

A PARCEL OF BLUE-BOOKS.

BY THE EDITOR.

There they lie on the Editor's table,—the Minutes, Reports, and Statistics of a dozen Presbyterian churches.

THEIR OUTWARD APPEARANCE.

In *color* they are not all literally blue (excepting the books of the Scottish churches), but are of various hues. In *size* they differ very widely, from the bulky quarto in which the Established Church of Scotland gives forth its reports, to the modest pamphlet of forty-seven pages containing the "*Minutes of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South.*" In *method* there is considerable difference: the Free Church of Scotland, in a volume of about 1000 pages reports very fully the addresses of the Moderator, and the speeches of the leading speakers; whereas the most of the other churches give the barest outline of the business in terse language. The Free Church does not distinguish communicants from adherents in its statistical tables, and gives the total income of each congregation for two years, in separate columns, showing *increase or decrease*; and, after the fashion of Parliament, it gives in the Roll of Assembly, after each name, the divisions at which the member was present, and the side on which he voted, whereas the most of the other churches take no account whatever of adherents, neither do they show how members of the supreme courts voted on important measures. As to *material*, the paper and printing are, without exception, good, though there are degrees of excellence; the foremost place undoubtedly in fineness and finish of paper, and beauty of typography, belonging to the Presbyterian Church (North), U.S.A., and no mean place to the Presbyterian Church in Canada. There is a *price* put on some of these Blue-books, the highest being One Dollar, and the lowest being Fifty Cents, but we opine that for this style of literature there is not at present a great demand in the market,* and each church therefore presents a free copy to each minister, while our Canadian church presents a copy of its handsome volume of 800 closely printed pages to each of its 3076 elders. Thus far, then, with regard to matters inferior, accidental, and external.

THE INNER CHARACTER.

It is impossible to glance, even rapidly, over the vast array of figures contained in these Blue-books without being impressed with the thorough *business-like* way these Presbyterian Churches, without one exception, manage their ecclesiastical affairs. The amount of money handled by the British, Canadian, and American churches each year (not including capital invested), is not far short of twenty million dollars. Every dollar of this is credited in detail to its proper source, and debit to its

* We find that the Presbyterian Church (North), U.S.A., made last year \$240 by the sale of its Minutes, which cost \$4,152. The Minutes of our Canadian Church cost \$2,293, but we are not aware that copies are ever sold.