

Correspondence
respecting
Judge Fletcher.

I believe, several years ago. This, however, is one of the choice secrets of the party; it is far safer to allege a falsehood respecting matters which took place at a period long past; than with regard to more recent transactions; and a judge who has more than a thousand causes before him every year can scarcely be expected to remember every circumstance of each of them.

It must not be understood that I am answering, at the present moment, any of the charges which it appears to be the intention of the Assembly to make against me; it would be premature to attempt it; I must first know what they are. I am searching for something like a distinct accusation, some tangible charge, and I can find nothing in the evidence before me, but that the judge has, on certain occasions, differed in opinion from both Mr. Short and Mr. Kimball. All that I can say at present is, that the whole of the charges stated in the address constitute a mass of the foulest calumny which has ever disgraced the human character.

His Excellency will probably hear with astonishment that the first attack which was made on me by the Assembly took place more than seven years ago, at the instigation of one of their members, who was employed by Silas Horton Dickerson as his attorney in an appeal brought by him against a judgment in my favour by the Court of King's Bench for the district of Three Rivers, in an action brought by Dickerson against me; that this attorney was appointed chairman of the committee for the investigation of the complaint of his own client, with regard to the very matters to which the suit in appeal related; and that it is in consequence of that proceeding that I have been harassed and persecuted by this body every session from that day to this. It is the report of the committee of which this attorney was the chairman, which is the first of those mentioned in that now before us, and which has, as his Excellency will perceive, constituted the basis of all the proceedings which have since taken place; of no part of which have I ever received any notice whatsoever, except through the medium of the public papers.

Finding that my character was thus insulted and calumniated year after year, by resolutions and addresses without end, containing always the grossest falsehoods which the human mind can conceive, I determined, at last, to intreat his Excellency Lord Aylmer to direct that I might be furnished with such intelligence as the secretary's office could afford respecting the causes, whether real or imaginary, of this outrageous vituperation. I accordingly wrote a letter to Lieutenant-colonel Glegg, the then secretary, in March 1831, for the purpose of obtaining some information respecting the matter, but without effect, as there was, I believe, nothing to be found in the office but a copy of a string of resolutions as calumnious and abusive as the address now before us, which the Assembly had recently transmitted to his Lordship, and of which he had the goodness to send me a copy. I obtained, however, no further intelligence with regard to the facts on which they were pretended to have been founded. My letter to Colonel Glegg constituted the first communication which I had had with the government on this subject; the original is, as I suppose, still in your office, but I have, to save you the trouble of a search, enclosed you a copy of it from my letter-book of that day.

See p. 95.

A retrospect of the affairs of this unfortunate colony during the last 25 years furnishes many instances of calumnies and conspiracies of very extraordinary descriptions, and some of which are almost incredible; but I really know of no single case in the history of man which is any degree comparable to that now before us. It presents a most instructive lesson to the statesman and the philanthropist, as evincing, in a very remarkable manner, the progress which may be made by an association possessed of unlimited funds, great activity, and a certain degree of talent, in the propagation of truth or falsehood, and the cultivation of the virtues or the vices of their fellow men. It is mainly to this cause that the greater part of the depravity which human nature so frequently exhibits in this country is attributable. Things were far otherwise previous to the year 1790: the Canadians themselves were at that period a loyal, religious and moral people, and they are still so wherever they are unexposed to the influence of the Assembly.

With regard to the case immediately before us, my allegation is, that Mr. Justice Fletcher, a great part of whose long life has been spent in the service of his sovereign and the public, has always demeaned himself, not only blamelessly, but with exemplary zeal, fidelity and industry in the execution of every duty with which he has been charged; and I challenge my calumniators to produce evidence of any single fact which can cast a shade of doubt on the truth of this assertion. My conduct as a judge in the cases of Dickerson and Evans has already undergone the ordeal of discussion before other courts, whose decisions have been in my favour. If my persecutors, however, conceive that they have any other subjects of accusation against me, let them bring forward their charges in any intelligible and tangible shape, and I can assure his Excellency that I shall be ready to meet them and their hireling witnesses, on any reasonable notice, on either side of the Atlantic. The experience which I have had in the conduct of His Majesty's Government and the tribunals of the British empire will not permit me to entertain a doubt that, whatever prejudices may have been created by the superhuman malignity and artifice of the terrific band by which I am assailed, justice will eventually be done.

I have thought it necessary to acknowledge the receipt of your packet without an hour's delay; and you will accordingly perceive that what I have written has been too hastily composed: any adequate idea of the ineffable wickedness which has been practised against me could only be conveyed by a much longer communication, with the assistance of numerous documents. I shall, however, in the course of the present month endeavour to discover, by reference to the records of the courts here, and my own minutes, what were the real circumstances of the particular cases alluded to in these papers, so far as they can now be traced,

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