

The Examiner.

"THIS IS TRUE LIBERTY, WHEN FREEBORN MEN—HAVING TO ADVISE THE PUBLIC, MAY SPEAK FREE."—EURIPIDES.

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CHARLOTTETOWN, P. E. ISLAND, MONDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1848.

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THE EXAMINER.

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THE EXAMINER AND ITS FRIENDS.

Charlottetown, October 20.

DEAR SIR—

I believe I shall not differ greatly from the majority of your subscribers in lamenting the tenor of the leading article contained in your paper of the 16th instant. Without following you through it, I will merely repeat the concluding words: Speaking of the approaching Trials for High Treason in Ireland, you say—"though we regret that such men ever espoused such a cause, or having espoused it, they did not succeed,"—from which words it will be seen that only one inference can be drawn, which is, that the Editor of THE EXAMINER regrets that the Irish Emeute, Insurrection, or term it what you will, was not successful. I will not, as one of your subscribers, be identified with such a sentiment. If I rightly have understood the object of THE EXAMINER, it has been to invite Scotchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, brother colonists in Prince Edward Island, to coalesce in using all lawful means to abate and rectify certain abuses which time and circumstances have introduced into the form of our Government—to extend the full enjoyment of the British Constitution to ourselves, in the form in which it is enjoyed by the Canadians, Nova Scotians, and the people of New Brunswick, in a word, to procure Responsible Government.

You have done me the favour to publish many writings of mine, intended, however feebly written, to have this aim and tendency. I think there is a general feeling that the desired end, if constitutionally pursued, will be obtained. There can be no doubt that the next General Election will place it within the reach of the people, if they are true to themselves, and can appreciate its value. But, Sir, loyalty to the people in this pursuit is perfectly compatible with, nay inseparable from, loyalty to the Sovereign.

From the age of sixteen I have served the Crown and my country in Civil and Military capacities—I have fought and bled in their service; and though the hand of time is now upon me, if there were occasion, I should be ready to do it again. How then can I suffer your article of the 16th to pass, and the slightest suspicion ensue that I have any participation in it? I do most entirely admit and declare that you are under no controul—those who have been more or less associated in your undertaking are far too liberal minded to wish you (if it were in their choice) to wear their shackles. No Public Journalist can be of any value under restriction; yet the general tenor of a publication will, in spite of you as well of myself, decide its usefulness as well as its success. We conceived that local politics were to be the staple of your trade; and I have always thought it quite unnecessary, nay, decidedly injurious, to throw abroad the apple of discord amongst parties far removed from, and possessing no influence, moral or physical, over the matters which at present agitate Ireland. The same rule of conduct formerly actuated me when the Free Church controversy was rife amongst the Scotch.

Our adopted home affords topics enough for political writing, and the cause we have in hand is decidedly weakened by the part you have now taken.

There are many little matters in which I have certainly shown myself no enemy to the Irish in this Island. I have acted on a conviction, that it is just and necessary to give them the practical enjoyment of religious tolerance, and unrestrained participation in all the political rights of their fellow subjects. My desire and aim has been to unite all the different classes of my brother colonists. I am not insensible to the distresses of my Irish fellow countrymen. God grant that they may be alleviated. I hold them to be occasioned by causes to the full as much social as political. I cannot conceive

that insurrection, however partial, can have any other effect than to aggravate them; and it is clear that this is the opinion of Mr. John O'Connell and others, with a great body of the Priesthood and People of Ireland. At all events, as the public (it should seem by the Press) conceive me to be occasionally identified with your opinions, I think it but just to myself to say that in this instance I cannot participate in them. And I regret exceedingly that you have taken a course calculated, in my judgment, to divide the supporters of reform within the Colony, and thus endanger the success of our legitimate and constitutional object.

"Divide et imperia," is a good rule of action applied to our adversaries, but dangerous when employed in a political party amongst themselves.

Sincerely lamenting the position in which you have placed me and many others,

I am, dear Sir,

Your obt. Servt.

WILLIAM SWABEY.

E. WHELAN, Esq., M. P. P.

I should not consider it worth my while to offer a syllable in explanation of the sentiments contained in the article to which the above letter refers, did I not entertain a desire to cultivate and retain the good opinion of those "liberal-minded" gentlemen, who have encouraged me so far by their support and approval in the publication of this Paper. Let it therefore be borne in mind by my readers, that the observations which I shall offer are not intended to be a reply to the malevolent aspersions which both the *Islander* and *Gazette* have thought proper to publish—anxious at all times to display their zeal in hunting down any man who will not play the hypocrite like themselves when there is the slightest pretext for raising the cry of *loyalty!*—and which aspersions will no doubt continue to be echoed by every jackanapes, who has been led by example as well as by direct instruction to misrepresent and vilify every word and deed of mine. It is the interest of a certain class in this community to abuse me on every occasion—to encourage in one journal the brutalities of a brutal adversary, and in another the inanities of a half-idiot—to ruin a business I have struggled to establish, and ultimately to drive me out of the colony. And why?—because I have for five years endeavoured to instil into the people of this Island that independence of mind which I have brought to the performance of my own labours—because I have proclaimed the right of the many to the privileges exclusively enjoyed by the few—and because I have not concealed the misconduct of a public officer, or, like my cotemporaries, deemed his rank or his influence an excuse for his faults and his follies. Still, I have never winced or flinched under the hatred of my foes; and though the *Islander* might be ready with its lie, when its blockhead of a printer could get some lawyer's clerk to put it in sensible English for him—and though *Jemmy Hazard* might shake his head, looking as grave as if he were doling out justice from the magisterial bench, and declare that 'British connexion' is endangered so long as Edward Whelan is permitted to print—I think I have not been the less active in pursuing the even tenor of my way. But when I find allies in the cause in which I am engaged prepared to read me a lecture on discovering what they may believe to be an indiscretion on my part—and others who have cheered me in the conflict, retreating to neutral ground, because I happen to fire a chance shot at some object apart from the common enemy—I must be permitted to doubt the propriety of their proceedings.

However the Hon. Mr. Swabey and others may lament the tenor of the observations on the State Trials (and I am sure their lamentation is sincere)—I cannot believe they will have such an effect upon the public mind as to be injurious to the cause of reform in this Island. It is not sufficient, nor fair, to infer that any man's writings are seditious, and thereupon proceed to censure, in

ever so friendly and paternal a style;—the most direct and convincing proof that they seditious, should be given—and then you have a right to censure, and to predicate the effect such writings are most likely to produce—calling them, however, seditious or treasonable does not make them so. Had not the article in question been particularly pointed out and commented upon, it would have passed with as little reflection as a thousand other casual things excite, which are daily to be met with in the newspaper press. We are all too apt to bestow on trifles a consideration which their merits do not justify; and thus a thing which in itself would be harmless is rendered injurious when submitted to public criticism and enquiry.—Had I been in the practice of giving utterance to sentiments such as are contained in the article under consideration—had I commented from week to week on the progress of the Irish agitation, and proclaimed my deep abhorrence of the oppression with which I believed my unfortunate country is borne down—had I in every number charged this oppression upon her Whig Rulers, and applauded any and every attempt to get rid of it,—then those who think differently from me upon this subject, and who agree with me in local politics, would have some reasonable ground of complaint. But this has not been the case. I have abstained hitherto from commenting upon Irish affairs; and when my Irish fellow subjects, who are supporters of reform in this colony, and patrons of the *Examiner* and who are, I am convinced, as firmly attached to the Crown and Constitution as any of the lip-loyalty people "who call them disloyal"—have complained that the *Examiner* contained in its editorial columns no expression of opinion on subjects connected with Ireland, I have been forced to acknowledge that such a course would be dangerous in a small community of so mixed a character as ours, where national antipathies, though not apparent, prevailed in all their ancient asperity—where, in short, I believed the Irish would be liked better if they seemed to like their native country less.

The tenor of the article may be ill-timed and injudicious, but that it is not treasonable or seditious, I think would not be difficult for me to prove. It would seem, indeed, from the outcry which has been raised against me, that this community has not yet learned to regard, with that indulgence so characteristic of other communities, the hastily-prepared observations of a newspaper press. In other places, Editors of journals are allowed as great a degree of latitude as fall to the share of public assemblies—to the forum, the pulpit, or the senate. In moments of excitement, in debate or in conversation, a man may say whatsoever he pleases, without being called to account; but if he happen to place himself in the unlucky position of an editor, and presume to use the same privilege—if, in fact, he insert in the newspaper which he controls, on the spur of the moment, without thought or preparation, a paragraph so ambiguously written as to admit of various interpretations,—one of these interpretations, perhaps, rendering the whole paragraph obnoxious to the general sense of the community,—if, I repeat, a man thoughtlessly place himself in this position, he is sure to be threatened with all manner of punishment—bullied by every vagabond who is anxious for an opportunity to vent some paltry spite upon him, and persecuted and maligned for months after, under the especial protection of the generous, indulgent, and liberty-loving public of Charlottetown.

Although it is not my place to prove that the article is not seditious—my accusers not having proved the contrary—I will, however, offer a few facts and observations upon this point. In the second sentence of that part of the editorial which relates to the State Trials, I state that the Young Irelanders "committed a monstrous blunder" in resorting to physical force for the attainment of their object, while they were destitute of the sinews of war—men and money. In this sentence I did not express any approval of a war with Great Britain; and if I did,