

former position, we frankly acknowledge. And we acknowledge also, that that position was never very high. They were but in embryo. Numerous obstacles generally beset the commencement of every great undertaking. The obstacles which beset the commencement of these were of no common magnitude, and thickly strown. But we rejoice to think, that there is a fairer prospect opening, even through increased difficulties, than has ever been presented in the history of the Colonial Church.

Queen's College at this moment possesses as great a number of scholars and students as she did at any period before the schism in the Church. And we will be bold to affirm, that both during last session and the present they have received as thorough and efficient an education in the branches that have been taught as has been given in any other institution in North America. This affirmation, we are confident, will be amply confirmed by the results of the general examination that will take place at the close of the present session, to which we would specially invite the inspection of all who take an interest in the educational institutions of the Province.

The French Mission was another undertaking, in which the Synod had engaged previous to the secession. This scheme, always feeble and hampered with difficulties arising out of the very nature of the work, could not fail to suffer by the dismemberment of the Church, from drawing off a considerable portion of its supplies, at best too scanty for carrying forward with success a scheme of such magnitude and importance. It appears, however, to be rising into renewed vigour and activity, if we may judge from the extracts from the Report on the state of the Mission given in the present and last Nos. of our paper.

Another symptom of increased vigour and activity is the establishment of a Fund for the relief of the Widows and Orphans of Ministers. The Synod have long had their attention turned to this desirable object, and have at length succeeded in commencing a plan with the most favourable prospects of success. The establishment of this scheme we hail with unfeigned satisfaction. It promises to be at once one of the greatest boons that could be bestowed on a patient and laborious class of men—*“genus patiens operum, parvoque assuetum”*—as well as a most efficient instrument for elevating the social condition and intellectual character of our Ministers. However devoted to the service of God, however anxious to be engaged in preaching the Gospel of reconciliation to perishing sinners, few men of refined feelings, and of a high intellectual cast of mind, it can be supposed, would enter on the work of the ministry—which, requiring, as it does, such a lengthened and expensive preparation—

and sweetened, though it be, by the noblest satisfactions—yet in the discharge of many of its duties a work painful, vexatious, and toilsome—if they had not some prospect of leaving their families above the pinching of absolute poverty, should they in the providence of God be removed from them. It is clear that in this country this prospect they cannot have, unless they neglect the duties of their holy calling, and betake themselves to employments inconsistent with the functions of their office, and degrading to their Ministerial character.

But, if we mistake not, a greater general benefit will result to the Church itself from the establishment of the Fund, than any individual benefit that will accrue from it to the Ministers. The sympathies of the whole body will be awakened; there will be created an identity of purpose and of interest among the several Congregations; their benevolent efforts will be concentrated, and more effectually directed to proper ends, and thus, in the greater harmony of feeling and of action produced, they will more nearly realize the grand idea of the Christian Church according to our Lord's own definition, “that they may be all one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they may also be one in Us.”

That it is the bounden duty of Congregations to make provision to some extent for the families of men who did spend and were spent in the service of God for their sakes, requires no proof. It is a proposition clear as noon-day, and universally felt and admitted to be true by the Congregations themselves. There may be some exceptions, some men who think that they fully discharge their incumbent obligations to support religious ordinances, if they drop a copper into the weekly contributions. It gives us much satisfaction to infer from the liberality of the Congregational contributions to the Widows' and Orphans' Fund, that there are but few such *copper-hearted* Christians among us. So far as we have been able to ascertain the opinions of the Laity on this subject, they seem fully impressed with the excellence of the scheme, and rejoice that they have had an opportunity afforded them of discharging an incumbent duty, in a way so easy to themselves and so beneficial to their Ministers.

The institution of the Lay Association itself we consider no mean evidence of the power of religion on the minds of the people, more especially in the present circumstances of the Church. It becomes us to be modest while speaking of ourselves, but without any undue assumption of merit, we may predicate concerning the Association that it has done essential service to the Church, not only in distributing a portion of the funds at its command for the relief of poor Congregations, but also by such acts strengthening the bands of unity

subsisting between every member of the Church. The tendency of the circumstances in which in this country our Church has been placed, is, to isolate Congregations, and to make each act independently of the others rather than as one body bound by a common faith, by common forms of worship, and by mutual sympathies, and thus to destroy that catholicity which is a characteristic of the Presbyterian form of Government. The counteracting tendency to such disuniting elements, of a large portion of the influential members of the Church associated for the exercise of Christian benevolence and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom is so obvious, that we were led to entertain the hope that similar associations, united by stated correspondence and an identity of pursuits would have been formed throughout the whole bounds of the Synod. That this has not yet been done, we are inclined to believe, arises more from the want of an organizing machinery than from the want of a due sense of the importance and the practicability of the scheme. Yet at the same time we may not have availed ourselves of the advantages we possessed. We think that hardly sufficient pains have been taken by the “Office-Bearers of the Church to promote the formation of a Provincial Association, a Branch Association at the seat of each of the Presbyteries, and an Auxiliary Association in every Township,” in accordance with the deliverance of Synod. (See Minutes 1846 and 1847).

It has been hinted to us, that the formation of Lay Associations has been objected to by some of the Members of Synod on the ground that such irresponsible bodies are not recognised by the constitution of the Presbyterian Church, and might in certain supposable circumstances exercise their power in subverting the spiritual liberties of the Christian people. It is well, at the commencement of any scheme affecting to be designed for their benefit, to look carefully to every possible contingency, lest what was intended to promote their welfare should really turn out to be injurious to their best interests. But we conceive that danger will not arise from such organizations, but from combinations originating in party views and for the accomplishment of party purposes, and called into action by the special emergency that will give them being. Nothing in our opinion so fully demonstrates the unsound state of the Protestant Church than the abandonment of her own legitimate authority and the constant appeals made to the passions and prejudices of the people in order to carry out any great measure designed to promote internal improvement, or repel external aggression. This is one of the characteristic features of the times—one common to all denominations, and necessarily arising out of the disunion that unhappily prevails to an unprecedented extent in the body politic, and one that is