

The Secretary's accounts were examined and found correct, the balance at the credit of the Contingent Fund in the Bank of Montreal being to date \$1,163.88.

The Secretary's contingent expenses, amounting to \$6.38, were ordered to be paid.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned, to meet on Wednesday, 22nd February, 1882, or earlier, if necessary, on the call of the Chairman.

GEORGE WEIR,
Secretary.

Cobden and the Classics.—Cobden is a striking instance against a favourite plea of the fanatics of Greek and Latin. They love to insist that a collegian's scholarship is the great source and foundation of a fine style. It would be nearer the truth to say that our classical training is more aptly calculated to destroy the qualities of good writing and fine speaking than any other system that could have been contrived. These qualities depend principally, in men of ordinary endowment, upon a certain large freedom and spontaneousness, and, next, upon a strong habit of observing things before words. These are exactly the habits of mind which our way of teaching, or rather of not teaching, Latin and Greek inevitably chills and represses in anyone in whom the literary faculty is not absolutely irrepressible. What is striking in Cobden is that, after a lost and wasted childhood, a youth of drudgery in a warehouse, and an early manhood passed amid the rather vulgar associations of the commercial traveller, he should, at the age of one-and-thirty, have stepped forth the master of a written style which, in boldness, freedom, correctness, and persuasive moderation, was not surpassed by any man then living. He had taken pains with his mind, and had been a diligent and extensive reader, but he had never studied language for its own sake. It was fortunate for him that, instead of blunting the spontaneous faculty of expression by minute study of the verbal peculiarities of a Lysias or an Isocrates, he should have gone to the same school of active public interest and real things in which those fine orators had, in their different degrees, acquired so happy a union of homeliness with purity, and of amplitude with measure. These are the very qualities which we notice in Cobden's earliest pages; they evidently sprang from the writer's singular directness of eye, and eager and disinterested sincerity of social feeling, undisturbed as both these gifts fortunately were by the vices of literary self-consciousness.—*John Morley's Life of Cobden.*