

THE UNIVERSITY QUESTION.

The question of state aid to University education in this Province has by no means ceased to attract attention. It is still discussed most earnestly and from every point of view. Nor can the interest manifested in this grave question of social, political and religious welfare be surprising. The advocates of a purely secular system of education are ever active, ever on the alert, to diffuse their theories. According to their view a purely state or secular system of primary and intermediate education should be crowned by a purely secular university. To this view it is that we take exception. We hold that it is all important for the state, all important for the security of governments and the happiness of peoples that university education especially should be religious. Many of the evils attendant upon purely secular education in the primary and intermediate schools might be mitigated, if not altogether removed, by a thoroughly sound Christian university training. True, indeed, it is that comparatively few of those who pass through our primary and intermediate schools ever enter a university but nevertheless it is very largely through those who receive a university training that the public opinion of a country is formed, and, once formed, directed and controlled. If the countries of continental Europe to-day be afflicted with atheism and infidelity—if there be no longer in these countries respect for authority legitimately constituted and for religion in any form, it is, we may safely state, in a great measure owing to the character of the training imparted in their great schools or universities. We lately alluded to the deplorable condition of higher education in Belgium, where the great majority of university students are said to be rank infidels. We accuse no university in this Province of being atheistic or infidel. We know that there is none such in our midst. But we are now, as we have always been, convinced that institutions from which religion is excluded, however Christian their professors and students may be, must in time become so. We have instances of well-known colleges in the neighboring republic which began under strictly Christian auspices, which continued Christian to a greater or less extent for many years after their foundation, but which are now veritable hot beds, not professing, of course, but to all practical intents and purposes, of the most dangerous forms of irreligion. We hold furthermore that in the Province of Ontario, the state stands committed to an acknowledgment of the principle of religious education and that in this respect it is bound not only to the assistance and encouragement of a Christian primary education but to the subvention of Christian university education. We have in this Province the beginning of a Catholic system of education. We are permitted to establish and support Catholic primary schools from our own taxation, but this only under difficulties and inequalities. We have at our own private expense established many fine intermediate schools, and we have chartered colleges and universities. But though these institutions do a great work for the State as well as for the Church, from the former they receive no recognition whatever. Their charters were obtained before Confederation, so that even in this respect they stand nowise indebted to the government or Parliament of Ontario. We maintain that the legislature of Ontario is in justice bound to give the Catholic minority a thorough system of education. We are entitled to state aid, not alone for primary, but for intermediate schools and for a university. To say that a Catholic university in Ontario is an impossibility, is to say that which is unfounded, that which is too absurd to be otherwise met than by the very flattest contradiction. If we ask not, we shall not receive; if we insist not on our rights, they shall be denied us.

Our Protestant fellow-citizens in Lower Canada have never hesitated, and we respect them for their courage, to demand from the Catholic majority all that they deemed necessary for the protection of their educational rights. How different their line of conduct from the pusillanimity, the time-serving and the empty declarations of inferiority and servility of some few Catholics in Ontario. Few indeed these are, and fewer still they will be. The masses of the Catholic people in this Province are sound on the education question. They insist upon and will be content with nothing less than the concession of all their rights in this most important matter. The Catholic constituencies of this Province, the seats of the political power of the minority in Ontario—Prescott, Russell, Glengarry, Cornwall, Ottawa city, the Renfrews, North Essex and West Kent—all these if interrogated on this important issue would, we feel confident, insist upon a thorough system of Catholic education from the elementary school to the university. Our Protestant fellow-citizens in Ontario are now insisting on the protestantizing of the public schools by making the reading and studying of the bible therein compulsory, and a great majority of them insist upon each of their denominations having a university separate and independent from all others.

At a late Methodist conference Bishop Carman, certainly one of the ablest men in that body, spoke very emphatically in favor of denominational university education. He is reported to have said:

"A resolution adopted by the General Conference affirmed that in this matter they should adhere to the traditional policy of Methodism, and that the Church should have her colleges and universities under her care. In England education was largely denominational, but in this country, especially in Ontario, there was a peculiarity. The State provided for the education of the people here, and the consequence might be for a little doubt to spring up as to the traditional policy of the Church. The lines were not clearly drawn. Either the Church had business with education or it had not. There were those who would like to bring them down to theological schools only. Well, the Lord helping them, they would inculcate evangelical doctrines in their theological schools. But were they going to give up what was called their traditional policy because the State made ample provision for young men and young women? (Cries of "No.") As they were on this matter they were responsible not merely for education, but that that education should be vitified, electrified, strengthened, and he might even say, in some cases, dynamited with religion. (Applause.) The declaration of the Belleville Conference was made on solemn conviction, as they knew. It was made on the solemn conviction that infidelity, materialism, agnosticism, the shades of error, came in not so much in English grammar or arithmetic, but in the sphere of learning. Just in the university work was the very spot they must guard. University men were the very men who should have this religious influence, above all others. Insidious error crept in there, and therefore their Church said solemnly before the country and the world, "We will guard our colleges and universities." (Applause.) While they said that they were not going to be sectarian, it was not peculiar tenets of Methodism they wanted taught there. There was freedom in Victoria University and Albert College, and had been in years past, as everybody knew. They were not so unprincipled as not to join with the people of this country for a liberal education. Who made the present system so liberal? The late Dr. Ryerson had more to do with that than any one else, but he never advocated the giving up of Victoria College. (Applause.) He saw if Methodists were going to do the work of the world, they must have colleges and universities, and manfully do the work."

This is language unmistakably clear. Bishop Carman maintains that it is specially in universities that they should have a strong religious influence pervading their every department. We like, we must confess it, such plain outspoken language as that of Bishop Carman. However mistaken in his convictions we may believe him to be, we desire to give him all credit for his candor. Even the Christian Guardian, which, if we rightly apprehend its position on this question, favors an affiliation on a federative plan, of the great Methodist Colleges with the state university, takes ground as clearly defined and as unmistakable in favor of a distinctively denominational and Methodist training for the students of that particular form of religious belief. The Guardian says:

"There is good ground to believe that the government of Ontario is disposed to go as far in formulating a plan that would be acceptable to the representatives of the Church Colleges, as the public sentiment of the country will warrant. How far the plan which the Government may submit shall deserve the approval and support of the Methodist Church it would be premature to say. But we want our Methodist people throughout the country to know, that no one who has any right to speak for Methodism proposes, or approves, any scheme that would lessen the religious supervision and influence over Methodist students. No one representing Methodism proposes to make Victoria College merely a theological school. Those who favor a plan, that would allow the Methodists to share in the advantages of the State provided for university education, are just as deeply convinced of the importance of religious education as those who are anxious to cut us loose from all connection with the Provincial University. We are all one on that point. What are the advantages which have been deemed sufficient to warrant us in shouldering the expense of maintaining a denominational university? They are simply these: The religious oversight of the students, and the security we have as to the character of the professors. Apart from our theological students, we have never pretended that we maintained a university to teach theology or religion. Indeed, it has been our boast that our College was not sectarian—that Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and even Roman Catholics, have been educated at Victoria, without any interference with their religious faith. Now, our own position is this: If any arrangement can be made that will allow us as Methodists to share, as well as others, the advantages of the provision made by the State for university education, and give us a sufficient assurance on the two points named, viz., religious supervision, and the character of professors, then we maintain it would be neither wise nor patriotic for us to stand aloof, and hand over the endowments of the university to other Churches which have no more claim to them than ourselves. If, however, no reasonable security can be given on these points, we must face the difficulties and do our work in our own way. In that case we can depend upon the loyalty of our people."

If the government really have any such scheme as that alluded to by the Guardian under consideration, it is a matter of vital concern to the Catholic people of this Province. The bishops whose episcopal sees are in the Province of Ontario, and who have spiritual jurisdiction over its inhabitants, have not yet indeed pronounced on the best

means to be taken to preserve Catholic interests in this important matter. When those venerated prelates shall have pronounced a decision on the subject, it shall, we need not say, meet with our hearty and earnest support. Meantime it cannot be considered inopportune to discuss the matter from our standpoint, for which we are individually responsible. We are opposed to any affiliation of all the Catholic colleges of Ontario with the state university, for the reason that we can see no means whereby Catholic interests will be sufficiently guarded by any scheme of affiliation. It may be that some such means may be found, and, if so, we will be happy to withdraw our objections. What we desire above all things is to see the episcopate of the Province at the head, and in complete control, of any system or form of university education that may be devised for the Catholic body in Ontario. The placing of a few Catholics on a general examining board could not have this effect, just as the admission of a few Catholics into the governing body of the state university can offer no guarantee, to our mind, adequate to the due protection of Catholic interests. Catholics, being in favor of religious education, can not advocate any system of university training that is not religious in the Catholic sense. Now, no system can be such in which the training is not in the hands of Catholics and the examining power likewise under Catholic control. Catholics may indeed avail themselves, in so far as the ecclesiastical authorities permit, of opportunities offered by non-Catholic institutions for the obtaining of university degrees. But when something better can be obtained it does not become us to be satisfied with great deal less than that to which, in strict justice, we are entitled. We are deeply impressed with the conviction that it is not only possible, but quite feasible, to arrive at some arrangement whereby the Catholic body in Ontario may have the benefit of university education free from all non-Catholic control.

We were very forcibly struck by the speech of Mr. Blake at the last annual commencement of Toronto University. Then Mr. Blake there is no man in this Province who knows better how to state a case. His learning, his lucidity of speech, and his earnestness of conviction, all do him service when he places his opinions on any subject before the people of this country. Mr. Blake's position on the subject of state education is well known. He is convinced and argues that all the denominational colleges in the land should be feeders of the state university, through which alone he thinks the standard of education can be raised. In the speech referred to he took a retrospect of the history of the question of state aid to denominational colleges since Confederation. That retrospect is interesting. Said Mr. Blake:

Confederation came and gave us freedom for local affairs, including the great question of education. All people of Ontario had settled down to the view that the voluntary system should be carried out in our institutions to the fullest extent, and the proof of that end is obvious. Up to that time seven colleges in the Province were receiving public grants: Regiopolis, Kingston..... \$3,000 Queen's, Kingston..... 5,000 Bytown, Ottawa..... 1,400 St. Michael's, Toronto..... 2,000 Trinity, Toronto..... 4,000 Victoria, Cobourg..... 5,000 L'Assomption, Sandwich..... 1,000 In the very first session of the Legislature of Ontario, the Government of Sandfield Macdonald proposed, that these grants should be discontinued, that they should be paid for 18 months, for convenience sake, and thereafter discontinued on the ground of their inexpediency, and a law was proposed which declared that they should not be lawful after that time. That law was assented to by the whole Legislature. There was no division of parties upon it. I do not mean to say there was not a man in Parliament who did not sympathize with that law. But the public sentiment was overwhelmingly in favor of it. An attempt was made to get up an agitation against this policy. The subject was discussed during the recess, and we went back to Parliament knowing that the subject would be brought up again; and in December, 1868, it was proposed:

"That in the opinion of this House it is necessary and expedient in the interests of collegiate education that some comprehensive scheme be devised and adopted for giving effect to the objects, and for extending the operation of the Act, 16 Vic., cap. 89, for the establishment of a Provincial University, and the affiliation of colleges to be supported in connection therewith."

To this resolution the following amendment was moved:—"While this house recognizes the importance of educational interests it is still of the opinion, as expressed by the Act of last session, that no college or institution under the control of any religious denomination should receive aid from the public treasury."

Now some who approved of the principle of the amendment, yet wished to recognize the desirability of some improvement in our existing provisions for superior education, and particularly did they wish to recognize the expediency of providing for a

UNIFORM ELEVATED STANDARD of education through the medium of the Provincial University. I had the honor of moving in that direction, but I felt that there was great difficulties in the way, that could not be overcome without the cordial assent of existing institutions whose chartered rights no one proposed to interfere with in the slightest degree; that this action must be purely voluntary or nothing could be done. I felt also that

it was not for those who stood in the relation in which they still stand to our educational system to devise a plan which they had not power to carry out, because, as I have stated, no plan could be carried out except it should remove the cordial assent and co-operation of these other institutions. I did not agree with the view that we should devise the plan, but I did agree with the view that we should express our willingness to consider fairly and cordially any plan that might be devised by those who complained of the existing state of things. I moved the following amendment:

"That this House, while firmly adhering to the view that denominational colleges should not be supported by State aid is prepared to give its best consideration to any scheme which may be laid before it for the improvement of superior education and for the establishment and maintenance through the Provincial University of a uniform and elevated standard of graduation."

Now, that amendment was carried by a Vote of 66 to 4, and the four who voted against it did so because they thought it was not unfavourable enough to the denominational colleges, so that there was practical unanimity in the mind of the Legislature in the re-assertion of the view that the public interests required the adoption to the full of the existing system, that there was to be no attempt to resume a system of public aid to denominational colleges, and that it was important to make arrangements for the establishment of graduation through the medium of this, the Provincial University. Now, since that time there have been in the Province four general elections, and I am not aware that any party or individual has at any time raised the question whether the decision which was then reached by the Legislature was a sound decision.

We have a very distinct and painful recollection of the time when the action referred to by Mr. Blake was taken by the legislature of Ontario. The Catholic body strongly disapproved of the course taken by the legislature, a course, in our estimation, unwise, unjust and even unconstitutional. Mr. Sandfield Macdonald, then at the head of affairs in this Province, was by no means a friend of Catholic education. He was its most decided and determined enemy. He had placed himself on record as such by his motion moved on the 14th of March, 1865, in amendment to the confederation scheme on the subject of religious education in Upper Canada. The journals of the House for that day give us a very exact view of Mr. Macdonald's position on this question:

And the Question being again proposed, That a Select Committee, composed of the Honorable Mr. Attorney General Cartier, the Honorable Mr. Brown, the Honorable Mr. Galt, Mr. Robitaille, Mr. Haultain, and the Mover, be appointed to draft an humble Address to Her Majesty, founded upon a Resolution adopted by this House, on Friday last, on the subject of uniting the Colonies of Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island in one Government.

The Honorable Mr. Macdonald (Cornwall) moved in amendment to the Question, seconded by Mr. Scatcherd, That the words "and that it be an instruction to the said Committee to consider whether any constitutional restriction which shall exclude from the Local Legislature of Upper Canada the entire control and direction of Education, subject only to the approval or disapproval of the General Parliament, is not calculated to create wide-spread dissatisfaction, and tend to foster and create jealousy and strife between the various religious bodies in that section of the Province," be added at the end thereof.

Mr. Macdonald's motion was indeed rejected. Had his views been carried out he might in the first session of the local legislature have gone further than withdrawing the grants from the denominational colleges. Our separate schools might have been obliterated. Our misfortune at the time was that Mr. Sandfield Macdonald was a nominal Catholic. In fact his appointment to the Premiership of Ontario was looked upon in some quarters as a concession to the Catholic minority, and the support of Catholics at the polls was asked for his candidates on this ground. But no more pronounced enemy of Catholic interests in matters educational sat in the legislature of Ontario than Mr. Sandfield Macdonald, who actually opposed the election of Mr. D'Arcy McGee in Prescott, preferring to that distinguished man, who ran as a supporter of his own, a bitter opponent, Mr. James Boyd. Mr. McGee took the field as the standard bearer of the Catholic minority and the Catholic Premier planned his defeat. It was then a misfortune for the Catholic body that the Premier of Ontario should have been Mr. Sandfield Macdonald. But that body owed it to itself to have entered a most energetic protest against the course adopted by the government and legislature of the day. We have always looked upon the attitude of our people at that time in the light of a base surrender and cannot but feel that we were guilty of a dereliction of duty in not entering an appeal to the general government against the course adopted by the legislature. We were then wronged. It is now full time that our wrongs should be righted, that the Catholics of Ontario should, in the matter of university education, be placed, in so far as the state can place it, on terms of equality with non-Catholics and secularists. Mr. Blake would have our wrongs righted by an acceptance on our part of his invitation to fall into line and have our collegiate institutions absorbed in the state university. He tells us that affilia-

tion is not absorption, but merely conjunction. It may not indeed be absorption, in so far as the collegiate course of these institutions is concerned, but in respect of university training it is certainly absorption. The Provincial University consists not merely of an examining body, it is a university with the professorships and curriculum usual in non-Catholic institutions of a like character. Mr. Blake himself in the speech we have cited from bears convincing testimony to this fact. He says:

"We have, as is known, not merely an official relation, but a very close practical relation between this University and those institutions of high training which are known as Collegiate Institutes and High Schools throughout the Province. Now, of the head masters of these institutions there are 51 graduates of Toronto University out of a total of 94 who have graduated from Ontario institutions. Of the assistant masters, Toronto University sent out 75 out of a total of 98; and of 31 assistants who are under-graduates of Ontario institutions, 26 belong to Toronto University. (Applause.) From the figures presented we see that the share which the University is bearing in supplying the higher education of the Province is not merely a large, but an increasing one. It is quite obvious that none but the best results may be anticipated for the future of the institution, from the few figures I have given."

There is then an avowed alliance between the non-Catholic high schools of Ontario and the Provincial University and it is proposed that our colleges should take the same rank as these high schools and become puny feeders to this pampered seat of learning, uncontrolled in the slightest degree by Catholic sentiment or influence. The day that shall see our colleges so reduced, will be, in our opinion, a sad one for this great Province. But Mr. Blake gives us further evidence of the overwhelmingly non-Catholic character of this state institution. Statistics speak more strongly and convincingly than words themselves:

"Now the figures for the year 1882-83 are as follows:—Matured in law 16, in medicine 17, in arts 177, a total of 209; and the graduates for that year in all branches were 91. Last year there were 8 graduates in law, 24 in medicine, and 171 in arts, or 203 in all; and there were 75 graduates in all, 63 being in arts. I may add that the number of persons who have given notice for junior matriculation is 185—(Applause)—and these figures will probably be increased to 200 before the examination takes place. So that we have reason to suppose that the junior and senior matriculants will be at least equal in number to those we had in the previous year. The number of candidates examined for junior matriculation in the year just closed was 160; in the local examinations for women, 72; supplemental examinations in September, 72; arts examinations in May, 342; law examinations, 33; total, 736. Now of the 315 persons who attend University College, the denominations are given as follows:—

Presbyterian, 46; Episcopal, 53; Methodist, 63; Baptist, 3; Roman Catholic, 13; Society of Friends, 3; Congregational, 4. I may also give you some statistics as to the women under-graduates, and those of the standing of the fourth year number 5; of the third year, 4; of the second year, 18; of the first year, 54—a total of 82. They have obtained in all 297 honors, of which 159 are first-class and 148 second-class, and they have won nine scholarships."

Mr. Blake need not expect that the Catholic body in Ontario will, to any much greater extent, for the time to come, avail itself of the advantages of Toronto University. Catholics will not regret the growth of that institution, nor the spread of its influence among those whose educational welfare it is calculated to promote. But they cannot rest content with any position short of one of equality in this matter of university education. We have ourselves hopes of seeing a great Catholic university in this Province, an institution that will be to our elementary and intermediate schools that which Toronto University now is to the non-Catholic elementary and intermediate schools of the Province, their complement and crown. We have, we repeat, hope for Catholic education in Ontario. We have trust in the energy, the activity, the patriotism and the sound religious spirit of our people. And that trust leads us to the conviction that no half measures will satisfy them, but that in any arrangement the government may arrive at in regard to this University question, Catholic rights will be fully recognized and the equality of all fully acknowledged, secured and guaranteed by law. Equality we demand, with nothing less can we be satisfied, nor by any other means can the public good be effectively promoted.

It is announced that, after the publication of the Pontifical Encyclical against Freemasonry, the Congregation of the Holy Office, considering the great number of persons who have allowed themselves to become members of these secret societies, has suspended for one year, starting from the 20th of April last, the reserve of excommunication to the "Sovereign Pontiff," and has authorized the Ordinaries of the whole world to absolve those members who, repenting sincerely of their conduct, will seek during the course of this year to become reconciled to the Church.

A daughter of General Hugh Ewing, of Lancaster, Ohio, made her solemn profession in the Convent of Mercy, Pittsburgh, Pa., recently, at the hands of the Very Rev. Father Phelan, V. O. Her name is religion is Sister Veronica.

SEAFORTH.

The annual picnic in aid of the Seaforth church building fund was held on Dominion Day. It was very largely attended, and in all respects a great success, no less than five hundred dollars having been realized. The Catholics of Seaforth, like their brethren of Goderich, are ever ready to second the efforts of their zealous pastor in all the good works inaugurated by him. Father O'Shea is one of the most active and zealous of the priests of London. Since his appointment to the mission of Seaforth there has been a steady and marked progress in religion. The church of Seaforth reflects the highest credit on the Catholic spirit of its people. Its internal arrangements are as complete and neat in design as those of any church it has ever been our privilege to visit in this Province.

BRANTFORD LETTER.

SCHOOL EXAMINATION.

The summer examination in our school here took place on Thursday, July 3rd, and a good deal of interest was manifested in the presence of quite a number of the parents, who took part in examining the classes. Several of the trustees were present also and assisted in the work. The pupils displayed the effects of careful training in the promptness and correctness of their answers, and the teachers received well-merited praise from all present.

THE SCHOOL PICNIC.

The pupils of St. Basil's school held their picnic at the beautiful grounds of Oakwood sanatorium on Monday afternoon, and spent a most enjoyable time. Besides the children of the school quite a number of grown up people were present—parents, friends and trustees, and they seemed as happy as the youngsters. The pupils and teachers assembled at the school house at noon and about one o'clock some two hundred and odd formed in procession and marched to the picnic grounds, the boys in the lead. There was every facility afforded for pleasure. The boys brought their lacrosse and football, and there were croquet, and base ball, and swings, and races for boys and girls, and all entered into the games with energy and ardor. Some folks admire the American game of base ball which the professional clubs play with such precision, but there is a good deal of fun in the old game where you can have as many as you like on a side, and every tick is a run, and any bounce is out, and you shy the ball at base runners as they go around. This is the way it was played, and young and old seemed to have an equal chance. The lacrosse and foot ball matches by the boys were well contested, and the races for boys and girls had lots of starters. About five o'clock all hands were ready for lunch and the woods seemed full of little picnics. Family parties, and groups of a dozen, and whole classes, and every possible combination of humanity filled the grounds; and this part of the labor was executed with energy and dispatch. When all were filled they were up and at it again as lively as ever and the fun was kept up till half past seven when all formed in line to start for home. Before leaving the grounds Rev. Father Lennon presented a beautiful gold medal to Miss Lizzie Cahill, being the first prize for proficiency, improvement, attendance and punctuality. The medal is beautifully carved, and is in shape somewhat similar to a Maltese cross. It is valued at \$8.

All who attended were delighted with the day spent at Oakwood, and all felt grateful to Mr. Alexander for his kindness and thoughtfulness. He not only gave the fine grounds for the picnic, but also busied himself during the afternoon to make everybody as happy as possible. The children got back home about eight o'clock tired and satisfied.

THE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION.

At the entrance examination for the Collegiate Institute six pupils from the Separate School passed of the ten who went up. There were in all 113 who wrote for entrance, of whom 53 passed and 25 others were recommended. The latter had the requisite number of marks (280) but failed in one or more of the subjects. From the city public schools 21 passed and nine were recommended. Of our pupils Lizzie Cahill stood second on the list with 403 marks, only two behind the first pupil among the successful ones. The others from our school stood as follows: John P. Mullaly, 374; Mary Cahill, 373; Alice Savage, 344; Maud Franklin, 324; Augustine Comerford, 321. Comparing the number in the public and separate school here, our pupils have done much credit to themselves and their teachers.

MORE SCHOOL TALK.

Since Rev. Father Lennon resigned his seat at the school board and was appointed to the public library board, Rev. Father Cronin has been elected to the seat and appointed chairman of the board.

Mr. W. A. Shannon, who has been teaching for two or three years past in the Institution for the Blind here, has resigned his position, and intends studying medicine in Toronto. He is home at Belleville for vacation. Mr. Shannon has made many warm friends in Brantford, having been here a number of years as student and teacher.

Mr. Kelleher, of the Brantford Separate Schools, is spending his holidays at home in Galt.

Miss Ella Dalton, Principal of Ridgetown public school, is at her parental home here for vacation.

Mr. T. W. Shine and Miss Maggie Shine, of Brantford, are among the most successful teachers of Brant County.

ST. MARY'S CHURCH.

St. Mary's Church, in this city, was crowded to the doors on last Sunday evening, the occasion being a grand musical vespers by the choir of the church. The singing was very fine and reflects the highest credit on the organist, Miss Farrell, and those composing the choir.