

the country will be large, and the only result, besides a great moral stench, will be a fresh demonstration of the unfitness of Commissions of Inquiry to fulfil the quasi-judicial purposes for which they have of late in this country been employed. They have no power of bringing an offender to justice : it is doubtful whether they have the power even of branding him with censure without laying themselves open to an action for libel : all they can do is, after dragging his guilt to light, to leave him a noxious example of impunity. Their action in these cases is an abortive encroachment on the province of the courts of justice. The information of Government is the sole proper function of Royal Commissions of Inquiry, and the only one ever entrusted to them in England where they rigorously abstain from entering into any question or receiving any evidence affecting personal character or conduct. The subject was thoroughly discussed, and the right principle was distinctly laid down, as an able writer in the *Globe* some time ago pointed out, in connection with the University Commission of 1850. It is to be hoped that "the well-known" principles of the British Constitution will prevail in relation to this matter for the future.

— When we said that the only sign of life given by the Senate during the last Session was its attempt to amend the Scott Act, we intended to speak of its life as a co-ordinate and independent branch of the legislature, modifying in important questions the action of the Commons, and originating measures which would not have originated with them. These are the purposes, we imagine, for which the Senate is supposed to exist, and for the fulfilment of which it draws its pay. But a friend, whose authority claims the highest respect, tells us that our observations were unjust, since most of the Government measures of the Session were introduced in the Senate. So they were ; but can they be said, in any practical sense, to have emanated from the Senate, or even to have been really forwarded.