

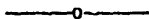
she may pass, but may, at the instance of her humblest member, be dragged before the Civil Courts, and for this plain reason, she has no known jurisdiction, no recognized authority, and therefore no visible protection. Yet see how she vaunted, up to the unhappy Cardross case! She would not show her proceedings, she would not produce her records, she would do all her pleasure rightfully or wrongfully, without deference to Cæsar. Dr. Begg said lately, "We have not transgressed our own laws; and if we have, the Court of Session has no right to review them, or restrain us." But this Popish irresponsibility is three centuries too late for the latitude of Britain; and hence the conscience of the Free Church has at length submitted its spiritual sentence of deposition against Mr. Macmillan, to the hated review of the Civil Court.

Now, this Cardross case illustrates better than anything, and indeed brings out in the very clearest light, what the Free Church meant by her Spiritual Independence. The Minister of Cardross was libelled for drunkenness and another crime. Of these he was acquitted by the Presbytery and Synod; or the case was not found proven against him. By complaint of a minority of the Synod, the case reached the Free Assembly. The count brought up by appeal to the Free Assembly was the lightest, viz. the appearance of being the worse of drink; but that Court travelled quite out its way, and overhauled the other two charges, although not brought up at all before them. The consequence was that Mr. Macmillan was not only suspended at pleasure but his Church declared vacant. By this extraordinary proceeding the Free Church violated her own law; for she declared by her counsel before the Court of Session that her forms of process are the same as in the Church of Scotland before 1843. Now, never was it known that a minister was deprived of his living for suspension. Here, then, was a gross civil as well as ecclesiastical wrong. And where was the minister's redress? The Free Church did not acknowledge the right of any Court on earth to review her actings. Mr. Macmillan was made a beggar by the breath of the Assembly. He appealed to the Court of Session. This was a crime so heinous that he was not allowed to open his mouth, and was summarily deposed from the ministry. Now, what is singular and passing strange in this case, is, that for the charge of drunkenness and a criminal advance to a married woman, he was allowed to plead; but when the crime of appealing to the Civil Court was admitted, he was condemned unheard. According then, to the Free Standard, an appeal to a Civil Court is a more aggravated offence than any other offence known to the criminal code. Festus the Roman Governor (Acts xxv. 16.) said to Agrippa, "It is not the manner of the Romans to condemn any man till he have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime

laid against him." But harder measure was dealt out by a Christian Assembly of ministers to their own brother than the heathen Romans considered indispensable for common justice.

Hence, then, the Spiritual Independence which caused the Disruption, appears to be the right to do justly or unjustly, without being amenable in either case to any earthly court. This in the language of Dr. Hanna, is indeed "some stern embodiment, and something more than thin ghosts of Popery stalking in regions remote enough from Rome."

Let this much suffice, in the meantime, to serve as answer to the question, "What caused the so-called Disruption?" Time will not admit of enlargement either for exhausting this part of the discourse, or entering on the second question, which must therefore be postponed till next Thursday.



NOTES OF MY TOUR IN THE WEST HIGHLANDS.

Shall I write about the trap rocks of Skye, rising gaunt and isolated out of the accumulations of disintegrated shale &c., at their bases, and worn down into all fantastic shapes—huge needles, cathedral spires, statues of man and beast, massive walls, ridges and columns; or of the flat bleak land of Lewis and its hundreds of fishing smacks so like an old Scandinavian navy; or will we sail over to the Applecross and Gareloch country and lose ourselves amid the wild mountains, till we get across to Ben Wyvis, from the top of which we will in propitious weather see half of the Highlands? Our hearts fail us. How shall we be able to put down in the little space that is left us, all the geological, social, and ecclesiastical information we have picked up? What wonderful stories I could tell of witches and warlocks,—local tales that are twined round every old ruined hill, and well, eagerly drank in from old folk who loved to talk, and who believed every one of them! Some queer gossip too from behind the scenes concerning "the men," concerning "Disruption" times, of how the strings were pulled, and how the waves were lashed into fury, and what will perhaps come of it all at last. But all this precious knowledge, beloved brother reader, is to be shut upon you forever. Of course the loss is yours, but I am not sure that it is so very great as to excite discontent; for there are many little trifles that it might not be wholly unprofitable to talk over at the fireside, but which it is scarcely worth while to indite for the *Record*.

I would like to take a batch of young Nova Scotians whose eyes have been familiar with little of the grand in scenery save multitudinous raspberry bushes and hackmatack knees—and irregularly shaped clearances in the back woods, and to whose nostrils nothing is so