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THE EASTERN SECTION.

A VERY large number of members attended a meeting of the Section, held in Glasgow last June, when several important matters were under consideration.

It was reported by the General Secretary that, in the interests of the Alliance, he had attended the Supreme Courts of nine of the Churches within the British Isles, and had, on all occasions, been cordially received. It was also reported, that nearly all of the British Churches have now adopted the proposal that emanated from the London Council of 1888, of observing a season of special prayer on behalf of Foreign Missions, during the last week of November.

On the proposal of the Glasgow Local Committee it was agreed, That next meeting of the Council be held in that city during the closing days of September, 1896, the precise date to be determined after communication with the Western Section.

It was also agreed, That, as the triennial meeting of the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church of Cape Colony will be held next October, the General Secretary be instructed to attend that meeting, and to present to its members the fraternal salutations of the Churches of the Alliance. He was also instructed to visit as many of the Mission stations in that part of the Continent as he may be able to reach, especially the Synod of the native congregations of the French Bassouto Mission, the Swiss Romande Mission at Lorenzo Marques on Delagoa Bay, and the Scottish Free and United Presbyterian Missions in Kaffraria and Natal. As a number of presbyterian congregations of British origin are scattered up and down the country, he was further instructed to learn the circumstances of these, and to see if in any way Presbyterial organisations might not be established among them.

(In consequence of the above appointment, Dr. Mathews will leave London on 28th July, and will probably not be back to his

office until the end of November. Under these circumstances, the Section agreed, that delay in the publishing of the next number of the *Quarterly Register* was unavoidable.)

CIVIL MARRIAGE IN HUNGARY.

OUR readers have no doubt followed with great interest the late battle in Hungary, over a measure brought in by the Prime Minister, providing for a civil ceremony in connection with the observance of marriages in that country. That bill was, however, after all, little more than an occasion for the coming to the surface of a conflict which has long been going on, and is becoming more and more acute every day. To understand the real nature of the late struggle, we must, therefore, bear certain things in mind. Hitherto, marriage in Hungary has been a matter within the supervision of each of the Churches. The Roman Catholics, regarding it as a religious rite, had laid down certain laws and regulations for its observance by members of their community, and then declared that all marriages not so observed were illegal before the State, because illegal before the Church. In due time the question of marriage was made with Protestants also a matter of church legislation, the State accepting the law and practice of the Protestant Churches in reference to the marriages of Protestants. There thus came to be as many marriage laws in Hungary as there were religious bodies, while, in many cases, a marriage legal according to one Church was not legal according to another. All this confusion, springing out of the dogmatic position of the Roman Catholic Church, became at length intolerable, and a Bill was introduced requiring a civil marriage in the presence of a state official, thus securing a uniform marriage law. Each Church was left all its previous freedom in reference to any religious ceremony, but hereafter, the State, in determining the question as to whether a certain man was married or not, would respect the

"camp meeting." It will be held in a rural district, while a local committee will furnish tents, bedding, cooking vessels, &c., &c., and everything required for a week's "camping out" for a fixed charge. Members may bring their own tents, &c., the local committee doing all in its power to provide supplies of food, and other necessaries. A veritable revival of the wilderness journeyings of the Israelites !)

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

met in Eugene, Oregon, May 17th, when the Rev. Dr. Earle, Arkansas, was chosen Moderator. On the call of the roll, the name of Mrs. L. M. Woosley was objected to, on the ground that the constitution of the Church did not permit the ordination of a woman. The matter having been referred to the Judicial Committee was afterwards discussed at length. The Committee reported that the ordination of a woman to the ministry was contrary to Scripture, to the Confession, and to the practise of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and that, therefore, Mrs. Woosley had no right to a seat in any Church court. A minority based their defence of her right to a seat in the Assembly on the ground, that ordination to the ministry is a matter exclusively within the province of a presbytery; that the Assembly was bound to accept whom it might delegate; that it was open to the Assembly to instruct the Synod as to any further action that might be taken, but until this was done, that she was entitled to a seat as the presbytery intended that she should have. The majority report was afterwards carried by a vote of 87 to 78. It was then agreed to recognise Mrs. Woosley as a lay evangelist, and to commend her as such to the Churches. The connected proposal of altering the constitution so as to admit of women being elected deacons or elders was, under the circumstances, dropped. The Foreign Mission report showed missions carried on in Japan, where there are three ordained missionaries, with a communicant membership of 617; the same number of agents in Mexico, and two among the Choctaw Indians, with an income of about twenty thousand dollars, including, however, more than seven thousand dollars from the Women's Board. The Board urged the Assembly to commence mission work both in China and in Africa. The Women's Mis-

sionary Board, being a separate Committee, sent two of its members, ladies, to report on its behalf, when it was stated that during the forty-two years' existence of the Assembly's Board, it had sent out only eleven foreign missionaries, while the Women's Board, during its fourteen years of existence, had sent out an equal number. By a unanimous vote, the Assembly resolved to adhere to the present name of the Church. The Temperance report was a very outspoken document, and among other things, urged that ministers should avoid the use of tobacco. In reference to the Christian Endeavour movement, the Assembly recommended denominational rather than union work, and strenuously held that each society should be under the control of the Church session. By a vote of 80 to 49 the Assembly declined to fall in with the proposed scheme for Church Federation, but afterwards appointed a small committee to report respecting it to the next Assembly.

THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD, U.S.A.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR D. B. WILLSON,
ALLEGHENY, PA.

THIS Synod met in Philadelphia, Pa., May 30—June 6. Rev. J. C. McFesters was Moderator.

There were signs of life and energy in the prosecution of the work of the Church, and of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the unanimity with which the forward steps were undertaken.

MISSIONS.—Attention was called in the report of the Board of Foreign Missions, to the closing of the schools in Cilicia and Syria, by the Turkish authorities, and in this connection the following action was taken:—

"That Synod send a delegation to Washington D.C., for the purpose of seeking such official action in behalf of those United States citizens representing us in the Turkish Empire, as shall secure them from invidious discrimination against them in regard to their rights, confirmed to them in the Berlin Treaty."

Mention was made in the same report of the visit of Rev. Dr. G. D. Mathews, the Secretary of the Alliance, to these mission fields, and of his kindly aid in London in seeking from the British Government its influence to secure treaty rights as above.

Two of the younger ministry were chosen

missionaries to China, and as the funds are on hand to begin the work, it is likely this new mission will be commenced, unless some unexpected difficulty occur.

Mission work was reported among the Jews in Philadelphia and Cincinnati. Moses Greenberg, a convert from Cilicia, is in charge of the work in Philadelphia.

REFORMS.—The testimony of this Church found expression in several ways. We specify:—The Temperance report declared—“Our Church will continue to throw the whole weight of its influence on the side of total abstinence and prohibition.” The report on Secrecy had this resolution—“That we continue to bear testimony by word and deed against this great and growing evil.” The Synod also protested “against the admission of Utah to the sisterhood of States.” Rev. A. J. McFarland was chosen to devote his time to pressing on the people the sin of the present secular State, in its divorce from religion and non-acceptance of the law of Christ.

MEETING IN SCOTLAND.—Steps have been taken to hold a Covenanter Assembly, previous to the meeting of the Alliance in 1896. Action has been taken by the Covenanter Synod of Scotland for a meeting in Glasgow to last four days, with the aim also to add other days of special outdoor services at such places of historic interest as Drumclog and Ayrsmoss. The American Synod has endorsed the plan, and arrangements are in progress.

THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE REFORMED CHURCH OF AMERICA

met in Asbury Park, on 6th June, when the Rev. Dr. E. A. Collier, Kinderhook, N.Y., was chosen Moderator, while an elder, Austin Scott, Esq., LL.D., was chosen as Vice-President. The Synod resolved, that that version of the Heidelbergh Catechism, which had been approved by the Synod of Dort in 1618, should be regarded as the one authorised for use in the Church. It also decided, that in the election of a theological professor, each classis (or presbytery) should have the right of nominating one candidate for such office, the Synod itself to nominate three, and then, that out of the whole number, the election should be made by ballot. The Synod approved, by a vote of 83 to 81, of the proposed scheme of Church Federation. The Foreign Mission income amounted to 106,571 dollars, leaving only about 1,900 dollars to be added to the debt. In the

face of this, Synod determined to increase its staff of agents, and to ask the Churches next year for 140,000 dollars, the growth and the needs on the foreign field being now so great. The Mission to Arabia was accepted by the Mission Board as one of its regular missions, its support however, to come, as at present, from its own circle of friends. The Synod held itself not competent to comply with the request of the classis of Holland, or to take any action in reference to the Rev. Dr. De Witt, he not being under its jurisdiction. (Dr. DeWitt had lately published a work on Inspiration, in which he explained Inspiration to be “a special energy of the Spirit of God upon the mind and heart of selected and prepared human agents, which stimulates and assists them to the clear discernment and faithful utterance of truth and fact, and, when necessary, brings within their range truth or fact which could not otherwise have been known.” To prevent any misunderstanding as to its position, the Synod declared its adherence to “the direct and plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture as the Word of God.”)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CANADA

met at St. John, N.B., on 18th June, when the Rev. Dr. Mackay, missionary from Formosa, was chosen Moderator. Considerable time was spent respecting a “Common Book of Praise” to be prepared in concert with committees of the Church of Scotland, the Free and U.P. Churches, and the Presbyterian Church of England. The conclusion of the matter was, the resolving by the Assembly that this book should contain:—1. The whole of the metrical versions now in use. 2. Selections from the prose version, arranged for chanting. 3. Selections from the existing and other metrical versions of the Psalms. 4. Hymns approved by the Assembly; and 5. A collection of Scripture sentences. The Home Mission report was, as usual, full of interest. No fewer than 765 preaching stations in the great North-West are now maintained by the missionaries of the Church, which, in its work, knows no nationality, but in faith, pledges itself to the evangelisation of the country. Much aid has been received from Great Britain, but there is still need of more. The Foreign Mission Committee presented its Jubilee report, the Rev. Dr. Geddies having