

SIXTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT.

A Tract, what is it? Some would answer, "only the dwarfish semblance of a book!" Then what is a Religious Tract Society? The answer of many would be, "It is a petty and contemptible institution, fit only to interest very small minds." Were these things truly so, it might be our first duty at this time to apologize to the intelligent public for holding this Anniversary, and especially for giving it the first place among the gatherings of this festive week; but we feel that no such apology is requisite. Who, let us ask, are the objectors and despisers? Chiefly the ungodly and profane, but some also among the professors of piety; for there are professing Christians who grudge even a pittance in aid of this enterprise, while they give freely in aid of others. Yet "little among the thousands of Judah," as a Religious Tract Society may seem, both in the eyes of the world, and in the estimation of some in the church, we claim for it a most distinguished rank in the order of means and appliances for bringing glory to God in the salvation of men.

The despised Tract—is it after all so despicable a means of spreading the great truths of the common salvation? Should the church disdain