

rit of the British Constitution prevails in its full extent and genuine effect :—But in this Province it is scarcely a paradox to maintain that such a *public opinion* as is here spoken of,—an enlightened public opinion, formed with knowledge and consideration, has no existence among the mass of the people.—Public opinion, such as these Petitions profess to express, is any thing and every thing which a small number of active agitators may chuse to instil into the minds and put into the mouths of an unlettered, and credulous peasantry, who are actually too happy and contented to trouble themselves with inquiry or thought on political questions, and too uneducated and ignorant to form a correct opinion on the particular points at issue. Public opinion, so represented, means the opinion of 250 busy Notaries, as many petty Parish Merchants, a certain number of Lawyers struggling into notoriety and practice, by mingling in political contentions, and a few active individuals in principal towns ;—all these, combining in any one system of misrepresentation and circulating it with restless zeal, find no difficulty in raising an outcry which they call the voice of the people, and persuade the open-eared multitude to join in it only by telling them that it is necessary, in order to secure them in the enjoyment of their farms, their purses, or their religion. This is no exaggerated representation of the manner in which public opinion (or what is so called) is formed and expressed in Lower-Canada. To such public opinion the better-informed and thinking portion of the community, however small their comparative numbers, never can bow without at least an endeavour to redress its evil consequences by appealing to that Supreme Power from which the Constitution was derived, and which has the undeniable authority, to alter it in such a manner that its present perverted operation may be corrected, and its future influence on the destinies of the Colony rendered more conformable to the wise and beneficent views in which it was originally devised.

*FINIS.*