

Dr. Smith, of North Leith, seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. Kinloch, yr. of Gilmerton, moved :

“ That petitions in accordance with the foregoing resolutions should be presented to both Houses of Parliament ”

Thereafter a hearty vote of thanks to the Lord Provost for presiding, and for showing himself such a liberal friend of the Church, brought this important meeting to a close. We give the following from the *Courant* upon the meeting, the resolutions passed, and the speeches delivered :

“ We cannot but regard it as fortunate for the Church of Scotland, and as an augury also of future success, that those who have taken the lead in the movement for seeking the abolition of patronage rest their claims upon such moderate grounds as they do. The meeting which was held on Wednesday, and the speeches then delivered reported in our columns yesterday, afford an apt illustration of this circumstance. There is none of the high-handed denunciation of patronage as in itself a tremendous evil which was so common in the anti-patronage struggle thirty years ago. Nor is there the assertion which was so frequent at the same period of the sacredness of the right of congregations to elect their own ministers, as if the withholding of that right were the infliction of a terrible injustice and the commission of a heinous wrong. Probably the majority, certainly very many, of those who are taking part in the present movement, regard patronage as being in itself better than unlimited popular election, and consider that the interests of the church and of the people of Scotland are likely to be as well, if not better, preserved and maintained under a well regulated system of lay patronage, than under the usual mode of electing ministers practised in dissenting Churches. But while the abstract propriety of patronage is not doubted, and while the mode in which it has been actually exercised in Scotland in the main is, as it ought to be, generally commended, it is nevertheless felt that the occurrence of a peculiar concantation of circumstances has seemed to render it expedient that there should be some such change as will introduce the great mass of our congregations into more direct contact with the conduct of their Church's affairs. The grounds which lead to such an opinion were well embodied in the resolutions carried unanimously at the meeting on Wednesday; while, at the same time, the character of the results anticipated from the

desiderated change is of a similar practical nature. The first resolution expressed a judgment based upon a historical induction which was admirably and with lucid force expounded by the mover of the resolution. The retrospect of the history of the Church certainly bears out the inference that practical evils have flowed directly, and are perhaps inseparable, from patronage, as exercised in Scotland. It has fostered divisions, been the frequent occasion, and sometimes the direct cause, of secessions that have greatly impaired the strength of the Church; and even where it has not produced such extreme results, it has too often injured, sometimes injured irretrievably, the best interests of congregations. If this be so, the conclusion seems unavoidable that the modification of patronage, so as to acknowledge and admit the influence of congregations in the selection of their ministers, will tend not only to prevent the recurrence of such unhappy episodes in the future, but may even be a means of reuniting with some of those who have separated from the Church. The motive which swayed the minds of some of the speakers, and which was given expression to in an excellently calm and judicious speech by the Dean of Faculty, is the hope that the realisation of a Presbyterian reunion, if not of an incorporating, yet at least of a co-operative character, may ultimately be found practicable. And the main object which is expected of the strong national Presbyterian Church which would result from such an event is of such a character as cannot fail to commend itself to honourable and intelligent Christian men of all the sects into which Presbyterianism has become divided. That object is, of course, that, so re-invigorated, the Church might be able to devote herself with greater energy and better success than ever heretofore to the important task of contending against and remedying the religious destitution which so largely prevails in our own land, of combating and checking the irreligious and immoral social forces so actively at work amongst us, and of thereby proving that the Christian Church is still, as of old, the very salt of the earth and of society. We cannot but hope that the prominence rightly given to such motives will tend to overcome the opposition or allay the suspicions of some who are at present doubtful of the beneficial tendencies of the present movement.

“ The difficulties of the work which has been undertaken by the Church, and which has been stamped with its approval by the collective voice of the great majority of her General Assembly, will of course become only more apparent when its promo-