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J. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Manager and Editor

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## GOOD OUT OF EVIL.

Thus far Japan has done nearly as well against the Russians as it did a few years ago against the Chinese. We quite recognize Russia as a country of formidable resources; but even in finally besting Japan, if that should be, Russia would not greatly add to its laurels; whereas plucky little Japan has already achieved, come what will, a considerable naval and military reputation. It is but a short period since Russian and German newspapers were glibly telling the British Empire how the Boer war ought to be conducted; they perhaps begin now to see that war from the standpoint of the arm-chair critic is one thing, and actual conflict quite another. It is only natural, other things being equal, British subjects should be pleased to hear of the success of Britain's ally; but as we have several times pointed out, Japan happens in this case to be in the right, and the Russian despotism entirely in wrong and the aggressor.

We think the common people of Russia have many good qualities, and we believe the Czar to be personally well-meaning. We look for two good results from this war:—first, such a shaking up in Russia as will lead on gradually to constitutional self government; second, such a friendliness towards the English-speaking world as will promote the further progress in Japan of the Gospel of Christ.

Rev. Dr. Wilson, of the First Methodist church, Hamilton, speaking to a large united audience in his own city recently, said that he would be perfectly satisfied if the policy of the Presbyterian Church were adopted by the united churches; and he would be willing to let Dr. Caven determine the theology. If Dr. Wilson's views obtain to any great extent in the Methodist Church, there would be little objection to union in that quarter.

## LONG DELAY IN DECISION IMPRACTICABLE.

One thing must be borne in mind in connection with the wide spread movement in favor of organic union between the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregationalist bodies, namely, that it has now become as dangerous and difficult to delay as it would be to proceed.

When the leading men and venerable fathers of three denominations proclaim to every breeze that no reason exists for separation, the denominational tie becomes thereby considerably disintegrated; a certain general sentiment becomes widely diffused throughout the country; so that unquestionably denominational separatist feeling can never again be exactly what it once was.

The moral would thus appear to be that if, as many of us believe, the overwhelming sentiment in favor of union is the moving finger of Providence, then, if union is to come, as come we believe it will, it were well it should come without too much delay. Already we have heard of certain projects of particular congregations which would naturally be treated and decided in a very different way were it believed union would come shortly.

The next important move will fall to the lot of the Presbyterian Assembly and the Congregational Union at their meetings within a few weeks. If they approve the general principle, the project then passes on to the Methodist General Committee, who would very possibly convene a special meeting of the General Conference. To give the finishing touches, and formally ratify the union, it would probably be arranged to have the ecclesiastical parliaments of the three bodies meet at the same time in the same city.

But the point we desire to repeat is this, the lessening of purely denominational ties in the case of the three bodies named, has already to a considerable extent taken place, and from this time forward there will be as much danger and disintegration in delay as there could be in taking the great step forward.

It is announced that Mrs. Grant Needham, of Orillia, has been appointed Principal of the Ottawa Ladies' college, which is under the control of the Presbyterian General Assembly of Canada. She will succeed Mrs. Anna Ross, who, for several years has honorably held the position. Mrs. Needham is the eldest daughter of Rev. George Grant, M.A., Inspector of Public Schools for the district of Parry Sound, and is the granddaughter of Rev. Donald McKenzie, of Zorra, the first Presbyterian preacher of Canada West. The new Principal is a graduate of Toronto College of Music, is a music teacher of wide experience and capability and is also a woman of exceptional executive ability. Mrs. Needham will take charge of the College next September, after the summer holidays.

Faith can remove mountains, no doubt of it; but it is the faith that takes off its coat and digs.

## IAN MACLAREN ON POSITIVE RELIGION.

The positive and full blooded convictions of St. Paul, who "remains to all ages the classical type of religious attitude," afford a striking contrast, says Rev. Dr. John Watson, to the attitude of the multitude of people nowadays who "neither know what they believe nor where they stand." This "timid uncertainty," Dr. Watson accounts for in part as the natural reaction from a "student and imperious dogmatism." Our fathers, he admits, "argued truth out to its jots and tittles, and laid a burden on the minds of their children which they have not been able to bear." But the pendulum has swung to the other extreme, and "if it was the failing of our fathers to be certain about everything, it is our disability to be certain about nothing." He continues (writing in the British Weekly):

"The vice of unlicensed affirmation has given place to the habit of unlimited negation. Atheism, as the author of 'Natural Religion' used to say, is 'speculatively monstrous—a mere speculative croquet or a great moral disease'; but one often wonders as he talks to his acquaintances, or even looks at people in church, how many have a living and working creed which they could state and vindicate, which they have tested, and which they hold with all their mind and all their strength. What strikes one to-day is not what people believe, but what they do not believe, that their attitude is not positive, but negative. . . .

"It is very well to disbelieve things which have not been proved, but are there things which we do believe because they have been proved? Really for a modern to refuse to believe anything because his fathers believed it, or to be willing to believe anything if it be not in the Bible, is too simple-minded a creed. Yet is it not the case that any book which denies is supposed on that account to be honest and thoughtful, and any book which affirms to be by so much ignorant and obscurantist? Certainly the people who doubt everything which the church of Christ has held most firmly for nineteen centuries give themselves amusing airs of superiority, and the people who hold the heart of the Christian creed are liable to be regarded with intellectual pity. As a matter of fact, there is no more ability in denying than in affirming, nor any greater liberality in doubting than in believing, for if there be a bigotry of orthodoxy which is sometimes intolerant, there is also a bigotry of heterodoxy which is most insolent."

The writer emphasises the need of positive religion by pointing out that the modern attitude of negation fails to be sufficient unto itself:

"It is very instructive, as also very pathetic, to notice how negation realizes its homelessness and tries to create some kind of religion, and how exceedingly modest are its substitutes before faith. Men whose lofty intellect was sadly obliged to lay aside the gospel have turned with ingenuous confidence to Mrs. Eddy and her lucrative invention, and women who have not been able, to believe the apostles used to speak a few years ago with tears in their eyes, and a beautiful far-away look of Madame Blavatsky's il-