

the manners, habits and social characteristics of the people. Nor is this circumstance to be wondered at, for, in the literary, as well as in the provision market, the supply must always be regulated by the demand.

Never, in any newspaper, have I observed a Report of the proceedings of the Church Courts in this Province. It is the practice, in Scotland, to lay before the public, not only the results of ecclesiastical policy, but the logical or illogical processes (in the form of debates,) by which these results were attained. And this is a wise and useful practice, because it sometimes happens that the instincts of ecclesiastics are not in strict harmony with the instincts of other people; and an opportunity is thus afforded of subjecting to fuller review and broader discussion every question of public importance. By this means, the interests of all parties are protected. Rash and ill-considered schemes may be thus timeously exploded, and wise and beneficial measures receive the advantage of being more effectually commended to the public mind.

The people who belong to the Church of Scotland in this Province, have not the advantage of reading in the papers the discussions which take place in our Supreme Church Court, in relation to the various matters which are brought before it. They see in the *Record* only a summary of the resolutions adopted, and are ignorant of the reasons which were advanced for and against the measures, when proposed. I purpose, on the present occasion, to supply, in some degree, this defect, by recording the substance of the views I expressed at last meeting of Synod, in relation to a subject of such public importance, that no member of the Church ought to be ignorant of it. The subject to which I refer, is the proposed institution of a Theological Hall in the city of Halifax, to train and prepare native aspirants for the ministry, so as to save them the trouble of going home to Scotland for that purpose. On this subject, there was, by no means, unanimity of opinion at the Synod.

It appeared, in the course of discussion, that, when the plan of re-organizing Dalhousie College was first entertained, on the part of certain members of our Church, this project of a Divinity Hall was reserved to be developed, in due time, as the crowning part of the enterprise. Various members of Synod, however—myself among the number—were altogether taken by surprise when the "Overture" on the subject was produced and read. It is much to be regretted that a scheme of such grave importance—a scheme, indeed, requiring more calm consideration and more careful discussion than any other scheme which has been before the Synod for years—should have been suddenly disclosed at the eleventh hour, at the "flag end of the session," and slipped so hurriedly through Court, as this was done. There was scarcely any matter, of

the most trivial kind, which did not occupy more of the time and attention of the Synod, than this did. Several members never, till the moment the "Overture" was read, having heard of such a project, had not time to form an opinion concerning it. A scheme like this, on the issue of which the very life and prosperity of the Church may be said to be suspended, ought, in the first instance, to have been thoroughly discussed before Presbytery, and to have come up from Presbytery in the shape of an overture. Very different, however, was the manner in which the business was managed. The document, which was read and received as an overture, came neither from any Presbytery nor Synod, but was (formally) extemporized for the occasion, by a private individual. Nay, one member (at the last) revealed the fact that it was the intention of the projectors to have the proposed Hall in operation next summer! It is to be hoped that the business of the Church may be conducted in future in a more open and regular manner.

But, let us proceed fairly and calmly to judge the scheme on its own merits. No one can doubt the desirableness of our having a native ministry to supply the spiritual wants of the people of these Provinces, who maintain their attachment to the Church of Scotland. Young men, born and bred in the country, will, as a general rule, find themselves more at home, than natives of Scotland. Nevertheless, I believe it would be injurious to the religious interests of the people, and to the distinctive principles of the Church of Scotland in the Colonies, if there were not always somewhat of the home-grown and home-made material interwoven in the native cloth. But the question at once occurs, "Is there any necessity for a Provincial Divinity Hall, in order to train up a native ministry?" Certainly not. A number of the ministers, who are now settled in charges, are natives, who were sent to Scotland for their education, and the supply can be obtained in the same manner as formerly. It was objected that, when young men were sent to Scotland for their education, some of them never returned. Having tasted of the flesh-pots, they murmured, it seems, at being recalled into the wilderness; and the same spirit was manifested by those who were sent even to Canada. This objection is surely not seriously urged. The young men who were sent to Scotland from this Province, to be prepared for the ministry, all came back, and, with one exception, remained, and are now faithfully discharging their duties. That exception might, of course, have occurred under any system. But, if it is seriously maintained that the young men who are sent to Scotland are, with difficulty, got back to their native land, to enter on the office for which they were prepared, this fact plainly indicates the existence of an evil which an expensive local institution like that proposed, instead of re-