

Current Topics.

THE PRESENT ASPECT OF THE FEDERATION QUESTION.

THIS question we may hope will now be settled, by the cheerful acquiescence of all concerned in the decision of the General Conference, all the conditions required having been fully met. It seems scarcely necessary to re-argue the question, which was so fully discussed in the Conference, and in the connexional and secular journals three years ago. It is expected, now that the generous bequest of Mr. Gooderham has removed the chief financial difficulty, that those who have heretofore opposed Federation will unite with its advocates in carrying out, with the utmost possible energy and despatch, the policy to which we are as a Church committed, to which every dollar subscribed, since the General Conference, is sacredly pledged.

We think that a good many of those opposed to Federation have not yet reached a true conception of what the requirements of a great university, adequate to the necessities of the twentieth century, on whose threshold we stand, really are. In his excellent pamphlet on this subject—excellent in its courteous spirit, its literary merit, and its painstaking accumulation of information—the Rev. Jas. Allen, M.A., endeavours to show that all that is required to adequately equip Victoria College as an independent university, apart from buildings and professors' salaries—a very large exception—is an expenditure of, say, \$10,000 for physical and chemical apparatus, and \$5,000 for a library. We covet for Victoria College, as a federated part of our national University, the advantage of a much nobler outlay of money on these departments than that—the advantage which it will derive from the fine collection of apparatus and large library which Toronto University already possesses—which are in the near future to be

greatly increased. Our Methodist youth are not to be placed at a disadvantage as compared with any in the land. Nor will they. If our denominational University cannot furnish them as good opportunities as they can get elsewhere, they will go, in still larger numbers, where these opportunities can be found. Five thousand dollars seem to us an utterly inadequate sum for the library of an independent university. The most recent scientific books and journals, on account of their comparatively limited sale, are always expensive, and so rapid is the progress of science that any but the latest are soon out of date. Students, during their college days, should become familiar with the classics of all the languages which they study. They cannot, of course, read them all, nor is it necessary. Neither does one read the whole of a dictionary or a cyclopædia. But they ought to learn to consult them freely, to know what is in them, and to learn how to prosecute original investigation by means of the literary and scientific apparatus placed within their reach. Not one student in ten will proceed to a post graduate course, and still fewer will have the time or opportunity, when engaged in busy professional life, and remote from large libraries, to become familiar with the world's great storehouse of accumulated knowledge, to say nothing of the most recent developments in the specialized knowledge into which modern science is so minutely divided. For this something far more than two or three thousand volumes, on the whole range of the arts, sciences, and literature of all ages and all civilized lands, will be necessary. Scores of private libraries have more books than that number on the special subjects in which their owners are interested.

But the chief teaching now-a-days is not merely from books, but from