

The Examiner.

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

Vol. II.]

CHARLOTTETOWN, P. E. ISLAND, MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 1848.

[No. 56.]

TO DUNCAN MACLEAN, Esq., M. P. P.

By the gods

You shall digest the venom of your spleen,
Though it do split you; for, from this day forth,
I'll use you for my mirth, yea, for my laughter,
When you are waspish.

JULIUS CÆSAR, Act 4.—Scene 3.

SIR;

I address you individually, because the quarrel you have commenced is personal, because I have many things to say to you, which I can, perhaps, more conveniently say in the easy and familiar style of a letter, than in the formal character of an editorial; and lest you might be put to the trouble of borrowing your neighbour's paper, I enclose you a copy of THE EXAMINER for your own especial use—a "consideration," you will confess, which you do not now deserve.

For some years you have been looked upon, I believe, as a sort of literary "raw head and bloody bones"—a writer, in fact, of the "tomahawk and bowie knife" school, whom it would be safe for no weak man to engage—who was always sure to carry off the scalp of his adversary in every contest. Possibly long Jim Pickering or Jim Whiteside, or some other of your delectable neighbours on the banks of the South West, may even till this hour entertain these awful conceptions of your literary prowess—possibly the *Islander* people have a vivid recollection of the castigations you inflicted upon them, after your recantation of Canadian Toryism, when you first buckled on your armour to fight the enemies of Escheat, and the promoters of Compact ascendancy, and, having taught them to fear you, you have compelled them to respect. In former years it was my fortune—either good or ill—to know you well,—at first I fell into the common error, that you were a very great man—on nearer and more frequent approaches, I found you superior in nothing to the common race of bipeds, but (if it is a quality deserving praise) in an aptitude for scribbling or grunting severe thoughts in harsh and severe words. An offensive and ferocious animal is an object of dread at the first sight—learn its peculiar habits and conciliate them—approach it frequently, and you feel as perfectly at home as in caressing a favorite dog. Van Amburg tamed the lions, not because he was superior to them in physical strength, but because he learned their nature, and by dint of his learning subdued them. I am sure, however, you are not "the lion" you would wish to be, and I assure you it will be utterly useless to attempt to convince me to the contrary, as I care as little for your roar as for the bark of an ill-natured dog, or the bray of an obstinate ass.

The vulgarity with which I am treated in your communication printed in last week's *Islander*—(that paper which, three or four years since, had so rank an odour in your virtuous nostrils)—is, I perceive, the result of a refusal on my part to answer an impertinent question put by you as a postscript to a former communication. Where you formed your estimate of the duties of a public journalist, is not my business to enquire, but I am fully convinced that no honourable man charged with the management of a Press would let himself fall "so low in the scale of journalism," as to answer any Tom, Dick or Harry who might put the question to him through the column of an opposition paper, whether he did or did not write the articles published in his own periodical. Since a young man must teach an old one, I will instruct you even in this matter. You should have sought the information by private note; had I refused it, (which I might if I pleased,) you had sense enough to know where to find your remedy. Under the circumstances, I had nothing to give you but a sneer of contempt; and to the communication which I am now about to answer, I would accord the same reply, but that you consider yourself wonderfully big as a Newspaper writer—but what I have a leisure hour to spare, some columns of space to appropriate—a desire to expose the "rascality" (I will

quote your own happy phrases as often as I can) of a political apostate, who shall not, as in his assaults on Mr. Rae, walk the course, and riot in his vulgarity.

It is a matter of little consequence either to the public or to me whether you believe THE EXAMINER to be conducted by "two half editors." In this respect you must confess it to be superior to your present pet journal the *Islander*, which cannot boast of even one "half editor;" and it will be a source of joy to your philanthropic heart to learn, that the *Examiner*—whether it has "two half editors," or two and twenty—gives satisfaction to its supporters, and is gaining daily in popular favour. You say:—"I was not present when an application was made to the Assembly for a remission of the impost duty on the press and printing materials of the *Examiner*; but I was informed that enough transpired to satisfy members that they were the property of George Coles and Captain Swabey." A man who will wilfully propagate a falsehood in a small matter, will have no reluctance to utter a "lie" in an important affair. The following note from Mr. Preedy will show what little value you put upon your own veracity:

(COPY.) "SATURDAY, AUG. 19.

"DEAR SIR;

Will you oblige me to refer to your Notes of the proceedings of the House of Assembly, last Session, and inform me whether Mr. Duncan Maclean was in his place, when my petition, praying for a remission of duties on Printing Materials was under consideration; and whether Mr. Maclean, if there, took any part in the discussion?

"Yours truly,

"EDW. WHELAN.

"MR. THOMAS PREEDY."

(COPY.)

"MR. WHELAN;

"SIR—In reply to your note of this date, I beg to state, that I have referred to my Notes of the 17th of April last, and find, that the matter therein alluded to, was, in the afternoon sitting of the House, in Supply, under consideration—it was briefly debated, and lost by a majority of 10 to 8;—that Mr. D. Maclean was present, and that he took part in the debate, I need only transcribe the concluding sentence of his remarks to convince him: he said, 'the printers regard the public as a good milch cow.'

"I am, Sir, yours truly,

"THOS. PREEDY.

"Saturday Evening, Aug. 19, 1848."

You imagine, I presume, that you discovered something very odious and detestable against me, when you were informed (if every any such false and absurd information was communicated to you) that the printing materials of the *Examiner* "were the property of George Coles and Captain Swabey." If you had any inclination to tell the truth, you could state that Mr. Coles denied, on the floor of the Assembly, when my petition was under consideration, the alleged proprietorship of the *Examiner* press; and what it was which "satisfied members" to the contrary, is more than I can guess, or you, notwithstanding your unblushing impudence, can assert. But, supposing a negative—supposing "Captain Swabey and George Coles" to be the owners of the *Examiner* office—what would the fact prove against me? Thousands of papers are printed in the American States, in the Colonies, and in Europe, by printers who have no share or interest in the apparatus which they use—a Parson, a Lawyer, or a Minister of State may purchase a Press, and no printer would deem it a disgrace to work it for him. Take a walk through Queen Street the next time you honor the metropolis with your presence—ask the shopkeepers if they own the goods upon their shelves and in their storehouses,—they will answer yes, no doubt, though they will confess they are not paid for: so it is with newspaper property, the printer may call it his, but like the merchant's stock, it may not be all paid for: if you ask your friend John Ings, I presume he will not scruple to tell you that such is the case with him. Your impertinence in finding owners for my printing materials is so much in keeping with your character, that

I am quite disposed to humour you to the fullest extent. How would you like to see a paragraph such as the following, gravely published in an Island newspaper: "A certain gentleman now resident at New London, came to this colony a few years since, and proclaimed himself an eminently wealthy man—the depositor, in fact, of a very large sum of money in the bank of Scotland. It appears, however, that the gentleman's wealth was merely visionary, and that not only does he not own a sum of money in the bank of Scotland, but, fearful of retaining, in his own name, the farm which he now cultivates, he has made it over to another." If I were to copy your style of writing which deals so largely in inferences, hearsay stories, and beliefs, I should say at once, "I am informed, and I believe, that this is the predicament in which Mr. Duncan Maclean is placed;" and, after all, if you do cultivate a farm, legally the property of another, you are not in a worse position than the great body of your fellow-colonists, who, like the printer with his press, do not own the soil from which they get their living; but, let me give you this advice (and I dare say I shall have many more lessons to teach you before I have done with you), never insinuate that your neighbour is not independent in his pecuniary circumstances, when it is notorious you are not so yourself. If, in thus dealing with you, I sometimes extend my inquiries into personal and private matters, you will remember that I have your illustrious example to plead in extenuation.

I shall now proceed to investigate the "high crime and misdemeanor" perpetrated by me against the majesty of the glorious Triumviri, Duncan Maclean, Donald Montgomery, and Nicholas Conroy, Esquires. It is amusing enough, Duncan, to observe so wise and witty a writer—so profound a philosopher as you pretend to be—coolly and dispassionately giving utterance on paper to the most stolid nonsense and absurdity. I am told by you, that from the "offence" I have committed, "there is no retreat but with dishonour," and at the close of your communication you politely inform your intellectual friend, John Ings, that "if Mr. Whelan do not extricate himself from the stigma of the meanest and most contemptible offence that a man can be guilty of," you shall not "pay the slightest attention to anything he (Mr. Whelan) may write." Let me cram your logic in a nut-shell, and see what it is worth: I can't "extricate" myself from this "offence," (so you say) "without dishonor," and if I don't extricate myself from it, you shall not "pay the slightest attention to anything I may write!" So in either case, I presume the heavy affliction of your silence, is to be the punishment of my sin against your mightiness! Wee is me!—what a direful calamity, that Duncan, the loquacious and sarcastic—the mighty champion of the "grey goose quill"—the spokesman of the Triumviri—is to wrap himself up in his own virtue, and consign to the silence of oblivion the refractory editor of the *Examiner*! Again you say: "I shall prove a negative which I am not bound to do; and I am confident that Messrs. Conroy and Montgomery would—(could?)—do the same, had Mr. Whelan not fallen so low in the scale of journalism as to be unworthy of notice?" I hope Messrs. Conroy and Montgomery will duly acknowledge the compliment you have paid them in this sentence: the compliment is two-fold, namely, first, that they can write and "prove a negative," second, that they are too much of the gentleman to notice anything written by a person "fallen so low in the scale of journalism" as "Mr. Whelan." I apprehend, then, that you are conscious of your own want of dignity and gentlemanly feeling when you will undertake to do that from which Messrs. Conroy and Montgomery would shrink. The "negative" you promised to "prove" for self and fellows is simply this: that you have not abandoned certain political principles—have not betrayed the confidence reposed in you by your constituents—that you have not sold yourself to the Compact party in this