

when a person who differed from you on a point in theology could visit your house, remove you from the bosom of your family to a gaol, and at last burn you alive in a public square. Those days have gone by, and if anybody were to attempt anything of that kind on King Street now, the police would, no doubt, interfere. Still there are such things as attempts to prevent a man from exercising his right to express his opinion freely on public questions; there is such a thing still as press persecution, though the inquisition is now no more: there is such a thing as hounding a man down. The presence of members of the press, of all parties and shades of opinion around this table, is a pledge of their resolution to be true to the great principle of the profession, and however they may be divided on other points, to unite in guarding liberty of thought. It is a pledge of their determination that the press shall be open, and that no one shall be excluded from it or hunted out of it merely for daring to disagree with somebody else, so long as he does not otherwise make any dishonourable use of his pen. Sometimes it is necessary, when public rights and privileges are assailed, to fight for them. Fighting is not the most agreeable part of life. Very often, when merely your private rights are assailed, you would, rather than enter into a contest, hold intercourse with books in your library, or repose upon some classic shore; but when the interests public rights are bound up with private interests, it is not open to you to decline the struggle. Hampden, we know, was no needy demagogue. He had broad lands, a pleasant manor-house, books upon his shelves, friends whose society he loved, and, no doubt, had anybody overcharged him in the ordinary way thirty shillings, he would have paid this money rather than have a dispute; but when tyranny took him by the throat and said, 'Pay me that thirty shillings,' he said 'no,' and fought. Liberty of opinion is at least as well worth fighting for as self-taxation: it is the salt of all other liberties. If it perish all other liberties will perish, too, make what laws and statutes in favour of freedom you will. When a man publishes heterodox views you have a right to scrutinize his motives, and if you find that he has interested motives you have a right to say so. But if on fair scrutiny you find that he can have no interested

motives, that he is seeking no political prize, that he can have no pecuniary object, the fair conclusion is that he advocates the views he entertains because he believes they are good for the community. In such a case, wherever else he may meet with obloquy and discouragement, he has a right to protection from those who live by the freedom of the press. Gentlemen, I trust this meeting will not be the last gathering of the kind. It has often occurred to me—though as a new comer I felt that it was hardly proper for me to interfere in the matter—that the members of the press should be brought together in some friendly manner, and made more conscious of the fact that we belong to a common profession, and that it is the interest and duty of us all to uphold those rules, decencies, and courtesies which give our profession respectability in the eyes of the world, and attract to it honourable and cultivated men. If the black flag is to be hoisted, if all rules of courtesy are to be broken; if a writer who will not fall into line at the bidding of some dominant organ is to be treated as an outlaw; if the power of the press is to be used for the purpose of gratifying personal or commercial malice towards those from whom we differ, the profession will be sought only by men who have no character to lose. Gentlemen, again I thank you. Be assured once more that this tribute is not misunderstood. I do not believe that any political meaning attaches to it, or that by reason of it the community need allow itself to be convulsed with the fear of any change. The immediate occasion of it is my departure for—I was going to say—home. I will not, however, say home, though I love England well, though my ties there are still unbroken, and though the members of my party there always receive me with cordiality, and have given me, even since I have settled here, the strongest proofs they could give of their unabated confidence, so that you need not imagine that I was thrown upon the Canadian press a political outcast. No Canadian has a deeper interest in England than I have, or loves her more heartily than I do. Yet I will not say I am going home, because I think a man's home is where his lot is cast, where he intends to spend his life, and where his interests and duties are. Therefore I must call this country my home. Let me say, too, as I hope with truth I may, that