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A FACULTY OF THEOLOGY.

The question of University Consolidation seems to have died a natural death. No one talks of it now, and the public mind, by long contemplation of what has seemed, at least in a practical light, a Utopian scheme, has become so hardened that it is almost dead now to the issues of the case. Recent events, however, should have the effect of stirring up the question once more.

The Committee of the Legislature before which the matter was discussed has expressed itself so hostile to a bill for granting degree-conferring powers to the Protestant Episcopal Divinity School that it was withdrawn by its promoters in the face of certain defeat. We are aware that this bill was not opposed on the broad ground of University Centralization. The question was only whether the corporation desiring the bill represented its denomination as a whole, and as it was apparent that it did not, the bill was withdrawn for the present. The Committee was, it would seem, quite willing to recommend the bill to the Legislature for assent if it could be shown that the matter had been laid before and approved by the Diocesan Synod of the Church of England. Next year, doubtless, the bill will be again brought in, and if its promoters have their case better prepared, no doubt it will be passed; indeed, the Government under its present policy cannot well reject it with any show of justice. If degree-conferring powers are to be granted to one college, it would be manifestly unfair to deny another college of equal pretensions the same privileges. In a short time, doubtless, the Toronto Baptist College will apply for the same powers. St. Michael's College, under its present liberal management, may possibly do the same. Other colleges which are rapidly springing up will follow suit, and degrees in theology—once, alas, held to be the highest that any University could give—will be more common and less valued than the now degraded degree of Bachelor of Arts. Of course, while this is going on, University Centralization is becoming more and more impossible. The energetic Principal of Queen's University is increasing his endowment rapidly, and the number of students is multiplying. The new Provost of Trinity University is infusing new life into that ancient and slow-going institution. The endowment has been increased, and two new chairs are about to be added. Victoria University has completed recently a new hall, and is pushing forward. Knox College has obtained degree-conferring powers, and will soon be turning out a profusion of "B.D.'s." Daily these institutions are becoming more wedded to the University powers which they possess, and daily it is getting more difficult to dissolve the tie. The only gleam of hope that we can see is that the so-called Western University has applied for affiliation with the University of Toronto, and has been refused it unless it will abandon its title as a university and become an affiliated college. Undoubtedly it will comply with this restriction, and we will soon have one outside college working in affiliation with the University of Toronto and carrying out the scheme that the founders of the latter institution intended.

But until the faculties in our University are increased, the scheme of consolidation cannot possibly be carried out. How could our University fulfil the functions of an examining body to Queen's, Trinity, or Victoria Colleges while no examinations in theology are held? The basis of these colleges is a denominational theological education, and until a central university furnishes a board of examiners for these, it is nonsensical to talk of their surrendering their university privileges. There is no reason in the world why the University of Toronto should not fill this place. The theological education for which a degree is granted is generally and should be non-sectarian, and men of all denominations could be examined and degrees conferred in Theology without interfering with the peculiar tenets of any. It is true that the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge in their theological faculty represent a particular church, but their close connection with the Established Church is gradually becoming severed, and there is no reason why degrees in theology should not be granted by them without any participation in sectarian prejudices. Theology is no less a science than mathematics, Some may place it in a sphere entirely beyond human reason, but this is not the view of the thinking theologian of the nineteenth century who treats his subject in a thoroughly scientific manner. The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church in this respect is perhaps different to that of Protestant churches, but the foundation of both churches is the same, and examinations in theology need not introduce any controversial questions.

Why, then, should we not have a Faculty of Theology? Until we have, University consolidation will be a dream. Perhaps already the scheme must be confined to the region of the "might have been," but possibly prompt and liberal action on the part of our Senate will bring about the desired result. It will not do to wait until the various colleges join in asking that the faculty be established. Establish it, and when our University grants degrees in Theology of a uniform and sufficiently high standard, the different colleges will be glad to avail themselves of it, for it will free them from some trouble and expense, and give them more time for their special denominational training.

Scarcely anyone will question the wisdom of dissolving the connection between the Church of England and the University, but if our legislators will bear in mind that perhaps one-fourth of the undergraduates in Arts are intending to enter the ministry of some church, they cannot doubt that the establishment of this course will draw a large number of students from University College alone, not to speak of outside colleges. In the past the church and higher education have been so intimately connected that now, though by no means wishing to see the latter subjected to the former, we do sigh for the "good old times" when no University neglected to recognize that the problem of a religion for man was so vital that students should be instructed and examined in it as they were in Law, Medicine and Arts.

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