

THE WEEK.

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DIVINITY DEGREES.

In a short paragraph we last week drew attention to a somewhat astonishing proposal of the Ontario Government. They proposed to insert into the University Federation Act a provision enabling every theological college affiliated to the University of Toronto to grant degrees in divinity. The objection to this proposal was so evident that we cannot but wonder that it was seriously entertained by men so shrewd as those who compose the Government of Mr. Mowat. We may feel quite sure that it did not originate with the Ministry, but was probably forced upon them from without.

The very serious objection which we urged last week is really insurmountable. It can be no part of a purely secular Government to interfere with the internal affairs of a free religious society. Whatever may be the advantages of Church and State, or the disadvantages, it would be a strange application of Montalembert's watchword of "A free Church in a free State," to find the Legislature of the Province, elected on grounds entirely independent of religious considerations, dictating the terms on which religious distinctions should be distributed in the various Christian churches of the Province; and doing this not only without consulting the churches, but in opposition to the protests of their leaders, as was very near being done.

We have no doubt that these are substantially the considerations by which the Ontario Ministry were influenced when they consented to withdraw the obnoxious clause. But there is something more to be said in view of the subject being again introduced and a different result arrived at.

For the general principle of connecting divinity degrees with the theological schools there is a good deal to be said. The principle is admitted in Knox College, although here at the request of the communion represented by that college; and it seems likely that, in some way, it will be extended to the other colleges. But before this can be done, not only must the communions represented by those colleges be consulted, but some means must be taken by which these divinity degrees shall not be sown broadcast over the land without representing any special qualifications in the bearers of them.

Divinity degrees on this side of the Atlantic have become a joke. Dr. Philip Schaff, a very credible witness, has declared that there are more Doctors of Divinity in the city of New York than in the whole continent of Europe. The consequence is that many of our clergy and lawyers prefer to retain the more modest M.A. or even B.A., which mean something, to adding the more magnificent D.D., or LL.D., which in most cases seems to mean very little. As a matter of fact, most of the leading clergymen and preachers in Toronto, whether Episcopalian or Presbyterian, bear the degree of M.A., and not that of D.D.

Now the only guarantee of the value of D.D., provided by the Ontario Bill, was that the candidate should be a B.A. of the University. We admit that this is something, if not very much. But assuredly it should

not be left to any college or hall, which may obtain affiliation with the University of Toronto, to determine entirely the conditions on which its members should obtain these degrees.

We are here treading on ground which belongs to the representative and legislative assemblies of the religious bodies concerned, but we may at least suggest, for their consideration, the desirableness and the necessity of supervising in some way the granting of these degrees.

THE CRIMES BILL AND HOME RULE.

It is impossible to doubt the truth of the criticism made by the two members for Toronto on the resolutions introduced into the local House on the above subjects. They were brought forward merely to make political capital, as one of those gentlemen said; and the remark of the other was equally true, that the whole thing was a piece of impertinence.

These local Houses have the most prodigious powers ever known to any legislative Assemblies. The way in which they rush through bill after bill, resolution after resolution, is almost appalling. One gets dizzy as he reads the lists of measures which have been considered and passed into law. But our own House has really outdone itself in its rapid settlement of the questions of the government of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the enforcement of law in the old countries.

These poor people in Europe surely cannot know how well we get on in Canada with Home Rule, and how happy every one is, or they would not hesitate to follow our example, and do as we do. Could we not spare them Mr. Mowat or Mr. Blake for say three weeks, and so get the thing done effectually? It is only necessary to have the questions clearly stated by a Master Mind from the Dominion of Canada, and even the dull intelligence of Conservative Englishmen must move on.

Truly the vagaries of ignorance and conceit are surprising and unaccountable! These people tell us that Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill needed only amendment in detail to make it quite satisfactory, quite as satisfactory as our own method of government here. Those who draw their knowledge of the subject from the Bill itself, and not from their own imagination, are perfectly well aware that the two things are totally different. Do the self-constituted advisers of the English Parliament and Government know that Mr. Gladstone proposed to turn the Irish Members entirely out of the Imperial Parliament, and yet give that body a control over the Irish Assembly? Does any one in his senses believe that a scheme like that would work?

Suppose, again, that this defect should be remedied, and the Imperial Parliament made to occupy a relation to the local Houses similar to that of the Dominion Government to our local Assemblies; does it not follow from this, that every part of the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, perhaps the partition might go lower) must have its own local Parliament? And perhaps they do not want this; or, if they should come to see that the political descendants of Earl Simon are, after all, under the necessity of coming to Canada for instruction and guidance in the art of government, still they may not be prepared offhand to put the thing into its final shape. Would it not be better for us to allow these poor people in Great Britain to work out their problem for themselves? They are not all-wise; but they know a great deal more about the whole case than we do. And besides, if they make a mess of the business, they have to suffer, and not we; and, if they receive teaching from our wiseacres here, and make a greater mess, still they will have to suffer and not we, which would be a little hard upon them.

With regard to the Crimes Bill, if any one can show that it takes away any man's reasonable liberty, or that it has any other aim than the enforcement of law which is righteous and necessary, then it will be time to consider whether the general platitudes uttered on the subject have any application. It is possible that the utterers of them may retain or gain over some Irish votes; but it is shocking to think that the government of the country has to be carried on in this manner.

It is said that there are a great many more evictions for the non-payment of rent in the course of a year, in the city of New York, than in the whole of Ireland. Why should this be right and the other wrong? It is quite intelligible that Mr. Henry George and his followers, who are bent on bringing about the nationalisation of the land, should set them-