

The Examiner.

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

Vol. 1.]

CHARLOTTETOWN, P. E. ISLAND, SATURDAY, AUGUST 7, 1847.

[No. 1.

RANDOM REFLECTIONS ON LOCAL POLITICS.—No. 1.

I'll make him rue HIS handy-work,
And wish that HE had rather dared
To pull the devil by the beard.

HUDIBRAS.

"Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus."

HORACE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EXAMINER.

It has been often intimated that the "honourable and learned member for Prince County," (Mr. J. H. Conroy), as he has been sometimes designated in the Assembly—delights to embrace every opportunity that will enable him to convince the world—or, rather that fragment of the world that may be curious enough to concern itself about such a dazzling genius as the aforesaid gentleman imagines himself to be—that he cherishes some reminiscences of his school-boy days, and can, occasionally, cull a Latin quotation for an adversary, as safely as he can cull a simile for a patient. He can have little or no difficulty, I presume, in translating the above somewhat trite sentence from Horace; and let him, for a moment refer to his letter in the *Islander* of the 23d ult.—and, in the solitude of his own breast, now that the pride of his conception must have passed away, perhaps he will admit with me, and with the unbiased portion of the reading public—that the line is not inapplicable to himself and his precious production.

It is a long time since I have written a letter for the Newspapers, because there was no inducement to write—while the printers in Charlottetown had no manifest inclination to publish, the opinions of any man who had honesty and independence enough to think differently from them upon public affairs. Knowing that the publication of THE EXAMINER will tend to remedy this evil, I will hail its appearance as an era in our political literature; and it is not unlikely that I will be now and then solicitous of speaking through its columns—wage the labours and cares of a somewhat active life will leave me leisure for the purpose—touching those various circumstances and events that engage the attention of our pigmy politicians.

Mr. Conroy's letter is an amusing production. The laugh which its transparent sophistry and inordinate vanity must have excited, was not a bad recompense for the fatigue and dulness one must endure while travelling through the somniferous leaders of the *Islander*. The learned Gentleman is aware of his prominent weakness—i. e. vanity—when he modestly deprecates "the apathy so prevalent in this Island," and seeks to exempt himself from so heinous an accusation, because, forsooth, he is one of those who have been "entrusted with the representation of the people, and who have thereby incurred the obligation of watching their political rights." As for the "apathy," I do not think it is by any means "so prevalent," as the public-spirited Representative for Prince County intimates. Mr. Conroy makes his complaint in reference to the appointment of Mr. Coles to a seat in the Executive Council. Surely, public opinion has been as active as it need be, on this subject: but public opinion has been, unhappily for Mr. Conroy, turned against him and his political confederates; and because the mass of the people are not silly enough to imbibe his prejudices and those of his party, he adopts the very sage conclusion, that they—the people—are apathetic.

Few matters have excited more attention and contention than this very appointment of Mr. Coles. I will shew this. It led immediately to an election. At this election, every man who had an independent vote to give, which he believed, might serve to benefit his country, regarded the appointment as a concession to Liberal principles on the part of the Lieutenant Governor, and sanctioned that concession by his vote. The Clique, on the other hand, deemed it to be an encroach-

* "The mountain is in labour, and a ridiculous mouse is brought forth."

ment on their long-cherished privileges, and put forth all their strength to secure a majority of votes to Mr. Coles' opponent, who was their own nominee.—It is very well known that several of the Charlottetown shop-keepers—such persons, for instance, as Messrs. Andrew Duncan, James Purdie, Robert Longworth, Charles Welsh, Kenneth MacKenzie, and George Beer, (Butcher)—all Solons in their way—scoured almost every section of the District, for several days before the Election commenced, in order to procure votes for Mr. McCallum. In this enterprise, they were assisted by Doctor Conroy, and the individual who holds the Speaker's Chair in the House of Assembly, and by many others, of perhaps, less note; but all affecting to admire those principles, opinions, or motives, that have given, in times past, the "Family Compact" of Prince Edward Island such a predominant sway over its Government. Let any candid and unbiased reader turn once more to the names I have written, and let him challenge his memory to produce one act, performed by either of them, that will give him or them a right to be considered as Members of the Liberal Party, or, if you like, advocates and friends to the great Reform Principle that is now working its way through every government of British America. Kenneth McKenzie, and such men as he, advocates of the Reform Principle!! The thing is too ludicrous to be entertained with a serious countenance. Some of the parties who undertook their late crusade against Mr. Coles, have so deeply imbibed the doctrines of Toryism, as to be incapable of entertaining a liberal opinion; besides, most of them have scarcely a sufficient amount of brains to enable them to form any just conception of the principles of political science. In their private transactions, they are, probably, estimable men; but if they would not "damn themselves to save the Lord the trouble," they would perform one wise act in eschewing political agitation. The advice of Apelles to a Crispin may justly enough be recalled for the edification of some of those gentlemen who were lately so active in their canvassing excursion—*Ne sutor ultra crepidam*;—for my own part, however, I should not care a rush about their interference in the political squabbles of the day, so long as they confined themselves to principles, and abstained from exciting national and religious feelings among people too easily inflamed by their prejudices on national and religious topics. It is a fact too notorious, and too well established to be disputed, with any show of reason; that every effort was made to arouse the bigotry of the credulous and unthinking: The Protestant portion of the District had it continually dinned into their ears, that Mr. Coles was desirous of establishing a Catholic ascendancy, and was, consequently, unworthy of their suffrages. The Irishmen, again, were attempted to be cajoled into the belief, that Mr. Coles was an enemy to their country and their creed,—and the most villainous falsehoods were printed and propagated among them, to impress this absurdity on their minds, and excite them against him at his election. Bribery—the most barefaced and most flagrant—was resorted to, where falsehood and scurrility could not prevail. But, though unfortunately, these unhallowed measures proved effectual in a few instances, there were still enough of honesty and intelligence found among the electors to frustrate the machinations of the disreputable Clique who arrayed themselves against Mr. Coles, and who had, only a year before, ranked themselves among his most strenuous supporters. Does the reader desire to know from what circumstances this change of feeling arose? I answer—from Mr. Coles, having, in the first instance, connected himself with the tried friends of the People in the Assembly,—in the second, from his independent exposure of the corruption of the "Compact"—in the third, from daring to accept a seat in the Council of a Governor, that would not *always* be hoodwinked by their sophistry—nor influenced by their hopes and designs of self-aggrandizement.

It is abundantly evident from these facts, and from others, that I might adduce, that little or no "apathy" prevailed among parties who opposed or favoured the appointment of Mr. Coles. It is likely that I will have many more observations to offer, at another time, touching this appointment, and the consequent election.

When the portly member for Prince County makes the broad assertion, that "the prerogative of the Crown" is "frittered away or degraded by appointments that only add further odium to the man who makes, or the Council who advises and consents to such"—he would perform an essential service by giving even the least particle of proof. If the appointment of Mr. Coles was a violation of, or an encroachment upon, the Queen's prerogative, why did the Queen confirm it? and why did not Doctor Conroy publish his declamatory remonstrance at an earlier period? Had he the silliness to suppose that Her Majesty would disallow a constitutional act of an Officer whom she had deemed worthy to represent her? Did he imagine that her Colonial Minister would be influenced by the sneaking Memorial of a few individuals—some of them holding situations under the Government, from which they had not the manhood to retire, when they privately disapproved of an appointment?—or did he believe that the influence of a certain non-resident Land Proprietor could be as omnipotent in its service to Tory interests on that occasion as it was on a former one? Take any of the late appointments, what "odium" attaches to them? Ay, perhaps they are not sufficiently Tory in their character: they are not hangers-on to the "Clique"—they have not been conferred on persons accustomed to regard Mr. Conroy—*et hoc genus omnes*—as the alpha and omega in statesmanship. On what reasonable ground is Mr. Coles' appointment objectionable? The very clever member for Prince County says, he ought not to be appointed because he is the nominee of Mr. Rae: a most excellent reason, in sooth! The appointment is offered to Mr. Rae,—the latter gentleman declines, because its acceptance would interfere with his private business,—not from the cause so impertinently assigned by Mr. Conroy—and suggests to the Governor the propriety and utility of giving the office to Mr. Coles. Several gentlemen in the Assembly back the suggestion of Mr. Rae,—the Governor, having confidence in the party with whom Mr. Rae is connected, and who had a majority on most questions in the Assembly, last Session, elevates Mr. Coles to the Council, and, in doing so, carries out his own views, and the views of the party I have just referred to. It is a matter of very little consequence whether a majority of names were attached to the recommendation furnished the Governor by Mr. Rae: it would be preposterous to suppose, that on this recommendation the appointment entirely rested. Mr. Conroy or his party should prove, if they desire to make the recommendation alluded to, a test, that any members of the House refused to sign it. One thing he or they cannot forget, that Mr. Coles was not in a minority as a Member. I will ask Mr. Conroy did he suppose the Governor would offer the seat to him, or any of his party—and it is well known, that one or two of them would not hesitate so long as to require to be asked twice—after they had sold themselves, body and soul, to an individual, who had much more hardihood and perseverance in carrying out his schemes than they themselves had—who would pause at no means, however odious and despicable, that might serve to accomplish his ends—and who would remorselessly consign to the bottomless pit, party and people, to procure a gratification of his resentment against the Governor? The Governor could not do any thing of the kind, without rendering the act unquestionably odious. Then, as to the fitness of Mr. Coles. Pray, is he not fully as competent to fill the situation, as most of those who have held and do hold seats in the Executive Council? Go back to the appointments of the last ten or fifteen years, and inform us, if you can, what prodigies of