

JULY, 1878.

Ecclesiastical Assemblies.

THE UNITED STATES—NORTH.

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States which met at Pittsburgh on the 16th May, was chiefly occupied with business of a routine character. This, however, instead of detracting from the interest of its proceedings, stamped them with exceptional value: for the usefulness and prosperity of a church, consist after all in the proper regulation of its internal affairs, and the promotion of evangelistic and missionary and educational enterprises, rather than in the exercise of discipline and lengthened arguments respecting dogma and doctrine. Dr. Patton of Chicago, was the Moderator, — the youngest Moderator, it is alleged, who ever occupied the chair of that Assembly, but who proved himself well qualified for a position which above most others, requires quick perception, tact, and firmness, combined with such a knowledge of men and things as command unquestioning respect and obedience. One of the first acts of the Assembly was the formal unveiling of a memorial tablet commemorative of the Union of the old and new school Presbyterians, which took place in Pittsburgh, in 1869. A marked feeling of unity pervaded this Assembly, the old lines of division being almost entirely obliterated. The Sabbath School, its hymnology, literature, and equipment generally, occupied a prominent place in the deliberations. The Home and Foreign Missions, however, were the subjects in which all others found a common centre. Although in the discussions which took place, there was the appearance of threatened clashing of jurisdiction, yet it was evident that the heart of the Church was right in respect of both. The receipts from all sources on behalf of Foreign Missions were \$463,351, and the expenditure \$511 180. Early in the year, the gift of \$50,000 by Mrs. Green, had extinguished

the indebtedness of the Board, but owing to the decrease of contributions, a deficit was again reported of \$47,829. A matter of some difficulty has been to hit upon a satisfactory basis of representation in an Assembly of such large dimensions as this. It was now agreed to fix the ratio of representation at one Commissioner for every 2,500 ministers and communicants combined, and that when the membership of the Assembly exceeds 350, the Assembly may change the ratio, so as to reduce the size of the body. The solution is not considered satisfactory, owing to the uncertain and fluctuating, not to say at times, deceptive nature of ecclesiastical statistics. An overture from the Presbytery of Philadelphia, representing that the clause of the so called Apostles' Creed which asserts that Christ "descended into hell" is offensive, and conveys an erroneous idea to those who recite or read it, gave rise to an animated discussion, but resulted in no action being taken in regard to it. In answer to the question, Should converts from Romanism be re-baptized? a previous decision of Assembly was confirmed, namely, that the matter should be left to the Session of each Congregation. The case of Rev. Dr. Miller, of New Jersey, suspended from the ministry for publishing heretical doctrines, was the most important judicial case before the Assembly. The sentence of the Presbytery was sustained by a very large majority. A resolution was adopted on the influence of the secular press, recognizing the services it renders, and urging the exclusion of obscene news.

The *Presbyterian Banner* thinks that this Assembly taken as a whole, has not been equalled since the Union, in ability, acquaintance with the rules of order, and in all that constitutes it a representative body.

Synod of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

THIS Synod commenced its sittings in Edinburgh, on the 13th of May. The proceedings were invested with unusual interest. The Rev. David Croom, of