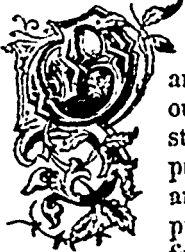


# THE PRESBYTERIAN.

AUGUST, 1866.



THE great difficulty which we find, in attempting to arrive at the true position of our Church, is the want of statistics. None have been published for some years, and even those which were published were most imperfect, from the extraordinary reluctance shown by many of the sessions and trustees of the congregations throughout the Province to forward the required information. After persevering for two years, the committee, thoroughly disheartened at the result of their labours, which were not small, gave up the apparently hopeless, and certainly thankless task of making bricks without straw, of attempting to give a fair statement of the position of the Church, without the information being furnished that would enable them to do so.

That wherever a full record of the transactions of any organised body is kept, there is most life and greater energy is undoubted. Bring the most urgent claim before the public, one in which their sympathies would be enlisted and their interest aroused, one for which a large sum of money would be required, which would be willingly supplied by all who had the means, and by many whose means are very limited. How are these means to be obtained? Is it by leaving the matter to itself, by allowing it to take its own course, and trusting for money to come in without any arrangements being made to receive it? On the contrary, even for those causes which arouse a sudden burst of enthusiasm, and which scarcely appear to need any instrumentality in carrying them out, machinery must be devised to direct them and to turn to the best advantage the desire which is felt to relieve the wants which have called forth sympathy. Publicity is needed, not only to make known who is ready to take charge of the means of rendering assistance, but also to show

what has been done with the contributions, and to show how they have been applied, and if they have been distributed judiciously. And if this is necessary in the case of a sudden spontaneous outburst of liberality, in a cause which appeals in a striking manner to our minds, as for instance the calamity which lately overtook Portland, sweeping away in a day the result of years of industry and toil, and leaving so many destitute, how much more is it required in the daily and yearly claims for the support of ordinances on which so many look with indifference, forgetful that the want of them is a far deeper loss than any other that could befall a community.

Among our congregations who are most successful in carrying on congregational work, in supporting local efforts, in contributing to spread the gospel in their own neighbourhoods, and at the same time in helping onward the general schemes of the Church? Is it those which are the wealthiest and most at ease in this world's goods? Is it not rather those which, without any superabundance of means, have their energies directed by judicious office bearers, who give proper publicity to what is being done, and have their annual reports made up in a business like way? It would be invidious to mention any of these by name to the disparagement of other congregations, but there are some charges in our Church, whose labour of love and whose self-denying efforts put to shame the members of many churches, whose wealth is very much greater. Yet those so contributing do not feel that they are unduly burdened. The system they have adopted lets every individual know what is required and this compels him, as it were, to give something. Large sums from country congregations are not made up by twenty, fifty, or hundred dollar subscribers from the few, but are raised by quarters or half-dollars regularly contributed by the many. Regular associations, correct accounts, full reports, these