

# THE PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

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### Assembly Minutes.

THE Assembly "Blue Book" is now printed and in the hands of most of our ministers and elders. Look at it,—turn over its hundreds of pages,—read the titles of the Reports,—refer to the figures that concern your own congregation: all very well. But this is by no means enough. The book is a treasury of minute, full and accurate information. Every minister and elder should be familiar with its contents. The reading is by no means "dry." Some of the Reports are of the very deepest interest: all are important: none should be neglected. The cost of gathering returns, printing reports, and circulating the Assembly Minutes from year to year is very considerable, but it is felt to be a good and profitable expenditure, for it is the means of widely diffusing authentic information regarding the operations of the church, at home and abroad. Let the book be studied then, so that you may know what the church is doing and what she is aiming at. The Presbyterian Church believes in the fullest publicity. She is of the people, for the people, and in all her works, she takes the people fully into her confidence. Presbyteries, Synods, Assemblies, are all open courts, and their proceedings may be published as widely as any one

sees fit. Thus our Synodical and Assembly meetings always command the attention of the secular press; and even our Presbyteries are not always ignored. But as a permanent, full, and trustworthy record of the Church's work, the Minutes of Assembly, with the Reports as in this volume, are of far greater value than any other source of information. It is hoped that when our elders have read, learned, and inwardly digested the Minutes and Reports, they will lend them to their neighbours—especially to such as delight in figures, and in taking a wide as well as a close and minute view of the work of the Church.

One of the Reports of Assembly contains 76 pages, and is itself a "volume" and a treasury of suggestive facts. We refer to the Report of the Committee on Statistics. From the nature of the case, absolute accuracy in Church Statistics is unattainable. All that can be claimed for the figures of this Report is that they are substantially correct, and that on the whole they furnish a fair view of the condition and work of the Church, during the past year. It is never too early to urge on sessions the duty of being up to time in all their returns. You would pity the Convener of the Statistics Committee were you to hear his statement of the manner in which his efforts to obtain complete returns were baffled—how reports are held back, week after week, and