

shewing what results may be considered as at least approximately correct, and partly to warn others from wasting as much time as I have done on those parts which can do nothing but mislead.

It may be desirable, as a preliminary, to explain the nature of the work performed by the enumerators. In their lists the name of each individual in a family is given, with columns to shew whether male or female, married or single, and with a column for the age next birth day. There are also columns to shew the number of births and deaths during the preceding year, and the age at which death occurred; and this is all that relates to vital statistics, or to that portion of the subject which we are examining. Now, it would appear probable *a priori*, that with ordinary care, the facts then and there present, viz.: everything relating to the persons living at the time, would be given correctly enough. I do not think that there is any reason to doubt the numbers living, the proportion of males and females, and of married and single, very nearly representing the true state of the population; and the ages would, probably, be not very far wrong, though there is much more doubt upon this subject. Many persons do not know their ages with accuracy, and many may have purposely misstated them. The tendency to guess at the age, and to call it the nearest round number, is forcibly illustrated in the Census of the State of New York, for 1855, by a diagram which shews the immense preponderance of ages stated as 35, 40, 45, &c., over all other ages. But when past facts are recorded, as the births and deaths which occurred perhaps many months before, we could hardly look for the same accuracy, and one would expect the births and deaths to be considerably understated. An error of this kind is not by any means peculiar to the Census of Canada. By the Census of the State of New York, for 1855, the total deaths recorded are 46,297, which gives a percentage on the population of 1.36, a suspiciously low rate; but in the same year, whilst the Census gave the deaths in the City of New York at 11,022, the city registers recorded 23,042. If we merely correct the manifest error in the city, the general rate would become 1.74, but if we suppose the omissions there to be a test of what they were in other parts of the State, it would be as high as 2.84; the true amount is probably intermediate between the two. A very striking illustration of the omissions which are likely to be made of facts, which occurred some time before the taking of the Census, is furnished by the United States Census of