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The Examiner.

"THIS IS TRUE LIBERTY WHEN FREE-BORN MEN—HAVING TO ADVISE THE PUBLIC—MAY SPEAK FREE."—MILTON'S EURIPIDES.

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LETTER III.

To the Constituency of the Second District of King's County.

MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW COLONISTS—

The next argument used against the introduction into this Island of the new system of Government, is that which I placed third on the list at the commencement of my last Letter. This argument asserts that members of the Assembly become corrupt so soon as they take office under Government; and that therefore they should be declared ineligible to hold seats in the Assembly. It is impossible to conceive any thing more egregiously absurd than this. It is impossible to assert any thing more strikingly illustrative of the imbecility of those who use the argument. If true, the old party must have been incorrigibly corrupt—for several of the present minority held situations under the Government while members of the Legislature. Mr. Palmer was Solicitor General—Mr. Longworth Commissioner of Small Debts Court—Mr. Haviland, Provost Marshal—Mr. Thornton, Clerk of the Crown, Commissioner of Small Debts Court and High Sheriff; and it would be easy to extend the list so as to include the names of gentlemen who held seats in former Parliaments, voting with those of the present minority, and holding offices under Government? If they were honest, as they claim to be, in the discharge of their official duties, how can it be predicated that other members of the Assembly would be dishonest, unless it can be proved that the only pure and upright men in the community are to be found in the ranks of the Obstructives? But if office-holders are, of necessity, corrupt and dishonest, as the argument would show them to be, then there could not have been one honest man connected with the late Government, whether in or out of the Legislature. Out of the Legislature, and subject to no controul, they had every facility for practising fraud. In the Legislature, they must have been dishonest, because they were in the Legislature;—this is the unhappy position in which this most absurd argument would place the imbeciles who employ it. It is really a monstrous outrage upon common sense to suppose that the mere circumstance of excluding an official from the Legislature would keep him honest, if he were disposed to be otherwise.—Now, the great merit of Responsible Government is, that it will prevent the possibility of corruption. Members of Assembly, on taking office, are compelled to return to their constituents; if not re-elected, in most

cases they lose their offices as well as their seats in the Assembly. If re-elected, they are under the controul of the majority in Parliament, who, it cannot be presumed, would band themselves together to connive at fraud and corruption on the part of one, two, or three individuals;—they are further under the controul of the Lieutenant Governor, whose positive duty it is to keep a vigilant watch on the faithful discharge of every branch of the public service;—they are, further, accountable to their constituents: if they demean themselves properly in office, they may reasonably hope to be continued, so long as their party possess a majority in the House of Assembly; if otherwise, they will be rejected by their constituents at a general election, and must retire from office, whether their party have a majority or not.

The only other topic to which I shall now beg to direct your attention is that in reference to what is generally styled *the Land Question*. Our Party are accused of having procured the intercession of the absentee Proprietors with Her Majesty's Ministers, to obtain for this colony Responsible Government; and the condition, it is asserted, upon which this mighty intercession was vouchsafed, is that our Government and Legislature should avoid any interference between the Proprietors and their Tenants on this Island; or, in brief, that we should shelve *the Land Question*. The first part of the accusation, if accusation it can be called, rests exclusively upon the authority of a London Newspaper paragraph, published many months ago. No proof whatever is given for the second part.—Now, if it were true that the absentee Proprietors did exert their influence at the Colonial Office with the view of having extended to us the privilege of self-government, the circumstance would have been eminently creditable to them; and would have contrasted most beautifully with the former proceedings of that body, whose tendency was to keep the people of this Island in the most degrading servitude to an Oligarchic Faction. Besides, it must be remembered that our party have been always heretofore regarded by our opponents, as the sworn foes of the Proprietary party, whilst those opponents were their most steadfast friends—that we have been censured for having incurred the enmity of the Proprietors,—and that we have been admonished, time after time, to make peace with them, and elicit their friendly interference on our behalf. Now if it be true that we have buried the hatchet, and smoked the pipe of peace together, why are we held up to reprobation, and marked out for derision and contumely? What do our opponents want? They abuse us for making way with the Proprietors; and they fly into a towering passion at the faintest indications of peace!

There is not, however, a particle of truth in the assertion, as to the owners of

land interesting themselves at the Colonial Office to procure for this Island Responsible Government. They are entitled to no credit for the concession, even though there were fifty London Newspapers to promulgate the contrary. That proprietary influence was brought to bear upon the subject, is an undeniable fact; but that influence was exerted with a view to withhold, not to extend, the concession. I state this fact upon the best authority, and if need be, I shall be prepared to prove it.—When it was known in England that his Excellency Sir Alexander Bannerman was appointed to administer the Government of this Island, some of the principal proprietors of land made a descent upon the Colonial Office, to urge their objections and remonstrances against the introduction of the Responsible system: one old lady—who is the owner of certain lands in this colony, and not unknown to our little aristocratic coterie and fair gossiping dames in Charlottetown—went so far, I believe, as to invade the private apartments of the First Minister of the Crown, to besiege his Lordship with her peculiar notions of the impolicy of, and of the mischief which would result from, appointing to the Government of this colony a gentleman who was deemed to be an exception to nearly all our preceding Governors, and would not therefore obstruct the legitimate action of the people's representatives.

But is not the conduct of their Agents in the House of Assembly the most convincing proof, that the Land Proprietors have been and are hostile to the new system of Government? Would Mr. Douse and Mr. Yeo oppose that system if their principals in Britain were well disposed towards it. The first of these gentlemen is indebted chiefly, if not altogether, for his legislative position, to the Rent Roll of the Selkirk Estate—he is in constant communication with the owner of that Estate. Would he have dared to oppose that master in whose "shoes" he delights to tread, if it were his wish that the people of this Island should have Responsible Government? As for Yeo, he knows Sir G. Seymour's opinions better than I can tell him, and he knows and must admit that Sir G. Seymour was no friend to Responsible Government.—Then there is Mr. Thornton, another Agent; and Mr. Palmer, a proprietor to some extent. Would these gentlemen likewise have opposed the measure, if, as is stated, the absentee landlords had entered into a solemn league and covenant to coerce Her Majesty's Government to consent to its adoption, and thereby secure the important advantage to themselves of having "the land question" for ever afterwards dead and buried. The gentlemen of the Legislature whose names I have taken the liberty to introduce have been at all times the unwavering advocates of Landlord claims, and the exponents of Landlord opinions; and I must say that I

think it would require more than an ordinary stretch of credulity to believe, that all at once those gentlemen would desert their chiefs, and run counter to their opinions, especially on a question whose successful issue was to be fraught with such immense advantage to themselves—if the assertion of their allies in the Press be founded in fact—as would be the non-interference policy between the proprietors and their tenants.

It may be said that we have two Land Agents on our own side of the House—and that they advocated Responsible Government under the direction of their employers. There is not an atom of ground upon which such an assumption could be raised. The gentlemen referred to are the Hon. Mr. Warburton and the Hon. Mr. Pope. The proprietors whom these Agents represent never interested themselves in the politics of the Island. They are comparatively small holders, whose lands are well settled with a thriving and contented tenantry. One resides in Ireland—the other in the United States of America—both far removed from the Colonial Office—both supremely indifferent to our petty political squabbles—both confident in the honesty and ability of their Agents to manage their Estates—both indulgent and generous to their tenants, whose attachment they have secured, and which attachment is the best guarantee for the security of their property,—the one having constant reason for perceiving, if his mind be at all open to political enquiry, the injustice of denying to the people a proper and constitutional controul over the administration of their own affairs;—the other nursed within the bosom of a "fierce democracy," his sympathies and predilections intertwined with it—accustomed to regard the popular, as the most essential, element for all governments, and desirous of seeing meted out to every people the fullest measure of liberty.

To notice all that has been said by our enemies in reference to "the Land question," and to the Despatch from Her Majesty's Colonial Minister, dated 12th Feb., 1851, interdicting a recurrence to the agitation of Escheat—is neither my purpose nor inclination. The Obstructives are at this moment in search of political capital, and in pursuit of accusations against Government and the majority of the Assembly; but if their future efforts in this laudable course be attended with no higher success than what has marked their past ones, Government will have little reason to apprehend a hasty withdrawal of public confidence, and the majority of the Assembly will be troubled with few compunctious visitings of conscience. When we are told that the Legislature and Government are instructed or commanded to abandon "the Land question," we are naturally led to inquire What do these terms imply? If Escheat, then our party cannot be said to have abandoned a question they never enter-