

4. This is not an opportune period to urge "relative rights and obligations" which in no sense have been disturbed or are jeopardised by wrongs on the one hand or menaces on the other, for never were these rights or obligations better preserved or upheld. There is no real nor practical grievance to complain of by the free and independent Colonies; and even the Crown Colonies have nothing to urge which is not easily redressed through the press or Parliament. There may be questions of internal defence or government to settle, but any difficulties which exist may be ascribed to the fact that

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new ;"

that men are slow to appreciate their privileges, and know not how to exercise the liberty they enjoy. They have power to tax, to create and to degrade high officials; to enter into and break contracts; to make capital for themselves, by bringing out loans, pledging their future for their present gains; to impose burdens "grievous to be borne" on posterity; to do either noble or ignoble things for those who do them "suit and service." It is not necessary to inquire whether they use or abuse this liberty. They are their own masters, amenable to nothing but public opinion, which, more in small than in large communities, is of a variable and uncertain quality, guided by narrow prejudices, subject to interested motives, rarely created by any deep-rooted sentiments, and still less actuated by lofty or impartial principles.

5. If any inquiry be made by a Parliamentary Committee or Royal Commission, there can be no