

POETRY.

THE SABBATH.

BY MRS. SIGOURNEY.

The world is full of toil,
It bids the traveller roam,
It binds the labourer to the soil—
The student to his home.
The beasts of burden sigh,
O'erloaded and oppress—
The Sabbath lifts its banner high,
And gives the weary rest.

The world is full of care,
The haggard brow is wrought
In furrows as of fixed despair,
And check'd the heavenward thought;
But with indignant grace,
The Sabbath's chastening tone
Drives money-changers from the place
Which God doth call his own.

The world is full of grief,
Sorrows o'er sorrows roll,
And the far hope that brings relief
Doth sometimes pierce the soul.
The Sabbath's peaceful bound
Bears mercy's holy seal—
A Balm of Gilead for the wound
That man is weak to heal.

The world is full of sin,
A dangerous flood it rolls,
The unwary to its breast to win,
And whelm unstable souls.
The Sabbath's beacon tells
Of reefs and wrecks below,
And warns, though gay the billows swell,
Beneath are death and woe.

There is a world—where none
With fruitless labour sigh,
Where care awakes no lingering groan,
And grief no agony:
Where sin, with fatal arts,
Hath never forged her chains,
But deep enthroned in angel hearts,
One endless Sabbath reigns.

Ecclesiastical Intelligence.

COMMISSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

On Wednesday the Commission of the General Assembly met in the Tolbooth Church. The attendance of members was unusually numerous, and the galleries were crowded with auditors. The Rev. Dr. Duncan of Ruthwell, Moderator of last General Assembly, having been called to the chair, the meeting was constituted by prayer.

NON-INTRUSION.

It was agreed that the Commission should hear Lord Belhaven's letter, and the report of the Committee on non-intrusion.

The Moderator accordingly read the following letter:—

“Wishaw House, July 31. 1839.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I have just returned from London, and have to inform you that I had the honour of presenting the petitions of the General Assembly (which were intrusted to my care) to the House of Lords.

“I had also the pleasure of expressing to the Queen, on the part of that venerable body, their loyal and dutiful attachment to her Majesty; and I was commanded by her, to convey to you her Royal approbation of the manner in which all the proceedings had been conducted.

“I beg leave at the same time to mention to you, that I had the pleasure of accompanying the deputation to the heads of the Government, and I feel myself entitled to say, that a strong desire was expressed both by Lord Melbourne and Lord John Russell, to effect a satisfactory settlement of the question respecting the presentation of ministers. They both expressed their decided intention of making such arrangements as would enable the Queen's patronage to be exercised according to the veto law; and Lord Melbourne stated that he would instruct the Lord Advocate to confer with the Procurator of the Church on this most important subject, and to draw up the heads of a bill to be laid before the Cabinet as soon as possible, in order that the measure may have full consideration before the next meeting of Parliament. I hope this will be (so far as it has gone) satisfactory to the Church. It is extremely desirable that as much unanimity should exist as can be obtained, and I hope all parties will see the propriety of uniting in order to

effect a satisfactory adjustment of this very important matter.

“I have the honour to remain,

“My dear Sir,

“Very truly and faithfully yours,

“BELHAVEN, &c.

“The Very Rev. the Moderator of the Church of Scotland.”

Dr. CHALMERS then proceeded to read the report of the Assembly's Committee on non-intrusion, as follows:—

“One of the earliest things done by the Committee, was to draw up a brief statement of their views, which, along with a supplementary note, they distributed among the holders of church patronage in Scotland, and members of both houses of Parliament. They had also announced their appointment by the General Assembly, and the object of it, to Her Majesty's Government; and it was in virtue of a communication from Lord Melbourne that they judged it expedient, instead of limiting themselves to a written correspondence, to hold personal interviews both with himself and with others in London.

“The opinion, on all sides, was, that at this advanced period it was now too late to attempt the introduction of any Parliamentary measure during the present session. Notwithstanding, however, of this delay, from the first so likely, that it was scarcely felt to be a disappointment, the deputation flatter themselves that, by the journey to London, a movement has been made in advance towards a satisfactory adjustment of the question at issue; and, after frequent opportunities to converse with the leading men of both parties, they can confidently state, as the result of the whole, that they are more hopeful than ever of matters being brought to a speedy and successful termination.

“First, we can state our having received the assurance of the Government, that they were fully impressed with the importance of the subject, and would give it their most serious consideration, and that they would give instructions to the Lord Advocate to prepare, along with the Procurator, a measure to be submitted to the Cabinet.

“And for those who might desiderate something more definite, and as they perhaps feel, more substantial than this, we have the satisfaction of announcing, if not yet a specific measure by the Legislature, at least a specific and most important concession to the views of the Church on the part of the Government. They have authorised us to state, that in the disposal of those livings which are at the nomination of the Crown, its patronage will most certainly be exercised in accordance with the existing law of the Church, a resolution which applies to nearly one-third of the parishes of Scotland. But we reckon on a good deal more than this. We deem ourselves to have good grounds for believing, of the great majority of our patrons, that they will not be outdone by the Government—either in a kind and liberal consideration for the difficulties, or in a deferential respect for the laws of the Church of Scotland. If, in the course of our manifold conversations, there be one sentiment whereof we have heard more frequent utterance than another, it is a longing desire for the settlement of this question; the earnest and anxious hope, that the unhappy difference now pending between the Civil and Ecclesiastical Courts may soon be terminated; and along with this, the most generous admission, that, in every exercise of Church patronage, regard should be had to the honestly expressed wish of every religious and right-minded congregation. The general and obvious disposition of those patrons to whom we have had access, is to view the power, wherewith they are invested, not so much with the feeling of its being their patrimonial right, or their property, as with the feeling of its being a grave and responsible trust, placed in their hands for the Christian good of the people. With such an experience, we cannot doubt of having such an amount of acquiescence on the part of the patrons, in the views of the Church, upon this question, as will greatly smooth the remaining difficulties in our way, and, more especially, will facilitate the consent of Parliament to the civil sanction which we now seek to obtain for our own legislation on the non-intrusion of ministers. In thus presenting our correspondence with patrons, we follow the very recommendations given to us by the Premier, in one of the recent conversations which we held with him. And the result, we are glad to say, has, as far as we have gone, been hopeful and satisfactory. It were premature to make any disclosure of instances or names—but we are confident that, when the whole truth is known, we shall be fully borne out in the assertion, that many are the holders of our patronage, and that, too, in the highest walks of society, who with an enlightened regard to the best interests both of the Church and of the country are now favouring your Committee with a countenance, a co-operation, and an aid, which, when the time comes for placing it before the public view, will

earn for them the grateful and heartfelt acknowledgements of every true patriot.

“So much for the progress we have made, and are yet making, among the patrons. In regard to our progress among members of the Legislature in both Houses, it will at once be acknowledged that after our interviews with the Government and with leading statesmen, it was our most natural attempt, and rightly the next in order, to hold converse with those senators from Scotland, who might be deemed most familiar with the principles of our Church and the feelings of our people. And we have the satisfaction of saying, not only that there is a strong and general desire for an adjustment—a desire the very existence of which is the likeliest precursor to its own fulfilment; but more specific than this, a goodly number of instances, and that too, among the most influential of our Scottish representatives, who understand enough of our ecclesiastical constitution to know and to acknowledge, that the principle of non-intrusion must be provided for—a check in the judgment of the Church and will of the people against that unlimited power on the part of the patrons, which has been recently claimed for them in high places. When we consider the weight of such testimony from such a quarter, we feel enough to convince us, that the system of unqualified and unrestricted nominations wherewith we have been threatened, can no more be sanctioned by Parliament, than it can be tolerated by the country at large.

“It will not be expected of us, in the yet unfinished, and necessarily immature, state of our proceedings, that we can be more particular. Suffice it to say, in one word, that after much intercourse, both with the highest functionaries of the State, and many of the highest standing and name in public affairs, it is our firm persuasion, that, if we but prosecute and sustain our part rightly here, there exists no insuperable obstacle there, to the happy settlement of this question. We have every prospect of obtaining a large and liberal consent on the part of the patrons. And we cannot doubt that there will be a full expression of sentiment on the part of the community; that the people will make known their wishes to the Legislature; and that, for the liberties of a Church dear to Scotland, a call will be lifted up from its towns and parishes which our rulers will not fail to listen to.—With such helps and encouragements on our side, let but the adherents of this cause remain firm and united in principle among themselves; and, with the favour of an approving God, any farther contest will be given up as unavailing; when, let us fondly hope, all the feelings of party, whether of triumph on the one side, because of victory, or of humiliation on the other side, because of defeat, shall be merged and forgotten in the desires of a common patriotism—to the re-assurance of all who are the friends of our Establishment—to the utter confusion of those enemies who watch for our halting, and would rejoice in our overthrow.”

NATIONAL EDUCATION.

Dr. MUIR then proceeded to read the reference from the General Assembly's Committee for directing education in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. The reference bore that the Committee had resolved to transmit their opinion to the Commission on the system of national education proposed by her Majesty's Ministers. The Committee viewed the system with great alarm, because it was to be conducted by a Board whose powers were undefined and arbitrary—because the ministers of the Established Church, and all ministers of the Gospel, were interdicted from any share in the superintendence of the national schools—because a separation was drawn between secular and religious instruction, so that the peculiar doctrines of Christianity were excluded—because the supplemental proposal in the plan, that pastors should have hours after school, was delusive, wrong in principle, and calculated to promote the cause of infidelity since there were many children whose parents were not connected with any religious denomination, and to make provision for disseminating any opinions, even the deadly errors of Popery or Socinianism, was a sinful application of the revenue of the State and calculated to draw down the judgements of the Almighty God—because the Committee viewed with great alarm the introduction of a system, which was the reverse of that established in the Bible Schools of Scotland—a system which, if it prevail, must discredit the Bible, and raise up a generation that know not God; and the Committee therefore felt it their duty to transmit to the Commission the expression of their fears on this important subject, and to submit that the Commission should take it into their most serious consideration. The Rev. Doctor then proceeded to say that the second reference related to an application from the Treasury, which the Committee were unanimous in considering as calculated to excite serious injury.

The Rev. Doctor concluded by making a motion to the effect, that the Commission should present an address to the Queen, and petitions to both houses