

paraphernalia of justice assumed merely for the protection of property? Was the possession of a man's gold all that required the aid of the law? Or, was personal security considered the important object of regard? No. Great as were these high interests, society had done but half its duty when it had secured these to its citizens. It was their good name and reputation in which the great body of the people were concerned. This was the inalienable and invaluable property which the humblest and the meanest, as well as the highest and the mightiest, had a right to retain. This was, perhaps, the only property which was above the reach of fortune or accident; and could be deserved by a man's own actions.— This was the legacy, which, in the wreck of all other blessings, he could leave to his children as a compensation for their orphanage; and this he had a right to demand that society would protect and preserve from the inroads of slander, and the malice of detraction. He did not contend for any novel strictness inconsistent with rational freedom. Discussion, enquiry, free examination, and able argument, however injurious to private feeling, were within the liberty of the press, and should never, by his agency, be interrupted. But malicious defamation, wanton scurrility, artful exaggeration, and contemptuous ridicule, were the unquestionable evidence of that licentiousness, which no liberality would sanction; and to pretend that it had any immunity under our institutions, was, in itself, a libel on our constitution and government, which no morality or intelligence would venture to maintain. But in the present case, every thing is conceded to the defendant, which the most strenuous advocate of a free press ever demanded. Right or wrong, with or without law, he is permitted to defend himself by shewing that the matters published were true, and printed by him with good motives for justifiable ends."

He then entered upon the merits of the individual case before the court, in the course of which he observed;

"The Jury are to decide why it was written. Was it to give information? to extend correct opinions? Let its manner, its style, its correctness, its tendency, determine. If it was fairly and honestly done; then, if it is true, it is not wrong. But was this its object? Was it written to gratify the puerile disposition of depraved minds? was it provided to feed that cormorant appetite for slander which grows by indulgence, and craves more as more is obtained? These are dishonourable ends; and however true may be the facts, such