

The office of Mr. Pugh was entered on Tuesday night of last week, (July 12,) the type injured, the press broken, the ink and paper destroyed. The reason of this outrage was that here the Philanthropist, edited by J. G. Birney was printed, and its being an anti-Slavery paper, was deemed sufficient excuse for this act.

This outrage has produced a considerable excitement in our community, and men are approving or disapproving, according to their views and feelings. We have received the following article on the subject, by Franklin, which sets the matter in its true light:

For the Journal and Luminary.

MR. EDITOR:—A few days ago at the dinner table of a friend, a man of sense and intelligence, the following conversation took place—"So," said Mr. L., flourishing his carver, "I hear Birney's press is broken open at last,—I knew it must be so, well, I can't say that I am sorry—it will teach him better than to be setting these ultra measures on foot in our city."—"You are glad of it!" said I, "you, a Christian man and a lover of good order, not sorry that the laws of the city have been violated, and the rights of private property invaded!—my good sir, I am astonished at you!"

"Why, no," said my friend, looking somewhat puzzled. "I disapprove of mobs and unlawful proceedings of every kind;—no man more;—but then Birney and these fellows are so ultra and immoderate, and their measures are so calculated to throw community into a ferment!—"

"And breaking into houses and destroying property are measures indicative of so much more moderation, and so eminently tranquilizing in their influence on community, that you patronize them, as the least of two evils?"

"Why, no, certainly," said Mr. L., "I would patronize no such thing; I disapprove of the *infraction of law* in this case, though I cannot say I am sorry that the thing has been done."

"But my good friend, by uttering just such a sentence as you have now, you do as much to patronize mobs and unlawful proceedings as any of their leaders could desire. Suppose the leaders of a mob knew that after they had broken the laws of the city, all respectable citizens would calmly put their hands in their pockets, and say 'well, I'm glad they did the thing, though I seriously object to this breaking of the laws,' do you think that this metaphysical reservation at the end of the sentence would have any effect in deterring from the next outrage?"

My friend was silent and went on eating his beef for some moments with great solidity and then resumed—"But you must allow that it is very undesirable to have that Birney here sending out these inflammatory things!"

"Why! what harm do they do?"

"Why?—they inflame community."

"Well, and what harm is there in inflaming community?"

"Why, it makes men furious, gives rise to popular commotions and disturbances, and mobs, &c.," said he hastily, beginning to see where his own logic was taking him.

"And is it because you are so fearful that Birney will create mobs and excitement, that you are not sorry that there was a mob last night to tear down his printing press? It seems to me that it is not so consistent an arrangement of principles as might be made; now my friend, do you think the liberty of the press is a good thing?"

"Certainly—to be sure."

"And you think it a good article in our constitution, that allows every man to speak, write, and publish his own opinions, without any other responsibility than that of the laws of his country?"

"Certainly I do."

"Well then, as Mr. Birney is a man, I suppose you think it's right to allow him to do it in particular?"

"But Mr. Birney's opinions are so dangerous!"

"That is to say, so you think them; there are a large class of people in the nation, who are just as sure that they are not, now how is the constitution to be worded:

"Every man in the state may speak, write, print, and publish his own sentiments on any subject, provided that nobody in the nation thinks they are dangerous."

"Pshaw! said my friend—of course no law could run in that way, but there is a point you know, where all men of sense are pretty much agreed."

"Then," said I, "perhaps you would recommend that the constitution should provide that every man may print and publish his sentiments, except in cases where all men of sense are pretty much agreed that they are dangerous."

"Why," said my friend, after an uneasy silence of a few moments, really you are getting to be quite a warm abolitionist—I had no idea that you were so much inclined to favor Birney—it was only a month ago that I heard you lamenting that he would come here and set up his paper."

"So I did," said I, "and so I do now, but that has nothing to do with the question. The question is—is the article in our constitution that allows freedom of the press, a good one? either say it is a good one, and allow Birney, or any other man (be his opinions what they may,) the benefit of it, or say it is not good, have it struck out, and take the consequences."

"Well," said my friend, "you are right I believe, but what is to be done? there must be some restraint on these fellows."

"Perhaps that is a difficult question, Mr. L., but one thing is certain: the encouraging of mobs is not the thing to be done; I have been perfectly shocked to hear sensible christian men making just such remarks on several occasions as you have made to-day. Why just suppose that there was a train of gunpowder extending under every house in the city, and the incendiaries had begun to explode it under some unsightly old buildings which specially disfigure the place—you stand on a hill top and look down with great complacency—"That's right—can't say I'm sorry!—glad to see those ugly old things blown sky high!" "You fool," says a man running up, out of breath—"don't you know that the same train of powder runs under your house and mine, and every house in the city; let it go twenty minutes longer and they will all go together!" now this is precisely the case with these mobs. Every man is glad of a mob that happens to fall in with his views, without considering that if the mob system gets once thoroughly running, it may go *against*, as well as *for* them.

There is a mob at Vicksburgh against the gamblers; "I'm glad of it," say some well disposed people, "it will put a stop to this gambling." But what next! Why next there is a mob to tear down a church, or tar and feather a minister; and now the good people are shocked at this mobbing system!—What an awful thing it is! There is a mob to-night to tear down an abolition press; "glad of it," say many respectable men, this abolition is a bad thing—ought to be stopped. But at the heels of this follow a Jackson mob and a Harrison mob, a mob of workmen for wages, a mob on rail-road companies, and a mob on water companies;—one man's house is torn down for one thing, and another's factory burnt for another; till all begin to doubt whether abolitionism or any other *ism* is not better than mobism—and all this comes of every man patronising in the beginning, the particular mob that happened to suit his own taste. Now the only way to prevent all this, is for every man to stand sternly up for the principles of law, and frown with indignation on every violation of them even though they accidentally accomplish something that he thinks desirable. The minister and christian must treat with as much severity a mob against gambling as a mob against ministers and churches. The patriot statesman frown alike at the mob that advances us on that that retards his plans, and all lovers of good order must declare with one voice, that they will regard nothing with approbation, compromise with mobbing, and accept of nothing as a good deed that is purchased by outrages endangering those rights of property and of free opinion which are the pride and treasure of every American citizen.

FRANKLIN.

This communication gives us an opportunity to express some views on this subject which we have felt until they had wrought in us an abiding hatred of the least approach to the violation of our Laws. We shall strive to subdue to a proper temperateness our high feelings (which we have in common with every virtuous man, on seeing the outrages, to which we are becoming so liable,) while we express our sober views of the nature and prospective effects of these things, so new in the history of our land.

This event in our city, the similar outrage at St. Louis, twice committed, the one at Hudson in this State, had they come separately, at any former period, would only have excited that interest and indignation which every good man feels at the violation of private rights. But as it is, these events, have more than their intrinsic interest, there is more than private suffering, more than public outrage. They herald to our eye the future; they are the prophets and forerunners of a new and different state of society, to which we are rapidly treading;—they are bubbles which come up from the depths of society, revealing the silent changes below—flame jets which never come unpursued by the earthquake.

1. *These mobs, riots and private outrages, are not the effects of superficial or temporary causes. THEY ARE THE FORESEEN RESULT OF WELL APPLIED, CAREFULLY PREPARED MEANS.* Who has not heard, how long and loud foreign and domestic miscreants have preached the most disorganizing doctrines to our middle and lower classes, the Owen's, the Wright's, the Kneelands and the locust-swarm of their followers? They have labored with apostolic zeal to destroy, not only the maxims of morality and religion but of law and civil order; to convince the people that they were oppressed and abused, that Law is a mere farce, the unholy instrument by which a capricious aristocracy hold down the poor and laboring classes, while they roll in wealth and ease; that no law should restrict unlimited personal liberty; that licentiousness and immorality are the harmless excesses of natural feeling; that society must be reorganized; that the top must come down and the bottom go up; that one wide levelling sweep of force must spread an unbroken uniformity from side to side, from centre to circumference; that professional distinctions must cease, and property be equalized. Thousands and thousands have been made drunk with this story of their evils, which they never dreamed of before, or bewildered, by golden visions of a perfect future which would come when laws were changed and society revolutionized. Thus, by watching every fault incident to the best civil structure, by magnifying trivial evils, by tampering with the better feelings, by prejudice, by flattering by reasoning, by sophistry, by ridicule and by example, they have brought our wholesome laws into disrepute in the eyes of thousands.

And now the results of this long teaching is coming out;—mobs and riots, and private aggressions—the triumph of individuals over Law, are the fruit—the desired, foreseen, long expected fruit of this teaching. The infection has taken; we are poisoned, men think they are oppressed, that society is an ill-constructed thing—that laws are oppressive, and ought to be destroyed. The pressure of law is taken off from corruption and licentiousness and vice and desperation, and they are shaking themselves and coming out from their secret dens, with foul faces, allured by the savor of such doctrines. To this class of natives, is to be the myriad population thrown upon us from abroad;—ignorant of our laws, of our habits, of their own good;—instructed only in vice and immorality.

2. *The frequent mobs, riots, &c. indicate very clearly that there is no suitable public sentiment against them.*—Had there been a prompt movement on the part of our civil authorities supported by all the virtuous part of the community—had mobs been met at once and put down—had men seen that they were not to be tolerated at any rate, would they have come swarming upon us in this alarming abundance?

Men who professes to support Law, have destroyed it by openly sympathising with these popular outbreaks—have rejoiced in their doings—and everybody has stood by inactive. The private thief is taken, the incendiary is caught, the murderer is executed, but what adequate punishment has ever overtaken men boded together, to destroy the quiet of whole cities, to rob—to steal, and murder on the great scale! Our very judges tell us that for such, there is no punishment; It is notorious that there is no danger to those who join mobs, no life to be lost, no heavy damages—nay, no loss of character. Our citizens are willing to sacrifice the supremacy of Law to promote dislike and party feeling.

3. This evil spirit which haunts our liberty and inspires mobs, is growing tipical in every form. It is a radical corruption and disease of our system. It is not a temporary excitement against any one thing—it is a deep seated evil, a characteristic feature of our time, at every opportunity it shows itself. To-day it is called out by abolitionism, to-morrow the wheel turns and it is by politics, next by revenge for private injuries. Already in has at different places devoured everything that law was set to watch;—trial by jury has been prostrated, and in its place, loose associations—committees of safety—of vigilantes, or of whatnot, have seized the unhappy victim of suspicion—and in one breath, accused, convicted, condemned and executed him unheard and untried; it has guawed the bands of property and made them uncertain and now with its pestilential breath it is blasting the first, the highest, the most sacred, the last deserted right of freemen, the right of free discussion.

4. Who can forbear asking, to what these things are bringing us! Who can be blind to their results. They are as plain as if prophet told. The scroll is open—it hangs from the page of history and speaks without reservation in clear and strong language that society cannot exist where law

is unheeded. Can the sediments be cast up mire and dirt, upon the surface of society, and no evil happen? If private liberty and private opinion and property and quiet, cannot be had by law, men will spurn law entirely! Will they allow themselves to be robbed of their dearest rights under its broad shadow without reparation or hope of it! If men cannot be protected by the community, they will protect themselves; each one will retake that right of self-defence which he surrendered to society in return for its protection—associations, unions, clubs, societies, will supplant law; under the wide cope of nominal society will spring up ten thousand little associations and a reorganization will go on in the frame and shell of the old. Thus it has always been, and must always be. During the civil wars of England, the land swarmed with unions because law could not protect men. France, in the days of her revolution, was a nest of noxious, belligerent clubs and societies. Hardly a street in Paris which had not two opposing clubs, for there was no law to protect men. Ireland is now rent by this same evil, the Catholic association, the Orange society, are instances and in breaking these to pieces hundreds of others have been formed. Let us not deceive ourselves; this must be our fate: We have no remedy, no talisman; we shall suffer what others have suffered, if we do as others have done.

We are departing with enormous strides from the maxims and habits of those who founded this nation and planted the seeds of that prosperity which now blossoms and bears fruit through our land. But if we do not stop these violent doings against law, in the harvest—in the summer-tide of our prosperity, the tempest will smite us and sweep from our foolish expectations all that we have hoped or longed for. And now, having spoken freely on this subject, we will not be silent, but ever after we will boldly proclaim him to be false to himself, false to his country, who in any way countenances or encourages that spirit which overtops the laws, which we ourselves have made and takes the power from the sacred depository where we have entrusted it, to give it to private and irresponsible hands.