

our services, and I had the privilege of administering to them, with the rest of my flock, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It is impossible to speak in terms sufficiently high of their devotedness. "The Lord has done great things for them, and it is marvellous in our eyes." If I can make myself further useful, pray do not hesitate to write to me. I am, dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

M. JOHN MATHERS.

Had I forgotten to mention that, on Saturday last, they were summoned to the Prefecture, and in the lengthened conversation which the Prefect had with them, he stated, with much emphasis, that they were indebted to the French Government for their liberation. Can that really be so?

**RELEASE OF THE MADIAI ACCOUNTED FOR.**—The facts relating to the release of the Madiai have been felt to be incomplete, while it was unknown by whose intervention that result was effected, and especially while the English public remained in ignorance of the reason for the French Emperor appearing upon the stage when the captives were liberated, and not till then. We are happy to be able to supply the required information. The Grand Duke of Tuscany had been so importuned from all quarters about the Madiai, that he and still more his Government, were most anxious to get rid of the subject; but they did not like to yield to Lord John Russell's monacés. Meantime, it appears that the ex-Duke of Parma, who abdicated some time since in favour of his son, and who is now out of Italy, had been led to feel a warm interest about the Madiai, together with a strong sense of the impolicy, as regards the church, of such gross persecutions. In these feelings his son, the reigning Duke, was led to participate, and the week before the liberation of the Madiai, our countryman, Mr. Ward, who is become the most confidential and useful agent of his Government, was sent over from Parma to Florence on the subject. He found the Court of Florence in the state of feeling above alluded to, vowing, however, that they could not, and would not, yield to England. Mr. Ward, with Yorkshire good sense, suggested that France should be induced to make the request, and that the concession should then be made to France. This was done. France did apply; and to France the concession was made. The only object of Tuscany was to get out of an untenable and disgraceful position, with as little loss of dignity as possible. There is no love lost in the matter. Our Christianity does not require us to be hoodwinked about this.

Tuscany is making pretty speeches just now to the Madiai, about their being at liberty to go to Piedmont. After a long correspondence between France and Tuscany, it has been intimated to the Madiai, that as they have behaved so well, and sought no omissions, their passport shall be issued for Piedmont. What possible right has Tuscany to meddle in the matter? If the King of Sardinia chooses to receive them, what affair is it of any one? It makes us indignant to hear persecutors taking credit to themselves for that over which they have no control. If the Grand Duke is sincerely anxious to show real consideration to his persecuted subjects, with behaved well under unjust treatment, let him liberate Guarducci. He will be obliged to do it at last; and it would be more politic to do it soon.

SIR. C. E. EARDLY says, I rejoice to congratulate our friends on the liberation of the Madiai. In looking back upon all the events connected with this result, I cannot but see the blessing of God visibly resting on Christian union. Nothing but the combination of believers of all nations is strong enough to encounter the newly-roused phalanx of universal Popery. This international union the Evangelical Alliance, and no other existing institution, has brought into operation. I will illustrate this statement from the Madiai case.

The circumstances of their liberation appear to have been as little honourable to the Tuscan Government as their previous detention. They were suddenly taken out of their respective prisons—ono or both of them in their prison dress. They were hurried down to Leghorn, and put on board the steamer, where they met, for the first time, and where they were detained for twenty-four hours before the vessel sailed. No notification was given to our Minister at Florence. He heard, for the first time, of their liberation from Mr. McBean, our consul at Leghorn. Their passport was made out, and their places taken, by order of the Government, under a false name! The Minister of France, in Tuscany, M. de Gabriac, if I am not misinformed, went with them from Leghorn to Marsailles. They are now in the midst of our friends there, who have shown them the warmest sympathy.

The object of the Tuscan Government seems to have been to prevent any publicity of the fact and any manifestations of interest. In this they have failed. By a train of circumstances which I am not at liberty to mention, the liberation, the fraud about the name, the confinement on board the vessel, were all known before the steamer sailed; and the only effect upon the public mind will be to show that the Government is ashamed of its own deed; that it knows the feelings of the population to be in favour of the persecuted Gospel, and that it is afraid of that feeling being exhibited. As for preventing publicity, the captives only sailed from Leghorn on Wednesday, and on Friday afternoon Lord John Russell made his announcement to the House of Commons. The enemies of religious freedom may rest assured that they can neither hinder the triumphs of that principle, nor the notoriety of their own defeats. The electric telegraph, the press, and the liberties of England will, by God's blessing, be too much for them:

## UNITED PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD.

The Synod of the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland, opened its Sessions on May 2nd, in the Synod House, Queen Street, Edinburgh.

After a sermon by the retiring Moderator, the Rev. Mr. Renton, Kelso, the Synod proceeded to make choice of a successor. The Rev. J. S. Taylor, Glasgow; the Rev. Professor M'Michael, Dunfermline; and the Rev. George Johnson, Edinburgh, were severally nominated and seconded. The Rev. Dr. Peddie, Edinburgh, was also proposed, but declined the honour.

The vote having been taken, the election fell upon Mr. Johnson, who had 40 votes, Mr. Taylor having 28, and Professor M'Michael 27.

An overture from the Presbytery of Glasgow with reference to the choosing of the Moderator of Synod, was then taken up. It proposed that the Moderator should be elected at the Wednesday meeting of the year previous to that in which he has to serve.

Dr. STRUTHERS, who was heard in support of the overture, advanced several arguments in favour of the proposed alteration, the principal of these being that the Moderator should have time to prepare for the exercise of his important functions.

Dr. M'KERRON proposed that the present system of election should be continued.

This proposition on a division, was carried by a very large majority. The Marriage Law came before the court on a protest and appeal by Mrs. Mather, against a deed of the Presbytery of Glasgow, confirming a sentence of the Session of Cathedral Street Congregation in her case. Dr. Struthers and Mr. Jeffrey represented the Presbytery of Glasgow. Mrs. Mather was not present, but a letter signed by her was read, stating that, from the effects of a very severe cold, she was unable to appear at the bar to attend to her appeal; but that even although she had been able to attend, and if her feelings had been so scared that she could have addressed such a large assemblage of gentlemen in support of her appeal, she could not be heard, inasmuch as the Scriptures forbade women to speak in public. If, however, the court would allow Mr. J. Mitchell, a member of the United Presbyterian Church, who was attending the Synod on business of his own, to do so, she would feel grateful, and leave the matter in his hands.

On a division, Mr. Mitchell was allowed to appear on behalf of the appellant. From this statement, and the papers read, it appeared that Mrs. Mather, a member of Dr. Lindsay's congregation, in Glasgow, had married her deceased husband's brother, and that on her applying to the kirk-session to baptise their child, baptism had been refused, and she had been cut off from communion with the church. She alleged, in defence, the irregularity of the session's proceedings, and the fact that no one tried to convince her that she was living in sin, or that such a marriage as that which she had contracted was contrary to the word of God—her opinion being that it was actually sanctioned in the Bible. Her "reasons" also entered largely into the question of the propriety of marriages of this description, and maintained that they were in accordance with the law of Scotland, though contrary to that of England; stating, moreover, that she had no fear of being brought before the High Court of Justiciary or of the legitimacy of her children.

Dr. LINDSAY was also heard on the case. He stated that, as moderator of the session, he had repeated interviews with Mrs. Mather, and had given her to understand that her marriage was in opposition to the principles of the United Presbyterian Church, and in his view opposed to the word of God. He had not, however, heard of the marriage till some time after it had taken place. Dr. Lindsay also stated that Mrs. Mather had always stood high in his esteem, and that irrespective of this marriage, he knew of nothing that could be alleged against her. This was the reason why some reluctance had been felt to come to an ultimate decision on the case; although at the same time, there was no doubt whatever as to what that decision must have been.

Dr. EADIE, said that the Confession of Faith forbade the marriage now in question, and that as that Confession was embodied in the law of Scotland, the marriage must therefore be in opposition to the law of this country. He then entered into a learned discussion of the subject, and concluded by saying that he did not see how the kirk-session or Presbytery could have acted otherwise than it had done.

Dr. BAIN then moved that the appeal should be dismissed, and the judgment of the Presbytery affirmed, which was unanimously agreed to.

The Court proceeded to take up a report by a committee on the better support of the Gospel Ministry. This report entered at some length into the subject referred to the committee, and concluded by submitting the following resolutions for the adoption of the Synod.—1. That as a large majority of Presbyteries and Sessions have again reported in favour of a minimum stipend of £150, exclusive of a manse, while a considerable number suggest that £120 should, in the meantime, be named, as more easily attainable—the Synod take immediate steps to raise all the stipends of the church to at least £120, but that £150 be kept in view as the minimum stipend ultimately to be realised. 2. That, as many congregations at present under £120 are quite able, without extraneous aid, to give that stipend, and as many above £120, but below £150, are equally able to realise the latter sum, the Synod instruct the committee that may be appointed to correspond with these congregations, with the view of bringing the matter under their serious consideration; and as operation through the medium of deputations has been recommended by some portions of the Church, the committee be empowered to adopt that course where it is regarded as expedient. 3. That in order to carry out the