

THE
KNOX COLLEGE MONTHLY
AND
PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE

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BRYANT COMPANY (Limited), 58 Bay Street, Toronto.

TORONTO, DECEMBER, 1893.

THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES.*

ON Monday, August 7th, 1643, there was no small stir in Edinburgh and Leith. The Parliament of Scotland—the Estates, as they were called—and the General Assembly of the church had both been sitting for some days. There had been no lack of business, but all were waiting for something, and that something happened to-day. News had reached the capital from Leith that the ship from London, day by day anxiously looked for, had at length arrived. If we had been passing down Easter Road—Leith Walk was not yet in existence—by the unenclosed ripening cornfields, we should have been startled by the approach from Edinburgh of a lumbering coach, and an accompanying cavalcade. These were the Lords of the Estates, on their way to the quay at Leith, and the coach was for the commissioners from the Long Parliament of England and the Westminster Assembly, come to seek the help of Scotland. The cause of the Parliament had not been prospering. Recent Royalist victories made its members fear an utter defeat; they realized the terrible consequences to themselves and to their country; and in their distress their thoughts turned to their Scottish fellow-citizens, now enjoying a relief—which, however, they had good reason to believe, was only temporary—from the

* A Sabbath evening lecture, read as a paper before the Toronto Presbyterian Ministerial Association, Nov. 20th, 1893, and printed at its request.