

best modes of increasing her strength and usefulness. Branch Societies of Clergymen and Laymen are to be established all over the country, and, although the plans of operation are not yet fully matured, it is understood that the promotion of our Missionary schemes, the increase of Christian activity, the consideration of the religious wants and social evils of the time, and the suggestion of remedies, are the objects contemplated.

In the Free Assembly Dr. Candlish was several times attacked with great bitterness, charged with the desire of being dictator; and what he would like still worse, was defeated in almost all his measures. This is rather remarkable, considering that a year or two ago, Dr. Cunningham thought his power so firmly established, that he withdrew altogether from Church Courts, regarding opposition as hopeless.

The overture from the Free Presbytery of Glasgow against the proposed union with the Seceders was regarded with much apprehension; but it ultimately got the go-by on a point of form. Dr. Candlish insisted on proposing a motion similar in spirit to that of Professor Gibson at Glasgow, but many members earnestly deprecated any discussion on the subject, declaring that it would be fatal to the peace of the Church; and, as there was some screw loose in the transmission of the overture, it was allowed to drop. Had the discussion gone on, a number of elders, who had signed the resolutions, would have gone into the merits of the question, and defended themselves. It has already blown over, producing no result; indeed the common remark is that a union with the Church is much more likely and feasible than a union with the United Presbyterians.

The Free Assembly has a number of Professorial Chairs to fill up, and the choice made is generally thought very judicious. The dividend of the Sustentation Fund is less than it was last year, and many discouraging speeches were made upon the subject; but of course it was all satisfactorily explained in some way or other, so as to look well upon paper; but the fact of a smaller dividend remains nevertheless.

Our General Assembly declined to interfere in the question of the uncollegiating of St. Andrew's Church, Edinburgh; and the consequence is that things remain as they are. The Town Council have accordingly, at the request of the people, presented to the second charge the Rev. Mr. Stuart, of Stirling, a very popular preacher, in general estimation only second to Mr. Caird. Mr. Robertson, of Mains, who was previously spoken of, declined the appointment. Old Greyfriar's Church, Edinburgh, which has sometimes been called the Westminster Abbey of Scotland, was re-opened last Sabbath, after having undergone a thorough repair. The windows are all filled with stained glass, and

are greatly admired; they are memorial windows, and have been contributed for the most part by the descendants of clergymen who were connected with the Church.

We have had most delightful weather for the last few weeks, and there is the prospect of a most abundant harvest. Hay-cutting has already commenced. I have never seen the country looking better, and even the farmers are satisfied. This is the season of the year when travelling abounds, when people shut-up their town-houses, and go to the Continent, or the coast, when ministers take their few weeks' recreation. The great point of attraction this summer for travellers is the Manchester Exhibition of Art Treasures, where for a few months are collected together all the finest paintings in the country, along with the rarest specimens of sculpture, ancient armour, tapestry and porcelain. These are nearly all from private collections, and the Queen and the higher nobility have set an example in lending their choicest treasures, which has been most readily followed. There never was such a collection of paintings in Britain before, and many years must elapse before the like is seen again; as, although the owners may be willing to lend them occasionally, it is not a process that will bear being often repeated.

#### THE LATE CALAMITY.

*For the Presbyterian.*

Although our favoured and temperate climate is saved from the fearful ravages of pestilential diseases, earthquakes and tornadoes, so frequent in tropical countries, yet we are from time to time visited with wholesale destruction of another kind, to which it is more difficult patiently to submit.—For, while the calamity comes directly from the hand of Him who has the elements under His control, and before whose all-wise dispensations, mysterious though they be, we can only bow in silent submission, the other, though certainly included in His over-ruling providence, finds too often its proximate cause in the culpable negligence or the avaricious and cold-hearted recklessness of man, and, while humbly recognising the hand of God in the stroke, no one can deny that this reflection is a bitter aggravation to the catastrophe.

Another of these so-called "*fearful accidents*," which have of late become startlingly common even in Canada, has just taken place upon our waters. It seems but yesterday since the tidings of the Desjardins catastrophe struck a thrill of horror into all our hearts, and the agony of suspense, the cloud of bitter sorrow which it brought into many a happy household, are yet fresh in our recollection. Scarcely has the spring had time to pass into summer, and the grass to grow over the graves of the victims of the railroad disaster, when a new calamity, so appalling and extensive

as to sink the previous one into comparative insignificance, fills us with dismay and absorbs our thoughts with its heart-rending details.—Again and again the imagination reverts to the circumstances of the disaster, the calm, lovely summer evening, the noble St. Lawrence flowing between banks clothed in all the rich luxuriance of June, the crowded steamer busily plying its way with its cargo of unsuspecting passengers, most of whom, strangers from a far country, were no doubt congratulating themselves on having got through the dangers and the tedium of the sea voyage, and looking with delight and admiration on the first glimpses of "the new and happy land," round which clustered so many high hopes, so many eager anticipations.—Then suddenly the hoarse cry of "fire" breaking upon the tranquillity, the black smoke bursting out, the panic, the rush, the terrible alternative between the hot, rushing flames and the cold, still water below, the despairing plunge, and the indescribable agony of those terrible "twenty minutes" during which the water was covered with two hundred and fifty gasping, drowning human beings. It was soon over. The waters flowed on, blue and calm as before, the charred timbers of the wreck remained the solitary remnant of so much life, bustle and activity.

Of the thoughts and feelings of these two hundred and fifty souls in those last terrible moments how little will ever be known! Some few may have been marked in the trying hour. We hear of one who in his native Scotland had been a faithful feeder of Christ's lambs, and we know from his words of trust and confidence that the Master he had served was with him even in the "deep waters". But by far the greater number must have perished unmarked by any human eye, and the secrets of their sudden passage of the "dark river" and their final destination in that other country whither our wistful gaze cannot follow them are known to the Searcher of hearts alone.

What a world of hopes and fears, schemes and anxieties, lofty aspirations and ardent affections, those blue waves flowed over that day! Could we but know the private histories of each of the hearts so warily beating but a few moments before, and now cold in death, we would no doubt find many a thrilling and touching tale disclosed to our view. How bitterly in the last sad moment when all hope was gone, and he felt himself sinking hopelessly in the cold waters, must the heart of the poor emigrant have turned to his distant Scottish home, to the old familiar places, the well-known fields and lanes, to the "kirk" where his fathers and forefathers sat, and the chime of whose Sabbath bells still perchance resounded in his ear, to the loving friends, perhaps to the wife and children he had left behind, and whose thoughts, unsuspecting of his danger, were even now following him to the new country where he came to find a