

forte, statistics is not ; and after an experience of ten years with many teachers, medical students, law students, and college undergraduates and graduates, I can say that there is only one of the whole lot whose work I could accept without revision, and stake my life that it was right. And, lest there should be any apprehension or suspicion of egoism in the mind of a hearer, I will add that this one was not myself. Until now, I did not know what degree of perfection clerical skill might attain to in the use of numbers ; but I know now, and the illusion of infallibility is gone. The clerical statistician may be—I am sure he often is—a master in the art of constructing and posing figures of speech ; he can set them in array before you in column, in open order or in solid square in a way to make a commander-in-chief green with envy. But give him a column of plain numeral figures to add up and table with a half-dozen other columns, and you might better ask him to calculate an eclipse !

In the plan of this paper, as first conceived, I had purposed to exhibit the growth of Baptists in Ontario and Quebec with a table giving the number of churches and church members in each Province by years, beginning with 1870 and coming down to 1891. But as a complete set of YEAR BOOKS was not to be found, I was obliged to change the plan for one showing growth at intervals of five years instead. No doubt it will be thought strange that neither in the office of the Publishing Company nor in the library of McMaster Hall, nor in the joint collections of office and library, is there a complete set of those records ; yet such is the case. I have no reflection to make ; indeed I am almost glad now that a complete set was not available, as had there been, I should, no doubt, have attempted to carry out the original conception. Could I have depended on the summaries and totals as given in the books, this task would be light and congenial ; but such a job of buckwashing as I have had of it I do not long to repeat, as Carlyle said about the Cromwell papers which he sorted out and patched together for a life of the great Puritan. Of eight volumes that I have used there is but one in which the totals of membership are accurate. The wholesale blunders in all the others would make a school-boy hold his sides with convulsive glee, but they fill a busy man with indignation. To give one instance out of a hundred, I find by the statistics of 1890 that the aggregate membership of churches in the Middlesex and Lambton Association was "1,466, being a decrease of 728." Turning to 1889, I find that the membership as given for that year was "2,416, being a loss of 32 for the year" ; and going back to 1888, I find that it is given as 2,556, which is correct, for a wonder. Now, from 2,556 in 1888 to 2,416 in 1889 is a loss of 140, instead of 32 ; but the accurate total for the latter year is 2,672, including one church of 32 members whose return was left out. Therefore there was an actual gain in the year of 116, in place of a loss of either 140 or 32. Coming again to 1890, the YEAR BOOK aggregates show a loss of 950, not 728 ; but as the correct total is 2,466, with one