

the fifty-seven rectories, has completely changed the aspect of the question. It is understood that every rector possesses all the spiritual and other privileges enjoyed by an English Rector; and that though he may have no right to levy tithes (for even this has been made a question,) he is in all other respects in precisely the same position as a clergyman of the established church of England. This is regarded by all other teachers of religion in the country as having at once degraded them to a position of legal inferiority to the clergy of the church of England; and it has been resented most warmly. In the opinion of many persons this was the chief predisposing cause of the recent insurrection, and it is an abiding and unabated cause of discontent. Nor is this to be wondered at. The church of England in Upper Canada, by numbering in its ranks all those who belong to no other sect, represents itself as being more numerous than any single denomination of Christians in the country. Even admitting, however, the justice of the principle upon which this enumeration proceeds, and giving that church credit for all that it thus claims, its number could not amount to one-third, probably not a fourth, of the population. It is not, therefore, to be expected that the other sects, three at least of whom, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the Catholics, claim to be individually more numerous than the Church of England, should acquiesce quietly in the supremacy thus given it. And it is equally natural that the English dissenters and Irish Catholics, remembering the position which they have occupied at home, and the long and painful struggle through which alone they have obtained the imperfect equality they now possess, should refuse to acquiesce for themselves in the creation of a similar establishment in their new country, and thus to bequeath to their children a strife as arduous and embittered as that from which they have so recently and imperfectly escaped.

But for this act, it would have been possible, though highly impolitic, to have allowed the clergy reserves to remain upon their former undetermined and unsatisfactory footing. But the question as to the application of this property must now be settled, if it is intended that the province is to be free from violent and perilous agitation. Indeed, the whole controversy, which had been in a great measure suspended by the insurrection, was, in the course of last summer, revived with more heat than ever by the most inopportune arrival in the colony of opinions given by the British law officers of the Crown in favour of the legality of the establishment of the rectories. Since that period the question has again absorbed public attention; and it is quite clear that it is upon this practical point that issue must sooner or later be joined on all the constitutional questions to which I have previously adverted. I am well aware that there are not wanting some who represent the agitation of this question as merely the result of its present unsettled character, and who assert, that if the claims of the English church to the exclusive enjoyment of this property were established by the Imperial Parliament, all parties, however loud their pretensions, or however vehement their first complaints, would peaceably acquiesce in an arrangement which would then be inevitable. This might be the case if the establishment of some dominant church were inevitable. But it cannot be necessary to point out that, in the immediate vicinity of the United States, and with their example before the people of Canada, no injustice, real or fancied, occasioned and supported by a British rule, would be regarded in this light. The result of any determination on the part of the British government or Legislature to give one sect a predominance and superiority would be, it might be feared, not to secure the favoured sect, but to endanger the loss of the colony, and, in vindicating the exclusive pretensions of the English church, to hazard one of the