

JUNE, 1878.

## Our Theological Colleges.

**T**HIS subject has occupied a prominent place in the deliberations of the negotiating churches before union and in the councils of the now United Church. In the meetings of the union committees this topic absorbed all others and more than once darkened the prospect of union and nearly prevented its accomplishment. While many circumstances have combined to show that it is possible for the once divided sections of the Church to unite in their Schemes of Christian enterprise, there is but one topic remaining to engender suspicions and create alienations, and that is Theological Colleges. That this remains unsettled appears by the minutes of the last Assembly, in which the question of having a common Fund for the maintenance of the colleges of Toronto, Kingston and Montreal is remitted to Presbyteries for consideration.

Fortunately, the maintenance of the Theological Colleges in its more sensitive aspects is narrowed down to that of the maintenance of those of Toronto, Queen's and Montreal. The College in Manitoba, being a missionary College, situated in a thinly populated Province, must remain for a long time a charge upon the whole Church. Morris College enjoys an independent foundation, in which it asks for the prosecution of its work no direct aid from the General Assembly. The Halifax College belongs by history and situation to the Synod of the Maritime Provinces, and is left to the support of those who have hitherto sustained it. This position assigned it at union has proved to be a wise arrangement. The Churches of the Maritime Provinces have, by the success of their building and endowment funds, shown their ability and willingness to support their College. Their Board has purchased a building offering unrivalled accommodations for students and professors. The realised endowment of the Maritime Colleges amounts to \$100,000 in addition to their building. The subscriptions amount to \$70,000 more, while a fourth part of the congregations remains to be canvassed. The friends of theological education in the Maritime Provinces have no fear as to the result, and can afford to contemplate the

college question, as it affects the upper Provinces, with perfect impartiality.

Friends of the Church must view the matter, both as it concerns union and education. With them it is union *first* and education *afterwards*. It must be borne in mind that it is not sufficient to consummate a union. There is much to be done afterwards in making the union real and abiding, by removing stumbling blocks and closing up fountains whence waters of bitterness may flow. Any subject calculated to revive ancient disputes should be avoided, and every interest of that kind should be disposed of in such a way as to prevent malign influences. If an arrangement can be made that while just in itself would prevent discussion—an arrangement under which each College would claim what belongs to it and the matter end there, this would be an advantage to all parties. The existence of different colleges has generally drawn dividing lines even in churches where college support is not derived from the Church; because each College acquires a character of its own and is probably distinguished for some peculiarities of culture. Thus, colleges by their own character and by the attachment of their alumni scattered throughout the Church have often been the means of forming parties. This has been the case ever since the Reformation and in all the reformed churches. But whenever their support depends upon the church, these differences are necessarily brought to the surface and reveal themselves in a telling manner.

The arrangement hitherto existing, while perhaps the only one possible in the circumstances, cannot be considered as anything but temporary. Unfortunately, it is one of the worst possible, and calculated to produce and perpetrate the evils deprecated. This arrangement is: a territorial area of support and an apportionment of the Assembly's funds to each college in "a way just to the claims and necessities of each". Such a method cannot be just; for it punishes the liberality of particular sections of the church before union by giving them less after union than their neighbours who may have done little or less than they would have received but for union. It favours illiberality, because the vague expect-