

PREFACE TO VOLUME XIV.

In taking up our pen to write this first yet last page of the fourteenth volume of the *CANADIAN INDEPENDENT*, there come to its point manifold more words than the brief page can contain. It has been a pleasant thing to be able to address, from month to month, and to aid in communicating with one another, the honoured pastors, deacons and members of the Congregational Churches of the Dominion of Canada, with their households, in "the cities, the villages, and the country," many known to us in person, and many others by name; those who have "gone out from us," but still "are of us," unforgetting and unforgotten; fathers and brethren in the ever dear Old Country; and, though last not least, the editorial fraternity, with whom we have interchanged publications;—"fit audience, though few," comparatively. And there has been much of reward in receiving so frequent testimonies to the value of such a service. The magazine has bridged over the wide gulf between one of our general yearly convocations and another; it has enabled those who were unavoidably detained at home to be partakers of the counsels of their brethren; and it has allowed the whole membership of the churches—so far as they would—to enjoy the same benefit. These pages have been, in some sort, a monthly Union meeting. The labour and responsibility devolving on the continuous chairman of that meeting (who has also to perform some of the functions of the committees), have not been small. We can understand a little better than formerly, the meaning of the phrase, "the care of all the churches." The secretariats of our various organizations entail much time and trouble; but the editor has been a secretary of secretaries, thinking and speaking for every church and every society, and that in print too.

The time has come, in our settled judgment, when this charge must be transferred to other hands. Personal, pastoral and denominational considerations, various and weighty, have induced the undersigned to say to the Publishing Company, that it will be necessary for them to find a successor to the chair at the end of this volume.

Who "the coming man" will be, we are not in a position to say—for, as the Company will not meet until the 10th of June, he is as yet "the great unknown." But we have no doubt that a thoroughly satisfactory choice can and will be made, and we cordially invoke for the new editor, that hearty confidence and support of his brethren, which we have so largely enjoyed, alike during the present incumbency of three years' duration, and the former one of over two—in volumes second, third and fourth. May he deserve and receive it, tenfold!

If the Congregationalists of the Dominion are wise, they will sustain their periodical with unstinted liberality and ever-advancing enterprise. It is a necessary of life to them. There is a strong instinct of *growth* within it: take heed that it be not checked.

It is not without some fond parental yearnings that we part with the "wee bit hindering thing," (as the Scottish poet called his bairn,) but it must needs be. The good Lord prosper thee in all thy ways, beloved!

F. H. M.

Toronto, May 20, 1868.