

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

\$2.00 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

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OFFICE—NO. 5 JORDAN ST., TORONTO.

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TORONTO, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1878.

UNIVERSITY CONSOLIDATION.

WE have had much pleasure in observing that, at the late meetings of the Educational Associations in Kingston and Toronto, attention has been called to the question of University Consolidation in Ontario. The time has arrived when the Government ought to be pressed to do its duty in the matter. The churches have too long carried a heavy burden which they should never have been asked to bear; and it is full time for the State to assume a duty which is peculiarly its own.

We imagine that few will deny that it is the duty of the State to provide the means of obtaining a University education for those who desire to avail themselves of it. The power and influence of a nation depend, in no small degree, on the character, and intelligence, and spirit of its citizens; and it would not be difficult to show that the reflex benefits resulting to the State from the higher culture given in the Universities are well worth all that the State is likely to expend in providing that culture. No one can seriously maintain that the provision made by the Government of Ontario in the *one* college which it sustains in Toronto is at all adequate to the wants of the country.

Why, we ask, should the various churches be laid under the necessity of providing the means of literary, scientific, and philosophical culture for those who are unable or unwilling to attend the college endowed by Government, and who, even if they should present themselves at University College, Toronto, could not find either accommodation or instruction there? The churches have quite enough to do, in the way of education, if they maintain efficiently theological schools in which candidates for the ministry can receive the technical training needed for their profession. Why should they be burdened, in addition, with the task of providing a general University training for the whole community? As a matter of fact the churches are quite unequal to the task. We have not forgotten the memorable description which Mr. Goldwin Smith gave to the people of England, of the

wretched equipment of some of our Canadian colleges. Even if there was exaggeration in that description, the fact remains that all of these denominational institutions are sadly hampered and harrassed for want of adequate support. We have a vivid recollection of a conversation with the President of one of these colleges, in which he playfully described the vexations he had to endure in "running the big machine under his charge while he had not the means to do it with." It must have been pleasing to Principal Grant, when seeking an additional endowment for Queen's College, to have Premiers and ex-Premiers on the platform of his meetings saying all sorts of complimentary things about himself and the institution over which he presides. We could not help wondering whether there occurred to his memory, at the time, the story which Dr. Chalmers told when he was seeking an endowment for his theological chair from the very courteous, but very close-fisted, Town Council of Edinburgh. A certain lady had taken offence at the action of the office-bearers in the church where she worshipped. To mark her resentment, on the following Sabbath she passed the plate at the door without putting into it her usual contribution, and having made a most profound courtesy to the elder standing by, she swept magnificently up the centre of the church. The worthy elder, nothing daunted, immediately followed her into the building; and in a voice loud enough to be heard by the whole congregation addressed her in the words, "Gie us less o' your manners an' mair o' your siller, my lady."

Indeed, when we read of the large contributions made by the ministers and members of the church to sustain the University at Kingston, we cannot help feeling indignant that sacrifices so heavy should be exacted from men little able to make them; and that means, which are so much needed by the Church to carry on its own work, are being diverted into another channel, simply because our statesmen are too indolent or too timid to take hold of a question which ought long before this time to have been definitely settled. We have no hesitation in avowing it as our decided conviction that the whole amount which Principal Grant is now endeavoring to raise within the bounds of our church ought to be spent on the college buildings and the endowment of the theological faculty; and that the Provincial Government ought to charge itself with the duty of maintaining in efficiency the department of Arts in the various colleges of the land.

Why should the State allow the churches to do work which is peculiarly its own? Why should it require, or even permit, this at their hand. If it be true that every emigrant added to the population is worth a certain sum of money to the country, it may surely be concluded that every man who has received a thorough University training has an additional value, for which the country should be willing to pay an extra price. Even on economical grounds, it is of unspeakable value to have, scattered throughout the land, men who are able from their culture and intelligence to guide public opinion and public action in the right direction. University College in Toronto receives from the Legislature a handsome annual sum for the culture which it be-

stows upon its graduates. Why should the Province refuse to pay a price for a literary product of equal value to the country furnished by a college at Cobourg or Kingston? Will any one say that the rich Province of Ontario is unable or unwilling to do more than it has hitherto done? There are (in addition to the County Model Schools) *two* large institutions supported by the State to provide candidates for the single profession of teaching, and only *one* college maintained by the State to furnish the needful preliminary training for *all* the other liberal professions—for lawyers, physicians, journalists, legislators, clergymen, as well as for those who wish to obtain the fitting education of gentlemen! We have no desire to see University College deprived of any part of its present endowment; but we feel assured that the great majority of intelligent people would gladly see something contributed by the State (if it can fairly be done) to help other colleges, which are doing work quite as needful and valuable to the country as that which is done in Toronto. If the learning and culture of the graduate are worth something to the country, no one, surely, will say that the value is lessened, when the denominational colleges endeavor to attach to the literary culture a certain amount of moral and religious training as well.

We have not space to dwell on many other reasons in favor of University Consolidation; but we cannot help referring to one which has naturally excited attention at the teachers' meetings. As things now are, no one can tell what is the true value of a University degree. When a pupil has passed the entrance or intermediate examination in our high schools, we know pretty accurately how far his education has proceeded, and what his attainments are. But when we come to those who have passed through our Universities, we are involved in darkness and difficulty. What is the degree of B.A. or of M.A. worth? Without inquiring into the mode of teaching and examining in a number of separate institutions no one can tell. Why should we not be able to appraise the value of our higher marks of literary culture without inquiries, which are always painful, and sometimes impossible?

It seems to us that the adoption of principles which have been found to work admirably in the school system, would deliver us from most of the evils that are now felt. Let there be a simultaneous and uniform examination (at the different seats of learning, if necessary) of all candidates for degrees in Arts by the examiners of a Provincial University; and let there be payment from the public treasury of the various colleges according to the ascertained results. If we had in Ontario a truly national University—not more closely allied to University College than to any of the others;—if all the colleges were fairly paid by the country in proportion to the work they do for its benefit;—if it were required in the future, that wherever a degree in Arts is necessary, the degree should be one from the national University—we believe that, before long, all the colleges for which the Province need have any concern would consent to fall into line; and our university arrangements, instead of constituting as they now do, an unseemly and unrighteous anomaly, would become the crown and the glory of the educational system of our land.