

by turns jocular, that the serious might not sink into the melancholy. I have advised—I have in duty offered services, but in vain: on went the sport, till yesterday, when the cannon announced to us that the play was over; and now we have the second speech of the Administrator, who has appropriately sunk down from the throne to the chair!

Gentlemen, the constitution of this province is in danger, and all the blessings of social compact are running to waste. For three years the laws have been thwarted, and set aside by Executive power: for three sessions have your Legislature sat in Assembly, and given sanction to the monstrous—the hideous abuse. A worthy catastrophe has closed this farce of Government; your Commons and your Peers have quarrelled, and the latter would assert that the constitutional charter of Canada may be trifled with. What is to be done? Do you expect anything from a new Governor?—you will be disappointed. Do you expect anything from a new set of representatives?—here again you will be deceived. Your members of Assembly are now at home: compare their characters with those around them, and you will find them equally honest—equally wise—equally independent. Now, that they are returned to society, as private individuals, I should be the very last man to call in question their worth or their probity; they are probably every way above par. It is not the men, it is the *system*, which blasts every hope of good; and, till the system is overturned, it is in vain to expect anything of value from *change* of representatives, or Governors.

It has been the cant of time immemorial, to make mystery of the art of Government. The folly of the million, and the cunning of the few in power, have equally strengthened the reigning belief; but it is false, deceitful and ruinous. The people of every nation may, at any time, put down either domestic tyranny or abuse—they may, at any time, lay a simple foundation for public prosperity; they

have only to be honest, and, in their honesty, bold.

In my last address to you, I said that the British constitution was “that beautiful contrivance by which the people, when perfectly virtuous, shall become all powerful.” Did you mark these words?—did you weigh them?—they are as important as they are true. We, of all men, have least to oppose us in correcting the errors of our constitution. The British constitution has provided for its own improvement in peace and quietness: it has given us the right of petitioning the Prince or Parliament; and this exercised in a *proper manner*, is competent to satisfy every virtuous desire.

My present purpose is not to dwell on theory; but to recommend and set example in the practice of using this glorious privilege. As individuals we have a right to petition the Prince or Parliament of Britain; and we have a right to meet for this purpose, in collective bodies. My proposal now is, that a meeting be forthwith held, in each organized township throughout the province. I shall take upon me to name the day for the meeting of the people of this township of Niagara, and say, that on Monday next, the 13th inst., I shall be ready by 12 o’clock, noon, at Mr. James Rogers’ Coffee House, to proceed to business, with whoever is inclined to join me. The people of each township should, I conceive, at meeting, choose a representative and clerk. The representatives should assemble from the several townships, within each district, on an appointed day, to draw up a petition to the Prince Regent; and which could, soon after, be got signed by every well wisher to the cause.

The district meetings should, without delay, hold conference by representatives, each respectively choosing one, to meet in a provincial convention, and who should arrange the whole business—dispatch Commissioners to England, with the petitions, and hold correspondence with them, as well as with the Supreme Government. Two or three Coun-

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