

and still, while in a few deep, earnest words Dr. Hill entreated God's mercy on their fallen brother. The officer now summoned Mr. Grieve, the offender, to the box, and as he did not appear, the Clerk read out the sentence decreed, and the Moderator pronounced "in name and by authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of this Church, I do hereby depose Mr. Grieve from the sacred office of the ministry, and declare the parish of Mertoun vacant. May God have mercy on him and us!" There is a brief, still pause, and it is at such moments that Christians deeply feel the truth of what old John Newton used to say when he saw a criminal led on his way to execution, "there goes John Newton, but for the grace of God."

The Colonial Committee read an encouraging report of their operations over the length and breadth of the Empire. With reference to Nova Scotia, flattering mention was made of the four Pictonians now studying at Glasgow, and who, God willing, will be at work before the next meeting of Assembly, in their native country. Permission was given, on the motion of Dr. Hill, to any or all of them, if residing in the Lowlands, to avail themselves of the privilege of Highland students who are licensed in November instead of in the following July; and they may therefore be expected home in the beginning of 1861. It was also through Dr. Hill that their application to the Colonial Committee was made; and this zealous kindness and interest ensured immediate attention. Indeed I think that the great danger that is run by the young men you send out here is that they may be spoiled by the excessive praise and kindness they everywhere receive; and when such men as Dr. Hill and Dr. McLeod take them by the hand, I would not wonder if they returned to you a little bumptious and opinionative, like small men who boast much of their ancestry and upbringings.

CHURCH AT HOME.

OPENING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The Lord High Commissioner, Lord Belhaven, after holding a Levee in the Picture Gallery of Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh, on Thursday the 17th May, proceeded to the High Church, escorted by a detachment of the 13th Light Dragoons, where a sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Cook, of St. Andrew's, the retiring Moderator.

About two o'clock, the Lord High Commissioner proceeded to the Assembly Hall to open the annual sittings of the General Assembly. His Grace was accompanied to the Throne Gallery by Lady Belhaven, Lady Anna Melville, the Misses Ramsay, the Lord Provost, General Sir Duncan Cameron of Fasifern, Commanding the Forces in Scotland, Colonel Sir John Douglass, Adjutant

General Colonel M'Lean Major Anderson, and other gentlemen.

After prayer by the Moderator, the roll of the Assembly was called.

ELECTION OF MODERATOR.

The Moderator then rose and said—Fathers and brethren, we are again met in General Assembly, and our first emotion must be one of gratitude to Almighty God, who is pleased to grant us such opportunities of meeting together to take order and counsel regarding the affairs of our National Church. It is three hundred years since the first Assembly of Reformed Pastors in Scotland met, and during all that time, with a few interruptions, and none for the last 169 years, the Lord has been pleased to grant us the privilege of meeting in yearly Assembly. May the spirit of these reforming fathers—the spirit of counsel, and of the God of glory be with us. In proceeding to the business before the Assembly, the first step, according to the oldest Acts of Assembly, for the eschewing of confusion, is that one be elected to preside over the Assembly; and, according to what one of the fathers of the Second Reformation calls the ancient and laudable practice of this Church, it devolves upon him who presided over the last Assembly to take the place I occupy here, and to submit a name to the Assembly. Having had the honour in last Assembly of being called to sit in the chair of that Assembly, that duty now devolves upon me. And there has been proposed to me one name, of which I may be permitted to say it well merits your cordial acceptance—the name of one who, descended from successive generations of ministers of our Church, has himself shown his strong personal attachment to her cause—who for more than thirty years has been proving himself a faithful minister of Christ among his people—who in other courts of this Church, by his judgment and his character, has gained the esteem and the confidence of his brethren—and who, in all the wide district of the country with which he is connected, I believe is regarded as worthy of the office for which he is now nominated—I mean Dr James Maitland, minister of Kells. (Applause.) I submit that name to the House, and I have to ask if any member has any other name or names to propose.

After some discussion, in which Dr. Aiton, of Dolphinton, took the principal part. Dr. Maitland was unanimously elected.

Dr Maitland was then introduced, and was received with general applause. Dr Cook intimated to Dr Maitland his election, and vacated the chair, which the new moderator took, bowing to the Lord High Commissioner and to the House.

The Commission of Lord Belhaven as Lord High Commissioner was then handed to the moderator, and read by Dr. Simpson