

said of another that he was a thief, the person making the charge might support it by proving that the party accused had taken property secretly, without the consent or knowledge of the owner. About evidence in a question of this sort, all men of common understanding would form the same opinion. But what sort of evidence would be necessary to prove the first words of the indictment, that the reign of Mr. Adams had been one continued tempest of malignant passions? The circumstances to which the writer might allude, and which satisfied his mind that Mr. Adams was intemperate and passionate, would only prove to a man of different political complexion, that he was under the influence of a patriotic, honest and virtuous sensibility. When Mr. Adams said in his reply to the people of Arlington and Sandgate, "that he had long seen the exertions of dangerous and restless men misleading the understanding of well-meaning citizens, and prompting them to such measures as would sink the glories of America, and prostrate her liberties at the feet of France,"—some might conceive that he was speaking the language of passion and malignity. Many were of that opinion,—he himself was. He did not think that Mr. Adams could point his finger to a single man who deserved a reproach so vile. It was language calculated to exasperate the rage of contending parties. On the other hand, he was willing to admit that there were men of good sense and upright principles who really believe that the President spoke the plain truth, and that they themselves had seen such men as he had described. This was a question of opinion only, and therefore was open to endless discussion.

One instance more completely illustrates his meaning. The indictment charged the traverser with having maliciously asserted, that the President had reversed all his principles. If this assertion could be proved, it would be necessary, first, To show what his principles were; second, What they are now. The first branch of discussion presented difficulties absolutely insurmountable. Men of dif-