

of the danger of innovation. They came to the consideration of these subjects with minds free from all excitement. They had obtained no victory, and were not flushed with triumph. They had no opposition, and were not obstinate. The civil power was in their own hands, they could delegate as little or as much as they thought expedient to an executive. Authority was not demanded, it was conceded. Every individual had a strong personal interest. It depended solely upon himself and his own conduct whether he should administer the law or should silently submit to its operation.

Every measure to be adopted was an act of the whole body and not a party. Is it then to be wondered at, that with this experience they reasoned well, and decided wisely ?

When we consider that all this occurred more than two hundred and thirty years ago, before civilization had made such mighty strides as it has in modern times, and that the people who then deliberated on the difficult problems of government and jurisprudence, though men of strong intellect and good parts, nevertheless laboured under the great disadvantage of having their tempers soured, and their understanding clouded by fanaticism and bigotry, we are struck with astonishment at the knowledge and consummate skill they displayed in laying the foundations of their political fabric ; and if their system of jurisprudence was imperfect, it