

ephemeral existence. (Applause.) The Church of Scotland exists for the working out of broader, if less volatile and high-flying, ideas—to teach religion and charity, to persuade to the practice of morality, and preach the gospel without price to all, holding its ministers independent of the high and of the low, sheltered from pressing cares about the necessities of life, and assured that the means of obtaining them does not straiten the straits of the poor, or place the preacher in the perilous position of being the paid servant and absolute nominee of those to whom he is bound to declare the truth, be it sweet or bitter, regardless alike of their pleasure and their prejudice. (Loud applause.)

Parties having been removed,

Dr. Bisset said that, notwithstanding all he had heard about meetings, and consent, and so forth, the case came before the Court in a comparatively simple form. They had the presentation from the undoubted patron; that presentation was sustained by the Presbytery, who took the usual steps in appointing the presentee to preach in the vacant parish. He did so, and it appeared that he had comparatively few hearers. He (Dr. Bisset) did not wish to say anything of a disparaging character of the parishioners of Dunbog; and he thought the Assembly ought to deal with them very considerably, as they might have been mistaken and misled as to the power of any Church Court to hear such objections as they thought fit to bring forward; he thought he might tell them calmly that these objections were not such as could be maintained under the Benefice Act, with which alone they had to do. Therefore, in his opinion, the judgment of the Presbytery of Cupar was really what he believed almost every Presbytery of the Church must have given under the same circumstances. If these persons were so far misled as to suppose that though they did not go to hear the presentee, they had still a *locus standi* as objectors, it was much to be regretted, because—and he spoke entirely without reference to the character of this presentee—it might be that they would have been able to bring up such a case as this Court could have sustained. (Hear.) It must be so far satisfactory to the Court to hear that this presentee had a good report from those who were without the parish, so that they might augur the best results for his reception there. As to the crown he did not think that a shadow of *mala fides* rested upon it in connection with the present case. Sir George Grey had, no doubt, before presenting Mr. Edgar, ascertained his fitness, and, believing the parish to be divided, felt he made a good selection. Consequences had been predicted of the judgment of the Assembly if adverse to the appellants. These they must leave to a higher power, and have regard only to present duty; but they had the best reason to suppose that if the Court did its duty between the different parties uprightly, firmly, and tenderly, none

of those melancholy results which had been anticipated by some of the speakers at the bar would happen. On many similar occasions results of a disastrous character had been predicted, but those results had very seldom been found to accrue. (Some expressions of dissent.) He would refer for one moment to the case of his late much respected friend Mr. Edwards, minister of Marnoch. In that case the people bound themselves by a vow never to enter the Church if Mr. Edwards was inducted. Now, his friend, laboured there a good many years, and though the people certainly, in consequence of their vow, did not go to hear him on the Lord's Day, he was regarded as the friend and counsellor of the whole parish, and conciliated the respect and admiration of all. At length he opened a place of worship in another part of the parish, and there he could not get a place large enough to contain the people who came. He trusted that the people of Dunbog had made no such rash vow, and that if their loyalty to their Church continued to be such as it had hitherto been, they would soon gather round the ministry of Mr. Edgar, and the present little uproar would be forgotten. (Applause.) Without any hesitation, therefore, he would move that the Assembly dismiss the appeals, affirm the judgment of the Synod of Fife and the Presbytery of Cupar, and instruct the Presbytery to proceed with the settlement of Mr. Edgar with convenient speed, according to the rules of the Church. (Loud applause.) Principal Barclay seconded the motion, which, after some further discussion, was unanimously adopted.

TUESDAY, MAY 26.

INNOVATIONS IN WORSHIP.

The Assembly took up the following overture by the Synod of Aberdeen against innovations:—"Whereas it is alleged that unauthorised changes in the form of public worship have been introduced into some of the congregations of this Church—it is humbly overtured by the Synod of Aberdeen, to the venerable the General Assembly, 1863, to take this subject into consideration, so as to secure, as far as possible, uniformity in the form of public worship within this Church."

Professor Pirie, Aberdeen, addressed the Assembly in support of the overture. He said he regretted that there seemed to be a growing desire for the introduction of small changes—for he must say they were small changes—into the public worship of the Church. He regretted it for this reason—that from all he had read, or heard, or seen, he had never found, in any case that a Church had begun to show a tendency for forms, rites and ceremonies of a very minute kind—he had never seen a Church showing a desire to retrogress, if he might so speak, from a pure and simple worship to a more showy and more complicated worship, and depending on geo-