

DISESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

BROOKLYN, Dec. 28th, 1877.

The Editor of the Scottish-American Journal:—

SIR:—In a brief paragraph recently published in the SCOTTISH-AMERICAN JOURNAL it has been stated that Dean Stanley is about to enter into the controversy respecting the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland, and that he will propose, as the first instalment, the disendowment of the parish churches in the Highlands. I have had several paragraphs in other papers; and perhaps there is some truth in them. At any rate there has lately been a large meeting in Glasgow in which strong expression was given by the speakers against the old Church; and it was stated that the Marquis of Hartington had said that he was not unfavourable to a movement for the disestablishment of the Scotch State Church first, as there were few difficulties in the way of dealing with that question, whereas there were many difficult problems to be solved concerning the English Church.

I trust that Dean Stanley has more good sense than to come before the public as a revolutionist of the Scotch Church. It would be a piece of impertinent interference on the part of any clergyman of the Church of England to do so. It is well for ministers of the Gospel, and all others, to remember the sacred advice "Take the beam out of thine own eye before thou pullest the mote out of thy brother's eye." I was a member of a dissenting church when in Scotland, and I think, in a general sense, that Church and State should not be united. At the same time, I have a strong affection for the old mother Church of Scotland. I cannot forget that one of its ministers was my first schoolmaster, and that my parents were members of the church of that parish in Paisley where the eminent John Witherspoon had been minister before he came to America. With fond recollection I would, therefore, urge upon the people of Scotland great caution and charity anent the disestablishment of the old Church. Although the salaries of the ministers are paid by a tax on property, yet these

salaries are so small, that they are not oppressive to the people. Then, again, the doctrines of the Church are those of nine-tenths of the population; and, in this respect, it is a national Church. Again, the people who are communicants now elect their minister, so that it is ecclesiastically, as well as doctrinally, the people's Church.

I believe there are more difficulties in the way of disestablishing the Church of Scotland than many persons suppose; or that persons like Dean Stanley, the Marquis of Hartington, and C. Cameron, M. P. of Glasgow, who are Episcopalians, know about. The general idea of the Scotch Church as sustained by the State, is, that all the ministers are paid by an annual tax upon the real estate in Scotland, and that all that has to be done to disendow the Church is simply to abolish the tax for the stipends of the ministers. But there are some very intricate questions about property connected with the Church, which it will be difficult to deal with. There are the churches, the manses, and glebes; and not only the glebes common, but extraordinary; and respecting which there is a general want of information, even among Members of Parliament. It would be easy to deal with the churches and the manses, by giving them up to the State Church as a denomination; but how would the Marquis of Hartington, or those politicians who lately met in Glasgow to demand Disestablishment, deal with the glebes? Take, for example, the extraordinary glebe of Wilton, in Roxburghshire. It is eighty acres in extent, exclusive of a common glebe of sixteen acres. How will the politicians deal with this property, especially as there is no record of its being granted to the Church? It has been a glebe beyond the memory of man, and is only supposed to have been granted by one of the lairds of Langlands. This large glebe is near the manse, and is called the *infield*; the small glebe, or *outfield*, is two miles distant. In other parishes, unknown to me, there may be like difficulties. Were the Church disendowed, should this large glebe not be retained justly by the Church? It does not belong to the State.

When I consider what the Church of Scotland has done for the people, and