

we think the time will never come when a degree in arts from one of our universities will be rejected as insufficient evidence of knowledge and culture to qualify the applicant for beginning the study of the law. Are the people of Ontario and its professional men inferior in education to those of the sister Province? We certainly think not.

**A CONFESSION NOT CONCLUSIVE PROOF OF GUILT.**—One of the most remarkable cases in the criminal annals of the present century has lately been disposed of at the Northumberland (England) assizes by Mr. Justice Denman and a jury. The prisoners, Harrison, Gair, and Spratt, were accused of conspiracy and perjury in connection with the Edlingham burglary in 1879. In February of that year two burglars broke into Edlingham Vicarage and wounded the Vicar and his daughter, a crime of which Brannagan and Murphy were convicted in the following April, and sentenced to penal servitude for life. Last year two other men, Edgell and Richardson, came forward and confessed that they were the real culprits. The convicts were pardoned and released, and each of them received a *solatium* of £800 for his nine years in the dungeon. The police were accused of having conspired to convict innocent men, and three of them were indicted, as already mentioned, for conspiracy and perjury. The trial and conviction of Edgell and Richardson upon their own voluntary confession, and their being sentenced to four years' penal servitude, convinced the public that there had been a great miscarriage of justice in the former trial. The weight given to their evidence by reason of the severe punishment to which they were of their own accord exposing themselves, was somewhat detracted from by their admission on cross-examination that they had been assured that as there were two men in prison already for the same crime, they could not be punished if they confessed. At the recent trial all the facts of the original crime were fully gone into, and Mr. Justice Denman declares that there was "a tremendous case" against the original prisoners, notwithstanding that they had the services of able counsel. The evidence given against them was in some points slightly weakened, but in others it was materially strengthened. Brannagan was identified by the Vicar and his daughter as one of the burglars, and the latter says positively that Edgell was not the man. But the confession and imprisonment of the other two men remains a stubborn fact to be explained. The trial of the police has satisfactorily established one thing, that they did nothing more than their duty in working up the case in 1879. Mr. Justice Denman does not seem to have shared in the general doubt as to which pair of villains, for all of them were admittedly men of depraved character, committed the crime. He says that if Brannagan and Murphy could be tried again, the evidence against them would be ten times stronger than it was ten years ago, and no jury could have had any hesitation in convicting them at that time. The verdict of the jury at the trial of the police for conspiracy was "not guilty," of which Mr. Justice Denman remarked, "a very right verdict, gentlemen, if you will allow me to say so."