

PREFACE.

The proposal to issue this first YEAR BOOK—of, we trust, a long series—was sprung upon the Union Meeting at Brantford, somewhat suddenly, with little, if any, previous preparation. The plan was so cordially, even enthusiastically, received, that there can be no doubt that the publication will meet a general want. But this initial number appears under some disadvantages. At least two of the following Reports were already in type, so that the uniformity of type and consecutive numbering of pages, characteristic of a “book,” were unattainable in this instance. Moreover, the absence of the Editor for his annual vacation, and delays in receiving expected material, have made the day of publication later than the promised first of September. The whole of the outline sketched in the plan has not been filled up, something being left for after years.

Notwithstanding these drawbacks, however, the volume now presented will be found to contain a mass of valuable information with respect to the origin and present condition of our churches and denominational institutions, which will prove both interesting and serviceable to those who concern themselves—as all ought to do—with the proceedings of the body at large.

Time and space have failed for a history of all our general organizations. The story of the Unions of Canada East and Canada West, and of Canada, must be reserved for another year. That of the late Widows' and Orphans' Fund,—now the “Congregational Provident Fund Society,”—and that of the “Canadian Independent” have lately been told in the pages of that periodical, but may advantageously be rehearsed in a future YEAR BOOK. In the present issue, however, the Missionary Society, the College, the Union of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and the several District Associations of Ontario and Quebec have their beginnings and progress clearly set forth.

The lists of British, Colonial and American Congregational Organisations will be found very useful for purposes of correspondence and visitation. It is believed that they have not been so brought together in any previous publication. The same may be said of the list of periodicals.

To these are added the “Declaration of Faith and Church Order” of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, and an outline of the Statistics of the body in Britain and America.

All this matter, however, is but introductory to the Reports of the several