

* * * It has very usually, but, from the pressure and variety of my public occupations, I may say unavoidably occurred, that in bringing out (if at any length) matter which I had occasion to prepare for the press, I have had to render explanations for being rather after-date. Nearly six weeks have now elapsed since I sat down to the task of preparing the following letter, and although, (with the reservation of some corrections to be made here and there,) it was soon afterwards brought to its close, it has been lying by me and almost lost sight of, in my attention to other matters, some of which had been accumulating while I was engaged upon it. The aspect, in the mean time of the annexation movement has undergone some considerable change, and appears, as I trust, to threaten no very marked or serious consequences—a turn of affairs which, aided by the effect of some other considerations, has been judged to afford sufficient reason for abandoning the proposed formal issue of a Pastoral Letter, upon the subject. The thoughts, therefore, which I had thrown together, although they stand unaltered in themselves, (for I could not undertake to re-construct them in adaptation to varying circumstances) are now, as I wish it to be understood by all persons into whose hands these sheets may come, merely printed for private and unofficial circulation among my friends of the Clergy and Laity, under the impression that they contain matter which, in some quarters, may not be wholly useless nor uninteresting.

Quebec, 11th Dec. 1849.