

# THE PRESBYTERIAN.

MARCE, 1868.



We have watched with deep interest a discussion which has been carried on by the Press of Ontario, since the commencement of this year, on the subject of grants to what are called denominational Colleges. Queen's University is much concerned in this discussion, and along with Victoria University, at Cobourg, it has figured prominently in newspaper editorials. Every friend of a liberal and adequate education must feel the greatest solicitude as to the issue of the present agitation, and ought to cherish a prayerful hope that the Legislature will be led to adopt such a policy in the premises as will facilitate and extend, rather than curtail the work in which the Colleges have hitherto been so nobly and successfully engaged. The discussion has, we think, been characterized with much firmness and moderation, if we except one or two journals which have been more declamatory than convincing, in the expression of their views. We have no hesitation in saying that the best of the argument is on the side of the Colleges, and that with the exceptions mentioned, they are supported by a majority of the ablest and most influential of the newspapers. It is clearly established and, in fact, universally admitted that the colleges are liberal, meritorious, and most useful Institutions. They show by ample statistics that the work they have done is, in every sense of the term, a public service, and that the grants received from government have never been employed for denominational purposes, but, on the contrary, large sums have been added annually from their own revenues to make these grants adequate for their efficiency, to say nothing of the munificent expenditure which, by private liberality, they have been enabled to make in the purchase of suitable properties, the fitting up of class rooms, the procuring of apparatus, and the establishment

of libraries, museums, &c. What particularly pleases us in the representations put forward in behalf of the colleges, is the fact that while they would be content to go on under the present system, they do not regard it as the best that can be devised. They would prefer a plan more in consonance with broad views and sound reasoning upon the subject, as well as with conclusions which have come to be recognized by the best educational organizations in the more advanced nations of civilized Europe. There are too many degree-granting institutions in Ontario. What is demanded is one independent university, which alone shall have the power of conferring degrees, and enough of colleges throughout the country to prepare, by adherence to a sufficient curriculum, all aspirants to literary distinction. This is the plan contemplated by that liberal and patriotic measure, the University act of 1853, which, if it had been properly carried out, would have supplied the Province both with efficient institutions and abundant means for support. The design of that act has, however, been shamefully frustrated. The public property of the country has been swallowed up by a gigantic monopoly at Toronto, which is doing less public work than the colleges that have been first despoiled of legislative benefits intended for them, and then cruelly reviled with invidious distinction on account of their nominal sectarianism; and which, notwithstanding all that is said of its being under government control, has not condescended for seven years to give any account to the legislature of the use it has made of the people's patrimony. By this maladministration of one the wisest measures in the Canadian Statute book, the colleges in existence at the time it was passed have endured the loss of all the benefits they expected to derive from it. They do not now propose or encourage any attempt to impair the once favoured institution, but on the ground of equity and fair play, they plead