

I.

THE SCHISM IN SCOTLAND.

Of the events which preceded the schism in Canada, I shall speak as briefly as possible, yet they cannot be dismissed in a few sparkling phrases, even if I had the talent so to compress them. For many years the Church of Scotland was, in ecclesiastical matters, paramount in her own country. There were other religious bodies, it is true, but they were weak in numbers and influence. As a consequence of this state of things, certain abuses had crept in, and a coldness and apathy existed on the part of too many, laity as well as clergy. Nor is this remarkable. The history of all religious bodies, which have become too powerful to dread control or to fear opposition, proves the rule to be universal. But a new element entered into the mass. The Reform Bill of 1832 roused into more vigorous action the Voluntaries, Dissenters, and other seceding bodies of Presbyterians. The names I use to describe these are not given out of disrespect, such being the titles by which they themselves chose to be known. They believed, that the extension of the suffrage afforded them an opportunity of attacking the Church of Scotland, and of having her disestablished. They united, therefore, for this purpose, but for no other, until some fifteen years after, when they formed what is now known as the United Presbyterian Church. The attack naturally roused the members of the Church of Scotland to defence, and prominent among the defenders were to be found a number of young ministers, who in many respects closely resembled the Ritualists of the Church of England. There was the same fiery zeal, not always tempered with discretion; the same priestly assumption; the same exalted idea of the respect which was due by others to the office they held; the same belief that they were the chosen of the earth, and that all civil and social laws must bend to their authority. What gave power to both was their evident sincerity and energy;