

fore the *only* constituted authority authorized to decide this question, the Legislature, had convened to deliberate upon it.

The example of Great-Britain, whose tyrannical principles have so long been the theme of popular harangue, one would think would be conclusive on this point—and that whatever may be done *with impunity* in that monarchical and severe government, might certainly be permitted in our free and enlightened country. It is well known that all the publick writers in England, both *before* and *after* the *decision* of Parliament, as to the question of war, undertake to arraign its justice, its policy, its necessity, its expedience, their own weakness, the means which they have of annoying the enemy, and to magnify the resources, power, and talents of their foes : nor can there be found, in a single instance, an attempt to check this freedom of enquiry, either by prosecution or threats.

If this example, and the explicit language of our own Constitutions were not sufficient authority, we might cite an illustrious man, whose opinions a large part of the community would be unwilling to question.—President Jefferson lays it down as an established axiom, “ that the utmost liberty of the press may be safely indulged, in such a country as ours, and that errors in opinions can do no injury, *where reason is left free to combat them.*”

If this doctrine be true in *ordinary* cases, how much more strong its application to the important questions of war and peace ?—To what terrible consequences would the tyrannical doctrine of the National Intelligencer, above quoted, lead us ? A foreign nation makes an attack which is alledged to be cause of war : Such an attack must always involve a question of fact, and a question of law or right. If the opinion of any particular set of men, even of dignified officers, *could be conclusive* as to these *two questions* : If no private citizen who might be in possession of better evidence as to the *facts*, or better authority as to the law, could divulge these facts, and make known his principles of law, it would follow that our Constitution would be a dead letter ;—the Legislature would become mere tools in the hands of the executive, and the nation might be involved in all the calamities of war at the pleasure of a single man. But the doctrine of the Government paper goes farther, you can not only not discuss the question of right, but you must be silent