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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any other person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

BEFORE this number of THE WEEK is in the hands of most of its readers, eighteen hundred and ninety will be dead and eighteen hundred and ninety-one will have entered upon its course. What has the Old Year brought to each one of us, to our country, to the nations, to civilization, to humanity? What will the New Year bring? The reader need not brace himself for a homily. That is not exactly in our line, yet he must be singularly destitute of thoughtfulness to whom the closing hours of a yearly cycle are not, in a greater or less degree, hours of retrospection, of introspection, and of—if we may coin a word for momentary use—prospexion. He would be a wise man indeed who could set down the answer to the last of the above-named questions for any single individual, to say nothing of a nation or a world. Day by day, week by week, month by month, the answer will be wrought out. What the closing year has brought to us individually, each can answer for himself, and for himself only. To Canada it has brought moderate prosperity in most industrial pursuits; a time of trial, such as tests the stuff of which a young people is made, in the partial closing, through a purblind selfishness, of the markets of her powerful next-door neighbour against her; and a new hope, in the discovery which bids fair to give to her, in her unique mines of nickel and other valuable ores, a source of inexhaustible wealth in the near future. To her it has also brought the disgrace of a series of atrocious crimes unexampled in her previous history, and, let us hope, not likely to be paralleled for a decade at least. To the United States the year has brought the downfall of polygamy in the Mormon Church, the overthrow of the Louisiana Lottery, the threatened Indian outbreak, and the enactment of the most barbarous tariff legislation in the civilized world. By the Mother Country it will be remembered as the year in which Parnell, in selfish and wolfish desperation, crushed with his own heel the Home Rule power which he had created and fostered into a lusty life. To the nations of Europe, notwithstanding the ever-growing burden which their terrible armaments are placing upon the backs of singularly submissive peoples, the dying year bequeaths peace-prospects happily, though undeservedly, brighter than those left by any previous year for some time

past. To civilization eighteen hundred and ninety has brought whatever of good is involved in the opening up of Africa by the Stanley and other expeditions; the partition of a part of its territories between Great Britain and Germany; the settlement of the difficulty between the former and Portugal; the Pan-American Congress, with its arbitration arrangements, and so forth. This, of course, is no historical summary, but a mere unstudied allusion to some of the events of the year, most readily recalled at the moment, which seem likely to be more or less permanent in their effects and tendencies. On the hopes resting on such scientific discoveries as that of Dr. Koch we have not space to touch, but we must not pass by the great philanthropic scheme which is just now attracting so much attention in England, and which, whatever inherent defects or personal shortcomings may stop or mar for the moment its development and effectiveness, we feel justified in hailing as the genesis of the largest, most comprehensive and most practical and promising idea for the uplifting of the submerged masses which has yet been conceived. This idea is too grand to be let die. It is bound sometime and soon to be a boon to humanity. On the whole, then, the departing year has been one of the best the world has yet seen. May its successor far surpass it in its record of noble achievements.

WHATEVER the immediate result of their efforts, Senator Allan and those gentlemen who have aided him in his attempt to bring about an exchange of other city property for that belonging to the University on Bloor Street, have deserved well of the city, and should have the warm thanks of every citizen. Senator Allan's letter in the city papers presents the case in favour of the proposed exchange so fairly, and at the same time so cogently, that it must be hard to resist the conviction that the scheme recommended is the very best that can be devised. The question of values, present and prospective, is, however, one which should be gone into carefully by the most competent authorities before a final decision is made. The city should certainly desire to deal fairly, not to say liberally, with the University. On the other hand, those representing the University, and all who are connected with it being citizens of Toronto, should be, and, we do not doubt, are equally interested with others of the most intelligent classes in desiring that the best interest of the city shall be safe-guarded. One thing, at least, should be considered settled and unalterable, viz., that the property in question must be kept open at any cost. That resolve would, we venture to say, commend itself to a very large majority of all intelligent ratepayers. Any Council, or other civic authority, that should permit those grounds to be sold for residential or business purposes, would grossly betray its trust and incur the reprobation of the coming, if not of the present, generation. It is, indeed, hard to believe that the University authorities, themselves, can have any serious intention to so dispose of it. Should it prove otherwise, the city should prevent such a calamity, even were it necessary to buy every lot as soon as put upon the market. We confess that we are astonished to learn that the University authorities are willing to part with it permanently for any consideration, and it is almost inconceivable that they could think of parting with it, save under such conditions as would guarantee its preservation as a park. In that shape it would be about as useful to the University in the city's possession as in its own, while expenses of landscape gardening and caretaking would be saved. One of the first cares of the new City Council should be either to make the transfer proposed by Senator Allan and his friends, or substitute a better scheme without delay. This breathing-space is indispensable to the health and comfort of the citizens, and will become more manifestly so with every passing year.

TORONTO is to be congratulated on the opportunity about to be afforded it of reforming its municipal system. The scheme adopted by the Council at its meeting on Friday last for submission to the electors may not be the best possible, but it can hardly fail to prove a marked improvement upon that which has been tried and found so seriously wanting these last few years. The principal

changes, if the new scheme be adopted, will be the abolition of the present ward system and the substitution for it of six oblong sections, made by lines of division running from the Bay northward to the city limits; the reduction of the number of aldermen to twenty-four, four for each district, to be elected for a term of two years in such order that two vacancies shall occur annually in each section; the division of the business of the city in future between four standing committees of the Council, each committee being composed of six members, whose chairman shall be annually appointed by the Mayor, the Mayor and chairmen constituting a Board of Control, or Executive Committee; and the payment of all for services rendered, the Mayor to receive the same salary as at present (\$4,000), each chairman of committees \$2,000, and each alderman an indemnity of \$500. It would be easy to criticize certain features of this scheme, especially the very large powers entrusted to the Mayor, in permitting him to nominate the chairmen of committees, thus choosing his own Cabinet. But the reduction of the number of wards, and the appointment of responsible and paid heads of Departments, with necessary powers, are changes so clearly in the right direction that we can scarcely doubt that an overwhelming majority of the citizens will vote "Yea." The proposed Reform Bill is substantially that introduced by Councillor McDougall, to whom is due the honour of having devised the most feasible and promising scheme yet brought forward.

THE Minister of Education for Ontario took occasion, in a recent address in connection with the Medical Department of the Provincial University, to defend the expenditure of public money for purposes of medical education, by pointing out that some of the most important discoveries in modern medical science have been made in institutions connected with the State. The argument is worthless for several reasons. In the first place, in order to estimate its value we should require to know the relative number of great scientific institutions of the kind referred to which are supported by the State, as compared with the number supported on the voluntary principle. If it should appear that nearly or quite all the great English and European medical colleges and laboratories are connected with State Universities there is manifestly no basis for comparison. The argument is merely equivalent to saying that these discoveries are generally made in connection with such institutions as really exist, and not in connection with such as are non-existent. Nor does the fact that most of the great existing institutions on the other side of the Atlantic are aided or supported by the State prove anything with regard to the possibility or otherwise of the existence of equally efficient institutions on voluntary foundations, since it is obvious that so long as the Government undertakes to do any specific work, whether belonging to its proper sphere or not, there is little inducement for private individuals or societies to undertake that work. The Minister complained that objections were being made to the recent action of the Government to which he belongs in restoring a Medical Faculty to the University of Toronto. Having referred to the objectors it would have been but fair had he gone on to meet and answer their objections. This he scarcely attempted to do. The objections taken to the action of the Government in this matter are, if we understand them, of two kinds—general and specific. On general principles, a considerable class of objectors claim that a Government steps beyond its proper sphere and misappropriates the funds which belong to all its citizens, when it undertakes to provide for the education of those preparing for any one lucrative profession. The very fact that the profession is lucrative affords, it is forcibly urged, a sufficient guarantee that adequate provision will be made for furnishing the training necessary to enter it. If it be said that the medical profession is peculiar, in that the health and lives of citizens are involved in its practice, and that the Government is bound to protect these by guarding the entrance to the profession against incompetent practitioners, the answer is—admitting for argument's sake the doubtful assumption that the State institution does or can effect this result—that all that is necessary to the end in view is for the State University to perform the functions of an examining body, in accordance with the original