

firm. There has been indeed a general wish to set the house in better order, but no wish to pull it down. There has been a wish to carry out more fully the principles of the constitution as adapted to a colonial dependency of the empire, but none to employ a Benthamite to fuse it in his crucible, and bring it out recast in some new form. We are much mistaken if the events of the last few months have not laid bare some deplorable imperfections in democratic institutions, which, when no trial was in the way, had lain concealed. We have seen what a perilous thing self-government is, amongst a people misled by their interests and their passions. We have seen with what facility they can set their own laws and magistrates at defiance, and with what facility the magistrates themselves combine with the multitude in their lawlessness. We have seen how insecure life and property are in the contiguous republic, should the self-governing majority be inclined to invade them. And when we, desirous of their good, as well as our own, turned anxiously in expectation of the interference of their supreme magistrate, to restrain the aggressions of their lawless citizens on our territory, we looked in vain, and received only confessions of his impotence to restrain the people by any other means than public opinion, which, in good truth, is no means at all when the people choose to be in the wrong. These facts do not recommend the principle of self-government as adequate to secure either internal order, or international justice. Had such banditti collected within Canada, to invade or commit piratical aggressions on citizens of the United States, a country so nearly related to us by blood and language, and treaties of amity and commerce, and had our civil or military authorities been apprized of their wicked designs, we verily believe the shore would have been strewn with their dead, and those that escaped the bayonet would scarcely have escaped the gibbet. Law and justice would have arisen in their might to avenge those that set them at defiance, and to convince the world that with us national honor and national treaties are sacred things, and that we regard no sacrifice too great to sustain and defend them. It has not been so, however, in the United States. The feeling that actuates us on questions of national honor and honesty, do not seem to prevail there. We have witnessed the impotence of Executive power under this boasted self government, and have sorely suffered by it. It has permitted our country to be ravaged, and filled with constant alarm from the incursions of pirates and marauders—with such bands as are known only on the outskirts of the civilized world. It has created an enormous drain on the treasury of the empire. It has made some parents childless, and some wives widows, and has spilt upon the ground blood that must yet be accounted for.—Thank God, the peculiar nature of our government preserves us from the pernicious influence of misguided popular opinion bent on lawless designs. Amongst us popular caprice cannot supersede the laws—cannot evade the demands of justice. In this land we are not governed by *public opinion*, but by *rulers*, to whom the administration of the law is committed;

and whatever deference may be paid to the collective voice of the people constitutionally expressed, law and right can never be sacrificed to the clamor and violence of a mob. The arm of the civil ruler among us is always sufficiently strong to enforce obedience. These are excellencies in our form of government which should strengthen our determination to uphold it. Laws framed in equity, and dispensed with a temperate justice, are the bulwarks of our liberty. This is our inheritance. Let us guard it well, and transmit it as our best legacy to our children.

But whatever may be the excellencies of our civil constitution, our annals furnish melancholy evidence how much its beneficial workings may be retarded, by the contentions and animosities of party. We have already glanced at two of the results of these—the late insurrection, and the present unsettled state of the community. But they had given birth to incalculable evils long before this catastrophe was dreamed of. It is impossible to review the history of our provincial legislature for the last ten years, without mourning over the extent to which the demon of discord presided in its assemblies. Business was retarded in every possible way by the leaders of party; their harangues were rarely fitted for aught else, but to mislead and inflame the public mind; many measures of manifest utility were sacrificed for low party ends, and the religious instruction and education of the people, two of the most sacred objects to which the Christian legislator can give his attention, were yearly brought up for angry discussion, and the secularities connected with them were continually employed by party as themes to awaken discontent and bitterness among those whose highest interests were involved in the determination of the agitated questions. It often happened that the opposing squadrons in this arena were so nicely balanced as wholly to neutralize each other, and the people had the mortification to see questions most deeply affecting both their temporal and spiritual well-being, not only kept unsettled, but used as the occasion of stirring up increasing exacerbation of spirit in all interested in them. Nor was this the only evil. Such scenes in the colonial assemblies, conveyed the impression to the parent state, and other countries, that the people of Upper Canada (for we have no reference at all in these observations to the lower Province,) were factious and dissatisfied. The influx of capital and emigration was thereby diminished; the fostering care of the Imperial government was more sparingly extended; a degree of mutual alienation was engendered; and an evident blight fell on the prospects of the colony. Were it necessary to enter on the investigation, we might trace the discordant spirit prevailing among us, and to which we mainly attribute these evils, to various causes. It might be traced to the local government and its officers, who, acting too much for their own advantage, or under royal instructions, (perhaps in some cases suggested by themselves) not wisely adapted to the condition of the colony, arrayed a large mass of the people, and their representatives in the assembly, against the government; this gave rise to an