

peculiar difficulties,—it left the Church *free* in all other matters,—and even in the department within which it limited her action, it did so only partially. It deprived the people, indeed, of free election, but it did not compel the Church to force a presentee upon a reclaiming congregation. It still left to the people the right of call, and still left the Church at liberty to make the free call of the people, the ground on which the pastoral tie should be formed. This has ever been the opinion of the evangelical and anti-Erastian party in that Church, and, on this ground patronage was submitted to by that party under protest, and in the hope of its being eventually removed. The encroachments of the civil courts which we are now to explain, go immeasurably beyond this ; they affect the whole ecclesiastical province of the Church, and sweep away every vestige of real spiritual independence.

*Second.*—CLAIMS, SUBVERSIVE OF THE SPIRITUAL INDEPENDENCE OF THE CHURCH, ADVANCED BY THE CIVIL COURTS, AND SANCTIONED BY THE IMPERIAL LEGISLATURE. A ludicrous attempt is sometimes made, to evade the consideration of the nature and amount of the claims, subversive of the independence of the Church, which have been advanced and enforced by the civil courts in Scotland, by reviving the old and now buried question of the legality of the Veto Law,—the law, as will be remembered, in which the dispute between the Church and these courts originated,—and by attempting to prove that in the enactment of this law, the Church exceeded her powers, and rashly drew down upon herself the interference of the civil courts ;—as if the proof of the assertion that the Veto Law was illegal, involved in it the refutation of the allegation that the civil courts, by their Erastian usurpations, have enslaved the Church. One defender of the Synod in connection with the Church of Scotland, in particular, has excited the *wonder* of his opponents, if not of his friends, by adopting this, and with an appearance of perfect honesty and good faith, as almost his sole line of defence.

But, whatever the motives with which this discussion of the legality of the Veto Law may be started, a more shallow and disreputable evasion of the real question at issue could not well be conceived.

Were the charge brought by the Free Church, merely that the civil courts *had no civil statute to ground upon*, in advancing claims subversive of the rights of the Church *with respect to the calling of pastors*,—to which, as will be remembered, the Veto Law referred,—it would, of course be the natural and proper defence of the *legality*