

of Parliament which met during the Regency of the "good Earle of Murray," in 1567, and by which the "Confession of Faith" of the Reformed Kirk of Scotland was ratified and confirmed. As yet, we find no distinct allusion to Presbyteries as forming any part of the government of the Church.

In the Assembly which met in 1568, at Edinburgh, we enter upon a new stage of developement in the constitution. This Supreme Court henceforth ceases to be *general* in the strictest sense, and now assumes the character, which it has ever since retained, of a representative Convention. It was then ordained "That nane have place nor power to vote in General Assemblies except Superintendents, commissioners appointed for visiting Kirks, Ministers, commissioners of burghs and shires, together with the commissioners of Universities. Ministers and commissioners of shires shall be chosen at the Synodal convention of diocies with consent of the rest of the Ministers and gentlemen convened thereat. Commissioners of burghs shall be appointed by the council and Kirks of their own towns. Nane shall be admitted without sufficient commission in write." From this it will be seen that the Assembly was the representative, not as now-a-days of the Presbyteries, but of the Provincial Synods and the burghs. Presbyteries did not at this time exist. The second book of Discipline which was adopted in 1578, eighteen years after the first establishment of the Church, makes no mention whatever of these Courts. It says that, "Assemblies are of four sortis. For aither ar they of particular Kirks and congregations ane or ma, or of a province or of a hail nation, or of all and divers nations professing one Jesus Christ." It will be observed that three of these only pertain to the regular constitution of the Church, and that among them the Presbytery is not included.

To speak now more particularly of Presbyteries as another stage of Church developement, we would say that they evidently took their rise from two sources.

1st. From the original constitution of what the second Book of Discipline designates as "the first kind of Assemblies" or Kirk Sessions, which at that time were not only the Elders of one congregation, but of several joined together "to take up the delation of offences, within their own Kirks and bring them to the Assemblies" and which is still known in some parts of Scotland as the "General Session."

2d. From the meeting together of Ministers for religious exercises in regard to which Row in his History says: "The Kirk was strictlie and well governed by Kirk Sessions in everie particulare congregation, then afterwards by Presbyteries in chief towns 20 ministers, or some fewer or more as the bounds about that town could afford with one Elder accompanieing each minister, meeting together every week on a certain day appointed; at which time some portion of Holy Canonick Scripture was opened up and expounded by one of the said ministers, others speaking by course, which was called the Exercise of Prophecieing or in cleptick expression the Exercise of the Ministers. After while "Exercise all matters of discipline belonging to that præcinct or bounds were handled." But these Exercises were at first voluntary meetings, and not untill the fortieth Assembly in 1579 were they recognised as a part of the Church polity. This was done evidently to meet the wants of the Church on the cessation of the office of Superintendent, and on account of the difficulty of convening in these troublous times the diocesan Synod twice every year. It was accordingly enacted, that "The Ministers of the Exercise are judged, a Presbytery in the meanwhile whill (untill) the Policie be established."

This interim arrangement was made permanent by the Assembly which met at Glasgow, in April 1581. For this we are in some measure indebted to King James. At this time he seems to have been greatly pleased with the Kirk and its policie. With his own hand he drew up a public confession of faith, known