

opposition which systematically endeavored to frustrate every measure that the government was desirous of carrying. On the other hand the assemblymen partook of the multifarious character of their constituents; many of them were poorly qualified for the business of legislation; unable to judge for themselves on the great questions brought before them, they generally fell into the train of some party leader, whose opinions and spirit they reflected on their constituents, as they returned annually from their legislative duties. Without fixed principles, they sought, by referring their acts to popular suffrage, to draw from this variable and uncertain source an illegitimate support; and thus their opinions, even on questions that lay within their reach, were unsettled and variable. Their perplexity became the more evident and embarrassing, whenever it was attempted to legislate on principles opposed to those embodied in the British constitution, as was the case in reference to the law of primogeniture, in the various attempts to generalize the elective franchise, and above all in the measures that have been repeatedly pursued by assemblymen respecting the public maintenance of religion. Had the principles of our constitution been deemed sacred and inviolable, such questions would not have been brought into discussion. Our legislation would have been confined within the limits of the constitution, and regulated by the practice of the parent state. The collective wisdom of ages would then have served as a guide, and prevented our raw statesmen from losing their way in a labyrinth of unsettled opinions in political science—often very dangerous when attempted to be carried out in practical legislation, even by those most profoundly skilled in the art of government. It is not difficult to conjecture what would have been the fate of Canada, long ere this day, had not the higher branches of the legislature reined in the popular branch. If we are to indulge any hope that these evils shall not again occur, it must be founded on a deeper veneration of our constitution in the bosom of the people, and especially among those who represent them in the legislature; its fundamental principles must be esteemed an authority to which all, of every degree, will cheerfully submit; its walls and bulwarks must not be assailed; it must be defended in the citadel of the people's love, and handed down to posterity as the charter of their freedom; whatever modifications it may undergo to adapt it to a new condition of society, its spirit, its essential form, its parental image, must be preserved immutable. Throughout the changes and expansions of a nascent empire, let its excellencies form a fixed centre around which the love and veneration of the people shall ever concentrate. Such an object of deep and generous regard would form a potent cause of political concord. Embodying a multitude of fundamental principles to which all have resolved to bend with cordial and implicit submission, it would infuse a milder spirit into such debates as might arise, in its application to emergent circumstances. We might then indulge the hope that our social fabric, a thing not of mushroom growth, would not be a thing of mushroom decay; that it would survive to hoar

antiquity, and occupy a niche in the temple of history collateral with that of the empire from which it sprung. These are pleasing dreams! What bosom warmed with the glow of patriotism, does not breathe the fervent prayer that they may become realities when we shall have quitted the stage to be the inhabitants of a kingdom that cannot be moved.

We may offer in connection with these remarks, a suggestion as to what the character of those men should be, to whom the management of public affairs is intrusted. Too many among us seem to have acted on the maxim, that any body would do for an assemblyman; and talents, principles, moral character, did not form elements in their choice. Were a parent to commit the education of his child to a teacher without inquiry on these points, he would be highly culpable, and might be doomed to reap very bitter fruits. How much more culpable is the elector, who intrusts the most important of his civil interests to a person of whose character and qualifications nothing favorable is known! It is true, that the difficulty of finding suitable persons to undertake the office, and the low intrigues of electioneering, may occasionally frustrate our wishes. But it were well that every one were fully aware that no provisions of a constitution, however excellent, can preserve the liberties of a country, or promote its well-being, unless they are administered by suitable officers. It will not be denied that senators should be men of competent intellectual ability, not merely of natural endowments, but of various acquirements. In a young colony in which civil affairs are less complicated than in great nations, it may be neither necessary nor practicable to establish a high standard; yet, in a matter of so much importance, it is surely allowable to aim at high things—to elevate rather than depress. "Whatever offices rulers hold, it is of very great importance that they have improved their mental faculties by early cultivation, studied the principal sciences with great care, and formed habits of correct thinking, of patient research, and prompt action, by previous education. Especially ought they to have studied *politics as a science*, not satisfied with the loose maxims that float confusedly on the surface of the public mind, but examining the fundamental principles, that lie open to the diligent inquirer only, in their order, origin, connexions, and results. If you load a vessel with a precious cargo for a distant country, you do not employ a commander unacquainted with the art of navigation. If you equip an army for defending the national rights against the violence of unprovoked aggression, you do not choose a general who knows nothing of the military profession. If you wish a physician who may cure your bodies of the maladies with which you are afflicted, you do not prefer some ignorant pretender, who has never examined the structure of the human frame, nor learned the approved mode of medical treatment. Why, then, choose as legislators men who have not studied with the requisite attention, the leading principles of politics and jurisprudence, whose memories are not furnished with an accurate knowledge of those laws and precedents