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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 1885.

A NEW YORK contemporary is moved to say that Mr. Gladstone "has dominated the Commons with Olympian nonchalance." In the same page there is an excellent article on preaching in which the modern pulpit is accused of using a too ornate and rhetorical style. Dominating the Commons with Olympian nonchalance, seems to us a trifle rhetorical. There must surely be a plainer way of saying what Mr. Gladstone has done in the Commons.

THE *Christian-at-Work* describes the city council of New York as the "short-haired, blear-eyed, rum-sucking crew known as the Board of Aldermen," and the *Christian-at-Work* is anything but a sensational journal. It is a solid, conservative and somewhat stately and dignified religious paper. Our contemporary describes the aldermen in that way simply because that is the kind of men they are. Is not this right? Is there anything undignified in giving a truthful description of a public body? Is there anything dignified in describing a body as honourable gentlemen if a large number of them are loafers and sots? Suppose two or three members should appear in our House of Commons some evening next session under the influence of liquor would it not be better for the press to tell the people of Canada that they were drunk?

THERE seems to be a general agreement that we are having another financial squeeze. As usual at such times a good many people are talking about economy. Economy is a good thing during business depression. But it would be well to exercise some judgment as to the expenses that are to be cut down. There is some danger lest the cutting down process begins in many cases with the Church. Are there not several items that might be pared down a little before taking anything from the amounts paid to aid the Lord's cause? How many good men have smoked one pipeful of tobacco less on account of the hard times? Of those who take an occasional glass of something—moderately of course—how many have taken a glass less because business has not been very active? We had a very hard squeeze from '74 to '79, but we failed to find one man who stopped smoking on account of the crisis. Not one. Retrenchment is a good thing in hard times, but we should be careful about beginning with the sums we give to the Lord. And yet that is just where too many do begin.

A SOMEWHAT peculiar case of conscience is said by some of our exchanges to have occurred the other

week in Montreal. A young man who had obtained goods under false pretences from his former employer came under the influence of religion and so strong were his convictions that he went to the Police Court, confessed his crime and was sentenced at his own request to ten days' imprisonment. Assuming that the facts are as stated, was he under any obligations as a Christian to do so? Would not the ends of justice have been satisfied by making restitution to his former employer, Mr. George McRae, Q.C., a gentleman that we are very certain would be sorry to see a young man go to the police cells because he thought he had become a Christian. A similar case occurred in Chicago some years ago. A man who had defrauded the State in some way became convicted and, as was hoped, converted, at one of the Moody meetings, and confessed his crime. The question arose, should he give himself up to the State as a criminal? Of course every one admits that a man in these circumstances should make restitution, but should he after confession, contrition and restitution be expected to walk into a cell of his own motion? Many high authorities, Mr. S. H. Blake among the number, we believe, hold that he should give himself up, and ask the law to take its course. We do not see it in that light. After contrition and restitution we think the Master would say, go and sin no more.

CLEMENT, the well known correspondent of the *New York Evangelist*, has been on a prospecting tour on the Pacific Coast and gives a graphic description of the Puget Sound region. He has a strong liking for our Canadian possessions in that region as the following will show:

But the most interesting town on Puget Sound is Victoria, at the south-eastern extremity of Vancouver Island. The intelligent and patriotic American cannot resist the conviction that it, and the island on which it stands, ought to belong to this country. The Island is larger territorially than Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut; it is much richer in natural resources than these three States; and its climate is far more mild and delightful. Though Victoria is a little north of the forty-eighth parallel, yet it is said that flowers bloom there in the open air all through the winter. New Orleans could hardly show larger or more beautiful roses than were to be seen there last August, and the display of apples, pears, and plums growing on the trees in many private yards, I have never in any latitude seen excelled, if equalled, whether for abundance or quality.

The intelligent and patriotic Canadian has a strong and abiding conviction that Vancouver ought not to belong to Brother Jonathan. If the intelligent and patriotic American cannot resist the conviction that other people's property belongs to him, said American may get into trouble. Many people have got into trouble in just that way. In his long and eminent services in the pulpit "Clement" must have given a course of sermons on the Decalogue. Wonder if he noticed that command which begins "Thou shalt not covet," etc.

UNIVERSITY CONFEDERATION.

PRESEWORTHY efforts have been made to harmonise the conflicting interests of the higher education of Ontario. Bringing into conference the representatives of the various colleges has thus far been satisfactory and has justified the wisdom of the endeavour. Conditions have changed since the different educational institutions of the province were founded. Old asperities have been softened, and distinct antagonisms have been greatly modified. The present cries of former times are almost meaningless in these days and few there are who would care to incur the responsibility of reviving them.

The scheme drafted at successive conferences of University and College representatives has at length been published. It has been the result of careful deliberation and earnest study. It bears the impress of an earnest wish to meet the reasonable desires of the various institutions and the constituencies by whom they have been founded and supported.

The educational institutions already affiliated with Toronto University have had no difficulty in accepting the proposed plan. From the conference held last week by Methodist representatives it may reasonably be expected that Victoria College will accept the principles embodied in the scheme. Whatever difficulties may at present exist for the most part relate to details. The chief difficulty in relation to Victoria College will be its location. That is a question which pertains to the leaders of the Methodists themselves. Naturally enough the people of Cobourg wish their town to remain the seat of the University while influ-

ential members of the body hold out large inducements for its removal to Toronto. This difficulty however is not insurmountable, the leaders of the Methodist body are large hearted and public-spirited enough to rise above local prejudices and seek the promotion of the public good, with which it will doubtless be found that their denominational prosperity coincides. Victoria College without doubt will fall into line.

From what has already transpired stronger opposition to the scheme will come from Queen's College, Kingston. From its inception it has shown individuality, and never has its vitality been stronger than it is now. Its friends are distrustful of the confederation proposals, because they fear evil from centralization. This fear may be well or ill-grounded. We incline to the belief that there is no great danger. The conciliatory spirit shown in maturing the scheme, and the proposals already formulated bear testimony to the desire that all institutions entering the confederation will have their rights and privileges respected. If however, the friends of Queen's have any doubts on the subject they are perfectly right in stating them, and would be justified in obtaining assurance that their interests shall receive no injury.

The Board of Trinity College have given the proposed plan their most earnest consideration. They show a disposition to treat the proposal for federation in a fair and candid spirit. They have not accepted the scheme, neither have they rejected it. They suggest certain modifications, not by any means of an insuperable character. Like the authorities of Victoria College they ask for compensation for the possible removal of their buildings and holding in abeyance their degree conferring powers.

The Middlesex graduates of the University of Toronto at a meeting in London, after an able and full discussion, expressed by resolution their approval of the plan agreed upon by the conference.

It may be that time will be required for a thorough and exhaustive discussion of the proposed scheme. It may be wisdom in a matter of so much importance to the interests of University education, and therefore the well-being of the Province to hasten slowly. The time will not be lost. Better a well-digested scheme of confederation than a hasty, ill-sorted and therefore an impossible union. A dispassionate view of the whole question, irrespective of the immediate interest of any one of the contracting parties will no doubt lead to an harmonious settlement of existing difficulties. The union of the provincial colleges will give them a dignity to which they have not yet attained, and the cause of learning will receive an impetus that separate and conflicting interests only serve to render impossible.

A DEFENDER OF EXEMPTIONS.

IT is a poor satisfaction to spoil a magnificent rhetorical period, delivered for platform effect mainly, but Dr. Hunter, of Wesley Church, Hamilton, leaves us no option. In a lengthy lecture in defence of the indefensible position that tax exemptions are eminently proper and praiseworthy, especially if the exempted property can be denominated ecclesiastical, he pretends that a paragraph appearing in these columns was written in ignorance of the proper interpretation of a passage adduced. For our confutation he quotes "Rev. Albert Barnes, the great Presbyterian Commentator." There, Doctor, you are astray. He was an indefatigable, painstaking and industrious annotator of Scripture, but not generally recognized as a profound exegete. No Presbyterian or other divine thinks of quoting him as an authority. Even Dr. Hunter may possibly know that the science of hermeneutics has made wonderful advances since Albert Barnes wrote his painfully laborious commentary. It happens, however, that in the passage cited by Dr. Hunter, Barnes is right, though several commentators of greater erudition take the opposite view. Granting that Barnes is right does not help Dr. Hunter's limping argument. On returning from the Babylonian captivity a tax for the maintenance of the temple service was imposed on all male Jews. Dr. Hunter himself admits that it was voluntary. None but Jews were required to contribute. The priests were exempt. On this ground our Great High Priest might have justly claimed immunity from the impost, but He who fulfilled all righteousness paid His tribute.

No one can pretend that our condition in the Canada of to-day is analogous to the Jewish theocracy