

## II. IMPRESSIONS OF U. S. ASSEMBLIES

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The General Assemblies of the three largest Presbyterian Churches in the U. S. A. met in Atlanta, Ga., from May 14 to 18, 1913. Having been a commissioner from the Presbytery of Oakland, California, to the northern Assembly, the editor of the Westminster Hall Magazine has asked me to write an article on these meetings with special reference to the subject of the progress being made in the matter of a closer union between these bodies.

However desirable organic union may be to be effective, it must be harmonious and not merely mechanical, and so it should be a matter of spiritual growth more than of mere ecclesiastical action.

There are twelve branches of the Presbyterian church in the U. S. A. in which there are 16,711 churches, 13,396 ministers and 1,944,000 members. The largest of these is the Presbyterian church in the U. S. A. (usually called the northern), which has 9,000 ministers and 1,380,000 members. The next largest is the Presbyterian church in the U. S. (known as the Southern) which has 1,712 ministers and 293,000 members. The third is the United Presbyterian Church of North America with 1,010 ministers and 178,000 members. The synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian church holds its annual meetings in the autumn and it sent chosen delegates to represent that church on this occasion. This body has 106 ministers and 14,000 members. There were about 1,500 commissioners present from all these churches, 859 of whom were of the Northern Church, while the attendants at the meetings of the Women's Home and Foreign Mission Societies, and other friends, swelled the whole number of visitors to about 5,000. This was the largest gathering of Presbyterians in such a capacity ever held in the United States, and will have historic interest in the future.

The meeting of these three Assemblies in one place and at the same time was by special pre-arrangement. The desire in the hearts of the ministers and members of the Presbyterian Churches in Atlanta for a closer union and warmer fellowship among themselves led to the invitation being given to these Assemblies to hold simultaneous meetings in Atlanta, and these invitations were most gladly accepted. The avowed object was not for the purpose of endeavoring