

For the Christian Messenger.

Acadia College.

MR. EDITOR,—

Having spent three days of last week in Wolfville, in attending the College Examinations, I have much pleasure in recording the high gratification they afforded me. I need not particularize. Suffice it to say that in Classics, Mathematics, and Theology, the students proved themselves thoroughly acquainted with what they had gone over, and this also reflected much credit on their Instructors. The standard of Education at Acadia College is now higher than at any other institution in the province. The College course is four years, and good scholarship is requisite in order to commence it.

The Board of Governors met in the Library on Thursday afternoon. The Treasurer presented his Report which was highly satisfactory. Since he came into office two thousand pounds of the Endowment fund have been collected and safely invested. The Professors' salaries are all paid up to the present, but there will be a deficiency at the end of the financial year, to meet which an Appeal will again be made to the Churches, though for a smaller sum than was required last year. I was surprised to learn that so few of the Churches appealed to last year responded. Surely the Churches are not indifferent to the wants and claims of Acadia College, which next to Home and Foreign Missions, if not before them, demands the sympathy and support of the denomination. It is hoped that when the Circular, calling for help the current year, comes into the hands of the Pastors of our churches, they will immediately bring the matter before their people, and see that collectors are appointed to raise the amounts respectively apportioned to them. If ministers and deacons cannot find time to accomplish this work—of course they have the inclination—let them hand it over to the sisters, who, as ever, will succeed. The truth is, the churches must give the Treasurer their hearty and united co-operation if they would secure his valuable services to the College.

On Friday evening the Exhibition in connection with the Academy took place in the Gymnasium. Several Dialogues and original pieces were spoken, the intervals being filled up with delightful music, in which Prof. Saffery took the lead. No one could look upon the vast assembly, numbering probably 800 persons without being convinced of the growing appreciation in which our institutions of learning are held. Fathers and mothers that evening had their bosoms swell with pride on witnessing the noble efforts of their sons. The whole affair was of a kind to inspire those present with a profound love of learning.

I was present also at the examination of a few classes in the Female Seminary, and of what I saw and heard there, I would express my approbation in the most unqualified terms. It appears that the building now occupied by the Seminary is altogether too small, and it is proposed to erect a large and more commodious one on the beautiful grounds opposite to the College. This contemplated building will cost 8000 dollars. Of this amount I understand that Wolfville has pledged one quarter. Will not 6000 of our female friends scattered over the province send in one dollar each, and thus make up the remainder?

The number of pupils in attendance at the Academy, both departments, is about 175.

ONE OF EXAMINING COMMITTEE.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, APRIL 1, 1863.

The Dalhousie College Bill.

In the *Provincial Wesleyan* of the 25th ult. is a moderate, well-written article on the Bill for re-organizing and establishing the Dalhousie College, which we cordially commend to the perusal of our readers. The direct and unequivocal tendency of the measure, to appropriate a large annual amount of public funds to the almost exclusive use of one Denomination of Christians, cannot be doubted, and however enlightened or respectable that body may be,—a fact which no one will attempt to gainsay,—the whole affair is, in our view, in such manifest contradiction to every principle of public policy upon which we have hitherto professed to act, that it cannot for a moment stand the test of fair and open scrutiny. Whatever the true intention of the measure may be, and we do not think we need go out of the Bill itself, and the circumstances under which it has been brought before the public, to discern its origin,—its effect can only be, so far as pecuniary aid and encouragement can

avail, to throw a large and preponderating influence in the important matter of education, into the hands of the Presbyterian body, as well as to furnish a most fruitful source of future jealousy and dissension between them and every other denomination of Christians in the province.

Under such circumstances we cannot but trust that the subject will obtain the most careful and dispassionate consideration of every member of the Legislature, before passing the bill into a law. We copy the article from the *Wesleyan*:

THE DALHOUSIE COLLEGE BILL.

Dalhousie College, founded over forty years ago, was intended to be a Provincial Institution, on the plan of the Edinburgh University. Its career has been anything but successful. It would almost seem as if over it hovered some fatality. Earnest attempts have been made again and again to galvanize it into good working existence, but every such attempt has miserably failed. Its location, in the capital, is regarded by very many as being much less desirable than a rural situation; yet this circumstance is not altogether sufficient to account for its marvellous want of success. Political influences—at least on one occasion—may have somewhat tended to cast upon it a blight; yet, had it attained a healthy existence, these influences it could have outlived. The establishment of other and denominational Institutions cannot have been a principal cause of the failure of this one; for some of these—one, at least, of our provincial Colleges—arose out of the ill-fortune of Dalhousie. Its endowment has been handsome, and the most strenuous efforts of its friends—and these have been influential—have been put forth repeatedly to carry out its original design; but all in vain. There has surely been enough of discouragement in connection with its history to lead its friends to the conclusion that it is destined to be to them nothing but a plague, and that they had better have its funds devoted to the general interests of higher education in the Province, and the building appropriated to some Provincial objects for which it is suitable.

But, not utterly disheartened by the past yet another earnest attempt is now to be made for its resuscitation, and a Bill for the purpose of modifying its whole government and working is before the Legislature. In its reconstructed form the privilege of founding Chairs or Professorships is to be accorded to the various denominations, and these may be represented in its Governorship. The measure is introduced with the expectation, and with this object especially in view, that the Presbyterian Churches will avail themselves of such privilege. The circumstances of those Churches would seem to render it desirable that if they are to have anything to do with Dalhousie, it should be at once, before movements are made by them in another form in regard to their educational schemes. Accordingly, in advance of all legislation on the subject, overtures were made to the Synods of the Kirk of Scotland, and the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces respectively, at the late sessions of these bodies to ascertain their views and wishes on the whole matter. A committee from each Synod held counsel on the proposal, and authority was given to conclude arrangements with the Governors of the College. The present Bill is the result.

The measure may meet with sufficient favour from members of the Legislature, representing different creeds and classes, to carry it through; for, independently of the idea, that this effort on behalf of the College may possibly result more favourably than former ones in promoting its efficient operation, there is an additional motive influencing gentlemen on both sides of the House. A general election is soon to come off, and capital, to some extent, may be made, in a quiet way, by means of this question, in maintaining thereby, the influence and aid of former friends, of both Presbyterian churches, in the coming political struggle.

It will be seen that the elaborateness of the Bill has not very greatly taxed the skill of its framers; but it is the denominational bearing of the question which chiefly claims our attention. Every right-hearted man would be gratified to see the Presbyterian churches in this Province occupying educationally a position commensurate with their numbers and respectability; and were their efforts now directed toward building up, on an enlarged scale, their own educational Establishment, they would deserve the favor and gratitude of every friend of education of whatever creed. But the question very naturally arises, and cannot be very satisfactorily answered, Why should the privileges of a Provincial Institution be handed over to one denomination for its especial benefit, and under circumstances, too, which cannot but be regarded as amounting to the virtual exclusion of all the rest? The Bill does not express this, but the present position of denominational Institutions, as resulting from the Legislative action of by-gone years, must be taken into account. The Presbyterian Government of Dalhousie, from whom proceeded the proposal made to the Synods last summer, were quite confident in making that proposal that other denominations would not abandon their cherished Institutions,—in the founding of which they had made great sacrifices, and incurred weighty liabilities,—to take hold of the Dalhousie project. Of what value then is the aspect of liberality which this measure wears? It is but a delusion. Did not the Legislature of Nova Scotia, several years since, lay down the principle that denominational Colleges were the best for our Province? Have not some of the denominations heavily taxed themselves in carrying out this principle? Is it right then that manifest preference should now be shown toward one denomination in regard to this Provin-

cial Institution with the intention of conferring large advantages, from which others are excluded by the very efforts they have put forth on behalf of Education?

In presenting this matter before our readers, and in giving expression to these sentiments, we are influenced by no unkind feeling toward the Presbyterian churches. We hold them in esteem. We wish them success. They are deserving of praise for their efforts in the cause of Education. They are not to be blamed for being ready to avail themselves of an offer which, as they imagine, promises to them great advantage. We may be pardoned for believing them to be influenced in this matter, not so much by a regard for the general interests of Education, as by the hope of denominational advancement and position. But in this they are scarcely to be condemned. Others might yield to the same motive, were they in the same circumstances. If the contemplated measure involving this denominational preference should be adopted, the responsibility of such favoritism will rest, not with the Presbyterians as a body, but elsewhere.

We have nothing to do with the seeming inconsistency of that portion of the expectant beneficiaries who are professedly voluntaries, and who, though they cannot conscientiously accept State grants for denominational purposes, are not unwilling to enter into partnership with the Government in the College scheme for the advancement of denominational objects. It might be asked, unless it is to remain in perpetuity a Presbyterian College, may not gross heterodoxy, or covert infidelity, notwithstanding the guard in one of the sections of the bill, work its way into Dalhousie, and become an ally of Presbyterianism? But with this question also Presbyterians themselves have to deal.

We have no idea that any other denomination in the Province engaged in the work of Education, can at all desire to occupy the position contemplated by the Presbyterian body in relation to the College; but even though the project should utterly fail, the intention of the originators and abettors of the scheme will remain the same. For any denomination having anything to lose, to form an alliance with so unfortunate a College as Dalhousie—to attempt to give a reputation to that which has hitherto been only a proverb of reproach—is not unattended with risk. It would seem that the Synods of the two bodies, in dealing with the overture, were not blind to this; and hence their resolve to keep their educational funds so under their own control, as to be at liberty, whenever a necessity may arise, to retire from the partnership. This foresight, in a matter so problematical, is only prudent; for however tempting the bait now presented, it is well to remember that

"The best-laid schemes o' mice and men,
Gang aft a-gley,
And lea'e us naught but grief and pain,
For promised joy."

The Editor of the *Presbyterian Witness* of last week remarks, under the head "Dalhousie College":

"The Presbyterians are not the only denomination likely to enter into the present scheme. It is very probably that the Congregationalists will also join in speedily; and it is not unreasonable to hope that others will follow."

The Congregationalists having more money—in the Gorham legacy—than students, they would form a very convenient ally. That manoeuvre, we believe, has been partially tried once before. In reference to the bill he says:—

"We are persuaded that Presbyterians would not ask for what they felt to be an undue advantage over other denominations. They are too well aware of the punishment that infallibly overtakes churches that seek a factitious ascendancy, to run the risk. What they did they did openly, with the full cognizance of every one who chose to look into the matter. Neither the churches nor the governors went into the arrangements blind fold. And we think that they have a right to ask others to hold them innocent till proved to be guilty. It is a very pretty piece of dog-in-the-manger policy to try to hinder others from doing good or reaping benefits because we cannot share in these ourselves. We do not accuse the *Wesleyan* of this; we are certain that the views it maintains are maintained in all charity and sincerity."

Our contemporary seems well posted up in the origin of the bill. It is a little ungracious of him not to except the *Messenger* as well the *Wesleyan* from his "dog-in-the-manger" remarks; and yet we will not complain, for we expect nothing better. We believe we have said nothing so severe as the above article. Indeed we doubt if we have fully performed our duty in tearing off the "no-political-bearing" mask, behind which this piece of machinery has been concocted. We have simply given our readers the information to which they were entitled.

The Church of England Synod Bill.

The Legislative Council chamber has had its usual quiet somewhat disturbed during the past week by an animated discussion of the Church of England Synod Bill, between Bishop Binney and J. W. Ritchie, Esq. We have had a brief notice or two of the difference of opinion existing amongst Churchmen, as to the propriety of passing this Act of Incorporation, introduced into the House of Assembly two or three weeks since.

As the Bill does not directly propose to interfere with any but Churchmen, we have not given much attention to it. But as every thing which affects our fellow-citizens demands attention from us, and particularly when it has reference to the cause of religion we cannot witness it with indifference. The principal feature of the Bill which is objectionable, is that it is intended to make the Acts of the Synod to have the power of law whereas the Bishop who presides at all its sittings, holds the power of veto—he may prevent its being submitted to the Synod. The Bishop would then be able to control church arrangements and to make appointments of clergymen, even without consulting the wishes of the people.

The bill passed into committee of the lower house. The Bishop appeared before that committee, and advocated its passage into law. Notwithstanding the strong petitions against it; it received but little obstruction and with a trifling amendment. On a division but 11 were found opposed to it. In the regular course of things therefore it was sent to the Legislative Council. Here a more formidable opposition was apprehended and it was referred to a Committee, consisting of the Honorable Messrs. Almon, Pines, and Creighton, all churchmen. On Monday the 23rd, the Committee sat for several hours. J. W. Ritchie, Esq., appeared in behalf of the petitioners against the bill, and Bishop Binney in its favor. As however, his Lordship complained that Mr. Ritchie had not left him time to say all he wished, the Committee expressed their willingness to hear whatever any one wished to say upon it, and named the following day, but as the Bishop had a Confirmation on that day they appointed Wednesday. On that day the two gentlemen appeared and as Mr. Ritchie had the privilege of reply, the Bishop commenced. He began his address at about ½ past 10 in the morning and continued till 3 in the afternoon. His Lordship shewed no small amount of tact and ability in presenting before the Committee the case and urging them to recommend the bill to the Council. He even ventured to suggest that as the Churchmen in the lower House, who were the representatives of the people had all agreed in passing the bill, and that as the Churchmen in the Council were mostly residents in Halifax, and under the blandishments of the city churches they should not allow their own feelings to guide them, and warned them that although they might refuse their assent to the bill yet he should not cease to pursue his purpose to obtain an Act from the Legislature. He intimated that they might even be obliged to listen to the voice of the country. He protested that he wished nothing more than was allowed to every other denomination, and affirmed that the Methodist body possessed even more power over their people than this bill would give to Episcopalians. He also read from the Revised Statutes the Act given to the Presbyterian body shewing that there the Legislature had even presumed to be the judges of Presbyterian orthodoxy. His Lordship failed to shew what has been asserted by some of the anonymous writers in favor of the Bill—that the Baptists have an Act of Incorporation for their Associations. The Presbyterians have their Synods incorporated, the Methodists also have an Act for their Conference, but the Baptist Associations have no recognition of State control or interference, nor do they need it any more than did the Church at Jerusalem when asked their opinion on the question of circumcision. His Lordship occupied four hours and a half, and in closing made an appeal of altogether too personal a nature for such a time and place. He intimated that he had accepted the bishopric of Nova Scotia, when he was receiving a larger salary at home and might have had charge of another diocese which would have been more lucrative than this.

Mr. Ritchie then arose and delivered a speech of more than four hours in length, in which he reviewed the several points of his bishop's address. He shewed himself thoroughly versed in ecclesiastical law and practice. He denounced the bill as intended to clothe the Bishop with irresponsible power and render the Synod a machine for crushing out everything like independence in the clergy and laity, and but a step towards the introduction of Puseyism. He replied to the bishop's enquiry on whose behalf he appeared before the Committee, that he was acting in behalf of the parishioners of St. George's, St. Paul's, and St. Luke's, also in behalf of every churchman in Nova Scotia, and lastly in his own behalf. He noticed the action of the Synods and Councils, and shewed that all the acts of oppression and persecution, even to roasting men and women alive, had been done in the name of religion, by the councils, when they had become possessed of irresponsible power, and he believed that it was most dangerous to entrust such power to ecclesiastics.