

independent existence and put themselves to all the trouble and expense of changing their location.

But we are far from thinking that, because the denominational universities would be benefited, the University of Toronto would therefore be injured. On the contrary, it is quite certain that it would gain much and lose nothing, and even University College, as distinguished from the University, would gain far more than it would lose, by having an increased number of colleges affiliated with itself in the same university, engaged in a spirit of friendly rivalry in doing the same work.

The advantages of university confederation have been frequently set forth in these columns and elsewhere. It is not too much to say that many persons who had a strong prejudice against the union have been won to its support. It is clearly advantageous, for example, that there should be a common standard for the university degrees. In the multiplicity of universities and of examinations it is hardly possible to gain any clear notion of the educational value of B.A., M.A., or any other academical distinction. It would extend the scope of the examinations to have the religious principle clearly recognized as optional in the national university, without making it compulsory on any candidate for its degrees. Moreover, it is clear that the department of science could be more thoroughly equipped if the resources of all the universities were united. These and many other considerations have been dwelt upon at great length on previous occasions, and are here simply noted, that they may not be forgotten or ignored.

The difficulty of carrying out the scheme generally agreed upon by a commission appointed by the Government of Ontario speedily became apparent. We wish to recognize the value of the work done by that commission, consisting of some members of the Government, and of the heads and leading members of the various colleges and universities. We think that their scheme, although susceptible of amendment, was in the main an excellent one. The slight alterations afterward suggested by the corporations of Victoria and Trinity might have been adopted in whole or in part without making any great difference to the general theory of federation. Besides, it would have been quite easy to make further changes whenever any part of the scheme might be found unsuitable.

The first check came from the University of Queen's College. On the whole, we are inclined to think that the supporters of the Kingston University were right in their decision to remain where they are. We are aware that not a few persons, whose judgment is of weight, are of a different opinion. When, however, we consider the distance between Toronto and Kingston, the excellent university buildings possessed by Queen's College, the claim which the city of Kingston may be said to have upon the university, the fact that it draws its alumni, in a considerable measure, from its own side of the Province, and further, the large amount of prosperity which it actually enjoys, it must be confessed that it would be difficult to prove that it was a duty to remove such an institution, and that those who did so would undertake a very grave responsibility.

The case of Victoria and Trinity was in various respects different. Cobourg has not the same claims that Kingston possesses. Trinity is already in the same city as the University. In the former case there appears to be a considerable diversity of opinion among the leading men of the Methodist body. It would be useless to follow here the arguments adduced on both sides. As a general rule, the opponents of federation seem to regard the subject from a merely denominational point of view. The advocates of union appear to have broader conceptions of their duty to the country and the cause of education at large. Among the friends of Trinity College there is also some lack of unity, several of its old and devoted supporters being vehemently opposed to the scheme. It may, however, be said that among the members of the corporation, and those who are most intimately acquainted with the working of the institution, there is a decided feeling in favour of union.

The final difficulty is the money question. Neither Trinity nor Victoria can afford, or would think it right, to sacrifice the capital invested in college and university buildings. Unless some compensation could be obtained for this outlay, or the buildings were sold to those who could make use of them and not merely have to pull them down, the loss would be considerable. Is the Government, is the country, prepared to meet that loss—to compensate these two universities for the sacrifices they would be called upon to make in moving their quarters? This would appear to be the present state of the question.

Full credit must be given to Mr. Mowat, the Premier of Ontario, and Mr. Ross, the Minister of Education, for the real and deep interest which they have manifested in the matter since it was first taken up. Their numerous and pressing duties in other departments have not hindered them from seeing that the future interests of education in this country are, in no small degree, involved in the solution of this question. To have one

great university in Toronto, with its cluster of colleges around it—a cluster increasing from age to age—would be an inconceivable gain to the cause of higher education. We might hope to see the advantages of the English universities on the one side, and those of the Scotch and German on the other side, to some extent combined. It was evident that Mr. Ross at least had a very clear vision of the grandeur of the conception, and was thoroughly in earnest in wishing to see it realized. At one time he spoke with the ardent hope that seemed begotten by undoubting faith. His faith has not failed, we may be sure; but hope is in danger of being quenched by the lukewarmness of fellow-counsellors. It is obvious to remark that the Government can do nothing unless the country is favourable to the outlay; that is to say, unless the country can be got to see the importance of the scheme. When that is achieved, then it will also be seen that no public money has ever been expended more profitably than that which is invested in perfecting the educational system of the country.

A very few words may be given to that aspect of the subject which will most readily occur to the supporters of the various institutions which would come into the confederation. There is no ground that we can discern for the supposition that such an union would act injuriously upon any of the colleges. Each would retain its own internal organization and discipline. Victoria College would be as much a Methodist institution when it was part of the University of Toronto as it is now. Trinity College would have its chapel, its services, its Divinity School precisely as it has now. No Government would have any more power to interfere with the constitution or the internal management of these institutions than it has at the present moment.

It would appear, therefore, that the only thing needed to bring about the completion of the work of federation is a grant of public money. It is greatly to be hoped that this will be obtained before the difficulty is increased by further expenditure upon the present buildings. C.

### THE SKYLARK.

ENSKIED in cloudless calm this fresh May-morn,  
High up in soaring ecstasy the lark,  
A quivering speck of pulsing melody,  
Brims all the azure vault with rapturous trills,  
Thick-warbled coruscations of sweet sound,  
And pours his little being into song  
As if the summer day were still too short  
For all he has to sing. Now, upward yet,  
With joyous bounds, he mounts and mounts on wings  
Of reckless freedom, till height dims his notes  
To muffled softness, and the dazzling blue  
Absorbs his form in light, like some rapt spirit  
Which Heaven hides from earth. In praise to God,  
Who made this world so fair, his life so glad,  
His *Jubilate* rings. First treble, he  
Leads up the many-voiced choir of earth,  
Where spreads the sapphire semblance of the Throne,\*  
With psalm invitatory of cheerful lauds:—  
"O come before His presence with a song."  
So Love's full heart upon a morn like this,  
Impatient of low flights and tardy strains,  
Seeks larger utterance than mere words can give,  
And flings tumultuous song far into heaven.

A. SMYTHE PALMER.—*The Spectator*.

### SOCIAL CLUBS AND FOREIGN LITERATURE.

TORONTO, either from its educational advantages or its large professional elements, may be regarded as the intellectual centre of the Dominion. Circumstances have rendered Montreal commercial, Ottawa political and viceregal, Kingston military, Hamilton musical, and Toronto intellectual.

It is not generally known that the fair sex, animated with a laudable desire for mental improvement, have added their quota to the diffusion of knowledge by the creation of a Reading Club, a German Club, and a French Club. The constitution or organization of these clubs has been, we believe, a much-vexed question among them.

Precedence must be given to the Reading Club on the ground of age and longevity. It was carried on for several winters, and finally abandoned for want of a system and a head. This club dealt naturally with literature—English, not foreign. A certain poet or author having been selected by the lady at whose house the meeting was to be held, she requested four or five members of the club to give readings from his works which she either named or left to their individual selection; in the latter case, she was notified of their choice, to prevent repetition and arrange a programme.

\* Ezekiel i. 26.