

COLONIAL AND FOREIGN CHURCH NEWS.

We are sure that all our readers will be glad to learn that his lordship the Bishop had made arrangements to leave England on Aug. 19, and in all probability will have reached Fredericton by the time this magazine is in the hands of its subscribers. The visitation of the clergy will (D. V.) be held on the 13th and 14th of September, when the Bishop's charge to the clergy will be delivered.

The condition of the Church in Nova Scotia seems the most suitable subject for the first number of a periodical, the main object of which is to advance its interests. Believing, as we do most sincerely, that its doctrines are sound, its form of worship scriptural and promotive of true devotion, its government primitive and Apostolic, and, therefore, that it possesses every possible title to its claim of being a pure branch of the universal Church of Christ, we are decidedly of opinion that any want of success with which it meets must proceed either from defects in the carrying out of its principles, or from ignorance of its nature, its claims and its position. We do not look for perfection in any results brought about by human instrumentality, however perfect may be the system of operation, but we are confident that all will be ready to acknowledge that much more might be effected if the efforts of Churchmen were carried on in a more systematic manner; if the intercourse between the clergy and laity in the different parts of the Diocese were more intimate, and the sympathy more complete. No doubt the establishment of a Synod will prove of great benefit in this respect, and make each individual more conscious of his duty to concern himself in the welfare of the diocese in general, as well as of his own parish in particular. And this feeling, once roused thoroughly, will not stop there, but will lead him to regard with deep interest all branches of the Church of Christ; to mourn, if necessary, over their faults or their failures; to rejoice in their progress and success; and to pray for that blessed consummation, when all that profess the name of Christ shall be one.

But, in order to excite and foster this feeling, an accurate acquaintance with the position of ecclesiastical matters is necessary. To afford this, as far as possible, will be one of our principal objects. To many of our readers our remarks may not contain anything new but we feel sure that they will look on them with favour, or, at least, with forbearance, for the sake of the good cause which we all have at heart. Let us briefly glance at our present position, reserving for a future occasion the practical inferences to be drawn from it.

The general statistics of the Church, (exclusive of the Archdeaconry of Prince Edward Island, to which we will take another opportunity of referring) are as follows. By the last Census, in 1861, the number of members of the Church of England was 47,744. According to the average rate of increase (nearly one-fifth in ten years,) the number at present would exceed 51,000; it will therefore be perfectly safe as well as convenient to set it down at the round number 50,000. The number of clergy in active service is 67.—The number of parishes and ecclesiastical districts, is 56; the churches, over 140; other places where divine service is held uncertain, probably over 120, eight parishes giving an average of three and a half.

On comparing the number of clergy with that of the members of the Church, we find that, on the average, each clergyman has the charge of about 750 persons, a very favourable state of things, as compared with many other countries, and even with many parts of

England, if it were not for the scattered condition of our population. But it will be easily understood that a clergyman can more efficiently manage a parish of 1200 or 1500 persons within a circumference of a mile radius and assembling in one church, than he can of 250 or 300 persons, within a circumference of 20 miles radius, and assembling in three or four churches. It is evident that the extent of the parishes forms an important item in estimating the efficiency of our parochial agencies. We regret that we are not in possession of any statistics which will enable us to introduce this element even approximately; to do so would require not only the length and breadth of each parish, but also the distance of the various dwellings from the residence of the clergyman. In fact each parish would have to be examined separately and for this especial purpose. We must, therefore, for the present content ourselves with the county divisions, and the results of the late Census, making the moderate increase of one-fifteenth for the four years that have elapsed since the Census was taken.

We find that about 15,000 members of the Church, or three-tenths of the whole number, are to be found in the county of Halifax alone, and of these nearly 8000 are in the city of Halifax and in the town of Dartmouth. There are 15 clergymen engaged in the active discharge of their duties in the county, giving an average of just 1000 to each.

In the county of Lunenburg, which comes next in point of numbers there are some 7500 members of the Church, or just half that of the county of Halifax, under the charge of eight clergymen, each extending their labours over very large districts. This would give an average of 940 to each clergyman, apparently less than in Halifax, but really requiring more labour to minister to them effectually; because, as we saw, more than half of the population of the latter county are congregated within a few square miles.

The extensive counties of Annapolis, Hants, and Guysborough may be set down as having an average population of Churchmen of 3600, the total number giving as about being 10,971; the Churchmen actually in charge of missions, being six in each of the counties of Annapolis and Hants, and four in that of Guysborough, exhibiting a very great disproportion against the latter.

We must rapidly sum up the remaining counties, apologizing for these dry details on the ground that they may be useful hereafter in the practical conclusions to be drawn from our condition.

Cumberland, Cape Breton and Digby each contains over 2200 each; the sum total being 6716, with four clergymen in Cape Breton and three in each of the others.

The five counties of Colchester, Pictou, King's, Shelburne and Queen's give a total of 7222 Churchmen, or an average of 1450, Pictou and King's having three clergymen, and each of the others two.

The remaining five counties all average under 1000, the whole number of members of the Church being 2434. There are at present two clergymen in the county of Yarmouth, one in each of the counties of Sydney and Richmond, and none in either Inverness or Victoria, although some of the clergy in the adjoining counties occasionally extend their labours into these destitute localities.

We have thus briefly drawn the attention of our readers to the numbers and geographical position of the Church population. We shall endeavour in a future number to turn these details to some practical benefit. The only inference we propose to draw on the present