

genious and shifty in argumentation from its beginning. It has accomplished feats of tortuous logic which have made it often a laughing-stock to broad and candid religious minds. But in trying to make out the position of the Church of Scotland to be a cause of irritation to Dissenters, it has almost excelled itself; and that Radical politicians should have taken up this line, shows to what dire necessities they are driven. How they must laugh in their sleeves while taking up the howl of a jealous bigotry, which has become insensate in its hatred of an institution which lives and thrives notwithstanding all their dislike of it.

Let it be remembered that all the opposition to a religious census in Scotland in 1861 and 1871 came from the Dissenters; that while the Dissenters have had the making up of their own numbers, and the amount of their liberality, the statistics which represent the Church of Scotland are Government returns; and that the Church has not even now thought it necessary to bring forth in tabulated results the full strength either of its membership or its liberality. The latent strength of the Church in both directions is far more than that of any other ecclesiastical body in Scotland. Not only so, but—even taking numbers as an absolute test—an institution like the Church of Scotland is to be judged by the number, not merely of its own members, but of all who approve of the principle of a State Church, which it represents. All we make bold to say is that not even the wildest Radical imagination in the House of Commons will venture to affirm that there is a majority of the people of Scotland opposed to this principle—nay, that there is not a large majority in favour of it. So confident are we of this, that nothing would please us better than to see the question put to the popular vote. Let those who prate so much about Disestablishment venture to do this. They know as well as we do what the result would be.

But it is now time to present the letter and statistics, with the notice of which this article began. The letter was written to the 'Times' in London in the end of June, but did not appear till July 6, under the title of—

THE SCOTCH CHURCHES.

SIR,—Your readers. I am afraid, will be tired of the question of the Scotch Churches; and I have been reluctant to trouble you further after the notice you have already taken of my address at the close of the late General Assembly, and what I then said of the impolicy of the Liberal Party raising the question of disestablishment. It is very important, however, that mistakes should not prevail in England as to the relative numbers of the Church of Scotland and the two Presbyterian Nonconformist Churches which exist alongside of it. Notwithstanding the repeated assertions made in the course of the recent debate in the House of Commons that the Established Church is the "Church of minority"—assertions for which, as your correspondent of last Wednesday, "A Scottish Peer," truly says, there was "in no case any authority given."—I believe that the Church of Scotland at this date really represents a considerable majority of the Scottish people. It may be true that the number of its places of worship is not quite so large as those of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches combined; but the following statement, which has been carefully prepared, and which is self-authenticating, is sufficient to prove the statement which I have made as to its relative membership.

I do not add a word on the general question; but as there is no politician who can desire to be otherwise than correctly informed on such a point, and as the influence of your journal is justly so wide, I venture to hope that you will find room to submit the statement to your readers.—I am your obedient servant.

June 27

JOHN TULLOCH.