

encroach thereon? Did they invade the Church's province? and did the Established Church submit to such interference? Singularly enough, notwithstanding what I have quoted above from one part of Dr. Hanna's sermon, in another, he asserts, (page 8) the State did the one, and the Church the other. He says, "The Court of Session had not only assumed the direction of all the civil affairs of the Established Church, that is, of all questions affecting the civil and pecuniary interests of its ministers and members; it had taken into its hands the direction of its spiritual affairs; it had reviewed and reversed; it had declared null and void suspensions, ordinations, depositions, which the Church in the most solemn manner had pronounced and ratified; it had prohibited ministers whom the Church had deputed to preach in certain districts, from exercising within those districts any function of the holy minister." At page 14, he adds, "We of the Free Church believe that, at the time of the Disruption, the Establishment suffered the sacred domain of the Church to be sacrilegiously invaded, and its spiritual independence trodden under foot; that in submitting to such civil control, the Establishment did a thing dishonouring Christ and injurious to his cause."

Mark all this! and yet the Church is allowed by him to have done no such monstrous thing as to "pluck the crown from the Saviour's brow." It did not do this; yet, according to Dr. Hanna, it "suffered its spiritual independence to be trodden under foot." With all deference, I would venture to think that the one appears not very far from being identical with the other; that such plucking of the crown is pretty like suffering his "sacred domain to be trampled under foot." Dr. Candlish says, (page 18) "The courts of law claimed a right to settle all civil questions, all questions of property to which our spiritual proceeding might give rise,—that we always conceded or recognized; but these proceedings themselves they subjected to review and affected to reverse and cancel at their pleasure."

Now, upon the showing of these Reverend Doctors, it would appear that the State and the Church both acted a most unconscionable part, the former in assuming authority, (called in the Confession of Faith, the power of the keys), the latter in submitting to such usurpation. If either is fairly chargeable with such grave imputation, it is obvious there can be no defence for them; and I am certainly not here to offer such defence, being myself as staunch an upholder of the Church's spiritual independence in its legitimate sense, as any in all broad Scotland. But the fact is, that the history of the painful proceedings during the four years proceeding the '43, shows that neither the State nor the Church is truly chargeable with the heavy accusations urged by our Reverend Brethren and Doctors of the Free Church.

It is quite true that the Church did within those years depose so many ministers in Strathbogie; it is quite true that the Court of Session did issue interdicts at that time, in the cases of Mr. Edwards of Marnoch, and Mr. Young of Auchterarder; it is all true that the said Court did interpose between the deposed ministers and the execution of the Church's sentences, deposing them; and it is known, that ministers deputed by the Church to preach, &c. in Strathbogie, were interdicted by the authority of the Court of Session. What then? What greater evidence necessary to prove the invasion of the Church's special province by the civil courts? In answer:—the fact was, it was the Church itself which travelled out of its own sphere, and not the Court of Session. Who but knows that the celebrated Veto Act opened the door to all the confusions and every evil work between 1839 and 1843? The Church passed this Act upon her own responsibility, without consulting the State, the other party to the contract; and when the case came before the courts of law, the Act was found illegal, or, as the phrase is, *ultra vires of the Church*. It was found that the Church by her contract or terms of her union with the State, had no right to introduce Chapel Ministers into her presbyteries and other courts, without the consent of the State. And who can question the right of the State to interpret its own laws? The State, in other words, the courts of law, as the organs of the State, may indred err, as no doubt they have, in common with every human institution; but, then, what *on earth* is above the State? not surely the Church, as a visible, voluntary association. If so, as Dr. Hanna truly hints, the Church of Rome is justified in all her impious and extravagant claims. Now, what occasioned all the unseemly and painful collisions of the four years between 1839 and '43, was this foreign element introduced into the courts of the Church, viz.—the chapel ministers, amounting to some hundreds. What was the harm, say you, of introducing ordained ministers, as good, learned, and useful men as yourself, into the Church courts? I don't say there was any harm; on the contrary, the act met my approbation; but, then the State has just as good a right to judge for itself as I had. The harm was, not the addition of these good men and true to the Ecclesiastical Courts, but the manner of doing it,—the Church doing this without consulting the State. We say, a bargain is a bargain; and, if in the terms of union with the State, such action on the part of the Church was not one of its rights or privileges, then the Church, in assuming it, encroached on the domain of the State,—it took a step on its own authority which the State had not bargained for. But, then, you repeat the question, What harm was there in the Church's passing the Veto Act, and thereby introducing the chapel ministers into her courts,—