

that if they opened their mouths, they might expect to share the fate of Lovejoy; while at the same time they have been kindly assured, that if they would keep still they should not be molested. I have not been threatened with violence, that I am aware of, but I consider myself not the less in danger. I shall, nevertheless, proceed to tell you the truth, as I conceive every American citizen is deeply interested in the events that are here transpiring. I state nothing but what I know from personal observation, or from the most unquestionable authority. If I shall, from wrong information, or inadvertently, state any thing that is not in strict accordance with truth, I will most cheerfully retract it, so soon as it shall be made to appear that I have erred, and take pains to make the retraction as public as the statement. My object is to injure no man; but simply to tell the truth.

You, I believe, Sir, know pretty well my views in reference to abolitionism, the great agitating question of the nation. I shall not, therefore, be charged by you, at least, with zeal for abolitionism, in writing what I have. The great strife is not between abolitionism and anti-abolitionism. The number of abolitionists in this town is quite small. And those engaged in this conflict have not taken sides according to their views in reference to this question at all. It has been a question, whether a peaceful, unoffending citizen, of irreproachable character, should be protected in the exercise of his lawful rights. Probably not one-fourth of those who volunteered, from time to time, in defence of the press, and probably not more than one-half of the number in the building devoted to destruction that night, were abolitionists. Several were there who I know have always been opposed, and are still opposed to abolitionism. Interesting as the question of slavery is, the question now pending here, I regard as surpassing it in interest. To have my mouth hermetically sealed and guarded by pistols and bayonets, and not allowed to express an opinion without danger of immediate assassination,—this, this is slavery infinitely more degrading and humiliating than is to be found in any form in Louisiana and Mississippi. For one, I shall not submit to it. While I live, I shall utter freely my opinions, however dear I may pay for my temerity. Life is dear to me as any man. But life, purchased at the expense of disfranchisement of all the dearest attributes of my being—what is it? It is too high a price for me. I scorn to be a slave.

But those who united in defending the press have been called a mob. It has been said that one mob opposed another. There is no truth in this statement. The citizens have, in no instance, since these late difficulties commenced, taken up arms, without the express advice and sanction of the Mayor. They acted under his authority and direction. On the night of 31st ult., when it was rumored that a riot would be got up at the Presbyterian church, where President Beecher was to preach, the Mayor expressly advised that those who were disposed to aid him in keeping the peace, should have their arms in some convenient place when they could get them at a moment's warning. They obeyed him implicitly in this matter. Their arms were deposited near the church, and when there were indications of a mob, by a stone having been thrown into the window, they repaired immediately to their guns, and formed in a line in front of the church, awaiting the orders of the Mayor. After the church was dismissed, he advised them all to go home. They immediately obeyed, although, as they retired, some of the people threw stones at them. One was struck in the head; another in the back, and a third had the breech of his gun struck off by a stone. But they did not retaliate. If this was a mob, acting as they were, under the direction of the civil authorities, then these men will not deny that they were in a mob.

Again, on the night of the landing of the press, the mayor was with the 30 men under arms, counselling and acting with them. Again, while the mob was raging, the mayor after he had exerted all his official authority without, went into the building to confer with those within, on the expediency of giving up the property, they asked him whether they should defend their property with arms, and he replied, as he had repeatedly before, that they had a perfect right to do so, and that the law justified that course. This then is the kind of mob that was organized against the assailants.

I alluded in my former letter, to a public meeting held on Friday P. M. previous to the outrage. The official account of this meeting you will see in the Alton papers. This meeting originated among those who were known to be opposed to the views of Mr. Lovejoy. But Mr. L. and his friends, desirous of promoting peace, if it could be done at any price, short of a total abandonment of principle, met with them, and although care had been taken to secure a large majority of those who were adverse to Mr. L.'s views, they remained and discussed the matter with them till the going down of the sun, when it was determined to commit it to a committee of seven, to report at an adjourned meeting the next day, at 2 o'clock P. M. Altho' the avowed object of the meeting was to endeavor to effect a compromise, yet in the appointment of the committee which was done by the chair, there was not one abolitionist on it, and but one who had manifested any disposition to defend Mr. Lovejoy in the exercise of his undoubted rights. The committee was selected chiefly, from our most substantial and respectable citizens—men in whose hands I would willingly trust my property and life in any case where their minds had not been predisposed against me. But the most of them were known to be irreconcilably hostile to Mr. L.'s remaining among us. What sort of a report was to have been expected from such a committee? Why, just such an one as they brought forth. While it made no concession on the part of those who were opposed to Mr. L. it very modestly required of him to abandon his constitutional rights, his principles, his occupation, his property, his all! and this too, while no charge or insinuation was made that there had been any infraction of the laws; but on the contrary it expressly asserted that his private character was unimpeachable: and yet this was called a compromise! At the adjourned meeting on Friday, pains were taken by certain individuals to get in as many as possible who were opposed to Mr. L. that every thing might be carried by acclaim. The meeting was hardly organized before a resolution was warily brought in, excluding all from a participation in the deliberations except citizens of Madison County. It was understood, that the object of this resolution was to prevent president Beecher and others who had troubled them with some sober truths and arguments the day before, opening their mouths on the occasion. The way being thus cleared, one of the committee (Mr. Linden) made a long speech in explanation of the views of the committee, and commending, in the highest terms their liberality and indulgence. It was viewed by the speaker as a remarkable instance of moderation; considering the provocation that had been given; and more than intimated that if it were not accepted so favorable terms might not be offered. In the course of his remarks, he broke out in several episodes of considerable length against abolitionists, ministers of the gospel &c. &c. After he had concluded his speech, which although it professed to be very mild and conciliatory, was in fact, of the most inflammatory character, Mr. Lovejoy obtained the floor.

He proceeded to the desk, in front of the audience, laid aside his overcoat, and in the most calm and deliberate manner addressed the meeting.—He repelled, in a spirit of meekness several charges and insinuations that had been hurled at him. He said it was not true that he held in contempt the feelings and sentiments of this community in reference to the great question which was agitating it. He respected and appreciated the feelings of his fellow citizens; and it was one of the most painful and unpleasant duties of his life, that he was called upon to differ from them. If they supposed he had published sentiments contrary to those generally held in this community, because he delighted in differing from them, or in occasioning a disturbance, they had entirely misapprehended him.—But, although he valued the good opinion of his fellow citizens as highly as any man could, yet he was governed by higher considerations than either the favor or fear of man. He was impelled to the course he had taken, because he feared God. As he should answer to God in the great day, he dare not abandon his sentiments, or cease in every proper way to propagate them.

He told the meeting he had not asked or desired any compromise. He had asked for nothing but to be protected in his rights as a citizen, rights which God had given him, and which were guaranteed to him by the constitution of his country. He asked "What infraction of the laws have I been guilty of? Whose good name have I injured? When and where have I published any thing injurious to the reputation of Alton? Have I not on the contrary, labored in common with the rest of my fellow citizens, to promote the reputation and interest of Alton? What has been my offence? Put

your finger upon it. Define it, and I stand ready to answer for it. If I have been guilty, you can easily correct me. You have public sentiment in your favor. You have your Juries, and you have your Attorney, (looking at the Attorney General,) and I have no doubt you can correct me. But, if I have been guilty of no violation of the laws, why am I hunted up and down continually, as a partridge upon the mountains? Why am I threatened with the tar barrel? Why am I waylaid in the day, and from night to night, and my life in jeopardy every hour?" He told them they had made up a false issue, (as the lawyers say,) there were not two parties in the matter, between whom there could be a compromise. He planted himself down upon his unquestionable rights, and the question to be decided, was not whether he should be protected in the exercise, and enjoyment of those rights.—What is the question:—Whether my property shall be protected, whether I shall be suffered to go home to my family at night, without being assailed, and threatened with tar and feathers, and assassination: whether my afflicted wife whose life has been in jeopardy, from continued alarms and excitement, shall night after night be driven from a rich bed into the garret, to save her life from the brick bats and violence of the mob: that *is*, the question. Here his feelings overcame him, and he burst into tears. Many others in the room also wept, several sobbed aloud, and I thought for a time, that the sympathies of the meeting were so much excited that there would be a reaction in his favor. He apologized for having betrayed any weakness on the occasion. It was the allusion he said to his family that overcame his feelings. He assured them it was not from any fears on his part. He had no personal fears, not that he felt able to contest this matter with the whole community, he knew perfectly well that he was not. But where should he go? He had been made to feel that if he was not safe in Alton, he would not be safe any where. He had recently visited St. Charles, for his family and was torn away from their embrace by a mob. He had been beset, night and day in Alton. Now if he should leave Alton and go elsewhere, violence might overtake him in his retreat, and he had no more claim for protection upon any other community, than he had upon this. He had finally, come to the determination, after having consulted his friends, and earnestly sought counsel of God, to remain in Alton, and here to insist upon protection in the exercise of his rights. If the civil authorities refused to protect him, he must look to God for protection; and if he very soon found a grave in Alton, he was sure he should die in the exercise of his duty.

The above is a very meager outline, which I sketch from memory, not having taken any notes of the time. His manner: but I cannot attempt to describe it. He was calm and serious, but firm and decided. Not an epithet or unkind allusion escaped his lips, notwithstanding he knew he was in the midst of those who were seeking his blood, and notwithstanding he was well aware of the influence that that meeting, if it should not take the right turn, would have in infuriating the mob to do their work. He and his friends had prayed earnestly that God would overrule the deliberations of that meeting for good. He had been all day communing with God. His countenance, the subdued tones of his voice, and whole appearance indicated a mind in a peculiarly heavenly frame, and ready to acquiesce in the will of God, whatever that might be. I confess to you Sir, that I regarded him at the time, in view of all the circumstances, as presenting a spectacle of moral sublimity, such as I had never before witnessed, and such as the world seldom affords. It reminded me of Paul before Festus, and of Luther at Worms. As soon as he had left speaking he left the room, and the Attorney General again obtained the floor. He treated as hypocritical cant, every thing Mr. L. had said. He held him up as a fanatic of the first order, and as a very dangerous man in the community. He waxed warm, and became very violent, not only against Mr. L., but against abolitionists and ministers of the Gospel generally, interlarding his speech with many profane allusions to scripture; in reference to which he betrayed as much ignorance as malignity. A number of respectable gentlemen, most of whom are not abolitionists, unwilling to sit and hear themselves and friends, and their religion, abused, arose and left the room. As they were going out, the speaker paused, and said he would wait for all the abolitionists to leave the room—was sure they would not be missed. After speaking a while in a most inflammatory manner, he introduced a resolution—a substitute for the report of the committee which said a religious paper might be established in Alton, under certain circumstances. The manifest spirit and design of his resolution was, that no independent religious paper should be tolerated.

The Chairman of the Committee, Hon. Cyrus Edwards, arose, and in a very respectful but decided manner, expressed his dissent from the sentiments just uttered. He urged the importance of maintaining peace and good order, and concluded by saying, that he wished to take his name before the country, on the report and resolutions of the Committee. But the substitute was urged with a great deal of pertinacity, and finally carried by shouts which made the whole building ring—no one voting to the contrary. Those in favor of maintaining the supremacy of the laws had either left the room, or remained as spectators. The idea that Mr. Lovejoy was a fanatic, not partially insane, was countenanced by religious men in the meeting. A story was told of the lamented Ely Pierson, who fell a victim to the impostor Matthias, as a illustrative of the nature and tendency of this kind of fanaticism. Other stories were told of a similar kind, which were regarded as very much in point by the meeting.—Their whole tendency was to impress upon the minds of the audience, that Mr. L. was not entitled to the protection of the laws in the exercise of his rights.

The meeting adjourned with every expression of satisfaction at what had been done. No resolution had been passed to destroy Mr. L. and his press, it is true, but from the resolutions that were passed, and from the remarks made, it was clearly demonstrated to the minds of all present that if such a work was undertaken, it would not be interrupted by those who composed that meeting. Altho' to this fact, that several of the Magistrates were known to be in favor of the mob. One had been heard to say openly, after the first press was destroyed: "I ordered that to disperse, but they had my good wishes." Another recently said, "he considered the mobs as the least of the two evils," (comparing them with abolitionism.) And these add also the well known opinions of the Prosecuting Attorney of the State, "that any thing might be perpetrated rather than suffer Mr. L. and his press to remain among us." I say put all these things together, and it was not difficult to predict the result. I told my friend on my way home from the meeting, that there would certainly be violence. It would be the legitimate fruit of such a meeting in the present excited state of the community. If there should not be, it would certainly not be because in the nature of the case, there had not been sufficient preparations to secure it; but it would be because God had held in check the elements fitted for the purpose.

How differently might have been the result, if the whole Committee, with all their influence, (and they have much in this community,) had planted themselves upon the correct doctrine contained in the brief and simple, but expressive protest of Mr. Gilman, viz., "That the rigid enforcement of the law would prove the only sure protection of the rights of citizens, and the only safe remedy in similar excitements in future." Had they taken this course; had they assured the mayor, in the presence of the assembled multitude, that he might rely on their assistance, their counsel, their influence, and their personal efforts to aid him in suppressing violence and maintaining the laws; had they at once set about devising ways and means for promoting the public peace and safety, instead

* Since writing this letter, I have just learned that this gentleman is not now acting in the capacity of Attorney General—having been disqualified in consequence of three several indictments that are now pending against him. The first is for an assault on Senator Riley at Vandalia, with intent to kill. The facts as stated in the indictment, are as follows. Mr. L. met the Senator in a Barber's shop, and fired a Pistol at him, containing 5 balls, which passed through his coat without doing him any injury. When L. saw that it had not taken effect, he fired another Pistol, which also missed him. The second indictment was at Vandalia for palpable omission of duty, having visited only two counties of the State on official duty. The third is pending in this county, for palpable omission of duty, having been drunk during the whole term of Court. Perhaps in justice, I ought also to state that he has recently joined the Temperance Society in Alton.

of taking the course they did,—who believes that we should have witnessed such scenes as occurred soon after the meeting? Who believes that human blood would have been shed? That our young, and hitherto prosperous and far-famed city would have been so indelibly disgraced? And that the world would have been furnished with this new, but signal and desired opportunity of sneering at our boasted liberty and freedom of speech? There is not a man in this community that believes it. I regret, deeply regret, that the Committee should not have taken this ground. I believe the time will come, when they will see that they have erred. They may, indeed, for a time, enjoy the unenviable satisfaction of being commended by every slave-holding and enslaved press in the land, for their zealous attempt to compromise human rights.—They have already received this need. The Missouri Republican, a print zealous in the interest of the mob, is clamorous in their praise; but, when the occasion of the present excitement shall have gone by, and men return again to sober reflection; when reason, instead of passion and interest, begins again to sway men's minds, these transactions will be viewed, even by themselves in a very different point of light from what they now are. When the history of these times shall hereafter be chronicled by the impartial historian for the use of posterity, the highest place that I desire on the historian's page, is to be found, standing up for, and supporting the laws of my country. Let my name have an humble place under the simple, but patriotic protest of WASHINGTON S. GILMAN.—With the laws of my country let me stand or fall.

Many incorrect statements have gone abroad relative to the conduct of those engaged in defending the press.—Some of these we deem it important to correct.

They have been charged with a spirit of bravado and recklessness, in bringing the press into the city at a time when the populace were so much excited against it. That there is no foundation for this, will appear from the following facts, which are not generally known. On the 2d inst. when the excitement was so great that it was apprehended that the press could not be safely landed, (it was expected daily,) they sent an express to St. Louis, to await its arrival there, and have it landed at Chippewa, about 5 miles below this place, and hauled to a place for secretion in a building which had been engaged to store it. A team was kept in readiness the next day at Chippewa, to receive it, and two individuals went down to assist in loading it. It did not arrive, however, and as it rained the next day, the road from C. was bad. It was then concluded to let it arrive at Alton, and if it should come in the day time, let it be landed; but if at night, and there should be any appearance of a mob, it was to be carried further up the river. On Saturday night, Nov. 3d, another express was sent to St. Louis, ordering the press to arrive at Alton at 3 or half past 3 o'clock A. M., it being thought the most unlikely time for a mob. On Sunday evening, the 4th, an express arrived from St. Louis, and advised of the arrival of the press at that place, in the Missouri Fulton. An urgent letter was then written to the Captain to make his arrangements to reach this place at three o'clock on Tuesday morning, which he did, as already stated in my former letter. By this statement it will appear that every precaution was taken to avoid excitement on the landing of the press.

Another story that has been reported through the Missouri Republican is, that Mr. Lovejoy, on the evening preceding his death, had agreed to leave Alton, and remove his press, but was dissuaded by Beecher and some others from so doing, on the ground that the war had been commenced there, and must be terminated there.

This statement is not true. Mr. L. never vacillated for a moment, in regard to his duty in maintaining his rights to the last. That President B. did express it as his opinion, in consultation on Monday, that it was the duty of good citizens to contend for the freedom of speech, and resist the demands of a lawless mob, is quite probable. These are well known to be his sentiments. These are the sentiments of all who defended the press—they acted from principle. These were the sentiments of all the gentlemen who composed the Convention at Upper Alton. (I mean the delegates.) And for the special benefit of that Editor, and those of his friends who don't know it, I will take it upon myself to inform them, that these were the sentiments of Washington and Lafayette, of Adams and Hancock, of Jefferson and Franklin, and all the founders of our FREE (!) republic. And they are the sentiments of Daniel Webster, the great expounder of the constitution, of Henry Clay, of John Quincy Adams, and almost every other man who has distinguished himself by promoting his country's good and his country's glory. Yet, for the expression of these sentiments in 1837, President Beecher is held up to public animadversion. The Editor regards him as "a far more dangerous man than the deceased Lovejoy," and has already designated him to the operators as a suitable victim to be "sacrificed." We regard it as very providential, that he left town on Monday; for we are advised, that a plot was deliberately laid for his assassination. Had he remained, there is but little doubt that he too would have found a grave in Alton. May that God, who has so signally interfered for his preservation, long preserve his valuable life.

There are many other things that I wished to say; but I perceive that I have already exceeded the bounds of a letter, and perhaps, wearied your patience.

The next morning, after Mr. L.'s death, his remains were removed, by a few of his friends, from the warehouse in which he died, to his family. It was manifest, as the hearse moved through the street, that the malignity of his enemies, not satisfied by having spilled his heart's blood, still burned against him. I myself saw their sneers, and overheard some of their profane jests. One who was known to have taken a conspicuous part in the tragedy remarked, that "if he had a fit, he would play the dead-march for him." The next morning, his friends assembled and quietly deposited his remains in the narrow house of the tomb. There were no public exercises except a prayer at his funeral,—it being deemed that silence was the most expressive sermon for the occasion. He is now where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest. He rests from his labours, and his works will follow him.

His poor afflicted wife, we fear, will scarcely survive the tragedy. She has been delicious almost constantly since his death. She is entitled to the sympathies of the Christian world, and, no doubt, will receive them.

There is now comparative quietness in our city. The mob, having triumphed over the laws, have undisputed control. No steps have yet been taken to arrest the offenders, although they are well known. Indeed, they boast openly in the streets of their deeds of valor. Report says, there has been quite a contention between two or three of the leaders, as to who was entitled to the honor of shooting Lovejoy. There is, probably, no city on the civilized globe, where, when the evidence of guilt is so abundant, and so palpable, no efforts would be made to bring the offenders to justice. The magistrates who are not in the interest of the mob, feel, like all the rest of us, that they are at their mercy.

O! my country! my country! I tremble for thy destiny. I already see the fair fabric of thy government crumbling by the hand of the ruthless destroyer—its pillars tottering on their base, and the foundations themselves giving way! May the God of Nations, who has been so often provoked by contempt of his authority, and abuse of his goodness, in his infinite mercy, avert the fearful judgments that are fast gathering over her! If he does not, then, we are, as a nation, undone. Desolation and ruin, wide-spread and fearful, will sweep away all the structures that have been reared for human liberty and human happiness, and blot out our name from under heaven.

W.

ALTON.

We have on hand several letters from Alton, which came to late for this week. We have only room for one of them. A letter received a day previous, from another writer, contains substantially the same facts as those published last week. This, together with another of the 10th, we withhold, to make room for the following, of later date. We shall give the others, or extracts from them, in our next week's paper. These letters are from individuals in whom we have the fullest confidence.

ALTON, November 15, 1837.

My Dear Brother:—I wrote you hastily from this scene of strife and danger last week. As there are some other matters connected with the recent transactions in our city, which the public are interested to know, and as there is no press in this neighborhood, that I am aware of, that is not either in the interest of the mob, or afraid to tell all the things that have come to pass here in these days, it was seemed good to me, having been an eye and ear witness of most of the things that have transpired, to write unto you, that you may know the certainty of these things. I am fully aware of the danger I incur by so doing. Ministers of the gospel have been told here, in the street, by authority that it would be unsafe to disregard,