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## OUR PRESBYTERIAN HOUSE AND HOUSEKEEPING.

A time of great interest in our Church is the few weeks immediately preceeding the meeting of the General Assembly, while it is sitting, and for a short time following the meeting. It is the season when our Presbyterian House and Housekeeping are examined into, reported upon, and set in working order for another year. Then soon the special interest of this season wears off and things settle down to their normal, everyday working condition. Except by the few whom interest or official duty require to keep the state of our house and housekeeping constantly before their minds, the whole thing passes very largely out of sight and out of mind for almost another year. This is surely not wise, for the Presbyterian House and Housekeeping together form a very large concern, in which every member of the household is, or ought to be interested. The pulpit in part, and still more, the denominational press, may fairly be looked to and expected to keep so important a matter, to some extent at least, before the minds of all connected with the establishment. As a summary of the present state of the house, and the accounts, nothing could surpass the presentation given in the opening address of Rev. Dr. Warden, the ex-moderator at the last meeting of the General Assembly. But in the first place, how few of our members will take the time or have the patience to read that address from beginning to end; and next, when it is read even carefully through, the impression made by it, unless it is revived from time to time, becomes dim, it does not fade out altogether. To be productive of good, it needs to be revived again and again. Doing this, or keeping the state of the Church at the latest stock-taking in some way before the mind of the Church, ought to be helpful in many ways, to guard against sloth and carelessness and stimulate to diligence and zeal. To do this, we propose from time to time to turn to

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some of the principal items of our housekeeping, and so set and in some measure keep the subject before the mind of our readers.

We begin first with the general and shall come in time to the particular. The reports of our Church work "so far as congregations and stations are concerned," the report of the Assembly's Committee on statistics informs us, "are more complete than in former years." "Steady progress has been made in almost every department of the work," says Dr. Warden. This is a cheering, heartening report to begin the year with. In giving numbers for the sake of convenience, and as a help to the memory, we shall, as far as possible give round numbers, the nearest above or below the actual figure.

Families—The family is the foundation of society, so we begin with the family. Christian families are the hope of the Church as well as its product, and they are also the hope of the world. In round numbers, the families in our Church run up to almost 120,000 and include no fewer than 600,000 persons. These are families in which, it the claims of religion do not hold supreme sway, they are at least, to some extent felt and acknowledged. Adding to these the families connected with all other religious bodies in the country, we have before the mind a statement of the utmost significance in its bearing upon the general well-being in every respect of the whole country.

Ministers and elders.—Next perhaps in importance in its bearing upon the life and work of the Church, and so of the spiritual life and moral character of the country, is that of the Christian ministry, and in this we include the elders as being men ordained to certain departments of Christian work. The number of ministers is 1200, and of elders 7500, thus giving to each elder 15 families or twice that number of communicants, a number not too large for spiritual oversight to be overtaken by an efficient elder. Supposing all these ministers and elders to be filled with the spirit of their office, men of prayer, and zealous and earnest in mutual helpfulness in building up their people in Christian life and character, and that they again are met in a responsive spirit by the people under their charge, what results of highest good might not be expected and produced. On the ministers and elders rests a tremendous responsibility. The whole spiritual character of the Church, and so the moral character of the nation, and the efficiency of the Church in carrying out the great work of the evangelizing and Christianizing of the world depends more upon the gospel ministry than upon any other single agency.

Communicants.—These, by the fact of their being communicants, sitting down at the Lord's table in profession of their acceptance of Him as Saviour and sin bearer, of faith in and union with Him, and being enlisted in His service, are professedly converted persons. They number 220,000. This includes an addition made to their number last year on profession of faith of 5,800. The great object for which the Church exists, is the conversion of the whole world to Christ, the conversion of sinners of mankind to become the followers and

servants of the Lord Jesus. If the Church, through the means of grace, does not succeed in this, it fails in its supreme purpose. And yet, Dr. Warden says in his address, "Not including mission fields, 228 congregations report no conversions during the year, no members received on confession of faith, and in 656 of the other congregations of the Church, where additions were made on confession of faith, the number in no case exceeds six. There is surely here ground for humiliation." It is not the ministers alone, nor the elders alone who are responsible for this. The idea of the Christian Church is that every member of it is pledged to be a worker in his own sphere, in bringing men to Christ. It is because this idea, to such a degree, is lost sight of, that the number of conversions is so small. There is need for much heart searching and painful reflection and humiliation in the fact stated by the ex-moderator.

Mission stations and Congregations.—To trace the history of the rise and growth of almost any one of our congregations is a work full of interest. A handful of families here or there, in a city suburb, in a rising village or town, in a rural district in a wooded region in the prairie, or among the mines in the mountains, are sought out and gathered together by some missionary, and arrangements made for service at regular intervals. This is a mission station. Of these we have 1464. Two, three, or four of these are grouped together and we have a Mission field. And of these there are 506. What an interesting record of struggling upward, of self sacrifice, of labour and prayer could be written of almost every mission station and mission field. As soon as two or three stations grouped together, and uniting their labours and contributions, can, in part, support a pastor, they receive assistance to make up his full support and are called an *Augmented charge or congregation*. There are 203 augmented charges, making 360 congregations. Few of what are now strong congregations, have not at some period in their history been indebted to our invaluable Augmentation fund for timely help. At one end of the list of augmented charges, congregations are being continually set off, having become *self-supporting*, while at the other end, mission stations are being constantly added on to it as charges or congregations whose givings are to be augmented. Of *self-supporting* congregations there were 783 reported to the last General Assembly. This is one phase of our Church's work, another, the financial, can best be dealt with by itself.

## KING EDWARD VII CROWNED.

God save the King! Long live the King! At last, and happily, amid the utmost enthusiasm of his subjects, with beams of gladness and rejoicing, and with solemn, stately and imposing ritual enacted by high Church dignitaries, surrounded by the highest and noblest of the empire, in the Church, the army and navy, and the state, and princes and princesses of the blood royal at home