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a Liberal Member of Parliament, occupied seats behind the young Nonconformist, whose subject, "*Church, Chapel, and State*," had appealed to a large number of persons whose interests, as a rule, seemed mutually destructive. Firmalden was a speaker of the first rank: his voice, his delivery, his persuasive, earnest manner always commanded attention. Yet the audience had collected in an unfriendly mood. Lessard, who had a long experience of the public, felt an evil spirit in the air the moment he entered the building. The listeners were not cold or indifferent—it was not a case where the speaker, by his own force, could stir up latent enthusiasm. It was a case where the sullen majority, well set on ignoring any possible instinct of fair play within themselves, had come to deaden a man's words. They moved, they sneered silently, they looked about, they scratched their cheeks, they yawned, they did not pretend to listen. For the first fifteen minutes, Lessard wondered whether Firmalden could possibly hold his own against two thousand ill-natured and prejudiced souls. But without any visible effort, and by the power of his religious faith rather than by any common vitality, Firmalden arrested their attention. He could not win them to the justice of his views—for they lacked alike the education to understand them and the willingness to have them explained; but he asserted unforgettably the principle which teaches, that a man's power depends on the strength of his conviction, not on the number of his followers.