

THE FREE COMMISSION OF ASSEMBLY AND PROFESSOR SMITH'S CASE.

At a meeting of this Commission in Edinburgh on Wednesday Mr. Mitchell (elder) submitted a reference from the Presbytery of Aberdeen in regard to Professor Smith's case. The question they wished the Commission to advise them upon was when they should submit the libel which had been framed against Professor Smith to the legal adviser of the Church. The Committee of the Presbytery who had charge of the case thought they would be doing good service to have a better opinion than their own on the libel, and they had forwarded it to the legal adviser of the Church. He had not time to consider it, and it was returned. A portion of the Presbytery thought the Committee had exceeded their duty in doing so. Sir Henry Moncreiff moved that the reference should be sustained, which was agreed to. Sir Henry Moncreiff then moved that the Commission should instruct the Presbytery to send the libel for revisal by the legal adviser before putting it into the hands of the accused party. In reference to the functions of the legal adviser, he said that his duty was to see whether, in point of form, the libel was so framed that it would bring out its own intention. (Hear, hear.) Dr. Begg seconded the motion, which was passed. Mr. Sloan protested against the idea that there had been any undue delay on the part of the Presbytery of Aberdeen in proceeding with the libel. They had proceeded cautiously with a view to serve the interests of truth and deal fairly with Professor Smith. Dr. Begg asked what the Presbytery of Aberdeen intended to do in reference to the questions they had been instructed to put to Professor Smith by the Assembly. He saw that the Presbytery had put the questions, but that the Professor had replied that he was precluded from answering them in consequence of the libel framed against him. Dr. Adam submitted that the question was incompetent, there being nobody present as representing the Presbytery of Aberdeen to answer it. Dr. Begg moved that the Presbytery of Aberdeen should be summoned at next meeting of Commis-

sion to answer the question. Mr. Campbell, Greenock, seconded the motion. Mr. Sloan, Aberdeen, speaking for himself, said he did not believe that Professor Smith had the slightest intention of appearing uncourteous to the Presbytery. In the letter he wrote to them he had simply delayed answering the questions that he might do so regularly and with more satisfaction to all concerned. Dr. Begg, after hearing the explanation of Mr. Sloan, withdrew his motion, and the subject dropped.

GLEANINGS.

Tale-bearing and idle gossiping is under all circumstances, and by whomsoever indulged in, a most unprofitable and disreputable business; but when it assumes the form of malicious slander, it at once becomes a crime even though the poisonous darts are so shaped that the strong arm of the law may be unable to protect or redress the wrongs of the ones thus injured. But the most serious, very worst feature of slander, is that which is invented or circulated by one woman against another. A woman writes of this great wrong as follows. It may be read with profit by all: "Women against women is a problem none can solve. Why do women stab their own sex so mercilessly—strike so ruthlessly? Many a pure, sensitive woman has been stung to death by such injustice—too often by unfounded rumor. Who that has ever traced the torrent of rumor to its source did not find that vivid imagination had colored it till facts and reason had been lost in the whirl? Slander rears its hydra head everywhere, and all good, pure women—and, thank heaven! there are many—d disdain to listen to a story against another, unsupported by proof. If women could but realize how pained and disappointed all true men are to hear too often nothing, while in their own society, but depreciation of their own sex, they would be nobler and truer women. Men—even bad men—never endorse a woman's trying to injure her own sex; whatever her motive may be, it matters not."