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December 18, 1880.

THE TIMES.

It was a surprise and disappointment to the gentlemen of Montreal who waited upon Mr. General Manager Hickson, on Monday last, to invite him—on behalf of a large and influential committee—to be their guest at a dinner, to receive a refusal. The invitation was genuine; it was offered by the leading merchants of the city, and they were anxious to do honour to the man who had not only redeemed the Grand Trunk from insolvency, and by sheer dint of personal ability and industry put it in a position to pay dividends on two preferences, and where it will also probably pay on the third, but had greatly increased the business and credit of the Dominion. But even those most disappointed were compelled to approve the decision. Mr. Hickson's courteous letter fully explained his reasons for declining. It was not that he thought lightly of the compliment, but wished to adhere to a policy of hard work. He is a railway man, and gives all his time and energy to his duty. To begin the dining business might mean a series of dinners, and the result of that is always a doubtful issue. So Mr. Hickson prefers to go on his unostentatious way, doing his best for his company. The committee are disappointed, but they must feel still more forcibly the prudence of the answer they got.

We have pleasant signs of push and enterprise in our Canadian book trade—Dawson Brothers, of Montreal, taking the lead. They got the plates for the senile "Endymion," and published it here on the day

it was published in England and the United States. Now the Dawson Brothers have brought out an edition of Tennyson's "In Memoriam" in a style that would do credit to any firm in England. The printing is beautifully clear, and the style of the binding is exceedingly chaste. All who have not read that most tender bit of mourning in all the English language should get this last edition.

The Montreal Jesuits hope to get some good help, in the way of sacred oratory, by the arrival of the priests who have been driven out of France in the great name of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity." I hope they will not be disappointed, for it is said that they are much in need of a good preacher.

The Philharmonic concert in the Queen's Hall was not merely creditable, it was brilliant—I refer to the chorus singing. It was music of the very best kind and I am sorry and ashamed to hear that it was a financial failure. The promoters of such a society deserve to be supported, for they confer upon us a public and personal good. Such music forms no unimportant part of artistic and ethical culture. It was a privilege for a man to take his wife and family to such an entertainment, and that we should fail to respond handsomely with funds to support such a society as the Philharmonic is a disgrace to the community. The truth is that as a community we have no care for what is really good and instructive and ennobling. Madame Carreno could only get three hundred people to pay to hear her magnificent recitals on the piano. Even good ballad concerts command no attention—a Shakesperian play will hardly gather dollars enough to pay for lighting and heating the house, and an address or lecture or sermon, on a subject which makes some demand on the intellect will get a cent where it ought to get a dollar. But let some fantastic thing come along, as a new clog dance, or "Buffalo Bill," or "Nigger Minstrels," or "The Blondes," and the house is filled. *O Tempora! O Mores! O Montreal!*

SIR,—Please stop the paper. I want it no more; for its editor has gone mad on Oliver Cromwell. I do not want to be taught history by you, if such be your views of one of the best men that England ever produced. I am ashamed of you as an Englishman. I have not time to give you any reason, only I believe Cromwell has been misrepresented, and by none more so than by you. Read history, and you will see the condition of Ireland. See how 150,000 men, women and children were murdered. Cromwell put a stop to all this by "meeting fire with fire." . . . Ireland would have been happy to-day if there had been more men like Cromwell.

The above letter is from a Toronto Alderman. He is an ornament and honour to the city, doubtless. But how did the worthy Alderman get to know what I said in my lecture about Cromwell in Ireland? I hear that some Western papers have been venturing on some severe criticism of that same lecture; but there was no decent report of it in any paper—no report, that is, which could convey a correct idea as to my position. If the Alderman is as hasty in forming judgments about civic matters, I am sorry for Toronto. The Alderman may not wish to be taught history by me, but he needs a great deal of teaching for all that.

Lord Granville's message to President Hayes, in which he so magnanimously "gives away" the Canadians—*anent* the Fisheries question, will not give additional firmness to the already strong Canadian loyalty. The feeling is abroad that we have been treated a little too cavalierly, and that our position should have been recognised