

Canada was the centre,—that one who should resolve to live and labor down here, with Canada within hail, would be as crazy as a Scotch farmer, who preferred Cape Wrath for a home to the Lothians, and especially that ministers of the Scotch Kirk ought to betake themselves to Canada, if they had any desire to occupy a position worthy of a minister of the Established Church of Scotland. A careful examination of these statistics shewed great opulence and liberality in certain positions, but in the generality of congregations, state of things very similar to that existing among ourselves, in many instances an illiberality to which we have no parallel, and a vast amount of debt; while we have none at all. The Church in the Lower Provinces contrasts unfavorably with the Church in Canada, after a constitution unparalleled in the history of any church, to which our friends in the West were strangers; after being soured into a desponding apathy by the flight of the few ministers, that did not secede, and while unpossessed of any temporal advantages; as the Church of Scotland in Nova Scotia is the only religious body in this Province, which never has received and does not now receive any government grant for any institution whatever. It is time that the Statistics of our own Church, then, should receive some notice at our hands. The table published in the present Synodical year is the first, putting forth any claim to completeness. That portion relating to statistics is necessarily imperfect, where it refers to the vacant congregations. The publication of such a Table was a desideratum, the accomplishment of which has by a great many been earnestly desired. The search for materials, and collection of all the items required, met with many delays, and sometimes with unexpected carelessness. Hoping that these difficulties will in each following year become less, that a livelier interest in that part of a Church's duty will animate ministers and laymen, and especially, that the annual publication of these Tables will induce Presbyteries to employ some part of the winter in the Presbyterian visitation of every congregation according to the form recommended in the Synod of 1856 for the acquisition of information and the production of a healthy religious excitement in the different portions of the vineyard. Let us now proceed to reckon up the results, which have been obtained.

It appears from these returns, that there are in our organized congregations about 13,000 persons. This number looks small; but it can confidently be maintained, that it does not represent the strength of the Kirk in this country. There are thousands of sympathisers and hundreds of professed adherents not represented in the return. There are many places in which a stand requires only to be taken and the consequence will be the rapid formation of congregations. The great proportion of Scotch emigrants in past

times have been persons who have been baptized, brought up and trained in the Kirk, and who, like all other human beings in similar circumstances, can never, in any part of the world, in any society, under any neglect, and under any regularly administered dozes of voluntarism, Americanism, and bigotry in general, in any of its nauseous admixtures, forget her traditions. The brief formulæ of childhood are never forgotten in worldly or religious things by any one, who is not ashamed to be a man. It is contended, then, that our strength is to be estimated not only by the *actual* but also by the *possible*; and that there is many a congregational nucleus, which only waits for a devoted minister after God's own heart, to become a powerful centre of light.

But some one says, (as many will say) it is vain and chimerical in you to talk of maintaining a separate denomination of such small proportions! If so, it must be the height of absurdity for Dr. Clark and Mr. Somerville, to uphold a separate existence, as the Reformed Cameronian Church of Ireland. Under the circumstances, what is in our conduct absurdity, must be in theirs vanity, for which our Provincial Asylum would furnish too good treatment. But no one thinks of condemning their conduct. It is generally admitted, that they have a right to their own opinions; and they are far more useful men in their own respective spheres of labor, than if they showed a propensity for making unions with a mysterious accommodativeness as to principle, and sacrificing their ecclesiastical independence, which represents some important ideas and has at least the merit of sincerity, at the shrine of a grasping sectarian ambition. And what is the real truth about the 13,000? What is the true and honest view of the matter? It ought to be a sentiment of astonishment that there are so many. Who would think of deriving his impressions of the fertility of a farm from its desolate condition in winter? This is winter with us, but wait till the spring comes, and the voice of the laborer is heard cheerfully urging on his toil, and a large field will open to the agency of our church, the final prosperity of which, like that of all other societies, depends as much upon her calamities as successes. The poor mariner may be ridiculed for the attachment he forms to his shattered bark, and *disinterested* advisers will keep calling to him—*abandon it, or what is worse, sell it,—for a mess of pottage or a puff of vanity.* But said mariner has a stupid affection for the vessel that has so nobly done her battle in strife with the howling deep. He says: she looks crazed and stripped and leaky, and open, compared with other painted things, but she has survived the storms of many years, she has sustained the assaults of crafts of the fighting order and she did not sink even when there was no crew left to work, and for *one* I'll get better, I'll get *ten* worse. So say we