

to see that I was in the wrong. With the two great facts of the Irish Union and the Irish Church before me, I could not petition against Roman Catholic emancipation. I felt, too, that were I myself a Roman Catholic, I would listen to no Protestant argument until what I held to be justice had first been done me. I would have at once inferred that a religion associated with what I deemed injustice was a false, not a true, religion; and, on the strength of the inference, would have rejected it without farther inquiry; and could I fail to believe that what I myself would have done in the circumstances, many Roman Catholics were actually doing? And believing I could defend my position, which was certainly not an obtrusive one, and was at times assailed in conversation by my friends, in a way that showed, as I thought, they did not understand it, I sat down and wrote an elaborate letter on the subject, addressed to the editor of the *Inverness Courier*; in which, as I afterwards found, I was happy enough to anticipate in some points the line taken up, in his famous emancipation speech, by a man whom I had early learned to recognize as the greatest and wisest of Scottish ministers,—the late Dr. Chalmers. On glancing over my letter, however, and then looking round me on the good men among my townsmen,—including my uncle and my minister,—with whom it would have the effect of placing me in more decided antagonism than any mere refusal to sign their petition, I resolved, instead of dropping it into the post-office, to drop it into the fire, which I accordingly did; and so the matter took end; and what I had to say in my own defence, and in that of emancipation, was in consequence never said.

This, however, was but the mere shadow of a controversy: it was merely a possible controversy, strangled in the birth. But some three years after, the parish was agitated by a dire ecclesiastical dispute, which set us altogether by the ears. The place had not only its parish church, but also its Gaelic chapel, which, though on the ordinary foundation of a chapel of ease, was endowed, and under the patronage of the crown. It had been built about sixty years previous, by