

of immortality of this kind given than to the journalist who honestly uses his powers in the service of truth and justice. After all, how can an exact line be drawn between the journal and the pamphlet, or between the pamphlet and the book? Burke was a pamphleteer, and Addison, when he wrote on politics, as in his *Whig Freeholder*, was a journalist. If you look at the works of Harrington, Hobbes, or Locke, or at those of any other great political writer, what are they but the current thought of the time worked up into a permanent shape? And it is we, the journalists, that have the largest share in making the current political thought of the time. Writing an editorial is, as you know, not the easiest matter in the world; there are many who think they can do it until they try. The writer of an editorial is not producing an immortal work, but he is trying to produce a distinct effect at the time, and to do that he must be master of an art. He must be able to give his work a certain unity, form and finish, and although he cannot introduce an unlimited quantity of learning and information without appearing pedantic, yet all he has read and knows will tell in the way of enrichment and illustration, and will add to the effectiveness as well as to the literary excellence of his articles. I remember sitting at a table in London beside the editor of a leading journal. He said: 'I am in distress; I have lost one of my regular writers.' I did not know much about journalism at the time, so I remarked: 'I suppose you will have to get another.' He replied: 'Get another! I will have to get three, and I will be surprised if at the end of a year one of these three writers does as well as the writer I have lost.' One is tempted, perhaps, to magnify one's own calling, but I should say that the power of journalism, great as it is, is still on the increase. The real debate has been transferred from assemblies, deliberative no longer, to the press, and the assembly does little more than record the conclusion. What we have to fear, in fact, is not that the press should be wanting in power, but that its independence may be impaired. Sinister influences may get behind it, and, under the mask of impartial criticism, use its organ for the purpose of falsifying public opinion in their own interest and in furtherance of their own designs. This is one of the great dangers at once of the press and of

society at the present day. I hope I may truly say that in any dealings which I have had with the press of Canada my object has always been to increase its independence and make it entirely free to serve the people. It will hardly become me to take a position outside of the profession, and try to estimate its progress since I have known the country. I landed in Canada fifteen years ago, and since that time two things have taken place encouraging and creditable to our profession. Unless I am very much mistaken, the local press has gained very much in force. One cannot say that centralization is absolutely bad, or that decentralization is absolutely good. There are times when a nation requires a strong force, impulsive or controlling at its centre; but, as a general rule, decentralization is a mark of high civilization; and I know of nothing more salutary to a country, I know of no better guarantee of a country's political future than the existence of multiplied centres of opinion. Assuredly the existence of a strong local press has had a most beneficial effect upon the politics of England. In former days *The Times* exercised an absolute controlling power in England. It is still a powerful paper, and its circulation is as great as ever, but its influence is now balanced and limited, to the great advantage of the country. That our metropolitan press has not fallen back, while the local press has been advancing, or lost its due share of power, the new buildings on King Street are a proof which speaks to all. With this increase of the force of the local press has naturally grown independence of opinion. I do not think there can be any mistake about that. Liberty of thought is the palladium of our profession. Talk of treason; what treason can be greater than that of the journalist who strikes at the principle of liberty of opinion—the very principle in which the press itself has its being? How would the world advance if new opinion was to be killed in the bud? What journalist has not seen the treasonable paradox of one day become the open question of the next day and the accepted truth of the day after? No doubt some people will say it is absurd to doubt the existence of perfect liberty of opinion in these days. But there are more ways than one in which liberty of opinion may be restrained. Times, no doubt, have changed for the better. It is no longer as it was,