

ARMY AND NAVY CHAPLAINS.

Dr. Cook, St. Andrews, gave in the report of the committee appointed by last Assembly on army and navy chaplains, and generally to consider and advance the means of promoting the spiritual interests of Presbyterian soldiers and sailors. The report stated that the number of Presbyterian Chaplains attached to the British army has not been increased during the past year, and still appears to the committee to be below the number required in proportion to the number of Presbyterian soldiers, and not in proportion to the number of chaplains of the two other denominations—Church of England and Roman Catholic. Few of them, moreover, have received permanent appointments, and it seems a reasonable object to endeavour to attain that there should at least be a Presbyterian chaplain permanently attached to each of the 14 Scotch regiments. The Committee have also been enabled, partly through the assistance of the Assembly Committee on Colonial Churches, to send a supply of copies of Assembly Committee's Aids to Devotion to Mr. Paton, and to all the 4 army chaplains in England at Aldershot, Shorecliffe, Chatham and London; and that they have received from the chaplains the most gratifying assurances of the readiness with which these were welcomed among the soldiers, and of the beneficial effects with which the distribution of them has been attended. The Committee had received some very liberal donations and parochial contributions, which they desire very gratefully to acknowledge; but they regretted to say that the whole sums transmitted to them have been of so inconsiderable amount as to prevent them giving such aid to the chaplains as might have been desired, and altogether to preclude them from entertaining at present the question of sending, with the sanction of the official authorities, any assistance of the nature which Scripture-readers or others so employed might have been able to render.

Dr. Cook, after reading the report, said he could not avoid expressing the earnest wish that he could impress members of the House with a sense of the vital importance of this subject. There were upwards of 20,000 soldiers of the British Army belonging to the Church of Scotland; and surely, separated as these men were from their native country, most of them in distant parts of the World, this Church must feel a lively sympathy with them, and a desire that there should be a Presbyterian minister wherever there was any number of Scotch Presbyterian soldiers.

Dr. Nisbet rose to move the adoption of the report.

He could testify to the value of the services of the chaplains in the army, and he knew well that both officers and men deeply prized their ministrations. He was glad to say that a good many of his congregation contributed to the support of a Scripture reader who was at present on his way to the 92d in India, and communication after communication had been received from India pleading that there might not be any delay in sending out the reader. He was strongly of opinion that Government should be asked to do something for our Presbyterian soldiers, of whom they had no need to be ashamed in the field of battle. Lately on the field of Kalaclava the "thin red line" gained for them an immortal name, and in their march to Lucknow they had shown what Presbyterian worship could do. After referring to the advantages likely to be derived from the circulation of the Book of Prayer which had been sanctioned by the Church, Dr. Nisbet concluded by moving—"That the report be approved of, that the thanks of the Assembly should be given to the Convener and

members of Committee, and that the Assembly be reappointed—Dr. Cook, Convener."

Dr. Irvine, of Blair-Athole, seconded the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

REPORT OF THE HOME MISSION COMMITTEE.

Dr. Crawford, Convener of the Home Mission Committee, read the report of the committee, of which the following is an abstract:—The main source of revenue of this scheme is that arising from the church-door collections. These collections, on an average of 10 years preceding 1860, yielded little more than £3000, and the contributing congregations numbered about 94. During the past year the collections have reached £3865, 4s. 2d., and the number of contributing congregations has increased to 994. Compared, therefore, with the average amount of collections, and the number of contributing congregations during the previous 10 years, the past year shows an increase on the former to the amount of about £800, and of the latter to the number of upwards of 50. The entire receipts for the year ending 15th April, 1860, amounted to £5022, 18s. 6d., while the expenditure for the same period amounted to £4969, 9s. 10., thus showing an excess of revenue for that year to the amount of £53, 8s. 8d. The entire receipts for the year ending 15th April last were £5054, 5s. 4d., inclusive of £445 from legacies, while the expenditure for the same period was £4619, 0s. 8d., showing the excess of revenue over the expenditure of £435, 4s. 8d. which, however, was inadequate to meet the outstanding building grants now in course of payment. The expenditure in aid of unendowed churches and towards the support of missionaries for the year ending 15th April next would exceed £4500, and the total outgoings, including 4 building grants to Kelvinnahugh, Sprugfield, Inverie and Calderhead, formerly voted, as also the usual items of ordinary expenditure, will approach £5500. After giving a detailed statement of their dealings and management during the past year in regard to church-building, the aiding of unendowed churches, and the employment of probationers as missionaries, the Committee concluded their report by expressing their hope that the Assembly would suggest such advice and instructions as were necessary efficiently to conduct and largely to extend the all-important work of its Home Mission Scheme.

Sheriff Barclay, Perth, seconded the motion, which, after a few words from Dr. Hill in its support, was unanimously approved of.

The Assembly adjourned about 6 o'clock until Monday at 11 o'clock.

MONDAY, May 27.

The General Assembly resumed this morning—Dr. Smith, Inverary, Moderator.

THE DUNBLANE CASE.

The Assembly then took up the Dunblane case, which came up in the form of certain appeals from the judgement from the Synod of Perth and Stirling.

The Assembly proceeded to consider an appeal taken by the objectors against a judgment of the Synod, of date 3d January last, allowing to be kept in *status* a certain communication from a considerable number of parishioners, communicants and adherents of the congregation of Dunblane, expressing their opposition to the settlement of Mr. Ingram. In connection with this appeal certain other appeals, all depending upon it, were also taken up, these appeals being against the refusal to allow certain questions to be put to witnesses regarding the communication referred to in the first appeal.

Parties were then removed from the bar.

Dr. Cook, St. Andrews, submitted that, although there were differences in the sermons, there was a fair exposition of the Word of God, and the subjects were well selected, relating to

the Divine character and work of our Lord, with practical exhortations. The effect of these sermons upon the congregation was, according to the evidence, that a few of those who went to hear the presentee prejudiced against him, in consequence of reports which had been industriously circulated in the parish, had their impressions altogether removed, and were led to welcome the presentee as one qualified to be their spiritual instructor. He did not think, therefore, that there was anything in the sermons calling for censorious remark or condemnation. There remained the other question whether the presentee was heard. He was quite willing to admit that some parties gave evidence truthfully that they did not hear Mr. Ingram distinctly; but there were other causes that might account for that irrespective of the presentee himself. He gave credit to the objectors for conscientious motives; but, admitting that, it must also be allowed that some of them went to hear Mr. Ingram in a state of mind that might operate so as to prevent them from hearing him distinctly. There was not, he believed, a single hearer out of a thousand who, returning from the House of God, could be able, without perjury, to say in strict truth that he did not lose some word or sentence of the preacher. Without, therefore, imputing to the objectors anything unworthy, he thought they might not have heard Mr. Ingram so fully as they desired on account of their own state of mind. Then it must be considered that it was the first time Mr. Ingram had preached in Dunblane Cathedral, where it was admitted that there was an echo. Looking to the whole circumstances of the case, he thought that, unless they were, upon the ground of any excitement in the parish—a case too common in the present day—to hold themselves warranted to reject the presentee, he did not see how they could decline to instruct the Presbytery to proceed with the settlement. He would not recommend the adoption of this course if he had not in his own mind the most complete conviction that Mr. Ingram was fully qualified to discharge the duties of a minister in that parish. (Applause.) Dr. Cook concluded by moving—"That the Assembly having considered the evidence, and having regard to the whole circumstances and condition of the parish, and to the spiritual welfare of the people, and that the objections to Mr. Ingram's fitness are not substantiated by the evidence, and remit to the Presbytery to proceed with the settlement of the presentee according to the rules of the Church." (Applause.)

Sir J. Heron Maxwell, in seconding the motion, said that it was evident from the record that the objectors in this case had been much irritated by the refusal of the Crown to give them the choice of a minister, and he firmly believed that their determination was so strong to reject any presentee that, if a Chalmers, or a Caird, or a Guthrie, or a Cumming had been presented, they would have refused to receive him.

Dr. Pirie said he felt the greatest doubts in assenting to the motion. He thought there was at least one important difference betwixt this case and those decided last year, and, were he to allow the case to pass on the assumption that there was any superiority in this presentee over the presentee rejected last year, he would be doing an injustice to the presentee rejected last year. (Hear, hear.) The only thing that could induce him to agree to this motion was the extraordinarily small number of objectors. Last year the number of objectors was exceedingly large, and the number of callers peculiarly small; this year, out of a parish that contained 1000 people, and out of 200 communicants, they had only 60 communicants who were objecting. There were cer-