

thority claimed in the late sedition law, passed by the late Congress.

This observation will, no doubt, be made and be echoed and reechoed from one champion to another, *that if the federal government cannot protect their president from libels, but must send him to the state courts for defence, we had better give up the national system at once.* This observation, when made, will be the result of the want of consideration. A moment's reflection will evince, that the general government is supported by the same people, who support the others. That these will have their influence; and whenever the general government shall be guided by men, who shall attempt a separate interest, the public opinion will gradually remove them, until the connecting balance shall be restored to its constitutional perfection.

The sum of the argument, on the whole, is this, that the constitutional freedom of the press does not open the flood gates of slander on the members of the civil society, and allow each man to calumniate his neighbor with impunity.

That a man's reputation ought to be guarded, as of the next consequence to his life.

That whatever is in fact done by a government, or by any officer of it, in his official capacity, or under a pretence of official authority, may be published to the world, without the writer or printer's being chargeable for a libel.

That the reputation of men in office, is as dear to them, as that of other citizens are to them, and as much under the protection of the laws, as the reputation of men in private life is; and that, therefore, a charge against them of bribery or corruption, ought not to be published, otherwise than in a judicial prosecution against them, before a proper tribunal, where they may be removed from office, or otherwise punished according to the demerit of their crime.

That where a man appears as a candidate for an elective office, he exhibits his character for a public scrutiny, and every one has a right to publish any thing against his