



THE reverberation of the far-sounding voice of Mr. James J. Hill, talking free trade between Canada and the United States, carries my mind back to a lovely autumn day some time prior to 1891 when I found myself on the Fair Grounds of Napanee to listen to a speech in favour of Commercial Union by that compact dynamo of energy, the late Erastus Wiman. I was little more than a boy at the time, and knew practically nothing about the points at issue. Wiman attracted me, however, very much. He seemed so sincere, so earnest and so well-informed. When he got through, old Senator Reid—long since dead—arose on the platform to state his opposition to Mr. Wiman's general conclusions. The Senator was sour and crabbed in his attitude toward the public, and he had not prepared himself for the encounter. So he was "short" on facts, but "long" on denunciation. Mr. Wiman replied, if I remember rightly, in an amiable manner in which he seemed to be sorry for the poor old gentleman who could not see the dawning of the light. If I had voted on the question then, I would have voted with Wiman.

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THEN came the thorough discussion which led up to the electoral campaign of 1891. The Commercial Unionists had to change their ground to that of Unrestricted Reciprocity; and even here they were beaten. The Canadian people were fearful lest Unrestricted Reciprocity might imperil British connection; and they were not to be dazzled into taking the risk. I knew a lot more about the subject before the results were announced that spring evening in 1891; and I was then convinced that the Canadian people would have to change materially before they would even think of such a policy. During the campaign, the Liberals maintained that their policy did not imperil British connection to the smallest extent, and they thus kept thousands of votes they would otherwise have lost; but Mr. Blake's letter, published in the *Toronto Telegram* as the news of the polling came in, banished much of the security with which these staunch British connection men had voted. In later years, the Liberals abandoned the policy, and gave the country an Imperial preference instead.

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IF Mr. Hill persists, he has the dead-weight of this failure to lift. He is appealing to the Americans, to begin with, and that is where any appeal now must be made. But if he should succeed with his adopted countrymen, what of Canada? Has Canada changed since 1891? It would be fairer to ask, has Canada changed since 1893-4-5 when the Liberals were slipping out of the skin of their late policy as quietly as they could? After Mr. Blake's letter, you could not have carried half the Liberal seats in the then Parliament on such an issue. The country was overwhelmingly against it. This position has been emphasized since then by the adoption of the British preference, and our commercial and industrial success under it; and there is to-day the additional lure of a high possibility that the Mother Country will soon give us a preference in return. Can even the great James J. Hill make headway against such a stream of influences? He should consult the spirit of that other Canadian-American, Mr. Erastus Wiman.

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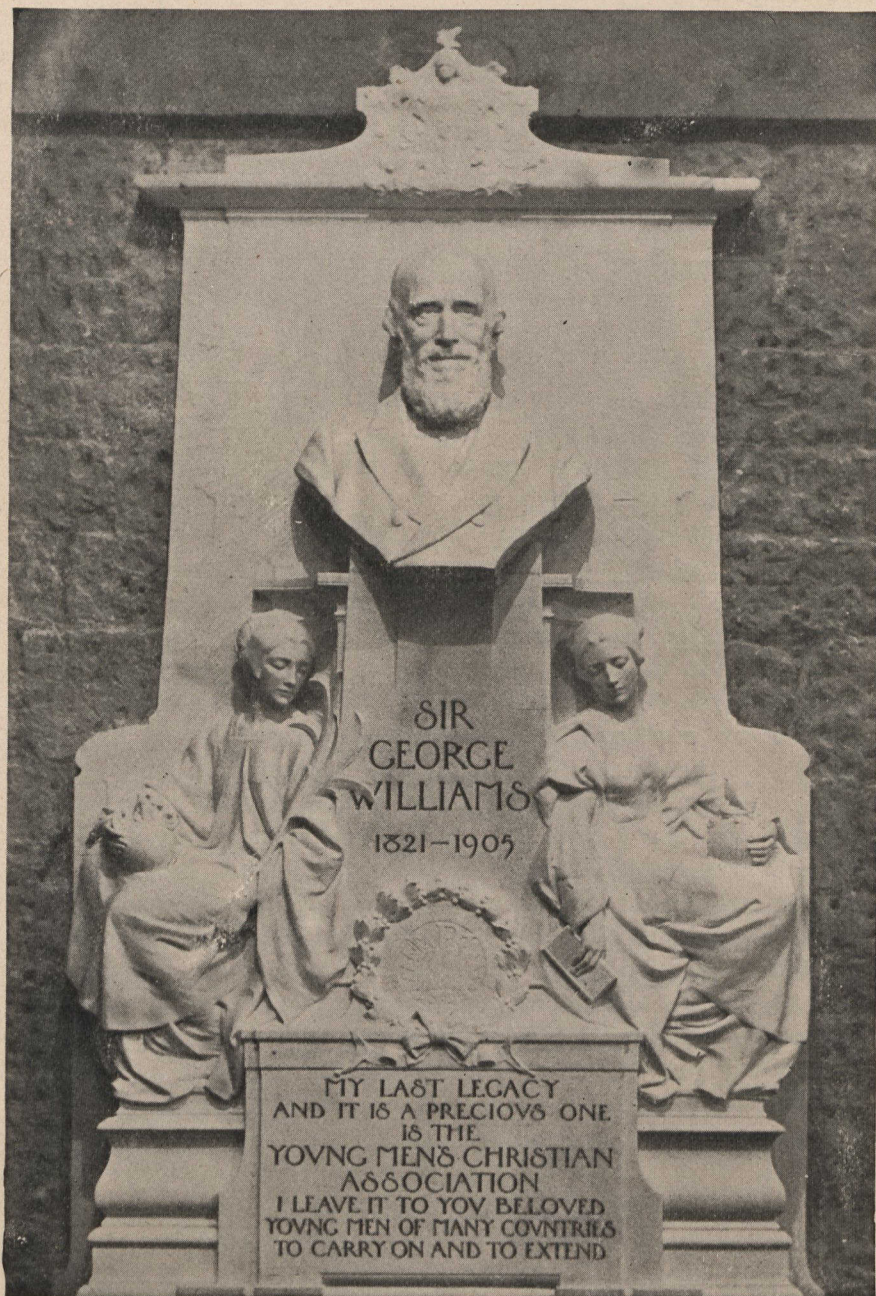
I SEE that the politicians have turned away from talking of "graft" in the Government departments alone, and are talking more largely of similar "graft" in all business. This is doubtless more comfortable for them. It seems less personal. They would have us believe that it is the common practice of business houses, when dealing with other houses which are their customers, to "bribe" the private servants of these customers in order to get favourable reports on their goods. That this happens sometimes, every one of us knows. To say that it is universal, however, is to accuse our whole business community of a purblind, self-deluded, trebly stupid and exceedingly costly form of lunacy. When a business house goes into this sort of thing while carrying through transactions with another business house, it cannot escape noticing that it is suggesting to its own

servants that they, too, should take bribes when they are dealing with other business houses. That is, it pays out good money to bribe the servants of a customer to betray their employer; and the chief thing it gets for this outlay is the certainty that its own servants will betray it in turn.

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IF our business houses are engaged in this fool's game of "beggar my neighbour," they have less business shrewdness than is commonly supposed. A man who hires another to corrupt a third, must be very confiding, indeed, if he does not expect his own instrument to take the hint and be open to such profitable corruption himself. Even in these Marine Department exposures, we have seen cases in which the servants of a merchant, who was sending "presents" to Government officials, hinted to these officials that they might well hand back a part of the "present" to the obliging servants who carried it to them. Corruption is a contagious disease of the utmost virulence; and the merchant who plants the virus in his own establishment must expect it to infect every man he has. In the long run, he is bound to lose far more than he gains. He will be betrayed quite as often as his rivals; and he will pay the price of at least his rival's betrayal into the bargain. I cannot believe that any such custom is universal. Where it exists, it ought to be treated like any other form of criminal treachery. There is no baser, more dangerous or more odious crime than treason, public or private.

W. J. M. P. O. T. E.



THE "Y.M.C.A.'S" FOUNDER

The Monument which has just been Unveiled in St. Paul's Cathedral, to the late Sir George Williams, is by Sir D. J. Frampton, and bears the words "My last legacy, and it is a precious one, is the Young Men's Christian Association. I leave it to you, beloved men of all countries, to carry on and to extend."