

SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT.

After a careful retrospect of the Association's operations during 1853, and in anticipation of the probable results of these, the Committee feel that in the very outset of their Report they are imperatively called upon to acknowledge, in the language of unfeigned and humble gratitude, the very large amount of success which the Father of mercies and the God of all grace has been pleased to accord to their labors. They do not deem it necessary to qualify in any degree this expression of gratitude because the number of the Returns to the Circulars falls considerably short of that of some by-gone years, as this shortcoming is quite satisfactorily accounted for by concluding that many Superintendents of Schools, which have been visited by our Agents during the past summer, have judged it quite superfluous to transmit to the Recording Secretary the same statistics which they had given orally to the Agents.

In pursuance of a resolution that the services of competent Agents, during the summer months at least, were absolutely necessary, the Committee instituted a correspondence on the subject with the American Sunday School Union. In the course of this correspondence it was intimated to the Committee that the American Union designed to commission Missionaries to visit Canada, particularly those sections that lie