

in all free governments, public opinion must eventually direct the most important measures of the administration. When once expressed by the legal *constituted authorities, it is binding upon all the citizens, though it is *still* competent for *them* to use the press in

* We say, that when expressed by the *constituted authorities*, this publick opinion ought to be treated with the *biggest respect*; and one would have supposed, that in a country like ours, which boasts of its light and information, a contrary opinion could *not prevail*: but the National Intelligencer, in its serious reasoning, considers the expression of the publick opinion, by the populace in about *twelve* mercantile towns as binding on *all the citizens*. In reply to some reasonings, endeavouring to shew that war would not be justifiable, that paper remarks, that it is unnecessary to enter into the discussion of the justice of a war; "the people have decided that question—they have *willed* it, unless ample reparation be made."

The Chronicle holds the same language.

Now we undertake to say, that the numbers and the violence displayed on this occasion, were less than those which appeared in opposition to the British Treaty—*one* of the same great cities was in opposition to *that* instrument—but, happily for our country, Washington did not mistake the clamours of a multitude in a great city, which *peaceable men* think it more prudent to go with than to oppose, in the first paroxysms of its rage, for the *will* of the people.

Governor Sullivan and Sheriff Allen tried at that time the effect of opposition, and they had very convincing proofs of the wisdom, good sense, and reasonableness of an infuriated populace.

It is ridiculous to call the proceedings at the State House, in Boston, the sense of the inhabitants of Massachusetts. Those of us who were near enough to Boston to lift up the splendid veil with which these things are covered, know that neither that meeting, nor the one signed by William Cooper, were correct expressions of the publick will.

The history of these meetings is briefly this:—The cool and judicious men of both parties in Boston, were opposed to having any meeting on the subject, and openly expressed their disapprobation of them. Not that the inhabitants of this metropolis are ever behind their fellow-citizens in their zeal to vindicate the rights, and maintain the honour of their country—but they thought that we were too ignorant of the facts, and too uncertain of the true course to be pursued, to venture to give a decided opinion upon the subject. Such was the temper of the inhabitants, when a respect for the citizens of Norfolk, induced the Selectmen to call a town-meeting. At this meeting, it is well known that so great an uncertainty prevailed, as to the true policy to be adopted, that the inhabitants, on the proposition to appoint a committee, did not generally vote on either side, and the respectable Moderator, thinking that the lukewarmness discovered was not sufficiently respectful for the occasion, intimated the propriety of more apparent zeal, and actually put the question for a second time.

This state of facts is well known, and the Editor of the Aurora, at Philadelphia; has an arch allusion to it, when he observed, that the resolutions of Boston were force meat. The Chronicle repeated this wit against its own town, and yet has the effrontery to cite these resolutions, as expressive of the publick will. It may be said, that this goes to prove that many individuals acted with insincerity.

I ask, how people must be expected to act in a popular government, when the passions are suddenly and violently inflamed? To soothe and persuade, or oppose and inflame?