

which they now maintained, for it must be known to all the members of the Court that the right of popular election was a right which was never exercised by the people of this country. There was no authority for it in law whatever—no shadow of authority, but the First Book of Discipline, which was never recognised and acted upon by the Church. But what did the people of Dunbog ask? They asked that they should be at liberty to reject the presentee without having given him a trial. He thought that was much stronger ground than had ever been taken up by any Church that he had ever heard of. The idea of rejecting a minister that had never been listened to was preposterous; it was, to say the least, an extremely original idea, for which the people of Dunbog deserved an immense deal of credit. (Laughter.) It was required that the objections to a presentee should be personal, either in general or with respect to the particular parish. Now, the objections by the people of Dunbog were about the most excellent specimens he thought he had ever seen of objections founded upon "mere dissent or dislike." The objectors had asserted the right of popular election without any show or shadow of reason. They had played a kind of comedy of disappointed lovers. (Laughter.) It would appear that the peasantry of Dunbog were familiar with only two important acts of selection in the affairs of life. The one was the selection of a minister, and the other was the selection of a spouse. (Laughter.) They thought that these two rather different kinds of choice were to be regulated by the same principle, and that they were very much the same sort of thing. So they fell violently in love with the Rev. John Webster: and in their judicial pleadings, which were usually very tame productions, they talk of "affection" for him, and "feelings of love and esteem" in the ecstatic style of a green, love-sick lad of seventeen. (Loud laughter.) And this they did about a gentleman who preached only three sermons in the parish; who was never heard above once by many of his admirers, and who was never heard at all by some of them—quite after the usual amatory fashion, where imagination supplied the defects of ignorance, and improved vastly upon reality. (Renewed laughter.) They did this although he preached all his sermons to them before they had applied to the Crown at all, and although they had no reasonable assurance that they would obtain him as their minister. These simple shepherds and shepherdesses of Dunbog, were a little rash, owing perhaps to their experience being confined almost entirely to Arcadian love. (Laughter.) Had their experience been extended to less Arcadian reasons, they might have reflected that there was some paternal authority to consult, or a substitute in the shape of a mother, or an aunt, or a grandmother, or a Secretary of State. (Loud laughter.) Had they so reflected, they would

not have behaved so foolishly, and been so bitterly disappointed. Like other love-sick mortals, they deserved some pity, but it should only be pity in moderation—(laughter)—for if they got too much sympathy there would be no end of such exhibitions of folly and extravagance. They were such exhibitions that required to be suppressed, for both love and popular election had a tendency to run into lunacy. (Loud laughter.) The objection about undue influence in signing the call he held to be as strong against the signing of the objections. Then as to the call itself, he maintained that by the law of the Church no call was necessary; and in this case there was doubtless sufficient call. In the Auchterarder case the call was signed by the 2000th part of the parish, while the call in this case, as far as the signature was concerned, was 400 times better. He thought that if the people of Dunbog were so disloyal sons of the Church as to leave it on account of some slight of the patron the sooner they left it the better; but he did not believe they would do anything of the kind. The learned gentleman concluded as follows:—"The induction into Dunbog of a worthy and highly-talented minister, against whom the people can and do say nothing personally, and to the purpose, except that he is himself, and not another man, may produce some evil, as many right and just acts have done when opposed or resented by the prejudices and unscrupulous intrigues of sections of mankind. But the finding of these pretended objections to be relevant, and the palpable disregard of law and logic, and of common sense, and, I might almost say, of common honesty, which such a finding would involve, could not fail to lead to consequences most prejudicial to the Church of Scotland. No doubt the Church of Scotland does not meet the temperament and fancies of many uncommonly good people. It is not sufficiently explosive and hysterical for them, and never can be. They must go elsewhere, to those co-operative theological associations—(laughter and applause)—which exist for the benefit of impulsive people; and what rational friend of the Church could hope or desire to keep them? Does any one who will be at the pains to think, and is capable of putting two ideas together, suppose that a sedate, ancient institution like the Established Church can compete with these modern co-operative associations in the manufacture of grand explosions—(laughter)—and the firing off of astonishing sensation rockets and blue lights? (Laughter and applause.) The laws which regulate the division of labour apply to Churches as well as to everything else, and the consequence is that an Established Church cannot compete with Dissenting Churches in the preaching and practice of those notions and nostrums to which the Dissenting Churches devote their chief energies, which they profess to understand, in which they have unwavering faith, and to which they owe their