

## MISCELLANEOUS.

## Political Position of the New Secession from the Church of Scotland.

[From the Wigtonshire Free Press.]

There may at this moment appear to be three distinct and powerful religious bodies amongst us—the Church Establishment, the Voluntaries, and the Free Church—but in reality the two last are one. The position which the new seceders have taken up is not a new one; it is simply that of the other seceders who had gone before them and preoccupied the ground; setting them the example of spurning the shackles of the state, and relying for their means of usefulness and influence only on that support which the zeal and sympathy of their flocks might afford. These were the men who raised the standard of dissent in difficult and dangerous times—who endured obloquy and suffered persecution—who, unsupported by wealth, and unbacked by numbers, frowned on by the great, shunned by the prejudiced, and suspected or ridiculed by the multitude, still kept on steadily their rugged path, established their missions, instituted their schools, multiplied their humble congregations, and persevered in disseminating their principles through the land, till at length, from small beginnings rising to more ambitious ends, the Dissenters of Scotland have come forward in their strength, and boldly flung their principles in the face of the Establishment itself; and achieving great services to the country (not only by the spur which they have given to the efforts of that Establishment, but by their strenuous exertions for the education of the people, and the zeal and intrepidity with which they have devoted themselves to the vindication of their civil and religious rights), the Dissenters, from being a small and proscribed body, are now powerful in numbers, powerful in character, powerful in their union among themselves, powerful above all in that earnestness of feeling, and integrity and stubbornness of principle, which always make men formidable in a cause which they believe to be identical with truth. They are not men to be lightly shoved aside for others to occupy the position which they have made strong; it is theirs—they will maintain it—they cannot be expelled from it. But though they will not give place, they will give room to others, and welcome all who, adopting their principles, are ready to avow them.

Now, what will the Free Church do—we would rather ask, what can she do? Can she take up a middle course, and halt half way between the Establishment which has been quitted and the Dissenters that have been approached? We think it is impossible, and we are sure that they who calculate on such a course over-estimate the strength and the durability of the new church. They are led away by present appearances, and forget that the aspect will not always be as favorable and imposing as it is now. The secession is a novelty—one that has struck the senses, and been the wonder of the day, and its authors, of course, the lions of the day. But lions soon go out of fashion, and nine days is the proverbial duration of a wonder. The multitude may be capricious, but there is some sense in its caprice; it must have something more to rest upon than a movement or an event; it must have something tangible—something practical,—something useful in the result. The Nonintrusionists may hitherto have been influenced by their leaders, but they must hereafter adopt some principle as their guide and their cement; and that prin-