

# AUGUST, 1876.

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## A VOICE FROM BROOKLYN.

Accustomed to think of Brooklyn as a suburb of New York, we woke up one fine morning, not long ago, to discover our mistake, in finding ourselves in a beautiful city of five hundred thousand inhabitants.

We found the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States convened in the Tabernacle Church, of which the well known Dr. Talmage is the pastor. It is the largest protestant church in America, being seated for 4200 persons, and its internal arrangements leave nothing to be desired on the score of comfort and convenience. Its acoustic properties are remarkably perfect. The members of the Assembly, numbering from five to six hundred, occupied a semi-circular area immediately in front of the platform: the remainder of the floor of the church was filled with spectators. A grand sight it was, the first look we got of such a sea of faces, and a solemn spectacle was that presented on the evening of the first day, when full three thousand communicants joined together in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Dr. Morris of Cincinnati, in relinquishing the Moderator's chair, and investing Dr. Vandyke with the insignia of office remarked that this Assembly, from long experience, had learned to govern itself. However that may be, it was an orderly Assembly from beginning to end. Its whole tone and temper was eminently conservative. There could be no mistake about its holding firmly by the Westminster Confession. Its recognition of the sanctity of the Sabbath was equally emphatic. It was very much a Missionary Assembly—the most of its time being devoted to the consideration of its Home and Foreign Missionary Reports. Some of the addresses delivered in connection with

these were master-pieces of eloquence, worth going a long way to hear: especially that of Dr. Dickson who spoke at great length on the Home Mission work of the Church, and that of the venerable Dr. Calhoun, from Mount Lebanon, Syria, to whom the Moderator referred happily, when he spoke of "the old weather-beaten missionary with the glory of Lebanon on his head, and the excellency of Carmel and Sharon on his lips, and who seemed as though the glory of the Transfiguration Mount would soon break through his skin." And when the relations of this church with the General Assembly, South, came to be discussed it was plain to be seen how desirous the Northmen were, not only for the establishment of fraternal relations but for complete reconciliation and re-union. Into this question Dr. Talmage, threw his whole soul, and rose to the full height of his eloquence. Respecting this, the *Christian at Work* says truly,—"there have been few grander scenes in the country than when the Rev. Dr. Prime stood up amid a consecrated and excited audience of six hundred ministers, saying: The Southern breezes this morning blow sweetly. The long looked-for day seems to have come. I read a telegram announcing that the South cordially enters with us upon fraternal relations." It was received as glorious news, and with rapturous applause.

There were no doctrinal difficulties to settle in this Assembly. There was no dirty linen washed in our presence at least. If there were any cases of discipline dealt with, that thing must have been done in a corner. We never heard of it. Any "protests" that we had cognizance of were directed against such things as those,—against Chinese proscription on the Pacific Coasts, against Sabbath-breaking under the ægis of Cen-