FREEDOM OF SPEECH. 41.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Constitution guarantees the liberty of the press, some have given a very strange and erroneous impression of its meaning. The word, "press," as used in the Constitution, means the newspaper press. It has been supposed that every man had a right to publish a newspaper or any other kind of paper as he might choose, without the slightest previous restraint, and to say therein whatever he pleased, and to sell it to whom he liked. Some of them have even supposed that a man was entitled to print a newspaper on his own lands, and within the jurisdiction of a county, without any previous permission. This is a mistake. The Constitution only declares that speech and press are free; but the word, "press," is used in a technical sense, as signifying the newspaper press, and not in a general sense, as signifying the whole body of the people. The Constitution of the United States guarantees to the private individual the right to publish a newspaper, and to sell it to whom he liked; but it does not guarantee to him the right to print a newspaper on his own lands, and within the jurisdiction of a county, without any previous permission.

The right of the press is one of the most valuable of all the rights of man; it is a right which cannot be too highly prized, and one which should be guarded with the greatest care. The press is the public voice of the people, and a free press is the best protection against any form of oppression. It is therefore a sacred duty to safeguard this right.

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