

papers will not be endured. It would lead to the seizing of a man and his papers for a libel, against whom there was no proof, merely slight suspicion, under a hope that, among the private papers of his bureau, some proof *might* be found which would answer the end. It is a fishing for evidence, to the disquiet of all men, and to the violation of every private right ; and is the most odious and infamous act, of the worst sort of inquisitions, by the worst sort of men, in the most enslaved countries : It is, in short, putting a man to the torture, and forcing him to give evidence against himself. For, if a paper be found in any house, in the hand-writing of the Master, which should contain the words of the printed Libel, there is no doubt but any Jury, upon proof of his hand, would find him the author ; and this sort of evidence is permitted in matters of Misdemeanor ; although, since the reversal, by Act of Parliament, of Algernon Sidney's case, that is, since the dominion of the Stuarts and their Judges, no proof from similitude or comparison of hands, notwithstanding the criminal writing be found in the custody of the person charged, has been deemed admissible evidence in capital cases. Nay, if it were once established for law, that, on the mere charge of a Libel, by the Attorney General's filing an Information *ex officio*, a Secretary of State might grant his warrant for seizing the person thus charged, together with his papers ; it would soon become usual, under the pretence of better keeping the Peace, to exercise this power in very ordinary cases, and without any hesitation or scruple ; and, by degrees, men known to be in opposition to the