

ministers and others, to the erection of what were called Chapels of Ease. So much was this the case, that from the year 1774 to 1834, only sixty chapels had been erected. But all at once, to the amazement and surprise of many, a new born zeal appeared, and a rage for erecting chapels in all directions: and so zealous were the friends of Establishments in this matter alone, that in the year 1834, no less than other sixty chapels were built, and in a few years afterwards this number had increased to two hundred. What but the pressure from without, by the Voluntary movement, could thus alter the policy of the National Church? So widely were Voluntary principles spreading, and invading the Establishment itself, that it was necessary thus far to imitate the Voluntaries in supporting and extending their church from their own resources.

Since the Voluntary controversy was agitated the subject of Patronage had been often discussed in the General Assembly. Many motions were introduced with a view to induce the court to adopt measures to have the law of Patronage modified, and if possible to have it rescinded. These, however, were met by the Moderate party, still the more numerous, with stern opposition. Even many of the Evangelical party voted with the moderates on these occasions; for here also the fear of alienating the aristocracy of the nation from their church made them, as well as the moderates, opposed to popular election. Even Dr. Chalmers, the great leader of the evangelical party, deprecated the idea of popular election, and in this he was followed by many of his brethren on the same side of the Church: and Lord Moncrieff, of the Court of Session, expressed his satisfaction that they did not intend anything like popular election.

But whilst patronage was to be preserved to please the higher classes, it was necessary to do something respecting it to please the common people, or, as Dr. Chalmers expressed it, 'to popularize the Establishment.' This led to what was called the Veto Act, by which it was decreed that Patrons should not be intruded on any parish in opposition to the people. It gave them not the right of choice, but a power, in certain cases, to object to the settlement of ministers who were unacceptable. The supporters of this measure were called Non-intrusionists: and this was the highest privilege which the people, who were members of congregations and heads of families, were to enjoy. If a majority of such objected to the settlement of a minister, he was to be rejected, and the patron was to propose another. If still such opposition were made, rejection was to be repeated, and this for six months, when it was to devolve on the Presbytery to present a minister, who was to be settled whether acceptable to the people or not, for no further objections were to be allowed.

Such was the Veto Act, passed in 1834, when the Evangelical party first acquired the ascendancy. This party had long sought some mitigation to the rigour of patronage, although few of them desired its total abolition. But all their endeavours had been opposed and frustrated hitherto, by the Moderate party, who had till now been the prevailing party in the Church Courts. Now, however, when for the first time a majority of evangelical representatives had been secured in the Assembly, and being aware of the keen contention against all civil establishments of religion in which so many of their own people co-operated with the Dissenters, and doubtless prompted thereby, they lost no time in enacting such measures as they thought most likely to preserve their church in favour with the people at large. But although, what Dr. Chalmers called the gullibility of the people might dispose many of them to accept this act as a boon, yet it gave them little power afterwards. It did not give them any power to nominate a candidate: it only gave them, under much restriction, the power of rejecting the patron's presentee. We think it was rather an insult to the people than a privilege. The popular anecdote of the celebrated Rev. Dr. McCrie, immediately after this act was passed, shows how contemptible it appeared to him, as it did to many. In a sermon, preached to his congregation, he referred to it in the following terms:—"It is more than suspicious that the alleged boon should be presented by the hands of those who have