

## THE ALTON TRAGEDY.

We make a few, and we can afford space but for a few, extracts from other papers, in relation to the late melancholy and disgraceful scenes at Alton. It is, at least, some consolation that in a large portion of the conductors of the periodical press, there is a moral sense which revolts at the murder even of an abolitionist. The Whig of this city, (a paper which we seldom see,) meets a just rebuke, not only from the New York Observer, but from other papers. What are we to think of that editor who himself claims the right of publishing his own sentiments, however adverse to the best interests of society, but against those who differ from him, is ready to excite mobs and riots, and to apologize for all their bloody deeds? We envy not the head or the heart of such a man.

How has it come to pass in this country that men are denied the right of speaking and publishing on the subject of *slavery*? One thinks and maintains that the institution of slavery is politically and morally right—another, that it is politically and morally wrong. How does it happen that either of these claims the power of silencing the other? When did one of these lose his right to form and express his opinion? Who made the one a judge of what the other might or might not speak, write, or publish? Who invested him with such high powers?

The truth is, that the most mischievous and demoralizing sentiments, sentiments calculated to sap the very foundations of society, are daily circulated by the press, and yet no violence is threatened for this. We are content to meet the torrent of corruption by the force of argument, and to counteract its mischief by moral influence. We have never known an instance of an attempt to put down a press for its outbreaking wickedness, and gross immoralities by mob power. Why is this? Simply because this is an offence only to men of correct principles, and such men can never give their sanction, directly or indirectly, to so dastardly and unprincipled a mode of correcting any evil. It is the profligate and abandoned, those destitute alike of political and moral principles, who are the fomentors and actors in these scenes of violence.

It seems as if some men could tolerate any thing but an *abolitionist*. An infidel, the most profligate debauchee, the scoffer at every thing virtuous, may be tolerated, and protected. They seem to be affected by a kind of monomania on this subject. They almost turn pale at the very thought of an abolitionist.

Why is this? Can there be found in the community of the west, men of higher moral worth—of more stern integrity of character—of kinder hearts—of more generous sympathies—of more amiable, and kind, and christian-like deportment in all the relations of life, than the great mass of anti-slavery men among us? Lay aside this single charge made against them, and it is exceedingly doubtful whether in any community a society of men can be found composed of better citizens, or of more unspotted characters. It is the strength of generous sympathy in their hearts which wakes up feeling and prompts to effort for the oppressed. If this sometimes carries them into errors, they are the errors of generous and noble hearts. And we must confess, that we had rather rank among our friends, one whose warm feelings and ardent temperament occasionally render him guilty of indiscretions, than one, who is ever surrounded by the chilling atmosphere of a cold prudery, and whose soul is never warmed up by a generous sensibility. We can love the one despite of his errors: we become chilled in the society of the other despite of his negative virtues.

Even if we differed ever so widely from such men on any single subject, we should find enough in their general character to assure us of the purity of their motives, and sufficient in their general intelligence to make us feel, in common modesty, that after all, they may be in the right, and we in the wrong.