Cambridge Chronicle.

VOL. X. NO. 12.

BY G. W. CALLAHAN. CAMBRIDGE, Md.---SATURDAY, AUGUST 20, 1836. WHOLE N O. 634.

TERMS:

The CAMBRIDGE CHRONICLE is published every Saturday morning, at Two Dollars and Fifty Cents per annum, payable half yearly, in advance. Subscriptions will not be taken for less than six months: No paper will be discontinued until all arrears are paid unless at the option of the editor; and the failure to order a discontinuance previously to the expiration of the time already subscribed for, will be considered as a new engagement.

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From the Alexandria Gazette.

Our correspondent, A. B., has performed an acceptable service in collecting the facts which he embodies in what may be called his "Thoughts on the present Discontents," and in giving utterance to his reflections upon the progress of disaffection to the laws and the general decline of public virtue. If 'History be Philosophy teaching by example,' how awful are the warnings and terrible the lessons of the history even of our own times and our own country! Look at the picture presented by our correspondent, and see how strong are the symptoms of the decay of national morality, and consequently of national happiness and greatness! Nor ought any American to shut his eyes to the real state of the case. "To be forewarned is to be forearmed." Possibly by having attention aroused to the *facts*, a salutary reform may be brought about in the minds, tempers, and dispositions of the people, and a correction thus applied to the great evil. Heaven grant it!

Even those who may not acquiesce in all the opinions expressed in the essay of our correspondent, with regard to the cases cited, the general conclusions to which he arrives must be admitted. All must acquiesce in the justice of the moral deduced.

It is a source of some satisfaction to us to reflect that, in relation to each and all of the instances of violence, disorder, and guilt enumerated, this press, in its humble sphere, has performed its duty. It has never hesitated to direct its severest censures against all outrages upon the *Laws of the Land*—those pillars and supporters of the social as well as political edifice under which we live, and to upturn or destroy which would be a crime, in our eyes, past forgiveness.

PROGRESS OF DISAFFECTION TO THE LAWS, AND DECLINE OF PUBLIC VIRTUE.

The last number of the London Quarterly Review has an able article on the subject of French Novels and the immoral tendency of this species of French literature. A perusal of this article cannot fail to impress the reader with a conviction unfavorable to the state of morals in that country. It presents the singular anomaly of a people most vehement and successful in contentions for principle, and who are yet, in reality, possessed of no principle at all, or at least of none that can add to the true glory of a nation.—Whatever benefit individuals and families may have received from the events of July, it is apparent from the state of affairs in France, that no essential good has been achieved for the cause of civil and religious liberty, or for the great moral interests of the country. The looseness of morals in the people, and their utter disregard of all the restraints imposed by religious feeling and social order, are in perfect keeping with the tyranical edicts against the press and the almost popular attacks upon the life of the sovereign.

While this deplorable state of things is moving onward in a confessedly enlightened part of the old world, and hastening to a crisis that must inevitably disturb the foundations of society there, and, by its example, injuriously affect good order every where, it will be well for those who have these interests at heart, to inquire into the moral and political condition of our own country, and the security we enjoy against the unbridled license of the mob on the one had and laxity of law on the other. If coming events cast their shadows before, and the transactions of a few years past, in various quarters of the Union, are forerunners of evils which are yet in embryo, then we repose upon the bosom of a volcano and rest in deceitful security. But the whole subject affords a fruitful theme for an abler pen and a more elaborate examination than can be given it within the compass of a newspaper. It is only intended now to glance hastily at some of the more prominent transactions of the mob, in order to show the uncertain basis upon which the peace of society and the rights of individuals rest.

We are accustomed more than any other people on earth, perhaps, to confide in the majesty of the laws, and in the willingness of the citizens to obey their mandates. The people themselves being the fountain of all authority, it is imagined that none are so reckless or mad as to be guilty of the suicidal acts of subverting institutions which they themselves have made, or of trampling upon a constitution which had been erected by the patriotism of their fathers. And in truth to a rational and dispassionate mind, such a conclusion is natural enough. But we know, or ought to know, that however pleasing this confidence of our citizens for the laws may be in theory, we are not without examples of their utter futility in practice. Of late years what country has exhibited so many instances of reckless disregard of the restrains imposed by law and order, as our own? When went there by a time, since the great flood, that more fiend-like scenes have been witnessed than those which have disgraced our own time and brought reproach upon our beloved country? Is there any thing to be found in the annals of the mob, more daring in the conception, more terrible in the performance, more fatal in the consequences, or more successful in the impunity with which it has been perpetrated, than the outrageous transactions at Charlestown, New York, Baltimore, Washington, Vicksburg, St. Louis, N. Orleans and other places throughout our widely extended country? It is believed that if a parallel can be found to the scenes alluded to it must be sought for in the most barbarous ages and amongst the most uncivilized people.

European mobs and riots, for the most part, differ from our own in this, that while the outbreakings of popular violence in this country have been as diversified in cause, and as inconsistent in principle, as the fluctuating caprices of passion could make them, popular frenzy on the other side of the Atlantic has scarcely ever been excited, except in defence of some real or imaginary right to assert some principle that has been deemed indispensable to liberty or justice. This excuse cannot be offered in extenuation of the crimes committed in this country under the sanction of the popular will.—These, generally, have been of a personal character, the grievance sought to be redressed local and limited in its nature and extent, and the victims of popular fury private individuals unsupported by the arm of power, and unsustained by the influence of wealth. In those cases where popular vengeance has contented itself with a burning in effigy, the persons represented by the figure have generally, been thus marked out and denounced, for no better reason perhaps than that they acted in conformity with the dictates of conscience and honestly differed with the mob.

Nor have the occasional outbreakings here been distinguished by purity of intention and singleness of purpose, though these characteristics, if strictly preserved, could not sanctify what is in itself a wrong. In the case of a widow in New Orleans, whose house was demolished and herself and daughters compelled precipitately to fly, it is a notorious fact that the most costly furniture and plate were borne off by the rioters, and the richest wines made to add fuel to the already excited passions of the mob. The circumstances were these: A fire had occurred in the course of the morning in a back building of the premises, and in the process of extinguishing it a scene was developed which greatly exasperated the public against the mistress of the house. She had used this back building as a prison, and had confined in it at the time several slaves, whose appearance bore the evidence of the grossest cruelty. They had been lacerated with the whip, reduced to mere skeletons by starvation, were covered with wounds and sores, and exhibited a spectacle that could only be witnessed with disgust. Still, this was a case against which there was ample legal provisions and redress. But what did the mob on this occasion? did they rush immediately on the house, and, under the impulse of sudden exasperation, take vengeance upon the author of this brutality? No; they controlled their indignation for several hours, in order that it might be vented under cover of darkess. When the fire was extinguished, the more valuable part of the furniture, which had been removed during the alarm, was carried back to the house, and it was the sight of these valuables that doomed the house to destruction. About 9 o'clock at night, eight or ten hours after the discovery of the scene which furnished the pretext for this outrage, the work of plunder commenced, and when the morning dawned there was not a particle left of all the costly furniture that adorned the house; it had been borne off, partly mutilated, by those conservators of the decencies of society, assisted by the prowling robbers who always form the rearguard of a mob.

The burning of the convent at Charlestown would have been a crime of the highest magnitude, and of the worst example, had it been done for real and well authenticated offences against the purity of morals and the decencies of life; but destroyed as it was for imputed misdeeds, which rumor had circulated with malevolent exaggeration and with unsparing zeal, and which were subsequently proved to have been without the slightest foundation in truth, the crime will ever remain a blot upon the country, which not all the blood of all the rioters can wash out. And here too, the game of plunder was actively carried on. Things, sacred from their very purpose and use, sacrilegiously hunted up and borne away by the defenders of morals and the champions of chastity! And all this perpetrated in the face of the law, amidst a people renowned for their intelligence and love of order, and no effort made to arrest the incendiaries or to prevent the spoliations of their adjuncts. In this case, as in the case at New Orleans, the arm of the civil authority was cunningly withheld, or only stretched forth when the work of destruction was complete.

The scenes in Baltimore need no comment; they are familiar to every one. It may be well, however, to remark, that here, too, plunder followed upon the heels of vengeance & availed itself of the fruits of her handiwork. In truth when a man's house is assailed and his property destroyed, for whatever cause, he becomes at once a victim of agrarianism in the worst possible shape it can assume. It is folly to expect that subsequent reparation by the State can cure this evil. It may excite the better part of the community to greater energy in their efforts to suppress mobs, but it will have no effect upon the materials of which mobs are composed. These, having every thing to gain and nothing to lose by tumult and disorder, can only be intimidated by confinement or the halter.

Let us take a brief review of the affair at St. Louis, for the purpose of contrasting it with a similar one of recent occurrence at New York. An individual, against whom legal process was obtained for some misconduct, was enabled to elude the officer, through the agency of a black man, his friend. This black man, for thus assisting to defeat the execution of the process against his friend, was taken, and while in the act of being carried before a magistrate to answer to the charge, a struggle ensued between him & the officers, in which one of the officers was killed and another badly wounded. In this case, probably, resistance was offered by the black, or it may be an attempt was made to escape, which was opposed by some rough treatment on the part of the officers. At any rate, it is not likely that the knife was resorted to until the blood of the negro was up and passion had overthrown his reason. He was pursued, captured, placed in jail, and afterwards forcibly taken therefrom by the populace, who conducted him to the suburbs of the city, chained him with his back to a tree, built a fire under his body and burnt him alive! Let it be remembered that this was a poor illiterate negro, whose passions had not been softened by education, and whose feelings and judgment had not been tempered or refined by parental instruction at the family hearth. Let it be remembered also that he was a negro, and as such, probably imbibed prejudice against the whites from the milk that nurtured his infancy. My object here being only to show that the murder of which he stood charged, although a violent one, was neither "foul, base or unnatural," and that the summary punishment of which he was made the victim, was, to say the least of it, irreconcilable with the usages of civilized society, and not to be justified by the circumstances of the case. If the subject had been submitted to the investigation of the proper tribunal, it might have been shown that the negro was wantonly and rudely assaulted by the officers, and that his drawing and making use of a knife was an act of self defence. At the worst, it could only have been shown that he was guilty of manslaughter—the case having none of the features of murder in the first degree.

We shall now turn to the New York Tragedy, and see what the mob did in a case which, for its enormity, might have elicited sympathy for the suffer. A beautiful girl, —an outcast and a prostitute, if you please, but yet beautiful and interesting,—is found dead in her chamber, her skull horribly fractured, and her body and the bed on which it lay partly consumed by fire. So cruel and unnatural was this murder, that in a city where murders are common, this damnable deed eclipsed all that had yet gone before it. An individual is arrested and charged with the commission of this revolting crime.—The circumstances in favor of his guilt crowd upon the public ear and fix the conviction of many. Here, then, was a case that might recommend itself to the jurisdiction of the mob, by its peculiar atrocity; for it went forth to the hearts of the virtuous and the upright, and appealed, trumpet-tongued, to their pity. But what did the mob on this occasion? Did they tear the accused to pieces, or burn him alive at the stake? O no, they covered him with the panoply of their tender mercies and took him into their especial keeping. When the day of his trial arrived, there was a gathering around the court house that actually interrupted the proceedings of the court; it was a concentration of the most inflammable materials of society; and when, in the course of investigation any slight circumstance was elicited that favored the innocence of the prisoner, the air was rent with plaudits, as effectually intelligible in their meaning as if the mob had cried out at the top of their voices, "Long live the murderer of Ellen Jewett!" Nor was this the most alarming feature in this melancholy transaction; the ministers of justice themselves, the very judge who presided, partook of this misplaced sympathy; and we find not only a lukewarmness of zeal on the part of counsel for the prosecution, but an evident desire in the judge to screen the prisoner from conviction. Who ever heard before, in this country at least, of a labored and undisguised defence of a criminal being made from the bench? And yet this was done, and openly and unblushingly done, at the late trial in New York.

Can such things be,
And o'ercome us like a summer cloud,
Without our special wonder?

But alas for the poor outcast who was hurried to her account with all her sins about her, there were none to cry out for "the deep damnation of her taking off."—Father or mother she had not, and he who had won her heart in its simplicity, "all undisguised in its young tenderness," had cast her from him, a forlorn wanderer, to shelter herself where she could. What if she was the child of frailty, and had taken up her abode with the bad? She had been seduced from the company of the good, and may have deemed a return thither, covered with shame, the greatest of all curses upon earth! Who knows that she may not have been formed too, in some strange freak of nature, with a mind far superior to the circumstances of her birth, and that she may not have preferred to be peerless in the house of iniquity to being an underling elsewhere? She was familiar with the creations of the poets, and had travelled over the pages of romance—she may have lived in the regions of fiction, and despised alike the common things and tame pursuits of groundlings. But she was not yet sunk to the lowest depths of degradation: the golden bowl was cracked, not broken; there was still a link between her and the better feelings; she loved, and like some of the heroines that had excited her fancy, could gaze upon the object of her affections with impassioned fondness, though she knew him to be a villain. On the very night that ended her short career, she waited with unwonted anxiety his coming, and when he did come, she received him with a welcome that would have touched the heart of any other than a fiend.

He seemed to love her, and her youthful cheek
Wore for a while the transient bloom of joy—

and it was probably with the sentiments of affection upon her lips, that she pillowed her head that night upon his arm, in full confidence of love, and was carried back in her dreams to some merry hour of innocent childhood! Good God! Who can contemplate this deed without abhorrence! And yet there were those who did, and who looked upon its reputed author not only with composure, but with feelings nearly allied to admiration. It is not our intention to throw a borrowed grace over the life and character of the deceased, and by excusing her waywardness and ignominy, to weaken the bulwarks of society. But it is asked if there is to be a distinction made between the perpetrators of crime? If there is to be a relaxation of the law, and an indulgence on the part of its ministers in favor of those who surpass in deeds of blood? Is it believed by any one acquainted with human nature, that had Robinson, in a fit of jealousy, or for any other cause, murdered a virtuous female, of respectable connections, the mob would have sustained the act, the rules of evidence been perverted to screen him, or that the judge would have made an elaborate argument from the bench, in defence of his innocence? Such conduct would have convulsed the elements of society, and we should have had a civil broil between the heated partizans of the Montagues and the Capulets. As it was, a cruel, cold blooded, remorseless murderer, whose crime was no less fiendish than wanton and unprovoked, is assisted in his escape from the hands of justice by the undue commiseration and partiality of the court, and the ill-timed and misplaced sympathies of the mob. I have mentioned this case, in connection with the affair at St. Louis, to show its inconsistency in principle, but no less dangerous tendency in example. When the laws are perverted or disregarded, and justice defeated in her course, it is of very little consequence whether it is the work of the mob in the streets or of the judge on the bench.

Another case, similar to the above, was that of Whitaker, in New Orleans. He entered a coffeehouse in that city, in a state of intoxication, abused the bar-keepers for some trivial inattention and when they retorted his insolence he drew his knife, jumped over the counter, drove all out but one, whom he cornered and stabbed to the heart. He was arrested, and it is due to the tribunals of the city to say he was fairly tried and convicted. While under sentence of death he committed suicide, and at the request of his friends his body was given up for interment. It was conveyed to the place of his birth and buried under all the "pomp and circumstance" of military honors. A major general of militia and a late candidate for the chief magistracy of the State, mounted a platform in the public square, and in the presence of the mob, with the dead body of the rowdy before them, discoursed of the virtues of the deceased, denounced the court and jury that tried him, and concluded a harangue distinguished for its sorry mimicry of the incendiarism of Mark Antony! What a spectacle was this, and what an insult to the laws! And yet it passed over without comment, and has even been approved by those who rank with the better sort of people.

We cannot, even at this day, look upon the tarring and feathering and hanging of the gamblers at Vicksburg, without asking if the perpetrators of that dark deed were, really and true, men of flesh and blood! The bare idea of seeing some half dozen men cruelly and inhumanly tortured with scalding pitch, and afterwards strung up to the gibbet, without trial or even the mockery of trial, in a civilized country, and in a land of laws, strikes the mind with terror and the feelings quail at the tho't. But to see men thus tortured and thus put to death, for an offence so venial and so universal as that of gambling, and to hear their heart touching and wrathsubduing entreaties for mercy made the sport of ruthless murderers, is enough to call down the vengeance of heaven. Time may roll on in its course, the fertile valley of the Mississippi relapse again into a wilderness, the Father of Waters itself go dry, but this transaction will stand forth through all time to come, and challenge a parallel for its enormity. The offence of the victims lies buried with their bones—the matchless cruelty of their fate will remain a by-word and a reproach.

It is believed that a hundred instances might be adduced of individuals being shot down in the street, in this country, and no punishment inflicted upon those who have done it. We boast of having no exclusive privileged class here, but it is a violation of truth to utter it, so long as your gentleman murderer is permitted to go at large unwhipt of justice, and the poor thief consigned to the dungeons.

No one can doubt that these scenes have already had their pernicious influence upon the morals of the people. We have seen this in the facility with which an editor of a newspaper can command the services of the mob. A dispute takes place in one of our large cities between two paltry actors—a dispute that, out of respect to ourselves, should have been left to be settled in the green room—this dispute is dignified into a national affair, and the spirit of the mob invoked by the public journalist to take vengeance on one of the parties! The scene went off, however, without any bloodshed, but it was a complete triumph over the laws by the rabble regiment of the editor.

Nor is the spirit of the mob confined to the pothouse and to the lower orders of the people. It has found its way into the high places of the land and amongst the elite of the nation. The very Capitol of the country has been made the scene of wrangling, tumult and disorder. Who has witnessed these things, and not noted the change which they indicate in the character of our legislators? Where is the respectful bearing, the decorous language, the urbane and gentlemanly deportment, that distinguished the founders of our republic, one toward the other? Gone, gone; and like the spirit of patriotism that inspired their actions, all lie buried with them in the tomb. We go into the Capitol now only to be reminded of the "grubs in amber"—we behold the innate vulgarity of the things, and wonder how they got there.

The question then is, are we not already hastening to the end of our destiny? Do not these "signs of the times" betoken the approach of calamities equally as fearful as any to be apprehended in the most corrupt governments! Let every good man ask himself these questions, and ponder on the conclusions to which they irresistibly lead. Let him proclaim it from the house tops and instil it into the minds of his children, that obedience to the laws, a vigilant watchfulness over their free and impartial exercise, and a scrupulous regard for the rights of each and every individual, are the only true basis of our national grandeur, the only guarantee for the perpetuity of our incomparable institutions. Let it be our care to excel in the arts of peace and the blessings of domestic tranquility, and when the historian shall come to give an account of our deeds, let it be his privilege to say—"This people, more than any other of whom we have record, excelled in their *love of order and dutiful obedience to the laws.*"

THE FUTURE.

From "Conversations of an Ambitious Student in ill Health," by E. L. Bulwer.

"It seems to me, by the-way a singular thing that among persons about to die we note so little of that anxious, intense, restless curiosity to know what will await them beyond the grave, which with me, is powerful enough to conquer regret. Even the most resigned to God, and the most assured of revelation know not, nor can dream of the *nature* of the life *how* they shall live, and move, and have their being; they know not whom they shall see, or what they shall hear; they know not the color, the capacity, of the glories with which they are to be brought face to face. Among the many mansions, which is to be theirs? All this, the matter of grand and of no irreverent conjecture—all this, it seems to me, so natural to revolve—all this I revolve so often that the conjecture incorporates itself into a passion, and I am impatient to pass the ebon gate, and be lord of the eternal secret. Thus, as I approach nearer to death, Nature and the face of things assume a more solemn and august aspect. I look upon the leaves, and the grass, and the water, with a sentiment that is scarcely mournful and yet I know not what else it may be called, for it is deep, grave, and passionate, though scarcely sad. I desire, as I look on those, the ornaments and children of earth, to know whether, indeed such things I shall see no more—whether they have no likeness, no archetype in the world in which my future home is to cast! or whether they have their images above, only wrought in a more wondrous and delightful mould. Whether, in the strange land that knoweth neither season nor labor, there will not be among all its glories, something familiar. Whether the heart will not recognize somewhat that it has known, somewhat of that which the clay loved and the spirit is reluctant to disavow. Besides, to one who, like us, has made a thirst and a first love of knowledge, what intenseness, as well as divinity, is there in that peculiar curiosity which relates to the extent of the knowledge we are to acquire. What, after all, is Heaven but a transition from dim guesses and blind struggling with a mysterious and adverse fate to the fulness of all wisdom—from ignorance, in a word, to knowledge—but knowledge of what order? Thus, even books have something wearied and mystic in their speculations, which, some years ago, my spirit was too encumbered with its frame to recognize: for what of those speculations shall be true—what false? How far has our wisdom gone towards the arcanum of a true morality; how near has some daring and erratic reason approached to the secret of circulating happiness round the world? Shall he whom we now contemn as a visionary be discovered to have been the inspired prophet of our blinded and deafened race? and shall he whom we now honor as the lofty saint, or the profound teacher, be levelled to the propagator and sanctifier of narrow prejudices; the reasoner in a little angle of the great and scarce discovered universe of truth; the moral Chinese, supposing that his empire fills the map of the world, and placing under an interdict the improvements of a noble enlightenment?"

A. But to those—and how many are there?—who doubt of the future world in itself, this solace of conjecture must be but a very languid and chilled exertion of the mind.

L. I grant it. I am not referring to the herd, whether of one faith or another, or of none. I have often pleased myself with recalling an anecdote of Fuseli—a wonderful man, whose capacities in this world were only a tithe part developed; in every thing of his, in his writings as well as his paintings, you see the mighty intellect struggling forth with labor and pain, and with only a partial success; and feeling this himself—feeling this contest between the glorious design and the crippled power—I can readily penetrate into his meaning in the reply I am about to repeat. Some one said to him, "Do you really believe, Mr. Fuseli, in the future existence of the soul?"—"I don't know," said Fuseli, "whether *you* have a soul or no, but I know that I have." And really, were it not for the glorious and all-circling compassion expressed by our faith, it would be a little difficult to imagine that the soul, that title-deed to immortality, were equal in all—equal in the dull, unwakened clod of flesh which performs the offices that preserves itself, and no more, and in the bright and winged natures with which we sometimes exalt our own, and which seem to have nothing human about them but the garments (to use the Athenian's* familiar metaphor) which they wear away. You will smile at my pedantry, but one of the greatest pleasures I anticipate in arriving at home—as the Moravian sectarians so endearingly call heaven—is to see Plato, and learn if he had ever been, as he himself imagined, and I am ready to believe, in a brighter world before he descended to this. So bewitching is the study of that divine genius, that I have often felt a sort of jealous envy of the living Platoist—Taylor; a man who seems to have devoted a whole life to the contemplation of that mystical and unearthly philosophy. My ambition—had I enjoyed health—would never have suffered me to become so dreaming a watcher over the lamp in another's tomb; but my imagination would have placed me in an ideal position, that my restlessness forbade me in reality. This activity of habit, yet love of literary indolence—this planning of schemes and conquests in learning, from which one bright smile from Enterprise would decoy me, when half begun, made C—— call me, not unaptly "the most extraordinary reader he ever knew—*in theory.*" I see, by the-by, that you are leaning upon the "Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury,"—will you open a page in which I have set a mark? We were speaking of the soul, and that page expresses a very beautiful and eloquent, if not very deep, sentiment on the subject. Will you read it?

A. Certainly.—"As in my mother's womb, that formatrix which formed my eyes, ears and other senses, did not intend them for that dark and noisome place—but, as being conscious of a better life, made them as fitting organs to apprehend and perceive those things which occur in this world,—*so* I believe, since my coming into this world, my soul hath formed or produced certain faculties, which are almost as useless for this life as the above named senses were for the mother's womb; and these faculties, are Hope, Faith, Love and Joy, since they never rest or fix on any transitory or perishing object in this world—as extending themselves to something farther than can be here given, and, indeed, acquiesce only in the perfect Eternal and Infinite."

——— *Socrates.*