

SUMMARY OF INTELLIGENCE.

MISSIONARY AND ECCLESIASTICAL.

This is the season for religious Jubilee in England and in the United States. The Exeter Hall May meetings have become famous over the world. From all hands we hear joyful tidings of the progress of the Redeemer's Kingdom. Bible and Tract Societies, Foreign and Home Missionary undertakings, are obtaining everywhere such a measure of success as greatly to rejoice the Christian heart. While much remains yet to be done, let us be thankful that much is doing. At this time also, the Supreme Courts of our Presbyterian Churches, both in Britain and America, generally meet. The Synod of the Presbyterian Church in England has had its annual Session, and one, too, of great interest both to the Church in Scotland and to the general Presbyterian family.

On the 20th April, in John Knox Church, Newcastle-on-Tyne, this Synod was constituted in usual form. The Rev. W. M. Thomson, of Woolwich, an amiable and devoted minister, was chosen Moderator, and delivered a singularly appropriate address. A new feature has been introduced at this Synodical Assembly, viz., that of out-door preaching. By the formal appointment of the Court, brethren were sent to preach the Gospel to the poor in the city and neighborhood. The work met with encouraging success. The Congregational Schools and the College were interesting subjects of consideration. Many schools have been established in destitute localities by the aid of the Synod Fund. The College is now in a most flourishing condition. Under the auspices of Dr. McCrie, the recently appointed Professor of Theology, it is acquiring much favour among the Churches, and promises to be of signal service to the Church. Some steps in advance have been taken in regard to the Union of the Church with the United Presbyterian Congregations in England. A plan was mooted by which, in the meantime, a sort of Union might be effected, namely: that while the Synods of the two bodies continued to occupy their own ecclesiastical position and to be the Supreme Courts of their respective Churches, there should be a Representative Assembly of Commissioners from each to watch over and legislate for the general interests of both. The chief argument in favour of this mode of effecting Union was, that it secured the immediate advantage of Union, while it escaped the dangers which some apprehend and the difficulties which all feel. In the meantime, the Committee on Union was re-appointed. In the Foreign Mission work the Report is most cheering. There are three missionaries in China whose labours so far have been attended with the Divine blessing, and two other probationers of the Free Church are about to proceed to the same field. Through the substantial aid of kind friends in Scotland the funds of this mission are in a flourishing condition. At Corfu, also, our English brethren have had a mission since the year 1844, partly intended for the Jews and partly for the soldiers in the garrison. The labours of the missionary meet with much favour. The grand subject of debate was, however, "The Organ Question." It appears that in two Churches in the Presbytery of Lancashire, the Organ has of late been introduced as an aid in the conducting of public praise. This, as might be expected, in a Presbyterian Church whose ministers and members are for the most part Scotch, led to serious disturbance and debate in the Church Courts. Last year, the Synod prohibited the introduction of Organs into churches, and thus gave a distinct verdict against their use. But the organs not having been removed from the churches, the question came up again this year, both in the way of reference and appeal; and while in the decision come to there has been no formal sanction given to the use of organs, yet the two cases of Warrington and Liverpool being regarded as *exceptional*, were not to be interfered with—were to be tolerated. Our readers may be interested by reading the motions which on this occasion were submitted to the Synod. They are as follows:—

"1. REV. WM CHALMERS proposed, which was carried;

"Dismiss the reference—find that the use of instrumental music in public worship, though not without precedent, is not in accordance with the ordinary practice of this Church, and ought not to be introduced in any case, without the permission craved and obtained of the Supreme Court; and enjoin Presbyterians to take order accordingly. But with regard to the cases of St. John's, Warrington, and St. George's, Liverpool, inasmuch as instrumental music had been introduced into them by the sanction, express or implied, of the Presbytery of Lancashire, and is agreeable to the feelings and wishes of said congregations, while its prohibition would disturb their peace, destroy their prosperity, and endanger their very existence, the Synod instruct the Presbytery of Lancashire to take no further action in regard to them, and renew its injunctions to all Presbyteries to take steps, as far as practicable, to encourage and cultivate the harmonious exercise of vocal praise."