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CONTENTS:

<p>A Standing Ministry, &c..... 193</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE.</p> <p>Foreign Mission Intelligence..... 202</p> <p>Report on Mr. Chiniquy's Mission..... 203</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HOME ECCLESIASTICAL INTELLIGENCE.</p> <p>Knox College—Close of Session..... 205</p> <p>Presbyterian College, Montreal..... 206</p> <p>Calls, &c.,..... 208</p> <p>Churches Opened, &c..... 209</p> <p>Distribution of Probationers..... 211</p>	<p>Proceeding of Presbyteries.—Hamilton, Toronto, Kingston, Cobourg, Stratford, Ontario, London..... 211 to 216</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OBITUARY NOTICES.</p> <p>The late John Redpath, of Montreal 217</p> <p> " Duncan Campbell..... 219</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RECEIPTS.</p> <p>Moneys Received 220</p> <p>Receipts for Record..... 224</p>
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A STANDING MINISTRY; AND THE RELATION OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY TO THE WORK OF THE PULPIT.

A LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE CLOSE OF THE SESSION OF KNOX COLLEGE,
BY REV. PRINCIPAL WILLIS.

It is not out of place, and can seldom be out of season, on such occasions as the present, to set forth the authority for a standing ministry, and to proffer suggestions on the matter of preaching, as well as on the question, Who should preach? Indeed, these two questions have a close relation to one another; not the least of the arguments for a standing ministry, or the expediency of a class of men being separated to the service of the Gospel, lying in the nature of the work, in the preciousness of heavenly truth, and the reasonableness of that truth having all the advantage in its presentation to the minds of men which deliberate preparation for the work of the preacher may secure for it.

It is a very usual procedure in reasoning to look first at the presumptive probabilities in favor of a conclusion in which one has confidence, on its own merits, before going into a positive proof. In arguing, for example, the inspiration of the writers of the New Testament, we feel as if already the point were half made out, when we have found evidence of the inspiration of the Old Testament writers; or, on the question of the canon as to whether it be a matter of erudition and human testimony, or of revelation,—