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John Brown
Soldier of Fortune

A Critique

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A Critique

BY

HILL PEEBLES WILSON

Mr. Vallandigham: Mr. Brown, who sent you here?

John Brown: No man sent me here; it was my own prompting and that of my Maker, or that of the Devil, whichever you please to ascribe it to. I acknowledge no master in human form.

Post, 313

THE CORNHILL COMPANY
BOSTON

TO THE MEMORY OF
MRS. SARA T. D. ROBINSON
OF KANSAS

PREFACE

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The writer of this book is not an iconoclast, neither has he prejudged John Brown. In 1859 the character was impressed upon his attention in a personal way. An older brother, Joseph E. Wilson, was a member of the company of marines that made the assault on the engine-house at Harper's Ferry, on the morning of October 18th; and from him he heard the story of the fight, and about Brown.

In 1889 the Topeka (Kansas) *Daily Capital* took a poll of the members of the Kansas Legislature on the question: "Who was the most distinguished Kansan?" or something to that effect. At that time the writer held the opinion that the public services rendered by John Brown in Kansas Territory, were of paramount importance in the settlement of the Free-State contention; and since the course which the nation was at that time pursuing had been arrested by the result of that contention, and diverted into the path which led to the marvelous achievements of the succeeding years; he, therefore, over his signature cast his vote in favor of John Brown; saying, among other things, in his little panegyric, that Brown is the only Kansan whose fame was immortal.

In 1898 he reformed his opinions concerning Brown's character and conduct, and the importance of his public services in Kansas. The change came about through an effort on his part to write a sketch of his life for a work entitled "Eminent Men of Kansas." In good faith, and with much of the confidence and enthusiasm characteristic of Brown's eulogists, he began an investigation of the available historical data relating to the subject; when he found to his surprise, and disgust, that the history of Brown's career contained nothing to justify the public estimate of him.

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Reporting to his associate that he would not write the sketch, he said that he "could find but little in the record of his life which gave him creditable distinction, and that he did not wish to write the discreditable things about him which it contained."

Later he gathered up the threads of Brown's life and has woven them, conscientiously, into the web of history. The story reveals little which is creditable to Brown or worthy of emulation and much that is abhorrent. But he indulges the hope that he has made it clear that his conceptions of the character have not been inspired by "prejudice," "blind" or otherwise, for he has examined the records in the case; an examination which has led him through all the existing testimony concerning Brown; except, that he has not explored the writings which have been put forth by those who have sought, viciously, to attack Brown's character. The opinions therefore which he has set forth are convictions resulting from serious investigation and thought.

In conclusion, the author takes great pleasure in acknowledging the deep sense of his obligation to the late Mrs. Sara T. D. Robinson, wife of Charles Robinson of Kansas, whose generosity, and deep interest in the history of our country, made the publication of this book possible.

Also, he desires to express his gratitude to Dr. William Watson Davis, of the University of Kansas, for the cordial encouragement which he received from him while preparing the work, and for his kindly assistance in molding the text into its present form. Also, to Dr. William Savage Johnson, and to Professor William Asbury Whitaker, Jr., both of the University of Kansas, he wishes to return his thanks for many valuable suggestions.

Lawrence, Kansas, April 15, 1913.

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The photogravure is from Mr. Oswald Garrison Villard's book: John Brown—A Biography Fifty Years After.

JOHN BROWN facing page 98

Steel engraving, made as above. The photograph was copied from a daguerreotype taken in 1856. Original in the Kansas State Historical Society.

CHAPTER I

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THE SUBJECT MATTER

Truth, crushed to earth shall rise again;

—BRYANT

The object of the writer, in publishing this book, is to correct a perversion of truth, whereby John Brown has acquired fame, as an altruist and a martyr, which should not be attributed to him.

The book is a review of the historical data that have been collected and published by his principal biographers: Mr. James Redpath, Mr. Frank B. Sanborn and Mr. Oswald Garrison Villard. It is also a criticism of these writers, who have sought to suppress, and have suppressed, important truths relating to the subject of which they wrote, and who have misinformed and misled the public concerning the true character of this figure in our national history; and have established in its stead a fictitious character, which is wholly illogical and inconsistent with the facts and circumstances of Brown's life.

Mr. Redpath, his first and most lurid biographer, was a newspaper correspondent of the type now generally called "yellow." He was a "Disunionist," and seems to have been a malcontent, who went to Kansas Territory to oppose the policy which the Free-State men had adopted for a safe and sane solution of the Free-State problem; and who sought to thwart their efforts to create a free state by peaceable means. He said:[1]

> I believed that a civil war between the North and South would ultimate in insurrection and that the Kansas troubles would probably create a military conflict of the sections. Hence, I left the South, and went to Kansas; and endeavored [Pg 16] personally, and by my pen, to precipitate a revolution.

After Brown's spectacular fiasco in Virginia, and tragical death, his cultured partisans, in most conspicuous eloquence proclaimed him to have been a philanthropist—an altruistic hero; and placed a martyr's crown upon his brow. Mr. Redpath's purpose, in putting forth his work, was to make Brown over to fit the part; to make his life appear to conform with the extravagant attributes of his improvised estate. In pursuance thereof he sought to conceal the facts concerning the actions and purposes of his life, rather than to develop them; and to blind the trails leading to the facts with masses of sentimental rubbish; and to divert public attention away from them. Upon the publication of his book, *The Public Life of Captain John Brown*, Mr. Charles Eliot Norton, in a review of the work, expressed his disapproval of it in vigorous language. He said:[2]

> It would be well had this book never been written. Mr. Redpath has understood neither the opportunities opened to him, nor the responsibilities laid upon him, in being permitted to write the "authorized" life of John Brown. His book, in whatever light it is viewed—whether as the biography of a remarkable man, as an historic narrative of a series of important events, or simply as a mere piece of literary job-work—is equally unsatisfactory....
>
> There never was more need for a good life of any man than there was for one of John Brown.... Those who thought best of him, and those who thought the worst, were alike desirous to know more of him than the newspapers had furnished, and to become acquainted with the course of his life, and the training which had prepared him for Kansas and brought him to Harper's Ferry. Whatever view be taken of his character, he was a man so remarkable as to be well worthy of study....
>
> In seasons of excitement, and amid the struggles of political contention, the men [Pg 17] who use the most extravagant and the most violent words have, for a time, the advantage; but, in the long run, they damage whatever cause they may adopt; and the truth, which their declamations have obscured or their falsehoods have violated, finally asserts itself.... Extravagance in condemnation has been answered by extravagance in praise of his life and deeds.

Twenty-five years later, when Mr. Sanborn published his book, *Life and Letters of John Brown, Liberator of Kansas, and Martyr of Virginia*, Mr. John F. Morse, Jr., voiced the disappointment felt by discriminating persons, in an article published in February, 1886.[3] He said:

> So grand a subject cannot fail to inspire a writer able to do justice to the theme; and when such an one draws Brown, he will produce one of the most attractive books in the language. But meantime the ill-starred "martyr" suffers a

> prolongation of martyrdom, standing like another St. Sebastian to be riddled with the odious arrows of fulsome panegyrists. With other unfortunate men of like stamp, he has attracted a horde of writers, who, with rills of versicles and oceans of prose, have overwhelmed his simple noble memory beneath torrents of wild extravagant admiration, foolish thoughts expressed in appropriately silly language, absurd adulation inducing only protest and a dangerous contradictory emotion. Amid this throng of ill advised worshippers, Mr. Sanborn, by virtue of his lately published biographical volume, has assumed the most prominent place.

Referring to the opinions expressed by these writers, Mr. Villard, in the preface to his book, *John Brown, A Biography Fifty Years After*, says: "Since 1886 there have appeared five other lives of Brown,[4] the most important being that of Richard J. Hinton, who, in his preface gloried in holding a brief for Brown and his men." Concerning his book he says:

> The present volume is inspired by no such purpose, but is due to a belief that fifty years after the Harper's Ferry tragedy, the time is ripe for a study of John Brown, free from bias, from the errors of taste and fact of the mere panegyrist, and from the blind prejudice of those who can see in John Brown nothing but a criminal. The pages that follow were written to detract from or champion no man or set of men, but to put forth the essential truths of history as far as ascertainable, and to judge Brown, his followers and associates, in the light thereof. How successful this attempt has been is for the reader to judge. That this volume in no wise approaches the attractiveness which Mr. Morse looked for, the author fully understands. On the other hand no stone has been left unturned to make accurate the smallest detail; the original documents, contemporary letters and living witnesses, have been examined in every quarter of the United States. Materials never before utilized have been drawn upon, and others discovered whose existence has heretofore been unknown....

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Under this broad pledge of personal fidelity to the subject, this historian introduced his volume, and has asked the public to give him its full confidence and to accept his work as a faithful and complete record of the ascertainable truths of history relating to the subject. For the ardor which he has exhibited, and for the great labor which he has expended in his compilation, and for much material of minor importance, which he has uncovered, the student of history will not fail to acknowledge to Mr. Villard the sense of his obligation. In these respects, and in the scholarly features characteristic of the writings, it is an interesting and dramatic contribution to this literature. But, he will not be stampeded by protestations of zeal, and by professions of integrity, to accept it as a presentation of the ascertainable truth. The work is more conspicuous for the absence from its pages of important historical truths, and for the contradiction of others which have been authenticated, than it is for the great volume of trivial facts which it presents. A line of derelictions conspicuously prevailing throughout the pages of the book, amply justify the charge that it was not written, primarily, for an historical purpose—"to put forth the truths of history as far as ascertainable, and to judge Brown and his followers in the light thereof." The true purpose seems to be ulterior to that which is effusively proclaimed in the prefatory declarations. He has written into the history of our country a concept of the character of John Brown which is incongruous with the actions and circumstances of Brown's life. He has created a semi-supernatural person—"a complex character"—embodying the virtues of the "Hebrew prophets" and "Cromwellian Roundheads" with the depraved instincts and practices of thieves and murderers. He presents a man who, for righteous purposes, "violated the statute and moral laws"; whose conduct was vile, but whose aims were pure; whose actions were brutal and criminal, but whose motives were unselfish.

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If this author had redeemed the pledge which he solemnly gave to the public, to put forth the truths of history as far as ascertainable, and, judging Brown and his followers in the light of them, had justified his "terrible violation of the statute and moral laws," the nature of this criticism would be different; it would be directed against his discrimination or, perhaps, against his intelligence. But that is not the case. The author referred to has sifted the truths of this history, and from the fragments has framed an hypothetical case; and has judged Brown and his followers in the light of that creation. "How may the killings on the Pottawatomie, this terrible violation of the statute and the moral law be justified? This is the question that has confronted every student of John Brown's life since it was definitely established that Brown was, if not actually a principal in the crime, an accessory and an instigator,"[5] is not the language of an impartial historian; but it is consistently the language of an advocate who writes for a specious, for an ulterior purpose. Why should an historian seek to justify a crime? Why should this author, if he intended to write impartially, seek for evidence to justify this horror? It was the desire to justify the crime that impelled the author to seek for pretexts for justification of it among the surviving criminals, and to garble the historical facts concerning it.

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The crime was the theft of a large number of horses; to accomplish it, and to safeguard the loot, it was necessary to kill the owners thereof. It was a premeditation. The plans for it were laid several weeks before it was executed, and during a time of profound peace. The principals were John Brown; his unmarried sons; Henry Thompson, his son-in-law; Theodore Weiner, and four confederates: Jacob Benjamin, B. L. Cochrane, John E. Cook and Charles Lenhart, whose names are herein associated with this crime for the first time in history. These confederates received from Brown's party the horses which belonged to the men whom they murdered, and ran them out of the country; leaving with Brown a number of horses, "fast running horses," which they had stolen in the northern part of the Territory. That is the crime which this author seeks to justify;

he has concealed these truths, and has suppressed the evidence concerning them. Pretending to put forth the "exact facts as to the happenings on the Pottawatomie," he has suppressed the evidence concerning the most important of the happenings, and has added no material fact concerning them which James Townsley had not, years before, put forth in his confession.

The public should know that as early as April 16, 1856, John Brown and his unmarried sons planned to abandon Kansas and the Free-State Cause and had disbanded the Free-State company to which they belonged, the "Liberty Guards," of which John Brown was captain; also, that the "Pottawatomie Rifles" had been organized in its stead, with John Brown, Jr., as captain; and that neither John Brown nor his unmarried sons belonged to it. They were "a little company" by [Pg 21] themselves.[6] The public should also know that prior to that date, as early as April 7th, Brown and the members of his little company had decided to abandon their claims and leave the country; and further, that they desired a recrudescence of pro-slavery atrocities. Concerning Brown's character and his life in Kansas, as well as his relation to territorial affairs, and a correct understanding of the Pottawatomie affair, no more important letter was written by him than his letter of April 7th disclosing these facts, a letter which Mr. Villard, in furtherance of his purpose, has seen fit to sift from history and suppress. The public has a right to know what Henry Thompson meant when he wrote in May that "upon Brown's plans would depend his own 'until School is out.'" This biographer, who said that he had left no stone unturned to make accurate the smallest detail,[7] interviewed Henry Thompson, and could have obtained from him a statement concerning the plans to which he intended to subordinate his conduct, which involved matters of so much importance as leaving the country. Salmon Brown and Henry Thompson could have told this historian why the "Liberty Guards" were disbanded and the "Pottawatomie Rifles" organized; and when, and for what purpose the "little company of six," which intended to leave the neighborhood, was formed; and he could have included the information in his statement of the "exact facts." Mr. Villard says it was organized May 23d; but that is not an "exact" statement; it is a contradiction of a statement which John Brown made over his signature concerning it.[8] These men could have told Mr. Villard specifically why they abandoned their claims, whither they intended to go, and what they intended to do. And further, they could have told him where they were, and what they were doing, during the fifty days their "whereabouts" are by this biographer reported as being "unknown," and their actions unaccounted for.[9] These matters are not trifling [Pg 22] details in this history. In view of the author's fine panegyrics concerning Brown's devotion to the Free-State cause, his intention to abandon it, and quit the Territory as early as March, 1856, is of more striking consequence than his coming into it; and the disbanding of the "Liberty Guards" in March, 1856, was an act of greater significance than was the organization of the company in December, 1855.

Mr. Villard's treatment of the Pottawatomie incident, "without a clear appreciation of which a true understanding of Brown, the man, cannot be reached,"[10] must stand as an indictment, either of his discrimination or of the integrity of his purpose, concerning it. Not being a dull man, he could not have been imposed upon by the participants in this riot of robbery and blood whom he interviewed, and whose evasions he has certified to the world as the exact facts. It was not the happenings on the night of May 24, 1856, that determine "the degree of criminality, if any," [mark the language, *if any*] "that should attach to Brown, for his part in the proceedings,"[11] for they were but the execution of the plans which had theretofore been laid for the adventure. Whatever the circumstances of the author's dereliction may have been, the fact remains, that the truths concerning this historical episode have been sifted, and such documents and concurrent evidence as tend to establish the fact that the motive for these murders was robbery, have been consistently suppressed from his exposition of it.

Brown made no attempt to justify his conduct in the affair. He would have acknowledged his responsibility and would have pleaded justification for his acts, if there had been even a shadow of a pretext for any justification; for he was shifty and crafty as well as vain; and was sensitive concerning his reputation.[12] Not having the murdered men's horses in his possession, he denied [Pg 23] his complicity with the murders, denied that he was concerned in the crime. If he had "killed his men" (and stolen their horses) "in the conscientious belief that he was a faithful servant of Kansas and of the Lord," as this author asserts, he would not have denied his relationship with the Lord in the matter, and offended Deity by persistently denying his participation in it with Him; neither would he have abandoned Kansas and the Free-State cause within the ensuing sixty days. Cowardly midnight robbery is impossible of justification upon any ordinary circumstantial hypothesis; and is preëminently so when the crime is aggravated by brutal assassinations, such as were incidental to this wholesale theft of horses.

The derelictions concerning the history of the Pottawatomie are characteristic of Mr. Villard's treatment of the more vital episode of Brown's career: his attempt to incite a revolution in the Southern States and to establish over them the authority of a "provisional government." This Brown planned to precipitate and accomplish by an insurrection of the slaves, and a resulting indiscriminate assassination of the slave-holding population: such as the people of that generation, North and South, believed to be impending, if not imminent. This central truth Mr. Villard denies, and seeks to substitute for Brown's intentions, the invention that his movement was merely a transitory raid, the forerunner of a series of similar raids to be undertaken by "small bands hidden in the mountain fastnesses." This conception is gratituitous and illogical; a contradiction of history and inconsistent with the bold, intrepid, daring, courageous characteristics which he has, except in this sole instance, consistently ascribed to Brown's character.

Brown's purposes, at Harper's Ferry, are logically foreshadowed by every act of his life, beginning with March, 1857; and are written in letters of living light in the "Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," and in "General Order, No. 1," dated: [Pg 24]

"HEADQUARTERS WAR DEPARTMENT, PROVISIONAL ARMY.

"Harper's Ferry, October 10, 1859."

As in the Pottawatomie incident, and consistent with a purpose to pervert this history, and fasten an imposition upon the public, these two "public documents," uttered, *ex cathedra*, by John Brown, find no place in Mr. Villard's book; they are not put forth as essential truths of history. The general order providing for the formation of the Provisional Army is not even remotely referred to; while the Constitution and Ordinances are treated contemptuously, and passed over slightingly with a few commonplace and irrelevant criticisms; and dismissed from consideration with manifest impatience and irritation as being so inconsistent—*not* with Brown's purposes, but with the author's theory of them—as to "forbid discussion."[13]

As a study of John Brown, Mr. Villard's book is misleading, and, in places, worthless. It is a jargon of facts and fancies; a juggling with the truths of history; a recital of the long list of Brown's minor peculations, and the bloody deeds which accent his career, interlarded with half-hearted denunciations of his moral obliquity and conspicuously fulsome panegyrics upon his character, and extravagantly illogical attributes concerning the nobility of his aims. The book seems to have been put forth not with reference to the truth, but to ennoble an ignoble character; to shroud the character in a mantle of mystery; to create in the twentieth century, a "complex" character: a mystic with a propensity to do wrong; wherein there is a compromise of virtue with vice. To the accomplishment of this end, this author has not only bent his energies in subordinating the truth, but, as a furtherance of his purpose, he has deemed it necessary to pass beyond the boundaries of historical research, and seek to strengthen his cause by inviting discredit upon the opinions of any who may venture to dissent from his inventions. [Pg 25]

It may not be held to be a suspicious circumstance, but it certainly is not good form for an historian to presuppose that his statements of fact will be disbelieved, and that the logic of his conclusions concerning them will be challenged by any one. Nor should he seek to discredit hypothetical opinions by the cheap, or vulgar, assertion that such opinions have their origin in prejudice—"blind prejudice"; for jurors, and even judges, sometimes disagree; and it is possible for persons, who are conscientious, to receive divergent impressions in relation to the same subject. He would have preserved a better decorum if he had relied upon candor, and the supreme truthfulness of his narrative, and the clearness of his reasoning, whereby to supplant disbelief with faith, and to dispel prejudice by enlightening it.

The tree is better known by its fruits, than by any tag which the owner may attach to the trunk. An historian who conscientiously writes the truths of history, is not solicitous concerning the criticisms of any who may read his lines.

CHAPTER II [Pg 26]

THE MAN

Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter unto the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

—Matthew, 7:21

The picturesque figure which has been presented to the public as John Brown is an historical myth—a fiction. The character, as it has been exploited, is a contradiction of the laws that govern in human nature. The material for it was furnished by partisans, who were unscrupulous writers of the times of strenuous political excitement and national unrest, in which Brown, by his deeds of violence, attracted public attention. Following the practice of partisans, these writers wrote with reckless disregard for the truth of their statements. Later, in the ultimate crisis that occurred in his fortunes, he was eulogized in surpassing eloquence by sincere people of high ideals, who were unaware of the real character of the object of their adoration. They were not informed concerning the criminal life which he had led, or of the shockingly brutal crimes which he had committed; neither did they understand that in his final undertaking he sought to involve a section of our fair land in a carnival of rapine and bloodshed exceeding in extent the horrors of San Domingo.[14] They were misled and were moved, in their orations, solely by sentiment and misplaced sympathy. Instead of a grim and unscrupulous soldier of fortune, leading a band of desperate men in an effort to unloose in the Slave States the demon of insurrection, they could see in him only a religious devotee, whom their imaginations had created; whose life they believed had been a devotion to deeds of charity and benevolence; who for years had been the especial champion of the slave; and whose work in Kansas had been, as in the existing crisis, an heroic and consistent consecration to duty. This man now awaited execution for his immutability to a great cause. He appeared to them to be a reincarnation of the virtuous primitive Christian—an altruistic hero—who, willing to die for his convictions, had "dared the unequal"; and, after battling heroically, though vainly, for humanity, had offered himself a sacrifice, making "the [Pg 27]

gallows glorious like the cross." These original laudations attracted, as Mr. Morse has stated, a "horde of writers, who, with rills of versicles and oceans of prose have overwhelmed his memory beneath torrents of wild extravagant admiration."

Many persons therefore believe Brown to have been an exceptional person, a man of deep religious fervor, of unimpeachable veracity and of the strictest integrity. But a careful study of his life, as revealed by himself, and as it has been written by his personal friends and his friendly biographers, may well result in a different interpretation of the man's character and actions.

John Brown was born at Torrington, Connecticut, May 9, 1800; but he was not, as he claimed to be, "the sixth descendant of Peter Browne of the Mayflower." The Peter Brown to whom John Brown's ancestry has been traced, was born in Windsor, Connecticut, in 1632, as Mr. Villard shows in very scholarly fashion.[15] The Peter Browne of the Mayflower left no male issue; nor does John Brown's name appear upon the rolls of the "Massachusetts Society of Mayflower Descendants."[16] His grandfather was a captain in the Eighteenth Connecticut Infantry, in the Revolutionary Army. The father of John Brown—Owen Brown—was a faithful, industrious citizen [Pg 28] who for a livelihood followed the occupation of shoemaker, tanner, and farmer. John learned the tannery trade and began work when he was fifteen, and for the greater part of the ensuing five years was employed as a foreman in his father's factory at Hudson, Ohio.

On June 21, 1820, he was married to Miss Dianthe Lusk, the daughter of his housekeeper. She became the mother of seven children; one of whom—Frederick—was killed at Osawatomie. Her death occurred August 10, 1832; three days after the birth of a son; mother and son being buried together. A second marriage was contracted on July 11, 1833, his bride being Miss Mary Anne Day, daughter of Charles Day of Whitehall, New York. Thirteen children were born of this union; seven of whom died in early childhood; two—Watson and Oliver—were killed at Harper's Ferry.

As a tanner, at Hudson, Brown was successful, but he gave up his business there and moved to Richmond, Pennsylvania, in May, 1825, where he established a tannery. He was appointed postmaster at Richmond in 1828, and held the office until he moved to Franklin Mills, Ohio, in 1835. He left Richmond "because of financial distress."[17] At Franklin Mills, he secured a contract for building the Ohio and Pennsylvania Canal from there to Akron. The next year, he undertook some speculations in real estate, and in company with a Mr. Thompson, borrowed $7,000 with which to buy a tract of one hundred acres, for an "addition to Franklin." During the same year, he, with others, organized the Franklin Land Company, and purchased the water power, mills, lands, etc., in both the "upper" and "lower" Franklin villages, combining the two water powers at a central town-site, which he and his associates laid out.[18] In these, and other schemes, Brown became so deeply involved that he failed during the bad times of 1837; lost [Pg 29] nearly all his property by assignment to his creditors, and was then not able to pay all his debts, some of which were never liquidated. His father also lost heavily through him.[19]

His failure in business should not of itself count against him, but some of the methods which he employed to extricate himself from his financial embarrassment, were of a most fraudulent and criminal character. July 11, 1836, he applied to Heman Oviatt and others, to become security for him on a note for $6,000 to the Western Reserve Bank. The note was not paid, and the bank got judgment against the makers in May, 1837. August 2d, the judgment debtors gave a joint judgment bond for the amount of the judgment against them, payable in sixty days. The bond not being paid, the bank sued again, and Oviatt had to pay the bank in full. The nature of the wrong done to Mr. Oviatt by Brown is described by Mr. Villard on pages 37 and 38. He relates that at the time of this transaction, Brown had a "penal bond of conveyance," but not the title, for a piece of property known as "Westlands," which he assigned to Oviatt, as collateral for Oviatt's having endorsed the judgment bond to the bank. When the deed to the Westlands property was duly given to Brown, he recorded it, without notifying Oviatt of this action. Later, he mortgaged the property to two men, again without the knowledge of Heman Oviatt. Meanwhile, Daniel G. Gaylord had recovered a judgment against Brown in another transaction, and to satisfy it caused the sale of Westlands by the sheriff. By collusion with Brown, the property was bought in at the sale, by his friend, a former business associate, Amos P. Chamberlain. Oviatt "brought suit to have the sale of Westlands to Chamberlain set aside as fraudulent, but the Supreme Court of Ohio held that Chamberlain had a rightful title, and dismissed the suit. John Brown himself was not directly sued by Oviatt, being, to use a lawyer's term, 'legally safe' throughout the entire [Pg 30] transaction.... Even after this lapse of years his action in secretly recording the transfer of the land, and then mortgaging it, bears an unpleasant aspect."[20] Meanwhile, the parties to the fraud upon Oviatt quarreled. Brown refused to give up occupation of the land to Chamberlain; assuming that Chamberlain had not treated him fairly in the matter; and held possession of the property, in "a shanty on the place, by force of arms, until compelled to desist by the sheriff...." Finally, the sheriff arrested Brown and two sons, John and Owen, who were thereupon placed in the Akron jail. Chamberlain, having destroyed the shanty which Brown had occupied, and obtained possession of the land, allowed the case to drop, and Brown and his sons were released.[21] Mr. Sanborn, on page 55, disposes of the matter in this way:

> The affair is explained by his son John as follows: "The farm father lost by endorsing a note for a friend. It was attached and sold by the Sheriff at the County seat. The only bidder against my father was an old neighbor, hitherto regarded as a friend, who became the purchaser. Father's lawyer advised him to hold the fort for a time at least, and endeavor to secure terms from the purchaser. There was, as I remember, an old shot gun in the house, but it was not loaded nor pointed at any one. No Sheriff came on the premises; no officer or posse was resisted; no

threat of violence offered."

Brown was not so staid and prosaic in his daily walk and conversation as to be indifferent to the sports and amusements of life. He seems to have been simply an active man of the world, getting as much worldly enjoyment for himself out of his environment as possible. He was a horseman with a fancy for horse racing; and while at Franklin, indulged in the very interesting and sportsmanlike business, or diversion, of breeding "fast running horses for racing purposes." He [Pg 31] bred from a well known horse of that time called "Count Piper"; and the name of another favorite sire was "John McDonald." He is said to have dismissed criticism of his conduct from a moral point of view, by the argument that "if he did not breed them some one else would."[22]

From 1837 to 1841 Brown lived alternately at Franklin, and at Hudson, Ohio. In 1838 he became a "drover," and drove cattle from Ohio to Connecticut. In this business he had trouble with his associates, Tertius Wadsworth and Joseph Wells, who furnished the capital; and was sued by them for an accounting.[23] In December, 1838, "he negotiated for the agency of a New York Steel Scythes house." And in January, 1839, he made his first venture in sheep, at West Hartford, Connecticut. He brought the sheep to Albany by boat, and drove them from there to Ohio. In June of that year he made his final drive to the east with cattle, and, while at New Hartford, committed a crime of unusual enormity. It appears that he proposed to the New England Woolen Company, of Rockville, Connecticut, to act as its agent in buying wool, and induced it to intrust to him $2,800 with which to begin purchasing the wool. The negotiations for this money were a deception throughout, in pursuance of theft. Brown did not intend to buy any wool with the money which he sought to have intrusted to his keeping for that purpose; but did intend to convert it to his own use—to make "a much brighter day" in his affairs. He also deceived his wife, whom he caused to believe that he was trying to secure a loan. Nor did he hesitate to have the crime, which he was committing, called to the attention of the God whom he pretended to serve, but asked her to ask "God's blessing" upon him in his pursuit of this purpose. Greater hypocrisy and depravity hath no man than this. The letter which he wrote to his wife in relation to the [Pg 32] transaction is as follows:[24]

New Hartford, 12th June, 1839.

My Dear Wife and Children:

I write to let you know that I am in comfortable health, and that I expect to be on my way home in the course of a week should nothing befall me. If I am longer detained I will write you again. The cattle business has succeeded about as I expected, but I am now somewhat in fear that I shall fail in getting the money I expected on the loan. Should that be the will of Providence I know of no other way but we must consider ourselves very poor for our debts must be paid, if paid at a sacrifice. Should that happen (though it may not) I hope God who is rich in mercy, will grant us all grace to conform to our circumstances with cheerfulness and resignation. I want to see each of my dear family very much but must wait God's time. Try all of you to do the best you can, and do not one of you be discouraged—tomorrow may be a much brighter day. Cease not to ask God's blessing on yourselves and me. Keep this letter wholly to yourselves, excepting that I expect to start home soon, and that I did not write confidently about my success should any one enquire. Edmond is well and Owen Mills. You may show this to father but to no one else.

I am not without great hopes of getting relief, I would not have you understand, but things have looked more unfavorable for a few days. I think I shall write you again before I start.

Earnestly commending every one of you to God, and to his mercy, which endureth forever, I remain your affectionate husband and father,

John Brown.

This beautiful letter, written to his wife in relation to the prosecution of a criminal design, stands as a *study* of John Brown which the student may well contemplate with profit. It is written in the [Pg 33] attractive style, and in the spiritual language characteristic of Brown's correspondence. It is strikingly similar to the letters that he gave out from the Charlestown jail, which, in their apparently devotional simplicity, and humble sincerity and trust in the mercy of God, won for him there his "victory over death." This letter was a dissimulation, the proof of which lies in the consummation of the negotiations for the money; and in the appropriation of it to his own use, at a time when he was hopelessly involved. It is a real key to the history of his life; it discloses his true character, and shatters to fragments every hypothesis that Brown was either sincere, devout, or honest.

"Three days after the receipt of this letter," Mr. Villard relates, "Brown received from the New England Woolen Company at Rockville, Conn., twenty-eight hundred dollars, through its agent George Kellogg, for the purchase of wool, which money, regretfully enough, he pledged for his own benefit and was then unable to redeem. Fortunately for him the Company exercised leniency toward him."[25] Later it permitted him to go through bankruptcy, upon the condition that he would endeavor to repay the money. Brown's letter in acknowledgment of the "great kindness" to him therein, is as follows:[26]

Richfield, Octo. 17,

Whereas I, John Brown, on or about the 15th day of June 1839, received from the New England Company (through their Agent George Kellogg, Esq.) the sum of twenty-eight hundred dollars for the purchase of wool for said Company, and imprudently pledged the same for my own benefit, and could not redeem it; and whereas I have been legally discharged from my obligations by the laws of the United States—I hereby agree in consideration of the great kindness and tenderness of said Company toward me in my calamity, and more particularly of [Pg 34] the moral obligation I am under to render them their due, to pay the same and interest thereon, from time to time, as Divine Providence shall enable me to do. Witness my hand and seal.

JOHN BROWN.

To Mr. Kellogg, agent for the woolen company, he wrote:

Richfield, Summit County, Ohio, Octo. 17, 1842.

George Kellogg, Esq.

Dear Sir—I have just received information of my final discharge as a bankrupt in the District Court, and I ought to be grateful that no one of my creditors has made any opposition to such discharge being given. I shall now if my life is continued, have an opportunity of proving the sincerity of my past professions, when legally free to act as I choose. I am sorry to say that in consequence of the unforeseen expense of getting the discharge, the loss of an ox, and the destitute condition in which a new surrender of my effects has placed me, with my numerous family, I fear this year must pass without my effecting in the way of payment what I have encouraged you to expect (notwithstanding I have been generally prosperous in my business for the season).

Respectfully your unworthy friend,

JOHN BROWN.

To Mr. Villard the public owes its obligation for the quite complete history of this transaction. Mr. Sanborn, in his record of it, saw fit to suppress the letter of June 12, 1839. He, evidently, garbled the correspondence relating to this criminal incident in Brown's life, with the intention of practicing a deception upon the public. Commenting upon the two letters of October 17, 1842, he said:[27]

These papers show the real integrity of Brown, in a transaction in which he might have escaped the obligation which he thus assumed.

That Brown promised restitution of the money herein, as a means to forestall criminal proceedings against him; and gave the above acknowledgment of the debt, and renewed promise [Pg 35] to pay, as a condition precedent to being permitted to go into the court of bankruptcy, is evident from the two preceding letters. It is also apparent from his letter to Mr. Kellogg, that he did not intend to fulfill the promises he had made. At his death, "this debt, like many others, was still unpaid," notwithstanding the fact that two years after his proceedings in bankruptcy he became prosperous, "with the most trying financial periods of his life behind him."[28]

With money in his pocket wherewith to commence life anew, Brown conceived the idea of leaving that part of the country and settling in Virginia, upon land[29] belonging to Oberlin College. He probably obtained information concerning the land from his father, who was a trustee of the college. On April 1, 1840, he appeared before a committee of the trustees, and opened negotiations with it for an agreement to survey the Virginia land, and to purchase some of it. Two days later he submitted a proposal "to visit, survey and make the necessary investigation respecting the boundaries, etc. of these lands, for one dollar per day, and a modest allowance for necessary expenses." He also stated that this was to be a preliminary step towards locating thereon, with his family, "should the opening prove a favorable one," and in the event of his so locating, he was to receive one thousand acres of the land. The trustees promptly accepted his offer, and the treasurer was ordered to furnish him with "a Commission and Needful outfit,"[30] which was done the same day. He immediately proceeded to Virginia and entered upon his duties. April 27th he wrote to his wife from Ripley, Virginia:

I have seen the spot where, if it be the will of Providence, I hope one day to live with my family.

July 14, 1840, he filed his report, and on August 11th he was notified that the prudential [Pg 36] committee of the trustees had been authorized by the board to "perfect negotiations, and convey to Brother John Brown, of Hudson, Ohio, one thousand acres of our Virginia land, on conditions suggested in the correspondence between him and the committee." Replying to the letter January 2, 1841, he wrote:

... I feel prepared to say definitely that I expect, Providence willing, to accept the proposal of your Board.... I shall expect to receive a thousand acres of land in a body, that will include a living spring of water discharging itself at a height

> sufficient to accommodate a tannery as I shall expect to pursue that business on a small scale if I go....

The trustees meanwhile, for reasons which have not been made public, changed their minds on the subject, and Brown's letter to their Mr. Burnell of February 5, 1841, reaffirming his intention to accept the land, as proposed, was never answered.[31]

Failing in his effort to establish himself in Virginia, he engaged in the sheep raising industry, in the spring of 1841, in company with Captain Oviatt, at Richfield, Ohio. He was successful and "gradually became known as a winner of prizes for sheep, and cattle at the annual fairs, in Summit County." By 1844 he had gained the reputation of a successful wool grower, and in that year formed "a partner-ship with Simon Perkins, Jr. of Akron, Ohio, with a view to carry on the sheep business extensively."[32] He moved to Akron April 10th of that year. Concerning his home at Akron, Mr. Villard says:

> They occupied a cottage on what is still known as Perkins Hill, near Simon Perkins own home, with an extensive and charming view over hill and dale—an ideal sheep country, and a location which must have attracted any one save a predisposed wanderer.

Two years later it was decided to establish a headquarters at Springfield, Massachusetts. There [Pg 37] Brown went "to reside as one of the firm of Perkins and Brown, agents of the sheep-farmers and wool merchants in northern Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and Virginia, whose interests then required an agency to stand between them and the wool manufacturers of New England, to whom they sold their fleeces."[33]

Of this arrangement Mr. Villard says on page 35: "John Brown was within bounds in thus exulting; even though the Perkins partner-ship resulted eventually in severe losses and dissolution. At least it was a connection with a high minded and prosperous man, and it lasted ten years. When it was over, the partners were still friends, but Mr. Perkins did not retain a high opinion of John Brown's ability or sagacity as a business man." Mr. Sanborn states on page 57, that when Mr. Perkins was questioned by him, in 1878, about Brown's wool growing and wool dealing, he replied: "The less you can say about them the better."

As to the business, there seems to have been trouble from the commencement of it. Mr. Villard says on page 60: "Moreover some customers had just grievances, for the letter book contains far too many apologies for failure to acknowledge letters and shipments, and to make out accurate accounts, for so young a firm."

In August, 1849, Brown made his historic trip to London to superintend, personally, the sale of wool, which he had shipped to that market, because he could not obtain prices that were satisfactory to him from the manufacturers of woolens in his home market. The amount of wool so consigned was about two hundred thousand pounds. The Northampton Woolen Mills Company of Northampton, Massachusetts, had bid sixty cents a pound for this wool at Springfield. In London, September 17th, a lot of one hundred and fifty bales of it was sold for twenty-six to [Pg 38] twenty-nine cents per pound. The buyer was the "Northampton Woolen Mills Co., of Mass., U. S. A."[34] Brown returned home in October "bringing back with him the portion of the wool which he had been unable to sell. The loss on this venture was probably as high as $40,000."[35] The firm of Perkins and Brown then began proceedings in liquidation, which had been under consideration for some time before Brown made the trip to Europe. The losses sustained by the company were upon a large scale. Suits against them were brought for more than one hundred thousand dollars.[36]

In 1850 Brown contemplated engaging in the manufacture of wine upon a large scale; and on December 4th, wrote to his sons to send him some samples of the wines they had made. He said: "I want Jason to obtain from Mr. Perkins, or anywhere he can get them, two good Junk bottles, have them thoroughly cleaned, and filled with cherry wine, being very careful not to roil it up before filling the bottles,—providing good corks, and filling them perfectly full. These I want him to pack safely in a very small strong box, which he can make, direct them to Perkins & Brown, Springfield, Mass., and send them by express. We can affect something to purpose by producing unadulterated domestic wines. They will command great prices."[37]

In 1846, Gerrit Smith, a wealthy philanthropist of Peterboro, New York, set aside one hundred and twenty thousand acres of his large estate in northern New York, to be divided up into farms, and given, without charge, to worthy colored people who would settle upon them and improve them for their permanent homes. Brown heard of this proposition in course of time, and made a proposal to Mr. Smith to settle among the negroes on these lands, and aid them by precept and example in their efforts at home building. In consideration of this, it is probable that Brown [Pg 39] secured title to some land on equal terms with the negroes, and possibly secured options on other tracts, at satisfactory prices and terms of payment. His experience with the Oberlin College people in relation to the Virginia lands, heretofore referred to, was probably of service to him in this transaction with Smith. The tracts which he selected were at Timbuctoo, or North Elba, and in the spring of 1849 he located his family upon the land; but in March, 1851, moved back to Akron. Brown himself did not go to North Elba to live. His time was taken up in liquidating the tangled affairs of Perkins and Brown, and with the extensive litigation involved in the settlement of them.

Litigation seems to have been a constant and conspicuous feature of Brown's commercial life. Mr. Villard says[38] that "on the records of the Portage County Court of Common Pleas are no less

than twenty-one lawsuits in which John Brown figured as defendant during the years 1820 to 1845. Of these, thirteen were actions brought to recover money loaned on promissory notes either to Brown singly or in company with others. The remaining suits were mostly claims for wages, or payments due, or for nonfulfillment of contracts.... In ten other cases he was successfully sued and judgments were obtained against him individually or jointly with others. In three cases those who sued him were non-suited as being without real cause for action, and two other cases were settled out of court. Four cases Brown won, among them being a suit for damages for false arrest and assault and battery, brought by an alleged horse thief, because Brown, and other citizens, had aided a constable in arresting him. A number of these suits grew out of Brown's failure in his real estate speculations. A serious litigation was an action brought by the Bank of Wooster to recover on a Bill of Exchange, drawn by Brown and others, on the Leather [Pg 40] Manufacturers Bank of New York, and repudiated by that institution on the ground that Brown and his associates had no money in the bank. During the suit the amount claimed was rapidly reduced, and when the judgment was rendered against him it was for $917.65.... In 1845 Daniel C. Gaylord, who several times had sued Brown, succeeded in compelling him and his associates to convey to him certain Franklin lands, which they had contracted to sell, but the title for which they refused to convey. The court upheld Gaylord's claim. The only case in which Brown figured as plaintiff was settled out of court." This is consistently a bad record.

The year 1854 brought the settlement of Kansas to the front and the wrecked and practically penniless Browns decided to emigrate to the new Territory. Not with the "ax and gun" went they, as will be seen, but with the ax, and with the hope of bettering their condition. The necessity for the gun was developed later—in 1855—and by the Free-State men who had preceded the Browns into the Territory.

It seems the family planned to establish a little colony or group of farms—"Brownsville"—and that while the sons were to be engaged in opening up the farms, the father would try to earn some money in surveying, which would be a very grateful and necessary assistance to them while struggling with the many discouraging incidents which usually befell the impecunious preëmptor. That such were their conclusions appears from a letter which Brown wrote February 13, 1855, to Mr. John W. Cook, of Wolcottville, Connecticut. He said:[39] "Since I saw you I have undertaken to direct the operations of a Surveying & exploring party, to be employed in Kansas for a considerable time perhaps for some Two or Three years; & I lack for time to make all my arrangements, and get on the ground in season." In pursuance of his intention to move to Kansas, he relocated with his family on the North Elba farm.

This review of Brown's career discloses a life spent, thus far, in a series of strenuous struggles [Pg 41] with various problems, covering a wide range in the field of commercial activity. All his efforts had ended in disappointment and failure. The removal to North Elba marks his retirement, in defeat, from the world of trade, and finds him, as the result of his failures, living with his dependent family upon a small tract of mountain land, of little value, that had been given to him as a condition of his settlement thereon. They had "moved into an unplastered four-room house, the rudest kind of a pioneer home, built for him by his son-in-law, Henry Thompson, who had married his daughter Ruth."[40]

What Brown's religious belief was is problematical. He was a student of the Bible, and, as he said, "possessed a most unusual memory of its entire contents." The Book, as a whole, was his creed, and upon its teachings he placed his personal interpretations. He spoke and wrote, when he so desired, in its phraseology; and by this distinction, in contradiction of the character of his actions, he gained a reputation for being a Christian. He may have been a Presbyterian, as has been said; or he may have been a Methodist, as has also been stated; and there is equal authority for the statement that he belonged to the Congregational church; but, it would seem that if he had been a consistent member of *any* of these churches, his historic name would have been proudly borne upon the rolls of membership, in the congregations to which he belonged; and the fact of his membership therein clearly established. It would further seem that he would have stated the fact of such membership in connection with what he did say, in 1857, in relation to his religious experience. It appears however, that while assuming to believe firmly in the divine authenticity of the Bible, he had become only to "some extent a convert to Christianity." There is no evidence that he ever attended public worship in Kansas, or at any place during the latter [Pg 42] years of his life, or that he engaged in prayer. Also, it would seem, that if he had been "a student at Morris Academy" in either 1816 or 1819, as a preparation for college—Amherst—with an ultimate purpose so creditable as "entering the ministry," he would have referred to the fact, incidentally at least, in his *Autobiography*, which treats specifically of his education.[41]

The Rev. H. D. King of Kinsman, Ohio, met Brown frequently at Tabor, Iowa, during August and September, 1857. He probably regarded him as an infidel, but did not wish to say so. "He was rather skeptical, I think," he said; "not an infidel, but not bound by creeds. He was somewhat cranky on the subject of the Bible as he was on that of killing people."[42] In the last letter which Brown wrote to his family, November 30, 1859, two days before his execution, he said:[43]

> I must yet insert the reason for my firm belief in the Bible, notwithstanding I am, perhaps, naturally skeptical—certainly not credulous.... It is the purity of heart, filling our minds as well as work and actions, which is everywhere insisted on, that distinguishes it from all other teachings, that commends it to my conscience....

The late Mr. George B. Gill of Kansas, who was a member of Brown's cabinet—secretary of the [Pg 43] treasury—said of him: "He was very human. The angel wing's were so dim and shadowy as to be

almost unseen."

Brown's younger sons were infidels. They had "discovered the Bible to be all fiction."[44] To the Sabbath day and its sanctity, he was indifferent. In violation of the stricter conventions, which prevailed at that time, concerning the observance of it as "Holy unto the Lord," he committed the principal crimes incident to his career, wholly or in part, on the Sabbath. A part of the murders and thefts on the Pottawatomie were committed on Sunday morning, May 25, 1856. Returning to Kansas from Nebraska City (August 9th and 10th) half the journey was made on Sunday, August 10th. "On August 24," 1856 (Sunday), "the Brown and Cline companies set out for the South, marching eight miles and camping on Sugar Creek."[45] Sunday night, October 16, 1859, was the time fixed for the insurrection of the slaves to occur, and on that night, in pursuance of his plans, he occupied Harper's Ferry.

Brown was averse to military operations, and military affairs. He refused to drill with the local militia, paying the fines instead, which were imposed by law for such delinquencies. In political matters he affiliated with the Abolitionists, or with those of the party who were "non-resistants." [46]

The statements which have been put forth in support of the assumption that Brown's life was a devotion to the Anti-Slavery cause—a series of abnormal activities in opposition to slavery—are not confirmed, nor can they be justified by any contemporaneous evidence. For notwithstanding the persistent, if not offensive, insistence of his biographers to the contrary; and the pages without number which have been written in support of such insistence, the record of his life is practically barren in relation to the subject. There is not a scrap of concurrent evidence which, [Pg 44] even remotely, suggests that prior to 1855 he might have taken more than a most ordinary interest in securing freedom for the slaves. Even in his letter of that year to Mr. John W. Cook (*note* 40), informing him of his intention to go to Kansas, and of his motive for going thereto, he made no reference to the subject whatever. A statement of everything which Brown did, or that he attempted to do up to that year, in opposition to slavery, may be republished in this book without encumbering its pages. It will therefore be given.

In 1857, after Brown had ceased to be a non-resistant, and was in the East professionally advocating war in Kansas; he wrote that during the late war with England an incident "occurred that made him a most determined Abolitionist: & led him to declare or *Swear*: *Eternal war* with Slavery." But Mr. Villard, having the infant Pardigles prodigy in mind, makes the point that "the oaths of a lad of such tender years do not often become the guiding force of maturity." A Mr. Blakesley, with whom Brown, before his marriage, kept bachelor's hall, relates that one evening a runaway slave came to their door, and asked for food, which was given him freely. John Brown, Jr., relates the same, or a similar, incident as occurring eight years later. The dramatic settings in each case are practically similar: Night! Sound of horses' feet approaching! Flight of fugitive, or fugitives, into the adjacent timber! False alarm! Subsequent search for, and locating of the fugitive "by the sound of the beating of his heart!" Finale: "Brown swears eternal enmity to slavery!"[47] Both of the tales are of the legendary type common to Brown literature. Mr. Blakesley's story is probably in part true, but whether either of them, or both of them, be true is without significance. It would indeed have been difficult to find a person living in the North at that time, who would have refused a poor fugitive slave the measure of assistance asked for in [Pg 45] this case.

On another occasion Brown is represented as taking the members of his family into his confidence, and enlisting them for life in the "eternal war" which he is said to have been personally waging; taking the precaution to swear them to secrecy. Jason Brown states that they were "merely sworn to do all in their power to abolish slavery," and does not use the word "force."[48] But as related by John Brown, Jr., the occasion was much more dramatic and far reaching. He says:[49]

> It is, of course, impossible for me to say when such idea and plan first entered his (John Brown's) mind and became a purpose; but I can say with certainty that he first informed his family that he entertained such purpose while we were yet living in Franklin, O. (now called Kent), and before he went to Virginia, in 1840, to survey the lands which had been donated by Arthur Tappan to Oberlin College; and this was certainly as early as 1839. The place and the circumstances where he first informed us of that purpose are as perfectly in my memory as any other event in my life. Father, mother, Jason, Owen and I were, late in the evening, seated around the fire in the open fire-place of the kitchen, in the old Haymaker house where we then lived; and there he first informed us of his determination to make war on slavery—not such war as Mr. Garrison informs us "was equally the purpose of the non-resistant abolitionists," but war by force and arms. He said that he had long entertained such a purpose—that he believed it his duty to devote his life, if need be, to this object, which he made us fully to understand. After spending considerable time in setting forth in most impressive language the hopeless condition of the slave, he asked who of us were willing to make common cause with him in doing all in our power to "break the jaws of the wicked and pluck the spoil out of his teeth," naming each of us in succession. Are you, Mary, John, Jason, [Pg 46] and Owen? Receiving an affirmative answer from each, he kneeled in prayer, and all did the same. This posture in prayer impressed me greatly as it was the first time I had ever known him to assume it. After prayer he asked us to raise our right hands, and he then administered to us an oath, the exact terms of which I cannot

recall, but in substance it bound us to secrecy and devotion to the purpose of fighting slavery by force and arms to the extent of our ability.

Referring to this incident Mr. Villard says:[50] "It must be noted here that in this letter John Brown, Jr., gives the date of the oath as 1839; in his lengthy affidavit in the case of Gerrit Smith against the Chicago *Tribune*, he gave the date as 1836, three years earlier, and in an account given in Mr. Sanborn's book he placed it at 1837; three distinct times for the same event. It can, therefore, best be stated as occurring before 1840."

In the opinion of the writer, it could, perhaps, "best be stated" as not having occurred at all. As has been heretofore stated, Brown was at that time a non-resistant, and there is no concurrent evidence that he treasured a thought of using force against slavery until after Robinson suggested it by arming the Free-State men in Kansas in the spring of 1855. The incident may therefore be considered as apocryphal. It is a part of the mass of legendary literature that has overwhelmed Brown's "simple, noble memory."

The improvisation of these two incidents, shows the strait in which John Brown, Jr., was placed, when called upon, by Mr. Sanborn, to narrate some of the incidents occurring in the course of his father's anti-slavery activities. There being none, nothing whatever to tell, he filched the Blakesley incident and related it as one occurring under his personal observation, and put it forth along with the fiction concerning the dramatic function just related, to relieve himself from an embarrassing situation. [Pg 47]

In a letter written nearly twenty years after the Blakesley incident is said to have occurred, Brown disclosed the character of the "eternal war" which he really proposed to wage, if any, against slavery. It was to "get at least one negro boy or youth and bring him up as we do our own, —give him a good English education, learn him what we can about the history of the world, about business, about general subjects, and, above all, try to teach him the fear of God." In the same letter he seeks to interest his brother—Frederick—in a school for blacks which he wanted to open at Randolph. He thought "if the young blacks of our country could once become enlightened, it would most assuredly operate on slavery like firing powder confined in a rock." Incidentally, he intended to own the school, and thought it would pay.[51]

While the suggestion to attack slavery in the manner outlined in this letter is the first recorded movement, or act of aggression, in the much talked of eternal war; and while it may be regarded as a sort of opening gun; though not a loud one, the proposal contained therein may be considered merely as being a commercial venture, for pecuniary profit, that he desired to engage in, rather than as a scheme in negro philanthropy. He thought the venture would be profitable, and offered to divide the profits arising from it with his brother upon terms that "shall be fair." Also it may be stated that at the time he made this proposal he was in the toils of insolvency. Six months later he left Randolph in straitened circumstances. It is therefore probable that he was moved to suggest the opening of a school for blacks by personal considerations, and that but for such reasons the letter containing the proposal would not have been written.

In 1848, while a resident of Springfield, Massachusetts, Brown wrote some articles reflecting upon the negro character; criticising negroes because of their vanity and shiftlessness. They were written under the caption: "Sambo's Mistakes," and were published in the *Ram's Horn*, a newspaper conducted by negroes, in New York. They do not relate to slavery.[52] [Pg 48]

In 1850 he made the first, and, it may be said, the only noticeable effort in behalf of the anti-slavery cause, that is recorded of him prior to 1854. The Fugitive Slave Law, enacted by the Thirty-first Congress, provided for the use of all the forces of the Department of Justice, to effect the arrest of fugitives from slavery, and the restoration of them to their masters. Brown conceived the idea of uniting the free negroes and fugitive slaves in an organization to resist the enforcement of the provisions of this law. The society was to be called "The United States League of Gileadites." The plan failed; the enrollment so far as known was confined to the Springfield, Massachusetts, branch, which numbered fifty-three members.[53] But the activities therein undertaken were strictly defensive in their character; they were not directed against slavery, but for the personal protection of fugitive slaves and free negroes living in the Northern States. His letter of advice to the Gileadites is, in part, as follows:[54]

WORDS OF ADVICE

"Union is Strength"

Nothing so charms the American people as personal bravery. Witness the case of Cinques, of everlasting memory, on board the "Amistad." The trial for life of one bold and to some extent successful man, for defending his rights in good earnest, would arouse more sympathy throughout the nation than the accumulated wrongs and sufferings of more than three millions of our submissive colored population. We need not mention the Greeks struggling against the oppressive Turks, the Poles against Russia, nor the Hungarians against Austria and Russia combined, to prove this. *No jury can be found in the Northern States that would convict a man for defending his rights to the last extremity. This is well understood by Southern Congressmen, who insisted that the right of trial by jury should not be granted to the fugitive.* Colored people have ten times the number of fast friends among the whites than they suppose, and would have ten times the number they now have were they but half as much in earnest to secure their dearest rights as they are to ape the follies and extravagances of their luxury. Just think of the money expended [Pg 49]

by individuals in your behalf in the past twenty years! Think of the number who have been mobbed and imprisoned on your account! Have any of you seen the Branded Hand? Do you remember the names of Lovejoy and Torrey?

Should one of your number be arrested, you must collect together as quickly as possible, so as to outnumber your adversaries who are taking an active part against you. Let no able-bodied man appear on the ground unequipped, or with his weapons exposed to view; let that be understood beforehand. Your plans must be known only to yourself, and with the understanding that all traitors must die, wherever caught and proven to be guilty. "Whosoever is fearful or afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead" (Judges, vii. 3; Deut. xx. 8). Give all cowards an opportunity to show it on condition of holding their peace. *Do not delay one moment after you are ready; you will lose all your resolution if you do. Let the first blow be the signal for all to engage; and when engaged do not do your work by halves, but make clean work with your enemies, and be sure you meddle not with any others.* By going about your business quietly, you will get the job disposed of before the number that an uproar would bring together can collect; and you will have the advantage of those who come out against you, for they will be wholly unprepared with either equipments or matured plans; all with them will be confusion and terror. Your enemies will be slow to attack you after you have done up the work nicely; and if they should, they will have to encounter your white friends as well as you; for you may safely calculate on a division of the whites, and may by that means get to an honorable parley. [Pg 50]

Be firm, determined, and cool; but let it be understood that you are not to be driven to desperation without making it an awful dear job to others as well as to you....

A lasso might possibly be applied to a slave-catcher for once with good effect. Hold on to your weapons, and never be persuaded to leave them, part with them, or have them far away from you. *Stand by one another and by your friends, while a drop of blood remains; and be hanged, if you must, but tell no tales out of school. Make no confession.*

In a letter to his wife, January 17, 1851, relating to the same subject, he said:[55]

DEAR WIFE ... Since the sending off to slavery of Long from New York, I have improved my leisure hours quite busily with colored people here, in advising them how to act, and in giving them all the encouragement in my power. They very much need encouragement and advice; and some of them are so alarmed that they tell me they cannot sleep on account of either themselves or their wives and children. I can only say I think I have been enabled to do something to revive their broken spirits. I want all my family to imagine themselves in the same dreadful condition. My only spare time being taken up (often until late hours at night) in the way I speak of, have prevented me from the gloomy homesick feelings which had before so much oppressed me: not that I forget my family at all.

The assumption that Brown, "The peaceful tanner and shepherd," had at this time been transformed "into a man burning to use arms upon an institution which refused to yield to peaceful agitation,"[56] is not justified by anything that he had theretofore said or done relating to slavery; neither is it justified by what he wrote to the "Gileadites," nor by the letter which he wrote to his wife concerning the condition of the free negroes. These papers contain no hint, to say nothing of evidence, that the action taken therein by him was the result of any preconceived intention to attack slavery; or that it was related to any general plan or purpose to oppose slavery; or that it foreshadowed any disposition on his part, burning or otherwise, to engage in the matter any further than by counsel and advice. The letter to his wife reflects the general sense of compassion that was felt for the negroes, by all humane people throughout the North, because of the distressful condition in which they were placed by the terms of the Fugitive Slave Law. [Pg 51]

The foregoing is a recital of all that is contained in the record of Brown's life concerning his anti-slavery activities up to the year 1852. In the working of that great engine for emancipation, the Underground Railway, he took no part. Of the more than seventy-five thousand slaves who were carried from bondage to freedom by the self-sacrificing agencies of the system, Brown, it is said, gave shelter and a meal to but one of them. The late Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, militant clergyman and abolitionist, in a eulogy upon Brown, said:[57]

... It had been my privilege to live in the best society all my life—namely that of abolitionists and fugitive slaves. I had seen the most eminent persons of the age: several on whose heads tens of thousands of dollars had been set; a black woman, who, after escaping from slavery herself, had gone back secretly eight times into the jaws of death to bring out persons whom she had never seen; and a white man, who after assisting away fugitives by the thousand, had twice been stripped of every dollar of his property in fines, and when taunted by the Court, had mildly said, "Friend if thee knows any poor fugitive in need of a breakfast, send him to Thomas Garrett's door." I had known these, and such as these; but I had not known the Browns.... [Pg 52]

This well informed man; this practical and intellectual leader of the anti-slavery movement had

been Brown's neighbor for years. Why was it that he had never heard of him? There is but one answer: Brown had not been a worker in Mr. Higginson's vineyard. He had not done anything to attract the attention of any one seriously interested in the anti-slavery cause. He was neither an ardent nor a conspicuous laborer in behalf of the slave.

However, what has been stated herein is the credit side of Brown's account with slavery; there is also a debit side in this history which exhibits strong presumptive evidence that his "horror" of slavery was neither so "passionate" nor so violent but that it could be controlled and modified to accommodate itself to the advantages of the system. When John Brown, the man of affairs, decided to become a resident of the State of Virginia, and engage in business there upon a one thousand acre estate, he knew that he would have to employ some slave labor. He knew also that the "good will" and the patronage of the people living in the section of the country in which he intended to locate, were necessary for the success of his undertaking; these he knew he could not secure unless he conformed to the commercial and social customs prevailing in Virginia, and to the sentiment of Virginians in relation to slavery. These conditions this aggressive speculator and sportsman, did consider and did accept. The letter which he wrote to his wife from Ripley, Virginia, suggests, as a matter of fact, that he had declared a truce in his opposition to slavery, whatever the degree of such opposition may have been; and that he had changed his attitude toward the system to meet the requirements of his prospective environment. The letter, abridged by Mr. Sanborn, is as follows:[58] [Pg 53]

Ripley, Va., April 27, 1840.

> ... I like the country as well as I expected and its inhabitants rather better; and I have seen the spot where, if it be the will of Providence, I hope one day to live with my family.... Were the inhabitants as resolute and industrious as the Northern people, and did they understand how to manage as well, they would become rich; but they are not generally so. They seem to have no idea of improvement in their cattle, sheep, or hogs, nor to know the use of enclosed pasture-field for their stock, but spend a large portion of their time in hunting for their cattle, sheep, and horses; and the same habit continues from father to son.... By comparing them with people of other parts of the country, I can see new and abundant proof that knowledge is power. I think we may be very useful to them on many accounts, were we disposed. May God in mercy keep us all, and enable us to get wisdom; and with all our getting and losing, to get understanding.

It would be very much more satisfactory if Mr. Sanborn had published the full text of that part of this letter which treats of the habits of the people, and of the labor conditions existing there. The question of labor was of paramount importance in Brown's Virginia venture. He was an optimist, and in his optimistic forecast saw that the care and cultivation of a thousand acres, and the operation and development of a tanning business would, in time, require a large establishment, necessitating, probably, the labor of a number of slaves. This question then arises: Did John Brown intend or expect to own, ultimately, the necessary slaves to operate this property, or did he intend to hire them from others. His letters consistently abound in minute detail. It is therefore improbable, in the opinion of the writer, that he discussed the manners and customs of the white people of that section with his wife, and wrote of minor conditions existing there, without making some reference to the black people of the country; and to the more important questions of slavery and labor—matters in which he would have a deep personal and pecuniary interest. Mr. Villard did not fail to comment, with surprise, upon the omission of the subject from Brown's letter. He said:[59] [Pg 54]

> But his letter to his family from Ripley, Virginia, April 27, 1840, already cited, is peaceable enough and his hope of settling his family there is hardly consistent with his anti-slavery policy of later years. Indeed, while recording his pleasure that the residents of the vicinity were more attractive people than he thought, he had nothing to say about the institution of slavery which he then, for the first time, really beheld at close range.

No one inspired with an enthusiasm upon the subject of slavery, such as has been attributed to Brown, could have failed, under these circumstances, to dwell upon the theme. A dilemma is, therefore, herein presented to his biographers and eulogists which they cannot disregard: either he discussed the questions of labor, and what their relations to slavery would be in their prospective estate, in this letter to his wife; or else, he considered slavery of so little importance in the premises, and was so indifferent at heart upon the subject, that his first sight of real slaves, in actual slavery, failed to elicit from him any expression whatever in regard to it. It is the opinion of the writer that John Brown, the man of iron will, the reckless speculator, optimist and sportsman, was well pleased with the prospect of owning a plantation of a thousand broad acres in Virginia; and with having it well stocked with fine horses, fine cattle, fine sheep, and *fine slaves*.

This opinion of the man is consistent with his reckless speculative career, and with his indifference as to the means for the accomplishment of his ends. And after all, it is by a man's actions, and not by any explanation of his motives, furnished by himself or by others, that we must, in the final analysis, estimate his character.

CHAPTER III

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KANSAS—A CRISIS IN OUR NATIONAL HISTORY

There are no greater heroes in the history of our country than Eli Thayer of Massachusetts, and Charles Robinson of Kansas.—WILLIAM H. TAFT

In its relation to Government, our country has completed two periods of its existence. The Colonial period ended at Yorktown. The period of State Sovereignty had its ending at Appomattox. Kansas was the herald of Appomattox; the climax in the series of political incidents which led to secession and the war between the States.

By the Ordinance of 1787, the last Continental Congress excluded slavery from all that part of the public domain lying north of the Ohio River. In 1803 our territorial limits were expanded by the purchase of Louisiana, and a serious clash between the Free and the Slave sections of the country came upon the division, in relation to slavery, of this newly acquired domain. It was precipitated upon Congress by the application of Missouri, in 1818, to be admitted into the Union. Its constitution provided for slavery. The northern part of the new state extended from the Mississippi to the Missouri; the north boundary being 40° 30' north latitude; and this line, taken in connection with the Platte River from the Missouri to the Rocky Mountains, suggested what the South intended should be the dividing line between the sections in the new territory. After two years of acrimonious debate a compromise measure was adopted admitting Missouri, as prayed for, but excluding slavery forever from all the remaining territory, acquired from France, lying north of 36° 30' north latitude.

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The debate upon the measure developed the existence, in the North, of a growing hostile sentiment toward slavery, which confirmed in the minds of Southern statesmen the necessity of keeping the number of Slave States equal, at least, with the number of Free States; for only by thus maintaining a balance of power in the Senate, could legislation adverse to slavery be prevented. Also, the limitations of the compromise agreement emphasized a further necessity; the acquisition of additional territory south of 36° 30' from which Slave States could be created in the future, to balance the admission into the Union of prospective Free States. This resulted in a propaganda for territorial expansion southward. In pursuance of such policy, the revolt against Mexico, by Texas, was probably encouraged.[60] In discussing the recognition of the Republic of Texas, in January, 1836, Mr. Calhoun said, "It prepared the way for the speedy admission of Texas into the Union, which would be a necessity to the proper balance of power in the Union between the slave-holding and non-slave-holding Commonwealths, upon which the preservation of the Union and the perpetuation of its institutions rested.[61]

The State of Vermont "apprehended that the political strength which the annexation of Texas would give to the slave-holding interests, would soon lead to a dissolution of the Union, or to the political degradation of the Free States"; and, in pursuance of that apprehension the "Legislature of Vermont adopted a set of resolutions protesting against the annexation of Texas or the admission of any Slave State into the Union," which was presented in Congress.[62] Having respect for Northern sentiment, Congress kept Florida waiting six years: until Iowa was ready to come into the Union.[63] The South consented readily to the settlement of the "Oregon Boundary Question" at 49° north latitude instead of 54° 40'. In fact, at the time the Democratic National Convention of 1844 declared our title to the whole of Oregon as far as 54° 40' to be "clear and unquestionable," Mr. Calhoun, secretary of state, had proposed to Her Majesty's representative to settle the controversy by adopting the 49th parallel as the boundary.[64] Texas was admitted into the Union; the articles of annexation providing that it might be subdivided into five states, at any time it chose to make such division. Also, after a war of conquest with Mexico, Upper California and New Mexico were added to the public domain.

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The mutual congratulations indulged in by the Southern managers over the accomplishment of the pro-slavery program for territorial expansion, were interrupted by intelligence of the most startling character. Before the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had been signed, gold was discovered in the Sierras, and the occupation of California by emigrants, principally from the Northern States, was an immediate result. Thus, the conquest of Mexico—the prize trophy in the triumphal procession of pro-slavery events—carried with it, by the irony of fate, the Nemesis of her despoiled people. Within two years a Free State had been carved out of the Territory which the South had won for slavery.

The contests which were had over the admission of Missouri into the Union, and the annexation of Texas, were trivial in comparison with the storm that burst upon the Thirty-first Congress over the admission of California. The already strained relations between the North and the South reached the limits of tension; and but for the tabling of the "Wilmot Proviso," and the adoption of the "Compromise" measures, the cords that bound the Union would have snapped then and there. "The first weeks of the session were more than enough to show in its full breadth and depth, even to the duller eyes, the abyss that yawned between the North and the South."[65] "All the Union men, North and South, Whigs and Democrats, for the period of six months were assembled in caucuses every day, with Clay in the chair, Cass upon his right hand, Webster upon his left hand, and the Whigs and Democrats on either side."[66] It was during this debate that Mr. Seward announced the doctrine of the "*higher law*":

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> The Constitution regulates our stewardship; the Constitution devotes the domain (the territories not formed into states) to union, to justice, to defence, to welfare,

and to liberty. But there is a *higher law than the Constitution*, which regulates our authority over the domain and devotes it to the same noble purposes.

Webster thus began his great speech:

> I wish to speak today, not as a Massachusetts man, nor as a Northern man, but as an American.... The imprisoned winds are let loose. The East, the North, and the stormy South combine to throw the whole sea into commotion, to toss its billows to the skies, and disclose its profoundest depths.... I speak today for the preservation of the Union. Hear me for my Cause.[67]

Said Toombs of Georgia:

> I do not then hesitate to avow before this House and the Country, and in the presence of the living God, that if by your legislation you seek to drive us from the territories of California and New Mexico, purchased by the common blood and treasure of the whole people, and to abolish slavery in this district, thereby attempting to fix a National degradation upon half of the states of this confederacy *I am for disunion*, and if my physical courage be equal to the maintenance of my convictions of duty, I will devote all I am, and all I have on earth to its consummation.[68]

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This speech was repeatedly interrupted by storms of applause. And Stephens, too, was greeted with loud acclamations when he announced his concurrence in every word of his colleague, and declared the Union dissolved from the moment an attack upon a section became an accomplished fact.

Colcock of South Carolina then announced that he would bring in a formal motion for the dissolution of the Union, as soon as the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia should have been resolved upon, or the Wilmot Proviso passed.[69] The compromise agreement was effected by the fine patriotism, the sagacity, and the personal sacrifice of two great figures of that generation: Clay and Webster. In promoting this measure, they exhausted their political resources, and forfeited their political fortunes. Neither of them could have been reëlected to the senate.

Nothing was settled by the compromise of 1850; both sides accepting it in a tentative way. "The present Crisis may pass," wrote Mr. Stephens in 1850,[70] "the present adjustment may be made, but the great question of permanence of slavery in the Southern states will be far from being settled thereby. And, in my opinion, the crisis of that question is not far ahead."

This review, altogether too brief, is made herein to show the extreme tension of the sectional feeling which existed in the country on account of the extension of slavery; and the national significance of the struggle that was soon to develop over the question in Kansas. It also foreshadows the action the Southern States would surely take, if the Kansas decision declared against them.

By the admission of California into the Union as a Free State, the South lost the "balance of power"; but the general situation at the time was far from being hopeless. Further territorial expansion was necessary—imperatively so—but the prospect was still full of promising possibilities. There was Cuba, that Buchanan had offered a hundred millions for in 1848; out of which two, or, if necessary, three States could be made. And, looming up in the more remote horizon, were Nicaragua and the remainder of Mexico. And, last but not least, "Squatter Sovereignty," or, in more modern parlance: "Let the People Rule."

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The "Pearl of the Antilles" was the prize trophy in the new crusade for territorial acquisition, and "Free Cuba" the slogan. The efforts to get control of the island, for purposes of annexation, were persistent, and the history of them is intensely interesting. First came filibustering operations. Three expeditions were sent out in 1849-1851. The command of the last of these was offered—first to Jefferson Davis, and then to Robert E. Lee.[71] It sailed August 3, 1851, under Lopez. In the first scrimmage with the Spaniards, Colonel Crittenden (son of Senator Crittenden of Kentucky) and fifty of his men were captured, taken to Havana, and shot, August 24th. The remainder of the Army of Invasion was defeated; Lopez was taken and garroted; and his followers who had been taken prisoners, were sent to Spain.

General Quitman's expedition, organized in 1853-1854, would have been more formidable than any theretofore undertaken. He had commanded a brigade in General Scott's army, in Mexico, and had been Governor of Mississippi. His demonstrations, however, may have been merely in support of Mr. Marcy's efforts, at the time, to open negotiations with Spain for purchasing the island. Meanwhile the Black Warrior incident offered the most promising opportunity of all. The provocation in that case could have been held to be sufficient to justify a declaration of war; and that surely would have been the result, had it not been for the tornado of anti-slavery sentiment which was let loose at the time by the promulgation, in the Kansas-Nebraska bill, then pending in Congress, of the new doctrine of "Squatter Sovereignty"; and by Mr. Dixon's amendment thereto, expressly repealing the restriction of the time honored Missouri Compromise. "It may be affirmed with confidence," says Mr. Rhodes,[72] "that Northern public opinion, excited by the Kansas-Nebraska act, alone prevented this unjust war." The New York *Courier and Inquirer* said June 1st:

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> Does any sane man live who believes that if Cuba was tendered to us tomorrow, with the full sanction of England and France, that this people would consent to

> receive and annex her?... There was a time when the North would have consented to annex Cuba, but the Nebraska wrong has forever rendered annexation impossible.

A revolution in Spain gave an opportunity for negotiations to purchase the island; but the suggestion that a few millions of money should be placed at the disposal of the Executive, during the recess of Congress, to be used in the Spanish-Cuban business, met no response;[73] while the "Ostend Manifesto" received no consideration whatever. The trouble was that the South had been moving with too much energy and too arrogantly. Her statesmen had undertaken to do everything at once. Had they been less aggressive, or more conciliatory and diplomatic, and concentrated their efforts on the acquisition of Cuba, they surely could have succeeded;[74] and would then have been in position to await the psychological moment to move the Kansas question. The Missouri Compromise was a "solemn covenant entered into by two opposing parties for the preservation of amicable relations." It was not sustained by any constitutional authority. Kansas Territory, therefore, might have been peacefully occupied by emigrants from Missouri and the Southern States, as Missouri had been, leaving, with confidence, the [Pg 62] constitutionality of the restrictions against slavery, for future settlement by the courts.

The creation of the State of Kansas was a political proposition pure and simple. The amendment to the Nebraska bill creating Kansas Territory provided for a "complete Territorial government; including a legislature with two houses and thirty-nine members; although, at the time, there was not one white man in the Territory, except those intermarried with Indians and the few who were there under authority of Federal law.... The project fell upon Congress as suddenly and apparently as uncaused as a meteor from the political sky."[75]

The settlement of the Territory was promoted by the leaders of the pro-slavery and anti-slavery sections of the country. The South was spurred to activity by the extremity of its political and commercial necessities; while the North was impelled by a great moral sentiment, that had developed with time and changes which had occurred in public thought and in economic conditions. But the fact should not be lost sight of, that the ethical emotions which nourished this sentiment had their origin, or beginnings, in the unprofitable and unsatisfactory character of slave labor in that section. The Southern statesmen staked the entire stock of their political assets on the result in Kansas. The North already had a majority of one State, with the Territories, Minnesota and Oregon, waiting at the threshold of the Union for admission into the family of States. If the South lost Kansas, its political power and prestige would be destroyed; slavery would thereafter be dependent, in the Union, upon the mercy or charity of the aggressively hostile anti-slavery sentiment which it had too arrogantly aroused.

The plans of the Southerners for the creation of the new State, were well matured, and seemed in every way feasible. The geographical situation was ideal. The close proximity of the friendly State [Pg 63] of Missouri, with a large percentage of its population on its western border, backed by the mutuality of every Southern State, seemed to be sufficient guaranty that the necessary voting population could, and would, be promptly furnished. They had good cause to believe that they could get their people into the Territory in sufficient numbers to control the necessary elections.

In the Senate Mr. Seward said, May 25, 1854:

> The sun has set for the last time upon the guaranteed and certain liberties of all the unsettled portions of the American continent that lie within the jurisdiction of the United States. Tomorrow's sun will rise in deep eclipse over these. How long that obscuration shall last, is known only to the power that directs all human events. For myself I know this: that no human power can prevent its coming on, and that its passage off will be hastened and secured by others than those now belonging to this generation.[76]

Authorities by the score might be cited to show the gloom and despondency of the North at this time. The people had reason to believe that Kansas and Nebraska would become Slave States, and that the preponderance of Southern influence in governmental affairs would be perpetuated indefinitely.

May 30, 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was signed and the doctrine of Squatter Sovereignty thereby crystallized into law. Immediately the historic contest for the occupation and political control of Kansas Territory was on: a contest that marks an epoch in the history of our country. The great events of the succeeding decade: the acts of secession, the war between the States, with its tragedies; and the Emancipation Proclamation, were all involved in the result.

It cannot be said that the contest was of local concern, carried on between factions in Kansas [Pg 64] over the question whether the State should be a Free State or a Slave State; for at that time there were no settlers in the Territory to comprise such factions. The interest in the impending struggle was nation wide. Congress had merely cleared the ground for action; "pitched the ring," for what was to be the first political battle in the "fight to a finish" between the slave-holding and the non-slave-holding sections of our country: the beginning of the final struggle between freedom and slavery.

The question of slavery in the Territory was to be decided by the votes of the people who would emigrate to and occupy it. The South had chosen to place its reliance upon votes in a contest where oratory, tact, and statesmanship had theretofore failed. Its slogan was "Squatter Sovereignty." The answer given back by the North was "Organized Emigration:" "a power unknown before in the world's history."

The rapid settlement of California had shown that any country will draw emigration thereto, if it offers an attractive lure. Mr. Eli Thayer, of Massachusetts, had made a note of that fact and believed that what the discovery of gold had done to promote emigration to that state, the advantages of soil and climate for successful home building, would do for Kansas, if properly advertised. The formation of the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company, with an authorized capital of $5,000,000, was a result of his conclusions upon the subject. It proved to be "a stronger defiance to slavocracy than anything ever uttered in the hall of Congress." This commercial novelty put its capital in the advance instead of in the rear of the column of occupation. It assisted emigrants to reach their destination, and helped them to develop their farms. For this purpose it installed saw mills and flour mills, where needed; furnished machinery and implements; built churches, school houses, and hotels. Also, it proposed to earn dividends for its stockholders by these and other investments. As Mr. Thayer expressed it: "When a man can do a magnanimous act; when he can do a decidedly good thing, and at the same time make money by it, all his faculties are in harmony." [Pg 65]

An incident of the period of the occupation of Kansas is thus related by Mr. Thayer on page 187 of the *Crusade*: "One day, in 1855, Senator Atchison, with some others, was at the wharf in Kansas City, when a river boat approached with one of our engines on deck. Atchison turned to those on the right and asked: 'What is that on the deck of the steamboat?' His companion answered: 'Senator, that is a steam engine and a steam boiler.' Turning to the others he repeated his question. They repeated the answer before given. He replied: 'You are a pack of —— fools. That is a Yankee city going to Kansas; and by ——! in six months it will cast a hundred Abolition votes.'"

The affairs of the company in Kansas were placed under the direction of Dr. Charles Robinson, also of Massachusetts. He came to the Territory early in July, 1854; located the town of Lawrence, and established there the headquarters of the bureau of northern immigration.

Naturally the first immigrants to arrive came from Missouri. In sentiment they were quite unanimously pro-slavery; but that was not discouraging, for the publicity bureau, organized by Mr. Thayer and ably backed by Mr. Greeley through the columns of the New York *Tribune*, had proclaimed the advantages and possibilities of the new Territory far and wide; and the public interest thus awakened gave ample promise of satisfactory results in the near future. July 31st, the first consignment of emigrants from the North, twenty-nine in number, arrived at Lawrence; and September 2d the second installment of one hundred and fourteen arrived and joined the initial company. Within a few months "Organized Emigration" was in successful operation; and by the close of the year 1856, it had fulfilled the Kansas prophecy. As Mr. Thayer states it:[77] [Pg 66]

> We had triumphed in the great conflict. We had in Kansas four Free-State men to every one of our opponents; our numbers were rapidly increasing while theirs were diminishing. Buford had returned to Alabama. Atchinson and Stringfellow had given up the fight.

Concerning the Kansas conflict Dr. Burgess says:

> The record of this struggle is certainly one of the most remarkable chapters in the history of the United States. There is much to admire in it, much to be ashamed of, and much to be repudiated as foul and devilish. The prudence, moderation, tact, and bravery of Dr. Robinson and his friends have rarely been excelled by the statesmen and diplomatists of the New World or of the Old. They were placed in a most trying situation both by their foes and by those who, professing to be their friends, endangered the cause more by violent and brutal deeds than did their open enemies. Their triumph over all these difficulties is a marvel of shrewd, honest, and conservative management, which may well serve as one of the best object-lessons of our history for succeeding generations.[78]

It is not within the purview of this sketch to recite in detail the various incidents, accidents, and extremities which befell the Northern emigrants in working out the problems of state building. They began to acquire experience promptly with the arrival of the first colony; and the authorities all agree, that, during the ensuing three years an area of low political barometer was general throughout the Territory, with a continuous storm center, of great energy, at Lawrence. "By the sharp logic of the revolver and bowie knife, the people of Missouri became the people of Kansas." Residents of Missouri furnished liberal pro-slavery majorities at the elections, and their personal services were available at all times, for the preservation of peace and order in the Territory; as well as to enforce, by force, a proper respect for the dignity of the Territorial officers, and for the authority of the Legislature itself. [Pg 67]

A revolt against these superimposed attentions, organized and led by Charles Robinson, became the thorn that rankled in the pro-slavery flesh, and led to the discomfiture and defeat of the Slave-State propaganda. Robinson had the temerity to challenge the subtile logic of the revolver and bowie-knife in determining the qualifications of Territorial electors. His dissent, at first, took the mild form of a petition to Governor Reeder, after the election of November 29, 1854. asking that "the entire vote of the districts receiving the votes of citizens of Missouri, be set aside; or that the entire election be set aside." After a brutal usurpation of the polls, at the election for members of the Territorial Legislature, March 30, 1855, a Legislature which, under the organic act could determine whether the State should be Free or Slave, Robinson again protested and sought redress of the spoilation of the squatters' rights: and, failing to obtain justice, united the Free-State men in a revolt against the authority of the Territorial Legislature, and in a determination to repudiate the laws it intended lawlessly to enact. Also, what had still greater

significance, he organized his followers into military companies to resist, by force of arms, any further infringement upon their rights. Answering his call to duty, the Free-State men of Lawrence and vicinity led the nation in this crisis in public affairs, making its history, and directing its destiny. It was the hour of Destiny. Sending for a second consignment of Sharp's rifles, Robinson wrote these impressive and heroic words:

> We are in the midst of a revolution, as you will see by the papers. How we shall come out of the furnace, God only knows. That we have got to enter it, some of us, there is no doubt; but we are ready to be offered.
>
> In haste very respectfully, Yours, for freedom for a world,
>
> C. Robinson.

[Pg 68] The organization of a military force by the Free-State men, gave to the Free-State party a solidarity and prestige it had not theretofore enjoyed. It at once became a popular party; and encouraged by daily accessions to its ranks by immigration, combined with a prospective certainty of becoming the majority party, it became bravely aggressive, and boldly launched its campaign for Free-State supremacy. In furtherance of their plan of campaign, the Free-State men adopted a constitution for a Free State, and organized and put into effect a full fledged State Government in opposition to the existing Territorial Government; and under it, with Charles Robinson as Governor, sought admission into the Union. Only a wise and courageous leadership combined with a high order of executive ability, could successfully handle the delicate problems involved in this complicated program. The leadership required the necessary tact to unite and reconcile divergent convictions and opinions, within the party, upon questions of principle as well as of policy; it also required prudence to restrain the impetuous, and to avoid complications which, at any time, might make shipwreck of the cause.

The results accomplished by the Free-State settlers during the first two years of their occupation of the Territory, amply justified the generous congratulations in which they indulged. They had, wisely, withdrawn from under the fire of an arrogant, domineering majority, and, in their segregation, were surely creating a State to their own liking, in their own way. They matched their wits against the management of their political opponents, and were more than satisfied with the dilemma in which the situation placed them. It became plainly evident that unless the Free-State organizations, civil and military, were utterly destroyed and further immigration from the North retarded, the Free-State cause would certainly succeed. The situation, therefore, demanded the adoption of more strenuous methods in dealing with it than could be approved by the National Administration.

[Pg 69] What they had failed to accomplish by "peaceful" methods, the pro-slavery junta now sought to gain by the execution of more radical measures. They accordingly organized an "Army of Invasion," and the Wakarusa War of 1855 became an historical incident. They indicted the Free-State Governor, Robinson, and the more prominent Free-State men, for "constructive" treason; arrested them, and put them in prison. In May, 1856, under cover of judicial authority, the town of Lawrence was looted and burned. The Free-State Legislature that had been elected, assembled at Topeka, only to be dispersed, July 4th, by the armed forces of the United States. A blockade of the Missouri River was declared against Free-State immigrants, and made effective. They also attempted, without success, to cut off communications between Kansas and the Northern States, which the Free-State men had opened up, via Iowa and Nebraska. They murdered Dow, and Barber, and Brown, and Stewart, and Jones, and Hoyt.

A third, and the final invasion, closed this chapter of heroic undertakings and lamentable failures. September 14, 1856, their army, 2800 strong, occupied Franklin. During the night, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph E. Johnston, U. S. Army, with a battalion of cavalry and a section of artillery, arrived at Lawrence. Placing his battery in position on Mount Oread, the muzzles of his guns pointing toward Franklin, and deploying his cavalry in the valley in front of the town, he awaited the crisis developing in the pro-slavery situation. On the morning of the 15th, the newly appointed Territorial Governor, John W. Geary, accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel Philip St. George Cooke, U. S. Army, arrived upon the scene from Lecompton. After a short conversation with Governor Robinson, they rode out to interview the invaders. It was the hour of fate. A brief conference with General Atchison was held in front of Atchison's lines; and then, it was all over; the Federal Government had intervened. The campaign of violence had failed, and with it expired the last substantial hope of the pro-slavery managers that the balance of power between the [Pg 70] warring sections of the country could be restored. Upon receiving Governor Geary's ultimatum: that he must retire with his forces from the Territory, immediately, Atchison turned the head of his column toward Missouri. Arriving at Westport, he disbanded his army and gave up the struggle. Buford returned to Alabama and Jackson to Georgia. That Kansas would be a *Free State* was practically assured from that hour.

Involved in the corollary of the Free-State victory were the startling incidents in history that followed in quick succession, culminating in the stupendous tragedies of war. Mr. F. B. Sanborn said:[79]

> Had Kansas in the death struggle of 1856 fallen a prey to the slave holders, slave-holding would today be the law of our imperial democracy. The sanctions of the Union and the Constitution would now be on the side of human slavery, as they were from 1840 to 1860.
>
> The question of slavery domination must and will be fought out on the plains of Kansas.[80]

> Kansas must be a Slave State or the Union will be dissolved.... If Kansas is not made a Slave State, it requires no sage to foretell that there will never be another Slave State.[81]
>
> Slavery in South Carolina is dependent upon its establishment in Kansas.[82]
>
> The Touch-stone of our political existence is Kansas.[83]
>
> Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama stand pledged to secede from the Union, should Kansas applying for admission as a slave state be refused admission.[84]
>
> The question is one of life or death to the South upon the simple alternative of the admission or rejection of Kansas with her slave constitution.[85]
>
> That American is little to be envied who can speak lightly of the decisive contest in Kansas between the two antagonistic civilizations of this continent. Either he does not love his country, or he is incapable of understanding her history.[86]

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CHAPTER IV

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HIS PUBLIC SERVICES

Peace rules the day, where reason rules the mind.

—Collins

It was in the fall of 1855 that John Brown came to Kansas to try another venture with fortune, in a new field of opportunity.

During the spring of 1854 his son John was seeking a new location, and had written to his father in relation thereto; who replied to him in a letter dated April 3, 1854, "I do not know of a good opening for you this way."[87] But during the fall of that year five of Brown's sons—John, Jason, Owen, Frederick, and Salmon—decided to settle in Kansas. Having completed their arrangements they moved to the Territory in the spring of 1855, arriving, about May 1st, in the vicinity of Osawatomie. They were attracted to the Territory, as thousands of others were, by the glowing accounts published by emigration societies north and south. These prospectuses described the beauty of the prairies, the fertility of the soil, the delightful and health-giving climate; and set forth the prospective rewards in wealth, health, and happiness which were awaiting all who took advantage of the great opportunities the country offered. That they were not disappointed upon their arrival, appears from their letters expressing eminent satisfaction with everything pertaining to the settlement, and their desire to have their father locate in Kansas with them.

May 24th John Brown, Jr., wrote to his father: "Salmon, Frederick, and Owen say that they never was in a country that begun to please them as well, and I will say that the present prospect for health, wealth, and usefulness much exceeds even my most sanguine anticipations. I know of no country where a poor man, endowed with a share of common sense and with health, can get a start as easy. If we can succeed in making this a free state, a great work will be accomplished for mankind."[88]

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Long before the coming of the Browns, the Free State leaders in the Territory had determined to repudiate the laws enacted by the Territorial Legislature; also, to defend themselves by force of arms against the aggressions of their over-zealous pro-slavery neighbors in Missouri. They had during April, 1855, secured from Boston a hundred Sharp's rifles to arm the companies organized at Lawrence, and were negotiating for further consignments of arms. After their arrival in the Territory, the Browns realized the importance of this movement, and since they had not brought any serviceable arms with them—having come with axes instead of rifles—they wrote to their father to try to get some for them, and bring them with him when he came. The letter which John Brown, Jr., wrote to his father on the subject is as follows:[89]

> And now I come to the matter, that more than all else I intended should be the principal subject of this letter. I tell you the truth when I say, that while the interests of despotism has secured to its cause hundreds and thousands of the meanest and most desperate of men, armed to the teeth with Revolvers, Bowie Knives, Rifles and Cannon—while they are not only thoroughly organized, but under pay from Slaveholders—the friends of freedom are NOT ONE FOURTH of them HALF ARMED, and as to MILITARY ORGANIZATION among them it NO WHERE EXISTS IN THIS TERRITORY unless they have recently done something in Lawrence. The result of this is that the people here exhibit the most abject and cowardly spirit, whenever their dearest rights are invaded and trampled down by the lawless bands of Miscreants which Missouri has ready at a moment's call to pour in upon them. This is the GENERAL effect upon the people here so far as I have noticed, there are a few, and but a few exceptions. Of course these foreign Scoundrels know what kind of "ALLIES" they have to meet. They boast that they can obtain possession of the polls in any of our election precincts without having to fire a gun. I enclose a piece which I cut from a St. Louis paper named the St. Louis *Republican*; it shows the spirit which moves them. Now Missouri is not alone in the

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> undertaking to make this a Slave State. Every Slaveholding State from Virginia to Texas is furnishing men and money to fasten Slavery upon this glorious land, by means no matter how foul.
>
> Now the remedy we propose is, that the Anti slavery portion of the inhabitants should IMMEDIATELY, THOROUGHLY ARM and ORGANIZE THEMSELVES in MILITARY COMPANIES. In order to effect this, some persons must begin and lead in the matter. Here are 5 men of us who are not only anxious to fully prepare, but are thoroughly determined to fight. We can see no other way to meet the case. As in the language of the memorial lately signed by the people here and sent to Congress petitioning help, "it is no longer a question of negro slavery, but it is the enslavement of ourselves."
>
> The General Government may be petitioned until the people here are grey, and no redress will be had so long as it makes slavery its paramount interest.... We have among us 5, 1 Revolver, 1 Bowie Knife, 1 middling good Rifle, 1 poor Rifle, 1 small pocket pistol and 2 slung shot. What we need in order to be thoroughly armed for each man, is 1 Colts large sized Revolver, 1 ALLEN & THURBER' RIFLE—they are manufactured somewhere in Mass or Connecticut (Mr. Paine of Springfield would probably know) and 1 heavy Bowie Knife—I think the Minnie Rifles are made so [Pg 75]
> that a sword bayonet may be attached. With this we could compete with men who even possessed Cannon. The real Minnie Rifle has a killing range almost equal to Cannon and of course is more easily handled, perhaps enough so to make up the difference. Now we want you to get for us these arms. We need them more than we do bread. Would not Gerrit Smith or someone, furnish the money and loan it to us for one, two or three years, for the purpose until we can raise enough to refund it from the Free soil of Kansas?...

In so far as the Brown family is concerned, this letter contains the first recorded evidence of an intention, or of a desire of any of them to actively oppose slavery in Kansas or elsewhere. It treats the subject as an original proposition; as though it had never been theretofore so much as mentioned in their family councils. The letter has historical significance: it secured John Brown's introduction to the public. It opened the way that enabled him to go to Kansas; where he began a career which led, ultimately, to Harper's Ferry and to Charlestown.

Following the suggestion of his son he took up with Gerrit Smith the matter of securing a loan wherewith to purchase the arms desired. The latter, instead of making an arrangement with them for the necessary amount, personally presented the case before a convention of Abolitionists that was held at Syracuse, New York, June 28th, with the result that a collection was taken up which yielded Brown sixty dollars in cash, twenty dollars of which was given by Smith.

The success Brown met with in collecting funds "for the cause of Kansas" at the Syracuse convention, opened before his commercial vision that easy field for profitable enterprise, which he afterward occupied and worked, in a professional manner, until the end of his career. After the Syracuse meeting he began a system of personal solicitations for money, arms, and clothing. At Akron, Ohio, he held open meetings in one of the public halls of the village. Mr. Villard says of [Pg 76]
these meetings:[90]

> Because of their interest in the Kansas crisis, and in the Browns, their former neighbors, the people were quickly roused by Brown's graphic words, and liberally contributed arms of all sorts, ammunition and clothing. Committees of Aid were appointed and ex-Sheriff Lane was deputed to accompany Brown in a canvass of the village shops and offices for contributions.

At Cleveland, also, he solicited aid with very satisfactory results. He obtained there guns, revolvers, swords, powder, caps, and money. He was so successful "that he thought it best to detain a day or two longer on that account." Mr. Villard says, "He had raised nearly two hundred dollars in that way in the two previous days, principally in arms and ammunition."

Brown, with his son Oliver and his son-in-law, Henry Thompson, left Chicago August 23d, on their journey to Kansas. Brown states that before leaving he purchased "a nice young horse for $120 but have so much load that we shall have to walk, a good deal." The journey was accomplished without either accident or incident worthy of the note, the party arriving at Osawatomie, October 6, 1855.

> Brown himself, being very tired, did not cover the last mile or two until the next day. They arrived in all but destitute condition, with but sixty cents between them, to find the little family settlement in great distress, not only because of the sickness already noted, but because of the absence of any shelter save tents.[91]

At the time Brown arrived, the Free-State cause in the Territory was well advanced and was progressing satisfactorily.

> Out of all the meetings and conventions of the nine months after the stolen March 30th election, there had come then, great gains to the Free State Movement. The liberty party had been organized, leaders had been developed, and a regular policy [Pg 77]
> of resistance by legal and constitutional measures adopted. If counsels of compromise were still entirely too apparent, and too potent, the train of events which resulted in Kansas's admission as a free State was well under way.[92]

As a result of the measures that had been adopted, an election was pending for the selection of a

Free-State Territorial Delegate to Congress; and delegates to a Free-State Constitutional Convention. This election had been called by the Free-State men to be held October 9th. The regular Territorial election had been held October 1st, the Free-State men not taking any part therein. Brown and his sons attended the second, or Free-State election, October 9th.

An election is a political incident. A reference to an election by any one invites an expression of his opinions upon the questions involved in the election, if he have any special interest therein. Since Brown's presence at this election was his introduction into the political affairs of the Territory, we may reasonably conclude that his comments on it cover the range of his general interest in the election and in the issues involved therein. His letters to his family in the East announcing his arrival at his destination, and describing the condition of affairs, domestic as well as political, are herewith republished.

Osawatomie, K. T. Oct. 13, 1855.
Saturday Eve.

DEAR WIFE AND CHILDREN, EVERY ONE—We reached the place where the boys are located one week ago, late at night; at least Henry and Oliver did. I, being tired, stayed behind in our tent, a mile or two back. As the mail goes from here early Monday morning, we could get nothing here in time for that mail. We found all more or less sick or feeble but Wealthy and Johnny. All at Brownsville appear now to be mending, but all sick or feeble here at Mr. Adair's. Fever and ague and chill-fever seem to be very general. Oliver has had a turn of the ague since he got here, [Pg 78] but has got it broken. Henry has had no return since first breaking it. We met with no difficulty in passing through Missouri, but from the sickness of our horse and our heavy load. The horse has entirely recovered. We had, between us all, sixty cents in cash when we arrived. We found our folks in a most uncomfortable situation, with no houses to shelter one of them, no hay or corn fodder of any account secured, shivering over their little fires, all exposed to the dreadful cutting winds, morning and evening and stormy days. We have been trying to help them all in our power, and hope to get them more comfortable soon. I think much of their ill health is owing to most unreasonable exposure. Mr. Adair's folks would be quite comfortable if they were well. One letter from wife and Anne to Salmon, of August 10, and one from Ruth to John, of 19th September, is all I have seen from any of you since getting here. Henry found one from Ruth which he has not shown me. Need I write that I shall be glad to hear from you? I did not write while in Missouri, because I had no confidence in your getting my letters. We took up little Austin and brought him on here, which appears to be a great comfort to Jason and Ellen. We were all out a good part of the last night, helping to keep prairie fire from destroying everything; so that I am almost blind today, or I would write you more.

Sabbath Eve, October 14.

I notice in your letter to Salmon your trouble about the means of having the house made more comfortable for winter, and I fondly hope you have been relieved on that score before now, by funds from Mr. Hurlbut, of Winchester, Conn., from the sale of the cattle there. Write me all about your situation; for, if disappointed from that source, I shall make every effort to relieve you in some other way. Last Tuesday was an election day with Free State men in Kansas, and hearing that there was a prospect of difficulty we all turned out most thoroughly armed (except Jason, who was too feeble); but no enemy appeared, nor have I heard of any [Pg 79] disturbance in any part of the Territory. Indeed, I believe Missouri is fast becoming discouraged about making Kansas a slave State, and I think the prospect of its becoming free is brightening every day. Try to be cheerful, and always "hope in God," who will not leave nor forsake them that trust in him. Try to comfort and encourage each other all you can. You are all very dear to me, and I humbly trust we may be kept and spared to meet again on earth; but if not, let us all endeavor earnestly to secure admission to that eternal home, where will be no more bitter separations, "where the wicked shall cease from troubling and the weary be at rest." We shall probably spend a few days more in helping the boys to provide some kind of shelter for winter, and mean to write you often. May God in infinite mercy bless, comfort, and save you all, for Christ's sake!

Your Affectionate husband and father,
JOHN BROWN.

In simple language and at considerable length. Brown thus announced his arrival at his destination, and described the conditions prevailing in Kansas and in the Brown colony. A half dozen lines in this letter sufficed to relate the incident of the important election of October 9th, and to give his opinions of the vital questions involved in the political situation as it then appeared to him. These lines are void of any hostile word or phrase; also they are void of any sentiment that can be made to suggest that Brown was different from the ordinary immigrant that came from the North to found a home and help to make a Free State. No settler from the North ever wrote a letter less war-like or more peaceful and domestic in its character than this letter written by John Brown. The clause, "I think the prospect of its becoming free is brightening

every day," is a truer index to the state of Brown's mind, and is better evidence of the peaceful character of his quest in Kansas, than the combined reckless assertions of his biographers to the contrary.

In violence of contemporary evidence, all of his biographers and some of the historians have [Pg 80] sought to educate the public to believe that Brown came to Kansas on a hostile mission. The public has been led to accept the fictitious John Brown, the picturesque character of history, instead of the real man under consideration. To this character constructing propaganda Mr. Redpath was an ardent contributor. One of his many effective flights has reference to the letter, heretofore published, which his son John wrote May 24th. He said concerning it:

> He undoubtedly regarded it as a call from the Almighty to gird up his loins and go forth to do battle "as the warrior of the Lord" as "the warrior of the Lord against the Mighty" in behalf of His despised poor and His downtrodden people. The moment long waited for had at length arrived; the sign he had patiently expected had been given; and the brave old soldier of the God of Battles prepared at once, to obey the summons.... John Brown did *not* go to Kansas to settle there. He did not dare to remain tending sheep at North Elba when the American Goliath and his hosts were in the field, defying the little armies of the living Lord.[93]

While Mr. Redpath did very well, his panegyric is not comparable with some of the latest and more scholarly studies of Brown. Here is one of Mr. Villard's efforts:

> Thenceforth John Brown could give free rein to his *wanderlust*; the shackles of business life dropped from him. He was now bowed and rapidly turning gray; to everyone's lips the adjective "old" leaped as they saw him. But this was not the age of senility, nor of weariness with life; nor were the lines of care due solely to family and business anxieties or to the hard labor of the fields. They were rather the marks of the fires consuming within; of the indomitable purpose that was the main spring of every action; of a life devoted, a spirit inspired. Emancipation from the counter and the harrow came joyfully to him at the time of life when most men begin to long for rest and the repose of a quiet, well ordered home. Thenceforth he [Pg 81] was free to move where he pleased, to devote every thought to his battle with the slave-power he staggered, which then, knew nothing of his existence.
>
> The metamorphosis was now complete. The staid, sombre merchant and patriarchal family-head was ready to become Captain John Brown of Osawatomie, at the mere mention of whose name Border Ruffians and swashbuckling adherents to the institution of slavery trembled and often fled. Kansas gave John Brown the opportunity to test himself as a guerrilla leader for which he had longed; for no other purpose did he proceed to the Territory; to become a settler there as he had hoped to in Virginia in 1840 was furthest from his thoughts.[94]

At the time the chrysalis of the Osawatomie guerilla is said to have emancipated himself bodily from the harrow and was burning to take up arms against the "swashbucklers," he wrote a letter to his son Salmon concerning his intentions to join the colony and asked him some questions relating to their condition, and to their requirements. Strange as it may seem this letter contained nothing that called for a war-like, or even a moderately ferocious reply from Salmon. His answer to it is scarcely dramatic; in fact it seems to relate more to the harrow, and to such disinteresting sublunary topics as the condition of his simple but more or less dilapidated wardrobe, than it does to "indomitable purposes" or to armies of a Lord who Mr. Redpath represents as being still alive. He wrote, June 22d:[95]

> In answer to your questions about what you will need for your company, I would say that I have an acre of corn that looks very well, and some beans and squashes and turnips. You will want to get some pork and meal, and beans enough to last till the crop comes in, and then I think we will have enough grain to last through the winter. I will have a house up by the time you get here. My boots are very near worn out, and I shall need some summer pants and a hat. I bought an ax and that [Pg 82] you will not have to get.

In a series of thirty-eight letters, published in Mr. Sanborn's *Life and Letters of John Brown*, commencing with the date, January 18, 1841; and ending with the letter herein, of October 14, 1855, there is not an expression relating to slavery that has not been heretofore quoted or referred to in this work. That Mr. Sanborn was a partisan writer, and that he sifted Brown's correspondence in a search for letters which could be quoted in support of the assumptions of these and other panegyrists, concerning his alleged hostility to slavery, will not be denied. Their assumptions are therefore, wholly fanciful; there is not a sentence contained in any of these letters, that can be quoted in justification of them. The attributes put forth in these eulogies are not only gratuitous, but they are illogical and inconsistent with Brown's circumstances, and incompatible with his environment. Mrs. Anne Brown Adams in a few plain words told why John Brown went to Kansas. She said:

> Father said his object in going to Kansas was to see if something would not turn up to his advantage.[96]

The often repeated statement that Brown came to Kansas "to fight," and not "to settle" after the manner of other immigrants, is further discredited in this history.

Before the Mason Committee, in January, 1860, Mr. Wm. F. Arny, who knew Brown to have been

a non-resistant, testified that he had conversed with him in Kansas, in 1858; and that he, on that occasion, asked him "how he reconciled his opinions then, with the peace principles which he held when he knew him in Virginia twenty years before. To this Brown replied, that the 'aggressions of slavery, the murders and robbery perpetrated upon himself and members of his family, the lawlessness by Atchison and others in 1855 and from that time down to the Marais-des-Cygnes, convinced him that peace was but an empty word.'"[97] [Pg 83]

Before the same committee Mr. Augustus Wattles testified:[98]

> Captain Brown told me that he had no idea of fighting until he heard the Missourians, during the winter he was there, make arrangements to come over into the Territory to vote. He said to me that he had not come to Kansas to settle himself, having left his family at North Elba, but that he had come to assist his sons in their settlement and to defend them, if necessary, in a peaceable exercise of their political rights.

Writing to his wife February 1, 1856, Brown said:

> The idea of again visiting those of my dear family at North Elba is so calculated to unman me, that I seldom allow my thoughts to dwell upon it.

This language bears the interpretation that he had located with the other members of his family in Kansas, and that a return to North Elba would be in the nature of a visit.

Brown told Mr. Arney that it was his intention, originally, to settle in Kansas. In his testimony before the Mason Committee, he said: "He (Brown) then referred to the fact that he had sent his sons into the Territory of Kansas in 1853 or 1854 with a lot of blooded cattle and other stock with the intention of settling."[99] There is presumptive evidence too, that he did "settle" in Kansas and that he did take a claim; also that it was "jumped." In a letter to Brown dated June 24. 1857, the late Wm. A. Phillips wrote as follows:[100] "Your old claim I believe, has been jumped. If you do not desire to contest it, let me suggest that you make a new settlement at some good point of which you will be the head. Lay off a town and take claims around it."

Among the real conditions of poverty described by Brown in his letters of October 13th and 14th, and with but "sixty cents" in his pocket, it is irrational to assume that he was free to move "where he pleased" or that he was "free to devote every thought," or any of his thoughts, for that matter, to this "battling" business. He was not "emancipated from the counter and the harrow," and from his natural obligation to continue to provide for the dependent wife and children, who were suffering the acute privations of poverty in a miserable home. The letters quoted are evidence of the domestic character of the thoughts which occupied his mind, and of his deep solicitude for the wants of his family. They are earnest letters, written about the pressing affairs of his domestic life, by a man of more than ordinary experience. He dismisses any reference to the subject of the "driving force of a mighty and unselfish purpose," with the moderate and sensible opinion, that the "prospect of Kansas becoming a Free state is brightening every day." [Pg 84]

November 2, 1855, Brown wrote a long and interesting letter to his wife about affairs in their Kansas home, concluding with this very conservative and peaceful statement: "I feel more and more confident that slavery will soon die out here,—and to God be the praise."[101] The letter is as follows:

> Brownsville, K. T., Nov. 2, 1855.
>
> Dear Wife and Children, Every One—
>
> I feel grateful to learn that you were all then well, and I think I fully sympathize with you in all the hardships and discouragements you have to meet; but you may be assured you are not alone in having trials. I believe I wrote you that we found everyone here more or less unwell but Wealthy and Johnny, without any sort of a place where a stout man even could protect himself from the cutting, cold winds and storms, which prevail here, much more than in any place where we have ever lived; and no crops of hay or anything raised had been taken care of; with corn wasting by cattle and horses, without fences; and, I may add without any meat; and Jason's folks without sugar, or any kind of bread stuffs but corn ground with great labor in a hand-mill about two miles off. Since I wrote you before, Wealthy, Johnny, Elen and myself have escaped being sick. Some have had the ague, but lightly; but Jason and Oliver have had a hard time of it and are yet feeble. Under existing circumstances, we have made but little progress; but we have made a little. We have got a shanty three logs high, chinked and mudded and roofed with our tent; and a chimney so far advanced that we can keep a fire in it for Jason. John has his shanty a little better fixed than it was, but miserable enough now; and we have got their little crop of beans secured, which, together with johnny cake, mush and milk, pumpkins and squashes, constitute our fare. Potatoes they have none of any account; milk, beans, pumpkins and squashes, a very moderate supply just for the present use. We have also got a few house logs cut for Jason. I do not send you this account to render you more unhappy but merely to let you know that those here are not altogether in paradise, while you have to stay in that miserable frosty region.... I feel more and more confident that slavery will soon die out here. —and to God be the praise!... [Pg 85]

November 23d, he wrote:

> Since Watson wrote, I have felt a great deal troubled about your prospects for a cold house to winter in, and since I wrote last, I have thought of a cheap, ready way to help it much. Take any common straight-edged boards, and run them from the ground up to the eaves, barn fashion, not driving the nails in so far but that they may easily be drawn, covering all but doors and windows, as close as may be in that way, and breaking joints if need be. This can be done by any one and in any weather not very severe, and the boards may afterwards mostly be saved for other uses. I think much too, of your widowed state, and I sometimes allow myself to dream a little of again sometime enjoying the comforts of a home; but I do not dare to dream much....

There were no disturbances in the Territory until the latter part of November, when the "Wakurusa War" became imminent. On the 27th the following dispatch was sent from Westport: [Pg 86]

> Hon. E. C. McLaren, Jefferson City—Governor Shannon has ordered out the militia against Lawrence. They are now in open rebellion against the laws. Jones is in danger.

December 6th, notice was sent out to all Free-State men to come to Lawrence. John Brown, with others from the vicinity of Osawatomie, answered the call, and upon their arrival at Lawrence he was appointed a captain in the Fifth Regiment, Kansas Volunteers. The men from Brown's neighborhood were assigned to his company which was named the "Liberty Guards."

There has been much controversy concerning Brown's actions during this brief but very interesting campaign; due, in some instances, perhaps, to political contention, but principally to the efforts of his biographers and eulogists to make him appear as a conspicuous figure in the proceedings, the hero of the occasion. However, Brown's plain sensible letter, written to his wife at the time, giving her a full and interesting account of what occurred, will be accepted by all sane persons, as evidence of what did occur, as well as evidence of his personal opinions of all matters pertaining thereto, so far as they came under his observation. His letter is as follows:[102]

> Osawatomie, K. T., Dec. 16, 1855.
>
> Sabbath Evening.
>
> Dear Wife and Children, Every One—I improve the first mail since my return from the camp of volunteers, who lately turned out for the defense of the town of Lawrence in this Territory, and notwithstanding, I suppose you have learned the result before this, (possibly), I will give a brief account of the invasion in my own way.
>
> About three or four weeks ago news came that a Free-State man by the name of Dow had been murdered by a pro-slavery man by the name of Coleman, who had gone and given himself up for trial to the pro-slavery Governor Shannon. This was soon followed by further news that a Free State man, who was the only reliable witness against the murderer had been seized by a Missourian (appointed sheriff by the bogus Legislature of Kansas) upon false pretexts, examined, and held to bail under such heavy bonds, to answer to those false charges, as he could not give; that while on his way to trial, in charge of the bogus sheriff, he was rescued by some men belonging to a company near Lawrence; and that in consequence of the rescue. Governor Shannon had ordered out all the pro-slavery force he could muster in the Territory, and called on Missouri for further help; that about two thousand had collected, demanding a surrender of the rescued witness and of the rescuers, the destruction of several buildings and printing-presses and a giving up of the Sharpe's rifles by the Free-State men,—threatening to destroy the town with cannon, with which they were provided, etc.; that about an equal number of Free-State men had turned out to resist them, and that a battle was hourly expected or supposed to have been already fought. [Pg 87]
>
> These reports appeared to be well authenticated, but we could get no further account of matters; and I left this for the place where the boys are settled, at evening, intending to go to Lawrence to learn the facts the next day. John was, however, started on horseback, but before he had gone many rods, word came that our help was immediately wanted. On getting this last news, it was at once agreed to break up at John's camp, and take Wealthy and Johnny to Jason's camp (some two miles off), and that all the men but Henry, Jason, and Oliver should at once set off for Lawrence under arms; those three being wholly unfit for duty. We then set about providing a little corn-bread and meat, blankets, and cooking utensils, running bullets and loading all our guns, pistols, etc. The five set off in the afternoon and after a short rest in the night (which was quite dark), continued our march until after daylight next morning, when we got our breakfast, started again, and reached Lawrence in the forenoon, all of us more or less lamed by our tramp. On reaching the place, we found that negotiations had commenced between Governor Shannon (having a force of some fifteen or sixteen hundred men) and the principal leaders of the Free-State men, they having a force of some five hundred men at that time. These were busy, night and day, fortifying the town with [Pg 88]

> embankments and circular earthworks, up to the time of the treaty with the Governor, as an attack was constantly looked for, notwithstanding the negotiations then pending. This state of things continued from Friday until Sunday evening. On the evening we left Osawatomie, a company of the invaders, of from fifteen to twenty-five attacked some three or four Free-State men, mostly unarmed, killing a Mr. Barber from Ohio, wholly unarmed. His body was afterward brought in and lay for some days in the room afterwards occupied by a part of the company to which we belong (it being organized after we reached Lawrence). The building was a large unfinished stone hotel, in which a great part of the volunteers were quartered, who witnessed the scene of bringing in the wife and other friends of the murdered man. I will only say of this scene that it was heart-rending, and calculated to exasperate the men exceedingly, and one of the sure results of civil war.
>
> After frequently calling on the leaders of the Free-State men to come and have an interview with him, by Governor Shannon, and after as often getting for an answer that if he had any business to transact with any one in Lawrence, to come and attend to it, he signified his wish to come into the town, and an escort was sent to the invaders' camp to conduct him in. When there, the leading Free-State men, finding out his weakness, frailty, and consciousness of the awkward circumstances into which he had really got himself, took advantage of his cowardice and folly and by means of that and the free use of whiskey and some trickery succeeded in getting a written arrangement with him much to their own liking. He stipulated [Pg 89] with them to order the pro-slavery men of Kansas home, and to proclaim to the Missouri invaders that they must quit the Territory without delay, and also to give up General Pomeroy (a prisoner in their camp),—which was all done; he also recognizing the volunteers as the militia of Kansas, and empowering their officers to call them out whenever in their discretion the safety of Lawrence or other portions of the Territory might require it to be done. He (Governor Shannon) gave up all pretension of further attempt to enforce the enactment of the bogus Legislature, and retired, subject to the derision and scoffs of the Free-State men (into whose hands he had committed the welfare and protection of Kansas), and to the pity of some, and the curses of others of the invading force.
>
> So ended this last Kansas invasion—the Missourians returning with *flying colors*, after incurring heavy expenses, suffering great exposure, hardships, and privations, not having fought any battles, burned or destroyed any infant towns or Abolition presses; leaving the Free-State men organized and armed, and in full possession of the Territory; not having fulfilled any of all their dreadful threatenings, except to murder one *unarmed* man, and to commit some robberies and waste of property upon defenseless families, unfortunately within their power. We learn by their papers that they boast of a great victory over the Abolitionists; and well they may. Free-State men have only hereafter to retain the footing they have gained, and *Kansas is free*. Yesterday the people passed upon the Free-State constitution. The result, though not yet known, no one doubts....
>
> We have received fifty dollars from father, and learned from him that he has sent you the same amount,—for which we ought to be grateful, as we are much relieved, both as respects ourselves and you....

This letter will always stand in its completeness as an official expression by John Brown of his entire satisfaction with everything that was done by the Free-State men on this occasion. The stipulations contained in the peace treaty not only covered every point for which the Free-State [Pg 90] men were contending, but gave them official recognition, in Territorial affairs, with authority therein far greater than they could have hoped to obtain. Brown's entire approval of the agreement, without any reservation whatever, is clearly and fully expressed in the sentence:

> Free-State men have only hereafter to retain the footing they have gained and *Kansas is free*.

No language could make his approval of what had been done more complete or specific; and yet, notwithstanding this unequivocal record, by Brown himself, of his approval of what had been done, his biographers insist that he was not only dissatisfied with the proceedings that were had, but that "the peace treaty itself produced in him only anger when he first heard of it."

> John Brown, boiling over with anger, mounted the shaky platform and addressed the audience when Robinson had finished. He declared that Lawrence had been betrayed, and told his hearers that they should make a night attack upon the pro-slavery forces and drive them from the territory. "I am an Abolitionist," he said, "dyed in the wool," and then he offered to be one of ten men to make a night attack upon the Border Ruffian camp. Armed, and with lanterns, his plan was to string his men along the camp far apart. At a given signal in the early morning hours, they were to shout and fire on the slumbering enemy.[103]

That this speech will stand for all time, as a classic in the existing melodramatic literature of John Brown, will be conceded. The novel plan of a night attack by ten men, furnished with lanterns, as targets, "strung far apart," against a force of fifteen hundred men, will, of itself, commend it to such recognition.

A summary of the speeches, recently referred to as "harangues," made by Governor Shannon, and by General Lane, and by Charles Robinson, on this occasion, was duly reported at the time and published throughout the country, for this was a notable incident in our national history. But not a word was reported about Brown's speech. It ought to have been the climax—the fire-works—of the whole performance for he was the only one of the speakers who is said to have been "boiling over" with anything. It may be assumed however that if John Brown had made a violent speech *from this platform* on this occasion, the fact would have been reported by the reporter for the *Herald of Freedom*, who was present, and who felt very kindly toward him. It may be true that Brown did some grumbling in camp, or some loud talking somewhere, about the treaty which he may not have understood at the time. [Pg 91]

A very extended report of the incidents occurring in the "Wakurusa War" is contained in the Lawrence *Herald of Freedom* of December 15, 1855,[104] from which the following are extracts:

> Sunday the negotiations were resumed with Governor Shannon and finally completed, the substance of which was communicated to the people by the Governor. The settlement was received with satisfaction and yet the terms were not coincided in so fully as many supposed it would be. It was apparent that the Governor was in bad odor, as several attempts to get up cheers in his favor proved a failure, though no insult was shown him.
>
> Colonel Lane followed and was loudly cheered. He assured the public there had been no concession of honor and that the people of Lawrence and Kansas, would cheerfully acquiesce in the terms of the settlement as soon as they could learn the particulars....
>
> General Robinson was also loudly cheered and congratulated by the people on account of the settlement.... The day closed by Governor Shannon giving General Robinson and Colonel Lane each a commission, and clothing them with full power to preserve the peace in the vicinity and to use the volunteer force at their command for that purpose. [Pg 92]
>
> Tuesday was full of animation. The soldiers were reviewed and finally formed in a square and addressed by the commanding officers. General Lane spoke as follows:...
>
> At the close of General Lane's speech, he was vociferously cheered.
>
> General Robinson, as Commander in Chief, delivered the following speech which was loudly applauded. He said: "...The moral strength of our position is such that even the 'gates of hell' could not prevail against us, much less a foreign mob and we gained a bloodless victory."... As General Robinson closed, six cheers were given to him.

Even a reporter and journalist so enterprising as James Redpath failed to know of Brown's much advertised speech. He said:[105]

> I had no personal knowledge of his opposition to the Treaty of Peace.... The first time I heard of old Brown was in connection with a caucus at the town of Osawatomie.

It was not Redpath's fault that he did not then know John Brown or that he had not even heard of him. It was simply because Brown was an ordinary person, and had not done anything yet to attract public attention to his personality. Opportunity did not happen to knock at his door on that occasion; if it had, Brown, doubtless, would have acquitted himself creditably, and Mr. Redpath would have heard of him. As soon as Brown did even a little thing, Redpath heard of it promptly. April 16, 1856, a meeting or caucus was held at Osawatomie to consider the question of paying the taxes that had been levied by authority of the Territorial Legislature, and other public measures. To pay the taxes would be a recognition of the "Bogus Legislature" that had enacted the laws relating to taxation. Richard Mendenhall was chairman of the meeting and Oscar V. Dayton was secretary. Brown, among others, spoke in opposition to paying the taxes. [Pg 93] There was nothing sensational in this incident, but Redpath heard of the meeting and located Brown in his mind, because of it. Referring to the incident Mr. Redpath made this authoritative statement:[106] "This was John Brown's first and last appearance in a public meeting in Kansas." Therefore, it appears that Mr. Villard has been imposed upon.

Of Brown himself, the *Herald* published the following sane and *restful* paragraph:

> About noon Mr. John Brown, an aged gentleman from Essex County, New York, who has been a resident of the Territory for several months, arrived with four of his sons,—leaving several others at home sick, bringing a quantity of arms with him which were placed in his hands by eastern friends for the defense of the cause of freedom. Having more than he could well use to advantage, a portion of them were placed in the hands of those who were more destitute. A company was organized and the command given to Mr. Brown for the zeal he had exhibited in the cause of freedom, both before and after his arrival in the Territory.[107]

Brown, with his sons, returned to their homes December 14th, and under that date, in a letter to Orson Day, he expressed, further, his satisfaction with what had been accomplished at Lawrence by the Free-State managers. He said: "The Territory is now entirely in the power of the Free-State men," and stated hopefully his opinion that "the Missourians will give up all further hope of

making Kansas a slave state."[108] January 1, 1856, he wrote from West Point, Missouri: "In this part of the state there seems to be but little feeling on the slave question."[109]

January 5th, a Free-State county convention was held at Osawatomie to nominate candidates for members of the Free-State Legislature. The Browns took a prominent part in the proceedings. John Brown was chairman of the meeting. Frederick Brown received the nomination for member of the House of Representatives, but at the request of his father, he declined the nomination, and it was given to John Brown, Jr. [Pg 94]

With his participation in this convention, John Brown closed his public services. Later—probably during March—he abandoned his honorable commission as captain of the "Liberty Guards," disbanded the company, and with his sons, Owen, Salmon, Frederick, Oliver, and his son-in-law, Henry Thompson, planned and decided to abandon the Free-State cause, enter upon a career of crime, and leave the neighborhood. The course was agreed upon with John Brown, Jr., as accessory thereto; but not with the knowledge of Jason Brown. These men comprised John Brown's "little company of six" who, with others, committed the robbery on the Pottawatomie on the night of May 24th—a robbery that included in the plans for its execution, the murder of seven persons, five of whom fell beneath the blows of the assassins.

CHAPTER V [Pg 95]

ROBBERY AND MURDER ON THE POTTAWATOMIE

A blush as of roses
Where rose never grew!
Great drops on the bunch-grass
But not of the dew!
A taint in the sweet air
For wild bees to shun!
A stain that will never
Bleach out in the sun!

Back, steed of the prairies!
Sweet song bird, fly back!
Wheel hither, bald vulture!
Gray wolf, call thy pack!
The foul human vultures
Have feasted and fled;
The wolves of the Border
Have crept from the dead.

—From Le Marais du Cygne. Whittier.

From a rude home in the bleak mountains of northern New York, John Brown went to Kansas; not for the purpose of fighting, but inspired by the hope of bettering his shattered fortunes; a hope that withered in the budding, and gave place to feelings of deep disappointment and discouragement. He wrote February 1st:

> It is now nearly six weeks that the snow has almost constantly been driven, like dry sand, by the fierce winds of Kansas. By means of the sale of our horse and wagon, our present wants are tolerably well met; so that, if health is continued to us, we shall not probably suffer much.... Thermometer on Sunday and Monday at [Pg 96] twenty-eight to twenty-nine below zero. Ice in the river, in the timber, and under the snow, eighteen inches thick this week.... Jason down again with the ague, but he was some better yesterday. Oliver was also laid up by freezing his toes,—one great toe so badly frozen that the nail has come off. He will be crippled for some days yet. Owen has one foot frozen. We have middling tough times (as some would call them) but have enough to eat, and abundant reason for the most unfeigned gratitude....[110]

These were hard conditions. It would be difficult to imagine circumstances of greater discomfort and hopelessness. But what about the future—the future for himself and for the wife and the daughters depending upon him for the necessaries of life, for whose benefit he had come to Kansas? Did Brown think of them? Present inconvenience and privation may be borne with fortitude if the future holds out a promise of betterment. In his case we may reasonably assume that the problems of the future, rather than the present conditions and discouragements, engrossed his thoughts. It is altogether unreasonable to suppose that this unscrupulous man of affairs—this restless, aggressive speculator—sat listlessly, amid his environment of discomfort and poverty, and permitted the dreary months to pass without thinking of his precarious financial condition, and of the incessantly urgent family responsibilities impending; and of the possibilities of bettering his fortunes in the immediate future. His biographers have wisely avoided discussion of the practical side of Brown's condition at this time, preferring to wander in more intangible fields, and to speculate upon the emotional and metaphysical phenomena they seek to involve in the situation. The record of his life at this time, however, reveals the fact that Brown did think of

the future and of its responsibilities; and that he did mature a plan to better his financial condition. Also, that his plan was in harmony with his latest and best biographer's estimate of his [Pg 97] character: "It was not only that he was visionary as a business man,"[111] says Mr. Villard, "but that he developed the fatal tendency to speculate; doubtless the outgrowth of his restlessness, and the usual desire of the bankrupt for a sudden coup to restore his fortune," To his wife he wrote as follows:

Brown's Station, K. T.,
April 7, 1856.

DEAR WIFE AND CHILDREN, EVERY ONE,—I wrote you last week,... We do not want you to borrow trouble about us, but trust us to the care of "Him who feeds the young ravens when they cry." I have, as usual, but little to write. We are doing off a house for Orson Day, which we hope to get through with soon; after which we shall probably soon leave this neighborhood, but will advise you further when we leave. It may be that Watson can manage to get a little money for shearing sheep if you do not get any from Connecticut. I still hope you will get help from that source. We have no wars as yet, but we still have abundance of "rumors." We still have frosty nights, but the grass starts a little. There are none of us complaining much just now, all being able to do something. John has just returned from Topeka, not having met with any difficulty; but we hear that preparations are making in the United States Court for numerous arrests of Free State men. For one, I have no desire (all things considered) to have the slave power cease from its acts of aggression. "Their foot shall slide in due time." May God bless and keep you all.

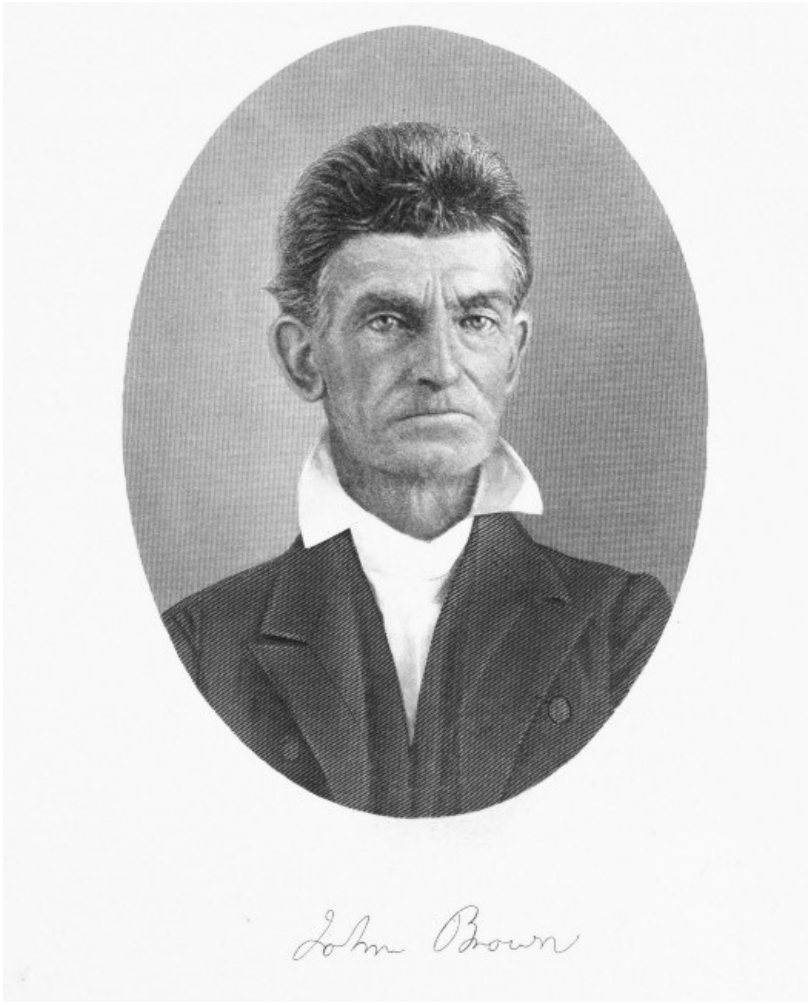
Your affectionate husband and father,
JOHN BROWN.

This letter foreshadows the turning point in John Brown's career. It discloses the fact that he and his sons intended to engage in an enterprise that was related to danger, against which he sought to quiet his wife's apprehensions. The letter also foreshadows the fact that as a result of what they intended to do, they would probably leave the neighborhood; but as to either the nature of [Pg 98] the undertaking which they had in view, or the time at which the venture would be executed, she would not be informed until they left the country. It discloses further the significant fact, that his attitude toward the Free-State cause had undergone a change. That instead of treasuring in his heart a patriotic desire to win freedom for Kansas by peaceable means, he had assumed a hostile attitude. He now desired, not peace, but war.

Three important facts appear at this point in Brown's history: That he had decided to do something of a dangerous character and leave the neighborhood; that he desired a revival of pro-slavery aggressions; and that he had disbanded the "Liberty Guards."

On the 16th of April, 1856, John Brown, Jr., was in command of the "Pottawatomie Rifles."[112] He said: "During the winter of 1856, I raised a company of riflemen, from the Free-State settlers who had their homes in the vicinity of Osawatomie and Pottawatomie Creek."[113] James Townsley, in his "confession," made December 6, 1879, said: "I joined the Pottawatomie Rifle Company at its reorganization in May, 1856, at which time John Brown, Jr., was elected captain."

Why Brown should desire a revival of pro-slavery aggressions, if he intended to leave the neighborhood; and what he intended to do, are important questions in this analysis which his versatile biographers have failed to attempt to explain. Brown could not have desired a provocation from the pro-slavery people because he wanted an opportunity to fight—to march against them at the head of the "Liberty Guards," and "stagger the slave-power by the driving force of his iron will;"—for he intended to leave the neighborhood; he intended to go away from the scene of the prospective aggressions. He was no longer "Captain of the Liberty Guards," but a private citizen; therefore, he must have desired an outbreak of pro-slavery hostility for personal reasons; for reasons relating to operations which he intended to engage in with Henry Thompson as an associate; who wrote, equivocally, to his wife in May, 1856, that "Upon Brown's plans would depend his own, until School is out."



John Brown

The operations that Brown and his four unmarried sons and Henry Thompson engaged in [Pg 99]
immediately after the letter containing this extract was written, show that the "plans" therein referred to related to the capital tragedy in the history of Kansas Territory. These plans provided for the theft of a large number of horses on Pottawatomie Creek. The horses were duly stolen by Brown and his band. To make the theft possible, and personally safe, they planned to quietly assassinate the owners of the horses. To avoid identification, and to dispose of the horses which they intended to steal, they planned to deliver them to confederates, who would run them out of the neighborhood; and, at the same time, they were to receive from such confederates horses of a more desirable character—fast running horses—which were to be brought from the northern part of the Territory to a designated rendezvous.

It was the original intention to steal four lots of horses and murder seven men. The persons murdered in pursuance of their plans were John Doyle and two of his sons, Hon. Allen Wilkinson, and William Sherman. Those who escaped death were Henry Sherman, a brother of William, and another person whose name has been withheld from publication.[114] The *silent* weapons used in these murders were some of the short swords, ground to a keen edge, that Brown had brought with him when he came to the Territory. The unfortunate victims, in holding up their arms in vain attempts to shield their heads from impending blows, were struck upon their forearms and hands; these in some instances were almost severed from their bodies. The heads of the murdered men, except in the case of Doyle, were split open and their bodies otherwise mutilated. [Pg 100]
In the case of Doyle, he was shot in the head; and in addition thereto, a sword was run through his breast. He was the first victim of the tragedies. The shot which struck him was the only shot that was fired in these murders, and the firing of it stands charged to John Brown himself. Of this Mr. Villard says:[115] "Salmon Brown will not positively state that his father fired it but admits that no one else pulled a trigger."

An account in detail of these murders is found in the testimony of the widows of Doyle and Wilkinson, and of James Harris, and others, taken before Hon. M. N. Oliver, of Missouri, minority member of a congressional committee of which Hon. W. A. Howard was chairman. The committee was appointed in 1855 to investigate and report to Congress upon the troubles in Kansas. The character of the evidence brought out in this investigation incriminated the Browns; but for more than twenty years thereafter the surviving members of the family stoutly denied having any participation in the crime. Even at Harper's Ferry, when standing within the shadow of the gallows, John Brown denied having had anything to do with it. To Judge Russell "the prisoner reiterated his assertion often made in those prison days that he was not personally concerned in the Pottawatomie murders."[116] But after the confession of James Townsley, his biographers and friends were forced to acknowledge Brown's directing hand in the crime. Since that time, they have continuously sought, by various pretexts—defensive, patriotic and altruistic—to justify him in the killing of these men; and to distract attention away from the real motive that prompted it;

with the result that they have thus far succeeded in so agitating discussion upon the merits of the *murders*, as to concentrate public attention upon that feature of the crime—the murders—and to eliminate or silence any allusion whatever to the fundamental feature of it—*robbery*. As a consequence of their propaganda, writers of history have not made any reference to the robberies to which the murders were subordinate and incidental. After the manner of sheep, they have followed the lead of Brown's eulogists into the interesting field of metaphysics; and have there engaged in profitless speculation upon Brown's mental processes, and the probable psychical impulses which may have controlled his actions.[117] [Pg 101]

The confession of James Townsley is as follows:

> I joined the Potawatomie rifle company at its reorganization in May, 1856, at which time John Brown, Jr., was elected captain. On the 21st of the same month information was received that the Georgians were marching on Lawrence, threatening its destruction. The company was immediately called together, and about four o'clock P. M. we started on a forced march to aid in its defense.
>
> About two miles south of Middle Creek, we were joined by the Osawatomie company under Captain Dayton, and proceeded to Mount Vernon, where we waited about two hours, until the moon rose. We then marched all night, camping the next morning, the 22nd, for breakfast, near Ottawa Jones's. Before we arrived at this point, news had been received that Lawrence had been destroyed, and a question was raised whether we should return or go on. During the forenoon, however, we proceeded up Ottawa Creek to within about five miles of Palmyra, and went into camp near the residence of Captain Shore. Here we remained, undecided, over night. About noon the next day, the 23rd, Old John Brown came to me and said he had just received information that trouble was expected on the Potawatomie, and wanted to know if I would take my team and take him and his boys back, so they could keep watch on what was going on. I told him I would do so. The party, consisting of Old John Brown, Watson Brown, Oliver Brown, Henry Thompson, (John Brown's son-in-law), and Mr. Winer, were soon ready for the trip and we started, as near as I can remember, about two o'clock P. M. All of the party except Winer, who rode a pony, rode with me in my wagon. When within two or three miles of Potawatomie Creek, we turned off the main road to the right, drove down to the edge of the timber between two deep ravines, and camped about one mile above Dutch Henry's crossing.... We remained in camp that night and all the next day. Some time after dark we were ordered to march. [Pg 102]
>
> We started, the whole company, in a northerly direction, crossing Mosquito Creek, above the residence of the Doyles. Soon after crossing the creek, some one of the party knocked at the door of a cabin, but received no reply—I have forgotten whose cabin it was, if I knew at the time.
>
> The next place we came to was the residence of the Doyles. John Brown, three of his sons, and son-in-law, went to the door, leaving Frederick Brown, Winer, and myself, a short distance from the house. About this time a large dog attacked us. Frederick Brown struck the dog a blow with his short two edged sword, after which I dealt him a blow with my sabre, and heard no more of him. The old man Doyle and two sons were called out and marched some distance from the house toward Dutch Henry's, in the road, where a halt was made. Old John Brown drew a revolver and shot the old man Doyle in the forehead and Brown's two youngest sons immediately fell upon the younger Doyles with their short two-edged swords.
>
> One of the young Doyles was stricken down in an instant, but the other attempted to escape, and was pursued a short distance by his assailant and cut down. The company then proceeded down Mosquito Creek to the house of Allen Wilkinson. Here the old man Brown, three of his sons, and son-in-law as at the Doyle residence, went to the door and ordered Wilkinson to come out, leaving Frederick Brown, Winer, and myself standing in the road east of the house. Wilkinson was taken and marched some distance south of his house and slain in the road, with a short sword, by one of the younger Browns. After he was killed, his body was dragged out to one side and left. [Pg 103]
>
> We then crossed the Potawatomie and came to the house of Henry Sherman, generally known as Dutch Henry. Here John Brown and the party, excepting Frederick Brown, Winer, and myself, who were left outside a short distance from the door, went into the house and brought out one or two persons, talked with them some, and then took them in again. They afterwards brought out William Sherman, Dutch Henry's brother, marched him down into the Potawatomie Creek, where he was slain with swords, by Brown's two youngest sons, and left lying in the creek....
>
> JAMES TOWNSLEY.
>
> Lane, Kansas, December 6, 1879.

From this statement it appears that John Brown set the example for his sons to follow by killing Doyle. "Old John Brown drew his revolver and shot old man Doyle in the forehead, and Brown's two younger sons immediately fell upon the younger Doyles with their short, two edged swords."

Mrs. Doyle, in her testimony said:

... My son John was spared because I asked them in tears to spare him....

The son testified:

> I found my father and one brother, William, lying dead in the road about two hundred yards from the house. I saw my other brother lying dead on the ground about one hundred and fifty yards from the house, in the grass, near a ravine, his fingers were cut off, and his arms were cut off; his head was cut open; there was a hole in his breast. William's head was cut open, and a hole was in his jaw, as though it was made by a knife, and a hole was in his side. My father was shot in the forehead and stabbed in the breast.[118]

Allen Wilkinson was the postmaster for the community, and was a member of the Territorial Legislature. Like Doyle, he was married, and had a family of small children. Mrs. Wilkinson states that the persons who murdered her husband, came to their home after midnight, and after knocking at the door, inquired "the way to Dutch Henry's." Wilkinson began to tell them, but they told him to "come out and show them." Her testimony is in part as follows: [Pg 104]

> ... One of them said, "You are our prisoner. Do you surrender?" He said, "Gentlemen, I do." They said, "Open the door." Mr. Wilkinson told them to wait till he made a light and they replied, "If you don't open it, we will open it for you." He opened the door against my wishes, and four men came in and my husband was told to put on his clothes, and they asked him if there were not more men about. They searched for arms, and took a gun and powder flask, all the weapon that was about the house.... They then took my husband away. One of them came back and took two saddles. I asked him what they were going to do with him and he said, "Take him a prisoner to the camp." ... After they were gone, I thought I heard my husband's voice, in complaint, but do not know; went to the door and all was still. Next morning Mr. Wilkinson was found about one hundred and fifty yards from the house dead, in some bushes. A lady who saw my husband's body said, that there was a gash in his head and in his side; others said he was cut in the throat twice. [119]

James Harris, at whose house William Sherman was staying on the night of May 24th, states in his testimony, what came under his observation. Harris was a day laborer. He testified in part as follows:

> On last Sunday morning about two o'clock (the 25th of last May) whilst my wife and child and myself were in bed in the house where we lived, we were aroused by a company of men who said they belonged to the Northern army, and who were [Pg 105] each armed with a sabre and two revolvers, two of whom I recognized, namely, a Mr. Brown, whose name I do not remember, commonly known by the appellation of "old man Brown" and his son Owen Brown.... When they came up to the bed, some had drawn sabres in their hands, and some revolvers. They then took possession of two rifles and a Bowie knife which I had with me in the room—there was but one room in my house—and afterward ransacked the whole establishment after ammunition.... They asked me where Henry Sherman was. Henry Sherman was a brother to William Sherman. I told them that he was out on the plains in search of some cattle that he had lost. They asked me if there were any bridles or saddles about the premises. I told them there was one saddle which they took, and they also took possession of Henry Sherman's horse which I had at my place, and made me saddle him. They then said if I would answer no, to all questions which they asked me, they would let [me] loose. Old Mr. Brown and his son then went into the house with me.... Old man Brown asked Mr. Sherman to go out with him, and Mr. Sherman then went out with old man Brown, and another man came into the house in Brown's place. I heard nothing more for about fifteen minutes. Two of the northern army, as they styled themselves, stayed on with us until we heard a cap burst and then these two men left. That morning about ten o'clock I found William Sherman dead in the creek near my house. I was looking for Mr. Sherman; as he had not come back, I thought he had been murdered. I took Mr. William Sherman out of the creek and examined him. Mr. Whiteman was with me. Sherman's skull was split open in two places, and some of his brains was washed out by the water. A large hole was cut in his breast, and his left hand was cut off except a little piece of skin on one side. We buried him.[120]

It should be remembered that prior to the date of these murders and robberies, the zone of conflict in the Territory had been confined within the limits of Douglas, Leavenworth, and Atchison counties. Also, that the settlers living south of Douglas county had, up to this time, enjoyed the repose and benefits of a condition of profound peace; and that during all of the time that Brown was formulating his plans to rob and murder his unsuspecting neighbors, the "Shannon Treaty" was in full force and effect, and a season of peace prevailing throughout the whole Territory. Mr. Villard says of this period:[121] [Pg 106]

> Not a single person had been killed in the region around Osawatomie either by the lawless characters, or by armed representatives of the pro-slavery cause. The instances of brutality or murder narrated in the preceding chapters, all took place miles to the north in the vicinity of Lawrence or Leavenworth.

And John Brown himself, in his speech before a committee of the Massachusetts Legislature,

February 18, 1857, said:[122]

> Things do not look one iota more encouraging now than they did last year at this time. You may remember that from the Shannon Treaty, (December 9th, 1855) which ended the Wakarusa war, till early in May, 1856, there was general quiet in Kansas. No violence was offered to our citizens when they went to Missouri. I frequently went there myself to buy corn and other supplies. I was known there, yet they treated me well.

Some of Buford's men had been in the neighborhood but they were not brutal toward the Free-State settlers. There was a potent restraining influence controlling their conduct. They were at the time on the pay roll of the General Government as deputy United States marshals, and the respectability and responsibility of their official positions demanded reasonably proper behavior on their part.[123]

The most important evidence upon the important subject under consideration, appears in Brown's letter to his wife, written after his fight at Black Jack; and in a personal statement made by John Brown, Jr., to F. B. Sanborn. The letter is, in part, as follows:[124] [Pg 107]

> Near Brown's Station, K. T., June, 1856.
>
> Dear Wife and Children, Every One,—It is now about five weeks since I have seen a line from North Elba, or had any chance of writing you. During that period we have passed through an almost constant series of very trying events. We were called to go to the relief of Lawrence, May 22, and every man (eight in all), except Orson turned out; he staying with the women and children and to take care of the cattle. John was captain of a company to which Jason belonged; *the other six were a little company by ourselves*.[125] On our way to Lawrence we learned that it had been already destroyed, and we encamped with John's company over night. Next day our little company left and during the day we stopped and searched three men....
>
> On the second day and evening after we left John's men, we encountered quite a number of pro-slavery men and took quite a number of prisoners. Our prisoners we let go, but we kept some four or five horses. We were immediately after this, accused of murdering five men at Pottawatomie and great efforts have since been made by the Missourians and their ruffian allies to capture us. John's company soon afterward disbanded, and also the Osawatomie men.[126]
>
> Since then, we have, like David of old, had our dwelling with the serpents of the rocks and wild beasts of the wilderness; being obliged to hide away from our enemies. We are not disheartened, though nearly destitute of food, clothing and money. God, who has not given us over to the will of our enemies, but has moreover delivered them into our hand, will we humbly trust, still keep and deliver us. We feel assured that He who sees not as men see, does not lay the guilt of innocent blood to our charge. [Pg 108]
>
> If, under God, this letter reaches you so that it can be read, I wish it at once carefully copied, and a copy of it sent to Gerrit Smith. I know of no other way to get these facts and our situation before the world, nor when I can write again....

The statement that John Brown, Jr., made to Mr. Sanborn is, in part, as follows:[127]

> We got back to Osawatomie from our five days' campaign, toward evening on the 26th of May.... I took my rifle and horse and went into the ravine on Mr. Adair's land, remaining there through that day (May 27) and the following night. About four o'clock P. M. I was joined by my brother Owen, who had been informed at Mr. Adair's of my whereabouts. He brought with him into the brush a valuable running horse, mate of the one I had with me. These horses had been taken by Free-State men near the Nebraska line and exchanged for horses obtained in the way of reprisals further south; and while on foot a few miles south of Ottawa Jones's place, May 26, I had been offered one of these to ride the remaining distance to Osawatomie. Owen's horse was wet with sweat; and he told me of the narrow escape he had just had from a number of armed pro-slavery men who had their headquarters at Tooley's,—a house at the foot of the hill, about a mile and a half west of Mr. Adair's. Their guards, seeing him in the road coming down the hill, gave a signal and at once the whole gang were in hot chase. The superior fleetness of the horse Owen rode alone saved him. He exchanged horses with me, and that night forded the Marais des Cygnes, and going by Stanton, (or Standiford as it was sometimes called), recrossed the river to father's camp about a mile north of the house of Mr. Day. Until Owen told me that night, I did not know where father could be found.... [Pg 109]

Referring to a horse whose mane and tail had been shaved—"Dutch Henry's gray pony"—Mr. Sanborn states:[128] "This horse was soon taken to northern Kansas by some Free State men who gave in exchange for that and other horses captured on the Pottawatomie, some fast Kentucky horses, on one of which Owen Brown afterward escaped from his pursuers."

But John Brown, Jr., received his fast running horse on the morning of May 26th and "upon a mate to it" Owen Brown escaped from his pursuers on the same day near Osawatomie. Therefore,

the exchange of the horses "taken as reprisals" on the Pottawatomie, for the fast running horses, was not made in northern Kansas some time afterward, as Mr. Sanborn states, but was made immediately after the robbery—May 25th or 26th—at the appointed time and place; probably on Middle Creek.

These statements, made by John Brown, and by his son, complete the recorded evidence of Brown's plan to retrieve his shattered fortunes by a plunge in horse stealing. It shows that he was in partnership with others in the transaction, and that his confederates brought the northern horses, eight at least, to the appointed rendezvous and delivered them to him. It shows also, that John Brown, Jr., was in his father's confidence, and that he knew enough about his father's plans and of what had been done on the night of the 24th, to enable him to walk to a point "a few miles south of Ottawa Jones's place" where he was "offered one of the northern horses," and accepted it as his own.

Who Brown's confederates were in this transaction, except as to Weiner, is as yet unknown. Salmon Brown still guards the sacred secret. But it is probable that the "mysterious courier," who came to the camp of the Pottawatomie Rifles on the morning of the 23d, was one of them, and [Pg 110] that he delivered a message to John Brown. There has been much debate concerning this messenger and his identity.[129] B. L. Cochrane may have been the important person, or it may have been Jacob Benjamin that bore the important message, or Charles Lenhart, or Mr. John E. Cook. None of these men have heretofore been charged with having taken any part in the Pottawatomie episode, but there are incidents in this history which connect them with it as confederates. Weiner owned the store at "Dutch Henry's Crossing," and Benjamin was in his employ. Weiner disposed of his stock of merchandise and gave up the business to engage in this speculation in horses. He was from Texas and to Texas he returned. It is also probable that he was a pro-slavery man. Benjamin was subsequently "imprisoned" for some act that he committed while in Brown's service; as appears from a reference which the latter made, during July, concerning him.[130] The name of Benjamin Cochrane also appears in the same reference, as having been with Brown at the Pottawatomie and at the Black Jack.

On page 101, Mr. Redpath states that Charles Lenhart and John E. Cook left Lawrence on the 21st to "commence reprisals." There is also evidence that they went southward. They were horse thieves, and at Cleveland in May, 1858, Cook stated that he had killed five men in Kansas.[131] It is therefore probable that these men were accomplices with the Browns in this deal; and participated, directly or indirectly, in the murders. Cook was a guest in their camp June 4th, two days after the fight at Black Jack, when they had Pate's horses and mules in their possession. Thereafter he continued to be Brown's faithful lieutenant, and followed his fortunes to the gallows at Charlestown. Charles Lenhart, too, appeared at Charlestown, engaged in an effort to effect Cook's escape from the jail.

The terms of the agreement which the Browns made with these confederates, and the details for [Pg 111] the execution of the Pottawatomie transaction, would make history of absorbing interest. How many horses did Brown turn over to them? Did they trade one bunch of horses for the other, and let it go at that? Or, did his confederates charge him with the value of the horses which they turned over to him; and then, after offsetting their services in selling Brown's horses, against his services in stealing them, did they divide the net profits, or the difference in value between the two lots of horses? Then as to the time when Brown was to make his delivery; it would be interesting to know about that. Were the parties to wait until the Border Ruffians started something, and raised some friendly dust that would distract public attention from their operations? Probably so, for Brown was prepared to kill his neighbors and take their horses at any time. His letter of April 7th shows that he intended to do this whether the slave-power renewed its acts of aggression or not. He simply preferred to commit his robbery under cover of some pro-slavery provocation. Otherwise, after the grass had well started, he intended to execute it in cold blood and leave the country. In that event, he probably intended to "go to Louisiana," and "head an uprising of the slaves there."[132]

For reasons obvious, Mr. Villard could not obtain the exact facts as to all these incriminating matters from his friends, Salmon Brown and Henry Thompson; but the former is still living,[133] and can yet supply them if he desires to do so. He can, if he be so disposed, give out the "exact facts" as to *all* the principal happenings on the Pottawatomie. For instance: He can give the name of the man whose horses they intended to steal, but failed to get, and the number of them. Townsley referred to this incident, but Salmon Brown gave further details and spoke very [Pg 112] interestingly upon the subject. He said:[134]

> Soon after crossing the creek, some one of the party knocked at the door of a cabin. There was no reply, but from within came the sound of a gun rammed through the chinks of the cabin walls. It saved the owner's life, for at that we all scattered. We did not disturb that man. With some candle wicking soaked in coal oil to light and throw inside, so that we could see within while he could not see outside, we would have managed it, but we had none. It was a method much used later.

From the expression "it was a method much used later" we derive a confession that the Browns continued in the horse stealing business.

Upon the number of horses that Brown expected to get as a result of the murder of seven men, depends this interesting problem in his psychology: his estimate of the value of a human life in terms of horses. In the case of the Doyles, he took three lives and got, probably, eight or ten

horses; but the whole number of horses taken will never be known unless Salmon Brown, or some one who has his confidence, should decide to reveal it.

"The Shermans," Bondi says, "had amassed considerable property by robbing cattle droves and emigrant trains."[135] They lived at a "crossing" of the Pottawatomie, and were buyers and traders in horses, oxen, and cattle passing over the trail. "Crossings" are usually camping places for emigrants and drovers; and at such locations lame, footsore, or otherwise unserviceable stock, can be, frequently, bought or traded for at a very profitable margin in favor of the trader. Travelers must either sell or abandon their lame stuff, and replace it with serviceable animals, or lie over and wait until such animals get in condition to travel. The trader not being compelled to trade, names the price he will pay, or the terms upon which he will exchange good stuff for bad. [Pg 113] When the stock which he buys is recuperated, he sells it for a good profit to other travelers, or to immigrants who locate in his neighborhood. In this way the Shermans, William and Henry, had accumulated wealth in horses and cattle; and since there was then much travel on the trail, they may have had on hand at that time, from twenty-five to forty or fifty horses.[136]

The importance of exchanging the Pottawatomie horses immediately, and getting them out of the country was a high card in Brown's play. If he and his gang had been caught with their murdered neighbors' horses in their possession the next morning, there would not have been any sophistical discussion fifty years after about how the "killings on the Pottawatomie" could be "justified"; or about Brown's "sudden impulses"; or of his altruistic convictions that it was necessary to "*remove*" anybody. The men of that outraged neighborhood, regardless of party affiliation, would have promptly hanged the outlaws. But the robbers were too deep for them. The neighbors lost the trail of the robbers and murderers; also, they lost the trail of the Browns.

The horror of these murders, aggravated by the brutal mutilation of the bodies of the victims, seems to have shocked that community into a condition of semi-insensibility. In a lot of resolutions adopted at a public meeting of citizens at Osawatomie, on the 27th, "denouncing the murders"; the motive prompting the crime, *the theft of the horses owned by the victims*, is not referred to. It is probable that the Osawatomie people, who drew the resolutions, did not then know that any horses had been stolen. At any rate, these resolutions came to be regarded as the public or official announcement of what had occurred; and since they contained no reference to any robbery, in connection with the murders, the public was thus, unintentionally, led to believe [Pg 114] that the assassinations were acts of partisan warfare; a killing of obnoxious pro-slavery men by unknown, but over zealous Free-State men. The resolutions are as follows:[137]

> *Whereas*, an outrage of the darkest and foulest nature has been committed in our midst by some midnight assassins unknown, who have taken five of our citizens at the hour of midnight, from their homes and families, and murdered and mangled them in the most awful manner; to prevent a repetition of these deeds, we deem it necessary to adopt some measures for our mutual protection and to aid and assist in bringing these desperadoes to justice. Under these circumstances we propose to act up to the following resolutions:
>
> *Resolved*, that we will repudiate and discountenance all organized bands of men who leave their homes for the avowed purpose of exciting others to acts of violence, believing it to be the duty of all good disposed citizens to stay at home during these exciting times and protect and if possible restore the peace and harmony of the neighborhood; furthermore we will discountenance all armed bodies of men who may come amongst us from any other part of the Territory or from the States unless said parties come under the authority of the United States.
>
> *Resolved*, That we pledge ourselves, individually and collectively, to prevent a recurrence of a similar tragedy and to ferret out and hand over to the criminal authorities the perpetrators for punishment.
>
> C. H. Price, President }
> R. Golding, Chairman }
> R. Gilpatrick }
> W. C. McDow } Committee
> S. V. Vandaman }
> A. Castele }
> John Blunt }
>
> H. H. Williams, Secretary

The pillage and burning of Lawrence put the killings upon a war basis. They were supposed to [Pg 115] have been a war measure, instead of a case of horse stealing; and, instead of the Browns *et al.* being hanged for their crimes, as they would have been, by common consent, as undesirable citizens, partisan spirit and sectional sentiment soon rallied in their behalf and not only condoned their horrible crimes, but, in time, approved of the murders, and recognized Brown as among the foremost defenders of the Free-State cause. At a meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society in Lawrence December 19, 1859, Governor Robinson said:

> It made no difference whether he (Brown) raised his hand or otherwise (at Pottawatomie); he was present aiding and advising to it and did not attempt to stop the bloodshed, and is, of course, responsible, though justifiable, according to his understanding of affairs.

Robinson also stated at this meeting that he himself thought the murders justifiable at the time.

> The Anti-Slavery Society, after the discussion, voted that the murders were not unjustifiable, and that they were performed from the sad necessity ... to defend the lives and liberty of the settlers of that region.[138]

Governor Robinson further said on February 5, 1878:

> I never had much doubt that Captain Brown was the author of the blow at Pottawatomie, for the reason that he was the only man who comprehended the situation, and saw the absolute necessity of some such blow and had the nerve to strike it.

The character of Charles Robinson is evidence that if he had known, at this time, that the murders on the Pottawatomie had been committed in the promotion of robbery, instead of resulting from a supposed spasm of patriotic resentment, provoked by the sack and burning of Lawrence, he would not have declared them justifiable.

In the light of these occurrences, the student of history may readily solve the enigmas involved in [Pg 116] Brown's letter of April 7th and in Henry Thompson's reference to his relation with Brown's plans: *until school is out*. He finds in them a logical reason for the disbanding of the "Liberty Guards"; for the organization of the Pottawatomie Rifles; and for Brown's desire that the slave-power should not "cease from its acts of aggression." These preliminary acts are in harmony with, and form a part of his general plan for a "sudden coup" on the Pottawatomie.

The evidence is complete that the theft of the horses was the part to be performed by Brown in this comprehensive scheme. His crime cannot be excused or justified upon any pretext of supposed conditions or of supposed circumstances. A condition of profound peace was prevailing throughout the entire Territory when he laid his plans for this assault upon his neighbors. The settlers in the region south of Douglas County were living in a state of amity and neighborly interdependence; so much so that Jason Brown and the members of the Pottawatomie Rifles, who started to go to Lawrence, and who expected to be absent for an indefinite period of time, deemed it safe to leave their families and their property in the care of, or at the mercy of these same pro-slavery neighbors. Neither can the crime be justified upon the ground that the robbery and the attendant murders were acts of partisan or guerrilla warfare. Such warfare is conducted in the open, with the knowledge and approval of the side to which the guerrillas belong; there is no secrecy concerning their operations. But Brown robbed and murdered in the night for his personal gain; and sought by secretly exchanging the loot to hide his identity therewith from the world, and denied his participation in the crime to shield himself from the wrath of his outraged friends and neighbors. Neither can Brown's crime be compared to the execution of undesirable persons by vigilance committees, as some have attempted to do. The swift vengeance of such [Pg 117] committees falls upon criminals—persons whose existence in a community is a menace to public order and safety; it is exercised by reputable persons whose social and commercial interests are involved; and in a public or semi-public manner, and after notice has been served upon the offensive persons. It is simply monstrous to conceive of a vigilance committee secretly murdering well-to-do citizens—heads of families, engaged in legitimate occupations; and then stealing their property and dividing it up among themselves. Yet such is the logic of that comparison.

Also, it is gratuitous to assert that the persons who were killed were disreputable. Wilkinson was the local postmaster, and was, when assassinated, a member of the Territorial Legislature; the Sherman brothers were successful horse dealers and stock men. Concerning the Doyles, notwithstanding the efforts which have been made to defame them, they seem to have been decent, respectable, well-to-do settlers. Of them Mr. Eli Moore of Lawrence, Kansas, says:

> William Doyle and his sons were good and desirable citizens. In 1854-55 the elder Doyle and his oldest son were contractors for building the mission houses at Miami, Missouri. I never knew more quiet and industrious men. I was with them almost daily for a year and never heard either of them utter a word of politics.[139]

They were not "poor whites" as has been recently said.[140] If they had been poor; if they had not owned a lot of good horses, they would not have been murdered. The desperado always appeared upon the fringe of our advancing settlements; but he was neither a settler nor a home builder. The men who were murdered and robbed had taken claims, had built homes, and were living peaceably and honorably in them. They did not in their lives exhibit the characteristics of the desperado, but their assassins measure up to the part. They had no homes; they were not [Pg 118] cultivating the fertile soil of eastern Kansas; they had abandoned their claims and were living upon their wits; they were floaters who intended to leave the neighborhood. These men wore the brands which distinguish the desperado; they carried "slung-shots";[141] they were swearing, swaggering bullies[142]—"rough-necks"—who infested that border and preyed upon the home builders.

In the preface to his great book, Mr. Villard states that "to Salmon Brown and Henry Thompson is due his ability to record for the first time the exact facts as to the happenings on the Pottawatomie." It is evident that he was imposed upon by these principals in the "happenings"; for it is unfair to suppose that he would withhold the facts from his publication if he had correct information in his possession concerning them. He has written voluminously, and in a scholarly manner about this episode, and has shown the inconsistency of a part of the brood of fallacies which were conjured, and put forth as motives justifying Brown's conduct therein; but he has not added any valuable fact to the narrative that was given out by Mr. Townsley concerning it.

Mr. Townsley withheld the facts relating to the robbery and the exchanging of the horses through confederates, for the personal reason that he did not desire to incriminate himself as a horse thief. Salmon Brown and Henry Thompson had greater reasons for withholding from Mr. Villard, and from the public, the damning evidence of the brutal selfishness of this crime. It was theirs rather to guard, *jealously guard* their father's fame and to defend his memory; and not to betray it by giving up facts that would disclose the secret of his and of their own dishonor. Statements made by criminals, concerning their criminality, are not usually true. It is well enough to get such statements, but it is the safer way not to attach much importance to them. These men were not [Pg 119] credible witnesses. John Brown, himself, was a very unreliable witness upon any question wherein his personal interests were involved; and was especially so in relation to this incident; and these two men, as witnesses in their own behalf, continually denied having any knowledge of the facts herein, until Townsley gave out the secret of their complicity with the murders. Salmon Brown wrote December 27, 1859:[143]

> Dear Sir: Your letter to my mother was received to-night. You wish me to give you the facts in regard to the Pottawatomie execution, or murder, and to know whether my father was a participant in the act. I was one of the company at the time of the homicide, and never away from him one hour at a time after we took up arms in Kansas; therefore, I say positively, that he was not a participator in the deed,—although I should think none the less of him if he had have been there; for it was the grandest thing that was ever done in Kansas. It was all that saved the Territory from being overrun with drunken land-pirates from the Southern States. That was the first act in the history of Kansas which proved to the demon of Slavery that there was as much room to give blows as to take them. It was done to save life and to strike terror through their wicked ranks.
>
> Yours respectfully,
> Salmon Brown.

Criminals who are tried and judged upon testimony furnished by themselves are usually acquitted. In this important case it is unfortunate that the distinguished author accepted the statements which these men made to him, as being the whole truth, and that he certified them to the public and wrote them into history as the exact facts therein.

Salmon Brown and Henry Thompson could not fructify the desert, but they held the secrets of the Pottawatomie, and if they had revealed them to Mr. Villard instead of practicing a deception upon [Pg 120] him, he would have written the history of the tragedy differently.

But Mr. Villard was zealous in a quest for evidence that would sustain the conception of the character of John Brown which he desired to establish for him in history: a "complex character," which only those can understand who hold a chart upon the mysteries of the soul. He said:[144]

> How may the killings on the Pottawatomie, this terrible violation of the statute and the moral laws, be justified? This is the question that has confronted every student of John Brown's life since it was definitely established that Brown was, if not actually a principal in the crime, an accessory and an instigator.

It thus appears that it was not historical facts that he sought, but evidence that would counteract the force of the historical facts already existing. It was a partisan zeal that led him to seek the testimony of partisans.

To obtain a true understanding of John Brown, the man, the student of his life must take up the threads of history that lead to the character making incident of May 24th. Mr. Villard concedes this[145] but he made no effort to gather them up. In a chapter of more than thirty pages, under the title, "The Captain of the Liberty Guards," he refers only to the organization of the company, and to Brown's two days' service with it at Lawrence—December 7th and 8th, 1855. The disorganization and abandonment of this company by Brown in the spring of 1856, is of far greater significance in this history than the organization of it. In honor, as "Captain of the Liberty Guards in the Fifth Regiment Kansas Volunteers," John Brown first received the historic title of "Captain," and *in dishonor he abandoned* his commission three months later.

Back of every human action there is that which incites the action, that which determines the choice or moves the will. There was that back of the actions of John Brown, and of his sons and [Pg 121] confederates, that moved them to do what they did on the night of the 24th of May, 1856; this inciting force was *motive*.

John Brown had a motive for disbanding the *Liberty Guards*. What was it? He had a motive for quitting the Free-State army secretly. Why secretly? He had "no desire all things considered, that the slave-power should cease from its acts of aggression." Why should he not desire peace? He had a purpose in view when he organized the Pottawatomie Rifles under the command of his son, and a motive for organizing five of his sons into a separate company: "a little company by ourselves." What were the purposes? He wrote to his wife that he contemplated leaving the neighborhood, but did not tell her when he would leave, or why he expected to leave, or where he intended to go. What motive prompted him to conceal from her the facts in relation to a subject in which she was so intimately concerned? The matters referred to here are "stones" that have lain in the path of this history for more than fifty years which have not heretofore been turned over. Salmon Brown and Henry Thompson could have answered all these questions correctly if they had been asked so to do. Also, they could have cleared the atmosphere of the Pottawatomie of the mockeries relating thereto, and of its glamour, which have been foisted upon the public as history; and could have given to Mr. Villard and to the public the exact facts concerning the

robberies, and brutal tragedies. It was the duty of Brown's historians to take up these matters and to make clear interpretations of them. But, because of his personal pledge of fidelity to the subject, it was especially incumbent upon the author of *Fifty Years After*, to make known the facts that these "stones" were in the record, and to turn them over; and with an analysis characteristic of his distinguished ability, make clear the essential truths which they covered; for without a clear appreciation of them "a true understanding of Brown, the man, cannot be [Pg 122] reached." This he has not done; but has elected to conceal these motive interpreting incidents from further historical research. He has excluded from history the facts relating to this period of Brown's life. It may be said of this biographer, that having determined to issue a certificate of altruism for John Brown, he did not wish to take up these threads of history and follow them to their logical sequence; because they lead, unerringly, to the robberies and the murders which the Browns intended to commit; and expose, in the character of his hero, the extremity of selfishness.

None of Brown's biographers has found it convenient to explain or to comment upon his letters of April 7th and June 16th, although the first contains a personal statement that he intended to do something of a dangerous nature, and the latter a similar statement concerning dangerous things which he had done. In their treatment of the Pottawatomie incident they have written without regard to the restrictions and limitations contained in these authenticated papers relating to the subject. Mr. Redpath chose to proceed along the lines of the least resistance. He suppressed both of these letters; denied that Brown had anything to do with the incident; and upon the "authority of two witnesses" stated that "he was on Middle Creek twenty-five miles distant, at the time."

Mr. Sanborn published both letters; made no comment upon the letter of April 7th, and, concerning the letter of June 26th said:[146]

> This is all that Brown says in his letter about the events of that night in May when the Doyles were executed. Doubtless his text the next morning was from the Book of Judges: "Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Lord had said unto him; and so it was that he did it by night. And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold the altar of Baal was cast down. And they said one to [Pg 123] another, Who hath done this thing? And when they inquired and asked, they said, Gideon, the son of Joash, hath done this thing."

By this expedient he placed the responsibility for the murders and the robbery upon the broad shoulders of the Almighty, and presented the incident to the public as an interesting exhibit in theological, metaphysical, and psychological phenomena. He called the murders executions and said that the victims "were first tried and found guilty; given time to pray; and were then executed."

Following the example of James Redpath, Mr. Villard suppressed the letter of April 7th; and in view of his disregard for the statements which Brown made in the letter of June 26th, he might as well have suppressed that letter also. In it Brown reveals the fact that the band that executed the Pottawatomie horror was already organized when the alarm bells rang out from Lawrence. He says that he and his sons "were a little company by ourselves. On our way to Lawrence we learned that it had been already destroyed, and we camped with John's company over night. Next day our little company left and we stopped and searched three men." This language certifies that Brown's party moved independently of the Pottawatomie Rifles, and that the camping "over night" with "John's company" was but an incident of their march; it certifies also that they were highwaymen—robbers.

When men who have banded together during a time of peace, subsequently commit acts of robbery, persons naturally suppose that they united for the purpose of committing such acts, and that the motives prompting them were selfish. So in this case. If Mr. Villard had admitted that Brown organized his little company as early as April, 1856, persons would think that the men composing the company united to do the things which they afterward did do; and that the motives prompting Brown and his sons to hold up and search men, on the 23d, and to steal these [Pg 124] horses, were selfish. Therefore, he decided to rewrite this bit of history, and change the time of the organization of Brown's company, and make it appear that it was formed on May 23d, under the popular excitement and indignation existing on that day, that had been aroused by the Lawrence outrage; and that the criminal acts included the murders only, and that they were committed the next day, before the excitement had cooled; thus making it possible for him to assume that the motives prompting these murders were unselfish. Contradicting what Brown said in his letter of June 26th, relating to the time when his band was organized, Mr. Villard makes the following remarkable statement:[147]

> About noon, May 23, John Brown selected for his party Henry Thompson, Theodore Weiner, and four sons, Owen, Frederick, Salmon and Oliver.

The author herein could not otherwise than have known that this statement was a contradiction of the truth, a falsification of the record, and a perversion of history. It is a clear contradiction of a vital point in the authenticated record concerning the history of the organization of this historic company. It is a direct assault upon an established historical fact.

Following this statement the author proceeds to repeat the fictions, theretofore put forth, concerning the grinding of the sabres for the party, and of the publicity given to the preparations for leaving the camp, and of the departure of the expedition "with the shouts of their comrades ringing in their ears." And, in support of this perversion of history he publishes an illogical, and scurrilous statement prepared for the purpose by Salmon Brown.[148]

Secrecy was characteristic of all Brown's planning. To the Gileadites he had written: "Let no man

appear upon the ground unequipped or with his weapons exposed to view. Your plans must be known only to yourself." Brown's expedition herein had for its object the accomplishment of an atrocity, conspicuous for its cowardice and selfish brutality; a crime that involved the honor, as well as the lives, of every person who was connected with it. The grinding of sabres usually signifies an intention to cut somebody to death. The men of this party intended to murder their victims quietly with swords; and had planned, long before the date of this supposed occasion, how to conceal their connection with the cutting, and therefore did not thus advertise their undertaking. There was no "enthusiasm" in the camp of the Pottawatomie Rifles two days later, when a messenger "came tearing into it,—his horse panting and lathered with foam,—and without dismounting yelled out: 'Five men have been killed on Pottawatomie Creek, butchered and most brutally mangled, and old John Brown has done it.'"[149] No "cheering," such as "you never heard," greeted this announcement. There was excitement, but not the "wild excitement" and enthusiasm of victory. There were no cheers for John Brown and his "avengers." There was, however, the deeper excitement of indignation and resentment against the tribe of Browns. Instead of adopting resolutions and presenting them to Captain John Brown, Jr., congratulating him upon the prompt and splendid achievements of his father's expedition, a drum-head court martial was convened in the camp of the Pottawatomie Rifles, which stripped him of his command and dismissed him in disgrace from the company; First Lieutenant H. H. Williams being elected captain to succeed him. Jason Brown said:

> This information caused great excitement and fear among the men of our company and a feeling arose against John and myself that led the men all to desert us.[150]

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If Jason Brown, "whose hatred of blood-letting had deprived him of his fathers confidence," when violent deeds were under way,[151] "had devoted" himself to sharpening the cutlasses in John's camp May 23d, as stated by Mr. Villard,[152] he would have known that "blood-letting" was to ensue; and the news that blood had been shed, would not have come to him as a shock—"'the worst shock' that ever came to him in his life."[153] Nor would he have "tremblingly" *demanded* of his father on the night of the 25th: "Did you have anything to do with the killing of those men on the Pottawatomie?" For he would not only have known that there were to be killings, and who were to be killed, but he would have been a party to them, and to the robbery. He would have known all about what was to happen. But to his eternal credit let it be said that his father and brothers had not taken him into their confidence in this matter. Townsley, in his confession, said nothing about the calling for volunteers, and the grinding of sabres, although it is probable that his connection with Brown's scheme began on May 23d, as he stated.

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There were suspicious circumstances which tended to incriminate the Brown party; but the facts that the horses which were stolen had been run out of the country, while the Browns remained in the neighborhood, and did not have the murdered men's horses in their possession, were potent in allaying these suspicions, and gave them an opportunity to deny their guilt. But if the sensational scenes of calling for volunteers for a hostile purpose, and the sharpening of their sabres had actually occurred, they would have had no possible defense. This evidence would have connected them directly with the crime, and it would have been published immediately upon the return of the resentful Pottawatomie Rifles to their homes at Osawatomie and on the Pottawatomie. Whereas the resolutions adopted at the mass-meeting of citizens at Osawatomie May 27th, refer to "midnight assassins unknown;" and on May 31st, Mr. James H. Carruth wrote to the Watertown (New York) *Reformer*:

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> ... It was murder nevertheless and the Free-State men here co-operate with the pro-slavery men in endeavoring to arrest the murderers.

In his statement of the facts as to the happenings on the Pottawatomie, Mr. Villard makes one sole reference to the robberies that happened. It is, that when Owen Brown had been denounced by his uncle, the Rev. Mr. Adair of Osawatomie, on the 26th, as a "vile murderer," and was refused admission to his home, that "he rode away on one of the murdered men's horses." Except for this and another incidental reference to theft, the reader of *Fifty Years After* would not be informed that any robbery had been committed; and even this statement is artfully written. It is incorrect and misleading. It conceals a thread in this history which would, if exposed, unmask the selfishness that prompted this crime: Owen Brown rode away on one of the "fast Kentucky horses" which John Brown received *in exchange* for the "murdered men's horses."

Mr. Villard assumes that Brown's motives for committing the murders herein, and stealing these horses, were unselfish; a grace that should logically apply to the swaggering, swearing infidels whom he directed. In a summary of his conclusions he says:[154]

> Fired with indignation at the wrongs he witnessed on every hand, impelled by the Covenanter's spirit that made him so strange a figure in the nineteenth century, and believing fully that there should be an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, he killed his men in the conscientious belief that he was a faithful servant of Kansas and of the Lord. He killed not to kill, but to free; not to make wives widows and children fatherless, but to attack on its own ground the hideous institution of human slavery, against which his whole life was a protest. He pictured himself a modern crusader as much empowered to remove the unbeliever as any armoured searcher after the Grail. It was to his mind a righteous and necessary act; if he concealed his part in it and always took refuge in half-truth that his own hands were not stained, that was as near to a compromise for the sake of policy as this rigid, self-denying Roundhead ever came. Naturally a tender-hearted man, he

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directed a particularly shocking crime without remorse, because the men killed typified to him the slave-drivers who counted their victims by the hundreds. It was to him a necessary carrying into Africa of the war in which he firmly desired himself engaged. And always it must not be forgotten that his motives were wholly unselfish, and that his aims were none other than the freeing of a race. With his ardent, masterful temperament, he needed no counsel from a Lane or a Robinson to make him ready to strike a blow, or to tell him that the time for it had come. The smoke of burning Lawrence was more than sufficient.

From the point of view of ethics, John Brown's crime on the Pottawatomie cannot be successfully palliated or excused. It must ever remain a complete indictment of his judgment and wisdom; a dark blot upon his memory; a proof that, however self-controlled, he had neither true respect for the laws nor for human life, nor a knowledge that two wrongs never make a right. Call him a Cromwellian trooper with the Old Testament view of the way of treating one's enemies, as did James Freeman Clarke, if you please; it is nevertheless true that Brown lived in the nineteenth century and was properly called upon to conform to its standard of morals and right living.

For John Brown no pleas can be made that will enable him to escape coming before the bar of historical judgment. There his wealth of self-sacrifice, and the nobility of his aims, do not avail to prevent a complete condemnation of his bloody crime at Pottawatomie, or a just penalty for his taking human life without warrant or authority. If he deserves to live in history, it is not because of his cruel, gruesome, reprehensible acts on the Pottawatomie, but despite them. [Pg 129]

Conceptions of the distinguishing traits in Brown's character are widely divergent; a divergence not attributable to a "blind prejudice." Those who knew him best did not have the exalted opinions of the nobility of his aims, or of the sublimity of his humanity, that inspired his eulogists and biographers. Prominent among the dissenters was John Brown himself. As late as March 31, 1857, he did not personally understand that what he had been doing in Kansas was either sentimental, patriotic, or romantic. It had not occurred to him that he had been impelled by the covenanters spirit, or that he was a crusader, either ancient or modern. On that date, replying to a letter that he had received from his wife, in which she informed him that "his sons were now inclined to give up war and remain at North Elba," he said:[155]

I have only to say as regards the resolution of the boys to "learn and practice war no more," that it was not at my solicitation that they engaged in it at first; and that while I may perhaps feel no more love of the business than they do, still I think there may be in their day what is more to be dreaded if such things do not now exist.

Judged in the light of what has been already shown concerning Brown's activities, this letter is fatal to any theory that he was instigated by other than sordid motives when he engaged in his course of crime. So judged it is an acknowledgment by himself that what he and his sons had been engaged in, in Kansas, was "*business*," simply business. Also, that it was disreputable; and he sought to absolve himself from any responsibility for their participation therein, by denying that it was at his solicitation "that they engaged in it at first." By the declaration that what he had been doing was repulsive to him, John Brown discredits every altruistic theory which has been put forth in extenuation of his crimes, or in justification of his actions. It is evidence that it was [Pg 130] his hands, and not his heart, that were enlisted in his operations. A man inspired by the righteousness of a cause is not moved to make apology for having invited others to engage in it with him. If he had believed that in these murders and robberies he had been acting as a faithful servant of Kansas, and of the Lord, he would have proudly asserted his conviction, and would have defended his conduct upon the high grounds of duty, loyalty, and humanity.

Mr. Geo. B. Gill was one who knew Brown better than any of his panegyrists knew him—Mr. Sanborn not excepted. Upon him he practiced no hypocritical pretensions. He was honored by Brown with a place in his cabinet, as secretary of the treasury, under the "Provisional Government of the United States," which he organized in Canada in 1858; and was one of the generals, in embryo, who was to command the Army of the Invasion. In a letter (not heretofore published)[156] written from Milan, Kansas, July 7, 1893, to Colonel Robert J. Hinton, author of *John Brown and His Men*, Mr. Gill expressed, confidentially, his opinion of Brown's personality. He said:

My dear friend:

It seems that all great men have their foibles or what we in our differences from them call their weaknesses. "A man is never a hero to his valet" and I am about to give you an expression of truthfulness which I have never given to any one yet.... I admit that I am sadly deficient as a God or hero worshipper.... And the man who may do his fellows the most good may be far from the goody-goody, but may be personally absolutely offensive.

My intimate acquaintance with Brown demonstrated to me that he was very human; the angel wings were so dim and shadowy as to be almost unseen. Very superstitious, very selfish and very intolerant, with great self esteem.... He could not brook a rival. At first he was very fond of Montgomery, but when he found that [Pg 131] Montgomery had thoughts of his own, and could not be dictated to, why, he loved

him no longer. Montgomery, Lane and all others went down before his imperial self. He was intolerant in little things and in little ways, for instance, his drink was tea, others wanted coffee. He would wrangle and compel them to drink tea or nothing, as he was cook and would not make coffee for them. I had it from Owen in a quiet way and from other sources in quite a loud way that in his family his methods were of the most arbitrary kind.... I have known Stevens to sometimes raise merry hell when the old man would get too dictatorial. He was iron and had neither sympathy or feeling for the timid or weak of will. Notwithstanding claims to the contrary, he was essentially vindictive in his nature. Just before we left Kansas, during a trip that Brown and myself were some days away from the rest, the boys arrested a man. (I think by the name of Jackson.) Montgomery gave him a trial and he was released by general consent as not meriting punishment. When we returned Brown was furious because the man had not been shot.... It seems hard and cruel in me to tell you of Brown's individuality as I have told you, yet it seemed to me that you, perhaps the last writer on the theme, should know all, whether it be any use to you or not....

Yours truly,
GEORGE B. GILL.

There is nothing in Mr. Gill's pen picture of John Brown that suggests to the mind a "misplaced Crusader," or a "self-denying Roundhead," a "Cromwellian trooper" or an "armored searcher for the Grail;" but there is that in it which does suggest a man of low instincts, trifling and contentious about little things; of a vindictive and quarrelsome disposition; inordinately selfish, inhuman and intolerant. It is for the reader to determine which of the two estimates of the man is entitled to credit.

In view of the facts presented herein, this much debated event in Brown's life cannot be considered, abstractedly, as a study in altruism; but as a premeditation in robbery, to which the murders were incidental. [Pg 132]

The movement to execute the Pottawatomie robbery began when Brown and his sons left their homes on the evening of May 21st, ostensibly to engage in the defense of Lawrence. They did not belong to the Pottawatomie Rifles. That was, says John Brown, the company of which "John was Captain" and to which Jason belonged. The six were "a little company by themselves." This party did not intend to go to Lawrence. They had matters of a personal nature to attend to. After camping "with John's company over night" they left his camp and retracing their steps, proceeded to a secluded spot, about a mile from the scene of their prospective operations; where they remained thirty hours, awaiting, doubtless, the arrival of their confederates with the northern horses. The owners of the horses that were to be stolen stood in the pathway of the thieves and they thrust them aside in death. If Brown and his band "killed these men in the conscientious belief that they were faithful servants of the Lord and of Kansas," then they stole these horses in the same exalted inspiration. The theft of the horses cannot be put in harmony with any theory of either patriotism or humanity. The *murders* have been defended, quite successfully, from a spiritual point of view; but there is nothing spiritual in horse-trading, nor is there anything in horse-stealing which appeals to the tender susceptibilities of our nature, or to the refinements of life. It is impossible, by any contortions of the imagination, to conceive of anything æsthetic, altruistic, or spiritual being connected with a horse trade wherein all the horses involved in the trade have been stolen, and the trade is being made between the thieves, even though some of the thieves be murderers. The event herein was a plain case of murder and robbery, deliberately planned and executed under most revolting circumstances. "Murder is murder" and robbery is robbery, therefore this combining incident cannot be accepted as an exhibit in metaphysics. The victims of these men were not murdered and their horses taken in behalf of Kansas and of the Lord, but for the exclusive benefit of the Browns and their associates in the crime; they were not moved to "murder these men and boys" by any "sudden overpowering impulse" excited by the spectacle of burning Lawrence; but by a brutal desire to get possession of their horses. Brown was impatient of the cruel fortune that kept him, as he tersely stated it, "like a toad under a harrow," and he determined to break asunder the chains that bound him within his environment of poverty, and to seek relief from their fetters in a life of crime; a decision due to "an outgrowth of his restlessness and the usual desire of the bankrupt for a sudden coup to restore his fortune." [Pg 133]

If the robbery on the Pottawatomie were undertaken and executed in behalf of the Free-State cause, then all the horses which the Browns stole during the time they remained in Kansas, were stolen from motives of patriotism and humanity. The term "attacking slavery" was a joke in the vocabulary of these bandits. The theft of a horse was spoken of, wittily, as an "attack upon slavery" or as "fighting for freedom."

On page 122 Mr. Villard stoutly says: "Where John Brown was, he led." Did he lead in these midnight murders? Were his methods and conduct throughout this bloody affair those of a hero inspired by a devotion to humanity and by the nobility of his aims; or were they characteristic of the assassin and thief, who kills and robs under cover of the night and hides his identity by flight? In view of his actions as set forth herein, it is violently illogical to suppose that in planning to murder these settlers and steal their horses, Brown's motives were unselfish; and that he was moved by the higher impulses of altruism. Yet such are the assumptions of his biographers.

A public sentiment in sympathy with "the men in bondage," and excited by the fierce storm of sectional animosity prevailing during the later fifties, created, of John Brown, an altruistic hero; and his biographers have been diligent and successful in perpetuating the fiction. When these [Pg 134]

murders were committed, had the public known that they were executed in promoting the robbery of these settlers; and that Brown and his sons were a band of thieves, working jointly with another party of thieves; and that they intended to continue their thieving operations while they remained in the Territory; the metamorphosis of John Brown, the criminal into John Brown, the hero, would have been impossible. History would have dealt differently with him.

CHAPTER VI

[Pg 135]

BLACK JACK

There is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads on to fortune.

—Julius Caesar, act iv

The tide in Free-State sentiment was soon to flow strongly in Brown's favor. He had wisely deferred the execution of his "sudden coup" on the Pottawatomie, until a time when public attention would be distracted from a close observance and inquiry into his actions. In the flames of burning Lawrence he saw the fruition of his hopes. The storm of passion awakened by the outrages there, swept by the malignant winds of revenge, spread and lighted the fires of partisan spirit and partisan hate in the hearts of the Free-State men, to the borders of the remotest prairie. They were aroused and united in their common cause, as never before, and were prepared not only to condone any outrages that might be committed upon pro-slavery men, but to approve of them. In this spirit they received the news of the "murder on the Pottawatomie" and congratulated the murderers. But when Brown won his victory over Captain Pate at Black Jack and humiliated that boasting aggravation of border ruffianism, they went wild in their enthusiasm for him and his name was upon every tongue. The criminal of the age became the hero of the hour. Had Brown sought to serve the cause of Freedom, and to engage the forces of slavery at "close quarters," he would have been carried to leadership upon the crest of the wave of Free-State enthusiasm which then swept over the Territory. But such was neither his intention nor his ambition. It was sordid gain which he sought—that, and that only. Free booty, and not Free [Pg 136] Kansas, was the slogan in the Brown camp.

May 26th Brown received some reënforcements. August Bondi and A. O. Carpenter joined the band. Bondi was a member of the Pottawatomie Rifles; also, he was an associate with Benjamin. Carpenter, it is said, knew of a safe hiding place. The retreat to which he invited the party was in a secluded ravine, opening into Ottawa Creek bottom, in the vicinity of Palmyra, some twenty miles northward. The flight of the Browns, during the night of the 26th, from their concealment on Middle Creek, to the more secure hiding place on Ottawa Creek, is thus described by Mr. Bondi. He says:[157]

> There were ten of us—Captain Brown, Owen, Frederick, Salmon and Oliver Brown; Henry Thompson, Theodore Weiner, James Townsley, Carpenter and myself.... The three youngest men, Salman Brown, Oliver and I—rode without saddles. By order of Captain Brown, Fred Brown rode first, Owen and Carpenter next; ten paces behind them, Old Brown; and the rest of us behind him two and two....

It will be observed that the little company of six which was on foot on the 24th, was now mounted; and the fact that Bondi rode without a saddle, indicates that his mount was not his own property, but that it had been furnished by the Browns. It thus appears that they had seven horses in their possession, exclusive of the fast running horse in the hands of John Brown, Jr.

Another incident therein related reflects some historical light upon the state of Brown's mind at the time. Generally, the leader of such a party rides at the head of it. On this occasion Brown assigned to himself a position of safety in the line of march not consistent with the reputation he earned later as a fighter; or with the biographical axiom: "Where John Brown was, he led." Danger was imminent on the route of this column. But Brown did not lead. His conduct can only [Pg 137] be accounted for upon the hypothesis that a man cannot be a thief and a hero at the same time. The subject of personal safety, by *flight*, was uppermost in Brown's mind. His study was how to escape from the country with his booty. He was fleeing, under cover of the night, from the wrath of his fellow citizens, and from the officers of the law whom he suspected might be upon his trail. He was in the rôle of a thief, pure and simple, and he acted the part. June 1st, under very much altered circumstances, his conduct was different. Having been encouraged to fight, he had made an honorable alliance with Captain Shore, and had started from his hiding place to join him in a contemplated attack upon a party of Missourians, then in the vicinity, to effect the arrest of the Browns. This march is also described by Bondi:[158]

> Still in the best of spirits, and with our appetites still better, just whetted by a scant breakfast, we followed Captain Brown,—he alone remaining serious, and riding silent at our front.

Continuing his narrative of the all-night ride, Bondi says that about 4 o'clock on the morning of May 27th, they reached the secluded spot, on Ottawa Creek, which Carpenter had indicated as a safe place for camping; in the midst of a primeval wood, perhaps half a mile deep to the edge of the creek.

Whether by premeditation or otherwise, the party lost no time from the pursuit of the purposes of their organization. During the afternoon of that day they went to the store of Mr. J. M. Bernard, at St. Bernard, or Centropolis, and helped themselves to such goods as pleased their fancy; principally blankets and clothing, and, returning next day they carried away, practically, the remainder of the stock. The value of the goods taken amounted to probably $3,000.[159]

June 19, 1856, Mr. John Miller testified concerning the robbery of Mr. Bernard's store, as follows: [Pg 138]

> I was at St. Bernard on Tuesday, May 27th, 1856. I was in the store (J. M. Bernard's) with Mr. Davis. Whilst there a party of 13 men came to the store on horseback, armed with Sharp's rifles, revolvers and bowie knives. They inquired for Mr. Bernard. I told them he had gone to Westport. One of them said to me, "You are telling a God damn lie," and drew up his gun at me. They called for such goods as they wanted and made Mr. Davis and me hand them out and said if we didn't hurry they would shoot us—they had their guns ready. After they had got the goods they wanted—principally, blankets and clothing—they packed them upon their horses and went away.... On the next evening, a party of 14 men came to the store on horseback. Thirteen of the party I recognized as the same that came to the store the day before and the other man I knew—William S. Ewitt is his name—and who I know is a Free-State man. They had a wagon along with them. They came into the store each having his gun ready. Some carried goods and some put the goods in the wagon.... They also took away with them Mr. Bernard's two large horses and three saddles and two bridles and nearly all the provisions that were there—bacon and flour and other provisions. They asked Mr. Davis for all the money he had in the store. There were but 4 dollars in the drawer which he handed to them. When they first came they looked up at the sign and said they would like to shoot at the name.[160]

An incident of vast importance to John Brown occurred in his secure retreat. What he then needed above all other earthly things, was a friend who could and would create a diversion in his behalf and present his case in a favorable light to the world. Here he met James Redpath, a correspondent for the New York *Tribune*, and other newspapers. Redpath had come to interview Brown, and to get a story for the press. Just how Redpath happened to know that Brown was due [Pg 139] to arrive at that time, at that particular point on Ottawa Creek, is not publicly known; but he knew of it, and was there awaiting his arrival.[161] The location of Brown's hiding place was so well concealed that Captain Pate, in pursuit of the Browns northward, passed by without discovering it; and Redpath, notwithstanding he had explicit directions, lost his way and had difficulty in finding the place. His description of the camp is as follows:

> I shall not soon forget the scene that here opened to my view. Near the edge of the creek a dozen horses were tied, all ready saddled for a ride for life, or a hunt after southern invaders. A dozen rifles and sabres were stacked against the trees. In an open space, amid the shady and lofty woods, there was a great blazing fire with a pot on it; a woman, bareheaded, with an honest, sun-burnt face, was picking blackberries from the bushes; three or four armed men were lying on red and blue blankets on the grass; and two fine looking youths were standing, leaning on their arms, on guard near by. One of them was the youngest son of Old Brown, and the other was "Charley," the brave Hungarian, who was subsequently murdered at Osawatomie. Old Brown himself stood near the fire, with his shirt sleeves rolled up, and a large piece of pork in his hand. He was cooking a pig. He was poorly clad, and his toes protruded from his boots. The old man received me with great cordiality, and the little band gathered about me. But it was for a moment only, for the Captain ordered them to renew their work. He respectfully but firmly forbade conversation on the Pottawatomie affair, and said, that, if I desired any information from the company in relation to their conduct or intention, he, as their captain, would answer for them whatever it was proper to communicate.[162]

Redpath remained for an hour in Brown's camp, an hour of importance to Brown, the most [Pg 140] fortunate hour of his life. Redpath not only pledged to him his professional support, but assured him that the Free-State men would defend him, and promised to have the formidable "Stubbs" Rifle Company, armed with Sharp's rifles, march immediately to his relief. At the close of the interview he returned to Lawrence and began his vivid exploitation of Brown in the Territorial and Northern press. He succeeded in stemming the current of condemnation of the Pottawatomie murders which came sweeping up from Osawatomie, and turned the tide of Free-State opinion to Brown's advantage. He was thereafter Brown's foremost representative, and became his first and most lurid biographer.

While the incidents herein related were occurring in Brown's camp, the murderers of the pro-slavery men were being diligently sought for by voluntary pro-slavery partisans, as well as by the Territorial authorities. The flight of the Browns caused the finger of suspicion to point to them as the guilty persons; and when Captain Pate at the head of a party of Missourians came into the Osawatomie district, and found out what had happened there, he proceeded to carry off or burn all the available property of the Browns and their allies—Weiner and Bondi. He then followed the trail of the Browns and arrived in the vicinity of their camp on Ottawa Creek, May 31st. Brown, in the meantime, encouraged by the arrangements he had made with Redpath, and the prospect of substantial assistance, abandoned the idea of further flight and determined to fight, and if possible, capture his pursuers. With Pate's company of twenty-five men, there were as many

horses, and probably a dozen mules, besides arms, provisions, and other plunder; all of which looked good to the plunder band.

The Free-State men in that neighborhood had organized a military company, the "Prairie City Rifles." It was under the command of Captain S. T. Shore, and numbered eighteen men. Shore agreed to "mobilize" his company, and unite his force with Brown's party of ten, and to attack [Pg 141] Pate, by surprise, in his camp. An attack of this character upon undisciplined men, was practically certain of success. The command was given to Brown, and at daylight on the morning of June 2d, the combined forces opened fire upon the front and right flank of the astonished "invaders." The attack was creditable, especially to Brown, who planned it, and who preserved his poise, and displayed all the skill and courage necessary in such an engagement. He was fighting for his existence, and for spoils, and won the battle without loss of life on either side. After an hour or two of desultory firing, Pate surrendered unconditionally. The total casualties were four men wounded, two in Pate's command, and one each in Brown's and Shore's companies. Brown took possession of all Pate's horses and other property, and held his men as prisoners until June 5th, when Colonel E. V. Sumner, First United States Cavalry, arrived upon the scene and separated the belligerents. He restored to Pate his horses, and such other property belonging to him as he could find, and ordered all of the "companies" to disband and return to their homes.

In view of the losses sustained by the parties engaged in the battle, it seems as though the fighting was conducted along conservative lines. Brown's account of it to his wife reads as follows:

Near Brown's Station K.
T. June 1856.

Dear Wife and Children, Everyone:

... The cowardly mean conduct of Osawatomie and vicinity did not save them; for the ruffians came on them, made numerous prisoners, fired their buildings, and robbed them. After this a picked party of the Bogus men went to Brown's Station, burned John's and Jason's houses, and their contents to ashes; in which burning we have all suffered more or less. Orson and boy have been prisoners, but were soon set at liberty. They are well, and have not been seriously injured. Owen and I have just come here for the first time, to look at the ruins. All looks desolate and [Pg 142] forsaken—the grass and weeds fast covering up the signs that these places were lately the abodes of quiet families. After burning the houses, this selfsame party of picked men, some forty in number, set out as they supposed, and as was the fact, on the track of my little company, boasting, with awful profanity, that they would have our scalps. They however, passed the place where we were hid, and robbed a little town some four or five miles beyond our camp in the timber. I had omitted to say that some murders had been committed at the time Lawrence was sacked.

On learning that this party was in pursuit of us, my little company, now increased to ten in all, started after them in company of a Captain Shore, with eighteen men, he included (June 1). We were all mounted as we traveled. We did not meet them on that day, but took five prisoners, four of whom were their scouts, and well armed. We were out all night, but could find nothing of them until about six o'clock next morning, when we prepared to attack them at once, on foot, leaving Frederick and one of Captain Shore's men to guard the horses. As I was much older than Captain Shore, the principal direction of the fight devolved on me. We got to within about a mile of their camp before being discovered by their scouts, and then moved at a brisk pace, Captain Shore and men forming our left, and my company the right. When within about sixty rods of the enemy, Captain Shore's men halted by mistake in a very exposed situation and continued to fire, both his men and the enemy being armed with Sharpe's rifles. My company had no long shooters. We (my company) did not fire a gun until we gained the rear of a bank about fifteen or twenty rods to the right of the enemy, where we commenced, and soon compelled them to hide in a ravine. Captain Shore after getting one man wounded and exhausted his ammunition, came with part of his men to the right of my position, much discouraged. The balance of his men, including the one wounded, had left the ground. Five of Captain Shore's men came boldly down and [Pg 143] joined my company, and all but one man, wounded, helped to maintain the fight until it was over. I was obliged to give my consent that he should go after more help, when all his men left but eight, four of whom I persuaded to remain in a secure position, and there busied one of them in shooting the horses and mules of the enemy, which served for a show of fight. After the firing had continued for some two or three hours, Captain Pate with twenty-three men, two badly wounded, laid down their arms to nine men, myself included,—four to Captain Shore's men and four to my own. One of my men (Henry Thompson) was badly wounded, and after continuing his fire for an hour longer was obliged to quit the ground. Three others of my company (but not of my family) had gone off. Salmon was dreadfully wounded by accident, soon after the fight; but both he and Henry are fast recovering....[163]

I ought to have said that Captain Shore and his men stood their ground nobly in their unfortunate but mistaken position during the early part of the fight. I ought

to say further that a Captain Abbott, being some miles distant with a company, came onward promptly to sustain us, but could not reach us till the fight was over. After the fight numerous Free-State men who could not be got out before were on hand, and some of them I am ashamed to add, were very busy not only with the plunder of our enemies, but with our private effects, leaving us, while guarding our prisoners and providing in regard to them, much poorer than before the battle....

Your affectionate husband and father,
JOHN BROWN.

"Articles of Surrender" signed by Captains Brown, Shore, and Pate, and his lieutenant, W. B. Brockett, provided for an exchange of prisoners, stipulating that Brown's sons—John and Jason— [Pg 144] then prisoners, were to be exchanged for Pate and Brockett respectively. It also provided that the side arms of each person exchanged were to be returned, also the horses, "so far as practicable."

An important incident at Black Jack was the failure of the deputy United States marshal, Wm. J. Preston, to arrest the Browns. He had warrants for their arrest for the murders on the Pottawatomie, and came with Sumner to accomplish it. The Colonel notified Brown that they would be served in his presence, but when ordered by Sumner to proceed, the marshal said: "I do not recognize any one for whom I have warrants," to which the Colonel replied: "Then what are you here for?"[164] A man of Brown's years and experience and courage is a dangerous animal when thus situated. That a tragedy was impending is more than probable. At any rate, Preston quailed under the hostile look which Brown fixed upon him. What would have happened if the marshal had attempted to make the arrests, none can say, but Preston decided not to mix up in a tragedy.

Another incident in the affair of historical importance was the presence of John E. Cook, as a guest in Brown's camp. None of Brown's biographers has referred to this incident, but the fact appears in Cook's confession heretofore quoted from. It will be difficult for anyone to account for Cook's presence there, at that psychological moment, upon any hypothesis other than that he was there by virtue of an invitation from Brown, or other notice or understanding with him. It follows, presumptively, that this was not the first time they had met, and that they were mutually interested in the problem which Brown had under consideration: how to get away, safely, with the horses and mules which he had taken from Pate. The final clause of the last sentence in the "Articles of Surrender," foreshadows the possibility, or probability, that some of the horses might [Pg 145] be missing later on, and gives credit to the suspicion, or assumption, that Cook had come to the camp to run the stock off north and turn it into money, as had been done with the Pottawatomie horses. That the horses and mules herein were not run off immediately, and disposed of, was doubtless due to the negotiations that were pending for the liberation of Brown's sons. He probably thought that a theft of the horses would be construed as a violation of the terms of the surrender, and might prevent the exchange of prisoners that he hoped to effect. But whatever his hopes and his plans may have been, they were all dissipated and broken up by a fly that unexpectedly dropped into the ointment of his calculations: the arrival upon the scene of Sumner, with his cavalry. He spoiled everything. First he made Brown give back to Pate's men all the property he had taken from them, or as much of it as was visible, and then peremptorily ordered all the combatants to disband and return to their homes.

Sumner's orders bore lightly upon Captain Shore. It was a simple proposition for his men to "disband and return to their regular vocations." The presence of Pate and his band in the neighborhood was a menace to their peace and security; they had left their work, in response to a call from their captain, to unite in an effort to drive out the intruders; also they had behaved creditably, and were ready to return to their homes and to the congratulations which they were sure to receive from their Free-State neighbors on account of their victory. But with the Browns it was different. They were engaged in a different kind of business: the horse and general robbery business. They too had won a victory—a far greater victory than Shore's men. It was their personal fight which they had won. With Shore's assistance they had beaten and captured the posse that had come to arrest them for murder and robbery. They had fought for their lives—also for Pate's horses and mules. But they had no homes to which to go. They belonged to a different class of citizens—the undesirable class. They were outlaws against whom their [Pg 146] neighbors and relatives had closed their doors. Mr. Villard states[165] that on the evening of May 26th, John Brown, Jr., and Jason Brown were refused admittance into the house of their uncle, the Rev. Mr. Adair, near Osawatomie. He said to them, "Can't keep you here. Our lives are threatened. Every moment we expect to have our house burned over our heads." However, after assuring Mrs. Adair that they "did not have anything to do with the murders on the Pottawatomie" they were permitted to come in. But later that night, when Owen Brown sought admittance to his uncle's home, Mr. Adair refused even to parley with him, saying: "Get away, get away as quickly as you can! You endanger our lives. You are a vile murderer, a marked man!"

Bondi states that within an hour after Sumner ordered the companies to disband. Camp Brown had ceased to exist. The wounded Salmon (Thompson) was taken to Carpenter's cabin, nearby, and nursed by Bondi; the others, with Weiner, camped in a thicket about half a mile from the abandoned camp.[166] June 10th settlement was made with Weiner, and he left the country. It is probable that, at this date, the horses which were taken on the Pottawatomie had been sold; and that final settlement was then made between the Browns and Weiner, and their unknown confederates. Mr. Villard states that "on Thursday June 10, at a council held that day, it was

agreed to separate. Weiner had business in Louisiana. Henry Thompson [Salmon Brown] was also taken to Carpenter's cabin, and Bondi accompanied Weiner as far as Leavenworth."

This was the end of the first John Brown organization. The period of its active operations covered eighteen days, May 24th to June 10th. During this time they murdered five men; stole a lot of horses; made a big horse trade, exchanging the whole, or a part of the stolen horses; robbed a store; made an alliance with Captain Shore, and captured Pate's posse at Black Jack: a record of [Pg 147] strenuous activity, characteristic of the aggressive speculator who directed the movements.

The chapter of robbery and murder on the Pottawatomie, of which Brown's success over Pate at Black Jack was an incident, closes with the settlement herein stated and the dissolution of Brown's band June 10th. It further appears that John Brown and his unmarried sons quit the Territory late in July, en route to the east. Inquiry then, very properly turns to what Brown did during the fifty days intervening between these dates. In the case of an altruistic hero, a "leader of the Free-State Cause," such as the heralds proclaim Brown to have been, the public supposes, naturally, that he did something during these days of opportunity that was worthy of the great distinction with which he is credited. But to the question: WHAT *did he do*? history gives back no answer. The historical record of John Brown, except as to three days, July 2d to 4th, is a total blank. Even his "whereabouts" during these fifty days is, to the public, unknown. The history of those days of strenuous endeavor, shows clearly where Robinson was, and what he was doing. He was the Free-State Governor of the "State of Kansas," and was in jail, or in confinement, under indictment in the Territorial Court for "Constructive Treason." History shows where Lane was, and where Walker was, and where Sam, Woods, and Deitzler, and G. W. Brown and the others were, but not where John Brown was. His latest biographer dismisses the question as immaterial, with the following generalization:[167]

"Not until the beginning of July," he says, "did John Brown terminate this life in the bush and again become active. On July 2 he boldly entered Lawrence, and called upon the *Tribune* correspondent, William A. Phillips." Brown's object, in calling upon Phillips, was not to make a report of the public services which he had rendered during the thirty days preceding; but for the [Pg 148] purpose of having him publish a letter which he had written in reply to Captain Pate's report of the Black Jack affair—a personal matter between himself and Pate. It may be said that if Brown had done anything creditable during "this life in the bush" he would not have failed to report the fact to Phillips for publication, for he was vain. He did, however, the next best thing; he told Phillips what he *intended* to do: "That he was on his way to Topeka with his followers, to be on hand at whatever crisis might arise at the opening of the legislature." Continuing his remarks Mr. Villard says:

> How long John Brown remained at the Willets farm, near Topeka, to which he now proceeded, and where he spent the next two or three weeks, is not known. He neither entered Topeka, on the fateful July 4th, nor immediately thereafter. It is probable that he returned promptly to the neighborhood of his sick sons, more than ever disgusted with the Free-State leaders and their inability to adopt his view that the way to fight was "to press to close quarters."[168]

Since Brown is herein creditably reported to have "terminated this life in the bush and again become active," it is fair to inquire into the nature of the public service which he rendered during the period of activity thus auspiciously announced. Mr. Phillips gave out what Brown said he intended to do. But Mr. Villard states that he did not do that; and that there is no record of what he did do, or of where he went. It appears, then, that "the termination of the life in the bush" was not a termination of it at all; and that the period of his public activities "terminated" at the end of a night ride, on stolen horses, from Lawrence to the vicinity of Topeka. It may be worthy of note, that the above example of Brown's activity in public affairs is probably the shortest period of public activity by a hero, that has ever been dignified by historical record. Further: History does not sustain the statement that Brown "recruited his band" after the disbanding of it, June 10th. [Pg 149] There is no reason apparent why he should have enlarged it. He and his sons could operate more profitably than a larger party could, and with less risk of detection.

Brown was not a loafer: and he was not in idleness during the fifty days of his obscuration; neither was he fighting, "pressing to close quarters," for no fighting was being done during this time. Investigation, however, of the record and of the various admissions and statements subsequently made by his sons, discloses the facts that the activities in which they were engaged were merely akin, or similar to a state of warfare; that there was continuous "fighting," of a certain kind, where they were, and "trouble"; so much so that the sons, at least, had a surfeit of it, and were "tired" of the "business," and were anxious to quit it and leave the Territory.

Salmon Brown stated to Mr. Villard, that they left "because Lucius Mills insisted on the invalids being moved, and because they were a drag on the fighting men": and Henry Thompson affirmed that "he, Oliver, Owen and Salmon had had enough of Kansas. They did not wish to fight any more. They felt they had suffered enough; that the service which they had been called upon to perform at Pottawatomie squared them with duty. They were, they thought, entitled to leave further work to other hands. They were sick of the fighting and trouble."[169]

These statements show that there were violent actions somewhere, about something long after Black Jack; and that the invalids impeded the movements of the "fighting" men. But where this fighting took place, or what it was about, history is silent. Salmon Brown could tell all about the occurrences of these fifty days if he were disposed to do so. There is ample evidence, however, of the fact that the Browns led a stormy life during the days they are reported "unaccounted for." [Pg 150]

[170] The friendly mantle which the night spread over their actions, at the time, has not been lifted, but the actors therein have told enough to show that what they did do, was done at the peril of their lives; and was of such a character that at least one of the party, Lucius Mills, refused to take any part in it. For this, Mills lost caste with Brown "because he had no desire to fight, but played nurse and doctor while the others did the fighting."[171] But since there was no fighting anywhere in Kansas, we must conclude that they used the term "fighting" as a convenience, or as a witticism, and that it really means stealing horses; and that the Browns, while in hiding from the world at large, were still carrying on the business they commenced in the bloody tragedy on the Pottawatomie. Further evidence that they were horse thieves, appears in an incident which occurred when they were en route home, as related by Salmon Brown. He says:[172]

> "We other four bought a double buggy and harness from the Oberlin people, on credit at Tabor, drove to Iowa City, sold the horses, sent back the money to pay for the wagon, and all four went home. The horses for the double buggy we came by thus: we heard on the way through Nebraska, that some pro-slavery men were after us. Oliver, who was always a dare-devil, and William Thompson ambushed these men, deliberately turning aside for that purpose. The men, ordered off their horses, took it for a regular hold-up in force, and surrendered their animals. Oliver and William immediately jumped on and lit out for Tabor. It was these horses that took us across Iowa." The need of converting pro-slavery animals into good anti-slavery stock, was thus urgent with the Brown sons in peaceful placid Nebraska as it had been in bleeding Kansas.

This incident bears all the characteristics of the daring professional at work. It is not probable [Pg 151] that two lone Kansas pro-slavery men followed John Brown, who had become the Terror of the Territory, up into Free-State Nebraska. It is much more probable that the Browns held up two unsuspecting, unarmed, citizens of Nebraska, and took their horses. And, having taken them in this manner, it follows, more than logically, that they also stole the buggy and harness, to complete the outfit; for it would be quite impossible that two irresponsible young strangers, traveling through a country, could thus buy a "double buggy and harness on credit."

The Browns profited by their operations in Kansas. They did not grow rich during the short period of their outlawry, but they became prosperous in comparison with what their circumstances were before they became robbers. It will be remembered that Salmon Brown, when he was a homebuilder, was very poor. Mr. Villard has been quoted as saying that Brown and his sons "arrived in Kansas in all but destitute condition, with but sixty cents between them, to find the settlement in great distress." And Redpath said of Brown, when he met him in his camp May 30, 1856, "He was poorly clad, and his toes protruded from his boots." In contrast with these commercial ratings we have a report on Brown, as he appeared in Nebraska about August 1, 1856:[173]

> The Captain was riding a splendid horse and was in plain white summer clothing. He wore a large straw hat and was closely shaven. Everything about him was scrupulously clean. He made a great impression on several of the company, who, without knowing him, at once declared that he must be a distinguished man in disguise.

As a result of their "fighting," and of their "pressing to close quarters," the Browns were quite independent when they left the Territory. "*School was out.*" Also, the "*toad*" had got out from under the harrow. They could now go wherever they wished, and they concluded to give up "their [Pg 152] struggle to make Kansas a Free-State" and to return to their home in New York. At Nebraska City, when Brown changed his mind about going east and decided to return to Kansas, he bought horses for himself and Frederick, who was to accompany him, and sent the remainder of the party on their way to the States.[174] When he arrived at Osawatomie, about August 20th, he had, as stated by Bondi, "a spick and span four mule team, the wagon loaded with provisions; besides he was well supplied with money."[175] In poverty and on foot, the Browns entered the valley of the Pottawatomie May 23, 1856; seventy days thereafter, they left the Territory, in independent circumstances.

During the latter part of July and the first days of August. 1856, some incidents occurred in Kansas which are interrelated. The pro-slavery men living in the vicinity of "New Georgia," near Osawatomie, built a "block-house" for the protection of pro-slavery settlers from Free-State aggressions. Following this, John Brown and his band of Free-State aggressors suddenly left the Territory. August 5th, Captain Cracklin, with the Stubbs Rifles, routed the Georgians at New Georgia and burned their block-house; also, upon receipt of this intelligence, at Nebraska City, Brown changed his mind about going east, and returned to Kansas to raid the Osawatomie district. The first of these incidents, the building of the block-house, was a pro-slavery demonstration in Brown's territory. It was notice to him that further stealing from pro-slavery settlers would be unsafe in that neighborhood; it was also a challenge to John Brown to fight, if he chose to accept it as such. That the leaving of the Browns was not a premeditation, but the result of a "sudden impulse," appears from a statement made by Mr. Adair to Mr. T. H. Hand in a letter dated July 17, 1856: "Bro. J. B. and unmarried sons expect to leave the territory immediately."[176] Also, from the further fact that at the time they left, William Thompson, [Pg 153] brother of Henry Thompson, was due to arrive in Kansas to join the Brown colony. They met him near the Nebraska line and took him back east with them.[177]

The abrupt leaving of the Browns, under these circumstances, is inconsistent with the theory that they were "fighting men;" or that they were anxious to fight. If John Brown had actually desired to "engage the slave-power at close quarters" as has been insisted upon, boastfully, for more than fifty years, he would have joined his force with Captain Shore, or others, and would have attacked the Georgians at New Georgia, and driven them out, as Captain Cracklin did August 5th, while they—Brown and his sons—were running away from the job.

CHAPTER VII

[Pg 154]

OSAWATOMIE

Do men gather grapes of thorn or figs of thistles?

—Matthew 6:16

At Nebraska City Brown met some distinguished persons: General Lane, Colonel Samuel Walker, and Aaron D. Stevens. These men were commanders in the Free-State army; they received him into their confidence, and related to him their plans concerning the pending military operations; the object of which was to destroy the pro-slavery forces that had occupied strategic positions near Lawrence and Osawatomie, or drive them from the Territory. He knew that the execution of these undertakings would result in important events and decided to return to Kansas. It was evident there was to be real fighting; fighting at close quarters; in fact the fighting had already begun. August 5th, Captain Cracklin had opened the campaign, prosperously, by a successful attack upon the pro-slavery post at New Georgia, as has been heretofore stated. Mr. Sanborn[178] claims that Brown had some share in Cracklin's victory, but of course, he could not be simultaneously at both of these places. News of this victory was received at Nebraska City in a message that came to Walker; whereupon the party, except Brown, "proceeded to Lawrence as fast as humanly possible." They all left Nebraska City August 9th: thirty hours later, Lane arrived at Lawrence, Walker arriving shortly afterward. But Brown stopped at Topeka on the 10th, where no fighting was in contemplation; and his "whereabouts," from that date until the 17th, is reported as being "unknown."[179]

[Pg 155]

August 12th, Captain Bickerton defeated Major Buford's company of Georgians, at Franklin; stormed and burned the block-house; captured some arms and provisions, and recaptured the six-pounder brass cannon, that Buford had taken possession of at Lawrence, May 21st. Buford wrote: "Our money, books, papers, clothing, surveying instruments, and many precious memorials of kindness and friends far away, were all consumed by the incendiary villains who hold sway.... We are now destitute of everything except our muskets, and an unflinching determination to be avenged..." Bickerton lost one man killed and six wounded. Buford's loss was four men wounded —one mortally.[180] But Brown was not present when Bickerton pressed to close quarters at Franklin; Lane was there, and Sanborn says that Brown was there:[181] "Returning about the 10th of August," he says, "with General Lane, he proceeded with him to Lawrence and to Franklin where there was some skirmishing." "On the 15th the Free-State men assailed Fort Saunders, a strong log house on Washington Creek, about twelve miles southwest of Lawrence. After the customary fusillade, the pro-slavery men retreated without blood shed on either side."[182] Still, no Brown. The following appeal, by General Lane, was sent to him, from Topeka, on August 12th:

> Mr. Brown:—General Joe Cook (Lane) wants you to come to Lawrence this night, for we expect to have a fight on Washington Creek. Come to Topeka as soon as possible and I will pilot you to the place.
>
> Yours in haste,
> H. Stratton.[183]

It seems from this that Brown was somewhere near Topeka, on the 12th, and not at Franklin.

[Pg 156]

On the 16th the attack was made on Fort Titus. Of this Mr. Villard says:

> There was real fighting at Fort Titus, which Captain Samuel Walker, Captain Joel Grover, and a Captain Samuel Shombre attacked, at sunrise August 16, with fifty determined men. Captain Shombre was killed, and nine out of ten men with him wounded, in a rush on the block-house. In a short time eighteen out of the forty remaining attackers were wounded, including Captain Walker. After several hours of fighting, Free-State reinforcements appeared, including Captain Bickerton, with the six pounder, and its slugs of molten type. It was run to within three hundred yards of the fort and fired nine or ten times.... As Titus still showed no white flag, a load of hay was again resorted to with the same success as at Franklin. As the wagon was backed up to the log fort, and before the match was applied, the party surrendered.... Walker captured thirteen horses, four hundred guns, a large number of knives and six pistols, a fair stock of provisions and thirty-four prisoners, six of whom were badly wounded. One dead man was found in the block-house before it was burned.

Again this question comes up: Where was Brown when this fighting was taking place? Was he in this very creditable engagement? Continuing his narrative, Mr. Villard says, on page 232:

> The testimony as to whether John Brown was at Saunders and Titus is conflicting. He himself left no statement bearing upon it, and Luke Parsons, James Blood, O. E. Learnard and others, are positive that he was not at either place. The weight of evidence would seem to be on that side.

But John Brown did leave a statement bearing directly upon the question as to whether, or not, he was present at any of these engagements. In the interview which he gave out after his capture [Pg 157] at Harper's Ferry, in answer to the question: "Did you know Sherrod in Kansas? I understand you killed him?" Brown replied: "I killed no man except in fair fight. I fought at Black Jack, and at Osawatomie, and if I killed anybody it was at one of these places."[184] Brown, therefore, was not present at any of these battles. He was at Lawrence, however, on August 17th, *after* the fighting was over. Mr. Villard says on page 233: "That Brown was at Lawrence, when Walker arrived with his prisoners, admits of no doubt. Again his voice was raised for the extreme penalty; again he asked a sacrifice of blood." It appears, therefore, that Brown "terminated" a seven days "life in the bush" on the 17th, and became active in public affairs, for twenty-four hours. Referring to a concurrent incident Colonel Walker says:

> At a little way out of Lawrence I met a delegation, sent by the committee of safety, with an order for the immediate delivery of Titus into their hands. Knowing the character of the men, I refused to give him up. Our arrival at Lawrence created intense excitement. The citizens swarmed around us, clamoring for the blood of our prisoner. The committee of safety held a meeting and decided that Titus should be hanged, John Brown, and other distinguished men urging the measure strongly. At four o'clock in the evening I went before the committee, and said that Titus had surrendered to me; that I had promised him his life, and that I would defend it with my own. I then left the room. Babcock followed me out and asked me if I was fully determined. Being assured that I was, he went back, and the committee, by a new vote, decided to postpone the hanging indefinitely. I was sure of the support of some 300 good men, and among them Captain Tucker, Captain Harvey, and Captain Stulz. Getting this determined band into line, I approached the house where Titus was confined and entered. Just as I opened the door I heard pistol shots in Titus's room and rushed in and found a desperado named [Pg 158] "Buckskin" firing over the guard's shoulders at the wounded man as he lay on his cot. It took but one blow from my heavy dragoon pistol to send the villain heels-over-head to the bottom of the stairs. Captain Brown and Doctor Avery were outside haranguing the mob to hang Titus despite my objections. They said I had resisted the committee of safety, and was myself, therefore, a public enemy. The crowd was terribly excited, but the sight of my 300 solid bayonets held them in check.

This is a part of the record of these heroic days—days of strenuous effort and of heroic achievement. The Free-State men were engaged in a supreme effort to drive from the Territory the armed pro-slavery bands that had been organized in the South to intimidate and subdue them. They had fought a splendidly aggressive campaign, dislodging their foes from all their positions, burning their forts, and capturing their supplies. There was, as has been said, real fighting, fighting at close quarters, and plenty of it. And now, in view of it, what is to be said about Brown, the hypothetical Kansas hero, the "Fighting Leader of the Free-State Cause?" Lane was in evidence; and Colonel Walker, and Bickerton, and Grover, and the gallant Shombre, were in the thick of it; but what part did Brown perform in these undertakings? What contribution did he make to the winning of these victories? Nothing! Absolutely nothing. He came out of the "brush" after the fighting was over, and endeavored to incite a mob to hang a prisoner who was severely wounded.

This disreputable action is evidence that Brown was not in harmony with the best thought of the occasion; that he mingled with the lawless element—with the "Buckskin" class, that "fired over the guard's shoulders, at the wounded man, as he lay on his cot." Brown was not interested in these important public matters; he was not coöperating with the Free-State men; his motives for returning to the Territory did not relate to Territorial affairs. His plans had to do with something [Pg 159] else. They were of a personal character; and his presence at Lawrence on the 17th, was simply an incident of his trip from Nebraska City to Osawatomie, where he arrived, according to Bondi, "about the 20th, well supplied with money," and with a "spick and span four mule team, the wagon loaded with provisions,"[185] to make a coup in horses and cattle. Brown had outfitted this four mule team at or near Topeka, and the presence of it at Osawatomie on the 20th, with its stock of provisions, is the best evidence of what he had been thinking about, and of what he was doing, while the Free-State men were fighting the battles around Lawrence.

Leaving Nebraska City on the 9th, Brown stopped at Topeka on the 10th. Later developments show that he had planned a scheme of robbery upon a larger scale than anything he had theretofore undertaken. As to the Free-State campaign, the battles "at close quarters," the victories, the rejoicings, the planning for future operations, he was indifferent, except as they served his personal purposes.

Brown's arrival at Osawatomie was his first appearance there after the Pottawatomie murders. By the 24th he had "enlisted" nine men: Wm. Partridge, John Salathiel, S. B. Brown, John Godell, L. T. Parsons, N. B. Phelps, Wm. B. Harris, Jason Brown, and J. Benjamin.[186] He had also stolen enough horses to mount them. Of this Mr. Villard says:[187]

> Naturally, as a good general, John Brown's first concern was for the mounts of his

men. Bondi avers that some of Brown's men received prompt orders to capture all of "Dutch Henry" Sherman's horses. He himself obtained, when these orders were executed, "a four year old fine bay horse for my mount" and "old John Brown rode a fine blooded bay."

The example set by the Browns, during May, June, and July, brought forth many imitators. [Pg 160] Robbery became an industry. A new Richmond was in the Osawatomie field—a Captain Cline, with a company of mounted men, every one of whose horses had been stolen. This seems to have been sufficient recommendation, for Brown joined forces with Cline, and the two commands set out, August 24th, for the south, marching eight miles, and camping on Sugar Creek, Linn County.[188] On the 26th another merger of the special interests was accomplished. Captain J. H. Holmes also had a company which was consolidated with Brown's party. Captain Shore was in the vicinity, with the Prairie City Rifles, but it seems that he was not stealing anything. The Brown combination probably represented all the plants, or commercial units, then doing "business" in that district. In promptly effecting the merger of these interests, Brown showed his capacity for affairs, and is entitled to receive for the second time the "historic title of Captain,"—Captain of Industry. The men who belonged to Holmes's Company were, Cyrus Tator, R. Reynolds, Noah Fraze (First Lieutenant), William Miller, John P. Glenn, Wm. Quick, M. D. Lane, Amos Alderman, August Bondi, Charles Kaiser, Freeman Austin, Samuel Hauser, and John W. Fay,[189] and, probably, Frederick Brown. Thus organized and equipped, the forces put into effect the purposes of their organization without delay. Mr. Villard says:[190]

> John Brown then rode off to raid the pro-slavery settlements, on Sugar Creek.... They visited the home of Captain John E. Brown, taking, as his toll, fifty pro-slavery cattle and all the men's clothes the house contained.... Other houses were similarly searched, and their cattle taken, on the ground that they had originally been Free-State before being purloined by the pro-slavery settlers.

That they moved promptly, worked industriously, and obtained satisfactory results without [Pg 161] hindrance from any quarter, appears from the further statement by Mr. Villard:[191]

> On Thursday evening, August 28th, Brown reached Osawatomie, traveling slowly because of the one hundred and fifty cattle he drove before him. Both his company and Cline's bivouacked in the town that night. The next morning, (August 29) early, they divided their plunder and cattle, and Brown moved his camp to the high ground north of Osawatomie, where now stands the State Insane Asylum. An ordinary commander would have allowed all his men to rest. But not John Brown. He was in the saddle all day, riding with James H. Holmes, and others of his men, along Pottawatomie Creek, whence he crossed to Sugar Creek, returning to Osawatomie with more captured cattle, by way of the Fort Scott trail.

This last lot of cattle was probably the drove that the Quaker, Richard Mendenhall, referred to, as quoted by Sanborn on page 326:

> I next met John Brown again on the evening before the battle of Osawatomie. He with a number of others, was driving a herd of cattle, which they had taken from pro-slavery men.

It is not probable that it will ever be known what Brown intended to do with these cattle. Those who know what his intentions were in the premises, have not revealed them. He was going East, later on, to work out a scheme which he then had in his mind, to raise money. He also had a fancy for fine animals and for the stock business. It is therefore probable that he intended to establish a stock ranch at some point in Kansas, further west, and put his son Frederick in charge of it; and that the cattle which he was then collecting, and the four mule team that he had bought, and the load of provisions, were to be used in starting the enterprise. Mr. Villard quotes Holmes's [Pg 162] estimate of Brown as follows:[192]

> To Holmes, John Brown appeared on that afternoon more than ever the natural leader. He rode a tall strong chestnut horse; his spare form was more impressive when he was mounted than when he was afoot. Alert and clear sighted, he closely watched the landscape for evidence of the enemy. The enemy were the settlers who were being robbed.

This short narrative of Brown's operations in stealing horses and cattle, at Osawatomie, discloses the secret motive that prompted his return to Kansas from Nebraska. It gives reasonable grounds for the assumption, that when his "whereabouts were unknown," from August 10th to the 16th, inclusive, he was working out the details of the new venture; financing it; purchasing the necessary outfit; and making plans for handling the loot after it would be rounded up. It furnishes a reason why he refused to join General Lane and his associates, in the attack on Fort Saunders, and on Fort Titus; he had business engagements and appointments elsewhere, that required his personal attention. But what is of more historical importance, perhaps, than anything else, is, that it reveals the general channel in which his mind ran; the things upon which his thoughts and energies were concentrated; the occupation he was following. Also, the magnitude of the hazardous performance undertaken in this instance, and successfully executed, shows clearly, that Brown was not a novice in the business. Only a strong, bold man, of large experience, could enter such a district, and within four days collect, equip and mount, upon stolen horses, a company of ten men, himself included. Then, within two days more effect a consolidation, under his leadership, of two other similar companies; and within three more days gather up by force, two hundred and fifty head of cattle, besides horses and other plunder, and assemble the whole [Pg 163]

at the general rendezvous in Osawatomie. Only an expert in horse stealing, and in the general plunder business, could accomplish so much in so short a time.

To counteract the effect of the Free-State victories, heretofore referred to, and to restore pro-slavery supremacy, a pro-slavery army numbering more than a thousand men, led by Major General David R. Atchison, invaded the Territory. This formidable force left Westport August 23d, and on the 29th arrived at Bull Creek, thirty miles from Lawrence. To oppose it, the Free-State army was being mobilized under the command of General Lane; who sent an urgent message to Brown, and others at Osawatomie, asking them to report to him at Lawrence at once, and take part in the impending battle. The message was delivered to Brown by Alexander G. Hawse, on the evening of August 29th, as he approached Osawatomie, "in a cloud of dust and driving the motley herd" of stolen cattle "before him." Captain Shore received a similar request, and promptly responded to the urgent call. He started for Lawrence about three o'clock in the afternoon. Brown did not go. He could not be expected to abandon the horses, and the cattle, and the plunder which he had on hand; and the robber combine of which he was the head, and which was operating so successfully, and which had before it a future so promising. He was too busy. Besides, the troubles about Lawrence would be "water upon his wheel." He was doing business under cover of the distracting conditions then existing. Mr. Villard says, "After consultation, it was decided that the call should be heeded on the next day."

At the time Brown received this message, General Atchison had already detached two hundred and fifty mounted men, with one field piece, to march against Osawatomie and burn the place. The command of the expedition was given to Brigadier General John W. Reid, who had served in the war with Mexico. Reid made a night march from Bull Creek. Arriving at Osawatomie, he [Pg 164] immediately began his attack. His official report of the fight is as follows:[193]

Camp Bull Creek, Aug. 31st

GENTLEMEN:—I moved with 250 men on the Abolition fort and town of Osawatomie—the headquarters of Old Brown—on night before last; marched forty miles and attacked the town without dismounting the men, about sunrise on yesterday. We had a brisk fight for an hour or more and had five men wounded—none dangerously—Capt. Boice, William Gordon and three others. We killed about thirty of them, among the number, *certain*, a son of Old Brown and almost certain Brown himself; destroying all their ammunition and provisions, and the boys would burn the town to the ground. *I could not help it*....

Your friend, REID.

Hon. William Higgins of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, then fourteen years of age, drove one of the three teams that comprised Reid's means of transportation. Concerning Reid's losses in the battle, he says: "The total was three men wounded. Two of these were conveyed back to Missouri in one of the wagons, while the other wounded man was able to ride his horse. No one was killed."[194]

On the Free-State side the battle seems to have been opened by Dr. Updegraff, of Osawatomie, and Holmes. The latter was "saddling up," presumably to join Brown in another day's ride after cattle, when the presence of the enemy was announced, and rode up toward the Adairs until he sighted Reid's troopers, upon whom he fired three times from his Sharp's rifle.[195]

From Lawrence, September 7th, Brown wrote to his wife as follows:[196]

DEAR WIFE AND CHILDREN EVERY ONE: [Pg 165]

I have one moment to write to you, to say that I am yet alive, that Jason and family were well yesterday—John and Family, I hear, are well (he being yet a prisoner). On the morning of the 30th of August an attack was made by the Ruffians on Osawatomie, numbering some four hundred, by whose scouts our dear Frederick was shot dead, without warning—he supposed them to be Free-State men, as near as we can learn. One other man, a cousin of Mr. Adair was murdered by them about the same time that Frederick was killed, and one badly wounded at the same time. At this time I was about three miles off, where I had some fourteen or fifteen men over night that I had just enlisted to serve under me as regulars. These I collected as well as I could, with some twelve or fifteen more—and in about three quarters of an hour I attacked them from a wood with thick undergrowth. With this force we threw them into confusion for fifteen or twenty minutes, during which time we killed or wounded from seventy to eighty of the enemy—as they say—and then we escaped as well as we could, with one killed while escaping, two or three wounded and as many more were missing. Four or five Free-State men were butchered during the day in all. Jason fought bravely by my side during the fight, and escaped with me, he being unhurt. I was struck by a partly spent grape canister, or rifle shot, which bruised me some, but did not injure me seriously. "Hitherto the Lord has helped me," notwithstanding my afflictions, etc., etc.

JOHN BROWN.

On the same day he gave out the following statement for publication:[197]

THE FIGHT OF OSAWATOMIE

Early in the morning of the 30th of August the enemy's scouts approached to within one mile and a half of the western boundary of the town of Osawatomie. At this place my son Frederick (who was not attached to my force) had lodged with [Pg 166] some four other young men from Lawrence, and a young man named Garrison, from Middle Creek. The scouts, led by a pro-slavery preacher named White, shot my son dead in the road while he—as I have since ascertained—supposed them to be friendly. At the same time they butchered Mr. Garrison, and badly mangled one of the young men from Lawrence, who came with my son, leaving him for dead. This was not far from sunrise. I had stopped during the night about two and one half miles from them, and nearly one mile from Osawatomie. I had no organized force, but only some twelve or fifteen new recruits, who were ordered to leave their preparations for breakfast and follow me into the town, as soon as this news was brought to me.

As I had no means of learning correctly the force of the enemy, I placed twelve of the recruits in a log-house, hoping we might be able to defend the town. I then gathered some fifteen more men together, whom we armed with guns—and we started in the direction of the enemy. After going a few rods we could see them approaching the town in line of battle, about half a mile off, upon a hill west of the village. I then gave up all idea of doing more than to annoy, from the timber near the town, into which we were all retreated, and which was filled with a thick growth of underbrush—but I had no time to recall the twelve men in the log house, and so lost their assistance in the fight. At this point above named I met with Captain Cline, a very active young man, who had with him some twelve or fifteen mounted men, and persuaded him to go with us into the timber, on the southern shore of the Osage, or Marais des Cygnes, a little to the north west from the village. Here the men, numbered not more than thirty in all, were directed to scatter and secrete themselves as well as they could, and await the approach of the enemy. This was done in full view of them (who must have seen the whole movement), and had to be done in the utmost haste. I believe Captain Cline and some of his men were not even dismounted during the fight, but cannot assert [Pg 167] positively. When the left wing of the enemy had approached to within common rifle shot, we commenced firing, and very soon threw the northern branch of the enemy's line into disorder. This continued for some fifteen or twenty minutes, which gave us an uncommon opportunity to annoy them. Captain Cline and his men soon got out of ammunition, and retired across the river.

After the enemy rallied we kept up our fire, until, by the leaving of one and another, we had but six or seven left. We then retired across the river. We had one man killed—a Mr. Powers, from Captain Cline's company—in the fight. One of my men, a Mr. Partridge, was shot in crossing the river. Two or three of the party who took part in the fight are yet missing, and may be lost or taken prisoners. Two were wounded—namely. Dr. Updegraff and Mr. Collis. I cannot speak in too high terms of them, and of many others I have not now time to mention.

One of my best men, together with myself, was struck by a partially spent ball from the enemy, in the commencement of the fight, but we were only bruised. The loss I refer to is one of my missing men. The loss of the enemy, as we learn by the different statements of our own as well as their people, was some thirty one or two killed, and from forty to fifty wounded. After burning the town to ashes and killing a Mr. Williams, they had taken, whom neither party claimed, they took a hasty leave, carrying their dead and wounded with them. They did not attempt to cross the river, nor to search for us, and have not since returned to look over their work.

I give this in great haste, in the midst of constant interruption. My second son was with me in the fight, and escaped unharmed. This I mention for the benefit of his friends. Old Preacher White, I hear, boasts of having killed my son. Of course he is a lion.

JOHN BROWN.
Lawrence, Kansas,
Sept. 7, 1856.

In a third statement[198] Brown says: "In the battle of Osawatomie, Capt. (or Dr.) Updegraff—and [Pg 168] two others whose names I have lost, were severely (one of them shockingly) wounded before the fight began, August 30, 1856."

The arrival of Reid's forces at Osawatomie, was a complete surprise. Brown knew nothing of their coming until after the battle was on. Mr. Villard states[199] that John Brown and his party, with the exception of Holmes, who spent the night in town, crossed the Marias des Cygnes to their camp on the Crane claim (about two miles from the town), taking their cattle with them. Captain Cline and about fifteen men remained in the town. Two of Brown's men, Bondi and Benjamin, were on guard (over the cattle) on the morning of the 30th, until the firing began. Brown was preparing breakfast at the cattle camp, where a messenger is said to have arrived with the news that Frederick Brown had been killed; whereupon Brown is said to have "seized his arms" and "cried, 'Men come on!' and with Luke F. Parsons hurried down the hill to the crossing nearest the town." But the men, it seems, finished their breakfast before responding to this request and still had time to overtake their leader. Mr. Villard says that "After finishing their coffee, most of them

overtook their leader before he reached the town"; and that Parsons, upon following Brown into the timber where the fighting was going on, "met Captain Cline and his company of fifteen well-mounted men retiring through the town, abandoning their cattle and their other plunder. One of his (Cline's) men, Theodore Parker Powers, was killed in the few minutes they were at the front."

From the data at hand it appears that the battle was opened by Holmes, who fired upon Reid's advance immediately upon the latter's arrival; that Dr. Updegraff, and other citizens of Osawatomie, turned out, and with Captain Cline defended the town for "an hour or more" during [Pg 169] which time Powers, of Cline's company, was killed and Dr. Updegraff and two others were severely wounded. These were all the casualties that befell the Free-State men in the actual fighting; and Brown states that they occurred "before the fight began": by which he meant, before he arrived upon the scene, which was at the time Parsons met Cline retiring in disorder from the field. None of Brown's men was hit while fighting. One of them, Geo. W. Partridge, was killed in the retreat while crossing the river. It seems therefore, that Brown arrived late in the engagement and that he, very wisely, attempted nothing "more than to annoy, from the timber near the town, into which we were all retreated."

Comment or criticism, favorable or unfavorable, as to what John Brown did or did not do in this fight is equally unimportant. Brown's men were not a military company organized for the defense of Osawatomie. They were a gang of "rustlers," as cattle thieves are sometimes called. Such organizations are not under obligations to fight anybody; and they do not fight, except as their personal interests or advantage may seem to require at the time. In this case the prospects for defeating Reid's command of two hundred and fifty men, getting his horses, and saving their own plunder, were so unfavorable, that Brown and his men were justified in getting away from the trouble as best they could; and that is what they did, leaving the town to be pillaged and burned by Reid's army. That "they stood not upon the order of their going" is evident from the fact that Brown lost his hat while making good his escape from the trouble. Of this incident Sarah Brown says:

> On the day that my brother Frederick was killed near Osawatomie, my father lost his hat in fighting.[200]

General Reid's estimate of the battle as quoted by Mr. Villard,[201] is perhaps more nearly the [Pg 170] truth: "Merely the driving out of a flock of quail." And it may be truthfully said that some of the birds flew as far as Lawrence, before alighting; "indeed, Bondi, Benjamin and Hawes set off at once for Lawrence and so by himself did Holmes."[202] As for Brown, he went deep into the friendly brush and hid. To a legislative committee, February 18, 1857, he read, from a prepared address, that about the first of September he was "obliged to lie on the ground, without shelter, for a considerable time; and at times almost in a state of starvation, and dependent on the charity of a Christian Indian."

Brown's son Frederick was killed by the Rev. Martin White, who was with the patrol that was scouting the head of Reid's column as it approached Osawatomie. Frederick had come from Lawrence the day before with Hawes. The two stopped over night at the Carr cabin, adjoining his uncle Adair's place, where they had left their horses. Frederick arose early to feed them, and noticing two or three mounted men approaching, walked out to see who they were. The parson knew him, and recognized him as being one of a party that had raided his home, and his stables, on the night of August 13th, whereupon he shot him through the heart as he stood in the road. Mr. Villard treats this incident facetiously. He says:[203]

> Thus on August 13th, the home of the Rev. Martin White was raided by Free-State men, among them James H. Holmes, and ten pro-slavery horses were weaned from their allegiance to a wicked and failing cause. White, a prejudiced witness, asserted that the horses were laden with plunder, but upon this point the memories of Holmes and Bondi, both participants, failed them.

Continuing he says:[204]

> White pretended to recognize the boots on Brown as a pair stolen from his son in the raid upon White; but there is no evidence to show that Frederick Brown was at that time elsewhere than in Lawrence. [Pg 171]

It may be said with equal irrelevancy, that there is no evidence to show that Frederick was elsewhere than in the raid. The author knows, or ought to know, the exact facts concerning that feature of this deplorable incident. He could have obtained the information from Holmes, one of the principals, or from others whom he met, who had knowledge of the facts. However, it is probable that Frederick was a party to this robbery. He returned to Kansas with his father from Nebraska City. "Frederick felt," according to the testimony of Henry Thompson, "that Pottawatomie bound him to Kansas. He did not wish to leave. He felt that a great crime had been committed and that he should go back to Kansas and live it out."[205] August 10th, father and son arrived at Topeka and disappeared. But since Osawatomie was the field of their prospective operations, and robbery the purpose for which they intended to enter it, Frederick probably went direct from Topeka to Osawatomie, and participated, with Holmes and Bondi, in an outrage for which he paid the forfeit of his life. His presence in the robbery is not the only probability in the case. The stolen stuff had to be sold somewhere, and, because of his experience in the business, and his knowledge of how to do such things, it is quite probable that after raiding the parson's and other homes, he went north with the horses that had been stolen, and disposed of them, and had just returned with the proceeds, August 29th, for another consignment of horses; or,

possibly, to drive the cattle, which his father was to steal during his absence, to their destination.

The death of Frederick was the beginning of the utter collapse and failure of Brown's "get-rich-quick" expedition. His camp was raided a few hours later, and his property—the cattle and other [Pg 172] loot of the recent foray, and probably the four mule team and provisions—was all taken by the enemy. "The horses and cattle, at hand, were gathered up and carried off, including Cline's booty from South Middle Creek."[206]

The statement put forth, that after the battle Brown "encamped" several days on the Houser farm, about two and one-half miles from Osawatomie, and attempted to fortify it,[207] is merely trifling with history. Aside from his personal statement that he was hiding, and starving, during this time, it follows, logically, that if Brown were human, and could have obtained facilities for so doing, he would not have refrained, until September 7th, from writing to his wife at North Elba, the sad news concerning the death of their son. And further, if John Brown had believed that his relation to this battle was honorable, and that the part which he had performed in it was in any sense heroic or creditable, he would not have concealed himself and the facts concerning his heroism from the public for eight days. It appears that Brown arrived bareheaded at the Adair home on the evening of the 30th, saw the dead body of his son, took his cap, and disappeared, leaving the burial of the body to be attended to by others.[208] The truth seems to be that he was ashamed because of his disgraceful conduct; and terror stricken because of the calamities which he had brought upon the people of the ill-fated town: and that he slunk out of sight and hid to avoid arrest, and the public condemnation that was his due. But when at Lawrence, Bondi, Benjamin, and Holmes gave out their exaggerations concerning the battle, but nothing about the robberies; and told of their personal prowess in the engagement, and of their leader's heroism (?) therein; and when Brown discovered that his band of thieves had come to be recognized as a military organization; and that he, the Loki of Osawatomie, had become the "Hero of [Pg 173] Osawatomie"; then, and not till then, came he out of hiding, and affirmed what had been put forth by his men concerning him, and accepted the honors which were accordingly thrust upon him.

With these September days came the climax of the aggressive Free-State campaign. Also, came the collapse of the pro-slavery effort to fasten slavery upon Kansas by force of arms. Lawrence was the headquarters for the Free-State men, and their activities gave to the place an atmosphere of war. Lane led an expedition against Atchison's army which he encountered at Bull Creek. September 7th, the day Brown arrived from Osawatomie, an expedition was launched against Leavenworth, under the command of Colonel James A. Harvey, but it was ordered back to Lawrence, by General Lane, before it arrived at its destination. On September 9th, General John W. Geary arrived in the Territory. He had been appointed Territorial Governor to succeed Governor Shannon.

"Almost simultaneously with Harvey's movements, Aaron D. Stevens, alias Charles Whipple, raided Osawkie, a pro-slavery settlement, taking eighty horses and nearly as many arms."[209] Falling back from the front of Atchison's army at Bull Creek, Lane personally led an attack upon Hickory Point, and finding the pro-slavery men too strong, sent to Lawrence for assistance. "Whipple and fifty men responded; but on their arrival Lane wanted Bickerton's cannon, and sent to Lawrence for it." Colonel Harvey, who had just got back from the Leavenworth campaign, also went to his assistance, arriving on the 14th. Lane in the meantime had abandoned the siege, but Harvey attacked them at once, and after a spirited fight captured the force. His loss was five men wounded. The pro-slavery loss was one man killed and four wounded. There was no robbery involved in this battle.[210] Later, Captain Wood, United States Army, met and captured one [Pg 174] hundred of Harvey's men including their arms, and the cannon.

The withdrawal of Lane from Lawrence, with a large portion of the organized Free-State forces, left the town quite unprepared to resist the advance against it by General Atchison's army, which arrived at Franklin on the 13th. This was the most formidable force that had ever invaded the Territory. It comprised, at this time, twenty-seven hundred men, including a battery of artillery. The principal subordinate commanders were Generals John W. Reid, B. F. Stringfellow, W. A. Haskell, and J. W. Whitfield. On the afternoon of the 14th, Atchison made a reconnoissance, his advance guard drawing the fire of the Free-State pickets in front of Lawrence. His attack upon the town on the morning of the 15th, was prevented by the armed intervention of the Federal Government. During the night of the 14th, detachments of United States cavalry and artillery arrived at Lawrence, and took up positions to defend the town. The Territorial Governor, Geary, appeared upon the scene on the morning of the 15th, and, proceeding to Atchison's camp, notified him that he could proceed no farther. This forceful intervention was fatal to the pro-slavery propaganda. Upon receiving the Governor's ultimatum, the pro-slavery leaders disbanded their army and gave up the struggle. Geary's interference was not wholly unexpected. The "hand writing" had heretofore been seen "upon the wall." Before Atchison's advance upon Lawrence, a South Carolinian, connected with the invading army, stated the situation in this way: "And why should we remain? We cannot fight, and of course, cannot prevent our enemy from voting. The object of our mission will then, of course, be defeated and we had as well return."[211]

Brown was well received by the Free-State leaders, on his arrival at Lawrence. He was fresh from the "bloody field of Osawatomie." He gave his story to the press, and posed as the hero of a [Pg 175] splendidly fought battle against odds of nearly ten to one; and, although defeated, had inflicted *heavy losses* upon the enemy.

> After his arrival, the Sunday morning council reassembled, and decided on the movement against Leavenworth. Most of the men thereupon offered the command

to John Brown, a responsibility he declined, out of deference to other leaders, and it was then entrusted to Colonel James A. Harvey.[212]

Referring to the defense of Lawrence, Mr. Villard says, with reference to September 14th:

> But the day before Lieutenant Colonel Johnston's arrival, these amateur fortifications were filled with very earnest Free-Soil men, ready to defend Lawrence at any cost. In the absence of Lane, the command was as much in the hands of Major J. B. Abbott and Captain Joseph Cracklin of the "Stubbs" as of any one else. Some partisans of John Brown have attempted to prove that he was in command, but the evidence is conclusive that he declined Major Abbott's offer of the command of a company, and then, at his request, went from one of the "forts" to another, encouraging the men, urging them to fire low, and giving them such military information as was his, everywhere, according to Major Abbott, with excellent results.[213]

Of the invaders, Mr. Villard says:[214]

> They had with them no less than twenty-seven hundred men, some of them completely uniformed and well equipped. Besides infantry and cavalry, there was a six-pounder battery; in all a remarkably strong force. Its advance guard had come in sight of the men on guard at Lawrence on the afternoon of the 14th, and after an hour's shooting at long range, the Missourians had retired upon Franklin. [Pg 176] Naturally the people of Lawrence were in great alarm; few were able to sleep that night, remembering as they did, Atchison's last visit to their town. There was, therefore, general rejoicing when, on the next morning, Lieut. Col. Johnston's troops were found to be encamped on Mount Oread, the hill overlooking Lawrence, where they had arrived during the night.

The people of Lawrence might well be in a state of alarm during the night of the 14th, believing that with the dawn of the 15th, Atchison's guns would open upon the town. But Brown was not there on the morning of the 15th to help meet the shock of the impending battle. True to the mercenary character of his conduct, he declined all offers of command on the 14th, and left the town to its fate, going to the home, in the country, of Augustus Wattles.[215]

Upon assuming control of affairs as Territorial Governor, General Geary released the Free-State leaders who had been arrested and held as prisoners at Lecompton during the later months of Governor Shannon's administration, an act that caused great rejoicing at Lawrence.

On the 13th, Charles Robinson addressed the following letter to Brown:

> Lawrence, September 13, 1856.
>
> CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN:
>
> Dear Sir: Governor Geary has been here and *talks very well*. He promises to protect us, etc. There will be no attempt to arrest anyone for a few days, and I think no attempt to arrest you is contemplated by him. He talks of letting the past be forgotten, so far as may be, and of commencing anew. If convenient, can you not come to town and see us? I will then tell you all that the Governor said, and talk of some other matters.
>
> Very respectfully,
> C. ROBINSON

In response to this letter. Brown called upon the Governor on the 14th; told him the story of his [Pg 177] "defense" of Osawatomie, and obtained from him the following beautiful letter:[216]

> Lawrence, Sept. 14, 1856.
>
> CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN.
>
> My Dear Sir: I take this opportunity to express to you my sincere gratification that the late report, that you were killed, at the battle of Osawatomie, is incorrect. Your course, so far as I have been informed, has been such as to merit the highest praise from every patriot, and I cheerfully accord to you my heartfelt thanks for your prompt, efficient, and timely action against the invaders of our rights and the murderers of our citizens. History will give your name a proud place in her pages and posterity will pay homage to your heroism in the cause of God and humanity.
>
> Trusting that you will conclude to remain in Kansas, and serve during the war, the cause you have done so much to sustain, and with earnest prayers for your health, and protection from the shafts of death that so thickly beset your path. I subscribe myself,
>
> Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
>
> C. ROBINSON.

But Brown was seeking neither honors nor honorable mention for honorable purposes; he sought only for something of commercial value. He wanted "assistance"; something upon which he could work the public for money. Robinson, therefore, addressed to him a second letter, a letter of

credit, as follows:

To the Settlers of Kansas—

If possible please render Captain John Brown all the assistance he may require in defending Kansas from invaders and outlaws, and you will confer a favor upon your co-laborer and fellow citizen. C. ROBINSON.

Brown obtained these letters by dissimulation. He took advantage of the Governor's confidence in his statements and deeply imposed upon him. He concealed from him the plans which he had [Pg 178] formed for working a colossal graft upon the Free-State sentiment in the East; and the fact that he intended to use these letters in pursuance of them. He was equivocal, too, as to his plans for leaving the Territory. If he had given Charles Robinson even a hint that he had been robbing the settlers in the Osawatomie district of their horses, cattle, and clothing; and had thus provoked Reid's descent upon the town, and the burning of it, as a retaliatory measure, and that he intended to use the letters he asked for in grafting operations, they would not have been written.

Brown's latest biographer regards the foregoing letters of special interest, because of Governor Robinson's subsequent criticism of Brown's actions—assuming that the spirit of these letters in inconsistent with his later estimate of the rectitude of Brown's conduct.[217] The point is not well taken. The Governor's endorsement is, plainly, dependent upon the information which he had received relating to it. He said: Your course, *so far as I have been informed*, has been such as to merit the highest praise from every patriot, and he then proceeds to state what the heartfelt thanks are for: "For your prompt, efficient, and timely action against the *invaders* of our right and the *murderers* of our citizens." This plain language cannot be distorted into an approval, by the Governor, of Brown's crimes in murdering and plundering pro-slavery settlers; who came into the Territory to build homes for their families, as Brown and his sons originally came to do; and whose rights, as settlers, were equal to those of their Free-State neighbors. Equality of settlers' rights, was the basic principle of the Free-State contention. Robinson wrote it into the platform of the party and unalterably maintained it, to a victorious finish. The war that was being carried on by the Free-State men, was directed against the invasion of the Free-State settlers' rights by pro-slavery men who were non-residents of the Territory.

John Brown remained at the Wattles farm until the 22d. Meanwhile plans were matured for his [Pg 179] sons, John and Jason, and their families, to quit the Territory. During the first days of October they left Kansas for the East. Brown's farewell is recorded by Mr. Villard, as follows:[218]

> On departing from the Territory, Brown left the remainder of his Osawatomie volunteer-regular company under the command of James H. Holmes, with instructions to "carry the war into Africa." This Holmes did by raiding into Missouri and appropriating some horses and arms and other property, for which he was promptly and properly indicted and long pursued by the Kansas and Missouri authorities.

The foregoing is the record, to date, of John Brown's "activities" in Kansas. The peace and tranquility of the Osawatomie district to which he came in October, 1855, had not theretofore been disturbed by any distracting contentions. The settlers were pursuing the even tenor of their way. They were comfortable, prosperous, and contented; living in the security vouchsafed, by the usages of our civilization and the laws of our country, to all of its citizens. They so continued to live, during a period of eight months thereafter, wholly unsuspicious of the designs their neighbor, Brown, was maturing against their peace, their property, and their lives.

From 1854 to 1860, the great political contest in the country was over the question of the extension of slavery into the public domain. It was the paramount issue in National politics. New alignments were then formed throughout the country in relation to it, as men were differently moved by their sympathies or interests. In Kansas, the division in public sentiment was more pronounced than elsewhere, for reasons that have been stated. Naturally, the settlers in the Osawatomie neighborhood were divided upon this political question; but certainly not with very much greater intensity of feeling than this same neighborhood was divided afterward, upon the [Pg 180] great moral question of prohibition, or upon the equally great economic question of free-coinage of silver. The differences of opinion there did not promote or arouse personal animosities, or bitterness of feeling, among the settlers. Ample authority for this conclusion of fact is found in the letters written, at the time, by John Brown and others of his family, and in the statement which he voluntarily made in 1857, before a committee of the Massachusetts legislature, heretofore quoted. A large majority of the settlers in that district belonged to the Free-State party which made the security and peace of the Free-State settlers complete, beyond debate. These conditions of peace and tranquility continued undisturbed, until the night of May 24, 1856, when John Brown opened his "school" of plunder, and cast the baleful shadow of his presence upon the settlement. The Pottawatomie horror inaugurated a season of assassination and robbery unprecedented in Kansas history: a period of public disorder and crime, that ended only when the Territory was finally rid of John Brown and his marauders.

CHAPTER VIII [Pg 181]

HYPOCRISY

He was a man
Who stole the livery of the court of Heaven
To serve the Devil in.

—Pollock, Course of Time

John Brown "struck the trail" of "easy money" June 28, 1855, when Gerrit Smith presented his case to the Syracuse convention and collected sixty dollars to assist him in migrating to Kansas. He had followed it up with profit, while en route thereto, at Springfield, Hudson, Akron, and Cleveland. Now he was returning to the East to work the field again. It was the same graft which he had theretofore worked, but upon greatly improved plans and along broader lines.

He had two schemes in view. Robinson's letter of September 14th addressed "To the Settlers of Kansas," showed that Brown was their accredited defender "from invaders and outlaws." Under the pretext of enlisting, arming, equipping, and maintaining in Kansas, a company of fifty mounted men to protect the settlers from "invaders and outlaws," he intended to try to secure $30,000, in cash, to finance the pretense. The other scheme was to have the Legislatures of Massachusetts and New York appropriate large sums of money—$100,000 each—to reimburse persons who had emigrated to Kansas from these States, for losses which they were supposed to have "suffered in advancing the Free-State cause." Naturally, Brown and all the members of his family were "sufferers," and would be eligible as beneficiaries of this legislation.

"The National Kansas Committee" was a company formed to promote emigration to Kansas Territory. It was also a sort of clearing-house for the various committees which had been organized in the Northern States for a similar purpose. It had offices in New York, Chicago, and other places. Mr. E. B. Whitman was the resident agent of the company in Kansas, a fact which the Browns had not overlooked. [Pg 182]

That Brown had this scheme for raising money in view as early as July, 1856, appears from the fact that before leaving Kansas with his sons, in that month, he called upon Mr. Whitman, at Lawrence, and filed with him a paper which was intended to serve as the foundation of a claim for reimbursement for such losses. It reads as follows:[219]

FOR MR. WHITMAN

Names of sufferers and persons who have made sacrifices in endeavoring to maintain and advance the Free-State cause in Kansas, within my personal knowledge.

1. Two German refugees (thoroughly Free-State), robbed at Pottawatomie, named Benjamin and Bondy (or Bundy). One has served under me as a volunteer; namely, Bondy. Benjamin was prisoner for some time; suffered by men under Coffee and Pate.

2. Henry Thompson. Devoted several months to the Free-State cause, traveling nearly two thousand miles at his own expense for the purpose, leaving family and business for about one year. Served under me as a volunteer; was dangerously wounded at Palmyra, or Black Jack; had a bullet lodged beside his backbone; has had a severe turn of fever, and is still very feeble. Suffered a little in the burning of the houses of John Brown, Jr., and Jason Brown.

3. John Jr. and Jason Brown. Both burned out; both prisoners for some time, one a prisoner still: both losing the use of valuable, partially improved claims. Both served repeatedly as volunteers for defense of Lawrence and other places, suffering great hardships and some cruelty.

4. Owen and Frederick Brown. Both served at different periods as volunteers, under me. Were both in the battle of Palmyra; both suffered by the burning of their brothers' houses; both have had sickness (Owen a severe one), and are yet feeble. Both lost the use of partially improved claims and their spring and summer work. [Pg 183]

5. Salmon Brown (minor). Twice served under me as a volunteer; was dangerously wounded (if not permanently crippled) by accident near Palmyra; had a severe sickness and is still feeble.

6. Oliver Brown (minor). Served under me as a volunteer for some months; was in the battle of Palmyra, and had some sickness.

7. (B. L.) Cochrane (at Pottawatomie). Twice served under me as a volunteer; was in the battle of Palmyra.

8. Dr. Lucius Mills devoted some months to the Free-State cause, collecting and giving information, prescribing for and nursing the sick and wounded at his own cost. Is a worthy Free-State man.

9. John Brown has devoted the service of himself and two minor sons to the Free-State cause for more than a year; suffered by the fire before named and by robbery; has gone at his own cost for that period, except that he and his company together have received forty dollars in cash, two sacks of flour, thirty five pounds of bacon, thirty five do. of sugar, and twenty pounds of rice.

I propose to serve hereafter in the Free-State cause (provided my needful expenses can be met) should they be desired; and to raise a small regular force to

> serve on the same condition. My own means are so far exhausted that I can no longer continue in the service at present without the means of defraying my expenses are furnished me.
>
> I can give the names of some five or six more volunteers of special merit I would be glad to have particularly noticed in some way. J. BROWN

When one considers the life Brown had been leading and the nature of the atrocities which he had committed, this proposal to ask for compensation therefor is a piece of effrontery: a good exhibit of sublime gall. Also, his ultimatum therein is deserving of consideration. In it he demands, as a condition precedent to the rendering of any further service in the Free-State cause, that he have an assurance that he and his sons would be paid for such services. This demand further discloses the fact that the energies which Brown was putting forth were not a devotion to the cause of the men in bondage, but that he sought to work a personal and family graft upon Free-State sentiment of the country. [Pg 184]

During February, 1857, Brown had a bill prepared and introduced in the Massachusetts Legislature to appropriate $100,000, as a contingent fund, to relieve the distress of settlers in Kansas. And on the 18th of that month he and Mr. Whitman appeared before the committee, having charge of the bill, to urge its passage.

Brown arrived at Tabor, Iowa, en route to the East, October 10th. On the 23d he was at Chicago, where he was well received by the National Kansas Committee. At this time it was moving a lot of supplies—two hundred Sharp's rifles, a brass cannon, ammunition, clothing, etc.—across Iowa to Kansas, under the direction of Dr. J. P. Root. The committee asked Brown to return and accompany the train to its destination. He, however, advised the management to stop the train, and not attempt to enter Kansas with it; saying that "The immediate introduction of the supplies is not of much consequence compared to the danger of losing them." His remark had reference to the efficient measures which Governor Geary had adopted to put an end to the lawlessness which was prevailing in the Territory at the time he assumed his official duties. Brown went with Root as far as Tabor, Iowa, where the supplies were stored, to await further developments.

Leaving Tabor, he passed through Chicago about the first of December. In Ohio, upon presenting his letters from Governor Robinson to Governor Chase, he received from him an additional letter of commendation, for use in Ohio, and twenty-five dollars in cash. Thus encouraged, he pushed on, stopping at various places on the way, soliciting money, and arriving in Boston about January 1, 1857. There the congratulatory letters which he had in his possession were of inestimable value to him. It was through them that he succeeded in establishing relations with men of ample means and of high character, who, by their generous contributions of money, and by their moral support, enabled him to work out his schemes to their logical conclusions. [Pg 185]

In Boston, Brown met Mr. Frank B. Sanborn, a young man but a year and a half out of Harvard, who was then secretary of the Massachusetts State Kansas Committee. "He was on fire for the anti-slavery cause, and ready to worship any of its militant leaders."[220] Brown, being a militant leader, made a deep impression upon this susceptible young enthusiast, who reported his find to Mr. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "the fighting young Unitarian Parson of Worcester," in a letter, as follows:[221]

> "Old Brown" of Kansas is now in Boston, with one of his sons, working for an object in which you will heartily sympathize—raising and arming a company of men for the future protection of Kansas. He wishes to raise $30,000 to arm a company, such as he thinks he can raise this present winter, but will, as I understand him, take what money he can raise and use it as far as it will go. Can you not come to Boston tomorrow or next day and see Capt. Brown? If not, please indicate when you will be in Worcester, so he can see you. I like the man from what I have seen—and his deeds ought to bear witness for him.

It will be observed that this was to be a cash transaction: he will "take what money he can raise and use it as far as it will go." Most persons will scan this proposal with grave suspicion, it bears so prominently the brand of the faker; but it will create no surprise in the minds of those who are familiar with Brown's criminal conduct while in commercial life, and with his career of murder and robbery and association with thieves in Kansas. [Pg 186]

In his enthusiasm for his Kansas hero, Mr. Sanborn led Brown, as the Psalmist had been led, "into green pastures and beside the still waters." Through him he met Dr. Samuel G. Howe, Patrick Tracy Jackson, George L. Stearns, Dr. Samuel Cabot, Judge Thomas Russell, Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, Henry D. Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and other notable persons, all of whom were intensely interested in the paramount political question of the day, and especially in the contest going on in Kansas to make it a Free State. His Eastern campaign opened auspiciously. As the popular leader of a popular cause, he struck the popular fancy. He presented himself to the public, "modestly," as being the leader of the "fighting" forces of the Territory; and as having come from the "front" to organize a more effective force, in order that he might render still more efficient services. January 7th, armed with his congratulatory letter from Governor Robinson, he called upon Mr. Amos A. Lawrence, who wrote of him, admiringly, as follows:

> Captain Brown, the old partisan hero of Kansas warfare, came to see me. I had a long talk with him. He is a calm, temperate, and pious man, but when roused he is a dreadful foe. He appears about sixty years old. His severe simplicity of habits, his determined energy, his heroic courage in time of trial, all based on a deep religious faith, make him a true representative of the Puritanic warrior. I knew him

before he went to Kansas, and have known more of him since, and should esteem the loss of his service, from poverty, or any other cause, almost irreparable.

[Pg 187] Mr. Stearns, too, was deeply impressed with his "sagacity, courage, and strong integrity," He had him dine with him at his home on Sunday, January 11th. Brown sought, on this occasion, to advance his personal fortunes by discrediting Charles Robinson and other Free-State leaders. Measured by his standard they were a collection of incompetents. He exalted Martin F. Conway as the best of them, but characterized him as "lacking in force." Naturally, if the best of them lacked force, there was an emergency to get Brown back to the Territory as speedily as possible. It became clear to Mr. Stearns's mind that it was the general incompetency and inefficiency of the men in control of affairs in Kansas, their cowardice and consequent inability to "protect" the settlers, that impelled Brown to come East and raise money to equip a force to protect them. He therefore determined "to do everything in his power to get him the arms and money he desired."

Mr. William Lloyd Garrison, also, was very much taken with him. "They discussed peace and non-resistance together, Brown quoting the Old Testament against Garrison's citations of the New, and Parker, from time to time, injecting a bit of Lexington into the controversy, which attracted a small group of interested listeners."[222]

The first result of his newly formed relations was a contribution to him of two hundred Sharp's rifles, four thousand ball cartridges, and thirty thousand percussion caps, made by the "Massachusetts State Kansas Committee." These were the arms which Brown had stored at Tabor. The committee also voted him a credit of $500 for expenses. The Massachusetts Kansas Committee originally purchased the arms, and had turned them over to the National Kansas Committee, under whose control they then were.

[Pg 188] Before the latter committee, at its offices in the Astor House, New York, Brown appeared, January 24th, and presented his case. He asked for the arms, and for the moderate sum of $5,000, cash. But this committee had taken pains to inform itself, through its general agent, Mr. Arny, with reference to conditions existing in Kansas. The directors, therefore, were not nearly so susceptible as were the more impulsive people of the Massachusetts Committee. They wanted to know something about the nature of the project which they were being asked to finance, and hoped that Brown would make a more specific and definite declaration. They wanted to know what the cost of the equipment, for the defenders he talked about, would amount to, and called for a list of the articles which he needed, with an estimate of the cost of each; and wanted to know what he intended to do with the company after it was organized. And then they asked another very relevant question: what he intended to do with the five thousand dollars he wanted them to give him. Brown's scheme was a personal matter, and to have answered these questions, and others that would have, logically, followed, would have caused him some embarrassment. He therefore denied their right to inquire into the privacy of his affairs. He wanted five thousand dollars flat; with no questions asked; and rising to the height of the occasion, put on a bold front, and refused to be interrogated. He said:[223]

> I am no adventurer. You all know me. You know what I have done in Kansas. I do not expose my plans. No one knows them but myself, except perhaps one. I will not be interrogated; if you wish to give me anything, I want you to give it freely. I have no other purpose but to serve the cause of liberty.

[Pg 189] The debate being thus closed, the National Committee then settled the question of the arms by transferring them back to the Massachusetts Committee; and with admirable tact, voted the five thousand dollars conditionally—for "necessary defensive purposes in aid of Captain John Brown in any defensive measures that may become necessary." The irony of the resolution was concealed by an order authorizing him to draw upon the committee for five hundred dollars at any time. But he received no part of it, until he showed, by his actions, that he intended to return to Kansas.

The committee penetrated the veneer that disguised Brown's hypocrisy, and refused to put any money whatever into his hands. After the adjournment, he made up a list of the articles that he thought he would need, which he handed to Mr. Horace White, assistant secretary. It reads as follows:

> Memorandum of articles wanted as an Outfit for Fifty Volunteers to serve under my direction during the Kansas war: or for such specified time as they may each enlist for: together with estimated cost of same delivered in Lawrence or Topeka. [224]

2 substantial (but not heavy) baggage waggons with good covers	$200.00
4 good serviceable waggon Horses	400.00
2 sets strong plain Harness	50.00
100 good heavy Blankets say at 2. or 2.50	200.00
8 Substantial large sized Tents	100.00
8 Large Camp Kettles	12.00
50 Tin basins	5.00
4 Plain strong Saddles & Bridles	80.00
4 picket ropes and pins	3.00
8 Wooden Pails	4.00
8 axes and Helves	12.00
8 Frying pans (large Size)	8.00

8 Large sized Coffee Pots	10.00
8 do do Spiders or Bake Ovens	10.00
8 do do Tin Pans	6.00
12 Spades & Shovels	18.00
6 Mattocks	6.00
2 Weeks provisions for Men & Horses	150.00
Fund for Horse hire & feed, loss & damage of same	500.00
	$1,774.00

There was a very handsome margin for profits between $30,000, his original estimate of what he would require to "arm and equip a company such as he thought he could raise this present winter" and his final estimate—$1,774. But that is not material; Brown was simply working the field for all the money he could get; as Mr. Sanborn truly said "he will take all he can raise and use it as far as it will go." [Pg 190]

The National Committee voted $1,774 to fill this requisition, but it declined to give Brown the money wherewith to make the purchases. He had a right to expect that the committee would give him this money, and trust him to expend it honestly; but it ordered otherwise. February 18th Mr. White wrote that the articles Brown had requisitioned would be shipped the following week; and on March 21st he notified him that he would "shortly go to Kansas and work there to fit him out with all the supplies he was entitled to under the New York resolution."[225] Brown was keenly disappointed and deeply humiliated by the actions of the National Committee; and in a letter to Mr. William Barnes, of Albany, April 3d, gave expression to his resentment. He said:

> I am prepared to expect nothing but bad faith from the Kansas National Committee at Chicago, as I will show you hereafter. This, for the present, is confidential.[226]

It was money and not supplies that Brown was eager for at this period in his operations. His plans did not contemplate any defense of Kansas. The "arming and equipping" of the fifty men was a deception. It was but his stock in trade—a pretext upon which he solicited funds. He, and the kind of men he would have enlisted, if he enlisted any, had all the arms they would need, and stealing requires but little ammunition. In his largest successful venture—the Pottawatomie—but one shot was fired, and that one, as stated by Salmon Brown, was "wholly unnecessary."

February 18, 1857, was an important day in Brown's calendar. Mr. Sanborn had prepared his bill to appropriate $100,000 to relieve the distress of Kansas settlers. It had been introduced in the Massachusetts Legislature, and referred to the Joint Committee on Federal Relations, before which it was to be taken up, on that day, for consideration. Mr. Sanborn stood sponsor for the measure; and Brown and Mr. Whitman appeared before the committee, as advocates, in support of it. Introducing these two distinguished persons Mr. Sanborn said in part:[227] [Pg 191]

> As one of the petitioners for State aid to the settlers of Kansas, I appear before you to state briefly the purpose of the petition. No labored argument seems necessary; for if the events of the last two years in Kansas, and the prospect there for the future, are not of themselves enough to excite Massachusetts to action, certainly no words could do so. We have not provided ourselves with advocates, therefore, but with witnesses; and we expect that the statements of Captain Brown and Mr. Whitman will show conclusively that the rights and interests of Massachusetts have suffered gross outrage in Kansas—an outrage which is likely to be repeated unless measures are taken by you to prevent so shameful an abuse. Your petitioners desire that a contingent appropriation be made by the legislature, to be placed in the hands of a commission of responsible and conservative men, and used only in case of necessity to relieve the distress of the settlers of Kansas—especially such as have gone from our own state.... We have invited Captain Brown and Mr. Whitman to appear in our behalf, because these gentlemen are eminently qualified either to represent Massachusetts in Kansas, or Kansas in Massachusetts. The best blood of the "Mayflower" runs in the veins of both, and each had an ancestor in the army of the Revolution. Mr. Whitman, seventh in descent from Miles Standish, laid the foundation of the first church and the first school-house in Kansas; John Brown, the sixth descendant of Peter Browne, of the "Mayflower," has been in Kansas what Standish was to the Plymouth Colony. These witnesses have seen the things of which they testify, and have felt the oppression we ask you to check. Ask this gray haired man, gentleman—if you have the heart to do it—where lies the body of his murdered son—where are the homes of his four other sons, who a year ago were quiet farmers in Kansas. I am ashamed, in presence of this modest veteran, to express the admiration which his heroism excites in me. Yet he, so venerable for his years, his integrity, and his courage—a man whom all Massachusetts rises up to honor—is today an outlaw in Kansas. To these witnesses, whose unsworn testimony deserves and will receive from you all, the authority which an oath confers, I will now yield place. [Pg 192]

Mr. Redpath states that Brown then came forward and read his speech, "in a clear ringing tone," as follows:[228]

> "I saw, while in Missouri, in the fall of 1855, large numbers of men going to Kansas

to vote, and also returning after they had so done; as they said.

"Later in the year, I, with four of my sons, was called out and traveled, mostly on foot and during the night, to help defend Lawrence, a distance of thirty-five miles; where we were detained, with some five hundred others, or thereabouts, from five to ten days—say an average of ten days—at a cost of not less than a dollar and a half per day, as wages, to say nothing of the actual loss and suffering occasioned to many of them, leaving their families sick, their crops not secured, their houses unprepared for winter, and many without houses at all. This was the case with myself and sons who could not get houses built after returning. Wages alone would amount to seven thousand five hundred dollars; loss and suffering cannot be estimated.

"I saw, at that time, the body of the murdered Barber, and was present to witness his wife and other friends brought in to see him with his clothes on, just as he was when killed.

"I, with six sons and a son-in-law, was called out, and travelled, most of the way on [Pg 193] foot, to try and save Lawrence, May 20 and 21, and much of the way in the night. From that date, neither I nor my sons, nor my son-in-law, could do any work about our homes, but lost our whole time until we left, in October; except one of my sons, who had a few weeks to devote to the care of his own and his brother's family, who were then without a home.

"From about the 20th of May, hundreds of men, like ourselves, lost their whole time, and entirely failed of securing any kind of a crop whatever. I believe it safe to say, that five hundred free state men lost each one hundred and twenty days, which, at one dollar and a half per day, would be—to say nothing of attendant losses—ninety thousand dollars.

"On or about the 30th of May, two of my sons, with several others, were imprisoned without other crime than opposition to bogus legislation, and most barbarously treated for a time, one being held about one month, and the other about four months. Both had their families on the ground. After this, both of them had their houses burned, and all their goods consumed by the Missourians. In this burning all the eight suffered. One had his oxen stolen, in addition."

The Captain, laying aside his paper, here said that he had now at his hotel, and would exhibit to the Committee, if they so desired, the chains which one of his sons had worn, when he was driven beneath the burning sun, by federal troops, to a distant prison, on a charge of treason. The cruelties he there endured, added to the anxieties and sufferings incident to his position, had rendered him, the old man said, as his eye flashed and his voice grew sterner, "A maniac—yes, a MANIAC."

He paused a few seconds, wiped a tear from his eye, and continued his narration....

"I saw while it was standing, and afterwards saw the ruins, of a most valuable house, the property of a highly civilized, intelligent, and exemplary Christian Indian, which was burned to the ground by the ruffians, because its owner was [Pg 194] suspected of favoring the free state men. He is known as Ottawa Jones, or John T. Jones.

"In September last, I visited a beautiful little free state town called Staunton, on the north side of the Osage, (or Marais-des-Cygnes, as it is sometimes called,) from which every inhabitant had fled for fear of their lives, even after having built a strong log house, or wooden fort, at a heavy expense, for their protection. Many of them had left their effects liable to be destroyed or carried off, not being able to remove them. This was to me a most gloomy scene, and like a visit to a sepulchre.

"About the first of September, I, and five sick and wounded sons, and a son-in-law, were obliged to lie on the ground, without shelter, for a considerable time, and at times almost in a state of starvation, and dependent on the charity of the Christian Indian I have named before, and his wife."

He concluded his remarks by denouncing the traitors to freedom, who, when a question of this kind was raised, cried out, "Save the people's money—the dear people's Money." He had a detailed estimate of how much the National Government had expended in endeavoring to fasten slavery on Kansas; and asked why these politicians had never cried out, "Save the people's money!" when it was expended to trample under the foot of the "peculiar" crime of the south, the rights, lives, and property of the Northern squatters. They were silent then. (Applause.)

The Chairman then asked who commanded the free-state men at Lawrence. His answer was characteristic of the man, whose courage was only equalled by his modesty and worth.

He explained how bravely our boys acted—gave every one the credit but himself. When again asked who commanded them, he said,—no one; that he was asked to take the command, but refused, and only acted as their ADVISER!

The Captain spoke in conclusion, about the emigrants needed for Kansas. [Pg 195]

"We want," he said, "good men, industrious men, men who respect themselves; who act only from the dictates of conscience; MEN WHO FEAR GOD TOO MUCH TO FEAR ANY THING HUMAN."

When asked by the Chairman:—"What is your opinion as to the probability of a renewal of hostilities in Kansas—of another invasion; and what do you think would be the effect, on the free state men, of an appropriation by Massachusetts?"—replied:—"Whenever we heard, out in Kansas that the North was doing any thing for us, we were encouraged and strengthened to struggle on. As to the probability of another invasion, I do not know. We ought to be prepared for the worst. Things do not look one iota more encouraging now, than they did last year at this time. You ought to remember that, from the date of the Shannon treaty till May last, there was perfect quiet in Kansas; no fear of a renewal of hostilities; no violence offered to our citizens in Missouri. I frequently went there myself; was known there; yet treated with the greatest kindness."

The Massachusetts Kansas Committee, of which Mr. Sanborn was secretary, was composed of the kind of men described in the resolution, "responsible and conservative men." It seems, therefore, that the scheme was to have the State appropriate this money, and place it with the Massachusetts Committee, for disbursement among Kansas settlers who had suffered, as the Browns and "four or five others" had suffered.

Of his biographers James Redpath, alone, seems to have been favorably impressed with the speech; and it is unfortunate for Brown's fame that he gave it publicity; for, had the report of the speech been suppressed and the manuscript destroyed, his biographers could have made much of the occasion; much more than was made of his mythical effort at Lawrence, December 8, 1855. The speech was, in truth, a maudlin plea for compensation for the time which he and his sons had [Pg 196] spent in secretly murdering and plundering Kansas settlers. It also included a weak attempt to criticise the Free-State leadership; a line of criticism then becoming popular, and still existing within the zone infected by the pernicious influence of the Disunionists of that period.

Brown did not dare to even hint at the truth concerning what he had seen, and what he had personally done in Kansas. Yet he did not hesitate to seek to impose this measure for compensation upon the Legislature, and to misinform it in relation to his conduct, and to misdirect its official actions. Imagine if possible the dismay, horror, and disgust that would have taken possession of the members of this committee, if a correct view of Brown's life, in Kansas, had been portrayed to them. The arrangement of the function was audacious and clever; an illustration of his daring hypocrisy, reckless insolence, and consistent variance with right doing. The legislative committee penetrated Brown's armor, as the Kansas National Committee had done, and refused to recommend that his bill be passed.

Three months later, Mr. Stearns was led to make an effort to have the New York Legislature take up a similar measure. Writing on May 18th, to a New York committee, he made the following remarkable statements:[229]

Since the close of the last year we have confined our operations to aiding those persons in Kansas who were, or intended to become, citizens of that Territory,—believing that sufficient inducements to immigrate existed in the prosperous state of affairs there; and we now believe that should quiet and prosperity continue there for another year, the large influx of Northern and Eastern men will secure the State for Freedom. To insure the present prosperity we propose—

1. To have our legislature make a grant of one hundred thousand dollars, to be placed in the hands of discreet persons, who shall use it for relief of those in Kansas who are, or may become, destitute through Border-Ruffian outrage. We [Pg 197] think it will be done.

2. To organize a secret force, well armed, and under control of the famous John Brown, to repel Border-Ruffian outrage and defend the Free-State men from all alleged impositions. This organization is strictly to be a defensive one.

3. To aid by timely donations of money those parties of settlers in the Territory who from misfortune are unable to provide for their present wants.

I am personally acquainted with Captain Brown, and have great confidence in his courage, prudence, and good judgment. He has control of the whole affair, including contributions of arms, clothing, etc., to the amount of thirteen thousand dollars. His presence in the Territory will, we think, give the Free-State men confidence in their cause, and also check the disposition of the Border Ruffians to impose on them. This I believe to be the most important work to be done in Kansas at the present time. Many of the Free-State leaders being engaged in speculations are willing to accept peace on any terms. Brown and his friends hold to the original principle of making Kansas free, without regard to private interests. If you agree with me, I should like to have your money appropriated for the use of Captain John Brown. If not that, the other proposition, to aid parties of settlers now in the Territory will be the next best.

It appears from the closing sentences of this letter, that Brown had succeeded in discrediting the men, who were steadfastly working out the Free-State problem, in order to ingratiate himself with the people whom he then sought to delude. His turpitude should not provoke surprise. The crime of ingratitude cannot further degrade the character of this mendacious mendicant. Having

assassinated his unoffending neighbors in the West, and robbed them, he now assassinated the fame of honorable men, and robbed them of the measure of confidence and esteem to which they were justly entitled because of their public services.

Disappointed in his scheme to have money legislated into his pocket, and in his effort to raise the thirty thousand dollars in large sums, he proceeded to canvass the East personally, for money, and to draw upon every possible source of supply—sailing under false colors and doing business under false pretenses. Referring to this, Mr. Villard says:[230] [Pg 198]

> It must not be forgotten in this connection that very little was known in Boston at this time, about the Pottawatomie murders, and still less about Brown's connection with them. Frank Preston Stearns, the biographer of his father, states that the latter never knew of John Brown's connection with the crime, and it may be well that Theodore Parker and others passed off the scene without a full realization of the connection between the Harper's Ferry leader and the tragedy of May 24, 1856.

Brown was proficient in the art of dissimulation. Mr. Thoreau was thus impressed with what, to him, seemed to be the sanctity of a Christian character. He said:[231]

> He was never able to find more than a score or so of recruits whom he would accept, and only about a dozen (among them his own sons) in whom he had perfect faith. When he was here, he showed me a little manuscript book,—his "orderly book" I think he called it,—containing the names of his company in Kansas, and the rules by which they bound themselves and he stated that several of them had already sealed the contract with their blood. When some one remarked that with the addition of a chaplain, it would have been a perfect Cromwellian troop, he observed that he would have been glad to add a chaplain to the list, if he could have found one man who could fill the place worthily. I believe he had prayers in his camp morning and evening, nevertheless. He is a man of Spartan habits, and at sixty was scrupulous about his diet at your table, excusing himself by saying that he must eat sparingly and fare hard, as became a soldier, or one who was fitting himself for difficult enterprises, a life of exposure. A man of rare common-sense [Pg 199] and directness of speech as of action, a transcendentalist, above all a man of ideas and principles,—that is what distinguishes him. Not yielding to a whim or transient impulse, but carrying out the purpose of a life. I noticed that he did not overstate anything, but spoke within bounds. I remember particularly how, in his speech here, he referred to what his family had suffered in Kansas, without ever giving the least vent to his pent up fire. It was a volcano with an ordinary chimney flue. Also referring to the deeds of certain Border Ruffians, he said, rapidly paring away his speech, like an experienced soldier keeping a reserve of force and meaning: "They had a perfect right to be hung." He was not in the least a rhetorician, was not talking to buncombe or his constituents anywhere. He had no need to invent anything, but to tell the simple truth, and communicate his own resolution; therefore he appeared incomparably strong, and eloquence in Congress and elsewhere seemed to me at a discount. It was like the speeches of Cromwell compared with those of an ordinary king.

Mr. Emerson recorded his impressions in the following beautiful language:

> For himself, Brown is so transparent that all men see him through. He is a man to make friends wherever on earth courage and integrity are esteemed,—the rarest of heroes, a pure idealist with no by-ends of his own. Many of us have seen him, and everyone who has heard him speak has been impressed alike by his simple, artless goodness and sublime courage. He joins that perfect Puritan faith which brought his ancestors to Plymouth Rock, with his grandfather's ardor in the Revolution. He believes in two articles,—two instruments shall I say?—The Golden Rule and the Declaration of Independence; and he used this expression in a conversation here concerning them: "Better a whole generation of men, women and children should pass away by a violent death, than that one word of either should be violated in this country." There is a Unionist, there is a strict constructionist for you! He believes in the Union of the States, and he conceives [Pg 200] that the only obstruction to the Union is slavery; and for that reason, as a patriot, he works for its abolition.[232]

These exalted characters, incapable of detecting the vile imposition which he was practicing upon them, gave Brown the full measure of their confidence; even accepting at its face value the assassin's statement that he would have been glad to add a chaplain to his band, if he could have found one who could fill that office worthily. Governor Robinson had been more conservative in his recommendation. He based his approval of Brown upon the information he had received. "Your career," he said, "so far as I have been informed, has been such as to merit the highest praise."

As may be supposed, Brown's most dependable contributor was the Massachusetts Committee. January 7th it voted him $500 for expenses and on April 11th it voted him $500 more for the same account. April 15th it authorized him to "sell to Free-State settlers in Kansas, one hundred of the rifles it had placed in his care, for not less than fifteen dollars each, and to apply the proceeds to relieve the suffering inhabitants of the Territory."[233] Meanwhile he pursued his

personal campaign for money without abatement of energy; visiting the principal towns and cities in Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut.[234]

On March 4th he published, in the New York *Tribune*, the following general advertisement for remittances of money:[235]

TO THE FRIENDS OF FREEDOM

> The undersigned, whose individual means were exceedingly limited when he first engaged in the struggle for liberty in Kansas, being now still more destitute, and no less anxious than in time past to continue his efforts to sustain that cause, is induced to make this earnest appeal to the friends of freedom throughout the United States, in the firm belief that his call will not go unheeded. I ask all honest lovers of liberty and human rights, both male and female, to hold up my hands by contributions of pecuniary aid, either as counties, cities, towns, villages, societies, churches, or individuals. I will endeavor to make a judicious and faithful application of all such means as I may be supplied with. Contributions may be sent in drafts to W. H. D. Callender, cashier State Bank, Hartford, Conn. It is my intention to visit as many places as I can during my stay in the states, provided I am first informed of the disposition of the inhabitants to aid me in my efforts as well as to receive my visit. Information may be communicated to me (care of the Massasoit House) Springfield, Mass. Will editors of newspapers friendly to the cause kindly second the measure, and also give this some half dozen insertions? Will either gentlemen or ladies, or both, who love the cause, volunteer to take up the business? It is with no little sacrifice of personal feeling that I appear in this manner before the public.

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At Hartford and Canton, Connecticut, he used a similar appeal:

> I am trying to raise from twenty to twenty-five thousand dollars in the free States, to enable me to continue my efforts in the cause of freedom. Will the people of Connecticut, my native state, afford me some aid in this undertaking? Will the gentlemen and ladies of Hartford, where I make my first appeal in this State, set the example of an earnest effort? Will some gentleman or lady take hold and try what can be done by small contributions from counties, cities, towns, societies, or churches, or in some other way? I think the little beggar-children in the streets are sufficiently interested to warrant their contributing, if there was any need of it, to secure the object.[236]

February 19th Mr. Lawrence sent Brown a check for seventy dollars which had been contributed to the Massachusetts Company by John Conant, of New Hampshire. About this time Mr. Lawrence published an offer to be "one of ten, or a smaller number, to pay a thousand dollars per annum till the admission of Kansas into the Union, for the purpose of supporting John Brown's family and keeping the proposed company in the field." Since he did not intend to have any company in Kansas, Brown took up this proposal promptly and pressed tenaciously to commute it for a thousand dollars, cash. On March 19th, he wrote Mr. Lawrence from New Haven, as follows:[237]

[Pg 202]

> The offer you so kindly made through the *Telegraph* some time since, emboldens me to propose the following for your consideration: For One Thousand Dollars cash I am offered an improved piece of land which with a little improvement I now have, might enable my family, consisting of a Wife & Five minor children (the youngest not yet Three years old) to procure a Subsistence should I never return to them; my Wife being a good economist, & a real old fashioned business woman. She has gone through the Two past winters in our open cold house; unfinished outside; & not plastered. I have no other income or means for their support. I have never hinted to any one else that I had a thought of asking for any help to provide in any such way for my family; & SHOULD NOT TO YOU, but for your own suggestion. I fully believe I shall get the help I need to operate with West. Last Night a private meeting of some gentlemen here; voted to raise one Thousand Dollars in New Haven for that purpose. If you feel at all inclined to encourage me in the measure I have proposed, I shall be grateful to get a line from you; Care Massasoit House, Springfield, Mass; & will call when I come again to Boston. I do not feel disposed to weary you with my oft repeated visitations. I believe I am indebted to you as the UNKNOWN GIVER of One share of Emigrant aid stock; as I can think of no other so likely to have done it. IS MY APPEAL RIGHT?

[Pg 203]

Mr. Lawrence replied March 20th that he had just sent nearly fourteen thousand dollars to Kansas to establish a school fund there, and was short of money, but assured him that if his life were shortened while engaged in the great cause, "the family of 'Captain John Brown of Osawatomie' will not be turned out to starve in this country, until Liberty herself is driven out." Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Stearns afterward agreed to raise the thousand dollars, but as the payment lagged, Brown "pressed to close quarters." May 13th he wrote quite peremptorily to Mr. Stearns:

> I must ask to have the $1000 made up *at once*; & forwarded to Gerrit Smith. I did not start the measure of getting up any subscription for me; (although I was sufficiently needy as God knows); nor had I any thought of *further burdening* either of my dear friends *Stearns or Lawrence*....[238]

The amount was made up and paid late in August, Mr. Lawrence paying $310 of it and Mr. Stearns $260.

It will never be known how much money Brown secured during this raid through the East. Mr. Villard estimates his cash collections at $4,000. The money value of the clothing and war material given to him was about $13,000. In addition to this Mr. Stearns gave him a cash credit of $7,000 against which he could draw from time to time "as it might be needed to subsist his company after they entered upon active service." He also had to his credit with the National Kansas Committee the $5,500 it had voted him. His total collections and subscriptions amounted therefore to about $30,000. A valuable asset in his collection of arms was two hundred revolvers, which the Massachusetts Arms Company, at Chicopee Falls, agreed, through Mr. Thayer, to sell to him for $1,300, fifty per cent of the regular price. Brown notified Mr. Stearns of the offer, who [Pg 204] promptly placed the order, agreeing to pay for the arms by his personal note, in four months from date of delivery. In his letter, notifying Brown that he would purchase the revolvers for him, Mr. Stearns remarked incidentally:

> I think you ought to go to Kansas as soon as possible, and give Robinson and the rest some back bone.

Also on May 11th he said:

> I am glad to know that you are on your way to Kansas: the free State leaders need somebody to talk to them. I hope you will see Conway very soon after your arrival. I did not expect you to return, or hold pledged to me, any arms you use in Kansas, but only such as were not used.
>
> Yours truly,
> George L. Stearns.

Encouraged by the success of his deceptions—"the greedy swallowing every where of what I have told,"—and flattered by the notoriety he had gained. Brown began to take his personal criticisms of the Kansas leaders seriously. During the latter part of March he became so impressed by his dissatisfaction with their "incompetence," and, what was worse, with their "unwillingness to fight," that he decided to take things into his own hands and displace them altogether. He would put abler men in charge of Territorial affairs. With this purpose in view, he modestly requested young Mr. Sanborn, and Martin F. Conway, to meet him in conference at the Metropolitan Hotel, in New York. From there the trio went to Easton, Pennsylvania, where they formally offered the leadership of the Free-State cause to ex-Governor Reeder, which the latter declined, with appropriate thanks. However, the mission was not wholly without results. Mr. Villard informs us that the ex-Governor was "so heartily in sympathy with Brown's plan, that the latter wrote to him for aid, on his return to Springfield, explaining that the only difference between them was as to the number of men needed, and hoping that Mr. Reeder would soon discover the necessity of [Pg 205] going out to Kansas this spring."[239]

The coming of spring was a serious matter in Brown's affairs. His "sagacious" forecast called for a renewal of pro-slavery aggressions in Kansas, and he was not there to resist them, if they arrived. His admirers had responded to his appeals for arms and money; and in return, they expected him to do something creditable; something worthy of his pretensions. Naturally they wanted their hero to be at the front; they wanted to see him at the post of honor, and, if need be, at the post of danger. Spring came, but Brown was not ready to go—"not yet, but soon." He had not got enough of the kind of money he wanted—"Money without questions asked." Mr. Villard says: "April was for Brown another month of active solicitation of funds." He realized that he had to go, and began making the necessary preparations with reluctance, and in a state of despondence wholly inconsistent with heroism; but true—strictly true—of the shamming mendicant. April 16th he wrote to Mr. Eli Thayer:

> I am advised that one of "Uncle Sam's hounds is on my track;" and I have kept myself hid for a few days to let my track get cold. I have no idea of being taken, and intend (if God will) to go back with irons in, rather than upon my hands.... I got a fine list in Boston the other day, and hope Worcester will not be entirely behind. I do not mean you or Mr. Allen & Co.[240]

At this time Brown heard, or pretended that he had heard, a rumor that a United States marshal had passed through Cleveland on his way East to arrest him for "high treason." In consequence of this he sought and obtained a hiding place in the home of Judge and Mrs. Russell, in Boston, where he remained concealed several days. Here he indulged in several spectacular effects, for the benefit of the Judge and his wondering wife. Some of his performances were related by Judge [Pg 206] Russell, as follows:

> He used to take out his two revolvers, and repeater, every night before going to bed, to make sure of their loads, saying, "Here are eighteen lives." To Mrs. Russell he once said, "If you hear a noise at night, put the baby under the pillow. I should hate to spoil these carpets, too, but you know I cannot be taken alive." Giving an account one day of his son Frederick's death, who was shot by Martin White, Mrs. Russell broke out, "If I were you, Mr. Brown, I would fight those ruffians as long as I lived." "That," he replied, "is not a Christian spirit. If I thought I had one bit of the spirit of revenge I would never lift my hand; I do not make war on slave-holders, even when I fight them, but on slavery." He would hold up Mrs. Russell's little girl, less than two years old, and tell her, "When I am hung for treason, you can say that you used to stand on Captain Brown's hand."[241]

Brown had not been charged with treason in Kansas, nor was he even under suspicion for "constructive" treason. But Kansas treason was then a fashionable offense in the North, and Brown, of course, worked it with fine effect upon his listeners. The Rev. Theodore Parker suggested to Judge Russell a way of escape for Brown. He wrote:

> My Dear Judge—If John Brown falls into the hands of the marshal from Kansas, he is sure either of the gallows or of something yet worse. If I were in his position, I should shoot dead any man who attempted to arrest me for those alleged crimes; then I should be tried by a Massachusetts jury and be acquitted.[242]

Brown at one time expressed his contempt for the gullible people upon whom he imposed. It was when he was in Kansas in 1858, and intended to write a book. He thought the story of his life, as [Pg 207] he would write it, would be a good "seller." The title was to be "catchy," if there be such a word. It read:

> A brief history of John Brown, otherwise (Old B.) and his family: *as connected with Kansas*; By one who knows.

It was to be "sold for the benefit of the whole of my family or to promote the cause of Freedom as may hereafter appear." There was a mutuality of interest or a unity of Brown and the cause of Freedom. Whatever he did for the cause was done for the benefit of the family. In writing to his son about this venture he said:

> I am *certain*, from the manner in which I have been pressed to narrate, and the greedy swallowing everywhere of what I have told, and complaints of the newspapers voluntarily made of my backwardness to gratify the public, that the book would find a ready sale.[243]

But his sons—John and Jason—disapproved of the venture: they were reactionaries; they thought it best to leave well enough alone, and shied at a proposal to skate upon ice so treacherous as they knew this departure to be. John said:[244] "But many a man has committed his greatest blunder when trying to write a book."

While at the Russell home Brown evolved a scheme, characteristic of his craftiness, which he launched in a highly dramatic and effective manner. The paper was named:

OLD BROWN'S FAREWELL

> *To the Plymouth Rocks, Bunker Hill Monuments, Charter Oaks, and, Uncle Tom's Cabbins.*

Having prepared the paper for the specific purpose of imposing upon Mrs. Steams, rather than upon Mr. Parker's congregation, he paid that lady the flattering compliment of desiring to consult her about "a plan he had," asking her to call on him at the Russell home. Her interesting [Pg 208] statement of what happened is as follows:

> ... As the address states, Brown was keeping very quiet at Judge Russell's house in Boston, partly on account of a warrant issued in Kansas for his arrest for high treason, and partly because he was ill with fever and ague, a chronic form which had been induced by his exposures in Kansas. It was in April, 1857, and a chilling easterly storm had prevailed for many days. Mr. Stearns went frequently to visit him, and on Saturday preceding the Sunday morning mentioned by Judge Russell, Captain Brown expressed a wish that I should go to see him, as he could not venture in such weather on a trip to Medford—emphasizing the request by saying that he wished to consult me about a plan he had, and that I might come soon. Mr. Stearns gave me his message at dinner, and I drove at once to Judge Russell's house. As soon as my name was announced Brown appeared, and thanking me for the promptness of my visit, proceeded to say that he had been "amusing himself" by preparing a little address for Theodore Parker to read to his congregation the next (Sunday) morning; and that he would feel obliged to me for expressing my honest opinion about the propriety of this. He then went upstairs, and returned with a paper, which proved, in reading, to be "Old Brown's Farewell." The emphasis of his tone and manner I shall never forget, and wish I could picture him as he sat and read, lifting his eyes to mine now and then to see how it impressed me. When he finished, he said: "Well, now, what do you think? Shall I send it to Mr. Parker?" "Certainly; by all means send it. He will appreciate every word you have written, for it rings the metal he likes. But I have my doubts about reading it to his congregation. A few of them would understand its significance, but the majority, I fear, would not. Send it to Mr. Parker, and he will do what is best about it." In reply he thanked me, and said I had confirmed his own judgment, had cleared his mind, and conferred the favor he desired. Then, I told him, he must give me a copy to preserve among my relics. He replied: "I would give you this, but [Pg 209] it is not fit. I had such an ague while writing that I could not keep my pen steady; but you shall have a fair copy." In a few days he sent the copy I now have, by the hand of Mr. Stearns. It will be forwarded with other memorials to the Kansas Historical Society.
>
> This matter being settled, Brown began talking upon the subject always uppermost in his thought, and, I may add, action also. Those who remember the power of his moral magnetism will understand how surely and readily he lifted his listener to the level of his own devotion; so that it suddenly seemed mean and unworthy—not

to say wicked—to be living in luxury while such a man was struggling for a few thousands to carry out his cherished plan. "Oh," said he, "if I could have the money that is *smoked away* during a single day in Boston, I could strike a blow which would make slavery totter from its foundation." As he said these words, his look and manner left no doubt in my mind that he was quite capable of accomplishing his purpose. To-day all sane men everywhere acknowledge its truth. Well, I bade him adieu and drove home, thinking many thoughts—of the power of a mighty purpose lodged in a deeply religious soul; of only one man with God on his side. The splendor of spring sunshine filled the room when I awoke the next morning; numberless birds, rejoicing in the returning warmth filled all the air with melody; dandelions sparkled in the vivid grass; everything was so beautiful, that the wish rose warm in my heart to comfort and aid John Brown. It seemed not much to do to sell our estate and give the proceeds to him for his sublime purpose. What if another home were not as beautiful! When Mr. Stearns awoke, I told him my morning thoughts. Reflecting a while, he said: "Perhaps it would not be just right to the children to do what you suggest; but I will do all I can in justice to them and you." When breakfast was over, he drove to the residence of Judge Russell and handed Captain Brown his check for seven thousand dollars. But this fact was not known at that time and only made public after the death of Mr. Stearns.[245] [Pg 210]

The historical *Farewell*, referred to, is herein reproduced:

> He has left for Kansas; has been trying since he came out of the Territory to secure an outfit, or, in other words, the means of arming and thoroughly equipping his regular minute-men, who are mixed up with the people of Kansas. And he leaves the States with a feeling of deepest sadness, that after having exhausted his own small means and with his family and his brave men suffered hunger, cold, nakedness, and some of them sickness, wounds, imprisonment in irons with extreme cruel treatment, and others, death; that after lying on the ground for months in the most sickly, unwholesome, and uncomfortable places, some of the time with sick and wounded, destitute of any shelter, hunted like wolves, and sustained in part, by Indians; that after all this, in order to sustain a cause which every citizen of this "glorious republic" is under equal moral obligation to do, and for the neglect of which he will be held accountable by God—a cause in which every man, woman, and child of the entire human family has a deep and awful interest—that when no wages are asked or expected, he cannot secure, amid all the wealth, luxury, and extravagance of this "heaven-exalted" people, even the necessary supplies of the common soldier. "How are the mighty fallen?"
>
> I am destitute of horses, baggage-wagons, tents, harness, saddles, bridles, holsters, spurs, and belts; camp equipage, such as cooking and eating utensils, blankets, knapsacks, intrenching-tools, axes, shovels, spades, mattocks, crowbars; have not a supply of ammunition; have not money sufficient to pay freight and travelling expenses; and left my family poorly supplied with common necessaries. [246]

In a letter to Brown of April 17th, Mr. Thayer proposed a name for Brown's prospective company, as follows:

> ... Will you allow me to suggest a name for your company? I should call them, "The Neighbors," from Luke tenth chapter: "Which thinkest thou was neighbor to him who fell among thieves." [Pg 211]

What Brown's thoughts were when he read this friendly suggestion can not well be imagined. The association of the word "neighbors" with the phrase "falling among thieves" may have caused him to suspect that Thayer held the secret of his dishonor; and that his guilt, hypocrisy, and mendacity might be on the verge of exposure. At any rate the effect of the combination of these words must have sunk deep into his heart. They could not but call up afresh, and vividly, a mental vision of the scenes on the Pottawatomie, when he and his band of thieves fell among, and upon, their neighbors, at midnight, and murdered and robbed them.

Brown's trouble now lay in the fact that he had to leave the East and there was nothing which he could do in the West. The Free-State cause under the direction of Robinson, and his co-laborers: Goodin, Roberts, Holliday, Lane, Crawford, Brown, Deitzler, Parrott, Brooks, Dudley, Emery, Woodward, Learnard, Phillips, Conway, Wood, and many others, was progressing in an orderly and satisfactory manner toward a decisive victory at the polls.

Acknowledging the receipt of Mr. Stearns's suggestions that he should go to Kansas immediately, Brown wrote him on the 13th: "I leave for the West to-day." It will be observed that he put off no fire-works, nor indulged in any exhibition in heroics on the occasion of his going to his, pretended, field of achievement. To William Barnes, of Albany, he wrote April 3d:

> I expect soon to return West; & to go back without even securing an outfit. I go with a *sad heart*, having failed to secure even the means of equipping; to say nothing of feeding men. I had when I returned, no more than I could peril; and could make no further sacrifice, except to go about in the attitude of a beggar: & that I have done, humiliating as it is. [Pg 212]

Proceeding slowly westward, almost aimlessly, with two wagons driven by himself and his son Owen, he worked the country he passed through for all the money and "supplies" he could

secure. It was not until August 7th, that he arrived at Tabor, Iowa. "I was obliged," he said,[247] "to stop at different points on the way, and to go to others off the route to solicit help."

While thus engaged, he wrote the "Autobiography"; a paper held in adoration by his biographers. It is in the form of a letter addressed to Mr. Stearns's twelve year old son, who had obtained "permission from his father to give all his pocket money to Captain Brown." It contains nothing that was unusual or extraordinary in the lives of those who wrestled with the problems and the privations which were incident to border-life during the period of Brown's youth. The paper was written for a special purpose and is valuable as an exhibit of his scheming to finance the operations he then intended to undertake in Virginia.[248]

John Brown was not a weakling, nor was he wasting any of his time trifling with sentiment when he wrote this letter. In his brain surged the hopes for success, and the fears of a miscarriage, for lack of funds, of a secret purpose of transcendant importance. The parents of young Stearns were the most valuable of his fiscal and moral supporters. Also he carried in his pocket the father's check for $7,000. Further, he knew that Mr. Stearns was seeking to have the State of New York appropriate $100,000 to put in his hands for use in his Kansas operations. Though still masquerading under cover of the deception which he practiced upon these people, he had definite plans in view, which were not a pretense; they were secret; he could not unfold them; but [Pg 213] they were none the less real. He intended to ask Mr. Stearns, and others, to finance his new project; and to do so without inquiring too closely into the nature of the details that would be involved in the execution of it. He wanted to retain the confidence which these friends reposed in him, and under these circumstances wrote the letter or autobiography, for the purpose of confirming their faith in his sincerity; and to encourage a belief in their minds that he was well equipped by heredity and training, to accomplish what he intended to undertake, and that he would with certainty succeed.

The problem of accounting for the impending failure of his Kansas pretentions was also a serious matter. Mr. Stearns confidently expected that upon his arrival in Kansas, Brown would promptly take up the subject of public affairs with Governor Robinson *et al.*, and tell them, sharply, what should be done. As he had derived it from Brown, these leaders needed a leader: one with courage and energy; and without a suspicion that he had been deceived in the premises, he thought Brown was equipped for the job, and that he was eager to give the Free-State leaders an effective stimulant for "backbone."

To keep up the pretense that his destination was Kansas, and that his going there had some political significance, Brown sought to have some responsible people meet him at Tabor for consultation about Kansas matters. He accordingly wrote to Colonel Phillips, June 9th, asking him to come, designating others whom he desired to meet. Also he wrote to Mr. Wattles and to Holmes, and probably to Cook. Phillips answered his letter June 24th, informing him that none of the men whom he hoped would meet him in the "most quiet way," for a conference about "very important matters," in relation to which there were to be "no words," was sufficiently impressed with the importance of his coming to put in an appearance. He also told him, what he already [Pg 214] knew, that there was no necessity for military operations.

Whether Brown entered Kansas at all, would depend solely upon whether or not conditions there were favorable for another "sudden coup to restore his fortunes." Upon this subject he was in correspondence with "Captain" James H. Holmes of Osawatomie fame. It will be remembered that Holmes had been "promptly and properly indicted and long pursued by the Kansas and Missouri authorities for "carrying the war into Africa"—stealing horses and other property." Holmes must have been a very daring and efficient thief, for Brown greatly admired him and "used to call him 'my little hornet.'"[249] One of the Little Hornet's men had been stung. To this Holmes referred in a letter which he wrote to Brown April 30th. He said:[250]

> You will hear of me either at Lawrence, through J. E. Cook, of the firm of Bacon, Cook, & Co., or I may be at Emporia, where I have taken a claim and make it my home. At any rate. Cook can tell you where I may be. A case has recently occurred of kidnapping a Free-State man, which is this: Archibald Kendall was some two weeks since, enticed out, under pretense of trading horses, by four men, and abducted into Missouri. Archy was in my company and is a good brave fellow.

In answer to a letter from Brown, Holmes replied August 16th:

> ... I do not know what you would have me infer by business; I presume though, by the word being emphasized, that you refer to the business for which I learn that you have a stock of material with you. If you mean this, I think quite strongly of a good opening for this business about the first Monday of Oct. next. If you wish other employments, I presume you will find just as profitable ones.[251]

The "Little Hornet" did not recommend, as profitable, the business that might be had on election- [Pg 215] day—October 5th; that opportunity foreshadowed the possibility of real resistance against pro-slavery aggressions; but other profitable employments could be had, by the act of undertaking them, at any time. These thieves understood each other. The "profitable employments" meant stealing horses.

With his arrival at Tabor, August 7th, Brown reached the limit of his possibilities. The next day he thus reported his arrival to Mr. Stearns:[252]

> In consequence of ill-health and other hindrances too numerous and unpleasant to write about, the least of which has *not been* the lack of sufficient means for freight

> bills and other expenses, I have never as yet returned to Kansas. This has been unavoidable, unless I returned without securing the principal object for which I came back from the Territory; and I am now waiting for teams and means to come from there to enable me to go on. I obtained two teams and wagons, as I talked of, at a cost of seven hundred and eighty-six dollars, but was obliged to hire a teamster,[253] and to drive one team myself. This unexpected increase of labor, together with being much of the time quite unwell and depressed with disappointments and delays, has prevented my writing sooner. Indeed, I had pretty much determined not to write till I should do it from Kansas. I will tell you some of my disappointments. I was flattered with the expectation of getting one thousand dollars from Hartford City and also one thousand dollars from New Haven. From Hartford I did get about two hundred and sixty dollars, and a little over in some repair of arms. From New Haven I got twenty-five dollars; at any rate, that is all I can get any advice of. Gerrit Smith supplied me with three hundred and fifty dollars, or I could not have reached this place. He also loaned me one hundred and ten dollars to pay to the Thompsons who were disappointed of getting their money for the farm I had agreed for and got possession of for use. I have been continually hearing from them that I *have not fulfilled*, and I told them I should not leave the country till the thing was completed. This has exceedingly mortified me. I could tell you much more had I room and time. *Have not given up.* Will write more when I get to Kansas. [Pg 216]
>
> Your friend,
> JOHN BROWN.

He now had at Tabor and at Nebraska City, five wagon loads of stuff[254] which was wholly useless for any purpose relating to Kansas. He had been posing, for nearly a year, as a hero charged with the responsibility of saving Kansas to freedom, and had finally come to the end of his rope. To Mr. Sanborn he wrote, August 13th:[255]

> I am now, at last, within a kind of hailing distance of our Free-State friends in Kansas.... I am now waiting to know what is best to do next.

Four days later he wrote to his wife these significant words:

> Should no disturbance occur, we may possibly think best to work back eastward.[256]

To Mr. Adair he wrote:

> I have been trying all season to get to Kansas; but have failed as yet, through ill health, want of means to pay Freights, travelling expenses, etc. *How to act now*; I do not know.[257]

There was nothing more that Brown could do. The failure of his pretensions was almost complete. Only his vocabulary had survived the general wreck. It was still intact and in working order. Drawing upon that inexhaustible resource of the charlatan, he wrote to Mr. Sanborn, October 1st:

> I am now so far recovered from my hurt, as to be able to do a little; and foggy as it is, "we do not give up the ship." I will not say that Kansas, watered by the tears and blood of my children, shall yet be free or I fall.[258] [Pg 217]

A comparison of Brown's correspondence at this time, with what his eulogists have put forth concerning it, discloses a wide divergence between the facts therein stated, and the biographical fiction relating thereto. Referring to Brown's irrelevant reference to the tears and blood of his children, Mr. Villard says:

> Brave as this sentiment is, it only increases the mystery of Brown's delaying at Tabor.... Obviously, Brown, grim, self-willed, resolute chieftain that he generally was, appeared baffled here and lacking wholly in a determination to reach the scene of action at any cost.... It will be seen that, when he finally reached Kansas, he stayed but a few days, was practically in hiding,...[259]

Only editorial fiction mystifies the cause of his delay at Tabor. The "grim, self-willed, resolute chieftain" had a clear and unalterable purpose in view, when he was delaying there. It was to attempt the conquest of the Southern States. If he entered Kansas, it would be merely an incident in the promotion of that scheme. His attitude was pivotal but not enigmatic; if a "disturbance" occurred in Kansas, he intended to proceed thither, and under cover of it, execute such purposes as he had in view; otherwise, he would "work back eastward."

One, at least, of his Eastern admirers, Mr. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, became impatient because of this delaying. After nursing his disappointment a few months, he protested Brown's procrastination, which evoked the following instructive reply from Mr. Sanborn:[260]

> ... You do not understand Brown's circumstances.... He is as ready for a revolution as any other man, and is now on the borders of Kansas, safe from arrest, but prepared for action, but he needs money for his present expenses and *active* support. I believe he is the best Disunion champion you can find, and with his hundred men, when he is put where he can raise them, and drill them (for he has an expert drill officer with him) he will do more to split the Union than a list of [Pg 218]

50,000 names, for your convention, good as that is.

What I am trying to hint at is that the friends of Kansas are looking with strange apathy at a movement which has all the elements of fitness and success—a good plan, a tried leader, and a radical purpose. If you can do anything for it *now*, in God's name do it—and the ill result of the new policy in Kansas may be prevented.

On August 13th, the "Cromwellian Trooper" wrote Mr. Sanborn a long letter,[261] which he intended "as a kind of report of my progress and success, as much for your committee or my friend Stearns as yourself." The letter has no public significance. It is a prolonged whine because he had not received all the *money* that had been promised him; also it incidentally but artistically put Mr. Stearns and Mr. Lawrence in a position that practically compelled them to make good the thousand dollars which he had theretofore pressed Mr. Lawrence for.[262] He said:

... It was the poor condition of my noble-hearted wife and her young children that made me follow up that encouragement with a tenacity that disgusted him and completely exhausted his patience. But after such repeated assurances from friends I so much respected that I could not suspect they would trifle with my feelings, I made a positive bargain for the farm; and when I found nothing for me at Peterboro', I borrowed one hundred and ten dollars of Mr. Smith for the men who occupied the farm, telling him it would certainly be refunded, and the others that they would get all their money very soon, and even before I left the country. This has brought me only extreme mortification and depression of feeling; for all my letters from home, up to the last, say not a dime has been paid in to Mr. Smith. Friends who never knew the lack of a sumptuous dinner little comprehend the value of such trifling matters to persons circumstanced as I am. But, my noble-hearted friend, I am "though faint, yet pursuing."...

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Brown's hope for a "disturbance" in Kansas was nourished by the reports that he received from General Lane, which, doubtless, encouraged him to prolong his stay at Tabor. Concerning this, Mr. Villard says:[263]

Only the erratic Lane, who was then the sole person trying to stir up strife in Kansas, and is accused by respectable witnesses, of planning schemes of wholesale massacre of pro-slavery men through a secret order; was on fire for Brown's presence in the Territory, but it was the Tabor arms, rather than their owner, he really desired.

Lane wrote Brown, confidentially, September 7th, as follows:[264]

(Private)

SIR:

We are earnestly engaged in perfecting an organization for the protection of the ballot-box at the October election (first Monday). Whitman and Abbott have been East after money & arms, for a month past, they write encouragingly, & will be back in a few days. We want you with *all* the *materials* you have. I see no objections to your coming into Kansas publicly. I can furnish you just such a force as you may deem necessary for your protection here & after you arrive. I went up to see you but failed.

Now what is wanted is this—write me concisely what transportation you require, how much money & the number of men to escort you into the Territory safely & if you desire it, I will come up with them.

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To this letter Brown replied September 16th:

I suppose that three good teams with *well covered* wagons, and ten *really ingenious*, industrious (not gassy) men, with about one hundred and fifty dollars in cash, could bring it about in the course of eight or ten days.

Lane, hoping to make his proposition more attractive, appointed Brown Brigadier-General, Second Brigade, First Division. But not until the 29th, did he send his Quartermaster-General, Mr. Jamison, to Brown, for the arms. In a letter addressed to "General John Brown" Lane said that it was "*all important* to Kansas, that your things should be in at the earliest possible moment, and that you should be much nearer than you are." He also enclosed fifty dollars, "all the money I have," but said that Jamison "had some more." Naturally Lane's proposal failed to interest Brown. He replied that he could not go to Lawrence on such short notice and returned the fifty dollars. [265] The election, however, passed off quietly and resulted in a complete victory for the Free-State men. They elected their delegate to Congress, and thirty-three of the fifty-two members of the Legislature.

Another of Lane's schemes served to keep Brown at Tabor a month longer: a project for "the wholesale assassination of pro-slavery men through a secret order" called Danites. This time Mr. Whitman ably seconded Lane's efforts to interest Brown. He borrowed one hundred and fifty dollars which he enclosed with a letter to him and sent it by Mr. Charles P. Tidd, saying: "General Lane will send teams from Falls City so that you may get your goods all in. Leave none behind. Come direct to this place, and see me before you make any disposition of your plunder.... Make the money I send answer to get here, and I hope by that time to have more for you. Mr. Tidd will explain all."[266] That this messenger gave Brown inside information concerning the prospective

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assassinations, there can be little doubt.

October 25th, Mr. Whitman reported to Mr. Stearns[267] that Brown would be at Lawrence November 3d, "at a very important council: Free-State Central Com., Executive Com., Vigilance Committee of 52, Generals and Capts. of the entire organization." Such a "disturbance" as this promised to be, could not otherwise than interest Brown. Regarding the money he received from Whitman as money due him from the National Kansas Committee, he kept it; and disregarding the instructions concerning the arms, he proceeded personally to Kansas, arriving at Mr. Whitman's home about November 5th: too late, it will be observed, for him to participate in the important council meeting of the 3d; but not too late to take advantage of any public disturbance that might arise as a result of the proceedings of the council. By messenger Tidd, Brown received one hundred dollars from Mr. Adair, and upon his arrival at Lawrence, he received from Mr. Whitman five hundred dollars for account of the Massachusetts Kansas Committee.

All the prospects for "trouble" in Kansas having vanished, Brown promptly decided to "move eastward." Mr. Villard states that he "remained two days with Mr. Whitman, obtaining tents and bedding." From Topeka, when *en route* to the East, on the 16th, he wrote to Mr. Stearns that he had "been in Kansas for more than a week;" that he had "found matters quite unsettled;" but was "decidedly of the opinion that there will be no use for arms or ammunition before another Spring;" that he had them all safe and meant "*to keep them so*." Also that he meant "to be busily; but very quietly engaged in perfecting his arrangements during the Winter." He further said: "Before getting your letter saying to me not to draw on you for the $7,000 (by Mr. Whitman) I [Pg 222] had fully determined not to do so unless driven to the last extremity." In a postscript he said: "If I do not use the arms and ammunition in *actual service*; I intend to restore them unharmed; but you must not flatter yourself on that score *too soon*."

It will be observed that Brown did not call upon Governor Robinson, or make any recommendations concerning Territorial affairs. To Mr. Adair he wrote on the 17th: "I have been for some days in the territory but keeping very quiet and looking about to see how the land lies ... I do not wish to have any noise about me at present; as I do not mean to 'trouble Israel.' I may find it best to go back to Iowa."[268]

The "failure" of Brown's plans to "trouble Israel," or the failure of his hope for another opportunity to plunder Kansas settlers on a large scale, lay in the simple fact that at the time he arrived at Tabor, August 7, 1857, the Free-State leaders had worked out the Free-State problem, and were then in position to make official declaration of the fact at the polls; and to take over, into their own hands, by right of the law of Squatter Sovereignty, the control of the Territorial government. They had almost accomplished their mighty undertaking. Also, they had established conditions of order, and security from violence, that afforded neither encouragement nor opportunity for organized bands of thieves, of the Brown type, to prey upon the settlements. The activities of the marauder and his "Little Hornet" were barred.

CHAPTER IX [Pg 223]

A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

He was the mildest manner'd man that ever scuttled ship
or cut a throat.

—Don Juan

At Collinsville, Connecticut, about March 1, 1857, John Brown gave out the first evidence that he contemplated inciting an insurrection in the Southern States. He was there making his usual appeal for money. To a group of citizens, among whom was a Mr. Charles Blair, he told the story of Black Jack; and, as was his custom in such recitals, he drew from his boot a trophy of the fight —a two-edged dirk-knife with a blade about eight inches long—which he had taken from Captain Pate; and said, that if he "had a lot of those things to attach to poles about six feet long, they would be a capital weapon of defense for the settlers of Kansas to keep in their log cabins to defend themselves against any sudden attack that might be made upon them." And then turning to Blair, whom he knew to be an edge-tool maker, asked him what it would "cost to make five hundred or a thousand of those things" as he described them. To this Blair replied that he would make "five hundred for a dollar and a quarter apiece; or if he wanted a thousand, they might be made for a dollar apiece." To this Brown replied that he would want them made. March 30th, a contract for the thousand spears was signed. Brown agreeing to pay five hundred dollars within ten days. At the time agreed upon he paid three hundred dollars; but April 25th, he remitted two hundred and fifty dollars more. This amount Blair expended in purchasing material, and in making a part of the order; after which he suspended work on it until such time as Brown would advance additional funds. There was some correspondence between the parties in February and [Pg 224] March, 1858, but nothing further was done in the matter until June 3, 1859, when Brown again called upon Blair and made satisfactory arrangements for payment of the remaining four hundred and fifty dollars; whereupon Blair renewed work upon the order, and, on September 17th, delivered the spears complete, at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.[269]

In New York City, Brown made the acquaintance of an Englishman who entered into his life more largely, and gave greater direction to his actions, than his biographers have acknowledged. This

man was "Colonel" Hugh Forbes. Brown called upon him, it is said, with a letter of introduction from the Rev. Joshua Leavitt. The date of their meeting is not given; but, since Brown is not reported as being in that city during 1857, after his visit there, January 23d-26th,[270] it may be assumed that they met upon that occasion, and together planned to precipitate a revolution in the South, through an insurrection of the slave population. Forbes was a practical as well as a professional revolutionist. He had served with Garibaldi. Mr. Villard refers to him as "a suave adventurer of considerable ability." To Mr. Horace Greeley he was "fanatical and mercenary and wholly wanting in common sense." Gerrit Smith described him as a "handsome, soldierly-looking man, skillful in the sword-exercise, and with some military experience picked up under Garibaldi." Before entering the latter's service he had been a "silk merchant at Sienna." In Mr. Sanborn's opinion he was a "brave, vainglorious, undisciplined person, with little discretion, and quite wanting in qualities that would fit him to be a leader of American soldiers. Yet he was ambitious, eager to head a crusade against slavery." In New York he taught fencing, and did some work on the *Tribune* as reporter and translator.

It was not unnatural that these two adventurers should meet and unite their fortunes in a revolutionary venture. Also, there was some similarity in their lives. Both were "typical of the human flotsam and jetsam washed up by every revolutionary movement." Forbes had been washed up by Garibaldi's "revolution" in Italy, and Brown had been washed up by Robinson's revolution in Kansas. Forbes was looking for an adventure, and Brown had a make-believe one on hand, which, if prudently handled, might be made to serve the purposes of their mutual ambitions. The suave adventurer was the stronger character. He impressed Brown with his knowledge of military science, and with the value his services would be in their undertaking, and so fascinated the "grim, self-willed, resolute chieftain" that he engaged his services at one hundred dollars per month, and paid him six months' salary in advance. Mr. Villard says:[271] [Pg 225]

> John Brown, the reticent and self-contained, unbosomed himself to this man as he had not to his Massachusetts friends who advanced the money upon which he lived and plotted.

In relation to this Mr. Sanborn says:[272]

> It was about this time that Brown made the unlucky acquaintance of Hugh Forbes, was pleased with him, and engaged him to drill his soldiers at a salary of one hundred dollars a month, even going so far as to pay him six hundred dollars in advance.

Both of these major transactions—the placing of the order for the spears, and the employment of Forbes, as stated—are so discreditable to ordinary intelligence, that they impeach Brown's sanity, except upon the sole hypothesis, that these two men had, at that time, so matured their plans for attempting a revolution, through an insurrection of the slaves, that Brown felt justified in placing the order for the spears, and in engaging the services of a man capable of directing large military operations. It is impossible to believe that Brown contemplated giving up a thousand dollars for a purpose so tame and absurd as the distribution of a thousand spears among the Free-State settlers of Kansas. They were already well armed with modern weapons—fire-arms—and knew how to use them; while the proposal to employ a "drill-master" at such a salary, in view of the state of his treasury, to drill such a lot of nightriders as he could use in Kansas, is quite as preposterous. If Brown needed the services of a drill-master, he knew where one could be had for less money. There were plenty of men available who had served in the volunteer army in Mexico, or had been discharged, or had deserted from the regular army—men of the Aaron D. Stevens class—who were competent to command as well as to drill. He also knew that many such men were ready and anxious to engage in adventures in the Kansas field, who would serve without compensation, other than a share of the prospective plunder. [Pg 226]

From the time of his alliance with Forbes, Brown pressed forward steadily, with a single definite ultimate purpose. The conquest of the Southern States was on; and the Osawatomie Guerrilla had become the Soldier of Fortune.

Brown and Forbes moved upon the theory that the slaves were the rightful owners of their masters' property. They believed that every slave regarded his master as an enemy, who denied him a right to his family, and appropriated to himself the fruits of his labor; that freedom was the hope and the dream of every slave; that each lived in a state of expectancy, awaiting the coming of a "Liberator" who would lead them in a crusade for liberty. Also, they believed that every slave would fight for his freedom. Self-constituting themselves "Liberators," they regarded each slave as already enrolled in their service. The problems before them were how to arouse these units of energy; how to incite the slaves to simultaneous activity, and how to organize and direct them as an operating force. The man who had killed his friendly neighbors with nonchalance, and had taken their horses, could not understand why another man, a slave, should hesitate to kill an enemy, such as has been described, and take his horses and lands, and be further rewarded by the benefaction of liberty. [Pg 227]

As results of their plotting, and planning, and scheming, they seem to have figured out to their entire satisfaction, how they could destroy the slave-holding population of the Southern States and confiscate their property; and then, with the aid of their negro allies, thus liberated from slavery, and with the assistance of the non-slave-holding whites in the South and the ambitious and daring in the North, who would be lured to join them, they could create an army; invade the South; take possession of the several State governments, and reorganize them under the jurisdiction of a Provisional Government.

Brown was a disunionist,[273] and believed his revolution would result in a dissolution of the Union. His friends—Redpath, Sanborn, Higginson, Smith *et al.*, were disunionists, and he lived in an atmosphere saturated with the toxin of disunion sentiment. Also, he was an optimist, and believed that while he ravaged the South with his bloody scourge, the disunion propaganda in the North would assert itself to his advantage, and create such a diversion in his favor, as would leave him and Forbes free to deal with the South and its problems in their own way. Only under such conditions could he hope to seize the property of slave-holders, "personal and real, wherever and whenever it may be found in either Free or Slave States." From their point of view, or as they hoped to make it appear, their revolution was to be an affair between the citizens of a block of sovereign States, in the result of which the Federal Government would not be especially concerned. They would act within the limits of the States involved for revolutionary purposes, [Pg 228] and not in unnecessarily aggressive hostility toward the United States. At the same time, these adventurers well understood that no matter how successful they might be in starting their revolution, there would probably come a time when the Federal army would have to be reckoned with; that the General Government would attempt to intervene in behalf of local order, at least, and might seriously embarrass their operations or wholly defeat them. This visible menace they not only planned to overcome, or eliminate from the problem, but actually to turn it into a valuable asset, by transposing it bodily to their side of the military equation. They planned, in apparent sincerity of purpose, to accomplish what appears to be the most colossal of all imaginable absurdities: to have the men of the United States army abandon their colors and accept service in their army; or, as Brown expressed it, to make an "actual exchange of service from that of Satan to the service of God."

To poison the minds of the soldiery of the Union and to ripen them for revolt against their colors, they planned to begin a campaign of education; to publish and distribute in the army, a series of tracts, for the instruction of the officers and enlisted men in public morals and in patriotism. In the division of their labors, to Forbes was assigned the Department of Literature. In pursuance of his duties, he proceeded to prepare a "Manual of the Patriotic Volunteer," and a tract, which was the first of what was to be a series of tracts, entitled "The Duty of the Soldier."[274] The tract was headed in small type: "Presented with respectful and kind feelings, to the Officers and Soldiers of the United States Army in Kansas." Mr. Villard says[275] the object of the tract was to win them from their allegiance to their colors. That it does this indirectly by asking whether the "Soldiers of the Republic" should be "vile living machines and thus sustain Wrong against Right." That it [Pg 229] contained "three printed pages of rambling and discursive discussion of the soldiery of the ancient Republics and of the princes of Antiquity, and a consideration of Authority, legitimate and illegitimate—as ill-fitted as possible an appeal to the regular soldier of 1857." Appended to the copy in his possession is a closing remark in Brown's handwriting as follows:

> It is as much the duty of the common soldier of the U. S. Army according to his ability and opportunity, to be informed *upon all subjects* in any way affecting the political or general welfare of his country; and to watch with jealous vigilance, the course and management of all public functionaries both civil and military: and to govern his actions as a citizen Soldier accordingly: as though he were President of the United States.
>
> Respectfully yours,
> A Soldier.

To one person at least, this literary performance was a serious matter. In the promotion of it, John Brown was deeply, deadly in earnest. The statement that "Forbes and not Brown, was the author of the tract"[276] is not correct, and to characterize the paper as Forbes's attempt to seduce the soldiery of the Union,[277] is equally misleading. The scheme originated with Brown; he furnished the subject. To Forbes he assigned the duty of preparing the text for publication. Writing to Rev. Theodore Parker, from Boston, March 7, 1858, he said:

> ... I want you to undertake to provide a substitute for an address you saw last season, directed to the officers and soldiers of the United States Army. The ideas contained in that address I, of course, like for I furnished the skeleton. I never had the ability to clothe those ideas in language at all, to satisfy myself.... In the first place it must be short or it will not be generally read. It must be in the simplest or plainest language, without the least affectation of the scholar about it, and yet be [Pg 230] worded with great clearness and power.... The address should be appropriate, and particularly adapted to the peculiar circumstances we anticipate, and should look to the actual change of service from that of Satan to the service of God. It should be in short, a most earnest and powerful appeal to men's sense of right and to their feelings of humanity. Soldiers are men, and no man can certainly calculate the value and importance of getting a single "nail into old Captain Kidd's chest." It should be provided beforehand, and be ready in advance to distribute by all persons, male and female, who may be disposed to favor the right.... Now, my dear sir, I have told you about as well as I know how, what I am anxious at once to secure. Will you write the tracts, or get them written, so that I may commence colporteur?[278]

There can be no doubt that Brown placed a high estimate upon the value of this tract, but we know from the postscript thereto, that, although the tract was dedicated to the "Officers and Soldiers" of the army, it was the "common soldier" that he hoped to arouse and incite. His effort to convert the army to his service, by means of a tract, may be called madness, but it may also be

said there was "method" in the madness. If he had been criticised in relation to this matter, he would probably have said in reply what he said to Mr. Sanborn, defending his action in ordering the thousand spears: "Wise men may ridicule the idea; but I take the whole responsibility of that job;" which was equivalent to saying: "You do not comprehend the scope of my scheme, or the use which I intend to make of these spears. When they have accomplished their silent but deadly work, the wisdom of my conduct concerning them will appear." The trouble in this case was how to obtain an opportunity to inject the virus of revolt into the ranks of the army—how to start the contagion—how to get his proposition before the troops, and to explain what he intended to do; and what he would have at his disposal to offer in the way of rewards for services in his army, [Pg 231] without putting himself and his plans in peril. How he intended to use the tract can only be surmised. But the fact remains that he had to begin this all important move somehow or somewhere, and the tract was, probably, evolved from his inner consciousness to meet that necessity. It may therefore be assumed that, under cover of discussing the generalities contained in the tract, Brown hoped to make acquaintances among the enlisted men of the army in whom he could confide, and who would serve his purpose by fomenting the revolt.

In projecting his campaign, Brown was a law unto himself, untrammelled by the accepted usages of war. The excess of his ardor and enthusiasm led him to believe that he could corrupt the rank and file of the army. In his philosophy, the daring, dangerous, adventurous men who largely composed the enlisted men of the army at that time, having no hope of promotion in the service, would become eager listeners to his proposal. Before them, he would throw open the storehouses of his prospective empire, that they might behold the volume of his treasures, and select that which they desired. His army was to be created; he had the men in view—the slaves whom he would set free—but not the officers to command them. If the enlisted men would desert from their service singly or *en masse*, and thus temporarily paralyze the United States forces, and join him, they could immediately become commissioned officers in his army and share with him the honors, the booty, and the beauty of the rich country he intended to ravage. By means of these "mighty and soul satisfying rewards" he hoped to "seduce the soldiery of the Union." The campaign of education was a stratagem.

It is not apparent that Forbes, at any time, showed a desire to quit Brown's service, or any disinclination to follow him westward. It is true that he was in arrears at one time with his [Pg 232] literary work, but that was due to an incidental diversion of his activities in other directions—soliciting contributions and collecting money from various benevolent persons, including Mr. Greeley and Mr. Gerrit Smith. Forbes also had been making necessary arrangements for the comfort of his family—a wife and a daughter. The former being in Paris, and the latter in New York, he wisely decided, in view of the character of the pending military operations, to have the latter return to the care of her mother. Brown, who was paying the price, required results rather than explanations. It appears that Forbes had not prepared the "Manual" within the time in which he had led his impetuous chief to believe it would be forthcoming; and this had aroused an unwarranted suspicion in his mind that his subordinate was lagging. It is also true that Forbes had been indiscreet from a "military" point of view. He had talked, as one having authority, or knowingly, about the situation in Kansas, and had committed the very serious mistake of expressing a doubt that their services would be needed there before winter, which would have a tendency to discourage contributions to the "cause of freedom." In addition to all this, Brown became suspicious that the "Colonel" was ambitious, and aspired to supersede him in command; or, it may be that he became jealous because of his subordinate's brilliant accomplishments—his "military bearing" and qualifications. Mr. Sanborn confirmed Brown's distrust of him. He says that "Forbes was ambitious and apparently desirous of taking Brown's place in command." It may, however, be nearer the truth to assume that the depleted condition of the exchequer had much to do with Brown's "dissatisfaction" with Forbes.

There is no apparent reason why Forbes should have preceded Brown into Kansas, and the fact that he arrived at Tabor August 9th, two days after the arrival of his chief, is proof of commendable alacrity on his part to take up and continue his duties. Besides, Forbes brought with him copies of the "Manual," and copies of Brown's specialty: "The Duty of the Soldier." With [Pg 233] these evidences of his ability, fidelity, and loyalty, the shadows of distrust were all dispelled, and Forbes's restoration to Brown's confidence and favor resulted immediately. The next day Brown was in a hopeful mood, and wrote very encouragingly to Mr. Stearns, sending him copies of the tracts and, incidentally, impressing upon his attention the important fact that he was "in immediate want of Five Hundred to One Thousand Dollars for secret service and no questions asked."

There can be no doubt that in their poverty, but dreaming of the splendors of war, of marching armies, and the possibilities of empire, these two bankrupt but hopeful speculators in destiny gazed wistfully upon the order for the seven thousand dollars that Stearns had given to Brown after his "Farewell to the Plymouth Rocks" effort. The question was, how to get some of it. Unfortunately for their purpose, Mars was not doing a thing for them; they were unable to detect even so much as a *trace* of a war-cloud upon the Kansas sky; and the $7,000 could only be used for the subsistence of the make-believe troopers when in "active service." Under these circumstances they did the best they could; they made as much as possible out of nothing. They wrote Mr. Stearns what he already knew; that there was no fighting in Kansas "just then"; and, that while "Rather interesting times were expected, no great excitement is reported." But "Our next advices may entirely change the aspect of things." From this, Mr. Stearns was to be led to infer that imminent danger to the Free-State cause was lurking somewhere, and that the sagacious leader was already upon the trail of it. Also, the hope that Brown earnestly expressed that the "Friends of Freedom" would respond to his call and "prove me now herewith," was

intended to move Mr. Stearns to authorize Brown to draw upon him for a part of the seven thousand dollars for their immediate necessities. But, although the request was wisely framed and neatly but urgently pressed, it failed to raise any money. To Theodore Parker Brown wrote September 11th:[279] [Pg 234]

> My dear Sir: Please find on other side, first number of a series of tracts lately gotten up here. I need not say I did not prepare it; but I would be glad to know what you think of it, and much obliged for any suggestions you see proper to make. My particular object in writing is to say, that I am in immediate want of some five hundred or one thousand dollars for secret service, and no questions asked. I want the friends of freedom to "prove me now herewith."... Have no news to send by *letter*.

Stranded at Tabor, without means to go anywhere, or with which to do anything, the two leaders of the revolution had abundant leisure to compare their respective plans of operation, and their views upon methods of procedure, as well as to formulate and agree upon final plans for the invasion and conquest. Forbes, later, disclaimed any intention to participate in "Brown's" purpose to overthrow the State Governments, and establish a provisional government; but that disclaimer came as an incident in his effort to supersede Brown, after his name had been dropped from the muster and pay-roll. November 1st, the financial embargo was raised by the receipt of two hundred and fifty dollars: one hundred and fifty from Lane, and one hundred from Mr. Adair. It was not a large sum of money, when compared with the expenses usually incurred in "mobilizing" even a small army, or, as compared with the magnitude of the operations they intended to inaugurate; but it was large enough to enable the filibusters to start doing something.

In their dreams of the Provisional Government and in their planning for the Provisional army, they decided to open a school for instruction in the science of war and in the science of civil government, at some point convenient to the scene of the prospective conflict; whereat the persons whom Brown had in view for his subordinate commanders—general officers, division and military district commanders—could be swiftly educated and fitted for their respective duties and responsibilities. Forbes, whose position was that of a chief of staff, was to have charge of the school. November 2d, he took passage from Nebraska City for the East to find a suitable location, in Ashtabula County, Ohio, for the War College which was to be improvised; and Brown, as we have seen, proceeded to Kansas to further finance their venture if local conditions —"disturbances"—became favorable for fiscal operations; and to matriculate the tyros. [Pg 235]

He had been in correspondence with Holmes—the "Little Hornet"—and other adventurers whom he thought would engage in his enterprises. Cook agreed to join him and recommended others—Richard Realf, Luke F. Parsons, and Richard J. Hinton.[280] On Sunday, November 8th, Brown met Cook and Parsons, near Lawrence, and came to an understanding with them for organizing a party to steal some horses; or, as Mr. Villard puts it: "To organize a company for the purpose of putting a stop to the aggressions of the pro-slavery forces." A few days later he notified the members of the party to meet at the appointed rendezvous. Cook met him on the 16th, at Mrs. Sheridan's, near Topeka. The next day Aaron D. Stevens, Charles W. Moffet, and John H. Kagi joined them, and the party set out on the contemplated expedition.

In their camp north of Topeka that evening. Brown took the men into his confidence, and disclosed to them his intention to attempt the conquest of the Southern States.[281] "Here," says Cook in his confession, "for the first time I learned that we were to leave Kansas to attend a military school during the winter." It is for the reader to decide for himself whether or not the party stole any horses that night, or what other steps they took, if any, to put "a stop to the aggressions of the pro-slavery forces." Their destination was Tabor, Iowa; they were horse thieves, and were in a secret camp, north of Topeka. Continuing his narrative Cook says: "Next morning I was sent back to Lawrence to get a draft of $80 cashed, and to get Parsons, Realf and Hinton, to go back with me." He relates how he with Realf and Parsons, made the trip to Tabor; but the route traveled by Brown, Stevens, Moffet, and Kagi, and the incidents of their journey, if any, are not given. [Pg 236]

December 2d, there were assembled at Tabor, John Brown, Owen Brown, A. D. Stevens, Charles W. Moffett, C. P. Tidd, John H. Kagi, Richard Realf, Luke F. Parsons, John E. Cook, and W. M. Leeman; also Richard Richardson, a runaway slave whom Brown had picked up at Tabor. "Here," Cook says, "we found that Captain Brown's ultimate destination was the State of Virginia"; and these were the men he had selected for his commanders in the Army of the Invasion. They were not a coterie of humanitarians or sentimentalists whom he had picked up, mooning about in Kansas; but a lot of care-free, reckless, ambitious young men who had parted their moorings to an orderly life. Of them Senator Doolittle, speaking for the minority of the Mason Committee said: "It was from such elements [lawless] that John Brown concocted his conspiracy consisting of young men and boys over whom he had entire control, many of them foreigners and none of substance or position in the country."[282] It is not in the "dominating spirit of John Brown himself must be found the true reason for their readiness to join in so desperate a venture as Brown outlined to them or because of their readiness to go any lengths to undermine slavery."[283] Cook knew Brown's career from the Pottawatomie to Osawatomie, and approved of his system for undermining things. Parsons was with him in the Osawatomie cattle raid. Stevens had graduated from a volunteer in the Mexican War, to a private in the First Dragoons, United States army. He [Pg 237]

was insubordinate, and had been tried for mutiny and for assaulting an officer—Major George A. H. Blake, First Dragoons—and sentenced to death. The sentence had been commuted to confinement, for three years at hard labor, in the military prison at Fort Leavenworth, from which he escaped and joined the Free-State forces in Kansas. He became colonel of the Second Regiment in the Free-State army under the name of Charles Whipple. It was not Brown and his magnetism or any insipid nonsense about "philanthropy or love for the slave" that appealed to these adventurers, but the scheme which he unfolded before them. It was the charm of the glittering expanse of opportunity which he pressed upon their mental conceptions, that won, and enlisted them in the venture.

On December 4th, with their plunder, ordnance stores and camp and garrison equipment, Brown and his staff set out from Tabor for Ashtabula. There had been argument, disagreement, and some wrangling at Tabor about the practicability of the undertaking; but yielding to the force of Brown's exposition of it, opposition was silenced and confidence of success supplanted doubt in the minds of all. Of the march across Iowa to Iowa City and Springdale, Mr. Villard, quoting from fragments of Owen Brown's diary, that survived the wreck at Harper's Ferry, says: "Progress was slow, for all of the men walked and the weather was bitter cold. On December 8, the entry reads: 'Cold, wet and snowy; hot discussion about the Bible and war—warm argument about the effects of the abolition of slavery upon the Southern States, Northern States Commerce and manufactures, also upon the British provinces and the civilized world; whence came our civilization and origin? Talk about prejudices against color; question proposed for debate,—greatest general, Washington or Napoleon.'" The party arrived at Springdale, Iowa, on the 28th [Pg 238] or 29th of December. Early in January, 1858, Brown changed his plans about going to Ashtabula County, and for opening there the School of Instruction. On January 11th, he located his men for the winter at the home of Mr. William Maxson, the latter agreeing to take the wagons and horses from Brown on account for boarding. The War College was then opened at Springdale, instead of in Ashtabula County; and with Stevens in charge instead of Forbes. Continuing his narrative about the doings of the school, Mr. Villard says:[284] "On the 12th (February) there was 'talk about our adventures and plans.' In the main, discussion ranged from theology and spiritualism to caloric engines, and covered every imaginable subject between them. Much talk of war and fighting there was, and drilling with wooden swords. Stevens, by reason of his service in the Mexican War, and subsequently in the United States Dragoons, was drill-master in default of Forbes. Sometimes they went into the woods to look for natural fortifications; again they discussed dislodging the enemy from a hill-top by means of zig-zag trenches. Forbes manual was diligently perused." Also they organized a "moot legislature and beguiled the long winter evenings, drafting laws for an ideal 'State of Topeka.' It followed the regulation procedure with its bills and debates." The curriculum in this school is evidence of the character of the duties the students therein were being fitted to perform; they were being instructed in the higher strategy of war, in the command of troops and in the science of government. Writing to Mr. Sanborn from Brooklyn, February 26th, Brown said:[285]

> I want to put into the hands of my young men, copies of Plutarch's "Lives," Irving's "Life of Washington," the best written Life of Napoleon, and other similar books, together with maps and statistics of States ... I also want to get a quantity of best white cotton drilling—some hundred pieces, if I can get it. The use of this article I [Pg 239] will explain hereafter.

About January 1st, the two Soldiers of Fortune—Brown and Forbes—arrived at the parting of their ways. They seem to have been in agreement and in full sympathy with each other when they separated November 2d; for Brown at that time gave Forbes a letter to Mr. Frederick Douglass, commending him to his confidence and asking Douglass to assist him. The letter Forbes lost no time in presenting. He stopped at Rochester, as he went east, and got what money he could. Mr. Douglass says[286] that he was not favorably impressed with Forbes at first, but took him to a hotel and paid his board while he remained, and gave him some money for his family in Europe, then in destitute circumstances. He introduced him to some of his German friends whom Forbes "soon wore out with his endless begging."

Failing to collect money for the cause, as fast as he thought he was entitled to, or as fast as he needed it, Forbes began to try to force contributions from Brown's friends, claiming that he had been employed by him, and that sums of money were due him on account of arrears of salary. Later he threatened to expose Brown's plans of invasion, believing, or assuming to believe, that such plans were a part of a general conspiracy, among the northern Abolitionists, to overthrow slavery. Information relating to his conduct was received by Brown at Springdale, and caused him to halt there until he could ascertain the extent of Forbes's defection. Upon confirmation of his advices, and being unable to pay Forbes's salary, he dropped him; refused to answer his letters, and changed his plans of procedure. Pressed by his necessities, Forbes became aggressive, and, carrying his case to Mr. Charles Sumner and to Mr. Henry Wilson, and to Mr. William H. Seward, denounced Brown as "reckless, unreliable and vicious." He approached Mr. [Pg 240] Wilson in the Senate chamber at Washington and demanded that Brown and his men be disarmed.

While Forbes caused Brown no end of trouble, the case was not nearly so serious as it would have been, if his eastern patrons had known what Forbes was talking about. Brown, whose "sincerity of purpose was above suspicion," and who "was so transparent that all men can see him through," had led them, throughout the whole extent of their intercourse, to think and believe that his operations were to be undertaken solely for the defense of the Free-State settlers in Kansas; they knew nothing about his plans for operations in Virginia. In the face of this condition of affairs,

Forbes could make no progress, by means of his threats to make exposures, and was immediately discredited; for, as Mr. Douglass said, "Nobody believed him although the scoundrel told the truth." He was discreet however, in his controversy with Brown and in his denunciation of him, in this respect: he was careful not to give his troubles publicity, or to do anything that would otherwise imperil or wreck the general proposition.

Forbes did not, at first, comprehend Brown's autocracy in the scheme—that he had no associates—and, that while he depended upon his generous friends to finance the enterprise, he had not taken them into his confidence, but was in reality practicing a deception upon them. When the facts of the situation finally became apparent to his understanding, he then sought to discredit Brown and his plans, and to ingratiate himself with his clientage, so as to supersede him in leadership, and in control of any general plan of action, in relation to slavery, that might thereafter be agreed upon and undertaken. With this purpose in view, Forbes addressed a letter to Dr. Samuel G. Howe, May 14, 1858, submitting to him a very weak statement of the violent and dangerous things which Brown intended to do, for comparison with a statement of the safe and sane things, that, in his judgment, could be done: claiming that he had urged his plan upon [Pg 241] Brown, and that he had, at one time, succeeded in obtaining Brown's consent thereto: and that it had been adopted by them under the name of "The Well-Matured Plan." Extracts from this letter are published by Mr. Villard on pages 313-314. Forbes, setting up a straw man for the purpose of knocking him down, stated that Brown proposed, with from twenty-five to fifty colored and white men, well armed and taking with them a quantity of spare arms, "to beat up a slave quarter in Virginia." To this Forbes offered objections as follows: "No preparatory notice having been given to the slaves [no notice could go or with prudence be given to them] the invitation to rise might, unless they were already in a state of agitation, meet with no response or a feeble one." To this Brown had replied, that he "was sure of a response." He calculated that he could get "on the first night from 200 to 500. Half, or thereabouts, of this first lot, he proposed to keep with him, amounting to a hundred or so of them, and make a dash at the Harper's Ferry manufactory, destroying what he could not carry off. The other men, not of this party, were to be subdivided into three, four, or five distinct parties, each under two or three of the original band, and would beat up other slave quarters whence more men would be sent to join him." "He [Brown] argued that were he pressed by the U. S. Troops, which, after a few weeks, might concentrate, he could easily maintain himself in the Alleghenies and that his New England partisans would in the meantime, call a Northern Convention, restore tranquility and overthrow the pro-slavery administration." This, Forbes contended, could at most be "a mere local explosion. A slave insurrection, being from the very nature of things deficient in men of education and experience, would under such a system as B. proposed, be either a flash in the pan or would leap beyond his control, or any control, when it would become a scene of anarchy and would assuredly be suppressed." On the other hand Brown considered "foreign intervention as not impossible." As to [Pg 242] the dream of a Northern convention, Forbes "considered it as a settled fallacy. Brown's New England friends would not have courage to show themselves as long as the issue was doubtful," and added: "see my letter to J. B. dated 23rd February."

Since Forbes's letters to Brown deal directly, and without dissimulation, with the matters under consideration, it is exceedingly regrettable that they have been withheld from publication. They would expose the flimsy fictions which have been put forth concerning the fictitious company of "volunteer-regulars": and that Forbes had been employed as a drill-master for it. Also, it is especially regrettable that his letter of February 23d has been suppressed. For there can be no doubt that it would disclose their plans for the invasion; the means they relied upon for success, and the broad lines which they expected to operate upon. It contained, in all probability, a discussion, from Forbes's point of view, of the insurrection; of armies and conquest; of government, and relations with foreign States; of northern conventions, and of international complications. This correspondence was suppressed, doubtless, because the publication of it would dissipate the theory that it was an altruistic "Foray into Virginia" that Brown had in view, or an illogical guerrilla "raid."

The passing of Forbes came with an "adroit and stinging" reply from Dr. Howe to his letter of May 14th, who, among other things said: "I infer from your language that you have obtained (in confidence) some information concerning an expedition which you think to be commendable, provided *you* could manage it, but which you will *betray* and *denounce* if he does not give it up! You are, sir, the guardian of your own honor—but I trust that for your children's sake, at least, you will never let your passion lead you to a course that might make them blush."[287]

CHAPTER X [Pg 243]

THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

Fear made the Gods; audacity, has made kings.

—Crebillon

Before leaving Springdale for the East, Brown forwarded the ordnance stores to his son John, at Conneaut, Ohio, who carefully concealed them. Proceeding to Rochester, New York, he stopped at the home of Mr. Douglass, where he remained until February 15th. From there he commenced his correspondence with the men whom he hoped he could induce to advance the necessary

money to float, or to initiate, the revolution; and it was at the Douglass home that he wrote and revised the constitution for the Provisional Government which he intended to attempt to set up in the Southern States. Mr. Douglass stated to Mr. Sanborn[288] that he had a copy of this Constitution in Brown's own hand writing, "prepared by himself at my house."

February 2d, he wrote to the Rev. Theodore Parker that he had nearly perfected arrangements for carrying out an important measure in which the "world had a deep interest, as well as Kansas," and that he only lacked from five hundred to eight hundred dollars to enable him "to do it." Also that it was the "same object for which he had asked for secret service money last fall"; that he had written to some of their mutual friends concerning the matter but that none of them understood his "views as well as you do"; and that he could not explain them without their committing themselves further than he knew of their doing, closing with the question, "Do you know some parties whom you could induce to give their abolition theories a thoroughly practical shape?... Do you think any of my Garrisonian friends at Boston, Worcester, or any other place, can be induced to supply a little 'straw' if I will absolutely make 'bricks'?"[289] [Pg 244]

He wrote letters in a similar vein to Gerrit Smith, to Mr. Stearns, to Mr. Sanborn, and to Mr. Higginson, and sought to have a meeting with these gentlemen at Mr. Smith's home on February 23d, at which he intended to submit to them as much of his plans as he thought it advisable for them to know, for their consideration and approval. Mr. Sanborn alone responded to his call; he arrived at Peterboro on Monday evening, February 22d. Brown had arrived there on the preceding Thursday, and had gone over the scheme with Mr. Smith. During the night of the 22d, Mr. Sanborn says, the whole outline of the campaign in Virginia was laid before the little council. "In astonishment and almost in dismay," they listened to the reading of the constitution that he had prepared for the government of the territory which he proposed to conquer; and to a recital of the details of the hazardous adventure. In the discussion, he explained his "plan of organization, of fortification, of occupation, and of settlement in the South" and of his "retreat through the North," if retreat became necessary. He had foreseen every difficulty they could suggest, and had provided for it "in some manner." And then he had "God on his side." "If God be for us who can be against us." All he asked for, in addition to the equipment which he then had, was "but eight hundred dollars, and would think himself rich with a thousand." With that he would open his campaign in the spring, and he had no doubt that the enterprise "would *pay*" as he said.[290]

The next day Mr. Smith and Mr. Sanborn took up Brown's proposition for final consideration and agreed to sustain him in it. They reasoned in this way:

> To withhold aid would only delay, not prevent him; nothing short of betraying him to the enemy would do that. Mr. Smith restated in his eloquent way the daring propositions of Brown, the import of which he understood fully; and then said in substance: "You see how it is; our dear old friend has made up his mind to this course and cannot be turned from it. We cannot give him up to die alone; we must support him. I will raise so many hundred dollars for him; you must lay the case before your friends in Massachusetts, and perhaps they will do the same. I see no other way."[291] For myself I had reached the same conclusion, and engaged to bring the scheme at once to the attention of the three Massachusetts men to whom Brown had written, and also to Dr. S. G. Howe, who had sometimes favored action almost as extreme as this proposed by Brown. [Pg 245]

As to Mr. Smith, he had approved of Colonel Forbes, to whom he gave one hundred and fifty dollars, and thought that he would "make himself very useful in our sacred Kansas work." He approved of Brown's "effort to seduce the soldiers of the Union" and thought his tract, "The Duty of the Soldier," very well written. After his declaration to Thaddeus Hyatt:[292] "We must not shrink from fighting for Liberty—& if the Federal troops fight against her we must fight against them," he had not far to go to approve of the insurrection and invasion which Brown now contemplated.

The outcome of the Peterboro conference was satisfactory. Brown skillfully put his public affairs in the hands of a committee—a war committee, composed of friends who, he had reason to believe, would finance his adventure. He therefore directed his energies to the task of strengthening his organization for the work before him. Among those whom he sought to enlist under his banner was Mr. Sanborn. To him he wrote from Peterboro February 24th:[293] [Pg 246]

> My dear Friend: Mr. Morton[294] has taken the liberty of saying to me that you felt half inclined to make a common cause with me. I greatly rejoiced for I believe when you come to look at the ample field I labor in, and the rich harvest which not only this entire country but the whole world during the present and future generations may reap from its successful cultivation, you will feel that you are out of your element until you find that you are in it, an entire unit. What an inconceivable amount of good you might so effect by your counsel, your example, your encouragement, your natural and acquired ability for active service! And then how very little we can possibly lose! Certainly the cause is enough to *live* for, if not to—for. I have only had this one opportunity, in a life of nearly sixty years; and could I be continued ten times as long again, I might not have again an equal

> opportunity. God has honored but comparatively a very small part of mankind with any possible chance for such mighty and soul satisfying rewards. But my dear friend if you should make up your mind to do so, I trust it will be wholly from the prompting of your own spirit after you have thoroughly counted the cost. I would flatter no man into such a measure, if I could do so ever so easily.
>
> I expect nothing but to "endure hardness"; but I expect to effect a mighty conquest, even though it be like the last victory of Samson. I felt for a number of years in earlier life, a steady, strong desire to die; but since I saw any prospect of becoming a reaper in the great harvest, I have not only felt quite willing to live, but have enjoyed life much; and am now rather anxious to live for a few years more.

It is inconsistent with the tenor of this letter, to draw from it the conclusion that the "mighty conquest" was a profitless "foray," or a "raid," that Brown thus invited Mr. Sanborn to engage in; nor did the latter so understand it. On the contrary he took the proposal seriously, and was deeply impressed with the broad significance of the undertaking herein dimly foreshadowed. [Pg 247] Commenting thereon he, consistently, said:

> Till I follow my noble friend to the other world, on which his hopes were fixed, I can never read this letter without emotion. Yet it did not persuade me to comply with his wish. Long accustomed to guide my life by leadings and omens from that shrine whose oracles may destroy but can never deceive, I listened in vain, through months of doubt and anxiety, for a clear and certain call. But it was revealed to me that no confidence could be too great, no trust or affection too extreme toward this aged, poor man whom the Lord had chosen as his champion.

One might venture to suggest, in this connection, that Mr. Sanborn's failure to catch any note of a "clear and certain call" during his months of doubt and anxiety, might be due, possibly, to facts or conditions existing in the Omnipotent economy. God, "whose mercy endureth forever," may not have desired that a "generation should pass off the face of the earth," at that time, "by a violent death." Also, the absence of any evidence of the Divine approval of Brown's scheme, raises a question of doubt, that the Lord had really appointed "this aged poor man as his chosen champion." While, on the other hand, the lamentable failure of the expedition undertaken in the accomplishment of this enterprise; and the overwhelming wreck and ruin of those who engaged in it, point to the theory that God, if he took any active participation in the matter at all, was opposed to Brown—that he was on the other side—on the side of the generation of men, women, and children, who, trusting in His mercy, lived in innocent ignorance of Brown's plot to destroy them.

Leaving Peterboro on the 24th, Brown began a tour among the colored people to unite them in support of his campaign. February 26th, to March 3d, he was at Brooklyn at the home of Dr. and Mrs. J. N. Gloucester, wealthy colored people, and sought their assistance. From Brooklyn he [Pg 248] went to Boston. From there, March 4th, he wrote to his son John:[295] "As it may require some time to hunt out friends at Bedford, Chambersburg, Gettysburg, Hagerstown, Md. *or even Harper's Ferry, Va.*, I would like to have you arrange your business so as to set out very soon." March 6th, he was again at Boston, and on the 15th, at Philadelphia again, where he met Rev. Stephen Smith, Frederick Douglass, Rev. Henry H. Garnett, William Sill, and other colored men. His son John met him there by appointment and thence they went to New York, New Haven, and to North Elba, where they arrived March 23d. April 2d, they were at Peterboro for consultation with Gerrit Smith, and from there they went to Rochester, where they separated. From Rochester, Brown went to St. Catherine, Canada, in company with a colored man—J. W. Loguen—where they met, by appointment, Mrs. Harriet Tubman, colored, known as the "Moses of her People." Brown was cordially received by the Canadian negroes. They listened to his statement of the things that he intended to do for their race, and gave him encouragement to believe that many of them would enter his service.

Believing the money which had been pledged would be promptly furnished, Brown launched his enterprise, and called a constitutional convention to meet at Chatham, Canada, to formally adopt a "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances, for the people of the United States." He then proceeded to Springdale to report the situation to his captains.

The war party left Springdale April 27th, and arrived at Chatham on the 29th, Brown stopping at the home of James M. Bell, a colored man. Notices calling the convention were immediately sent out; the form, as drawn by Cook, was as follows:

> Chatham, May—1859.
>
> Mr. ——.: Dear Sir:—We have issued a call for a very *quiet* Convention at this place, to which we shall be very happy to see any true friends of freedom and to which you are most earnestly invited to give your attendance. [Pg 249]
>
> Yours respectfully,
> JOHN BROWN.

The convention was represented, at Chatham, as being a meeting for the purpose of organizing a Masonic (colored) lodge; it met May 8th, at 10 o'clock A. M. Only Brown's party and thirty-four colored men were present. Richard Realf, in his testimony before the Mason Committee, said that Brown opened the convention with an explanation of the purposes for which it had been called. That he spoke of the manner in which he had qualified himself for leadership—by a tour of the European continent, inspecting all fortifications, especially all earthwork forts, that he could find,

intending to apply such knowledge, with modifications and inventions of his own, to the warfare he now proposed to undertake. "He spoke of his studies of Roman warfare, and of Schamyal the Circassian chief, and of his knowledge of conditions in Hayti, and of Toussaint L'Ouverture." He said that he expected all the free negroes in the Northern States to flock to his standard, as well as the negroes of the Southern States. Mr. Realf further stated that "no salaries were to be paid to the officers" under this constitution. That it was "purely out of that which we supposed to be philanthropy—love for the slave."[296]

After the address Brown produced a copy of the "Provisional Constitution." The articles were read and adopted unanimously. Each person present then signed the constitution, and swore allegiance to the Provisional Government.[297] The nature and purposes of Brown's invasion of Virginia, in October, 1859, are disclosed in the forty-eight articles contained in this remarkable historical document.[298]

At a meeting held in the evening, John Brown was elected commander-in-chief and John H. Kagi. secretary of war. The balloting for offices was continued on Monday, May 10th, and Richard [Pg 250] Realf was elected secretary of state, George B. Gill, secretary of the treasury, Owen Brown, treasurer, and Osborn P. Anderson and Alfred M. Ellsworth, colored, were elected members of Congress.

Article I, of the constitution, provides for qualification of membership, and includes "all persons of mature age whether proscribed, oppressed, and enslaved citizens, or of proscribed and oppressed races of the United States, who shall agree to sustain and enforce the Provisional Constitution and ordinances of organization, together with all minor children of such persons, shall be held to be fully entitled to protection under the same." Articles II, III, IV, and V relate to the branches of government: Legislative, executive and judicial. A number of articles relate to the trial of officers, impeachment, or recall of judges, army appointments, etc., etc. Article XXVIII treats of "Property." It recites that "All captured or confiscated property, and all property the product of the labor of those belonging to this organization and of their families, shall be held as the property of the whole, equally, without distinction and may be used for the common benefit, or disposed of for the same object." Article XXXVI is especially instructive. It reads as follows:

"The entire personal and real property of all persons known to be acting, either directly or indirectly, with or for the enemy, or found in arms with them, or found willfully holding slaves, shall be confiscated and taken whenever and wherever it may be found, in either Free or Slave States."

Mr. Sanborn says this constitution will be found "well suited to its purpose—the government of a territory in revolt, of which the chief occupants should be escaped slaves," an opinion which assumes that the white population had, in some manner, been eliminated from the "territory in revolt."

The plan of government was written by Brown, and was adopted in a solemn manner by sane [Pg 251] men, who signed it; and copies of this Constitution and Ordinances, Brown took with him to Harper's Ferry; and on the 18th of October, 1859, personally referred to it as an exhibit of his purposes for being there; and stated that it had been his intention to have a large number of copies of it printed, and distributed "at large," so that all might know the character of his invasion. And yet, after the lapse of fifty years, comes an oracular disquisitor, who, with an assurance de luxe, asserts that Brown and his followers did not intend to establish a Provisional Government in the South, or to do any of the things provided for in this infallible utterance; that his invasion of Virginia was not an invasion, but a "raid" to carry off some slaves, which, if successful, would be followed by further guerrilla warfare in the mountains of Virginia.

Referring, with undisguised impatience, to the irrelation of the "Constitution and Ordinances" to his conception of what Brown's purposes were, or to what he desires the historian to declare Brown's purposes to have been, he says, that "it actually contemplates not merely the government of forces in armed insurrection against sovereign States," but that it "actually goes so far as to establish courts, a regular judiciary and a Congress." And, "as if that were not enough it provides for" such heresies in guerrilla warfare as "schools for that same training of the freed slaves in manual labor which is today so widely hailed as the readiest solution of the negro problem. Churches too were to be 'established as soon as may be'—as if anything could be more inconsistent with his fundamental plan"; which Mr. Villard then magisterially states was to "break his forces up into small bands hidden in mountain fastnesses, subsisting as well as possible off the land, and probably unable to communicate with each other. At this and at other points," he says, "the whole scheme forbids discussion as a practical plan of government for such an uprising as was to be carried out by a handful of whites and droves of utterly illiterate and ignorant [Pg 252] blacks, and may stand as a chief indictment of Brown's saneness of judgment and of his reasoning powers"; admitting however, that "as a chart for the course of a State about to secede from the Union and to maintain itself during a regular revolution, the document was also not without its admirable features."

Commenting upon the condition of Brown's mind at the time he wrote this paper, Mr. Villard says that it was "fanatical, concentrated on one idea to the danger point, but still it remained a mind capable of expressing itself with rare clearness and force, focussing itself with intense vigor on the business in hand and going straight to the end in view."[299]

The preceding clause is in itself a refutation of the author's criticism. If it be true that when Brown drew up this paper "his mind was capable of expressing itself with clearness, focussing itself with vigor on the business in hand and of going straight to the end in view," then it must be

admitted that the document which he penned was not intended to serve a purpose so trifling as a *raid*, but that it was what it purported to be—a form of government or charter for a state during a period of revolution.

It will be observed that it is not the practicability of a revolution, such as the provisions of this document would be consistent with, that constitutes the indictment of Brown's saneness and reasoning powers; but the fact that the provisions of the constitution are inconsistent with this author's invention of what Brown's plans were: "A plan of government for small forces of whites and runaway slaves acting separately as guerilla bands in mountain fastnesses." It is strictly true that the provisions of the constitution are so inconsistent with this fiction as to forbid discussion; but that fact should not constitute an indictment of *Brown's* sanity. It merely emphasizes the fact that there is disagreement between John Brown and his biographer of fifty years after, [Pg 253] concerning the purpose for which Brown wrote the provisional constitution and ordinances, and suggests, as a bare possibility of the case, that the assumptions of the biographer as to what that purpose was may be inconsistent with the tenor of the constitution. If this biographer had been less eager to confirm in history the theory that it was a foray or a raid that Brown sought to execute at Harper's Ferry, he would have discovered that Brown intended to organize a thorough-going army there,[300] instead of sporadic guerrilla bands; and that he intended to extend the jurisdiction of this Provisional Government over the State of Virginia and the South.

It was Brown's intention to begin his campaign at once, May 15th being the date named; and something, probably, would have happened if he had received the one thousand dollars promptly, that had been pledged in his support. Realf, on his arrival at Chatham, wrote that they would remain there until they had perfected their plans, "which will be in about ten days or two weeks," after which they would "start for China."[301] Cook also had something to say. He wrote to some young ladies at Springdale:

> ... I long for the 10th of May to come. I am anxious to leave this place, to have my mind occupied with the great work of our mission.... Through the dark gloom of the future, I fancy I can almost see the dawning of light of Freedom.... That I can almost hear the swelling Anthem of Liberty rising from the millions who have but just cast aside the fetters and the shackles that bound them. But ere that day arrives, I fear that we shall hear the crash of the battle shock and see the red gleaming of the cannon's lightning.[302]

The seance closed abruptly on the 10th, owing to a collapse of the exchequer; whereupon the cabinet officials and officers of the general staff were furloughed, without pay, until such time as [Pg 254] they would be called upon to report to the commander-in-chief for service. They went to Cleveland, Ohio, and it is said that some of them chafed under the hardships and inconveniences of earning a living; with the result that a spasm of "philanthropy and love for the slave" became imminent among them. So pronounced were the symptoms that the honorable secretary of state, Mr. Realf, on May 23d, in an official note to the commander-in-chief, declared that unless "relief" were provided speedily, those affected might be so inspired by philanthropy and love for the slave as to "go South and raid by themselves."[303]

The failure to finance the Provisional Government was a result of a flurry on the bourse, that had its origin in the activities of Colonel Forbes. He was threatening the rear of Brown's communications. About the last of April, he wrote from Washington to Mr. Sanborn and to Dr. Howe, declaring his intention to give publicity to Brown's scheme. A "hurry call" was accordingly sent out for a meeting of the war committee. At a conference, May 2d, Mr. Parker and Mr. Steams thought "the plan" should be "deferred till another year." Dr. Howe thought differently, while Mr. Sanborn, whose mind was not working forcefully, was in a state of doubt, which he expressed, May 5th, in a letter to Mr. Higginson.[304] Gerrit Smith voted with Stearns and Parker. He wrote May 7th: "It seems to me that in these circumstances Brown must go no further; and I so write him."[305] May 9th, Higginson voted with Howe. He wrote: "I regard any postponement as simply abandoning the project." A letter of the 9th from Hon. Henry Wilson to Dr. Howe, settled the question. He went into the matter a little deeper, and suggested that their actions might involve others. He pointed out that if the arms in Brown's possession were used for any [Pg 255] other purpose than to "arm some force in Kansas for defense, *it might be of disadvantage to the men who were induced to contribute to that very foolish movement*"; and advised them to "get the arms out of Brown's control, and keep clear of him, at least for the present."[306] To this letter Dr. Howe replied on the 12th:

> I understand perfectly your meaning. No countenance has been given Brown for any operations outside of Kansas *by the Kansas Committee*. I had occasion a few days ago to send him an earnest message from his friends here, urging him at once to go to Kansas and take part in the coming election, and throw the weight of his influence upon the side of right.... There is in Washington a disappointed and malicious man working with all the activity which hate and revenge can inspire to harm Brown, and to cast odium upon the friends of Kansas in Massachusetts. You probably know him. He has been to see Mr. Seward. Mr. Hale also can tell you something about him. God speed the right.[307]

May 15th, he wrote Mr. Wilson, relating to the arms, that "prompt measures have been taken and will be resolutely followed up to prevent any such monstrous perversion of a trust as would be the application of means raised for the defense of Kansas, to a purpose which the subscribers of the fund would disapprove and violently condemn."[308]

Because of these letters Dr. Howe has been severely criticised; and by Rear Admiral Chadwick unjustly charged with "gross prevarication."[309] But, in a time of war, would the distinguished admiral hesitate to deceive the enemy in a similar manner? The things which the Doctor said were, of course, untrue, but in saying them he did not intend to wrong the Senator or to deceive him to his disadvantage. The correspondence was not personal; Senator Wilson was an [Pg 256] intermediary, or a medium of communication between Colonel Forbes and Brown's war committee. Howe, acting-for the committee, had the right to deceive the enemy—Forbes—in this manner. The letters he wrote were a stratagem of the war it was promoting. Brown would have disposed of Forbes in a more heroic manner. He wrote from Chatham: "We have those who are thoroughly posted up" (professional assassins) "to put upon his track and we beg to be allowed to do so."[310]

On May 14th, Mr. Stearns wrote to Brown enclosing a copy of Senator Wilson's letter, also notifying him officially, as chairman of the Massachusetts State Kansas Committee, that the arms in his care belonging to the committee must not be used for any other purpose than for the defense of Kansas.[311] He then forestalled any possibility of future complication relating to the arms by foreclosing a lien, which he is said to have held, on all the property of the committee; and having thus obtained the title to the arms, he placed them in Brown's possession as his personal agent. By this arrangement, Mr. Sanborn says,

> The business of the Kansas Committee was put in such shape that its responsibility for the arms in Brown's possession should no longer fetter his friends in aiding his main design.

But as to the character of the transaction he was not quite assured. "It is still a little difficult," he said, "to explain this transaction without leaving a suspicion that there was somewhere a breach of trust." It was also agreed between them that Brown should not further inform the members of the war committee of his plans in detail, nor "burden them with knowledge that would be to them both needless and inconvenient."[312] May 15th, Mr. Stearns wrote to Brown asking him to come to New York during the next week for consultation; but for reasons that have not been stated the [Pg 257] meeting did not take place; it was probably called off because arrangements were made for a more interesting function.

Then as now, there was a Peace Society in existence. Mr. Gerrit Smith was coming to Boston to deliver an address at its anniversary; and it was decided to take advantage of his presence in the city, to have a full meeting of the secret war committee which, Mr. Sanborn says, had been organized in March, and consisted of Gerrit Smith, Theodore Parker, Doctor Howe, T. W. Higginson, George L. Stearns, and himself. Mr. Smith arrived and took lodgings at the Revere House. The committee held its meeting, at his rooms, on the 24th of May. At this council it was finally decided to postpone the campaign until the winter or spring of 1859, when the committee would raise for Brown "two or three thousand dollars."[313]

Mr. Smith, because of his great zeal in the promotion of peace, had the honor of being chosen to deliver the address at the anniversary of the Peace Society, and, because of a similar zeal in the promotion of war, he had the honor of being chosen to preside, as chairman, over the Revere House deliberations of the war committee. It may be assumed, because of his versatility, that he acquitted himself creditably in both of these positions.

The impossibility of harmonizing the public professions of these apostles of peace, with their secret undertakings as ministers of war, discourages analyzation of their philosophy; and for the same reason, discussion of questions of moral obliquity, or of commercial irregularity in their actions or in the actions of any of them, in juggling with the liability for Brown's war equipment, and in financing an assault upon a State of this Union, may be dismissed as being without profit.

May 31st, Brown returned to Boston full of regret because of the postponement of the invasion; [Pg 258] but with the arms securely in his possession and with the $500 in gold in his pockets, which his committee gave him as a salve to soothe his wounded hope; and with the decision of the Revere House council to raise "two or three thousand dollars" for his campaign the next spring, his spirits rose, and he left Boston for North Elba well satisfied with the outcome of the flurry.

June 20th, he went to Cleveland and disposed of the staff, dividing with them the $500, and making such arrangements for them as circumstances permitted. Cook was sent to Harper's Ferry, to reconnoiter the field, and obtain statistics and other information. It is also probable that Brown would have joined him and begun the work of agitating the slaves for the coming revolt, if the news from Kansas had not offered an opportunity for "other occupations." The "disturbances" there, culminating in the tragedy on the Marias des Cygnes, May 19th, appealed to him with irresistible force. They "were the immediate cause of his return to Kansas."[314] [Pg 259]

CHAPTER XI

THE SHUBEL MORGAN PLUNDER COMPANY

The angel wings were so dim and shadowy as to be scarcely visible.—George B. Gill

In company with Kagi and Tidd, Brown arrived at Lawrence on the night of June 27th, and, under the name of "Shubel Morgan" left the next day for the zone of opportunity. The political situation in Kansas, or the progress which the Free-State cause was making at that time, was no part of his

concern; and to so much as mention his name in connection therewith, is to trifle with history. Writing to Mr. Sanborn from Lawrence on the 28th, announcing his arrival in the Territory, he sent a quick delivery order for some whistles. He said:[315]

> ... Can you send me by Express; Care of E. B. Whitman, Esqr. half a Doz; or a full Doz whistles such as I described? at once?

The above is the sole reference to Territorial affairs contained in this letter; it may therefore be regarded as an epitome of his interest therein; it is also an index to the character of the operations he intended to engage in.

On July 9th, he wrote to his son John that he was now in the log cabin of the "notorious James Montgomery" whom he deemed a very "brave and talented officer." Montgomery was the author of the recrudescence, in Linn and Bourbon counties, of the lawlessness of 1856. Disapproving of the election, January 4, 1858, under the Lecompton Constitution, he destroyed the ballot boxes in his district. His political relations with the pro-slavery settlers in Linn County becoming strained, he served notice on them to leave the Territory, and compelled them to seek refuge in Missouri. [Pg 260] A troop of cavalry being sent to arrest him, he, with seven others, opened fire upon it from the timber, killing one enlisted man and wounding the captain—George T. Anderson, First United States Cavalry—and two others.

While the Free-State men greatly admired Montgomery's prowess, they balked at the retaliatory operations his actions provoked. The deliberate killing of five Free-State men and the wounding of five more on the Marias des Cygnes May 19th, by Charles A. Hamilton, caused them to reflect, seriously, upon the situation. Even if Montgomery had succeeded in burning Fort Scott, in retaliation for these murders, it could not have brought the dead back to life. The settlers therefore, regardless of political sentiment, united in an effort to tranquilize matters. Governor Denver appeared upon the scene in company with Charles Robinson and Judge J. W. Wright, in an earnest effort to secure a general pacification. June 14th, at a mass-meeting held at Fort Scott, a treaty of peace was negotiated. It was called the Denver Treaty. It provided that "by-gones should be by-gones" as far as possible; that the Federal troops at Fort Scott should be removed; that militia should be stationed along the border, to prevent further invasions from Missouri; and that all other armed companies should withdraw from the field. "This compact was religiously adhered to during the summer and fall."[316]

Brown found upon his arrival in the recently distracted district that the Free-State settlers desired peace, and had so publicly declared, and that in response to their wishes Montgomery had disbanded his band of raiders. But with the Free-State settlers' wishes, and with their material and political welfare Brown had no concern. His interests were distinct from theirs. He came not to serve them, nor to serve the Free-State cause, but to use them and the Free-State [Pg 261] sentiment, as a shield to protect him from violence while in pursuit of the criminal operations in which he intended to engage. It was a continuation of the graft, upon the Free-State cause, which he was professionally working. Stealthily and in disguise he came into this settlement, and by stealth he proceeded to execute the purposes for which he came.

Disregarding the settlers' peace treaty and Montgomery's example, Brown proceeded to organize a company, or pretended that he organized one, and drew up a paper entitled "Articles of Agreement" for Shubel Morgan's Company. However, in view of the character of some of the men whose names appear upon the roll of its membership, and because of the nature of the business which Brown actually engaged in thereafter, as well as the personality of the men whom he really directed, it probably was merely a paper organization gotten up for the delectation of his Eastern friends, male and female. The articles are as follows:

> We, the undersigned members of Shubel Morgan's Company, hereby agree to be governed by the following Rules:
>
> 1. A gentlemanly and respectful deportment shall at all times and places be maintained toward all persons; and all profane or indecent language shall be avoided in all cases.
>
> 2. No intoxicating drinks shall be used as a beverage by any member or be suffered in camp for such purpose.
>
> 3. No member shall leave camp without leave of the Commander.
>
> 4. All property captured in any manner shall be subjected to equal distribution among the members.
>
> 5. All acts of petty or other thefts shall be promptly and properly punished, and restitution made as far as possible.
>
> 6. All members shall, so far as able, contribute equally to all necessary labor in or out of camp.
>
> 7. All prisoners who shall properly demean themselves shall be treated with kindness and respect, and shall be punished for crime only after trial and [Pg 262] conviction, being allowed a hearing in defense.
>
> 8. Implicit obedience shall be yielded to all proper orders of the commander or other superior officer.
>
> 9. All arms, ammunition, etc., not strictly private property shall ever be subject to, and delivered up, on the order of the commander.

Names	Date	1858
Shubel Morgan	July	12
C. P. Tidd	"	12
J. H. Kagi	"	12
A. Wattles	"	12
Samuelson Stevenson	"	12
J. Montgomery	"	12
T. Homyr	"	12
Simon Snyder	"	14
E. W. Snyder	"	15
Elias Snyder	"	15
John H. Snyder	"	15
Adam Bishop	"	15
William Hairgrove	"	15
John Mikel	"	15
William Partridge	"	15

After his arrival, Brown spent some time upon the tract of land upon which the Hamilton massacre had taken place. It belonged to Mr. Eli Snyder, a blacksmith, and Brown entered into negotiations with him to purchase his claim to it. Nothing came of the dealings, and it is not probable that Brown was very much in earnest upon the subject. While he remained with Snyder he made a reconnoissance into Missouri for the purpose of obtaining information that would be of use to him in his planning for future operations.[317]

In the meantime, Stevens and Gill reported for duty. The following named persons then comprised his band: Kagi, Tidd, Owen Brown, Gill, and Stevens; Albert Hazlett and Jeremiah G. Anderson joined later.

Just what Brown and his captains did during the first five months of their sojourn in the Territory has not been made public. Many pages of very irrelevant matter, containing very few facts, have been put forth upon the subject; but from the scraps of evidence occurring in the garbled accounts that have been published concerning their doings, they seem to have been engaged in stealing horses; but no big robbery was undertaken until in December. [Pg 263]

On July 20th, Brown began a letter to Mr. Sanborn which he completed August 6th, in which he said[318] that they would soon be in want of a small amount of money "*to feed us*. We cannot," he said, "work *for wages*; & provisions *are not* easily obtained on the frontier." He also gave out the information that a portion of his men were "in other neighborhoods." In response to this request for money, Mr. Sanborn, on August 25th, sent him Gerrit Smith's check for fifty dollars. This check Brown enclosed to his wife, endorsed to Watson Brown, in a letter to her September 17th.[319] Because Brown returned this money to the East, it may be inferred that the urgency for money had been tided over; that the crisis had passed by the time Mr. Sanborn's letter with the check arrived; that money had been received from some other source, and that he did not need it then, "*to feed us*." It is also noticeable that his men, who were "in other neighborhoods," and could "not work for wages," managed to obtain a sufficient amount of money to supply their personal needs in some other way. The exact character of these pursuits has not been stated, but the conditions under which they acquired their living have been made public, in an incidental way, and they were by no means ideal. They seem to have worked the Territory in pairs. Mr. Gill, speaking for himself and Mr. Kagi, said,[320] equivocally: "Sometimes one had the ague, sometimes both. Sometimes we fished, sometimes we had our supper and beds; at other times we went supperless and took the prairie for our bed with the blue arch for our covering." [Pg 264]

It would perhaps be called harshness to say, at this time, that John Brown and his men were a band of horse thieves, although Mr. Villard does say that one of them, "Pickles, was a well known horse thief;" and it has been more than intimated, within the writer's hearing, that Charles Jennison, who joined the band temporarily, while indulging a *penchant* for horses generally, was neither solicitous about his title to them, nor about the manner of getting possession of them. As a story tells it, one of the "psalms" sung by these humanitarians had special reference to Jennison; it ran in this way:

> Am I soldier of the boss—
> A follower of Jim Lane?
> And shall I fear to steal a hoss
> Or blush to ride the same?

We are also told that Mr. Albert Hazlett "picked up a fine stallion down in Missouri."[321] And Mr. Gill, in a letter to Colonel Hinton,[322] speaks of a trip which he and Brown were on during several days, but does not state the nature of their adventures. Brown was ill a part of the summer; and for several weeks was seriously so, in the home of Mr. Adair at Osawatomie, where he was cared for by the faithful Kagi. The latter wrote to his sister that he was compelled to "lay off" at Osawatomie, for a month, on account of this. He laid off from "fishing," and from sleeping on the prairie, with the "blue arch for a covering." It seems, however, that before Brown was taken ill, he had been doing some of this speculative or professional business himself; in fact he attributed his illness to the exposure which he had been subjected to, while engaged in it, whatever it may have been—"fishing" or other employment. He related to Mr. Sanborn, in his

letter of July 20th-August 6th: "Have been down with ague since last date, and had no safe way to get off my letter. I had lain every night without shelter, suffering from cold rains and heavy dews, together with the oppressive heat of the day." It appears, from this statement, that Brown also had had engagements in other neighborhoods, for, in his own neighborhood, "deserted farms and dwellings lay in all directions for some miles,"[323] and he could easily have taken shelter in some of them. It is evident, too, that wherever he may have been, his circumstances were such that he could not call upon the settlers, in such neighborhoods, and ask for shelter and accept from them such hospitality and entertainment as settlers are wont to give, or he would have done so. His condition seems to have been similar to the condition which horse thieves are in, when they have stolen horses in their possession: they cannot safely ask for shelter and other entertainment and have to lie out at night, and suffer from cold rains, if there happen to be any, and from heavy dews. It is to be regretted that Brown's later biographer did not secure from Salmon Brown a statement concerning the doings of Brown and his captains, while they were operating in Kansas. It transpired, however, that Brown encouraged horse stealing by his subordinates. Reference has been made to the fine stallion which Hazlett had "picked up" down in Missouri. Mr. Gill, in his narrative about this matter, states that Brown bought this fine horse from Hazlett; giving him, in exchange for it, a United States land warrant for forty acres of land, that had been donated to Brown by Gerrit Smith; and that he afterward sold the horse, by auction, at Cleveland.

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After recovering from his illness, Brown made a number of trips to Lawrence, where he had some controversy with the National Kansas Committee, for which he assumed to act as agent; not only without authority from it to do so, but in opposition to its expressed wishes. The committee, through its agent, Mr. E. B. Whitman, at Lawrence, had made advances, for necessary supplies, to many Kansas settlers, taking their notes for account of the same. Some of these notes had been given to Mr. Stearns, as security for money which he had advanced to the committee, and Stearns had given them to Brown, or sent them to him, for collection. It appears that the notes had not been endorsed and made payable to Mr. Stearns, and that the ownership of them was still in the committee. But Brown, when surrendering the notes to the makers, upon payment to him, cured that defect and extinguished the committee's title by acknowledging payment to him, as its agent. October 26th, Mr. H. B. Hurd repudiated Brown's agency in a letter to Mr. Whitman. He said: "Capt. John Brown has no authority to take, receive, collect or transfer any notes or accounts belonging to the National Kansas Committee, nor ever has had, nor will such dealings be recognized or sanctioned by our committee."[324] Of course, Brown kept the money he thus collected. He had an offset against the committee. He claimed that it owed him five thousand dollars. Under its resolution of January 24, 1857, it had "voted $5000 in aid of Capt. John Brown in any defensive measures that become necessary" in Kansas. Brown was then engaged in "defensive" measures or operations, as has been related, and from his point of view he had earned the right to claim this money.

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During the latter part of October, Montgomery again made things interesting for his neighborhood. Alleging violation of the Denver Peace Treaty, he entered the court-house at Fort Scott, while the grand jury was in session, took possession of the papers it was considering, destroyed them, and compelled it to adjourn. On the night of October 30th, a very weak attempt, or an alleged attempt, was made to assassinate Montgomery; a party, supposed to be pro-slavery men firing a volley into his cabin. Because of this it was decided to fortify it; Gill, Tidd, and Stevens doing most of the work. Brown "indulging in his favorite occupation of cooking."[325] The incident may have been a *ruse-de-guerre*. Having heard that he had been indicted by a pro-slavery jury, at Paris, for the ballot-box affair in January, Montgomery, on November 13th, went there with a party and made an unsuccessful search for the records. He invited Brown to join him. The latter did so, but remained "on the outskirts of the town" while the searching was being done. After this adventure, Acting Governor Walsh wrote the department suggesting that a reward of $300 and $500 be offered respectively, for the arrest of Montgomery and Brown; such a reward, he thought, "would either effect their arrest or drive them from the Territory."[326]

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On December 6th, a joint meeting of Free-State and pro-slavery men was held at Sugar Mound, in Linn County, to adopt a peace agreement to replace the Denver Treaty, which the Free-State men claimed had been violated by the court proceedings against Montgomery; the attack upon his life on the night of October 30th, etc. The resolutions were drafted by Brown, and Montgomery presented them to the meeting. They were adopted, after some modification.[327] The preamble recites that "the citizens of Linn County, assembled in mass meeting at Mound City, being greatly desirous of securing a permanent peace to the people of the Territory generally, and to those along the border of Missouri in particular, have this day entered into the following agreement and understanding, for our future guidance and actions." The articles provide that all criminal processes, pending against Free-State men, growing out of difficulties with pro-slavery parties, shall be forever discontinued and quashed; that all Free-State men held in confinement, on account of similar difficulties, shall be immediately released. Article 4 covered a very wide range. It provided that "No troops, marshal or other officers of the General Government, shall be either sent or called in, to enforce or serve criminal processes against any Free-State man or men on account of troubles heretofore existing for any act prior to this date." A "recommendation" that was unanimously agreed to was, "that we earnestly recommend that all those who have recently taken money, or other property, from *peaceable* citizens within this county, immediately restore the same to their proper owners."

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Brown was not sincere in his participation in this meeting as an advocate for peace. His plans were already formed for a grand *coup*, to raise money. He intended to do something spectacular —something that would be worthy of his name and of his reputation. The homes that he intended

to plunder had been selected long before, and the premises in each case thoroughly reconnoitered. All the essential details had been provided for. He was simply waiting, at this time, in a state of expectancy, for the psychological moment to arrive: then he intended to strike. September 10th, he wrote to Mr. Sanborn:

> Before I was taken sick there was every prospect of some business very soon, and there is some now that requires doing. I have but fourteen regularly employed hands, the most of whom are now at common work, and some are sick. How we travel may not be best to write. I have met the notorious Montgomery and think very favorably of him.[328]

October 11th, he wrote to his wife from Osawatomie: "... I can now see no good reason why I should not be located nearer home, as soon as I can collect the means for defraying the expenses. I still intend sending you some further help, as soon as I can. Will write you how to direct to me hereafter."[329] November 1st, he wrote to her from Moneka: "I shall write you where to direct when I know where to do so." From these letters it appears that his plans were complete except [Pg 269] as to the date for the execution of them. December 2d, he wrote to his family as follows:[330]

> I have just this moment returned from the South where the prospect of quiet was probably never so poor. Other parts of the Territory are undisturbed and may very likely remain so; unless drawn into the quarrel of the border counties. I expect to go South again immediately.... When I wrote you last I thought the prospect was that I should soon shift my quarters somewhat. I still have the same prospect, but am wholly at a loss as to the exact time.

His opportunity came December 16th,[331] when Montgomery, with a force of nearly one hundred men, marched upon Fort Scott, to effect the release of Mr. Benjamin Rice, who had been arrested November 16th, in violation of the by-gones-to-be-by-gones provision of the treaty of June 15th; and had not been released after the adoption of the Sugar Mound Treaty of December 6th. In this exploit a merchant of Fort Scott, Mr. J. H. Little, was killed, and his store robbed of goods amounting to about seven thousand dollars. Montgomery organized his company for this raid December 14th, and, upon invitation, Brown, Stevens, and Kagi joined in the expedition. Stevens and Kagi took part in the affair; Stevens being charged, by some writers, with having killed Little. But Brown, "with his customary dislike to serve under another," or probably, because of his higher responsibilities, took no part in the attack. He went "only as far as the rendezvous" at the Wimsett farm, where he probably received his share of the loot.

Returning on the 19th, he collected his men, and on the night of the 20th, executed his famous raid into Missouri. The party operated in two divisions—one under Brown's direction and the other under Stevens's orders. With Brown were Charles Jennison, Jeremiah Anderson, Geo. B. Gill, Kagi, and three or four others. This party was to rob the plantations of Mr. Harvey B. [Pg 270] Hicklan and Mr. John Larue. The latter lived about three-fourths of a mile from the Hicklan home. With the Stevens party were Tidd, Hazlett, and five others. This band was to rob the places of David Cruise and Hugh Martin. Cruise, in addition to his other possessions, had a slave girl that Stevens wanted—and got—but not until after he had killed Cruise. A statement by Stevens, made at the Kennedy farm, in Maryland, furnishes all the information that exists concerning the details of the murder. He is reported as saying[332] that he went to the cabin and demanded the girl; that the old man asked him to come inside, which he thoughtlessly did, and that then the old man slipped behind him and "pulled a gun." That it then became a case of "shoot first. You might call it a case of self defense, or you might say that I had no business in there and that the old man was right."

Brown's party arrived at the Hicklan home at midnight, forced the door open, and with pointed revolvers intimidated Hicklan, and proceeded to plunder the establishment. Mr. Gill, who appears to have been in charge of the ethics of the occasion, says, that in spite of his efforts to restrain the men, they took practically everything that was in sight. "Some of our men," he said, "proved to be mere adventurers, ready to take from friend or foe as opportunity offered." This statement, by one who knew whereof he spoke, is the clearest exposition of the character of Brown's thefts that has been made. The robbery on the night of December 20, 1858, was his final transaction of that character. All of the property stolen by him during that night belonged to pro-slavery men. Therefore, Mr. Gill's knowledge that "some of their number were mere adventurers, ready to take from friend or foe as opportunity offered" could not have been derived from their conduct on this occasion. The statement is explicit evidence that Brown and his men were not moved or controlled by any sentiment relating to slavery; or by any political bias in their thefts, but that they were common thieves, operating under the protection of Free-State sentiment while [Pg 271] they robbed and plundered Free-State men and pro-slavery men, without discrimination as opportunity offered. It may be said, in general terms, that all horses look alike to a horse thief. It is the horse, *per se*, that appeals to the thief, rather than the political affiliations of the owner. In the absence of competent testimony to the contrary, it would be said, promptly, of Brown, that he was an exception to this rule, as well as to all other rules, that control human actions; that he was moved by loftier motives than those which control the actions of the ordinary horse thief; that he confined his plundering to pro-slavery men, and robbed them, only, as a private duty, by and with the consent of the Almighty. But this direct evidence against him, and the men whom he controlled, is competent and quite conclusive.

It has been said that Brown made restitution to Hicklan of some of his property. But that statement belongs in the class of a long line of personal statements, that have been put forward

from time to time, in palliation of the enormity of Brown's crimes, or in attempts to justify them, or in efforts to make it appear that he was engaged in an unselfish warfare against slavery. Mr. Villard swept away a lot of this rubbish by the keen logic of his exposition concerning many of the stories which were made current about the Pottawatomie matter. So this statement, about returning to Hicklan some of his property, and Mr. Gill's statement that the raid on the night of the 20th, was inspired by the "Jim Daniels story," belong in the same general class of rubbish. Mr. Hicklan stated, in 1888, that nothing that was taken was ever recovered. He said:

> They did not give anything back. Brown said to me that we might get our property if we could; that he defied us and the whole United States to follow him. He and his men seemed anxious to take more from me than they did for they ransacked the house in search of money, and I suppose they would have taken it if they had found it.... What I have stated is the truth and I am willing to swear to it. I do not hold any particular malice or prejudice on account of these old transactions. Old things have passed away, but the truth can never pass away.[333]

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Along with the plunder of the Hicklan home, five slaves were taken; these are said to have belonged to the "Lawrence estate" then in Hicklan's care, as administrator. Besides the negroes, he took from the Lawrence estate two good horses, a yoke of oxen, a good wagon, harness, saddles, a considerable quantity of provisions, bacon, flour, meal, coffee, sugar, etc.; all of the bedding and clothing of the negroes, Hicklan's shot-gun, overcoat, boots, and many other articles belonging to the whites. From Larue were taken five negroes, six head of horses, harness, a wagon, a lot of bedding and clothing, provisions, and, in short, all the loot available and portable.[334] Besides killing Cruise and looting the home, Stevens took, as claimed by the family, two yoke of oxen, a wagon load of provisions, eleven mules, and two horses. A mule was also taken from the Hugh Martin home.

After the robberies the two parties united at a point theretofore agreed upon, and started on the return trip to Kansas. At daylight they secreted themselves in a deep wooded ravine, where they remained until after dark, when they continued their march, arriving at Mr. Wattles's home, two miles north of Mound City, at midnight of Wednesday the 22d. Here Brown stopped until morning, having with him the slaves, one wagon, and two or three of his men; the others pushing on northward with the swag, to get it beyond danger of recovery, and to divide it or sell it for the benefit of all concerned.

The liberation of the slaves was a cumbersome and dangerous experiment, but it was as necessary as it was dangerous. To have taken all this plunder and carried it off without the diversion of taking the slaves with him, would have been a case of such plain stealing, that Brown would have been completely discredited therefor; even the "Secret War Committee" might have joined in the general repudiation of him that would have followed. But the carrying off of the slaves to freedom, in this wholesale spectacular way, was great advertising; it distracted attention from the basic motive of the raid, and secured creditable notoriety for Brown in the North. It seems, however, that after arriving at the Wattles home with the slaves, Brown practically, or personally at least, abandoned them to their fate. The narrative states:[335]

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> At dawn on Thursday, the caravan started again, and this time without Brown. Two of his men accompanied the one ox-team, which was sent forward, one going ahead to act as pilot.

This man, however, turned back, leaving the negroes to make their way to Osawatomie alone. They arrived, without any mishap, at the home of Mr. Adair, near Osawatomie, on Christmas Eve, where, it seems, no arrangements had been made to receive them. On the arrival of the slaves at his home, Mr. Adair says he referred the matter of sheltering them to his wife, calling her attention to the responsibility it would involve. "She considered the matter a few moments and then said: 'I cannot turn them away.' They were taken around to the back yard, and the colored people were brought into the back kitchen and kept there that night."[336] Continuing the narrative Mr. Villard says that at two A. M. of the morning after Christmas, the fugitives were finally placed in an old abandoned preëmption cabin on the south fork of the Pottawatomie, where kind neighbors brought them food and gave them encouragement.[337] In this location they remained until they were taken north. It is probable that Brown, in his selfishness, cared but little whether these negroes were returned to slavery or not. He had done his stunt in liberating them, and made no pretense of defending them or of caring for them until in January, and took care not to be near the fugitives while the pursuing bands were scouring the country in search of them.

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Naturally no public accounting was ever made of the property taken by the Shubel Morgan Plunder Company, nor has any statement ever been made as to the division of the plunder, or of a division of the proceeds, among the members of it. But it is known that it was the raid and the robbery, that Brown had in view, whereby he expected to raise the money to defray the expense of the return of the party to the East. January 11, 1859, he wrote to his family that he had been unable to finish up his business as rapidly as he had hoped to when he wrote previously—December 2d—and the delay of his departure from Kansas until about January 20th, was probably due to the fact that it required that length of time to close out the company property and make distribution of the proceeds. Final settlement was probably made at or near Lawrence. Mr. Villard says on page 380:

> Somehow or other Brown recruited his finances while near Lawrence, and his wagons, when he drove away, were creaking with the weight of provisions contributed by Major Abbott and Mr. Grover.

Pending the sale of the plunder and final settlement for it, Brown remained an unwelcome prowler, in the neighborhood of Moneka, amid a storm of indignation against him that was as general as it was severe. Even his "staunch friend Wattles" severely censured him "for going into Missouri, contrary to our agreement, and getting these slaves." On January 2d, Brown wrote a formal letter to Montgomery "asking him to hold himself in readiness to call out reënforcements at a moment's notice, to prevent a possible invasion because of a raid into Missouri." But Montgomery was not holding himself in readiness to defend Brown, or to repel the retaliatory invasion he had invited; but "was eagerly at work for peace;" seeking to prevent a retaliatory [Pg 275] blow from falling upon the Free-State settlement. What Montgomery wrote to Brown in reply to this letter, if he answered it at all, has never been published. He denied having any complicity with Brown, and joined in the general denunciation of him, and in the condemnation of his action. It was this denunciation of him by Montgomery and the Free-State men generally that called forth Brown's personal defense of his conduct, in what he called his "Parallels"; a paper conspicuous in Brown literature.

The Lawrence *Herald of Freedom* on January 8, 1859, published a letter from a clergyman at Moneka, from which the following paragraphs are extracts:[338]

> I have watched the progress of these troubles here until I am sick-heart-sick with humanity. Here are men claiming to be Christians, and even ministers of the Gospel, who profess to be guided in their actions by the teachings of the Prince of Peace, who have organized a body of murderers, robbers, gamblers and horse-thieves, and subsisting by plunder. They are riding over the country and committing the basest of crimes. If this is Christianity anything would be preferable to it.
>
> The strangest of all is to see peace men, those in the States who were members of peace societies, and who were sending delegates to peace congresses, laboring to inaugurate civil war, with the expressed object of working a revolution throughout the nation, ultimating in a dissolution of the Union; and all to procure the emancipation of the slave. Simple men! They should learn that revolutions involving such grave consequences are not usually set on foot by murderers and thieves. Though Brutus triumphed over the dead corpse of Cæsar, yet it is not believed that in this age of enlightment a few ignoramuses and desperadoes of the character of those in this country can succeed in crushing out slavery and with it American freedom.

But Brown's band was the only band of thieves operating in that neighborhood after July 15, [Pg 276] 1858. The Shubel Morgan Company, then, was the "organized body of murderers, robbers, gamblers and horse thieves" described and complained of by the Moneka clergyman—"Men who prosecute their nefarious business in the name of God and Humanity." The *Herald of Freedom* seems to have fallen under Brown's displeasure. He thought "all honest, sensible Free-State men in Kansas consider George Washington Brown's 'Herald of Freedom' one of the most traitorous publications in the whole country."[339]

On January 11, 1859, Governor Medary asked the Territorial Legislature, then in session, to appropriate $250 as a reward for the arrest of Montgomery, and a similar amount for the arrest of Brown. In response to this, Montgomery wrote a letter to the Lawrence *Republican*, saying, among other things: "For Brown's doings in Missouri, I am not responsible. I know nothing of either his plans or intentions. Brown keeps his own counsels, and acts on his own responsibility. I hear much said about Montgomery and his company. I have no company. We have had no organization since the 5th day of July."[340] Continuing, Mr. Villard says that Montgomery came to Lawrence on January 18th, and delivered himself up to Judge Elmore, who placed him in the custody of the sheriff. There being but one indictment against him, and that for robbing a post-office, he was released on bail, in the sum of $4,000. Three days later he returned home and continued his efforts in behalf of peace. He came back to Lawrence on February 2d, with six of his men, who also surrendered themselves to the Territorial officers.

About this time Brown received a visit from George A. Crawford, a Free-State Democrat residing at Fort Scott, who said some things to Brown at the request of Governor Medary. In a letter to Hon. Eli Thayer of August 4, 1879, Crawford states the substance of this conversation. Some [Pg 277] extracts from the letter are as follows:[341]

> ... I protested to the Captain against this violence. We were settlers, he was not. He could strike a blow and leave. The retaliatory blow would fall on us. Being a Free-State man, I myself was held personally responsible by pro-slavery ruffians in Fort Scott for the acts of Captain Brown. One of these ruffians, Brockett, when they gave me notice to leave the town said, "When a snake bites me, I don't go hunting for that particular snake. I kill the first snake I come to."
>
> I called Captain Brown's attention to the facts that we were at peace with Missouri; that our Legislature was then in the hands of Free-State men to make the laws; that even in our disturbed counties of Bourbon and Linn we were in a majority and had elected the officers both to make and execute the laws; that without peace we could have no immigration; that no Southern immigration was coming; that agitation such as his was only keeping Northern friends away, etc. The old man replied that it was no pleasure to him, an old man, to be living in the saddle, away from home and family and exposing his life; and if the Free-State

men of Kansas felt they no longer needed him, he would be glad to go....

On account of the unfriendly criticism of his conduct, Brown left the neighborhood of Moneka January 11th and went to Osawatomie, and about the 20th, in company with Gill and Kagi, convoying the slaves, set out on the journey to the North. Stevens and Tidd were with the party at Osawatomie, but they were detailed to steal "a span of horses" the day the caravan moved, which made it necessary for them to scurry out of the neighborhood as rapidly as the horses which they had stolen could travel.

Concerning this transaction Mr. Gill says,[342] that a day or two before starting he found out that [Pg 278] a Missourian, with a span of horses, was stopping *temporarily* a few miles from Osawatomie; also that he had a well grounded *suspicion* that they had been stolen from Free-State men. At Garnett, he says, he communicated his suspicion "to Stevens and Tidd, who set out, the same evening that we did, to replevin these horses. After doing so they proceeded to Topeka to await us; Kagi also," he says, "scouted ahead for some purpose, most probably to arrange stopping-places for us, leaving Brown and myself alone with the colored folks."

With the stealing of these horses "Brown's men wound up their business in South Eastern Kansas." It was probably their last theft in the Territory. What their first one was, and what their intermediate acts were, can only be surmised. Summarizing his work in Kansas during 1858 Mr. Villard says:[343]

> As for John Brown, he was ready to leave the Territory for the last time. Of constructive work there was no more to his credit than when he left the Territory in 1856.... The sole act of any significance to be credited to him during these six months in Southern Kansas is the capture of the slaves.... Certain it is that the Missouri raid, in violation of his agreement, caused many peaceful Free-State settlers to flee their homes for fear of violence, and might have resulted seriously but for the efforts of certain Missourians to keep the peace....

Brown's successful trip across the country, from Kansas to Canada, in the rigor of winter, with these colored fugitives, will always stand to the credit of his courage, his sagacity, and his perseverance. The initial drive from Osawatomie to Major Abbott's place near Lawrence, where they arrived January 24th, had its discomforts. Mr. Villard, quoting from Gill's narrative says: "Through mud, and then over frozen ground, without a dollar in their pockets, their shoes all but falling apart, Gill and Brown, resolutely drove the slow-going ox-team with its load of women and [Pg 279] children. Gill's feet were frozen, and the 'old man's fingers, nose and ears frozen.'" From Abbott's hospitable home they sent the ox-team to Lawrence to be sold, and in its place obtained horses and wagons. On the 28th, the narrative states, they arrived at Holton "amid all the discomforts of a driving prairie snow storm." But the storm could not have been very severe, because upon their arrival next day at Spring Creek, six miles distant, that stream "was too high to ford" and they were compelled to remain there over Sunday. The storm therefore must have been a rain storm rather than a prairie blizzard.

About this time Brown's movements were discovered and his location had become known; also the Territorial authorities became active in an effort to arrest him. On Saturday, as the story goes, a volunteer posse from Atchison, under Mr. A. P. Wood, arrived upon the scene, and took up a position on the north side of Spring Creek, barring Brown's further progress northward. It looked as though the "chase was trapped"; and Governor Medary with evident satisfaction announced the fact to President Buchanan. The Governor also sent a special messenger—Deputy Marshal Colby—to Colonel Sumner, commanding at Fort Leavenworth, informing that officer as to the situation, and requesting that troops be sent to capture him. But Brown, in anticipation of hostilities, had sent to Topeka for assistance, and Colonel John Ritchie, with about twenty men, responded to his call, arriving at his camp about noon on Monday. Upon the arrival of these reënforcements, Brown promptly moved toward the crossing of the creek, and quite as promptly the Atchison party abandoned its position. The engagement that followed seems to have been a contest for speed, and was appropriately named "The Battle of the Spurs."[344] The Leavenworth *Times* had this to say about the battle:[345]

> The chase was a merry one, and closed by Brown's taking off three of his pursuers [Pg 280] as prisoners; with four horses, pistols, guns, etc., as legitimate plunder.

February 10th, Brown was at Tabor, Iowa. From there he wrote to his wife:[346]

> I am once more in Iowa, through the great mercy of God. Those with me and *other* friends are well. I hope soon to be at a point where I can learn of *your welfare* & perhaps send you something besides my good wishes. I suppose you get the common news. May the God of my *fathers* be your God.

Brown's reception by the people of Tabor was a disappointment. He arrived on Saturday and hoped to receive an ovation at the church next day; and that a "collection" would be taken up for his benefit. To bring this about he prepared the following notice, which he handed to the Rev. John Todd, as the latter entered his church Sunday morning, which he desired should be read to the congregation:[347]

> John Brown respectfully requests the church at Tabor to offer public thanksgiving to Almighty God in behalf of himself, & company: & *of their rescued captives in particular* for his gracious preservation of their lives, & health; & his signal deliverance of all out of the hand of the wicked, hitherto. "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever."

But there was objection and the note was not read. The fame of Browns actions, or the infamy of them, had preceded him at Tabor, which was probably confirmed by the swaggering and boasting of his men. At any rate, after conferring with Dr. H. D. King, who occupied the pulpit with Mr. Todd, the latter declined to read the note, or to take up the collection.[348] Dr. King is reported to have said:

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> Brother Todd, this is your church, but if I were you I would not make a prayer for them. Inasmuch as it is said they have destroyed life, and stolen horses, I should want to take the charge under examination before I made a public prayer.[349]

Brown was equally unfortunate at a public meeting which he called for Monday. It resolved that "we have no Sympathy with those who go to Slave States to entice away Slaves, & take property or life when necessary to attain that end."[350]

At Grinnell Brown held two night meetings, with full houses, at which he and Kagi spoke. Both were loudly cheered. The collections, too, were satisfactory: "$26.50 and whole party and teams kept for Two days without cost. Sundry articles of clothing given to captives. Bread, Meat, Cakes, Pies, etc., prepared for our journey."[351]

In justification of his Missouri raid, Brown, in March, wrote to Mr. John Teesdale of the Des Moines *Register*:[352]

> First, it has been my deliberate judgment, since 1855, that the most ready and effectual way to retrieve Kansas would be to meddle directly with the peculiar institution. Next, we had no means of moving the rescued captives without taking a portion of their lawfully acquired earnings, all we took has been held sacred to that object and will be.

The last clause of the latter statement would move Jennison's ghost to smile if it were read to it.[353]

The caravan arrived at Springdale February 25th, and remained there until March 10th, when the colored people and their traps were loaded into a box car, at West Liberty, and taken by an express train to Chicago. The use of a box car, and the transportation of the fugitives to Chicago, was quietly arranged by Mr. Grinnell with Superintendent Tracey, of the railroad. The latter refused to accept payment for the service, saying: "We might be held for the value of every one of those niggers."

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Arriving at Chicago, March 11th, at 4:40 A. M., Brown reported his case to Allen Pinkerton, who took charge of the party. Pinkerton also raised a fund of about six hundred dollars for Brown; and arranged with General Superintendent Hammond, of the Michigan Central Railway, for a car and transportation for the outfit to Detroit. Kagi had charge of the party from Chicago to Detroit where they arrived March 12th, at 10 o'clock A. M., Brown having preceded them on an earlier train to arrange for their reception at Windsor, Canada. He met them on the ferry boat and escorted them across the river to freedom.[354]

The liberation of these slaves in Missouri, and the safe delivery of them in Canada was a capable performance. But it is not believable that the department of justice at any time contemplated any interference with Brown, or that it made any attempt to arrest him, or had any desire to effect his arrest. That it had him under surveillance, and had reports of his movements, from the time he arrived at Holton until he disembarked the fugitives at Windsor, there can be no reasonable doubt; and that it had the power to arrest him, if it desired to do so, will not be denied. But the fugitive slave law, at this time, had become a grievous thorn in the political flesh of the northern Democracy. The Administration had troubles enough, already, in the distracted condition of the country, without further antagonizing Northern public sentiment, and turning loose upon itself the tempest of criticism and censure that would surely follow if Brown were arrested, and a heartless judge should remand back to slavery and punishment these timid, shrinking, friendless women and children.

CHAPTER XII

[Pg 283]

MOBILIZING THE PROVISIONAL ARMY

Confusion on thy banners wait!
Though fann'd by Conquest's crimson wing.—GRAY

Released from further responsibility for his fugitive wards, and wearing the laurels of his recent adventures, Brown began the reorganization of his forces for the final hazard. Arriving at Cleveland March 15th, he proceeded to sell, publicly, what remained of his share of the Kansas-Missouri plunder which had been forwarded to that point from Springdale: two horses and a mule. Brown announced that, notwithstanding the Missouri origin of the stock, they were now "Abolition" animals; explaining his metaphor by the statement that he had "converted" them. A pen picture of Brown by *Artemus Ward*, reads as follows:[355]

> He is a medium sized, compactly-built and wiry man, as quick as a cat in his movements. His hair is of a salt and pepper hue and as stiff as bristles; he has a

> long, waving, milk white goatee which gives him a somewhat patriarchal appearance. A man of pluck, is Brown. You may bet on that. He shows it in his walk, talk and actions. He must be rising sixty and yet we believe he could lick a yard full of wild cats before breakfast and without taking off his coat. Turn him into a ring with nine Border ruffians, four bears, six injuns and a brace of bull pups and we opine that "the eagles of victory would perch on his banner." We don't mean by this that he looks like a professional bruiser, who hits from the shoulder, but he looks like a man of iron and one that few men would like to "sail into."

Kagi appeared to him "like a melancholy brigand, some of whose statements were no doubt false and some shamefully true." A summary of the lecture Brown delivered at Cleveland reads as follows:[356] [Pg 284]

> Brown's description of his trip to Westport and capture of eleven niggers was refreshingly cool, and it struck us, while he was giving it, that he would make his jolly fortune by letting himself out as an Ice Cream Freezer. He meant this invasion as a direct blow at slavery. He did not disguise it—he wanted the audience to distinctly understand it. With a few picked men, he visited Westport in the night and liberated eleven slaves. He also "liberated" a large number of horses, oxen, mules and furniture at the same time.

In this speech Brown made the only acknowledgment of record, of his relation to the Pottawatomie assassinations. The *Leader*, which was friendly to Brown, quoted him as saying, [357] that "he had never killed anybody, although on some occasions he had *shown his young men with him*, how some things might be done as well as others and they had done the business." Brown also impressed Mr. Alcott, who said of him after hearing his lecture at Concord, May 8th: [358]

> He tells his story with surprising simplicity and sense, impressing us all deeply with his courage and religious earnestness.... I had a few words with him after his speech, and find him superior to legal traditions and a disciple of the Right in ideality and the affairs of state. A young man named Anderson accompanies him. They go armed, I am told, and will defend themselves if necessary. He does not conceal his hatred of slavery, nor his readiness to strike a blow for freedom at the proper moment. He is of imposing appearance.... I think him about the manliest man I have ever seen.

The principal matter in hand now was to finance the initial movement of the campaign. All the skies were clear. Time and the Kansas diversion had discredited Forbes's truthful statements and eliminated him from the problem. There was to be no further shifting of the scene, or hesitation or faltering. The flood in his affairs was rising, carrying him on its crest, to his fate. To the intelligent and insistent perseverence of Mr. Sanborn belongs the credit, or the discredit, as the reader may elect, for making Brown's operations possible. He stood, or became sponsor for Brown's integrity of purpose in January, 1857, and financed his subsequent career. May 30th, he wrote Colonel Higginson: [Pg 285]

> Capt. B. has been here for three weeks, and is soon to leave—having got his $2000 secured. He is at the U. S. Hotel; and you ought to see him before he goes, for now he is to begin.[359]

Mr. Sanborn states[360] that in all, a little more than four thousand dollars passed through the hands of the secret committee or was known to it, as having been contributed in aid of the "Virginia enterprise:" and that those who contributed thirty-eight hundred dollars of this sum, did so "with a clear knowledge of the use to which it would be put."

At North Elba, about June 16th, Brown bid his family farewell and went to West Andover where he made arrangements with his son John to take upon himself the combined duties of quartermaster general, and recruiting and mustering officer. From Ohio he went to Pennsylvania, writing to Kagi, from Pittsburgh, under the name of S. Monroe. He was at Bedford on June 26th, and at Chambersburg on the 28th. From Chamberburg, on June 30th, in company with two of his sons, Owen and Oliver, and Jeremiah G. Anderson. Brown left for the "front." On that day he wrote Kagi under the name of "I Smith & Sons" saying that they were leaving for Harper's Ferry and would be looking for "cheap lands near the railroad in all probability." July 3d, they arrived at Sandy Hook, Maryland, and spent the next day reconnoitering the country on the Maryland side of the Potomac above Harper's Ferry. [Pg 286]

To a Mr. Unseld, whom they met during the morning, Brown stated that they were farmers from northern New York and because of late frosts and other disadvantages, they had decided to seek a new location; that they had a little money and intended to buy a farm, but would prefer to rent a place until they became better acquainted with farm values in the neighborhood. He also told him that his business would be buying fat cattle for the New York market. Unseld suggested to them a farm belonging to the heirs of a Dr. Kennedy, recently deceased, which was then for sale. This farm was located about five miles from Harpers Ferry on the Boonsboro road. It had probably been selected for headquarters for the "Provisional Army" by Cook, who had been stationed at Harper's Ferry for more than a year.

The Kennedy farm suited Brown "exactly." He went to Sharpsburg immediately and leased two houses that were on the place, with firewood, and pasture for a horse and a cow, until March 1, 1860; the total consideration being thirty-five dollars. The main house stands about three

hundred yards from the road on the south side. "There was a basement, kitchen and a storeroom, a living room and bed rooms on the second story, and an attic." The "cabin" stood about the same distance from the road on the north side of it. Notwithstanding the distance from the road. Brown was constantly in danger of being brought under suspicion by the friendly but inquisitive neighbors, who were constantly dropping in to see the newcomers; but who were never invited to come into the house. To further disarm suspicion Brown, on July 5th, sent for his wife and daughter Anne, to report at headquarters. Mrs. "Smith," however, seemed to think she could not so readily abandon her home and her young children. But Oliver Brown's young wife came instead: she and "Annie" arrived about the middle of July. On the 10th of this month, Brown wrote [Pg 287] to Kagi, who was at Chambersburg, that it would be "distressing *in many ways*, to have a lot of hands for many days, out of employ. We must make up our lot of hands as nearly *at one & the same* time as possible."[361]

August 11th, there was a panic on the bourse of the Provisional Government. Kagi reported the arrival of fifteen boxes of arms with freight charges amounting to $85.00, which caused Brown to ask his son John to solicit for him "a little more assistance, say two or three hundred dollars." Continuing he said:

> It is terribly humiliating to me to begin soliciting of friends again; but as the harvest opens before me with increasing encouragements, I may not allow a feeling of delicacy to deter me from asking the little further I expect to need.[362]

In due time his requisition for funds was honored from the never-failing purse of Gerrit Smith. Brown's means of transportation consisted of a horse and a wagon, but a contract for moving the arms from Chambersburg to the Kennedy farm was awarded to a "Pennsylvania Dutchman" who had a large freight wagon.[363]

Meanwhile the movement progressed in a systematic and orderly manner. There was grave danger, however, that the secret of the contemplated insurrection would transpire through the loquacity of the many persons, estimated by Mr. Villard at possibly, eighty, who had more or less knowledge of the enterprise. Brown seems to have feared that Cook, especially, might give up information that would work disaster. It was not that he held his loyalty in doubt, but he had been reported to the commander-in-chief on a previous occasion, by the honorable secretary of state, Mr. Realf, for "cacoethes loquendi," and Brown feared a recrudescence of the malady. In a letter [Pg 288] to Kagi at Chambersburg, August 11th, he severely reproved those who had made their business in Maryland a subject for general correspondence. But his expressions of displeasure, did not prevent Leeman from writing to his mother, a month and a half later, as follows:[364]

> I am now in a Southern *Slave State* and before I leave it it will be a free State, Mother.... Yes, mother I am waring with Slavery the greatest Curse that ever infested America; In Explanation of my Absence from you for so long a time I would tell you that for three years I have been Engaged in a Secret Association of as gallant fellows as ever puled a trigger with the sole purpose of the *Extermination of Slavery*.

A warning, which was received by the Honorable Secretary of War, August 25th, notifying the department that Brown was then promoting a general insurrection among the slaves, probably had its origin in Cook's indiscreet volubility. The letter, addressed to "J. B. Floyd, Sec'y of War," "Private" is as follows:[365]

> Cincinnati, August 20.
>
> SIR: I have lately received information of a movement of so great importance that I feel it my duty to impart it to you without delay.
>
> I have discovered the existence of a secret association, having for its object the liberation of the slaves at the South, by a general insurrection. The leader of the movement is *old John Brown*, late of Kansas. He has been in Canada during the winter, drilling the negroes there, and they are only waiting for his word to start for the South to assist the slaves. They have one of their leading men (a white man) in an armory in Maryland—where it is situated, I have not been able to learn. As soon as every thing is ready, those of their number who are in the Northern States and Canada are to come in small companies to their rendezvous, which is in [Pg 289] the mountains in Virginia. They will pass down through Pennsylvania and Maryland and enter Virginia at Harper's Ferry. Brown left the North about three or four weeks ago, and will arm the negroes and strike a blow in a few weeks; so that whatever is done must be done at once. They have a large quantity of arms at their rendezvous and are probably distributing them already. As I am not fully in their confidence, this is all the information I can give you. I dare not sign my name to this, but trust that you will not disregard the warning on that account.

This letter, which should have led to the immediate overthrow and wreck of the Provisional Government of the United States, had been enclosed in an envelope addressed to the postmaster at Cincinnati, and mailed at Big Rock, Iowa. At Cincinnati, August 23d, it was remailed to the Honorable Secretary. Mr. Floyd received it at Red Sweet Springs, Virginia, August 25th, and while not attaching sufficient importance to the subject of the communication to read it a second time, he preserved the letter, and, after the denouement, published it. In explanation of his indifference to the contents of this letter, he stated to the Mason Committee, that the reference to the arsenal in Maryland misled him, there being no armory in that state. He therefore,

supposed the whole thing was a hoax, and gave it no further attention. The history of the letter was revealed in later years by its author, David J. Gue, of Scott County, Iowa, who obtained his information from Mr. Moses Varney, of Springdale.[366]

As the days passed, the men, who were to form the nucleus of the army of invasion, straggled into Harper's Ferry and reported at headquarters for duty. August 6th, Watson Brown arrived, and with him came the Thompson brothers, William and Dauphin. They were brothers to Henry Thompson, who had been with Brown in Kansas in 1856. Then came Tidd and Stevens, *et al.*, and last of all, but one of the most welcome of all the recruits, came Francis J. Merriam. He arrived at [Pg 290] the Kenneday farm October 15th, with six hundred dollars in gold in his pockets, which he covered into the Provisional Treasury. The arrival of Merriam with his gold relieved the strain upon Brown's exchequer. The commander-in-chief had been compelled to negotiate a loan of forty dollars from Lieutenant Coppoc, upon the credit of the Provisional Government, to meet the current expenses of the expedition. That deficit was now made good, leaving a handsome surplus on hand. When Brown was taken into custody three days later, he had with him two hundred and fifty or sixty dollars in gold and silver. Mrs. Anne Brown Adams said:[367] "The good Father in Heaven who furnishes daily bread sent Francis J. Merriam down there with his money to help them just at the moment it was needed." But it may also be said that in the varying vicissitudes of Brown's fortunes, almost any moment was just such a moment as this. "His money," Mr. Villard states, was Merriam's "only contribution of value to the cause.... In addition to his other physical frailties he had lost the sight of one of his eyes." After looking him over, Stevens assigned him to duty as guard over the arms which were to be left at the Kennedy farm.

On the 29th of September, the two young women left army headquarters to return to their homes. They had rendered faithful and valuable services during the months of their stay. If the Provisional Government had succeeded, these two women would have taken rank with the immortals—Betsy Ross and Mollie Stark. Mrs. Adams relates[368] that one day, while "we were alone in the yard Owen remarked, as he looked up at the house: 'If we succeed, some day there will be a United States flag over this house. If we do not, it will be considered a den of land pirates and thieves.'" In the division of their labors Anne, and not "Martha," seems to have "chosen the better part"; the latter did the cooking for the company, and was the general head of [Pg 291] the department of domestic economy; while Anne, from the watch towers of the rude farm house, kept vigils over all the approaches thereto. She was the faithful sentinel that sounded the alarm at every sign of danger—the vestal virgin, keeping alive the sacred fires upon their altar of liberty. The approach of any human being was cause for alarm, lest the presence of the invading army might be discovered and divulged. An interesting account of the daily life at headquarters, by Mrs. Anne Brown Adams is published by Mr. Villard.[369] Of the personnel of the field and staff, she says:

> It is claimed by many that they were a wild, ignorant, fanatical or adventurous lot of rough men. *This is not so*, they were sons from good families, well trained by orthodox religious parents, too young to have settled views on many subjects, impulsive, generous, too good themselves to believe that God could possibly be the harsh unforgiving being He was at that day usually represented to be. Judging them by the rules laid down by Christ, I think they were uncommonly good and sincere Christians, if the term Christian means follower of Christ's example, and too great lovers of freedom to endure to be trammeled by church or creed.

No doubt the conduct of these free-booters, in the presence of the young women, at the Kennedy farm, was circumspect and commendable, and justified the estimate herein expressed of their exemplary characters, and of the Christian lives that she supposed they had led, and were living.

Little indeed did this pure minded girl know of the reckless careers and the lives of violence these adventurers represented, or of the motives that prompted them to undertake their present enterprise. Measuring them by the standards put forth by Christ, it will have to be admitted that they were a collection of "mis-fit" Christians—as "mild mannered men as ever scuttled ship or cut [Pg 292] a throat." Leeman, for instance, may be taken as an illustration of one of these ideal "followers of Christ's example." "For three years," he had been secretly placing the example of his exalted character before the world, warring with slavery, in an association of as gallant fellows as ever "puled" a trigger. Who these gallant trigger "puling" fellows were, and what they did to earn their reputations as trigger "pulers," during these three years, is more or less conjectural. Mrs. Adams turns the light upon Leeman's Christian character a little further, by the statement, that "he smoked a good deal and drank sometimes." Mr. Villard states that he went to Kansas in 1856 with the second Massachusetts colony of that year, and became a member of John Brown's "Volunteer-Regulars," September 9, 1856. Also, that he fought well at Osawatomie. But since he is reported as having enlisted ten days after the battle of Osawatomie there may be some mistake as to that. George B. Gill, who knew a good bit about him and who may have been a trigger "puler" himself, says that he "had a good intellect with great ingenuity." Anne heard Hazlett and Leeman, one day, saying that "Barclay Coppoc and Dauphin Thompson were too nearly like good girls to make soldiers: that they ought to have gone to Kansas and roughed it awhile, to toughen them, before coming down there." Cook, it may be said, was less Christ-like than Leeman. He was disposed to "swagger," also he "was indiscreet" and "boastful." Once, when in a boastful mood, at Cleveland, he boasted that he had "killed five men in Kansas." Then too he "swaggered openly in his boarding house" which was bad form, from a Christian point of view. Also it is said that he "revealed too much to a woman acquaintance."[370] Then there was Hazlett; but the record as to his actions is so meager that one cannot estimate with any degree of accuracy how "Christ-like"

he really was. About all that is known of him is that he stole a horse—a very fine stallion—from somebody in Missouri, which, as has been stated, he traded to Brown for a forty-acre United States land warrant. Also, he was with Stevens when the latter killed Cruise, to get possession of the slave girl. As to Stevens, it cannot truthfully be said that he was a follower of Christ's example, in the stricter interpretation of that expression. One of Christ's disciples—Peter—it is said, followed the Master "afar off." In that respect Stevens resembles the disciple rather than the Master. As a matter of fact, if Stevens followed Christ's example at all, it was at very long range. From what is known of the lives of these men, it may be assumed also, that if Charles Jennison had been under Anne's observation at the Kennedy farm, he too would have secured absolution for his crimes and would have received at her hands a certificate of Christianity.[371] [Pg 293]

The details that Brown's biographers have published concerning the concentration of the military stores at his headquarters; his correspondence with his men; the assembling of them in Maryland; his constantly recurring financial embarrassments, and the edited statements concerning the daily life which he and his men led after their arrival at the seat of war, are of little or no public interest or value. They fail to touch upon the vital purpose that led Brown, in the disguise of a farmer or cattle buyer, to take up his residence at the Kennedy farm house. They fail to even hint at the broad purpose of his being there, or of the commanding things which he strenuously sought to promote during the months that he occupied the ground. They trifle with their theme and with their characters. These men had not dedicated their lives to martyrdom "that others might live." Their impromptu metamorphosis from "soiled lives" to consecrated lives is gratuitous. They were *capitalized* upon "the monstrous wrong which they beheld," and [Pg 294] intended to turn it, through a wrong still more monstrous, to a monstrous personal advantage. No maudlin sentiment inspired these men, "with soiled lives behind them" to dare as few ever dared before. Their "hearts throbbed" with a single mighty purpose—an ambition worthy of the desperation of their adventure. Their goal was an empire and its emoluments: their rewards the spoils of conquest of the most promising field that marauders ever planned to plunder.

The time finally agreed upon and fixed for the great catastrophe was the night of October 16th. The party consisted of the following persons:

WHITE:	COLORED:
John Brown	J. A. Copeland, Jr.
J. H. Kagi	L. S. Leary
A. D. Stevens	O. P. Anderson
J. E. Cook	Dangerfield Newby
C. P. Tidd	Shields Green
Albert Hazlett	
J. G. Anderson	
William Thompson	
D. O. Thompson	
Edwin Coppoc	
Barclay Coppoc	
W. H. Leeman	
Owen Brown	
Oliver Brown	
Watson Brown	
F. J. Merriam	
Stewart Taylor	

The extent of the conspiracy among the slaves and the confidential arrangements and agreements which Brown made and entered into with them—his co-conspirators—during the months he spent in secret negotiations with them; and the pledges and promises that had been exchanged between them will, of course, never be known. But so far as the plans agreed upon [Pg 295] related to the initial movements, the general outline of them was simple enough for the comprehension of every one, the untutored slaves included. Brown and his men were to occupy Harper's Ferry. They were to cut the telegraph wires and take possession of the public buildings located there—the armory, the arsenal, and the rifle works—and the military stores contained in them. The slaves, on their part, were to revolt against their masters; murder them and their families, and then report to Brown at Harper's Ferry, where they would be organized into companies, regiments, and brigades, and be armed and equipped from the stock of war material which he would have in his possession.

The war department was doing some business. Stevens, Kagi, Cook, Owen Brown, Oliver Brown, Watson Brown, Leeman, William Thompson, J. G. Anderson, Tidd, and Hazlett had been appointed captains in the provisional army, and Edwin Coppoc and Dauphin Thompson first lieutenants. The privates were Taylor, Barclay Coppoc and Merriam, *white*; and Green, Leary, Copeland, Osborn P. Anderson, and Newby, *colored*. There is conflict of testimony as to whether Hazlett was a captain or a lieutenant. Colonel Lee reported him and Leeman as lieutenants. A captain's commission, however, was found on Leeman's body. William Thompson and J. G. Anderson were probably captains.[372] In his confession Cook says:

> There were six or seven in the party who did not know anything about our Constitution, and were also ignorant of the plan of operations until Saturday morning October 16th. Among this number were Edwin and Barclay Coppoc,

Merriam, Shields Green, Copeland and Leary. The Constitution was then read to them by Stevens, and the oath, afterward, administered by Captain Brown.

CHAPTER XIII

[Pg 296]

THE FIASCO

The best laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft a gley.

—Burns

On Sunday morning, October 16th, 1859, Captain Owen Brown and Privates Coppoc and Merriam were detailed for duty at the Kennedy farm; the others were under marching orders during the day, awaiting the signal to "fall in," and move to the scene of active operations. "The night was dark, ending in rain." About eight o'clock Brown is reported to have said: "Men, get your arms, we will proceed to the Ferry." The column was soon in motion. It does not require a long time for eighteen men, who are otherwise in readiness to move, to put on their accoutrements and pick up their arms. In addition to a rifle, two revolvers, and forty rounds of ball cartridges, each man carried, in lieu of an overcoat, a long gray shawl, of the kind which was fashionable for men's wear at that time. The headquarters train—a horse and wagon—was brought to the door of the Kennedy farm house, and "some pikes, a crow-bar, and a sledge-hammer, were quickly thrown into the wagon." A recent biographer says, dramatically:

> In a moment more, the commander-in-chief donned his old battle-worn Kansas cap, mounted the wagon, and began the solemn march.

Knowledge of the condition, as to wear and tear, of the cap worn by the commander-in-chief on this occasion, is not essential to a true understanding of the purposes of the movement. But knowledge of the fact that the historian drew upon his active and resourceful imagination, when writing the history of these operations, and that it contributed, immoderately, to the character of [Pg 297] the writings which he put forth, is essential to such understanding. It is therefore pointed out, that the statement, while purporting to be one of fact, is altogether fanciful. Also, that the biographer's treatment of this trifling incident is characteristic of the coloring which embellishes his exposition of the general subject. But to return to the cap. The Kansas origin of it will not be denied; it may have been bought or stolen in the Territory; but it was not "battle-worn." It will be remembered that Brown had but two "battles" in Kansas, so far as the record shows, and that in the last one—the Battle of Osawatomie, August 30, 1856—Brown "lost his hat" or his cap or whatever his head gear may have been.[373]

A special order, "drawn up and carefully read to all" set forth the details of the movement to be executed. In the line of march Captains Cook and Tidd walked ahead of the wagon. The others, in files of two, followed it. At 10:30, after a lonesome but uninterrupted march of more than five miles, they arrived at the bridge which spanned the Potomac at Harper's Ferry. It was used for both railroad and wagon road purposes. Cook and Tidd, in the meantime, had detoured to cut the telegraph wires leading into the town, and Kagi and Stevens had the head of the column. While crossing the bridge, they took William Williams, the bridge watchman, into custody as a prisoner. Then, after posting Captain Watson Brown and Private Taylor at the bridge, the company proceeded to the Harper's Ferry end of the Shenandoah bridge, a few yards distant, where Captain Oliver Brown, Captain William Thompson, and Private Newby were placed on duty. From there they went to the United States Armory, located up the Potomac, about sixty yards from the ends of the two bridges. At the armory gate the watchman on duty, Daniel Wheelan, was taken into custody. Of this incident Wheelan said:[374]

> One fellow took me; they all gathered about me and looked in my face; I was [Pg 298] nearly scared to death, so many guns about; I did not know the minute or the hour I should drop; they told me to be very quiet and still, and make no noise or else they would put me to eternity.

Addressing the two prisoners—Wheelan and Williams—Brown made the following declaration of his intentions:[375]

> I came here from Kansas, and this is a slave State; I want to free all the negroes in this State; I have possession now of the United States armory, and if the citizens interfere with me, I must only burn the town and have blood.

Brown then crossed the street to the arsenal building, where arms and military equipment, valued at several millions of dollars, were stored, and took possession of it, placing Captain Hazlett and Lieutenant Coppoc in charge of the property. From there, with the remainder of the party, he proceeded to the rifle works, located about a half mile up the Shenandoah. Here the watchman was made a prisoner and Captain Kagi and Private Copeland were placed on duty. Private Leary was also assigned to duty at this post and later reported to Kagi.

These dispositions of his forces having been made, Brown's occupation of Harper's Ferry was complete. All of the United States property—the military stores accumulated at the arsenal; the armory and the rifle works; and the principal highways entering the town, were in his possession.

The plans for the occupation of the place had been accomplished without the firing of a shot. The initial movement of the invasion had been successfully executed.

After the occupation. Brown sent a detail into the country to bring in Colonel Lewis T. Washington and Mr. John H. Allstadt, whom he intended to hold as hostages for the proper treatment of any of his men who might happen to fall into the hands of the "enemy." The party was made up of Captains Stevens, Cook, and Tidd, and Privates O. P. Anderson, Leary, and [Pg 299] Green. The Washington home was four or five miles from the town. Colonel Washington was a great-grandnephew of George Washington. Of this raid into the country, Mr. Villard says:[376]

> In Colonel Washington's possession was a pistol presented to General Washington by Lafayette, as well as a sword now in possession of the State of New York, which, according to an unverified legend, was the gift of Frederick the Great to George Washington. John E. Cook had seen these weapons in Colonel Washington's home, and John Brown, beginner of a new American revolution, wished to strike his first blow for the freedom of a race with them in his hands.

The closing sentence of this quotation is dramatic and rings true; but it is inconsistent with the author's theory of the movement, which is, that Brown intended to do trifling things instead of heroic things.

The raiders entered the house by breaking down the back door with a fence rail; and Washington was awakened by hearing his "name called in an undertone." He opened the bed-chamber door and was met by "four armed men, one, with a revolver, carrying a burning flambeau, and the others with their guns drawn upon him." Stevens was in command. Cook had reconnoitered the Washington home a month or so before and had been shown the historic weapons herein referred to. These Stevens now demanded and received. He also demanded the Colonel's money and his watch, but on the refusal of the latter to deliver them, the demand was not pressed. When asked by Washington what the performance meant, they said, "We have come here for the purpose of liberating all the slaves of the South, and we are able (or propose to do it) or words to that effect." While matters were progressing in-doors, Tidd had been busy hitching up the Colonel's two-horse carriage and four-horse farm wagon. After putting Colonel Washington into the carriage and loading the slaves, four men, into the wagon, the caravan moved to the Allstadt [Pg 300] home, where the front door was broken down with a fence rail, as before, and Allstadt and his son, together with his adult male slaves, were taken into custody. Father and son were put into the seat of the wagon with the negroes and all were driven to Harper's Ferry and delivered to Brown at the armory. Brown told Colonel Washington that he had taken him for the "moral effect it would give his cause to have one of the name a prisoner." With the sword of Frederick the Great, and Washington, in his hand, Brown now directed his desperate defense. Tuesday morning Washington recovered the sword.[377]

In the meantime, at 12 o'clock, Patrick Higgins—also a night-watchman—went to the Potomac bridge to relieve Night-Watchman Williams who had been taken prisoner. As he approached he was "halted" by Oliver Brown, at the Shenandoah bridge, and upon refusing to obey the order, was fired upon, the bullet making a wound in his scalp.[378] Upon the arrival at Harper's Ferry, of the east-bound Baltimore and Ohio train, Higgins reported to the conductor—Phelps—what had happened to him. The engineer of the train and the baggage-master, on going forward toward the bridge to investigate, were also fired upon. At or about the time this incident occurred, Shephard Hayward, the station baggage-master, a free negro, went from the station toward the Potomac bridge to look for Watchman Williams. Upon being ordered to halt, he turned to retrace his steps to the station and was fired upon with fatal effect, by Watson Brown's party, "A bullet passing through his body a little below the heart," from the effect of which he died during the afternoon, about 4 o'clock. The arrival of the train being reported to Brown, he personally informed Conductor Phelps why it was being held, saying:

> We have come to free the slaves and intend to do it at all hazards.

Later, at 3 A. M., Brown notified Phelps that he could now proceed with his train and directed him [Pg 301] to say to the management of the road: "This is the last train that shall pass the bridge either East or West; if it is attempted, it will be at the peril of the lives of those having them in charge."[379] Phelps however, decided not to move until daylight. From Monocacy, at 7:05 A. M., he wired the situation to Master of Transportation Smith, at Baltimore; repeating what Brown had said to him, and suggesting that he notify the Secretary of War at once; concluding his dispatch with this statement: "The telegraph wires are cut East and West of Harper's Ferry and this is the first station that I could send a dispatch from."

The first alarm of what was occurring in the town was given out by a resident physician, Dr. John D. Starry. But the note which he sounded was not of the "Paul Revere" variety. The Doctor was aroused from his slumbers by the firing of the shot that struck Hayward, and went to his relief. The remainder of the night he spent in observing what was going on but gave out no information concerning it. "At daylight," it is said, "he could stand it no longer; he saddled his horse, rode to the residence of Mr. A. M. Kitzmiller, who was in charge of the arsenal during the absence of the superintendent, Mr. Barbour; acquainted him, and a number of other officials and workmen with the story of the night. He then put spurs to his horse, and ascended the hill to Bolivar Heights, where he awoke some more sleepers."[380] After arousing the town, the Doctor rode to Charlestown, eight miles distant, where the alarm was given by ringing all the bells. The local military company—the Jefferson Guards—fell in promptly; also a second company, composed of men and boys, was organized on the spot, both companies taking a train at 10 o'clock for the

scene of the trouble.

By 10:30 President Garrett of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, had informed the President of the United States of the conditions existing at Harper's Ferry. He also wired the information to Governor Wise, of Virginia; and to Major General Stewart, commanding First Division Maryland Volunteers, at Baltimore.[381] The news soon became general. From Monocracy it was wired to Frederick, and by 10 A. M. the Frederick companies were under arms and had marching orders. A Martinsburg company, under Captain E. G. Alburtis, arrived at Harper's Ferry during the afternoon, and shortly thereafter a company from Winchester reported for duty. Earlier in the day two local companies were "mustered into service;" one under command of Captain Botts and the other under Captain John Avis. Two companies from Shepherdstown also arrived—the "Hamtrack Guards" and the "Shepherdstown Troop." During the evening three companies arrived from Frederick, and five companies from Baltimore. In all sixteen companies of State Volunteers were assembled at Harper's Ferry within twelve hours from the time the first alarm was given out. [Pg 302]

The second casualty of the day occurred about 7 o'clock A. M., when Mr. Thomas Boerly, an Irishman and a resident of Harper's Ferry, was fatally shot by one of Brown's men. From that time until after 10 o'clock nothing of importance occurred in the town, except that Brown ordered breakfast for his war party and his prisoners, forty-five in all. The meals were prepared and served from a nearby hotel—the Wagner House.

In the early morning, after the prisoners—Colonel Washington and the Allstadts—had been delivered to Brown at the armory gate, Cook and Leeman proceeded to the Kennedy farm with the teams that they had taken from Colonel Washington, and began moving the military equipment, which had been left there, in care of Owen Brown, to a school-house, that was located about a mile from the Ferry. Later, Brown dispatched William Thompson to the school-house with a message to Owen, saying that "all was going well." Between 9 and 10 o'clock Leeman and Thompson returned to Harper's Ferry, bringing with them another prisoner, Mr. Terence Brown, a Maryland farmer of the neighborhood. After 10 o'clock Brown's position became critical. It was fast becoming evident that his plans had miscarried; that the slaves had failed to strike for their freedom; that the fundamental movement of the campaign—*the insurrection of the slaves*—had not been executed. "THE BLOW" which he planned to strike had not been delivered. The attempt to "assail the Slave Power with the only weapons that it fears," had "flashed in the pan." [Pg 303]

It was not important that the Potomac and the Shenandoah bridges were still in his possession and that access to the Maryland mountains was free; for Brown was not equipped for flight, and there are limitations upon physical endurance. Besides, these Southern mountains were, to him, inhospitable, and would furnish neither subsistence nor shelter. Also the inhabitants of the vicinity were rising in arms against him, their passions inflamed to a condition of frenzy because of the assault which he had made upon their lives and property. He well knew the excited mob would be upon his trail from the start; and that escape, except for a possible straggler or two, was impossible. But there still existed the possibility that the fifteen hundred self-emancipated slaves, whom he hoped to have under arms by 12 o'clock,[382] would begin to arrive.

Details of the subsequent occurrences are given in a very interesting manner by Mr. Villard, on pages 429 to 454. He relates that after 10 o'clock, the citizens of Harper's Ferry became aggressive, and opened a scattering or desultory fire upon Brown's position at the armory building. The "Jefferson Guards," upon their arrival at Bolivar Heights, marched to a point about a mile above the town, where they crossed the Potomac in boats, and came down the Maryland side of the river to the Potomac bridge, driving Watson Brown and Taylor from their post. This movement compelled William Thompson and Newby to abandon their station at the Shenandoah bridge, and seek shelter in the armory. The Galt House was then occupied by Captain Botts's company, while Captain Avis took a position near the crest of Bolivar Heights, overlooking the town, from where he opened fire upon the armory. Newby was killed by this fire before he reached the armory enclosure. It is said that his body was shockingly mutilated. About 1 o'clock Leeman sought to effect his escape. He left the arsenal and attempted to cross the Potomac, a short distance above the bridge, and succeeded in getting as far as a small island in the river, where he was overtaken and killed by a Mr. A. G. Schoppert. The body of the late captain, his commission in his pocket, as it lay upon the rocks in the river, became an object for target practice, by citizens, and by members of the volunteer military companies then assembling. [Pg 304]

During the afternoon Brown sought to have the firing cease by negotiating with the citizens for a truce; and sent out a prisoner, Mr. Cross, and William Thompson, to make the arrangement. Thompson was immediately taken and held as a prisoner, for a time, at the Galt House. Later he was led out upon the trestle leading to the Shenandoah bridge, where he was shot by a mob under the leadership of George W. Chambers and Harry Hunter; his body falling into the shallow water below, where it became a general target for the mob, in mob fashion. Still later, Brown sent Stevens and Watson Brown out, accompanied by Mr. Kitzmiller, under a flag of truce. This flag was fired upon from the windows of the Galt House with the result that both Stevens and Brown received severe wounds. Brown succeeded in dragging himself back to the armory engine-house, where he died thirty hours later. One of the prisoners, a Mr. Brua, went out and had Stevens carried into the Wager House.

Between 2 and 3 o'clock a small party, under the command of a young man by the name of Irwin, made an attack upon the rifle-works on the Shenandoah, where Kagi and his men were stationed. The latter sought to escape across the river, but were shot down before reaching the middle of the stream. Kagi fell and died in the water. Leary was mortally wounded, and died the following [Pg 305]

night. Copeland was taken prisoner by Mr. James H. Holt, of Harper's Ferry, and by him delivered to the Virginia authorities. In the confusion, the detail at the arsenal—Hazlett and O. P. Anderson—managed to escape unnoticed. They probably abandoned their post as soon as it became evident to them that the insurrection feature of the venture had miscarried. It is said they first went to the Kennedy farm, where they got supplies of provisions, and from there they made their way into Pennsylvania. Five days later Hazlett was captured at Carlisle, and taken back to Virginia under extradition papers, issued by the Governor of the State. His trial was had at Charlestown, and he was hanged there, with Stevens, March 16, 1860. Anderson fared better: he managed to reach Canada, and lived to write a marvelous story of his adventures.

Cook's party, and the detail under Owen Brown, met with better success, Cook alone being arrested. He was taken at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, October 25th, and returned to Charlestown, Virginia, where he was hanged December 16th. E. Coppoc, Green, and Copeland were hanged at the same time. The others: Tidd, Barclay Coppoc, Merriam and Owen Brown all succeeded in making good their escape. The negroes who had been taken returned to their masters.

About 2 o'clock, George W. Turner was killed. Turner was a prosperous farmer of the vicinity. He had been graduated from West Point, and had served creditably with the army, in Florida. Riding into town, with his shot-gun on his shoulder, he became a target for one of Brown's rifles. A shot struck him in the neck and killed him instantly. About 4 o'clock Mr. Fontaine Beckham, the mayor of the town, was killed. Beckham was the station agent for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company. He stepped out of the station-house to observe what was going on, when he was fired upon by Edward Coppoc, from the engine-house, with fatal effect. He also died instantly. [Pg 306]

The beginning of the final collapse came about 4 o'clock, with the arrival of the Martinsburg company. Alburtis attacked the armory enclosure and drove Brown, with his most prominent prisoners—Colonel Washington, the Allstadts, Brua, Byrne, Wells, the armorer, Ball, master-machinist, and J. E. Daingerfield, pay-master's clerk—into the engine-house. Of his attack Captain Alburtis said:[383]

> During the fight, we found, in the room adjoining the engine-house, some thirty or forty prisoners, who had been captured and confined by the outlaws. The windows were broken open by our party and these men escaped. The whole of the outlaws were now driven into the engine-house, and owing to the great number of wounded requiring our care, and not being supported by the other companies, as we expected, we were obliged to return.... Immediately after we drew off, there was a flag of truce sent out to propose terms, which were that they were to be permitted to retire with their arms, and, I think, proceed as far as some lock on the canal, there to release their prisoners. The terms were not acceded to.

There were troops enough on the ground at this time to have carried Brown's position by assault; and it is probable that an attack upon the armory would have been ordered, had such extreme measures been deemed necessary, which was not the case. Besides, if an assault had been made by these undisciplined men, it would have been attended with the loss of many lives, which, under the circumstances, would have been without justification. Brown and his party were in a position from which they could not escape; neither could his surrender be long deferred. A prevailing report, too, that a detachment of United States troops—marines—would soon arrive, under the command of an experienced officer of the regular army, may have had some influence in determining what should be done. However, before nightfall, a Mr. Samuel Strider delivered a summons to Brown, demanding his surrender, to which Brown replied as follows: [Pg 307]

> Capt. John Brown Answers:
>
> In consideration of all my men, whether living or dead, or wounded, being soon safely in and delivered up to me at this point with all their arms and ammunition, we will then take our prisoners and cross the Potomac bridge, a little beyond which we will set them at liberty; after which we can negotiate about the Government property as may be best. Also we require the delivery of our horse and harness at the hotel.[384]

The terms of the note were promptly declined by Colonel Robert W. Baylor, of the Virginia Cavalry, who seems to have been the ranking officer present. He said that "under no conditions would he consent to a removal of the citizen prisoners across the river." Still later in the evening the three companies, in uniform, arrived from Frederick, Maryland. One of these was under the command of Captain Sinn. This officer proceeded to the engine-house and entered into a lengthy conversation with Brown. During this interview Brown renewed his proposal to leave the place, and complained of the treatment his men, bearing a flag of truce, had received; that they "had been shot down like dogs." Being told that men in his position must expect such treatment, Brown replied that before coming there "he had weighed the responsibility and should not shrink from it." He thought, however, that he was entitled to better treatment from the people because of what he had *not* done to them; that he "had had full possession of the town and could have massacred all the inhabitants had he thought proper to do so."

During afternoon of the 17th, President Buchanan ordered three companies of artillery, from Fortress Monroe, to the scene of the trouble; also the detachment of marines, at the Washington Navy Yard. The latter were under the command of Lieutenant Israel Green, U. S. M. C. He also ordered Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Lee, Second United States Cavalry, brevet colonel United States army, to proceed to Harper's Ferry and assume command of all the United States troops [Pg 308]

concentrating there. General J. E. B. Stuart, at that time a first lieutenant in the First United States Cavalry accompanied Lee as a volunteer aide. The artillery from Fortress Monroe was detained at Baltimore by order of Colonel Lee. With two howitzers and ninety men Green left Washington for Harper's Ferry, at 3:30 P. M. En route he received orders from Colonel Lee to stop at Sandy Hook, a station within a mile, nearly, of his destination. At 10 o'clock Lee arrived at Sandy Hook on a special train. The marines were then formed, and marched to Harper's Ferry, leaving the howitzers aboard the cars. Arriving at the town, after consultation with the volunteer commanders present, Lee ordered the militia to vacate the armory grounds, and put the control, or care of the situation, in the hands of Lieutenant Green.

Before ordering the assault upon the engine-house, which, to save the lives of Brown's prisoners, was to be executed with the bayonet, Lee offered the honor of commanding the action to the regimental commanders of the volunteers: Colonel Shriver of the Maryland troops and Colonel Baylor of the Virginians; an offer which both of these officers, in behalf of their men, had the moral courage to wisely and properly decline. Colonel Shriver said, in effect, that they had come to help the people of Harper's Ferry in an emergency: that the emergency, in view of the United States troops present, was now passed; that his men had wives and children at home, and since it was not necessary to expose them to such risk as this attack involved, he would not voluntarily do so. Colonel Baylor expressed similar views. But, later, there was trouble over the matter. The pride of the Governor of Virginia, Henry E. Wise, was hurt because the Virginia troops had not done on the 17th what Lee, Stuart, Green, and the marines did so creditably on the morning of [Pg 309] the 18th. As a result, charges of misconduct were preferred against Colonel Baylor, by Mr. O. Jennings Wise, a son of the Governor; and a court of inquiry was convened in June, 1860, to investigate the case. Mr. Villard states that in a letter addressed to the court, by Mr. Wise, the latter charged that Colonel Baylor had assumed command on the 17th, "contrary to his grade and the nature of his commission." That he had acted without orders; that he was guilty of cowardice in not storming the engine-house, and of "unofficer-like conduct in assigning a false, cowardly and insulting reason for not leading the attack on the engine-house when the service was offered to him by Colonel Lee: to-wit—that it was a duty which belonged to the *mercenaries* of the regular service—meaning the marines—who were paid for it"; and, finally for using "violent and ungentlemanly language about his Commander-in-Chief (Governor Wise)."

After the militia officers had declined the command of the storming party, it was offered to Lieutenant Green, who, of course, accepted it, and, taking off his cap, thanked his commander for the honor, with soldierly courtesy.

Early on the morning of the 18th, Colonel Lee sent a demand upon Brown to surrender, which was read to him at the door of the engine-house by Lieutenant Stuart. The order read as follows: [385]

Headquarters Harper's Ferry,
October 18, 1859.

> Colonel Lee, United States Army, commanding the troops, sent by the United States to suppress the insurrection at this place, demands the surrender of the persons in the armory buildings.
>
> If they will peaceably surrender themselves and restore the pillaged property, they shall be kept in safety to await the orders of the President. Colonel Lee represents to them, in all frankness, that it is impossible for them to escape; that the armory [Pg 310] is surrounded on all sides by troops; and that if he is compelled to take them by force, he cannot answer for their safety.

R. E. Lee,
Colonel Commanding United States Troops.

It had been agreed upon between Stuart and Green, that, after having read the order to Brown, if he should refuse to surrender, as they supposed he would, Stuart would then signal by a wave of his cap, at the sight of which Green would order his company forward to the assault. His plan of attack was to advance with twelve men, holding another twelve in reserve to support them, if they should be disabled, and with a heavy sledge-hammer break down the door of the engine-house, and if successful, then, with the full command rush the insurgents with fixed bayonets. Upon seeing the signal agreed upon, Green ordered the attack. While being fired upon from within the engine-house, the marines, armed with the sledge, attempted to beat down the doors, but without success; then seeing a heavy ladder lying nearby, Green ordered some of the men to take it up and use it against the doors as a battering-ram. This expedient was successful. Two blows by the improvised engine of war sufficed to break a ragged hole, low down, in the right-hand door. Through the opening thus made, Green, and Major Russell, pay-master, United States Marine Corps, sprang, followed by the enlisted men.[386] Rising to his feet, Green ran back of the engine to the rear of the room, where he saw Colonel Washington, who, pointing to Brown said, "this is Osawatomie." Lieutenant Green states:

> When Colonel Washington said to me, "This is Osawatomie," Brown turned his head to see who it was to whom Colonel Washington was speaking. Quicker than thought, I brought my sabre down with all my strength, upon his head. He was moving as the blow fell, and I suppose I did not strike him where I intended, for he received a deep sabre cut on the back of his neck. He fell senseless on his side, [Pg 311]

then rolled over on his back. He had in his hand a short Sharp's Cavalry carbine. I think he had just fired as I reached Colonel Washington, for the marine who followed me into the aperture made by the ladder, received a bullet in the abdomen from which he died in a few minutes. The shot might have been fired by some one else in the party, but I think it came from Brown. Instantly, as Brown fell, I gave him a sabre thrust in the left breast. The sword I carried was a light uniform weapon and either not having a point, or striking something hard in Brown's accouterments, did not penetrate. The blade bent double. By that time three or four of my men were inside. They came rushing in like tigers, as a storming assault is not a play-day sport. They bayoneted one man, skulking under the engine, and pinned another fellow up against the rear wall, both being killed instantly. I ordered the men to spill no more blood. The other insurgents were at once taken under arrest, and the contest ended. The whole fight had not lasted over three minutes.[387]

Of Brown's eleven prisoners, whom he was holding as hostages, Lieutenant Green says:

> They were the sorriest lot of people I ever saw. They had been without food for over sixty hours, in constant dread of being shot, and were huddled up in the corner where lay the body of Brown's son and one or two others of the insurgents who had been killed.

The scrimmage being over, Green and Coppoc were taken into custody, and the dead and wounded were carried from the engine-house and laid upon the armory lawn, where they were protected from violence by a guard detailed from the company of marines. Later, Mr. Villard states, Brown was carried to the office of the pay-master of the armory and there given medical attention, when it was found that his wounds were far less serious than they were at first supposed to be.

Of the twenty-two ambitious men who courageously undertook to organize the "Provisional Army," ten had been killed: Kagi, Oliver Brown, Watson Brown, William Thompson, Dauphin Thompson, Jeremiah G. Anderson, Leeman, Newby, Leary, and Taylor. Five were prisoners: Brown, Stevens, E. Coppoc, Green, and Copeland. Seven had got away: Cook, Hazlett, Tidd, Owen Brown, Barclay Coppoc, Osborn P. Anderson, and Merriam. [Pg 312]

Those killed and wounded by the insurgents were as follows: Killed: G. W. Turner, Thomas Boerley, Fontane Beckham, Heywood Shepherd, and Private Quinn. Wounded: Mr. Murphy, Mr. Young, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Hammond, Mr. McCabe, Mr. Dorsey, Mr. Hooper, Mr. Woolet, and Private Rupert.[388]

About noon, on the 18th, some notable persons of that period arrived at Harper's Ferry, anxious to know the facts relating to the alarming events which had taken place. An interview with Brown was accordingly arranged, which was held at the office of the armory pay-master. The wounded Stevens had, in the meantime, been carried into the office and laid upon a mattress on the floor beside Brown. Those present were Governor Wise, of Virginia, Colonel Robert E. Lee, Lieutenant Stuart, Senator Mason of Virginia, Congressmen Vallandigham of Ohio and Faulkner of Virginia, Colonel Lewis Washington, Andrew Hunter, special counsel for the State of Virginia, and a half dozen citizens of the town and vicinity. Brown was able to answer freely, and seemed anxious for an opportunity to present his version of the situation to the public. He was "glad," he said, "to make himself and his motives clearly understood." Extracts from this interview are as follows: [389]

Senator Mason. Can you tell us who furnished money for your expedition?

John Brown. I furnished most of it myself; I cannot implicate others. It is my own folly that I have been taken. I could easily have saved myself from it, had I exercised my own better judgment rather than yielded to my feelings. [Pg 313]

Mason. You mean if you had escaped immediately?

Brown. No. I had the means to make myself secure without any escape; but I allowed myself to be surrounded by a force by being too tardy. I should have gone away; but I had thirty odd prisoners, whose wives and daughters were in tears for their safety, and I felt for them. Besides, I wanted to allay the fears of those who believed we came here to burn and kill. For this reason I allowed the train to cross the bridge, and gave them full liberty to pass on. I did it only to spare the feelings of those passengers and their families, and to allay the apprehensions that you had got here in your vicinity a band of men who had no regard for life and property, nor any feelings of humanity.

Mason. But you killed some people passing along the streets quietly.

Brown. Well, sir, if there was anything of that kind done, it was without my knowledge. Your own citizens who were my prisoners will tell you that every possible means was taken to prevent it. I did not allow my men to fire when there was danger of killing those we regarded as innocent persons, if I could help it. They will tell you that we allowed ourselves to be fired at repeatedly, and did not return it.

A Bystander. That is not so. You killed an unarmed man at the corner of the house over there at the water-tank, and another besides.

Brown. See here, my friend; it is useless to dispute or contradict the report of your own neighbors who were my prisoners.

Mr. Vallandigham (who had just entered.) Mr. Brown, who sent you here?

Brown. No man sent me here; it was my own prompting and that of my Maker, or that of the Devil—whichever you please to ascribe it to. I acknowledge no master in human form. [Pg 314]

Vallandigham. Did you get up this document that is called a Constitution?

Brown. I did. They are a constitution and ordinance of my own striving and getting up.

Vallandigham. How long have you been engaged in this business?

Brown. From the breaking out of the difficulties in Kansas. Four of my sons had gone there to settle, and they induced me to go. I did not go there to settle, but because of the difficulties.

Mason. What was your object in coming?

Brown. We came to free the slaves, and only that.

A Volunteer. What in the world did you suppose you could do here in Virginia with that amount of men?

Brown. Young man, I do not wish to discuss that question here.

Volunteer. You could not do anything.

Brown. Well, perhaps your ideas and mine on military subjects would differ materially.

Mason. Did you consider this a military organization in this Constitution? I have not yet read it.

Brown. I did in some sense. I wish you would give that paper close attention.

Mason. You consider yourself the commander-in-chief of these "provisional" military forces?

Brown. I was chosen, agreeably to the ordinance of a certain document, commander-in-chief of that force.

Mason. What wages did you offer?

Brown. None.

Stuart. "The wages of sin is death."

Brown. I would not have made such a remark to you if you had been a prisoner, and wounded, in my hands. [Pg 315]

A Bystander. Do you consider this a religious movement?

Brown. It is, in my opinion, the greatest service man can render to God.

Bystander. Do you consider yourself an instrument in the hands of Providence?

Brown. I do.

Bystander. Upon what principle do you justify your acts?

Brown. Upon the Golden Rule. I pity the poor in bondage that have none to help them: that is why I am here; not to gratify any personal animosity, revenge, or vindictive spirit. It is my sympathy with the oppressed and the wronged, that are as good as you and as precious in the sight of God.

Bystander. Certainly. But why take the slaves against their will?

Brown. I never did.

Bystander. You did in one instance, at least.

Stephens, the other wounded prisoner, here said, "You are right. In one case I know the negro wanted to go back."

Vallandigham. How far did you live from Jefferson?

Brown. Be cautious, Stephens, about any answers that would commit any friend. I would not answer that.

(Stephens turned partially over with a groan of pain, and was silent.)

Vallandigham. Who are your advisers in this movement?

Brown. I cannot answer that. I have numerous sympathizers throughout the entire North.

Vallandigham. In northern Ohio?

Brown. No more there than anywhere else; in all the free States.

Bystander. Why did you do it secretly?

Brown. Because I thought that necessary to success; no other reason. [Pg 316]

Bystander. Have you read Gerrit Smith's last letter?

Brown. What letter do you mean?

Bystander. The "New York *Herald*" of yesterday, in speaking of this affair, mentions a letter in this way:

"Apropos of this exciting news, we recollect a very significant passage in one of Gerrit Smith's letters, published a month or two ago, in which he speaks of the folly of attempting to strike the shackles off the slaves by the force of moral suasion or legal agitation, and predicts that the next movement made in the direction of negro emancipation would be an insurrection in the South."

Brown. I have not seen the "New York *Herald*" for some days past; but I presume, from your remark about the gist of the letter, that I should concur with it. I agree with Mr. Smith that moral suasion is hopeless. I don't think the people of the slave States will ever consider the subject of slavery in its true light till some other argument is resorted to than moral suasion.

Vallandigham. Did you expect a general rising of the slaves in case of your success?

Brown. No, sir; nor did I wish it. I expected to gather them up from time to time, and set them free.

Vallandigham. Did you expect to hold possession here till then?

Brown. Well, probably I had quite a different idea. I do not know that I ought to reveal my plans. I am here a prisoner and wounded, because I foolishly allowed myself to be so. You overrate your strength in supposing I could have been taken if I had not allowed it. I was too tardy after commencing the open attack—in delaying my movements through Monday night, and up to the time I was attacked by the Government troops. It was all occasioned by my desire to spare the feelings of my prisoners and their families and the community at large. I had no knowledge of the shooting of the negro Heywood.

[Pg 317]

Dr. Biggs. Were you in the party at Dr. Kennedy's house?

Brown. I was at the head of that party. I occupied the house to mature my plans. I have not been in Baltimore to purchase caps.

Q. Where did you get arms? *A.* I bought them.

Q. In what State? *A.* That I will not state.

Q. How many guns? *A.* Two hundred Sharpe's rifles and two hundred revolvers,—what is called the Massachusetts Arms Company's revolvers, a little under navy size.

Q. Why did you not take that swivel you left in the house? *A.* I had no occasion for it. It was given to me a year or two ago.

Q. In Kansas? *A.* No. I had nothing given to me in Kansas.

Q. By whom, and in what State? *A.* I decline to answer; it is not properly a swivel; it is a very large rifle with a pivot. The ball is larger than a musket ball; it is intended for a slug.

Reporter. I do not wish to annoy you; but if you have anything further you would like to say, I will report it.

Brown. I have nothing to say, only that I claim to be here in carrying out a measure I believe perfectly justifiable, and not to act the part of an incendiary or ruffian, but to aid those suffering great wrong. I wish to say, furthermore, that you had better—all you people at the South—prepare yourselves for a settlement of this question, that must come up for settlement sooner than you are prepared for it. The sooner you are prepared the better. You may dispose of me very easily,—I am nearly disposed of now; but this question is still to be settled,—this negro question I mean; the end of that is not yet. These wounds were inflicted upon me—both sabre cuts on my head and bayonet stabs in different parts of my body—some minutes after I had ceased fighting and had consented to surrender, for the benefit of others, not for my own. I believe the Major would not have been alive; I could [Pg 318] have killed him just as easy as a mosquito when he came in to receive our surrender. There had been loud and long calls of "surrender" from us,—as loud as men could yell; but in the confusion and excitement I suppose we were not heard. I do not think the Major, or any one, meant to butcher us after we had surrendered.

An Officer. Why did you not surrender before the attack?

Brown. I did not think it was my duty or interest to do so. We assured the prisoners that we did not wish to harm them, and they should be set at liberty. I exercised my best judgment, not believing the people would wantonly sacrifice their own fellow-citizens, when we offered to let them go on condition of being allowed to change our position about a quarter of a mile. The prisoners agreed by a vote among themselves to pass across the bridge with us. We wanted them only as a sort of guarantee of our own safety,—that we should not be fired into. We took them, in the first place, as hostages and to keep them from doing any harm. We did kill some men in defending ourselves, but I saw no one fire except directly in self-defense. Our orders were strict not to harm any one not in arms against us.

Q. Brown, suppose you had every nigger in the United States, what would you do with them? *A.* Set them free.

Q. Your intention was to carry them off and free them? *A.* Not at all.

A Bystander. To set them free would sacrifice the life of every man in this community.

Brown. I do not think so.

Bystander. I know it. I think you are fanatical.

Brown. And I think you are fanatical. "Whom the gods would destroy they first made mad," and you are mad.

Q. Was your only object to free the negroes? *A.* Absolutely our only object.

Q. But you demanded and took Colonel Washington's silver and watch? *A.* Yes; we intended freely to appropriate the property of slave-holders to carry out our object. [Pg 319] It was for that, and only that, and with no design to enrich ourselves with any plunder whatever.

Bystander. Did you know Sherrod in Kansas? I understand you killed him.

Brown. I killed no man except in fair fight. I fought at Black Jack Point and at Osawatomie; and if I killed anybody, it was at one of these places.

Mr. Sanborn publishes a conversation that Brown had with his jailer concerning his interview with Governor Wise.[390]

"'A Virginian,'" he says, "gives me this addition to Brown's conversation with Wise":

Jailer. I see in the papers that you told Governor Wise you had promises of aid from Virginia, Tennessee, and the Carolinas. Is that true, or did you make it up to "rile" the old Governor?

Brown. No; I did not tell Wise that.

Jailer. What did you tell him that could have made that impression on his mind?

Brown. Wise said something about fanaticism, and intimated that no man in full possession of his senses could have expected to overcome a State with such a handful of men as I had, backed only by struggling negroes; and I replied that I had promises of ample assistance, and would have received it too if I could only have set the ball in motion. He then asked suddenly in a harsh voice, as you've seen lawyers snap up a witness: "Assistance! From what State, sir?" I was not thrown off my guard, and replied: "From more than you'd believe if I should name them all; but I *expected* more from Virginia, Tennessee, and the Carolinas than

from any others."

Jailer. You "expected" it. You did not say it was promised from the States named?

Brown. No; I knew, of course, that the negroes would rally to my standard. If I had only got the thing fairly started, you Virginians would have seen sights that would have opened your eyes; and I tell you if I was free this moment, and had five hundred negroes around me, I would put these irons on Wise himself before Saturday night. [Pg 320]

Jailer. Then it was true about aid being promised? What States promised it?

Brown (with a laugh). Well, you are about as smart a man as Wise, and I'll give you the same answer I gave him.

A reporter for the New York *Herald* who was present said of Brown:[391] "He converses freely, fluently and cheerfully, without the slightest manifestation of fear or uneasiness, evidently weighing well his words, and possessing a good command of language. His manner is courteous and affable, while he appears to be making a favorable impression upon his auditory."

A reporter for the Baltimore *American* who was present at the interview said:[392] "No sign of weakness was exhibited by John Brown. In the midst of his enemies, whose homes he had invaded; wounded and a prisoner, surrounded by a small army of officials, and a more desperate army of angry men; with the gallows staring him full in the face, he lay on the floor, and, in reply to every question, gave answers that betokened the spirit that animated him. The language of Gov. Wise well expresses his boldness when he said, 'He is the gamest man I ever saw.'"

During the afternoon of the 18th, while the interview with Brown was in progress, Mr. John C. Unseld accompanied Lieutenant Green, with a detachment of marines, to Brown's recent headquarters at the Kennedy farm, where a quantity of war material was found, including bed clothing, canvas for tents, some axes, two cast-iron hominy mills, a good deal of clothing boxed up—new clothing for men, and some boots. Here also they found Brown's trunk containing his official papers and correspondence; copies of the constitution for the Provisional Government and other important documents; also maps of Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, South Carolina, Florida, and Georgia. Each map had a slip pasted on the side, evidently cut from [Pg 321] the census report of 1850, showing the number and kind of inhabitants (whether free or slave, white or black, male or female) in each county of the State or States which it represented. On the maps of South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia, there were various ink-marks in the shape of crosses at different points.[393] With the consent of Brown, John E. Cook had taken a similar census of the inhabitants living in the vicinity of Harper's Ferry.[394]

On the morning of the 19th the military stores that had been transferred to the school-house, on Monday, from the Kennedy farm, were taken possession of by the "Baltimore Greys," a company belonging to the Maryland regiment present, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Mills. Among them were the following articles:[395]

102 Sharp's Rifles
10 Kegs Gunpowder
23000 Percussion Rifle Caps
100000 Percussion Pistol Caps
13000 Sharp's Rifle Cartridges
483 Pikes
16 Picks
40 Shovels (The railroad waybill called for several dozen, showing that more were to come)
3 Gross Steel Pens
5 Ink Stands
21 Lead Pencils
34 Pen Holders
2 Boxes Wafers
47 Small Blank Books

On Wednesday morning, October 19th, the prisoners were safely transferred to Charlestown, under an escort of marines commanded by Lieutenant Green. Upon their arrival there they were delivered into the custody of the sheriff of Jefferson County and the United States marshal for the Western District of Virginia, and by them placed in the county jail. Brown and Stevens, being unable to walk, were transferred to and from the train, in a wagon.

The comments of the press of the country, upon the occurrences herein, however interesting they [Pg 322] may be, are not especially valuable. The writers of the time had but little correct information upon which to base their opinion as to the scope of the undertaking. Even at the present time, after the lapse of more than fifty years, opinion is divided as to whether this incident in our history was just an altruistic "*Foray into Virginia*"; or whether it was, practically, a harmless and utterly senseless "*raid*," or whether it was an organized reality—an invasion of the State of Virginia by Brown and his captains, having for their object, the conquest of the Southern States.

CHAPTER XIV [Pg 323]

A PERVERSION OF HISTORY

But many a man has committed his greatest blunder when attempting to write a book.

—John Brown, Jr.

Concerning the things which Brown intended to do, and the plans which he made in pursuance thereof Mr. Redpath says:[396]

> It was the original intention of Captain Brown to seize the Arsenal at Harpers Ferry on the night of the 24th of October, and to take the arms there deposited to the neighboring mountains, with a number of the wealthier citizens of the vicinity, as hostages, until they should redeem themselves by liberating an equal number of their slaves. When at Baltimore, for satisfactory reasons, he determined to strike the blow that was to shake the Slave System to its foundations, on the night of the 17th.
>
> ... Harper's Ferry, by the admission of military men, was admirably chosen as the spot at which to begin a war of liberation. The neighboring mountains, with their inaccessible fastnesses, with every one of which, and every turning of their valleys, John Brown had been familiar for seventeen years, would afford to guerrilla forces a protection the most favorable, and a thousand opportunities for a desperate defense or rapid retreats before overwhelming numbers of an enemy.

This is the conception of the Harper's Ferry episode that Brown's family, and his partisans, decided should be put forth concerning an incident which was to have been written in streams of blood, such as never flowed upon the continent. That anything so irrational should have been published, or should have been seriously considered by any one, is beyond the comprehension of [Pg 324] thoughtful persons; and yet, the foolish fictions therein suggested were accepted as the truth in the Northern States, and, with some modifications of the more grotesque absurdities therein contained, have been approved by subsequent writers and biographers and have been incorporated with the history of our country.

Why Brown should have intended to abandon Harper's Ferry without a struggle to retain it after having taken formal possession of the place and of the war material stored there, if the position was admirably chosen as the spot at which to begin a war of liberation; or how a voluntary retreat into the mountains by a band of twenty-two men could be regarded as a "blow" of any kind; or where the inaccessible fastness which he intended to retreat to was located: or how he intended to shelter and subsist his men and prisoners in an inaccessible fastness that had not been supplied with subsistence stores or with camp and garrison equipage of any description; or how he would be able to find his way, if the night happened to be a dark night, up and through the tangled obstructions upon which the fastness relied for its inaccessibility; or how he intended to transport the military equipment stored at Harper's Perry, to the fastness, without means of transportation, or roads to travel on; or how he intended to prevent his fastness from being surrounded and his communications with the world cut off while the altruistic negotiations for the "exchange of the wealthier citizen prisoners for an equal number of slaves," were progressing, appear to have been matters of no concern to this biographer. It was sufficient for his purpose to assume that these things, however inconsistent they might be, were the things which Brown intended to do, and that they constituted the blow which he had promised to strike. Mr. Redpath, personally, knew what Brown intended to do. He knew that Brown, pursuant to his pledges, planned to strike a blow that would shake the center of the slave system; that he planned to precipitate a war of surpassing atrocity; a war that was to begin with a carnival of [Pg 325] assassinations; that he intended "to assail slavery with the only weapon that it fears":[397] a servile insurrection.

Mr. Sanborn had been a valuable instrument in Brown's hands for the practice of his Eastern impositions. Taking his cue from Mr. Redpath, after describing what occurred on the night of the 16th of October, he rises to the full height of his conception of the occasion to inquire:

> Why then did Brown attack Harper's Ferry, or having captured it, why did he not leave it at once and push into the mountains of Virginia, according to his original plan?[398]

It was to this Mr. Sanborn, that Brown first suggested his scheme to raise $30,000 cash, to arm and equip a company of "fifty volunteer-regulars" for the defense of Kansas settlers. Mr. Sanborn was impressed, deeply so, and undertook to promote the proposition. Also, he undertook to promote Brown's scheme to have the Legislatures of Massachusetts and New York appropriate $100,000 each, to reimburse the Brown family for losses its members had sustained while "fighting" in Kansas; and ever thereafter had been Brown's faithful and efficient servant. He was a member of the "Secret War Committee" of six, and had reason to think, and probably did think, that Brown had taken him into his full confidence. He says:

> Although Brown communicated freely to the four persons just named,—Theodore Parker, Dr. Howe, Mr. Stearns and Col. Higginson,—his plans of attack and defense in Virginia, it is not known that he spoke to any but me of his purpose to surprise the Arsenal and town of Harper's Ferry.... It is probable that in 1858 Brown had not definitely resolved to seize Harper's Ferry; yet he spoke of it to me beside his coal fire in the American House, putting it as a question, rather, without expressing his own purpose. I questioned him a little about it; but it then passed from my mind, and I did not think of it again until the attack had been made a year [Pg 326] and a half afterwards.[399]

Thus Mr. Sanborn acknowledges that Brown had not entrusted to him the secret of his intentions,

and thereby disqualifies himself as an authority upon Brown's plans, or as having correct information concerning what he intended to do in Virginia. It is more than probable that upon the occasion to which Mr. Sanborn refers, Brown contemplated confiding to him his plans for the conquest of the South by means of an insurrection of the slaves and the massacre of the slave-holding population, and intended to offer him a position upon his staff. Brown and Forbes had laid plans for their campaign, with Harper's Ferry as the base of operations, as early as January, 1857, and in pursuance thereof had ordered the thousand spears with which to arm the blacks for the opening horror.

Sitting beside his coal fire in the American House, his thoughts upon his plans, and the hopes of his mighty conquest surging in his brain, John Brown, the grim Soldier of Fortune, drew out his young companion by indirection, and took the measure of his capacity for heroic undertakings. Had the young man, at the close of that interview, appealed for an omen "from that shrine whose oracles may destroy but can never deceive," he might, in a spiritual vision, have seen upon the invisible tablets, where Brown's mental records were kept, an inscription, or word, similar to that which Belshazzar saw traced upon the wall by the finger of an invisible hand. The man of "blood and iron" had invited the interview in his letter to Mr. Sanborn of February 24th.[400] Brown's decision was adverse to Mr. Sanborn. The latter did not suspect that he had passed through the fire of an examination, and had been found deficient. The subject was never again taken up; the door of opportunity closed against Mr. Sanborn.

Following the trail blazed by a discredited predecessor, the writer of *Fifty Years After* abandons [Pg 327] the teachings which the record discloses concerning this episode, and, concurring with Mr. Redpath, tries to confirm in our history that author's perversion of the facts relating to it. He assumes to believe, and seeks to teach the public to believe, that Brown's plans were, comparatively, crude, and that his movement in execution of them was of a harmless nature: that he merely intended to attempt to carry on a guerrilla warfare from some point in the nearby mountains, and that his entrance to Harper's Ferry was not an occupation of the place but a "raid" upon it, undertaken for the purpose of advertising, in a spectacular way, the guerrilla warfare which he intended to engage in. He says:[401]

> As for their general, he not only was the sole member of the attacking force to believe in the assault on the property of the United States at Harper's Ferry, but he was, as they neared the all-unsuspecting town, without any clear and definite plan of campaign. The general order detailed the men who were to garrison various parts of the town and hold the bridges, but beyond that, little had been mapped out. It was all to depend upon the orders of the commander-in-chief, who seemed bent on violating every military principle. Thus, he had appointed no definite place for the men to retreat to, and fixed no hour for the withdrawal from the town. He, moreover, proceeded at once to defy the canons by placing a river between himself and his base of supplies,—the Kennedy Farm,—and then left no adequate force on the river-bank to insure his being able to fall back to that base. Hardly had he entered the town when, by dispersing his men here and there, he made his defeat as easy as possible. Moreover, he had in mind no well-defined purpose in attacking Harpers Ferry, save to begin his revolution in a spectacular way, capture a few slave-holders and release some slaves. So far as he had thought anything out, he expected to alarm the town and then, with the slaves that had rallied to him, to march back to the school-house near the Kennedy Farm, arm his [Pg 328] recruits and take to the hills. Another general, with the same purpose in view would have established his mountain camp first, swooped down upon the town in order to spread terror throughout the State, and in an hour or two, at most, have started back to his hill-top fastness.... Hence, he confidently hoped to retire to the mountains before catching sight of a soldier of the regular army or of the militia,—by no means an unjustifiable expectation....
>
> The danger to any raiding force would come from losing possession of these bridges, in which case the sole means of escape would be by swimming the rivers or climbing up through the town toward Bolivar Heights, in the direction of Charlestown, eight miles away.

By the gratuitous and irrelevant assumptions herein, this biographer discredits Brown's intelligence; and by unjust, unfair, and illogical criticisms of his conduct, seeks to conceal and to emasculate his intentions. Authenticated facts place limitations upon the presumptions of historians, which challenge the consistency of reckless statements, and the logic of their conclusions concerning them. There is not an authenticated line in this history which justifies a belief that Brown contemplated doing the things which this author assumes that he intended to do. His theory that the occupation of Harper's Ferry was merely an incident in a raid, the first one of a series of undertakings in guerrilla warfare, which he represents Brown as intending to execute from a location within walking distance of the town, is a reflection upon the sanity of every person connected with the movement. It is an assumption that Brown and his men believed that they could maintain a headquarters for such warfare in the Maryland hills—at a "hill-top fastness," if you please—and not be "run to earth at once," as the author states Cook would have been, if he had attempted to hide in these inhospitable hills.[402] It is also a general denial of the historical truth that Brown intended to invade Virginia and the Southern States, and to establish [Pg 329] over them the jurisdiction of a provisional government. Moreover, it is so divergent from the lessons taught by the vast accumulation of authenticated facts which relate to the matter, that it constitutes a contradiction of the facts, and raises a question as to the integrity of the author's

purpose in putting it forth.

There is no room in historical literature for the indulgence of poetic license. If Brown was a man of "*blood* and *iron*" and his men "hard-headed Americans" one day, they must be regarded as being such the next day, and every day. It may be said, upon the authority of this author, that Brown and his men were not the stupids which they are, in this instance, represented as being. "Captains John H. Kagi and A. D. Stevens, bravest of the brave"[403] were not words idly spoken. "The hard-headed able Americans like Stevens, Kagi, Cook, and Gill, who lived with John Brown month in and month out worshipped no lunatic."[404] Grafter! Hypocrite! *Fiend!* MONSTER! Brown was, but never a trifler. If he ever engaged in a trifling enterprise or attempted to do anything in a trifling manner or upon a trifling scale, it has not been recorded. First, last, and all the time he played the limit of his resources. And in the execution of this venture—the climax of all his undertakings—he was neither trifling nor juggling with its details, as his biographers have persisted in doing with his motives, and with what his intentions and his plans were, in these premises.

Brown was not advertising his revolution when he secretly entered Harper's Ferry. These men were not baiting Death for spectacular effect. They had a well defined purpose in view, but it was not to "capture a few slave-holders and release *some* slaves." To Daniel Wheelan, Brown stated the purpose of his coming: "I want to free all the Negroes in this State; I have possession now of [Pg 330] the United States Armory, and if the citizens interfere with me I must only burn the town and have blood." Conductor Phelps said: "They say they have come to free the slaves and intend to do it at all hazards." Mr. W. H. Seibert states that Kagi told him personally, that their purpose was "not the expatriation of one slave or a thousand slaves, but their liberation in the states wherein they were born and were now held in bondage."[405]

To Governor Wise and others, on the afternoon of October 18th, Brown stated that his purpose in being at Harper's Ferry Would be found in the constitution for the Provisional Government. A copy of the document being produced, he requested Governor Wise to read it, and said that "within a fortnight he intended to have it published at large and distributed": an act which he could not have intended to execute from a location in any "hill-top fastness." In reply to questions, he stated that he intended to put the Provisional Government into operation "here, in Virginia, where I commenced operations": that he expected to have "three or five thousand" men or as many as he wanted to assist him. He stated "distinctly" that he did not intend to run off any slaves, but that he "designed to put arms in their hands to defend themselves against their masters, and to maintain their position in Virginia and in the South." That in the first instance he expected they and non-slave holding whites would flock to his standard as soon as he got a footing there at Harper's Ferry: and, as his strength increased, he would gradually enlarge the area under his control, "furnishing a refuge for the slaves and a rendezvous for all whites who were disposed to aid him, until eventually he over-ran the whole South."[406]

January 5, 1860, Mr. John C. Unseld, one of Brown's prisoners testified:

> I asked him why he made his attack on Virginia and at the place he did? His answer was: "I knew there were a great many guns there that would be of service [Pg 331] to me, and, if I could conquer Virginia, the balance of the Southern States would nearly conquer themselves, there being such a large number of slaves in them." [407]

Brown abandoned the Kennedy farm on October 16th and gave orders to Cook to remove the supplies to a school-house which was located within about a mile of Harper's Ferry. On the morning of the 17th the latter peremptorily dismissed the school and took possession of the building. To the teacher, Mr. L. F. Currie, Cook explained what they were doing and how they intended to do it. Mr. Currie, in his testimony before the Mason Committee stated that Cook, Tidd, and Leeman, having a Mr. Byrne in charge as a prisoner, came to the school-house about 10 o'clock and demanded possession of it. They then with the aid of some negroes unloaded several boxes and a large black trunk from a wagon and carried them into the school-house. Continuing he said:

> Cook said their intention was to free the negroes; that they intended to adopt such measures as would effectually free them, though he said nothing about running them off, or anything of that kind. He said this too: That those slave-holders who would give up their slaves voluntarily, would meet with protection; but those who refused to give them up would be quartered upon and their property confiscated,—used in such a way as they might think proper,—at least they would receive no protection from their organization or party.

Currie remained at the school-house until evening. Between 2 and 3 o'clock the firing at Harper's Ferry became "very rapid and continuous," and Currie asked Cook what it meant; to which he replied: "Well it simply means that those people down there are resisting our men, and we are shooting them down." In answer to a question as to how many men were engaged down there Cook replied: "I do not know how many men are there now; there may be 5,000 or there may be [Pg 332] 10,000 for aught I know."[408]

These exhibits are but a trifling fraction of the direct testimony relating to the subject; yet Mr. Villard, in wanton disregard of such testimony, and of the overwhelming preponderance of historical facts which corroborate it, puts forth his violent assumptions as to the truth; and asks the public to believe this great undertaking to have been merely a poorly planned raid which

another general with the same purpose in view would have conducted differently: "established his mountain camp first; swooped down upon the town in order to spread terror throughout the state, and in an hour or two at most, have started back to his hill-top fastness."

"First a soldier then a citizen was Brown's plan" for the uplift of the "emancipated blacks." "There is no doubt," says this author,[409] "that he still expected the negroes to rise and swell his force to irresistible proportions." Numbers are not irresistible unless they be armed and organized. Why should "the leader of a new revolution," with the sword of Frederick the Great in his hand, plan "to take to the hills" in a trifling retreat, and abandon the military stores at Harper's Ferry—the stores that were necessary to equip the irresistible numbers for irresistible operations? The assumption that he intended to do so is not only illogical; it is absurd.

The declaration that Brown was the sole member of the "attacking" force to believe in the assault upon the property of the United States at Harper's Ferry is contradicted by competent testimony, and by the significance of the general order that provided for the occupation of the town, and that designated the officers and men who were to take charge of this same property. As to the unanimity of sentiment that prevailed in relation to the matter, Mr. Redpath says:[410] "On Saturday a meeting of the Liberators was held and the plan of operations discussed. On Sunday evening a council was again convened and the programme of the Captain unanimously approved." [Pg 333]

Other documents disclose the facts that the "Captain" and his men not only intended to seize this United States property—the arms in the arsenal and in the rifle works—but that they intended to keep them and to use them. A general order issued from the headquarters of their war department provided for the organization of an army.

Jeremiah G. Anderson was one of Brown's veterans, who, with full confidence in the final success of their venture, approved of this movement. Late in September, writing from "near Harper's Ferry" he said:[411]

> Everything seems to work to our hand and victory will surely perch upon our banner.... This is not a large place but a very precious one to Uncle Sam, he has a great many tools here.

A victor is one who conquers—who defeats an enemy. In its relation to war, victory means the defeat of the enemy in battle. Anderson had an army in his mind, and battles and conquest, and the establishment of the Provisional Government, when he referred to victory, and used the word advisedly. A "raid" upon a place may be successfully executed but it cannot be, properly, called a victory over anything. John E. Cook believed the arms would be used and approved of the use of them. "But ere that day arrives," he said, "I fear that we shall hear the crash of the battle shock and see the red gleaming of the cannon's lightning."[412]

Brown leased the Kennedy farm because the location was suitable for his purposes in the furtherance of his plans. From there he conducted his secret negotiations, with the slaves, for the insurrection, and distributed the pikes, probably 500, which his co-conspirators were to use in their secret assassinations; but when he launched the invasion, and debouched his command, he abandoned it. Therefore, it was not necessary for him to leave a force "adequate" or inadequate "on the river bank to insure his being able to fall back to that base," or to cover a retreat still more illogical: a retreat of his little band, with a lot of slaves, and prisoners as hostages, "to the hills" where barren rocks afforded no shelter and "where starvation would have met him at the threshold of his eyrie."[413] [Pg 334]

Aside from what the record contains relating to the subject, it is illogical to assume that the veterans of Brown's band would imperil their lives in a scheme so dangerous—a scheme involving death upon the gallows for every one of them if they failed—unless they approved of it with the fullest possible degree of confidence; only absolute confidence in the feasibility of their plans, and the hope of reward without a parallel, could have induced these men "with soiled lives behind them."[414] to undertake this conquest. Their arrogance upon entering the town is evidence of their enthusiasm, and confidence in the success of what they were doing, and of their approval of it. Their conduct was of the swaggering, domineering kind. It was of the: Halt! or I'll kill you! kind; conduct bred by contamination in an environment supercharged with the scheming for murderous deeds, reeking with the planning for assassinations, and nourished by the belief that they were not accountable to any power upon earth for their actions. Men do not shoot down their fellows-men for trivial causes, unless they believe they are in control of the situation, and are immune from punishment. These men were expecting trouble. They had come to Harper's Ferry believing they were about to write the bloodiest chapter in history; that the most desperate struggle in all history was imminent, and they were impatient to have it begin. They cut the telegraph wires; made prisoners of whomever they met; stopped the railway train carrying passengers and mails: shot at Watchman Higgins; shot and killed the baggage-porter, Hayward, because he did not obey the command to halt; and killed Mr. Boerly without any apparent provocation. Men who have no confidence in their supremacy; who do not believe they will succeed in what they are doing, but intend to run away, and laboriously "take to the hills" and act upon the defensive without facilities for defense, do not thus demean themselves. The logic of Mr. Villard's theory of Brown's plans is: That this score of "hard-headed Americans" believed they could shoot down and kill their fellow-citizens upon the streets of Harper's Ferry with impunity; that they could rob the homes of that neighborhood and not be held accountable therefor; that they could carry off property: watches, money, horses, carriages, wagons, and slaves, into the hills adjoining the town, and not be pursued by the local authorities; that they could take citizens [Pg 335]

of the United States into custody as prisoners, and carry them to a "hill-top fastness," and maintain themselves there without supplies of either food, water, shelter, or munitions of war, other than what they carried upon their persons.

They know little of Brown's plans and of his intentions, who criticize his strategy, in occupying Harper's Ferry, and his tenacious defense of the position. And they know nothing of the agreements at which he had arrived, and the engagements which he had entered into with the slaves of that section, whom he had taken into his confidence, during the preceding three months, and who were to launch the insurrection he had planned, and who were to constitute the rank and file of his army of invasion. The author of *Fifty Years After* seems to have no clearer conception of the subject herein, than the author of fifty years before assumed to have. Accepting, almost at par, Mr. Redpath's deceptive vagaries, he formulates a plan of campaign to conform with the conditions of his absurd conclusions; and then criticizes Brown because he did not execute his conceptions. The plans for their operations, whatever they may have been, were satisfactory to Brown and to the veteran adventurers who followed his flag. "The man of blood [Pg 336] and iron" and the "hard-headed Americans" had the plans under consideration during the two years preceding, and had placed the seal of their approval upon them. If they were satisfactory to those who made them, and understood them, and staked their lives upon the successful execution of them, they should not be denounced too confidently, not to say flippantly, by those who do not know, or who assume not to know, what the plans were.

The details which Brown made from his command were not to "garrison various parts of the town" and "hold the bridges"; the assignments were made in pursuance of his well defined plan to organize and equip there the *army* which was to garrison the town and which was thereafter to *burn* the bridges and hold the approaches to it; the army that was to invade the Southern States; the army that was to "start from here" (Harper's Ferry) "and go through the State of Virginia and on South," conquering and to conquer.

The dispositions that he made of his forces were in harmony with the theory of the insurrection, which was the key-note of the invasion. The slaves from the east side of the Potomac—the neighborhoods of Sharpsburg, Boonsboro, and Hagerstown—after declaring their right to freedom, by assassinating their owners, were to report to Owen Brown at the "school-house," there to be organized into a battalion under his command, and, be armed with the rifles and supplied with the ammunition that were to be deposited there for that purpose. In the same way the slaves who were to arrive from the Middletown Valley, and from the Frederick country, through Pleasant Valley and Sandy Hook, were to report to Watson Brown at the Potomac bridge and by him, or by Taylor who was stationed there with him, taken to the arsenal, where Hazlett was in charge as quartermaster and ordnance officer, and there be armed and equipped from the "precious tools stored there," belonging to the United States, which were to be seized for this purpose. In a similar manner, the slaves from Loudoun Valley and the west side of the [Pg 337] Shenandoah were to report to Oliver Brown and William Thompson and Newby at the Shenandoah bridge; while the slaves coming from the country lying between the Shenandoah and the Potomac were to report to Kagi, at the rifle-works, and by him and his assistants—Copeland and Leary—taken to the arsenal for their equipment. Brown had said to his friend Douglass: "When I strike the bees will swarm and I shall want you to help me hive them." In this manner they were to be hived, *and furnished with stings*.

This being true, Brown defied no canons when he crossed the Potomac nor did he thereby place a river between himself and his base of supplies. He had, in general orders, designated Harper's Ferry as his headquarters. *Harper's Ferry*, with its millions of dollars' worth of military stores, was thenceforth to be his base of supplies, and the State of Virginia and the South the field of his operations. Having paralyzed the South with the insurrection, the Potomac was to be his front, and behind its banks he intended to entrench his army. He appointed no place for his men to *retreat* to, nor made any provisions for retreating, for the word had no place in his vocabulary. He fixed no hour for his withdrawal from the town, because he did not intend to withdraw from it. He was not executing a raid. Why should his captains proudly march to Harper's Ferry; "their Sharp's rifles hung from their shoulders, their commissions duly signed and officially sealed in their pockets," if they were to trudge back again to the Kennedy farm in demoralizing retreat, with no booty, and without having seen an enemy, and before a hostile shot had been fired; and then "take to the hills," there to be hunted by dogs and men, as wild beasts are hunted, and be shot down as wild beasts are shot, by slave-catchers, patrols, and marshals. Their campaign was serious, heroic, and desperate beyond the comprehension of Brown's biographers. Rarely in history have men voluntarily stood to win or die as these men stood at Harper's Ferry. There was no place on the earth where they could retreat to and live. When Brown and his captains crossed [Pg 338] the Potomac, the die was cast; the *invasion* was on. Thenceforth they might advance but not retreat; they might fight but not run. If they came back, it would have to be "with their shields or upon them."

There was no violation of military principles in Brown's occupation of Harper's Ferry, or in the dispositions which he made of his men, nor in his tenacious defense of his position. The military principles which he violated are not referred to in the charges and specifications preferred against him by this recent biographer. These violations were fatal to his enterprise, but they all antedate the night of October 16, 1859. If the hundreds of slaves whom Brown secretly armed with the Collinsville spears, with which to assassinate their masters and their masters' families, had done their bloody work as they had promised to do; then the fifteen hundred men that Brown believed would report to him for duty by 12 o'clock on the 17th,[415] and the 5,000 men whom Cook, at 4 o'clock, thought had already reported and were in action, would have arrived, and the

story of Harper's Ferry would have been different. There would have been no violations of military principles then in Brown's tactics and strategy, to criticise by any authority whatever. "Another general, with the same purpose in view," and with the same forces at his disposal, would not have improved very much upon Brown's plans.

The hint at a hill-top fastness, where another general would have established his camp before he "swooped" down upon the town, is a modification of Mr. Redpath's invention of an "inaccessible fastness." It is a delusion none the less, a delusion that was shot to pieces within two years after Mr. Redpath framed it. Such a position has no existence, except it be in authors' imaginations. There is not now, and there never was a position upon either Maryland Heights or Loudoun Heights that cannot be "stormed at with shot and shell."

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During the war between the States, the Union generals fortified Mr. Redpath's inaccessible fastness. Half way up the tangled steeps of Maryland Heights, on a small bit of plateau—less than an acre—they placed a battery of siege guns: two 9-inch Columbiads, a 50-pounder Parrott, and two or three field pieces. Also, they reënforced the natural defenses of the "hill-top fastness" by formidable breastworks, built of rocks and trunks of trees, and protected them by abatis. On the 12th of September, 1862, the Confederate infantry swarmed all over these inacessible fastnesses. During the 13th and 14th, the front of the "hill-top fastness," on the summit of Maryland Heights, was a sheet of flame and lead, enveloped in clouds of smoke. The rifle fire from the opposing lines stripped the bark from the trunks of all the trees, within a hundred and fifty yards of the front of these breastworks, as clean as though they had been girdled with an ax. Not only did Jackson's infantry penetrate these fastnesses, but during the morning of the 14th they took two pieces of artillery to the top of these "inaccessible" heights and "turned loose" with shot and shell upon the hill-top fastness. During the night of the 14th, the Union commander abandoned the inaccessible fastness, dismounted and spiked the guns on the mountain side, and joined the forces at Harper's Ferry, on Bolivar Heights.

On the 20th, a detachment from what had been Mansfield's Corps, of McClellan's Army—Crawford's Brigade[416]—then in command of Col. Joseph F. Knipe of the Forty-sixth Pennsylvania, with a section of artillery, also climbed these inaccessible heights to drive the Confederates from the position.[417]

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There are many persons living who remember having marched or "tramped" or "climbed" or "trudged" or "stumbled" or "hoofed it" up and down and over these mountains, on campaign and on picket duty, during the years of the great war; but it is doubtful if any of them ever heard of a detachment that executed such maneuvers by "swooping." The real movement is different, especially so if it be executed at night.

In behalf of a patient public that has long been grievously imposed upon by partisan biographers, the writer asks unanimous consent that references to "fastnesses," with which Brown is said to have been "familiar for seventeen years" be barred, henceforth, from the literature of this subject; the inhibition to include all the patterns of fastnesses which have been exploited; from the inaccessible kind of 1859 down through the intervening years, ending with the hill-top variety of fifty years after.

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CHAPTER XV

HIS GREAT ADVENTURE

All merit comes
From daring the unequal,
All glory comes from daring to begin.

—Eugene Ware

Beginning with January, 1857, one thing is clearly disclosed and made conclusive by the record of Brown's subsequent activities: that he contemplated an armed invasion and conquest of the Southern States. His correspondence, and the long line of historical incidents which touch his life, during the time intervening between that date and the collapse of his fortunes at Harper's Ferry, show that his mind was preoccupied with plans for the accomplishment of that stupendous purpose. He believed that the slaves could be induced to rise against their masters; assassinate them and their families, and declare their freedom. From the ranks of the freedmen, he planned to recruit an army for the occupation of the territory affected by the insurrection, and for further invasion; and to establish and maintain the authority of a provisional government.

His scheme for conquest was probably a result of his relations with Hugh Forbes. Together the two adventurers planned the details for the undertaking. It was in pursuance of their plans for this purpose that Brown engaged Forbes's services, at a salary of a hundred dollars a month; ordered the thousand spears; published the *Manual of the Patriotic Volunteer*; planned to lure the soldiery of the Union from their "service with Satan to the service of God"; planned to drive a nail into Captain Kidd's treasure-chest—whatever that meant; planned the War College, whereat the prospective generals for the prospective army, and the prospective members for the prospective cabinet of the prospective Provisional Government, were to be instructed, under the direction of Forbes, in the science of war, and in the science of civil government. It was for his

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civil and military leaders that he engaged Stevens, Cook, Kagi, Tidd, Parsons, Realf, Gill, and others, and placed them in the school of instruction.

To hedge against treason, he met with his embryonic generals and secretaries at Chatham, Canada, and in convention assembled adopted a "Constitution and Ordinances" for the Provisional Government, which, among its provisions, declared the confiscation of the "entire personal and real property of all persons known to be acting with or for the enemy, or found wilfully holding slaves." This constitution had been printed and copies of it were available at the Kennedy farm. Every man who marched with Brown to Harper's Ferry had read it, or had heard it read, and had sworn allegiance to the government it represented.

December 23, 1858, Merriam wrote to Brown: "I have heard vaguely of your contemplated action and now Mr. Redpath and Mr. Hinton have told me your contemplated action, in which I earnestly wish to join you in any capacity you wish to place me as far as my small capacities go." [418] He spent the winter in Hayti in company with Redpath, and knew how Brown intended to "assail the Slave Power."[419]

The message that Brown requested Conductor Phelps to communicate to the management of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, interdicting further traffic over the road, was a declaration of war. It was the first and only "Proclamation" issued by the commander-in-chief of the army of the Provisional Government. At the time he gave out this declaration—1:25 A. M., October 17, 1859—he and his captains confidently believed their insurrection to be in the full tide of successful [Pg 343] initiation; that the country in the vicinity was then in the throes of a slaughter that spared neither sex nor age; that hordes of black fiends, like furies, were surging over the land in a riot of unimaginable proportions. These adventurers believed that their dreams of conquest were about to be realized; and that the rioting thousands, excited into a frenzy by the bloody deeds which had set them free, were already pressing in bands to join them at the appointed rendezvous to fill the ranks of the "Army of Liberation"; that it was solely a question of time—a few hours at most—until these allies would be arriving, and they would have control of an army sufficiently strong to establish and maintain their authority.

That the slaves' sole way to freedom lay over the dead bodies of their masters, was a self-evident proposition. The slaves knew by tradition and by experience, and Brown and his captains knew, that if they—the slaves—ran away from their masters to join his forces, the masters, reënforced by the citizen soldiery, would pursue them immediately, and recover them before they could organize for either defensive or aggressive warfare. The problem of Harper's Ferry had been solved by the philosophy of the Pottawatomie. The same questions were involved in each venture: how to get the "goods" and keep them—how to get the slaves for the Provisional Army and forestall pursuit. It was the Pottawatomie amplified.

Brown intended to create the "Provisional Army" in the enemy's country; hence, it was essential for him to commence the undertaking by striking the most crushing blow that it was possible for him to deliver. The success of the movement depended upon his ability to strike a blow so terrible that the survivors of the carnage, dazed and paralyzed by the horrors of the existing conditions, would be incapable of organizing and sending any opposing force to attack him. Therefore the assassinations—the destruction of the persons who, otherwise, would pursue. That was the central feature of the movement, the base of the scheme, the blow which he intended to strike. It [Pg 344] was the only blow which he could strike; the only weapon that he could use of which any one stood in awe. The blow which he would have to strike if he would win, was the blow which he had told his Eastern friends he could strike: a blow that would shake the slave system to its foundation—the blow which he had promised Gerrit Smith he would strike, and doubtless, told him how he intended to strike it.

To the men from the Pottawatomie, a massacre was simply a means to an end. Brown and his sons harbored no feelings of animosity toward the Doyles, the Shermans, and Wilkinson; but they knew that these men would not give up to them, peaceably, the property which they coveted, therefore they murdered them and took their horses. They knew that the owners of slaves and lands in the Southern States would not, peaceably, relinquish their ownership of this property; therefore they planned to incite the slaves to kill their masters while they slept—and having *thus emancipated* the slaves, confiscate the estates of the slave-holders, and put the assassins and themselves in possession of them. This massacre, the most horrible that was ever seriously contemplated in the brain of man, was to be executed under the pretense that it was an humanitarian measure. In the name of humanity, they proposed to undertake the midnight assassination of millions of men, women, and children, and to contend for justification for their actions. The word, with Brown, was a convenience, or an interchangeable term. A definition of it, in the sense in which he used the word, is found in his personal understanding, or interpretation rather, of its co-relation, "The Golden Rule." He is quoted by Sanborn and others as having stated "more than once": "I believe in the Golden Rule and the Declaration of Independence. I think that both mean the same thing; and it is better that a whole generation should pass off the face of the earth—men, women and children—by a violent death than that one jot of either should fail *in this* [Pg 345] *country*. I mean exactly *so*, sir."[420]

The possibility that the blacks in the South might attempt to gain their freedom by a general massacre of the whites, was a condition co-existent with their enslavement. After 1831 that possibility became a fixed impending probability; and the question of means to prevent the inevitable cataclysm of blood, was a matter of constant concern in the economy of the Southern States; with the result that various preventive measures were adopted to discourage the possibility of attempts, by the slaves, to organize for such undertakings, or to fit themselves, by

education or otherwise, to promote such organizations.

In the philosophy of John Brown, what Nat Turner had done in a section of Southampton County, Virginia, could, if properly promoted, be done in any other section or locality; and, if in any locality, then in every locality, or throughout the whole South. Therefore, an insurrection by the slaves, having for its object the overthrow of the existing State governments of the South, was a venture, from his point of view, which might be undertaken with reasonable prospects for success; the ultimate result depending largely upon his ability to organize the slaves effectively for revolt; to equip them for the initial uprising, and thereafter to capably direct the movement.

No disaster that ever befell our country, war not excepted, was in any respect comparable with the horrors which would be incidental to a slave insurrection; yet our people lived during more than half a century in the shadow of that menace. They lived in a state of continual apprehension that it, the most stupendous of conceivable calamities, might at any time overwhelm them.

> For years patrols had ridden the roads and men had watched of night lest the negroes turn upon their masters. It was, an ever present fear. That the Abolitionists wished the slaves to rise and kill their masters in their beds was a belief widely held in the South and often publicly expressed, and no happening that could be imagined contained a greater possibility of horror and bloodshed. [421]

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It has been said, and there is great force in the statement, that the "Underground Railroad," instead of working hardship and great loss to slave-holders, was, in reality "the safety-valve to the institution." It was the sluice for the overflow of the dangerous class—the able and discontented. The Underground was organized at the close of the eighteenth century, and had on its rolls more than 30,000 "employees." It carried away from the South, probably 75,000 slaves of the value of more than $30,000,000. The slaves who thus sought and obtained their liberty, taking the risk of arrest and punishment in their attempts to gain it, were the ablest and the most influential among them. Had they remained in slavery, these men would have further developed and become leaders among the slaves, and would have organized them and led them into insurrection. "Had they remained, the direful scenes of San Domingo would have been enacted, and the hot, vengeful breath of massacre would have swept the South as a tornado and blanched the cheek of the civilized world."[422]

Brown knew about the hot vengeful breath which had swept the white population from the fair face of San Domingo. And he was familiar with the attempts which had been made to relight its fires in this country, and to start the tornado of death. He was familiar with what his predecessors in the insurrection business had done, and with what they had tried to do. He knew, too, or thought he knew, why they had failed. Naturally he sought to avoid the mistakes which they had committed, and to safeguard his operations by improving upon their methods. The seizure of Harper's Ferry was not a "Foray into Virginia," as Mr. Sanborn chooses to call it: neither was it a "Raid" as Mr. Villard, with conspicuous persistence, seeks to make it appear to have been; nor was it either an "attack" upon the town or a "blow" or any other specious form of movement. Brown selected the place and "occupied" it as the base for his military operations, because he intended to use the generous supplies of war material, which were then in store there, for the equipment of the army that he planned to organize. The occupation was to be permanent. It was a stratagem of his campaign, an incident in his main design.

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By the logic of the assassinations, Brown believed he would secure immunity from an immediate, or counter assault. Instead of being compelled to defend his position against attack by the militia, and by companies of armed citizens, which might be improvised for the occasion, he contemplated spending the first "few weeks" of the campaign in comparative security; publishing, far and wide, the proclamation of the Provisional Government, with its lure for adventurers in civil and military life; debauching the citizenship of the country and the soldiery of the Union. He also contemplated having leisure to attend such diplomatic functions as might be incidental to the situation, including negotiations with foreign nations, and the problems of "Foreign intervention," Northern conventions, etc.[423]

Forbes's letter of May 14, 1858, heretofore quoted, discloses Brown's theory of the invasion: it deals with the facts of Brown's secret movement then pending in the untried future. These two men had agreed upon an invasion of the South under cover of an "insurrection." The opinion Forbes gave Dr. Howe therein is a dissenting one, for personal reasons, from his agreement with Brown. In the revised opinion, Forbes stated his belief that the insurrection would fail; that it would be "either a flash in the pan, or it would leap beyond his control or any control," and after having spent its force in a riot of blood would be stamped out. Brown thought otherwise; he was "sure of a response," and believed that he could safeguard against "a flash in the pan." With the question of "losing control" of the insurrection he was not concerned; that was a bridge which he would cross when he came to it. Under his control, a whole generation was to pass off the face of the earth by a violent death, and nothing much could occur in excess of that if the insurrection did happen to get beyond it. The hurricane of horrors which he proposed to unloose, could not sweep too far for his purposes; he would have it spread to every Southern State, and in the language of Jeremiah Goldsmith Anderson, "make this land of liberty and equality shake to the center."[424]

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That Brown expected to be strongly supported by a secret colored military organization existing in the North, and "that had its ramifications extended through most or nearly all of the Slave States," is more than probable. This organization was represented at the Chatham convention by

G. J. Reynolds, of Sandusky, Ohio, "a colored man (very little colored, however)"; and after the convention adjourned, Geo. B. Gill was sent to Oberlin, Berlin Heights, and Milan, Ohio, to verify the statements which Reynolds had made concerning its forces. Gill met him and "under the pledge of secrecy which we gave to each other at the Chatham convention," he says. Reynolds took him to the room where they held their meetings, and used as their arsenal, and showed him "a fine collection of arms." "On my return to Cleveland," continues Gill, "he passed me, through the organization, first to J. J. Pierce, colored, at Milan, who paid my bill one night at the Eagle Hotel, and gave me some money, and a note to E. Moore at Norwalk; who in turn paid my hotel bill, and purchased a railroad ticket through to Cleveland for me." Reynolds asserted that they were "only waiting for Brown or some one else to make a successful initiative move, when their forces would be put in motion."[425]

It must not be assumed, because Brown did not *publish* a transcript of his plans for the insurrection and invasion, that he was "without any clear and definite plan of campaign," and that the consequences of his plans had not been anticipated, and provided for in minutest detail, for he was methodical. Also, secrecy was characteristic of his methods. Salmon Brown said:[426] "Father had a peculiarity for insisting on *order*.... He would insist on getting everything arranged just to suit him before he would consent to make a move." [Pg 349]

And to Kagi Brown wrote July 10th:[427] "*Do not* use much paper to put names of persons & plans upon."

The nature of Brown's plans, and of his intentions, and of his engagements, must therefore be drawn from the documentary evidence obtainable, and from such reasonable inferences as can be derived from the actions of the invaders: from the things which they did while they were free to do as they pleased; while they were yet unrestrained by the forces which later overcame them; and from such contemporaneous testimony, relating to the subject, as may be available. What they said when in prison, and in view of the impending gallows, about what they intended to do, is not the best evidence of what their intentions were.

On the 19th of August, Mr. Frederick Douglass met John Brown, by appointment, at an old stone quarry in the vicinity of Chambersburg. At that interview, Brown disclosed to Mr. Douglass his intention to seize Harper's Ferry. Mr. Douglass said:[428]

> The taking of Harper's Ferry, of which Brown had merely hinted before, was now declared his settled purpose, and he wanted to know what I thought of it. I opposed it with all the arguments at my command.... He was not to be shaken but treated my views respectfully, replying that even if surrounded he would find means to cut his way out.... In parting, he put his arms around me in a manner more than friendly, and said, "Come with me, Douglas; I will defend you with my life. I want you for a special purpose. When I strike the bees will begin to swarm, and I shall want you to help hive them...." [Pg 350]

The project that Brown had in view was clearly foreshadowed by Jeremiah C. Anderson, in a letter which he wrote, late in September, to a brother in Iowa. He said:[429]

> Our mining company will consist of between twenty-five and thirty men well equipped with tools. You can tell Uncle Dan it will be impossible for me to see him before next spring. If my life is spared I will be tired of work by that time, and I shall visit my relatives and friends in Iowa, if I can get leave of absence. At present I am bound by all that is honorable to continue in the course. We go in to win, at all hazards. So if you should hear of failure, it will be after a desperate struggle, and loss of capital on both sides. But this is the last of our thoughts. Everything seems to work to our hands, and victory will surely perch upon our banner. The old man has had this in view for twenty years, and last winter was just a hint and trial of what could be done. This is not a large place but a very precious one to Uncle Sam, as he had a great many tools here. I expect (when I start again travelling) to start at this place and go through the State of Virginia and on south, just as circumstances require; mining and prospecting, and carrying the ore with us. I suppose this is the last letter I shall write you before there is something in the wind. Whether I shall have an opportunity of sending letters then, I do not know, but when I have an opportunity I shall improve it. But if you don't get any from me, don't take it for granted that I am *gone up* till you know it to be so. I consider my life about as safe in one place as another.

The following interesting and instructive document discloses the formation of Andersen's mining company, and indicates the character of the "mining" which the operators intended to engage in. It reads as follows: [Pg 351]

HEADQUARTERS WAR DEPARTMENT, PROVISIONAL ARMY.

Harper's Ferry, October 10, 1859.

General Orders No. 1.

ORGANIZATION

The divisions of the provisional army and the coalition are hereby established as follows:

1—*Company.*

A company will consist of fifty-six privates, twelve non-commissioned officers, (eight corporals, 4 sergeants) three commissioned officers, (two lieutenants, a captain,) and a surgeon.

The privates shall be divided into bands or messes of seven each numbering from one to eight, with a corporal to each, numbered like his band.

Two bands shall comprise a section. Sections shall be numbered from one to four. A sergeant shall be attached to each section and numbered like it.

Two sections shall comprise a platoon. Platoons will be numbered one and two, and each commanded by a lieutenant designated by like number.

2—*Battalion.*

The battalion will consist of four companies complete. The commissioned officers of the battalion will be a chief of battalion, and a first and second major, one of whom shall be attached to each wing.

3—*The Regiment.*

The regiment will consist of four battalions complete. The commissioned officers of the regiment will be a colonel and two lieutenant colonels, attached to the wings.

4—*The Brigade.*

The brigade will consist of four regiments complete. The commissioned officer of the brigade will be a general of brigade.

5—*Each General Staff.* [Pg 352]

Each of the above divisions will be entitled to a general staff, consisting of an adjutant, a commissary, a musician, and a surgeon.

6—*Appointment.*

Non-commissioned officers will be chosen by those whom they are to command.

Commissioned officers will be appointed and commissioned by this department.

The staff officers of each division will be appointed by the respective commanders of the same.

(This document is in the handwriting of J. H. Kagi.)[430]

Oliver Brown and Jeremiah G. Anderson were captains in the provisional army. A copy of Brown's commission is published herewith:

GREETING:

HEADQUARTERS WAR DEPARTMENT.
Near Harper's Ferry Maryland.

Whereas *Oliver Brown* has been nominated a *captain* in the army established under the provisional constitution,

Now, therefore, in pursuance of the authority vested in us by said constitution, we do hereby appoint and commission the said *Oliver Brown a captain*.

Given at the office of the Secretary of War, this day, October 15, 1859.

JOHN BROWN,
Commander in Chief.

J. H. KAGI. *Secretary of War.*

(This document is printed in the original, with the exception of the words in italics and the figures, which are in the handwriting of Kagi, with the exception of the signature of John Brown, which is in his own hand.)[431]

Except as to Mr. Sanborn and Mr. Stearns, it is hard to believe that the members of Brown's war committee were ignorant of his intention to incite a slave insurrection, and invade the South. [Pg 353] Rev. Theodore Parker said:

> I should like of all things to see an insurrection of the Slaves. It must be tried many times before it succeeds, as at last it must.[432]

Dr. Howe also knew of the impending insurrection. Mr. Sanborn says:[433]

> Dr. Howe, returning from Cuba, (whither he accompanied Theodore Parker in February 1859), journeyed through the Carolinas, and there accepted the hospitality of Wade Hampton, and other rich planters; and it shocked him to think that he might be instrumental in giving up to fire and pillage their noble mansions.

Thaddeus Hyatt, of New York, too, seems to have known what Brown intended to do, and from whence he derived his inspirations. Also the indiscriminate massacre of non-combatants, white women and children, by the negroes of Hayti seems to have had his approbation. He presented to

the Black Republic a portrait[434] of the man, John Brown, who in 1859 sought to incite the negroes of the Southern States to do what the negroes of San Domingo did, when "one August night, in the year 1791 the whole plain of the north was swept with fire and drenched with blood. Five hundred thousand negro slaves in the depths of barbarism revolted, and the horrors of the massacre made Europe and America shudder."[435]

August 27, 1859, Gerrit Smith wrote the following letter to the "Jerry Rescue Committee":[436]

> It is, perhaps, too late to bring slavery to an end by peaceable means,—too late to vote it down. For many years I have feared, and published my fears, that it would go out in blood. These fears have grown into a belief. So debauched are the white people by slavery that there is not virtue enough left in them to put it down.... The feeling among the blacks that they must deliver themselves gains strength with fearful rapidity. No wonder, then, is it that intelligent black men in the States *and in Canada* should see no hope for their race in the practice and policy of white men.... Whoever he may be that foretells the horrible end of American slavery, is held at the North and the South to be a lying prophet,—another Cassandra. The South would not respect her own Jefferson's prediction of servile insurrection; how then can it be hoped that she will respect another's?... And is it entirely certain that these insurrections will be put down promptly, and before they can have spread far? Will telegraphs and railroads be too swift for the swiftest insurrections? Remember that telegraphs and railroads can be rendered useless in an hour. Remember too that many who would be glad to face the insurgents would be busy in transporting their wives and daughters to places where they would be safe from the worst fate that husbands and fathers can imagine for their wives and daughters. I admit that but for this embarrassment Southern men would laugh at the idea of an insurrection and would quickly dispose of one. But trembling as they would for beloved ones, I know of no part of the world, where, so much as in the South, men would be like, in a formidable insurrection, to lose the most important time, and be distracted and panic stricken.

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Commenting upon this letter, Mr. Sanborn, after quoting from Mr. Smith's biographer the expression "This Cassandra spoke from certainty," says that he (Smith) "knew what Brown's purpose was; and his last contribution to Brown's campaign was made about the time the Syracuse letter was written." Referring to the same letter, his biographer, Frothingham, says:

> It is hard to believe that the writer of these passages had not had John Brown's general plan in mind. There was no visible sign of peril. The blacks, North and South, were to all appearances quiet.... But for the whole-handed destruction of documents immediately on the failure of the project, Mr. Smith's participation in John Brown's general plans could be made to appear still closer.

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As late as 1867, Mr. Smith disclaimed having any knowledge of Brown's plans or of his intentions. He denied that he gave money with the purpose of aiding the insurrection. Concerning this Mr. Frothingham continues:

> Did Gerrit Smith really think that this was a complete and truthful statement of his relations with John Brown? A statement in which nothing true was suppressed, and nothing untrue suggested? A statement that would be satisfactory to Edward Morton, and F. B. Sanborn and Dr. Howe and other friends of the Martyr?... We must believe that his insanity obliterated a certain class of impressions, while another class of impressions on the same subject remained distinct.

The theory of Brown's operations being the conquest of the South through an insurrection of the slaves, the collapse of the scheme was coincident with the failure of the slaves to execute the part assigned to them in the plan of the invasion. It is herein that Brown's leadership may be criticised. The creation of the army depended upon the success of the insurrection. The latter, therefore, should have been made safe—beyond the possibility of failure—before he committed any subordinate irremediable acts.

At Cleveland, Brown took credit for never having killed anybody, but said, in a self conscious manner, referring to his Kansas successes, that on "some occasions he had *shown his young men with him* how some things might be done as well as others and that they had done them." Brown plainly attributed the failure of the insurrection, and his consequent failure, to a cause which he could have controlled—to his failure to do things which he could have done, and which he then reproached himself for not having done.

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"It is my own fault," he said, October 18th, "that I have been taken. I could easily have saved myself from it, had I exercised my own better judgment rather than yielded to my feelings."

"You mean if you had escaped immediately?" inquired Mr. Mason.

"No," he said, "I had the means to make myself secure without any escape, but I allowed myself to be surrounded by a force by being too tardy."

Brown had planned how to prevent being surrounded, and continuing said: "I do not know that I should reveal my plans. I am here a prisoner and wounded because I foolishly allowed myself to be so. You overrate yourself in supposing I could have been taken if I had not allowed it."

Nat Turner had shown his followers how to start an insurrection. He personally spilled the first blood, the blood which turned loose the furies in Southampton County, and Brown now saw, too

late, that if he and his captains had each led a party of negroes, as Turner had led; and shown them how to kill, as Turner had shown his followers; they too might have turned loose the furies of which Brown and Forbes dreamed, and launched the hurricane of death. Then, with thousands of rioting slaves, brandishing their bloody spears, the occupation of Harper's Ferry would have been but an incident of minor importance in this history.

Forbes perceived the weak link in the chain of Brown's forecast, and made the point, that unless the slaves were "already in a state of agitation, there might be no response, or a feeble one." But Brown, carried away by an enthusiasm inspired by a continuous contemplation of the grandeur of his scheme, failed to give the warning the consideration which its importance deserved. He [Pg 357] dismissed Forbes's caution with the confident assertion that he "*was sure of a response*" His over-confidence led to his immediate undoing. Upon the rock that Forbes had pointed out foundered the new-born ship of state. The great uprising of the blacks upon which he relied, failed to materialize; the thousands of reënforcements which he looked for, appeared not at all. [437] The plans for the conquest of the Southern States, and for the establishment of the Provisional Government miscarried.

Concerning Brown and his plans Mr. Vallandigham said:

> It is in vain to underestimate the man or the conspiracy. Captain John Brown is as brave and resolute a man as ever headed an insurrection, and, in a good cause, and with a sufficient force, would have been a consummate partisan commander. He has coolness, daring, persistency, the stoic faith and patience, and a firmness of will and purpose unconquerable. He is the farthest possible removed from the ordinary ruffian, fanatic or madman. Certainly it was the best planned and best executed conspiracy that ever failed.[438]

John Brown was not a pioneer in the slave insurrection business, nor does his plan of procedure at Harper's Ferry suggest any novelties or anything original in the way of such insurrections. He had before him a long line of precedents and examples which he studied; and ideals, written in blood, which he sought to emulate. His heroes were Toussaint L'Ouverture and Nat Turner, their hands red with the blood of innocence. Turner had killed between fifty and sixty white people, mostly women and children, and Mr. Redpath tells us that Brown "admired this negro patriot equally with George Washington." Turner was his most recent and most direct example. It was from what Turner had done, that Brown and Forbes formed their estimates of what they could do. From the example furnished by this ideal patriot, they framed the Maryland-Virgina equation. [Pg 358] They reasoned in this way: If an ignorant slave, with a score of poorly armed negro followers, who were also slaves, could kill sixty white people in a day, how many white people could a thousand negroes, who are well equipped for midnight slaughter, kill in a single night? Their solution of that problem found expression in the order which they placed, in March, 1857, with the Collinsville blacksmith. It was Brown's answer to this question, expanded as Brown sought to expand it at Harper's Ferry, that was to "make slavery totter from its foundations."

Upon several occasions—notably, once in South Carolina, and twice in Virginia—the slaves of this country had engaged in conspiracies against their masters. In each instance the men who promoted the revolt were themselves slaves. In two instances the insurgents planned to seize the arsenals, and public arms and ammunition, as Brown planned to do, and did, at Harper's Ferry. In each instance the revolt was to be accomplished by a general massacre of the white inhabitants. Brown and Forbes, in 1857, studied the trails that had been blazed on these occasions, and planned with reference to the experiences of the men who had directed the efforts.

The first attempt at insurrection in this country was led by "General" Gabriel in September, 1800. The date agreed upon was Saturday [Monday], September 1st. The place of rendezvous was on a brook six miles from Richmond, Virginia. The force was to comprise eleven hundred men, divided into three divisions. The attack was to have been made upon Richmond, then a town of eight thousand population, under cover of the night.[439]

The plan for the occupation of Richmond was similar in some respects to Brown's plans at Harper's Ferry. One of the divisions of the army was to take the penitentiary, which had been [Pg 359] improvised into an arsenal. Another division was to seize the powder-house. A statement of the trouble was published in the *United States Gazette* of Philadelphia, September 8, 1800:

> The penitentiary held several thousand stand of arms; the powder-house was well stocked; the capitol contained the State Treasury; the mills would give them bread; the control of the bridge across the James river would keep off enemies from beyond. Thus secured and provided, they planned to issue proclamations, summoning to their standard "their fellow negroes and the friends of humanity throughout the continent." In a week they estimated they would have 50,000 men on their side, when they would possess themselves of other towns.[440]

A formidable insurrection was attempted in 1822 by Denmark Vesey. The slaves involved in this plot were distributed over a territory of forty-five to fifty miles in extent around Charleston, South Carolina. Vesey's plan of revolt contemplated the wholesale slaughter of the white population and the occupation of the country by the blacks.

> "Every slave enlisted was sworn to secrecy. Household servants were rarely trusted. Talkative and intemperate persons were not enlisted. Women were excluded from participation in the affair that they might take care of the children.

Peter Poyas, it is said, had enlisted six hundred without assistance.

> "During the excitement and the trial of the supposed conspirators, rumor proclaimed all, and doubtless more than all the horrors of the plot. The city was to be fired in every quarter. The arsenal, in the immediate vicinity, was to be broken open, and the arms distributed to the insurgents and an universal massacre of the white inhabitants was to take place. Nor did there seem to be any doubt in the minds of the people that such would actually have been the result, had not the plot, fortunately, been detected before the time appointed for the outbreak. It was [Pg 360] believed, as a matter of course, that every black in the city would join in the insurrection, and that, if the original design had been attempted and the city taken by surprise, the negroes would have achieved an easy victory, nor does it seem at all impossible that such might have been, or yet may be the case, if any well arranged and resolute rising should take place." The plot failed because a negro, William Paul, "made enlistments without authority, and revealed the scheme to a house servant. The leaders of this attempt at insurrection died as bravely as they had lived; and it is one of the marvels of the remarkable affair, that none of this class divulged any of the secrets to the court. The men who did the talking were those who knew but little."[441]

Two promoters of slave insurrections were born during the year 1800: John Brown and Nat Turner. The latter was born in Southampton County, Virginia, October 2d. Turner became a preacher, and later, saw visions. He saw visions of conflicts "between white spirits and black spirits engaged in battle; and the sun was darkened, the thunder rolled in the heavens, and blood flowed in the streams...." Afterward he had another vision in which an angel told him that "the time is fast approaching when the 'first shall be last and the last first'"; which he interpreted as foreshadowing the promotion of the blacks to control in public affairs, and the subordination of the whites. Encouraged by his conclusion, he determined to attempt the promotion of the blacks by eliminating the whites. In pursuance of this he planned a general uprising of the slaves and massacre of their white masters. His blow was struck on the night of August 21, 1831, near Jerusalem Court House, Virginia.

Turner trusted his plans to four men: Sam Edwards, Hark Travis, Henry Porter, and Nelson Williams. After the plans had been completed. Turner made a speech appropriate to the occasion. [Pg 361] He said: "Our race is to be delivered from slavery, and God has appointed us as the men to do his bidding; and let us be worthy of our calling. I am told to slay all the whites we encounter without regard to age or sex. We have no arms or ammunition but we will find these in the homes of our oppressors; and, as we go on, others can join us. Remember we do not go for the sake of blood and carnage, but it is necessary that in the commencement of this revolution, all the whites we meet should die, until we have an army strong enough to carry on the war on a Christian basis. Remember that ours is not war for robbery nor to satisfy our passions; it is a *struggle for freedom*. Ours must be deeds, not words. Then let us away to the scene of action." In his confession after sentence of death had been passed upon him, Turner described the scenes of the murders which they committed. Of the attack upon the home of Joseph Travis, his master, he said:[442]

> On returning to the house, Hark went to the door with an axe, for the purpose of breaking it open, as we knew we were strong enough to murder the family, should they be awakened by the noise; but, reflecting that it might create an alarm in the neighborhood, we determined to enter the house secretly, and murder them whilst sleeping. Hark got a ladder and set it against the chimney, on which I ascended, and, hoisting a window, entered and came down stairs, unbarred the doors, and removed the guns from their places. It was then observed that I must spill the first blood, on which, armed with a hatchet and accompanied by Will, I entered my master's chamber. It being dark, I could not give a death blow. The hatchet glanced from his head. He sprang from the bed and called his wife. It was his last word. Will laid him dead with a blow of his axe.

After they had taken the lives of the Travis family, "they went from plantation to plantation, dealing death blows to every white man, woman and child they found." A list of the "dead that [Pg 362] have been buried" was published August 24th: At Mrs. Whitehead's, 7; Mrs. Waller's, 13; Mr. Williams's, 3; Mr. Barrow's, 2; Mr. Vaughn's, 5; Mrs. Turner's, 3; Mr. Travis's, 5; Mr. J. Williams's, 5; Mr. Reece's, 4; names unknown, 10; total, 57.

The news of the massacre spread rapidly, and the excited whites quickly armed themselves to suppress the insurrection. As a result, "Arms and ammunition were dispatched in wagons to the county of Southampton. The four volunteer companies of Petersburg, the dragoons and Lafayette Artillery Company of Richmond, one volunteer company from Norfolk and one from Portsmouth, and the regiments of Southampton and Sussex, were at once ordered out. The cavalry and infantry took up their line of march on Tuesday evening, while the artillery embarked on the steamer 'Norfolk' and landed at Smithfield."[443]

A Mr. Gray, to whom Turner made his confession, said of him:

> ... I shall not attempt to describe the effects of his narrative, as told, and commented on by himself, in the condemned hole of the prison; the calm, deliberate composure with which he spoke of his late deeds and intentions; the expression of his fiend-like face, when excited by enthusiasm; still bearing the

> stains of the blood of helpless innocence about him, clothed with rags and covered with chains, yet daring to raise his manacled hands to Heaven with a spirit soaring above the attributes of man.

And yet, such were the phenomenal inconsistencies occurring in the philosophy of persons who professed, and who, perhaps, believed themselves to be humane, this negro's crime was exultingly approved of by Brown's Eastern supporters. Mr. William Lloyd Garrison, at a meeting called to witness "John Brown's resurrection" said in his speech:

> ... As a peace man—an "ultra" peace man—I am prepared to say: "Success to every slave insurrection at the South, and in every slave country." And I do not see how I compromise or stain my peace profession in making that declaration....[444]

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CHAPTER XVI

[Pg 364]

A SOLDIER OF THE CROSS

No man can produce great things who is not thoroughly sincere in dealing with himself.

—Lowell

The regular semi-annual term of the court of Jefferson County, Virginia, began October 20th. Brown was taken into custody on Tuesday, October 18th, and on Tuesday morning, October 25th, he was put on trial for his life. For this unseemly haste the Virginia authorities have been censured. The spectacle of an old man, physically incapacitated, and suffering because of recent wounds, being rushed to trial without reasonable time and opportunity to even secure friendly counsel, justified harsh criticism, and did not fail to win sympathy for Brown from right thinking men in all sections of the country. Also, that wrong had much to do with promoting his "martyrdom." It was, however, his right to the courtesies of judicial procedure, in such cases, rather than any of his legal rights, that was infringed. In his efforts to explain his purpose for being at Harper's Ferry he had not only, in effect, confessed his guilt of all the charges upon which he was being held for trial, but had sought to justify his conduct in relation to them. Mr. Greeley, in the *Tribune* of October 25th, wrote:[445]

> As the Grand Jury of Jefferson County is already in session, the trial of Brown and his confederates may be expected to take place at once, unless delay should be granted to prepare for trial, or a change of venue to some less excited county should be asked for. Neither of these is probable. The prisoners in fact have no defense, and their case will be speedily disposed of.

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The jurisdiction of the Federal courts in the premises, was not seriously considered. The State had never ceded to the United States its jurisdiction over the territory that Brown had taken possession of, in behalf of the Provisional Government, and from which he had directed his operations. The question was raised as an expedient, because the Federal court afforded better facilities for incriminating Brown's northern supporters, the men "higher up," than did the State courts. Later, it was agreed upon that Stevens should be surrendered to the United States for trial. Mr. Hunter, for the prosecution, announced the fact, in court, November 7th, saying, that they were now after "higher and wickeder game."[446] But when, on December 15th, the President inquired by wire whether Stevens had been so surrendered, the prosecution hesitated; Mr. Hunter replying:

> Stevens has not been delivered to the authorities of the United States. Undetermined as yet whether he will be tried here.[447]

December 8th, Governor Wise wrote to Mr. Hunter:

> In reply to yours of the 15th, I say definitely that Stevens ought not to be handed over to the Federal authorities for trial.... I hope you informed the President of the status of his case before the court.[448]

The political necessity for trying Stevens in the Federal court, was obviated by Congress. December 14th, a select committee of the Senate was appointed to "inquire into the late invasion and seizure of public property at Harper's Ferry." It was clothed with authority to investigate the whole subject. The members were Mason, of Virginia, chairman; Davis, of Mississippi; Fitch, of Indiana; Doolittle, of Wisconsin; and Collamer, of Vermont; the majority being pro-slavery. The findings of the committee constitute the *Mason Report*, referred to in this book.

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At the preliminary examination, the presiding justice of the peace, Mr. Braxton Davenport, appointed as counsel for Brown Mr. Charles J. Faulkner and Mr. Lawson Botts. Mr. Faulkner was present at Harper's Ferry during the trouble, and thought it would be improper for him to represent the prisoners as counsel. He was therefore excused, and Mr. Thomas G. Green was appointed in his stead. Mr. Villard states that in "Messrs. Green and Botts, John Brown had assigned to him far abler counsel than would have been given to an ordinary malefactor." Brown's reply to the Court when asked if he had counsel is deserving of a place in this history. It was worthy of a leader of a lost cause. Though feebly rising to his feet, he said with defiant spirit:

[449]

> Virginians: I did not ask for any quarter at the time I was taken. I did not ask to have my life spared. The Governor of the State of Virginia tendered me his assurance that I should have a fair trial, but under no circumstances whatever, will I be able to attend to my trial. If you seek my blood you can have it at any moment without this mockery of a trial.
>
> I have had no counsel. I have not been able to advise with any one. I know nothing about the feelings of my fellow-prisoners, and am utterly unable to attend in any way to my own defense. My memory don't serve me, my health is insufficient; although improving.
>
> If a fair trial is to be allowed us, there are mitigating circumstances, that I would urge in our favor. But, if we are to be forced with a mere form,—a trial for execution,—you might spare yourselves that trouble. I am ready for my fate. I do not ask a trial, I beg for no mockery of a trial—no insult—Nothing but that which conscience gives, or cowardice drives you to practice.
>
> I ask again to be excused from a mockery of a trial. I do not know what the special design of this examination is. I do not know what the benefit of it is to this Commonwealth. I have now little further to ask, other than that I may be not foolishly insulted, only as cowardly barbarians insult those that fall into their power. [Pg 367]

When the question relating to counsel was submitted to Stevens, he promptly accepted the gentlemen named and the examination was proceeded with.

At 2 o'clock the preliminary court of examination reported its findings, and the presiding judge, Hon. Richard Parker, of the circuit court, at once submitted the case to the grand jury in an able and dispassionate address. At noon the next day, the 26th, a true bill was returned against each of the prisoners on the following counts: For "Treason to the commonwealth"; for "conspiring with slaves to commit treason"; and for "murder." After the noon hour the defendants were brought into court to plead to the indictments. Brown, refusing to appear voluntarily, was carried into the court room on a cot. He then made a plea for delay.

Mr. Hunter objected to consideration of Brown's plea until after the arraignment had been made. The Court held that the indictment should first be read, so that the prisoners could plead guilty or not guilty; after that he would consider Brown's request. Each prisoner pleaded not guilty and having demanded separate trials, the State chose to try Brown first.

The Court did not take the question of Brown's guilt or innocence seriously. The trial was simply to be a dignified conformance with the laws of the Commonwealth relating to the subject. Except as to respect for this formality, it was not considered important whether Brown had any counsel at all. On the 22d of October, Mr. Hunter, in a letter to Governor Wise said:

> The Judge is for observing all the judicial decencies; so am I, but in double quick time.... Stephens will hardly be fit for trial. He will probably die of his wounds if we don't hang him promptly.[450] [Pg 368]

Immediately upon the announcement by the Court that Brown should have a fair trial, arrangements were made to provide friendly counsel for his defense. First, Mr. J. W. Le Barnes, of Boston, at his personal expense, employed Mr. George H. Hoyt, a young lawyer of Athol, Massachusetts, to go to Charlestown and represent Brown in the dual capacity of counsel and spy. His instructions were, "first, to watch and be able to report proceedings, to see and talk with Brown, and be able to communicate with his friends anything Brown might want to say; and second, to send me (Le Barnes) an accurate and detailed account of the military situation at Charlestown, the number and the distribution of the troops, the location and defences of the jail; the opportunities for a sudden attack and the means of retreat, with the location and situation of the room in which Brown is confined," etc.[451]

Hoyt arrived at Charlestown on Thursday night, and on Friday morning, October 28th, reported to the Court and asked to be made additional counsel. His youth and his evident inefficiency, aroused a suspicion, on the part of Mr. Hunter, that he came as a spy rather than as counsel.[452] He accordingly asked that Hoyt be excluded from participating in the trial. In this he was overruled. The same day he reported to Governor Wise that a "beardless boy came in last night as Brown's counsel." And that he thought "he is a spy."[453] October 21st, Brown wrote letters, similar in character, to Judge Daniel Tilden, of Cleveland, Ohio, and to Hon. Thomas Russell, of Boston, asking them to appear for him as counsel, saying:

"I am here a prisoner, with several sabre-cuts on my head and bayonet stabs in my body."[454] In response to his request, Judge Tilden secured the services of Mr. Hiram Griswold, of Cleveland, to appear in his stead. The latter arrived at Charlestown, Saturday morning, October 29th. At the same time Mr. Samuel Chilton, of Washington, D. C., also arrived, and upon reporting to the Court, these two distinguished lawyers were assigned as counsel to Brown's staff. Mr. Chilton came upon the solicitation of Mr. John A. Andrew, of Boston.[455] Judge Russell did not arrive until November 2d. [Pg 369]

On Thursday morning, October 27th, the trial was begun with a surprise for the prosecution—Mr. Botts reading a telegram, which stated that insanity was hereditary in Brown's family; that his

mother's sister had died while insane, and that a daughter of that sister had been two years in a lunatic asylum, and citing other instances of insanity in the family.[456]

Mr. Botts then stated, "That upon receiving the above dispatch he went to the jail, with his associate, Mr. Green, and read it to Brown, and was desired by him to say that in his father's family there has never been any insanity at all. On his mother's side there have been repeated instances of it.... Brown also desires his counsel to say that he does not put in a plea of insanity." [457]

His counsel again moved for a continuance, and, doubtless, pleaded the insanity phase of the question in support of the motion. Upon the conclusion of Mr. Botts's remarks, Brown raised up on his couch and said:

> I will add, if the court will allow me, that I look upon it as a miserable artifice and pretext of those who ought to take a different course in regard to me, if they took any at all, and I view it with contempt more than otherwise. Insane persons, so far as my experience goes, have but little ability to judge of their own sanity; and if I am insane, of course I should think I knew more than all the rest of the world. But I do not think so. I am perfectly unconscious of insanity, and I reject, so far as I am capable, any attempts to interfere in my behalf on that score.[458]

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Mr. Griswold, however, after coming into the case, revived the question of Brown's sanity, and on November 7th, enclosed to the Governor a petition and an affidavit affirming the claim that Brown was insane.[459] Replying to this letter, Mr. Villard states that the Governor replied that "a plea of insanity could be filed at any time before conviction or sentence, and wrote an admirable letter to Dr. Stribbling, superintendent of the lunatic asylum at Staunton, Virginia, ordering him to proceed to Charlestown and examine the prisoner, saying: 'If the prisoner is insane he ought to be cured; and if not insane the fact ought to be vouched for in the most reliable form, now that it is questioned under oath and by counsel since conviction.' Unfortunately, the impetuous Governor countermanded these instructions and the letter was never sent."

Later, acting upon the advice of Mr. Montgomery Blair, the defence secured nineteen affidavits made by friends living at Akron, Cleveland, and Hudson, Ohio, in support of the plea. These affidavits were delivered to Governor Wise by Mr. Hoyt, on the 23d day of November. Mr. Villard states that "these people in their efforts to save Brown laid bare some sad family secrets." However, upon this very important phase of Brown's condition Governor Wise had an opinion of his own. To the Virginia Legislature he said: "I know that he was sane, if quick and clear perception, if assumed rational premises and consecutive reasoning from them, if cautious tact in avoiding disclosures and in covering conclusions and inferences, if memory and conception and practical common sense, and if composure and self-possession are evidence of a sound state of mind. He was more sane than his prompters and promoters, and concealed well the secret which made him seem to do an act of mad impulse, by leaving him, without his backers, at Harper's Ferry."[460]

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Brown's line of defense is set forth in a memorandum of suggestions which he personally prepared for the guidance of his counsel.[461] It reads as follows:

JOHN BROWN'S DIRECTIONS TO HIS COUNSEL

> We gave to numerous prisoners perfect liberty. *Get all the names.*
>
> We allowed numerous other prisoners to visit their families, to quiet their fears. *Get all their names.*
>
> We allowed the conductor to pass his train over the bridge with all his passengers, I myself crossing the bridge with him, and assuring all the passengers of their perfect safety. *Get that conductor's name, and the names of the passengers, so far as may be.*
>
> We treated all our prisoners with the utmost kindness and humanity. *Get all their names, so far as may be.*
>
> Our orders from the first and throughout, were, that no unarmed person should be injured under any circumstances whatever. Prove that by ALL the prisoners.
>
> We committed no destruction or waste of property. *Prove that.*

The defense began Friday afternoon. Mr. Villard states that Messrs. Botts and Green, following John Brown's suggestion, "essayed to prove, the kindness with which Brown treated his prisoners," which drew from Mr. Hunter the "caustic and truthful comment that testimony as to Brown's forbearance in not shooting other citizens had no more to do with the case than had the dead languages."

Mr. Hunter's objections being overruled, a number of Brown's witnesses were examined to show that he had not only not killed his prisoners and everybody else who came within the range of his rifles, but that he had treated all courteously, notwithstanding the fact that his enemies had fired upon his flag of truce, and had killed one of his men, William Thompson, while he was a prisoner in their hands.

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A scene was precipitated at the trial when the names of some of his witnesses were called and it was found that they were not present; Brown thereupon arose and, denouncing his counsel, demanded that the proceedings be deferred until the next morning. A *Herald* correspondent

stated:[462]

> When Brown rose and denounced his counsel, declaring that he had no confidence in them, the indignation of the citizens scarcely knew bounds. He was stigmatized as an ungrateful villain, and some declared he deserved hanging for that act alone. His counsel, Messrs. Botts and Green, had certainly performed the unpleasant task imposed upon them by the Court in an able, faithful and conscientious manner; and only the evening before Brown had told Mr. Botts that he was doing even more for him than he had promised.

Mr. Hoyt, of Brown's counsel, added to the interest of the scene by asking that the case be postponed. Anticipating that his colleagues would withdraw from the case as a result of Brown's speech, he said that he was utterly unable to go on with the case alone and that Judge Tilden, of Ohio, was coming to assist the defense, and would arrive during the night. Counsel Botts and Green, after asserting that they had done everything possible for their client, announced, that since the prisoner had no confidence in them they could no longer act in his behalf. Judge Parker thereupon released them, as counsel, and adjourned the trial until the next day at 10 o'clock.[463]

When court convened Saturday morning, Mr. Griswold and Mr. Chilton appeared for Brown, and asked for delay—a few hours only—in which to make some preparation for the defense, which was refused. "This term will end very soon," the Judge said, "and it is my duty to endeavor to get through with all the cases if possible, in justice to the prisoners and to the State." [Pg 373]

With the examination of a few additional witnesses, the testimony for the defense closed and the battle of wits began with a motion by Mr. Chilton, that the State be compelled to elect one count in the indictment and abandon the others. That Brown was charged with treason, and with conspiracy and advising with slaves and others to rebel, and with murder in the first degree. He contended, and cited authorities to sustain his contention, that in a case of treason, different descriptions of treason could not be united in the same indictment; high treason could not be associated with other treason. If an inferior grade of the same character could not be included in separate counts, still less could offense of higher grade, etc., etc., etc. Mr. Harding, associate counsel for the prosecution, of course, could not see the force of the objection made by the learned counsel on the other side. The separate offenses charged were but different parts of the same transactions. "Murder arose out of the treason as the natural result of the bloody conspiracy." Mr. Hunter said the discretion of the Court on one count in the indictment is only exercised where great embarrassment would otherwise result to the prisoner. The Court held that the point might be taken advantage of to move an arrest of judgment; but since the jury had been charged, and had been sworn to try the prisoners on the indictment as drawn, the trial must go on.... The very fact that the defense can be charged in different counts, varying the language and circumstances, is based upon the idea that distinct offenses may be charged in the same indictment. The prisoners are to be tried on the various counts as if they were various circumstances, etc. Mr. Chilton then said he would reserve the motion as a basis for a motion in arrest of judgment.[464]

Mr. Griswold then stated that the prisoner desired that the case be argued, and that while he had [Pg 374] not been present at the trial, counsel could obtain sufficient knowledge of the evidence by reading the notes; and since it was nearly dark, he supposed argument for the Commonwealth would engage the attention of the Court until the usual hour of adjournment; and asked that the Court adjourn after the opening argument by the prosecution. Mr. Hunter opposed opening the argument "unless the case was to be finished to-night," and protested against any further delay. The Court ordered the trial to proceed, but at the close of Mr. Hunter's speech, of forty minutes' duration, adjournment was had until Monday. Brown sought by all the means in his power on Saturday, to delay the trial, and when court convened after noon he sent word from the jail that he was sick; whereupon the jail physician. Dr. Mason, was summoned in the case. He reported that Brown was feigning illness. The Court then directed that he be brought into court on a cot. Mr. Hunter states that after the adjournment was procured, the "crafty old fiend was well enough to walk."

On Monday, at 1:30 P. M., the argument was completed. Mr. Chilton asked the Court to instruct the jury that if they believed the prisoner was not a citizen of Virginia, but of another State, they could not convict on a count of treason. The Court declined, saying the Constitution did not give rights and immunities alone, but also imposed responsibilities.

At 2:15 the jury returned their verdict of guilty. It was received in respectful silence; no demonstration of satisfaction or evidence of elation greeted the announcement. Of its reception by the people in waiting Mr. Villard says: "It is to the credit of the Charlestown crowd and of Virginia that not a single sound of elation or triumph assailed the dignity of the court, when the jury sealed Brown's doom. In solemn silence the crowd heard Mr. Chilton make his formal motion for an arrest of judgment, because of errors in the indictment and in the verdict, and it filed out equally silent when Judge Parker ordered the motion to stand over until the next day."

One person was dissatisfied with Brown's trial; not the prisoner—for he acknowledged the deep [Pg 375] sense of his obligation, to both Court and counsel, for the treatment he had received—but Mr. James Redpath. He said:

> I do not intend to pollute my pages with any sketch of the lawyers' pleas. They were able, without doubt, and erudite, and ingenious; but they were founded, nevertheless, on an atrocious assumption. For they assumed that the statutes of the State were just; and, therefore if the prisoner should be proven guilty of

> offending against them, that it was right that he should suffer the penalty they inflict. This doctrine every Christian heart must scorn; John Brown, at least, despised it; and so also, to be faithful to his memory, and my own instincts, must I. [465]

On November 1st the Court heard Mr. Chilton's motion in arrest of judgment; reserving its decision upon it until the next day. During the afternoon of November 2d, Brown was brought into court for the final scene of the trial. After Mr. Chilton's motion had been overruled. Brown was ordered to rise, and when asked by the clerk if he had anything to say why sentence should not be pronounced upon him, he delivered the following address:[466]

> I have, may it please the Court, a few words to say. In the first place, I deny everything but what I have all along admitted,—the design on my part to free the slaves. I intended certainly to have made a clean thing of that matter, as I did last winter, when I went into Missouri and there took slaves without the snapping of a gun on either side, moved them through the country, and finally left them in Canada. I designed to have done the same thing again, on a larger scale. That was all I intended. I never did intend murder, or treason, or the destruction of property, or to excite or incite slaves to rebellion, or to make insurrection.
>
> I have another objection: and that is, it is unjust that I should suffer such a penalty. Had I interfered in the manner which I admit, and which I admit has been fairly proved (for I admire the truthfulness and candor of the greater portion of the witnesses who have testified in this case),—had I so interfered in behalf of the rich, the powerful, the intelligent, the so-called great, or in behalf of any of their friends,—either father, mother, brother, sister, wife, or children, or any of that class,—and suffered and sacrificed what I have in this interference, it would have been all right; and every man in this court would have deemed it an act worthy of reward rather than punishment. [Pg 376]
>
> This court acknowledges, as I suppose, the validity of the law of God. I see a book kissed here which I suppose to be the Bible, or at least the New Testament. That teaches me that all things whatsoever I would that men should do to me, I should do even so to them. It teaches me, further, to "remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them." I endeavored to act up to that instruction. I say, I am yet too young to understand that God is any respecter of persons. I believe that to have interfered as I have done—as I have always freely admitted I have done—in behalf of His despised poor, was not wrong, but right. Now, if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments,—I submit; so let it be done!
>
> Let me say one word further.
>
> I feel entirely satisfied with the treatment I have received on my trial. Considering all the circumstances, it has been more generous that I expected. But I feel no consciousness of guilt. I have stated from the first what was my intention, and what was not. I never had any design against the life of any person, nor any disposition to commit treason, or excite slaves to rebel, or make any general insurrection. I never encouraged any man to do so, but always discouraged any idea of that kind.
>
> Let me say, also, a word in regard to the statements made by some of those connected with me. I hear it has been stated by some of them that I have induced them to join me. But the contrary is true. I do not say this to injure them, but as regretting their weakness. There is not one of them but joined me of his own accord, and the greater part of them at their own expense. A number of them I never saw, and never had a word of conversation with, till the day they came to me; and that was for the purpose I have stated. [Pg 377]
>
> Now I have done.

Judge Parker then pronounced the sentence of death upon Brown, fixing the 2d of December, 1859, as the date for the execution of it, and directing that the execution should be public. He then ordered all persons present to remain in their seats until the prisoner was removed. "There was prompt obedience and John Brown reached his cell unharmed, without even hearing a taunt."[467]

There is conflict between the "authorities" as to the manner in which Brown delivered his speech to the Court. In describing the scene, Mr. Villard gave rein to his bias in this choice flight:

> Drawing himself up to his full stature, with flashing eagle eyes and calm, clear and distinct tones, John Brown again addressed, not the men who surrounded him but the whole body of his countrymen, North, South, East and West.[468]

Mr. Redpath, who has not, in this history, overlooked any favorable opportunity to indulge his *penchant*, is not a bit dramatic in his statement of what occurred. He says that when the clerk directed Brown to stand and say why sentence should not be passed upon him, that "he rose and leaned slightly forward, his hands resting on the table. He spoke timidly—hesitatingly, indeed—and in a voice singularly gentle and mild. But his sentences came confused from his mouth, and

he seemed to be wholly unprepared to speak at this time. Types can give no intimation of the soft and tender tones, yet calm and manly withal, that filled the Court room, and, I think touched the hearts of many who had come only to rejoice at the heaviest blow their victim was to suffer."[469] [Pg 378]

It appears then, that Mr. Villard has framed and given out an exaggeration of the performance; but it is unfortunate that the subject-matter of the speech, fails to measure up to the height of the exalted standard which has been set for the occasion. When one to whom a prodigal biographer has attributed a pair of flashing eagle eyes, drawls himself up to his full stature, and addresses the whole body of his countrymen, he ought to be truthful as well as dramatic. It is bad form for an orator under such circumstances, to make statements which are not true; it mars the dignity of his utterances, and dwarfs the stateliness of his eloquence. Also, it is embarrassing for a hero to be compelled to retract his more heroic periods, as in this case, after they have "thrilled the world."

On the 18th of October, Brown, in answer to a question, had distinctly stated to Governor Wise and others, that it was not his purpose to run the slaves out of the country; but that he "designed to put arms in their hands to defend themselves against their masters, and to maintain their position in Virginia and in the South. That, in the first instance, he expected they and the non-slave-holding whites would flock to his standard as soon as he got a footing there, at Harper's Ferry; and, as his strength increased, he would gradually enlarge the area under his control, furnishing a refuge for the slaves, and a rendezvous for all whites who were disposed to aid him, until eventually he overrun the whole South...."[470]

Later, when Governor Wise called Brown's attention to the discrepancy between these statements and the statement which he had made in the opening paragraph of his speech to the Court on November 2d, he retracted what he had said to the Court, and wrote the following letter, to Mr. Hunter, explaining the dereliction:[471] [Pg 379]

Charlestown, Jefferson County, Va.
November 22, 1859.

DEAR SIR: I have just had my attention called to a seeming confliction between the statement I made to Governor Wise and that which I made at the time I received my sentence, regarding my intentions respecting the slaves we took *about the Ferry*. There need be no such confliction, and a few words of explanation will, I think, be quite sufficient. I had given Governor Wise a *full and particular* account of that, and when called in court to say whether I had anything further to urge, I was taken wholly by surprise, as I did not expect my sentence before the others. In the hurry of the moment, I forgot much that I had before *intended to say*, and did *not* consider the full bearing of what *I then said*. I intended to convey the idea, that it was my object to place the slaves in a condition to defend their liberties, if they would, *without any bloodshed, but not* that I intended *to run them out of the slave States*. I was not *aware* of any such apparent confliction until my attention *was called* to it, and I do not suppose that a man in *my then circumstances* should be *superhuman* in respect to the *exact purport* of every word he might utter. What I said to Governor Wise was spoken with all the deliberation I was master of, *and was intended for the truth*; and what I said in court was *equally intended for truth*, but required a more full explanation *than I then gave*. Please make such use of this as you think calculated to correct any *wrong* impressions I may have given.

Very respectfully yours,
JOHN BROWN.

Andrew Hunter, Esq., Present.

Mr. Emerson, in his oration at the funeral services of Abraham Lincoln, held at Concord, April 19th, 1865, saw fit to compare Brown's discredited speech with the greatest orations of time. He said:

> His speech at Gettysburg will not easily be surpassed by words on any recorded occasion. This and one other American speech, that of John Brown to the court that tried him, and a part of Kossuth's speech at Birmingham, can only be compared with each other, and with no fourth.[472] [Pg 380]

But is this comparison really relevant? Will the historian accept Mr. Emerson's comparison of this exhibit of Brown's prevarication, with the immortal words of the immortal Lincoln? The speeches are characteristic of the men who uttered them. Mr. Lincoln did not begin his sublime oration with a falsehood. Brown made a speech October 25th, which was truly an heroic utterance and deserving of a place in history.[473] His words on that occasion, were hurled at his enemies, the "Virginians" whom he addressed. That speech was as characteristic of his splendid courage, as his speech of November 2d, was of his craftiness, for John Brown was as brave as he was crafty.

In a letter to Governor Wise, Mr. Fernando Wood commended him for the firmness and moderation which had characterized the Governor's course in the emergency, and asked, if he dared to "do a bold thing and temper justice with mercy? Have you nerve enough to send Brown to State's Prison instead of hanging him?" He thought Brown should not be hung, "though Seward should, and would be if he could catch him." The Governor replied that he had nerve enough to send him to prison and would do so if he didn't think he ought to be hung and that he would be inexcusable for mitigating his punishment. "I could do it," he said, "without flinching,

without a quiver of a muscle against a universal clamor for his life." Continuing he said: "He shall be executed as the law sentences him, and his body shall be delivered over to surgeons, and await the resurrection without a grave in our soil. I have shown him all the mercy which humanity can claim."[474]

Immediately after Brown's incarceration, a movement was started by Mr. Higginson to have Mrs. Brown go to Harper's Ferry to visit her husband. But when the information reached Brown, he peremptorily forbade her coming; wiring Mr. Higginson: "For God's sake don't let Mrs. Brown come. Send her word by telegraph wherever she is."[475] [Pg 381]

This arbitrary action should not excite surprise. There was no atonement that Brown could make for the ruin which he had wrought: for the dead who would never return. There were no words that he could say which would carry consolation to this woman's stricken heart, nor was it possible for him to make any rift in the clouds of her unutterable woe. He shrank, instinctively, from a presence of the bleeding heart of the woman whom he had wronged. November 9th, he wrote to Mr. Higginson:

> If my wife were to come here just now it would *only tend* to distract *her mind* TEN FOLD; and would only add to my affliction; and *can not possibly* do me *any good*. It will also use up the scanty means she has to supply Bread & cheap but comfortable clothing, fuel, &c. for herself & children through *the winter*. DO PERSUADE her to remain *at home* for a time (at least) till she can learn further from me. She will receive a thousand times the consolation AT HOME that she can possibly find elsewhere. I have just *written* her there & will write her CONSTANTLY. Her presence *here* would deepen my affliction a thousand fold. I beg of her to be *calm* and *submissive*; & not to go *wild* on my account. I lack *for nothing* & was feeling quite cheerful before I heard she talked of *coming on*—I ask her to *compose her mind* & to remain *quiet* till the last of *this month*; out of pity to me. I can certainly judge better in the matter than *any one* ELSE. My warmest thanks to yourself and *all other* kind friends.
>
> *God bless you all.* Please *send this line* to *my afflicted wife* by first possible conveyance.[476]

In a letter addressed to his wife and children, dated November 8th, he said:[477] [Pg 382]

> ... I wrote most earnestly to my dear and afflicted wife not to come on for the present, at any rate. I will now give her my reasons for doing so. First, it would use up all scanty means she has, or is at all likely to have, to make herself and children comfortable hereafter. For let me tell you that the sympathy that is now aroused in your behalf may not always follow you. There is but little more of the romantic about helping poor widows and their children than there is about trying to relieve poor "niggers." Again, the little comfort it might afford us to meet again would be dearly bought by the pains of a final separation. We must part; and I feel assured for us to meet under such dreadful circumstances would only add to our distress. If she comes on here, she must be only a gazing-stock throughout the whole journey, to be remarked upon in every look, word, and action, and by all sorts of creatures, and by all sorts of papers, throughout the whole country. Again, it is my most decided judgment that in quietly and submissively staying at home vastly more of generous sympathy will reach her, without such dreadful sacrifice of feeling as she must put up with if she comes on. The visits of one or two female friends that have come on here have produced great excitement, which is very annoying; and they cannot possibly do me any good. Oh, Mary! do not come, but patiently wait for the meeting of those who love God and their fellow-men, where no separation must follow. "They shall go no more out forever." I greatly long to hear from some one of you, and to learn anything that in any way affects your welfare. I sent you ten dollars the other day; did you get it? I have also endeavored to stir up Christian friends to visit and write to you in your deep affliction. I have no doubt that some of them, at least, will heed the call. Write to me, care of Captain John Avis, Charlestown, Jefferson County, Virginia....

The thirty days ensuing November 2d, were days of great anxiety for the Virginia authorities. It was natural that they should suspect that schemes would be formed to rescue Brown from his impending fate. In this they were not mistaken. In fact the planning to effect his rescue was begun as soon as it became known that he was not seriously wounded; and it is probable that something in this direction might have been attempted, if the schemers had received any encouragement from the prisoner. But to the man who had planned and dreamed of conquest, as Brown had planned, and dreamed, their scheming was the merest of trifling; they had no conception of daring and striving, as he had dared and striven. As to heroics, he was blasé. In the collapse of his great undertaking he had had a surfeit of tragedies and disappointments. The heart of the man of iron was subdued. And there can be no doubt that, at this supreme hour in his life, the world looked small to John Brown. He had toyed with it as with a bauble, and was ready to throw it away. Besides, he had too often measured situations, and calculated the chances for success against formidable odds, to waste any time with adventures such as, in his opinion, his rescuers were capable of executing. Hence, when Mr. Hoyt informed Brown, October 28th, that a plan was being formed to storm the jail and set the prisoners free, he promptly refused to encourage the attempt. Conveying Brown's reply to Mr. Le Barnes, October 30th, Mr. Hoyt wrote: [Pg 383]

There is no chance of his (Brown's) ultimate escape: there is nothing but the most unmitigated failure, and the saddest consequences which it is possible to conjure, to ensue upon an attempt at *rescue*. The country all around is guarded by armed patrols and a large body of troops are constantly under arms. If you hear anything about such an attempt, for Heaven's sake do not *fail to restrain the enterprise*.

The planning for his rescue, however, did not cease because Brown disapproved of any attempt being made to execute such plans. Mr. Villard, on pages 511 to 528, gives a full and very [Pg 384] interesting account of various schemes that were proposed to accomplish something, by force, in Brown's behalf; as well as of the precautionary measures that were taken by the Virginians to prevent the possibility of a rescue.

Mr. Stearns, thinking that Charles Jennison was a co-philanthropist, sought to enlist him and James Stewart in one of these schemes. Naturally he received no reply. The plan for another Kansas rescue measure was to be communicated to Brown by a young Kansas woman—Miss Mary Partridge. She was to visit Brown in his cell at Charlestown; embrace him affectionately and, incidentally, put a paper containing the plan of the rescue into his mouth.[478]

Mr. Lysander Spooner, of Boston, proposed to kidnap Governor Wise, carry him out to sea on a fast-going boat, and hold him as a hostage for Brown. Mr. Le Barnes worked out the scheme. He found the man who would undertake to execute the job; and a boat that would steam fifteen to eighteen knots an hour could be had for $5,000 to $7,000. The expedition would cost $10,000 to $15,000. But the necessary funds were not forthcoming and the scheme failed. Another plan was for an open invasion of Jefferson County, Virginia. The volunteer forces that were coming from Kansas under Colonel Hinton, as reported by rumor, were to be consolidated with smaller forces that were being organized in Ohio, under John Brown, Jr., and to these were to be added the "volunteers from New York City and Boston." They were all to unite near Charlestown; "make a cross country rush on that town and, after freeing the prisoners, they were to seize the horses of the cavalry companies and escape." "Dr. Howe," it is said, "suggested that they be armed with 'Orisini' bombs and hand-grenades, in lieu of artillery." Money was wanted for this campaign, "fifteen hundred or two thousand dollars by Tuesday morning the 29th, and five hundred or a thousand dollars the day after." Mr. Le Barnes, Mr. James Redpath, and Mr. Sanborn seem to [Pg 385] have been at the front, in the promotion of these visionary schemes. Mr. Hoyt, in the meantime, returned from a fruitless mission to Ohio, to raise funds, and reported that no money could be had in that quarter. Upon receiving this report Mr. Sanborn "gave up the undertaking and wired Le Barnes to return."

October 31st, Brown wrote the following letter to his family:[479]

My Dear Wife, & Children Every One

I suppose you have learned before this by the newspapers that Two weeks ago today we were fighting for our lives at Harpers ferry: that during the fight Watson was mortally wounded; Oliver killed, Wm. Thompson killed, & Dauphin slightly wounded. That on the following day I was taken prisoner immediately after which I received several Sabre-cuts in my head; & Bayonet stabs in my body. As nearly as I can learn Watson died of his wound on Wednesday the 2d or on Thursday the 3d day after I was taken.

Dauphin was killed when I was taken; & Anderson I suppose also. I have since been tried, & found guilty of Treason, etc; and of murder in the first degree. I have not yet received my sentence. No others of the company with whom you were acquainted were, so far as *I can learn*, either killed or taken. Under all these terrible calamities; I feel quite cheerful in the assurance that God reigns; & will overrule all for his glory; & the best possible good. I feel *no* consciousness of *guilt* in the matter; nor even mortification on account of my imprisonment; & irons; & I feel perfectly sure that very soon no member of my family will feel any possible disposition to "blush on my account." Already dear friends at a distance with kindest sympathy are cheering me with the assurance that *posterity* at least will do me justice. I shall commend you all together, with my beloved; but bereaved daughters in law, to their sympathies which I do not doubt will reach you.

I also commend you all to Him "whose mercy endureth forever:" to the God of my [Pg 386] *fathers* "whose I am; & whom I serve." "He will never leave you nor forsake you," unless you forsake Him. Finally my dearly beloved be of good comfort. Be sure to remember & *to follow my advice* & my example too: so far as it has been consistent with the holy religion of Jesus Christ in which I remain a most firm, & humble believer. Never forget the poor nor think anything you bestow on them to be lost, to you even though they may be as *black* as Ebedmelch the Ethiopean eunuch who cared for Jeremiah in the pit of the dungeon; or as *black* as the one to whom Phillip preached Christ. Be sure to entertain strangers, for thereby some have—"Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them." I am in charge of a jailor *like* the one who took charge of "Paul & Silas"; & you may rest assured that both *kind hearts & kind faces* are more or less about me; whilst thousands are thirsting for my blood. "These *light* afflictions which are but *for a moment* shall work out for us a *far more exceeding & eternal weight* of Glory." I hope to be able to write you again. My wounds are doing well. Copy this and send it to your sorrow stricken brothers, Ruth; to comfort them. Write me a few words in regard to the welfare of all. God Allmighty bless you all; & "make you joyful in the midst of all

your tribulations." Write to John Brown Charlestown Jefferson Co. Va, care of Capt John Avis.

Your affectionate Husband and Father,
JOHN BROWN.

P. S. Yesterday Nov 2d. I was sentenced to be hanged on Decem 2d next. Do not grieve on my account. I am still quite cheerful. God bless you all.

Yours ever J. BROWN.

This letter is written in the soft language and in the apparently consecrated spirit that is characteristic of Brown's domestic and social correspondence. But the beauty of his lines is marred, and the sincerity of his purpose in putting them forth, as well as his claims to a Christian character, are discredited by the falsehoods contained in the opening paragraph. Brown was not [Pg 387] seriously hurt at Harper's Ferry. He received two wounds, a light dress-sword cut, on the neck and head, and a sword thrust in the body[480] and these he received, not after he had been taken prisoner, but while he was yet bravely fighting. Evidence of what he was doing, when he was struck down, appears in a letter which he wrote November 29th, to Mr. J. G. Anderson concerning one of his captains. He said:[481]

> Jeremiah G. Anderson was fighting bravely by my side at Harper's Ferry up to the moment when I fell wounded, and I took no further notice of what passed for a little time....

Brown may have written "the truth concerning his own spirit and composure, in this his first letter from the jail to his family,"[482] but he did not write the truth concerning the character of his wounds, and the conditions under which he received them.

With the freedom of correspondence that was granted to him came Brown's great opportunity, and the masterful manner in which he quickly turned it to his advantage is one of the marvels of this history. Equipped with a vocabulary of devotional phrases and an ample magazine of biblical quotations, this caged soldier of fortune, the would-be Catiline of his generation, stormed the heights of public opinion; and disarming righteousness of its opposition to wrong, won a moral victory as marvelous as it was triumphant. These beautifully devotional letters, that stand as monuments, certifying to an humble Christian character, like flights in oratory, were written with regard for the effect which he desired to accomplish, but without regard for the truth of what he uttered.

The opinion that the letters, which crowned Brown's character with a dignity akin to sanctity, [Pg 388] were artfully written, and were not characteristic of him, is not based merely upon a vulgar suspicion. It finds ample justification in the reckless disregard for the truth which prevails throughout the entire series; and in direct evidence. The invasion had failed. Wounded, and a prisoner in irons, with the gallows for his portion, Brown had the opportunity which solitude affords, to contemplate the terrible disaster which had befallen him: the wreck of his hopes; the ruin of his family; their utter wretchedness, and the shame and humiliation which they suffered because of him. In his extremity, he planned how best to meet the problems of his environment; and, substituting the mightier pen for the sword of the great Frederick, which had been stricken from his hand, he began a systematic campaign for a martyr's crown, and for pecuniary assistance for his family, whenever a favorable opportunity presented itself.

November 10th, he disclosed to his wife the plan of this, his final conception: "I have been whipped as the saying *is*," he said, "but I am sure I can recover all the lost capital occasioned by the disaster; by only hanging a few moments by the neck; & I feel determined to make the utmost possible out of a defeat. I am dayly & hourly striving to gather up what little I may from the wreck."[483]

In reply to a letter from a kinsman, the Rev. Dr. Humphrey of Pottsfield, Massachusetts, he wrote November 25th:[484]

> I discover that you labor under a mistaken impression as to some important facts which my peculiar circumstances will in all probability prevent the possibility of my removing; and I do not propose to take up any argument to prove that any motion or act of my life is right. But I will here state that I know it to be wholly my own fault as a leader that caused our disaster....
>
> If you do not believe I had a murderous intention (while I *know* I had not) why [Pg 389] grieve so terribly on my account? The scaffold has but few terrors for me. God has often covered my head in the day of battle, and granted me many times deliverances that were almost so miraculous that I can scarce realize the truth; and now, when it seems quite certain that he intends to use me shall I not most cheerfully go? I may be deceived, but I humbly trust that he will not forsake me "till I have showed his favor to this generation and his strength to every one that is to come...."

October 27th, a Quaker lady wrote to Brown from Newport, Rhode Island:[485]

> CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN.
>
> DEAR FRIEND:—Since thy arrest I have often thought of thee, and have wished that, like Elizabeth Fry toward her prison friends, so I might console thee in thy

confinement. But that can never be; and so I can only write thee a few lines which, if they contain any comfort, may come to thee like some little ray of light....

Oh, I wish I could plead for thee as some of the other sex can plead, how I would seek to defend thee! If I now had the eloquence of Portia, how I would turn the scale in thy favor! But I can only pray "God bless thee!" God pardon thee and through our Redeemer give thee safety and happiness now and always!

From thy friend, E. B.

Posing as if in the shadow of the sheltering wings of the Almighty, answering this letter, Brown asserted that he had been the special instrument on earth of a militant Christ, to execute the divine will in Kansas; and incidentally solicited a contribution for his family. He said:[486]

... You know that Christ once armed Peter. So also in my case I think he put a sword into my hand and there continued it so long as he saw best, and then kindly took it from me. I mean when I first went to Kansas. I wish you could know with what cheerfulness I am now wielding the "sword of the spirit" on the right hand and on the left. I bless God that it proves "mighty to the pulling down of strongholds." I always loved my Quaker friends and I commend to their regard my poor bereaved widowed wife and my daughters and daughters-in-law, whose husbands fell at my side. One is a mother and the other likely to become so soon. They, as well as my own sorrow stricken daughters, are left very poor, and have much greater need of sympathy than I, who through Infinite Grace, and the great kindness of strangers, am "joyful in all my tribulations." [Pg 390]

Dear Sister, write to them at North Elba, Essex County, N. Y., to comfort their sad hearts. Direct to Mary A. Brown, wife of John Brown....

It may be said of this unsophisticated woman, whose heart was touched by a sympathy undeserved, that if she had known what took place at the humble cabin of the Doyles on the night of May 24, 1856, when the murderous sword, which Brown says Christ placed in his hands, was run through Doyle's breast, (while others of the party secured the helpless widow's and orphans' horses) she would not have made her contribution to this history. Also, Brown's letter to this woman may be taken as an exhibit or sample of the sacrilege and artful dissimulation that is characteristic of his prison correspondence. And, since his claims to sincerity of purpose, and a devotion to humanity depend largely upon this correspondence, it discloses the fiction, wherewith his fame has been promoted. November 29th he wrote to his friend, Mrs. George L. Stearns:[487]

My Dear Friend,—No letter I have received since my imprisonment here, has given me more satisfaction, or comfort, than yours of the 8, instant. I am quite cheerful; & was never more happy. Have only time to write a word. May God forever reward you *& all yours*. *My love to All* who love their neighbors. I have asked to be *spared* from having any *mock; or hypocritical prayers made over me*, when I am publicly *murdered*: & that my *only religious attendants* be poor *little, dirty, ragged, bareheaded & barefooted* Slave Boys; & Girls led by some old *gray-headed* Slave *Mother*. Farewell. Farewell. [Pg 391]

The last paper written by John Brown was handed to one of his guards in the jail on the morning of his execution. It read:[488]

I John Brown, am now quite *certain* that the crimes of this *guilty land* will never be purged away but with *blood*. I had as I now think, vainly flattered myself that without very much bloodshed it might be done.

November 24th Governor Wise wrote to General Taliaferro, giving him directions as follows:

Keep full guard on the line of the frontier from Martinsburg to Harpers Ferry, on the day of 2d. Dec. Warn the inhabitants to arm and keep guard and patrol on that day and for days beforehand. These orders are necessary to prevent seizures of hostages. Warn the inhabitants to stay away and especially to keep the women and children at home. Prevent all strangers, and especially all parties of strangers, from proceeding to Charlestown on 2d of Dec. To this end station a guard at Harper's Ferry sufficient to control crowds on the cars from the East and West. Form two concentric squares around the gallows, and have a strong guard at the jail and for escort to execution. Let no crowd be near enough to the prisoner to hear any speech he may attempt. Allow no more visitors to be admitted to the jail. [489]

Appealing to the President for troops Governor Wise stated that he had reason to believe that an attempt would "be made to rescue the prisoners, and if that fails then to seize citizens of this State as hostages and victims in case of execution."[490]

In addition to the Virginia militia assembled at Charlestown December 2d, were a detachment, 264 men, from the Artillery Corps, United States army, and the corps of cadets from the Virginia Military Institute at Lexington. These organizations were commanded, respectively, by two men who were soon to win great renown; whose names were to become famous in the world's history for deeds of military glory: Colonel Robert E. Lee and Prof. Thomas J. Jackson. [Pg 392]

From the home of Mr. J. M. McKim, in Philadelphia, November 21st, Mrs. Brown addressed a

letter to the Governor asking for the "mortal remains of my husband and his sons" for burial, to which he replied as follows:[491]

> I am happy, Madam, that you seem to have the wisdom and virtue to appreciate my position of duty. Would to God that "public considerations could avert his doom," for The Omniscient knows that I take not the slightest pleasure in the execution of any whom the laws condemn. May He have mercy on the erring and the afflicted.
>
> Enclosed is an order to Major Genl. Wm. B. Taliaferro, in command at Charlestown, Va. to deliver to your order, the mortal remains of your husband "when all shall be over"; to be delivered to your agent at Harper's Ferry; and if you attend the reception in person, to guard you sacredly in your solemn mission.
>
> With Tenderness and Truth, I am
> Very respectfully, your humble servant,
> Henry A. Wise.

Under the authority of this letter, Mrs. Brown, in company with Mrs. McKim and Mr. Hector Tyndale, arrived at Harper's Ferry, November 30th. There she received a telegram from the Governor giving her permission to visit her husband, alone, on the following day, stipulating that she return to Harper's Ferry the same evening. She was, accordingly, driven to Charlestown the next afternoon in care of an escort—a sergeant and eight men—of the Fauquier Cavalry, a captain of infantry occupying a seat beside her. When the time came for her to return. Brown [Pg 393] begged that her visit might be extended until morning, but, under his orders, the general in command could not grant this request. The hour for the final parting had come; the heart-broken woman, with her grief, returned to Harper's Ferry to await the tragedy of the tomorrow.

December 2d, about an hour before his execution. Brown disposed of the wreckage of his campaign supplies in a "will and codicil" which were written for him by Mr. Hunter.[492] It provided that all his property, being personal property, "which is scattered about in the States of Virginia and Maryland," should be carefully gathered up by his executor and "disposed of to the best advantage and the proceeds thereof paid over to his beloved wife, Mary A. Brown." He trusted that his right to such articles as were not of a "war-like character" and all other property that he might be entitled to might be respected. He appointed Sheriff James W. Campbell, "Executor of this my true last Will, hereby revoking all others." The document was sealed, and witnessed by John Avis, the jailer, and Andrew Hunter.

At 10:30 Brown was notified by the sheriff to prepare for the execution. He then visited his late companions in arms. To all, except Hazlett and Cook, he gave such adieux as he could, in view of the painful circumstances into which he had led them. Hazlett he had refused to recognize when he was first brought before him in the prison, and continued to the end to deny that he had been a member of his band. As to Cook, the relations between them were not cordial. He had stated in his "confession" that Brown had sent him to Harper's Ferry in June, 1858. This Brown denied; and charged Cook with having made false statements, saying, "you know I protested against your coming." To which Cook replied: "Captain Brown, you and I remember differently." Cook may have asked for the Harper's Ferry detail, but Brown must have consented to the arrangement, for [Pg 394] he furnished the money to defray the expenses of his going thereto. Cook secured valuable information there, which he reported to Brown, including, among other things, a census of the slave population of that vicinity.[493]

The spectacle which met Brown's gaze as he stepped upon the porch from the door of the jail on his way to the scaffold, could not otherwise than recall to his mind the dreams of conquest and of military glory which he had cherished. Three thousand men—infantry, cavalry, and artillery—were under arms. In admiration of the display—for the "street was full of marching men," he said: "I had no idea that Governor Wise considered my execution so important,"[494] and for that reason, Mr. Villard says, "no little slave-child was held up for the benison of his lips, for none but soldiery was near."

The undertaker's wagon, a two seated vehicle, drawn by two white horses, stood near, the driver and undertaker occupying the front seat. Brown took his place in the second seat between the sheriff—Campbell—and his jailer, Avis. The party then moved to the place of execution. The escort, under the command of Colonel T. P. August, consisted of a company of cavalry under Captain Scott, and a battalion of infantry under Major Loring. On the way to the field, Brown spoke only of unimportant things, the weather and the scenery. "This is a beautiful country," he is reported to have said, "I never had the pleasure of seeing it before." It was a solemn procession, and was void of any effects in heroic phraseology.

The time was ripe for the final metamorphosis of John Brown. A blow of a hatchet cut the cord that linked him to earthly things: The Soldier of Fortune became the historical Soldier of the Cross.

CHAPTER XVII

[Pg 395]

"YET SHALL HE LIVE"

Much ado about nothing.

—Shakespeare

John Brown's fame is an unearned increment. It was secured by misrepresentations put forth by himself and members of his family, and by the Disunionists—"Union-splitters"—of his time, who inspired his final actions. Through these agencies he acquired a creditable rating in history; not because of the things which he did; nor because of the things which he sought to do; but because of the things which were said about him; and because of the things which were done to him. His fame is the result of an exploitation, in eloquent phrases, of virtues, purposes, and motives, which were attributed to him. It has thus been overcapitalized. The stock was watered. In respect to the truth of history, his fame is all "water." It was not based upon fact, but upon fancy; upon untenable conclusions concerning his character, and wildly extravagant and irrelevant assumptions concerning his emotions. These are the sole assets to be found in the appraisement of his public estate.

Of him Mr. Redpath said, *in part*:

> He was too large a man to stand on any platform. He planted his feet on the Rock of Ages—the Eternal truth—and was therefore never shaken in his policy or principles.
>
> He scouted the idea of rest while he held a commission direct from God Almighty to act against Slavery....
>
> Where the Republicans said, Halt! John Brown shouted, Forward! to the rescue! He was an abolitionist of the Bunker Hill school.

It did not concern Mr. Redpath that the "Bunker Hill" school of abolitionists were themselves slave-holders. [Pg 396]

Mr. Thoreau, who was also a Union-splitter, said:

> No man in America has ever stood up so persistently for the dignity of human nature, knowing himself for man and the equal of any and all governments. He could not have been tried by his peers, for his peers did not exist....
>
> He did not go to Harvard. He was not fed on the pap that is there furnished, but he went to the University of the West where he studied the science of Liberty, and having taken his degree, he finally commenced the practice of humanity in Kansas.

Of Thoreau, Mr. Alcott wrote in his diary, Saturday. November 5, 1859:

> ... Thoreau talks freely and enthusiastically about Brown, denouncing the Union, the President, the States, and Virginia particularly; wishes to publish his late speech, and has seen Boston publishers, but failed to find any to print it for him. [495]

Mr. Sanborn said:

> Such was the man—of the best New England blood, of the stock of the Plymouth Pilgrims, and bred up like them "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"—who was selected by God, and knew himself to be so chosen, to overthrow the bulwark of oppression in America. He seems to have declared a definite plan of attacking slavery in one of its strongholds, by force, as early as 1839; and it was to obtain money for this enterprise that he engaged in land-speculations and wool-merchandise for the next ten or twelve years.... Other men might have been spared but Brown was indispensable.[496]

Said Wendell Phillips:

> God makes him the text, and all he asks of our comparatively cowardly lips is to preach the sermon, and say to the American people that, whether this old man succeeded in a worldly sense or not, he stood as a representative of law, of government, of right, of justice, of religion, and they were pirates that gathered about him, and sought to wreak vengeance by taking his life. The banks of the Potomac are doubly dear now to History and to Man! The dust of Washington rests there; and History will see forever on that river side the brave old man on his pallet, whose dust, when God calls him hence, the Father of his Country would be proud to make room for beside his own. [Pg 397]

Mr. Higginson said:

> Such men as he needed are not to be *found* ordinarily; they must be *reared*. John Brown did not merely look for men, therefore, he reared them in his sons.

John A. Andrew, who did not believe that Brown was present or in any way connected with the robberies and murders on the Pottawatomie, said:

> Whatever may be thought of John Brown's acts, *John Brown himself was right*.

The Rev. Theodore Parker, who believed in slave insurrections and their horrors, wrote:

> Let the American State hang his body and the American Church damn his soul.

> Still, the blessing of such as are ready to perish will fall on him, and the universal justice of the Infinitely Perfect God will make him welcome home. The road to heaven is as short from the gallows as from the throne.

Mr. Emerson said:

> That new saint, than whom none purer or more brave was ever led by love of men into conflict and death—the new saint awaiting his martyrdom, and who, if he shall suffer, will make the gallows glorious like the cross.

Into a carnival of rhetoric so picturesque, Mr. John James Ingalls could not fail to enter the lists and compete for the prize. Poising his shining lance he delivered this thrust:

> But the three men of this era who will loom forever against the remotest horizon of time, as the pyramids above the voiceless desert, or the mountain peaks above the subordinate plains, are Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant and Old John Brown of Osawatomie. [Pg 398]

Victor Hugo said:

> The punishment of John Brown may consolidate slavery in Virginia, but it will certainly shatter the American Democracy. You preserve your shame but you kill your glory.

Similar exhibits, in the hyperbolical optimism that constitutes this promotion by wind, might be added hereto indefinitely; for the output of such fantastical flights was limited only by the boundaries of taste and imagination. Probably the best things have been said. But that does not wholly discourage the later generations. Emulation in the phrase making competition still places a premium upon inconsistency. Mr. Villard said fifty years after:

> In Virginia, John Brown atoned for Pottawatomie by the nobility of his philosophy and his sublime devotion to principle, even on the gallows.

Perhaps nowhere else than in the peculiar philosophy of those who attribute virtue to Brown as a motive for vice, may we find nobility in dissimulation; atonement without reconciliation; and the sublimity of devotion to principle in the denial of the truth. Awaiting death in the Charlestown jail, Brown denied that he had been a party to the murders and the robberies on the Pottawatomie; and went from the gallows into the presence of the Almighty to answer for both his participation in that horror and for his repeated denials of having been personally concerned in it.[497]

December 10, 1911, Mr. Clyde McGee, of Chicago, said, among many other worked-over things:

> It grew upon him as he prayed, for John Brown was a man who talked with God as confidently as a friend speaketh with friend.[498] [Pg 399]

When Brown and his sons planned, during March and April and May, 1856, to steal Doyle's, and Wilkinson's, and other settlers' horses and leave the country; they planned, as a precautionary measure, to first make widows and orphans of the wives and children of these men, and then to steal the horses; not from the dead men, but from the weeping women and helpless children. Who think you talked with Brown and his swaggering sons as "friend speaketh with friend" during the time their plans were being made for these assassinations and robberies, and while they executed them: The Almighty, or the Devil? Brown was not sure who it was that prompted him to incite the slaves to strike for their liberty, by assassinating their masters. He answered Mr. Vallandigham at Harper's Ferry:

> No man sent me here; it was my own prompting and that of my Maker, or that of the Devil; whichever you please to ascribe it to. I acknowledge no master in human form.[499]

Kansas has done much in honor of John Brown. An association, organized for the purpose, erected a stately monument at Osawatomie, which was dedicated to his memory August 30, 1877, by Kansas' most picturesque orator and statesman, the late John James Ingalls. Later, the patriotic women connected with the society of the Grand Army of the Republic, in Kansas, purchased the site of the Battle of Osawatomie, for a "State Park": which was dedicated, as such, by ex-President Theodore Roosevelt, August 30, 1910. Also, the State Legislature of 1895, authorized a society to place a statue of Brown in the national hall of fame, Statuary Hall, in the rotunda of the national capitol; thus, to the world, certifying his life and public services to have been the most conspicuous and illustrious of all its citizens. The text of the resolution concerning this statue is as follows: [Pg 400]

> *Whereas*, The Lincoln Sailors' and Soldiers' National Monument Association now has in process of construction a statue or monument of John Brown; and
>
> *Whereas*, Said association has made application to the authorities at Washington to have such monument put in statuary hall in the capitol building, and has been advised by the general government that before this permission could be granted a request from the legislature of the State of Kansas would be necessary: therefore, be it
>
> *Resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate Concurring therein*, That we hereby request the proper authorities in charge of the United States Statuary hall, at Washington, D. C., to permit such monument to be placed therein; be it further

> *Resolved*, That a copy of these resolutions be forwarded to each of our senators and representatives in Washington, D. C.

For a reason unexplained by his later biographers, the authority to confer this honor upon Brown —the highest honor within the power of the State to bestow—was never exercised; a delinquency which excites a suspicion that the resolution stated conditions, as existing, which did not exist.

At the head of the schedule of assumptions concerning the innocence of Brown's intentions, the purity of his motives, and the exaltation of his devotion to humanity, is his "martyrdom." This item has been illuminated with a halo of holiness. As "Christ died to make men holy," so Brown is said to have died to "make men free." No one has claimed that Hugh Forbes was an humanitarian, or other than an adventurer. Yet in relation to Brown's insurrection, the minds of the two men—John Brown and Hugh Forbes—met in full accord; there was agreement between them. Together they planned the invasion of the South, for the promotion of their personal fortunes. Their aims, their ambitions, and their hopes were identical. If Brown's exchequer had [Pg 401] been ample, Forbes too would have appeared at Harper's Ferry and there would have been a pair of martyrs there: "Two of a kind."

The logic of the fiction of his martyrdom is founded upon the assumption that Brown held an option upon his life which he elected to forfeit; and that he offered it as a sacrifice: that he chose to die, as the Redeemer of Men died; and in thus dying made "the gallows glorious like the cross." Brown did not contemplate dying at Harper's Ferry any more than did Hugh Forbes, or Stevens, or Cook, or Kagi: and he would not have died at Charlestown if he could have controlled the event. These men knew that some of them would, probably, die, but each passed the subject over lightly, believing that in some inscrutable way, if fatalities occurred, it would be some of the others who would fall. Men of their type "die but once." Brown accepted the chances of war as did his followers, and as Forbes sought the opportunity of doing. Men who have similarly risked their lives, times almost without number, are not impressed by such martyrdoms. To his faithful Sanborn, Brown wrote: "I am now rather anxious to live for a few years."[500] He desired to live to organize, and to command the army of the Provisional Government: and to be the head of a new nation: a new "United States." He hoped for longevity, that he might wear the honors and enjoy the fame and the emoluments of his prospective achievement.

The years of Brown's life were a constant, persistent, strenuous struggle to get money. As to the means which should be employed in the getting of it, he was indifferent. In his philosophy, results were paramount; the means to the end were of no consequence. A stranger to honor, he violated every confidence that should be held sacred among men: and in his avarice trampled upon every law, moral and statute, human and Divine. Consistent with the speculative instinct so distinctly [Pg 402] characteristic of his life, his greatest or principal object was to get money, and to get it quickly.

Mr. Villard asserts that Brown's greatest or principal object was to assault slavery, and so entitles an important chapter in the recent biography. Assuming his premises to be correct, he commences the chapter with this inquiry:

> When was it that John Brown, practical shepherd, tanner, farmer, surveyor, cattle expert, real-estate speculator and wool merchant, first conceived what he calls in his autobiography "his greatest or principal object" in life—the forcible overthrow of slavery in his native land? The question is not an idle one, etc.[501]

The question, nevertheless, is an idle one. During the interview which Brown gave out at Harper's Ferry, October 18th, Mr. Vallandigham asked him this pointed question: "How long have you been engaged in this business?"[502] To which Brown replied:

> From the breaking out of the difficulties in Kansas. Four of my sons had gone there to settle and they wanted me to go.[503]

Also, Brown stated over his signature, in March, 1859, that it was "since 1855" that it had been his judgment that the way to successfully oppose slavery "would be to meddle directly with the peculiar institution."[504] That he had the subject under consideration prior to 1845 is expressly discredited by Brown, in his autobiography, in the statement that he was "averse to military affairs"; that he refused to "train *or drill*; but paid fines & got along like a Quaker until his age finally cleared him of military duty."[505]

The record of Brown's life, prior to 1857, is barren of any contemporaneous expression by him or [Pg 403] by any member of his family which even remotely suggests the possibility that he might have contemplated attempting a forcible *assault* against slavery. If his mind had been preoccupied with a desire of such overshadowing importance the fact would have shone in the letters which he wrote to his children January 23, and August 6, 1852, relating to the conduct of their lives. [506] There is much, however, in this history which discredits the assumption that he gave the subject any consideration whatever. A man whose life was a "burning" devotion to an ambition so heroic as to become the "David of the Goliath of Slavery,"[507] ought to have shown some personal interest in the matter; he should not have left it wholly to his panegyrists. It appears however that the peaceful "tanner and shepherd" was so unconscious of having any object in life worth living for that he "felt," during this time, "a strong and steady desire to die";[508] a condition of mind wholly inconsistent with heroism or with one "burning" to bear arms, or with a "man of war emerging from the chrysalis of peace."[509] The assumptions upon which Mr. Villard relies for the relevancy of his question are gratuitous. The chapter is a scholarly example, put forth by a scholar, of the art of making "much ado about nothing."

It would be proper to say that the conquest of the Southern States was the greatest or principal undertaking in Brown's career, and that it was in 1857 that he first planned to attempt it. His capture of Pate's horses and mules at Black Jack in June; and the days which he spent in stealing cattle, at and around Osawatomie, during the last days of August, 1856; and his plundering in Missouri and Kansas in 1858, may be called meddling with slavery; though grafting upon the anti-slavery sentiment of the time, would more accurately describe the relation, if any, of his operations to slavery. [Pg 404]

There was this difference between Nat Turner and John Brown: the negro was a religious fanatic; he was sincere and consistent. Falsehood, deception, greed, selfishness, are not attributes of fanaticism, but they are characteristic of Brown's life. The sincerity of his "death-bed" professions of godliness, and of sympathy for the men in bondage, is discredited by the actions of a lifetime as conspicuous for its turpitude as it was barren of virtues. Neither charitable deed, nor manifestation of a benevolent, or of a patriotic spirit, appears, even incidentally, along the lines of his life, to break the monotone of selfishness that distinguishes it. In public affairs he took no part worthy of consideration.

Mr. Gill gave up a view of his natural or unassumed personality that is consistently discreditable, and Brown's correspondence is a confirmation of that estimate. It teaches the lesson that he administered his deportment to suit the circumstances of the occasion existing at the time; and that it covered the entire range of the various phases of human intercourse; from that of a coarse, brutal vulgarity, to the saintliness of his latest metamorphosis; from the use of language so distinctly vulgar and obscene, as to be, in the opinion of the writer, unprintable,[510] to the crafty assumptions of godliness contained in his letter to the innocent Quakeress.[511]

Brown was crafty in the sublimest degree of the art. His craftiness was a distinction. It will be difficult to find in our literature a more interesting example of the refinements of the art than the piece which he set for Mrs. Stearns: his "Old Brown's Farewell: to the Plymouth Rocks; Bunker Hill Monuments; Charter Oaks; and Uncle Toms Cabbins." In the setting, and in the dramatic execution of the play, he exhibited the perfection of the actor. The paper was not drawn for Mr. Parker to read to his congregation. Brown was not "casting his pearls before swine." It was for Mrs. Stearns personally that the paper was written; it was her heart that he intended to touch, and her generous emotions that he intended to prey upon. How successfully he played the part she has related.[512] [Pg 405]

Of Brown, it may be truthfully said that within the limits of his resources, he did nothing in a small way, nor did he move with a faint heart. With him, there was neither halting nor trifling in action. He was consistently an adventurer. His theology scorned all creeds. Without capital he was a plunger among speculators. The deception which he practiced upon the New England Woolen Company netted him a fortune little below the average of that period. In the commission business he was an acrobat, rather than a merchant: his operations were a series of feats in commercial gymnastics. Chafing because of the restrictions of an extreme poverty that kept him "like a toad under a harrow," he determined to burst the bands of his environment, and there was a massacre in the valley of the Pottawatomie out of which he rode with a herd of horses. And he would have ridden away from Black Jack with Pate's horses and mules, if Pate had not deceived him, and led him to believe that he held his sons—John and Jason—prisoners, as hostages. A guerrilla leader for six days, he drove two hundred and fifty head of cattle into his camp at Osawatomie, and in 1858, as a Kansas raider, he dwarfed the operations of James Montgomery. In the East, as a crafty imposter and grafter, he secured $30,000 in cash and plunder, and attempted a *coup* upon the Legislatures of Massachusetts and New York for $200,000 more. And then, within one year from the date of the outburst of his determination to be freed from poverty, he indulged hopes of a successful conquest: hopes of riches and of fame. An habitual cruelty in his domestic life, which is more than hinted at by his friend and confidant, George R. Gill, nerved his hand to execute the ferocious butchery of his neighbors on the Pottawatomie, and steeled his heart to incite the slaves at Harper's Ferry to emulate the example of Southampton. His attempt at revolution was not the result of a previous conviction and consecration to duty and to the cause of humanity, but of a growth—the indulgence and development of an abnormal passion for speculation: the culmination downward of his speculative and criminal instincts. Closing a commercial sas indulging the reasonable hope that in the new country he would find opportunity to improve his condition. In the horses owned by the Shermans, and by other well-to-do neighbors, he saw, and grasped, the opportunity—a desperate one—to make a "coup to restore his fortunes." Out of that plunge in robbery and murder came the leader of a gang of horse thieves—the chrysalis of the guerrilla captain of Osawatomie. [Pg 406]

Driven out of the Territory by the establishment of order, the crafty marauder raided the East as the militant defender of Kansas. In the practice of his impositions there, he met and established confidential relations with men who plotted against the life of the nation; men who planned how to provoke a revolution; how best to "split the Union";[513] men who wished "success to every slave insurrection." From this atmosphere, pregnant with the sentiment of disloyalty to the Union, Brown derived the inspiration which encouraged him to plan to do what his mentors had not the courage to undertake. Out of his negotiations with them came money; munitions of war; Hugh Forbes, the revolutionist; mutual planning for a revolution, and a dream of empire.

John Brown will live in history; but his name will not be found among the names of those who have wrought for humanity and for righteousness; or among the names of the martyrs and the saints who "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." [Pg 407]

"YET SHALL HE LIVE": but it will be as a soldier of fortune, an adventurer. He will take his place

in history as such: and will rank among adventurers as Napoleon ranks among marshals: as Captain Kidd among pirates: and as Jonathan Wild among thieves.

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX I

[Pg 411]

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE LATE D. W. WILDER CONCERNING JOHN BROWN

Topeka, Kansas, Dec. 18th, 1902.

General D. W. Wilder, Hiawatha, Kansas.

My Dear General:

I would like to have you kindly tell me something valuable about John Brown. I listened to your tribute to his memory, read before the Historical Society on the 2nd inst. It recalled the admiration which I entertained for the "Old Hero" throughout the many years of my life; from young manhood up to about four years ago; when I attempted to write a sketch of his life. It was in reading up to obtain data for this sketch that the idol, which my credulity, I suppose, or imagination had set up, went utterly to pieces in my hands. I read faithfully what his biographers, Sanborn, and Redpath, and the other fellows, have written about him, but none of them give up any valuable facts. They all seem to be long on eulogy. They do overtime on that. The whole performance is a continuous eulogium; but historical facts, upon which to predicate a story, or upon which his "immortal fame" is supposed to rest, are painfully lacking.... These are some of the things which I went up against when I tried in good faith to write about him, and they broke me all up, so I had to quit. John Brown, the "Hero" and "Martyr," is a creation—Charlestown furnished a simple text and the genius of his generation did the rest. The brilliant minds of this age have exploited him in literary effects, in prose, in poetry and oratory. They have placarded him "upon the walls of time"; but I am compelled to believe that his fame thus acquired, will not survive. The "why" may "repel the philosophic searcher," but it cannot "defy" the historical searchers. History has no enigmas.

I will be very glad indeed to have your opinions on this business.

[Pg 412]

Very truly yours,
Hill P. Wilson.

In this letter the writer asked Mr. Wilder for his opinion upon Brown's motives in their relation to several incidents that occurred in his life. His reply is as follows:[514]

Hiawatha, Kansas, Dec. 20, 1902.

My Dear Wilson:

... You have stood on various platforms and made many political speeches. Did any of them endorse the sentiments you now hold? The elder Booth, a man of genius, once staggered up to the footlights and said to the crowded house: "You are all drunk," and staggered off.

You think the people of your county, your state, your country and of the civilized world, including its noblest spirits, do not know a hero, an emancipator—first of his state, then of his nation. Only one Kansan has made a speech that thrilled the world and is immortal. You never read it. Only one Kansan lives in poetry, in song, in human hearts, and is the constant theme of the historian, the dramatist, the man of letters. You think he was a fool. The whole world has pronounced its verdict on John Brown.

Yours truly,
D. W. Wilder.

To this letter the writer replied:

Topeka, Kans., January 3, 1903.

My Dear General:

Your letter of the 20th ult., is received. I told you that I had gone the limit of my vocabulary in expressing my admiration of John Brown. I read the "speech that thrilled the world." I have read the poetry and have sung the songs. I make the

point that the speeches, the poetry, and the songs are all there is behind John Brown. When I asked you about some historical facts, you gave me more oratory. It seems to have become a habit. If you ever analyze this man's character, you will reverse your estimate of him.

The world sees Brown fighting, heroically, in the engine-house at Harper's Ferry, but it does not inquire how he came to be there. It was his death, and not his life, that gave him renown. Usually it is a man's life—his actions, that determine his place among men. If it be true that one unimpeachable fact will set aside the most plausible opposing theory, then Brown's fame will not survive. The facts of his life impeach the popular verdict. [Pg 413]

Very truly yours,
HILL P. WILSON.

General D. W. Wilder, Hiawatha, Kansas.

APPENDIX II [Pg 414]

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE JOHN BROWN RAID BY THE HON. ALEXANDER R. BOTELER, A VIRGINIAN WHO WITNESSED THE FIGHT

Taken from The Century

On entering the room where John Brown was, I found him alone, lying on the floor on his left side, and with his back turned toward me. The right side of his face was smeared with blood from a sword cut on his head, causing his grim and grizzled countenance to look like that of some aboriginal savage with his war-paint on. Approaching him I began the conversation with the inquiry:

"Captain Brown, are you hurt anywhere except on the head?"

"Yes, in my side, here," said he, indicating the place with his hand.

I then told him that a surgeon would be in presently to attend to his wounds, and expressed the hope that they were not very serious. Thereupon he asked me who I was, and on giving him my name he muttered as if speaking to himself.

"Yes, yes—I know you now—member of congress—this district."

I then asked the question:

"Captain, what brought you here?"

"To free your slaves," was the reply.

"How did you expect to accomplish it with the small force you brought with you?"

"I expected help."

"Where, whence, and from whom, Captain, did you expect it?"

"Here and from elsewhere," he answered.

"Did you expect to get assistance from whites here as well as from the blacks?" was my next question.

"I did," he replied.

"Then," said I, "you have been disappointed in not getting it from either?" [Pg 415]

"Yes," he muttered, "I have—been—disappointed."

Then I asked him who planned his movement on Harper's Ferry, to which he replied: "I planned it all myself," and upon my remarking that it was a sad affair for him and the country, and that I trusted no one would follow his example by undertaking a similar raid, he made no response. I next inquired if he had any family besides the sons who accompanied him on his incursion, to which he replied by telling me he had a wife and children in the State of New York at North Elba, and on my then asking if he would like to write to them and let them know how he was, he quickly responded:

"Yes, I would like to send them a letter."

"Very well," I said, "you doubtless will be permitted to do so. But, Captain," I added, "probably you understand that, being in the hands of the civil authorities of the State, your letters will have to be seen by them before they can be sent."

"Certainly," he said.

"Then, with that understanding," continued I. "There will, I am sure, be no objection to your writing home; and although I have no authority in the premises, I promise to do what I can to have your wishes in that respect complied with."

"Thank you—thank you, sir," he said repeating his acknowledgment for the proffered favor and,

for the first time, turning his head toward me.

In my desire to hear him distinctly, I had placed myself by his side, with one knee resting on the floor; so that, when he turned, it brought his face quite close to mine, and I remember well the earnest gaze of the gray eye that looked straight into mine. I then remarked:

"Captain, we, too, have wives and children. This attempt of yours to interfere with our slaves has created great excitement and naturally causes anxiety on account of our families. Now, let me ask you: Is this failure of yours likely to be followed by similar attempts to create disaffection among our servants and bring upon our homes the horrors of a servile war?"

"Time will show," was his significant reply. [Pg 416]

Just then a Catholic priest appeared at the door of the room. He had been administering the last consolations of religion to Quinn, the marine, who was dying in the adjoining office; and the moment Brown saw him he became violently angry, and plainly showed, by the expression of his countenance, how capable he was of feeling "hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness."

"Go out of here—I don't want you about me—go out!" was the salutation he gave the priest, who, bowing gravely, immediately retired. Whereupon I arose from the floor, and bidding Brown good-morning, likewise left him.

In the entry leading to the room where Brown was, I met Major Russell, of the marine corps, who was going to see him, and I detailed to him the conversation I had just had. Meeting the major subsequently he told me that when he entered the apartment Brown was standing up—with his clothes unfastened—examining the wound in his side, and that, as soon as he saw him, forthwith resumed his former position on the floor; which incident tended to confirm the impression I had already formed, that there was a good deal of vitality left in the old man, notwithstanding his wounds—a fact more fully developed that evening after I had left Harper's Ferry for home, when he had his spirited and historic talk with Wise, Hunter and Vallandigham.

APPENDIX III [Pg 417]

THE CONSTITUTION ADOPTED AT CHATHAM, CANADA

Copy of the Constitution, adopted at Chatham, Canada, May 8, 1858. *Mason Report*, p. 48.

PROVISIONAL CONSTITUTION AND ORDINANCE FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES

PREAMBLE

Whereas, slavery throughout its entire existence in the United States, is none other than a most barbarous, unprovoked, and unjustifiable war of one portion of its citizens upon another portion, the only conditions of which are perpetual imprisonment and hopeless servitude or absolute extermination; in utter disregard of those eternal and self-evident truths set forth in our Declaration of Independence: Therefore,

We, citizens of the United States, and the Oppressed People, who, by a decision of the Supreme Court are declared to have no rights which the White Man is bound to respect; together with all other people degraded by the laws thereof, Do, for the time being ordain and establish for ourselves, the following PROVISIONAL CONSTITUTION and ORDINANCES, the better to protect our Persons, Property, Lives and Liberties; and to govern our actions:

ARTICLE I

QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

All persons of mature age, whether Proscribed, oppressed, and enslaved Citizens, or of the Proscribed or oppressed races of the United States, who shall agree to sustain and enforce the Provisional Constitution and Ordinance of this organization, together with all minor children of such persons, shall be held to be fully entitled to protection under the same.

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ARTICLE II

BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

The provisional government of this organization shall consist of three branches, viz.: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial.

ARTICLE III

LEGISLATIVE

The legislative branch shall be a Congress or House of Representatives, composed of not less than five, or more than ten members, who shall be elected by all the citizens of mature age and of sound mind, connected with this organization; and who shall remain in office for three years, unless sooner removed for misconduct, inability, or death. A majority of such members shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE IV

EXECUTIVE

The executive branch of this organization shall consist of a President and Vice-President, who shall be chosen by the citizens or members of this organization, and each of whom shall hold his office for three years, unless sooner removed by death, or for inability or misconduct.

ARTICLE V

JUDICIAL

The judicial branch of this organization shall consist of one Chief-Justice of the Supreme Court, and of four Associate Judges of said Court; each constituting a Circuit Court. They shall each be chosen in the same manner as the President, and shall continue in office until their places have been filled in the same manner by election of the citizens. Said court shall have jurisdiction in all civil or criminal causes, arising under this constitution, except breaches of the Rules of War.

ARTICLE VI

VALIDITY OF ENACTMENTS

All enactments of the legislative branch shall, to become valid during the first three years, have the approbation of the President and the Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

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ARTICLE VII

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

A Commander-in-Chief of the army shall be chosen by the President, Vice-President, a majority of the Provisional Congress, and of the Supreme Court, and he shall receive his commission from the President, signed by the Vice-President, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and the Secretary of War: and he shall hold his office for three years, unless removed by death, or on proof of incapacity of misbehavior. He shall, unless under arrest (and till his place is actually filled as provided by the constitution) direct all movements of the army, and advise with any allies. He shall, however, be tried, removed, or punished, on complaint by the President, by, at least, three general officers, or a majority of the House of Representatives, or of the Supreme Court; which House of Representatives (the President presiding); the Vice President, and the members of the Supreme Court, shall constitute a court-martial, for his trial; with power to remove or punish, as the case may require; and to fill his place as above provided.

ARTICLE VIII

OFFICERS

A Treasurer, Secretary of State, Secretary of War, and Secretary of the Treasury, shall each be chosen for the first three years, in the same way and manner as the Commander-in-Chief; subject to trial or removal on complaint of the President, Vice-President, or Commander in Chief, to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court; or on complaint of the majority of the members of said court, or the Provisional Congress. The Supreme Court shall have power to try or punish either of those officers; and their places shall be filled as before.

ARTICLE IX

SECRETARY OF WAR

The Secretary of War shall be under the immediate directions of the Commander in Chief; who may temporarily fill his place, in case of arrest, or of any inability to serve.

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ARTICLE X

CONGRESS OR HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The House of Representatives shall make ordinances for the appointment (by the President or otherwise) of all civil officers except those already named; and shall have power to make all laws

and ordinances for the general good, not inconsistent with this Constitution and these ordinances.

ARTICLE XI

APPROPRIATION OF MONEY, ETC.

The Provisional Congress shall have power to appropriate money or other property actually in the hands of the Treasurer, to any object calculated to promote the general good, so far as may be consistent with the provisions of this Constitution; and may in certain cases, appropriate, for a moderate compensation of agents, or persons not members of this organization, for important service they are known to have rendered.

ARTICLE XII

SPECIAL DUTIES

It shall be the duty of Congress to provide for the instant removal of any civil officer or policeman, who becomes habitually intoxicated, or who is addicted to other immoral conduct, or to any neglect or unfaithfulness in the discharge of his official duties. Congress shall also be a standing committee of safety, for the purpose of obtaining important information; and shall be in constant communication with the Commander-in-Chief; the members of which shall each, as also the President and Vice-President, members of the Supreme Court, and Secretary of State, have full power to issue warrants returnable as Congress shall ordain (naming Witnesses etc) upon their own information, without the formality of a complaint. Complaint shall be made immediately after arrest, and before trial; the party arrested to be served with a copy at once.

ARTICLE XIII

TRIAL OF PRESIDENT AND OTHER OFFICERS

The President and Vice President may either of them be tried, removed, or punished, on complaint made by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, by a majority of the House of [Pg 421] Representatives, which House, together with the Associate Judges of the Supreme Court, the whole to be presided over by the Chief Justice in the cases of the trial of the Vice President, shall have full power to try such officers, to remove, or punish as the case may require, and to fill any vacancy so occurring, the same as in the case of the Commander-in-Chief.

ARTICLE XIV

TRIAL OF MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

The members of the House of Representatives may, any and all of them, be tried, and on conviction, removed or punished on complaint before the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, made by any number of members of said House, exceeding one third, which House, with the Vice President and Associate Judges of the Supreme Court, shall constitute the proper tribunal, with power to fill such vacancies.

ARTICLE XV

IMPEACHMENT OF JUDGES

Any member of the Supreme Court, tried, convicted, or punished by removal or otherwise, on complaint to the President, who shall, in such case, preside; the Vice-President, House of Representatives, and other members of the Supreme Court, constituting the proper tribunal (with power to fill vacancies); on complaint of a majority of said House of Representatives, or of the Supreme Court; a majority of the whole having power to decide.

ARTICLE XVI

DUTIES OF PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY OF STATE

The President, with the Secretary of State, shall immediately upon entering on the duties of their office, give special attention to secure, from amongst their own people, men of integrity, intelligence, and good business habits and capacity; and above all, of first rate moral and religious character and influence, to act as civil officers of every description and grade, as well as teachers, chaplains, physicians, surgeons, mechanics, agents of every description, clerks and messengers. They shall make special effort to induce at the earliest possible period, persons and [Pg 422] families of that description, to locate themselves within the limits secured by this organization; and shall, moreover, from time to time, supply the names and residence of such persons to the Congress, for their special notice and information, as among the most important of their duties, and the President is hereby authorized and empowered to afford special aid to such individuals,

from such moderate appropriations as the Congress shall be able and may deem it advisable to make for that object.

The President and Secretary of State, and in case of disagreement, the Vice-President shall appoint all civil officers, but shall not have power to remove any officer. All removals shall be the result of a fair trial, whether civil or military.

ARTICLE XVII

FURTHER DUTIES

It shall be the duty of the President and Secretary of State, to find out (as soon as possible) the real friends, as well as the enemies of this organization in every part of the country; to secure among them, innkeepers, private postmasters, private mail contractors, messengers and agents: through whom may be obtained correct and regular information, constantly; recruits for the service, places of deposit and sale; together with needed supplies: and it shall be matter of special regard to secure such facilities through the Northern States.

ARTICLE XVIII

DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT

It shall be the duty of the President, as well as the House of Representatives, at all times, to inform the Commander-in-Chief of any matter that may require his attention, or that may affect the public safety.

ARTICLE XIX

DUTY OF PRESIDENT—CONTINUED

It shall be the duty of the President to see that the provisional ordinances of this organization, and those made by Congress, are properly and faithfully executed; and he may in cases of great [Pg 423] urgency call on the Commander-in-Chief of the army, or other officers for aid; it being, however, intended that a sufficient civil police shall always be in readiness to secure implicit obedience to law.

ARTICLE XX

THE VICE-PRESIDENT

The Vice-President shall be the presiding officer of the Provisional Congress and in case of tie shall give the casting vote.

ARTICLE XXI

VACANCIES

In case of death, removal, or inability of the President, the Vice-President, and next to him, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, shall be the President during the remainder of the term: and the place of Chief-Justice thus made vacant shall be filled by Congress from some of the members of said Court; and places of the Vice-President and Associate Justice thus made vacant, filled by an election by the united action of the Provisional Congress and members of the Supreme Court. All other vacancies, not heretofore specially provided for, shall, during the first three years, be filled by the united action of the President, Vice-President, Supreme Court, and Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

ARTICLE XXII

PUNISHMENT OF CRIMES

The punishment of crimes not capital, except in the case of insubordinate convicts or other prisoners, shall be (so far as may be) by hard labor on the public works, roads, etc.

ARTICLE XXIII

ARMY APPOINTMENTS

It shall be the duty of all commissioned officers of the army to name candidates of merit for office or elevation to the Commander-in-Chief, who, with the Secretary of War, and, in cases of disagreement, the President, shall be the appointing power of the army: and all commissions of [Pg 424] military officers shall bear the signatures of the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of War. And it shall be the special duty of the Secretary of War to keep for constant reference of the

Commander-in-Chief a full list of names of persons nominated for office, or elevation, by officers of the army, with the name and rank of the officer nominating, stating distinctly but briefly the grounds for such notice or nomination. The Commander-in-Chief shall not have power to remove or punish any officer or soldier; but he may order their arrest and trial at any time, by court-martial.

ARTICLE XXIV

COURT-MARTIALS

Court martials for Companies, Regiments, Brigades, etc., shall be called by the chief officer of each command, on complaint to him by any officer, or any five privates, in such command, and shall consist of not less than five nor more than nine officers, and privates, one-half of whom shall not be lower in rank than the person on trial, to be chosen by the three highest officers in the command, which officers shall not be a part of such court. The chief officer of any command shall, of course be tried by a court-martial of the command above his own. All decisions affecting the lives of persons, or office of persons holding commission, must, before taking full effect, have the signature of the Commander-in-Chief, who may also, on the recommendation of, at least, one-third of the members of the court martial finding any sentence, grant a reprieve or commutation of the same.

ARTICLE XXV

SALARIES

No person connected with this organization shall be entitled to any salary, pay, or emoluments, other than a competent support of himself and family, unless it be from an equal dividend, made of public property, on the establishment of peace, or of special provision by treaty; which provision shall be made for all persons who may have been in any active civil or military service at any time previous to any hostile action for Liberty and Equality.

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ARTICLE XXVI

TREATIES OF PEACE

Before any treaty of peace shall take effect, it shall be signed by the President and Vice-President, the Commander-in-Chief, a majority of the House of Representatives, a majority of the Supreme Court, and a majority of all general officers of the army.

ARTICLE XXVII

DUTY OF THE MILITARY

It shall be the duty of the Commander-in-Chief, and all officers and soldiers of the army, to afford special protection when needed, to Congress, or any member thereof; to the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary of State, Secretary of Treasury and Secretary of War; and to afford general protection to all civil officers, other persons having right to the same.

ARTICLE XXVIII

PROPERTY

All captured or confiscated property, and all property the product of the labor of those belonging to this organization and their families, shall be held as the property of the whole, equally, without distinction; and may be used for the common benefit, or disposed of for the same object; and any person, officer or otherwise, who shall improperly retain, secrete, use, or needlessly destroy such property, or property found, captured, or confiscated, belonging to the enemy, or shall willfully neglect to render a full and fair statement of such property by him so taken or held, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and, on conviction, shall be punished accordingly.

ARTICLE XXIX

SAFETY OR INTELLIGENCE FUND

All money, plate, watches or jewelry, captured by honorable warfare, found, taken or confiscated, belonging to the enemy, shall be held sacred, to constitute a liberal safety or intelligence fund; and any person who shall improperly retain, dispose of, hide, use, or destroy such money or other article above mentioned, contrary to the provisions and spirit of this article, shall be deemed guilty of theft, and, on conviction thereof, shall be punished accordingly. The Treasurer shall furnish the Commander-in-Chief at all times with a full statement of the condition of such fund and its nature.

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ARTICLE XXX

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AND THE TREASURY

The Commander-in-Chief shall have power to draw from the Treasury the money and other property of the fund provided for it in ARTICLE twenty-ninth, but his orders shall be signed also by the Secretary of War, who shall keep strict account of the same; subject to examination by any member of Congress, or general officer.

ARTICLE XXXI

SURPLUS OF THE SAFETY OR INTELLIGENCE FUND

It shall be the duty of the Commander-in-Chief to advise the President of any surplus of the Safety or Intelligence Fund; who shall have power to draw such surplus (his order being also signed by the Secretary of State) to enable him to carry out the provisions of Article Seventeenth.

ARTICLE XXXII

PRISONERS

No person, after having surrendered himself or herself a prisoner, and who shall properly demean himself or herself as such, to any officer or private connected with this organization, shall afterward be put to death, or be subject to any corporal punishment, without first having had the benefit of a fair and impartial trial: nor shall any prisoner be treated with any kind of cruelty, disrespect, insult, or needless severity: but it shall be the duty of all persons, male and female, connected herewith, at all times and under all circumstances, to treat all such prisoners with every degree of respect and kindness the nature of the circumstances will admit of; and to insist on a like course of conduct from all others, as in the fear of Almighty God, to whose care and keeping we commit our cause.

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ARTICLE XXXIII

VOLUNTARIES

All persons who may come forward and shall voluntarily deliver up their slaves, and have their names registered on the Books of the organization, shall, so long as they continue at peace, be entitled to the fullest protection of person and property, though not connected with this organization, and shall be treated as friends, and not merely as persons neutral.

ARTICLE XXXIV

NEUTRALS

The persons and property of all non-slaveholders who shall remain absolute neutral, shall be respected so far as the circumstances can allow of it; but they shall not be entitled to any active protection.

ARTICLE XXXV

NO NEEDLESS WASTE

The needless waste or destruction of any useful property or article, by fire, throwing open of fences, fields, buildings, or needless killing of animals, or injury of either, shall not be tolerated at any time or place, but shall be promptly and properly punished.

ARTICLE XXXVI

PROPERTY CONFISCATED

The entire and real property of all persons known to be acting either directly or indirectly with or for the enemy, or found in arms with them, or found wilfully holding slaves, shall be confiscated and taken, whenever and wherever it may be found, in either free or slave States.

ARTICLE XXXVII

DESERTION

Persons convicted, on impartial trial, of desertion to the enemy after becoming members, acting as spies, or of treacherous surrender of property, arms, ammunition, provisions, or supplies of any kind, roads, bridges, persons or fortifications shall be put to death and their entire property

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confiscated.

ARTICLE XXXVIII

VIOLATION OF PAROLE OF HONOR

Persons proven to be guilty of taking up arms after having been set at liberty on parole of honor, or, after the same, to have taken an active part with or for the enemy, direct or indirect, shall be put to death and their entire property confiscated.

ARTICLE XXXIX

ALL MUST LABOR

All persons connected in any way with this organization, and who may be entitled to full protection under it, shall be held as under obligation to labor in some way for the general good, and any persons refusing, or neglecting so to do, shall on conviction receive a suitable and appropriate punishment.

ARTICLE XL

IRREGULARITIES

Profane Swearing, filthy conversation, indecent behavior, or indecent exposure of person, or intoxication, or quarreling, shall not be allowed or tolerated, neither unlawful intercourse of the sexes.

ARTICLE XLI

CRIMES

Persons convicted of the forcible violation of any female prisoner shall be put to death.

ARTICLE XLII

THE MARRIAGE RELATION—SCHOOLS—THE SABBATH

The marriage relation shall be at all times respected, and the families kept together as far as possible, and broken families encouraged to re-unite, and intelligence offices established for that purpose, schools and churches established, as soon as may be, for the purpose of religious and other instructions; and the first day of the week regarded as a day of rest and appropriated to moral and religious instruction and improvement; relief to the suffering, instruction of the young and ignorant, and the encouragement of personal cleanliness; nor shall any person be required on that day to perform ordinary manual labor, unless in extremely urgent cases. [Pg 429]

ARTICLE XLIII

CARRY ARMS OPENLY

All persons known to be of good character, and of sound mind and suitable age, who are connected with this organization, whether male or female, shall be encouraged to carry arms openly.

ARTICLE XLIV

NO PERSON TO CARRY CONCEALED WEAPONS

No person within the limits of the conquered territory, except regularly appointed policemen, express officers of the army, mail carriers, or other fully accredited messengers of the Congress, President, Vice-President, members of the Supreme Court, or commissioned officers of the army —and those only under peculiar circumstances—shall be allowed, at any time, to carry concealed weapons; and any person not specially authorized so to do, who shall be found so doing, shall be deemed a suspicious person, and may be at once arrested by any officer, soldier, or citizen, without the formality of a complaint or warrant, and may at once be subject to thorough search, and shall have his or her case thoroughly investigated; and be dealt with as circumstances, or proof, may require.

ARTICLE XLV

PERSONS TO BE SEIZED

Persons within the limits of the territory holden by this organization, not connected with this organization, having arms at all, concealed or otherwise, shall be seized at once, or taken in charge of by some vigilant officer; and their case thoroughly investigated: and it shall be the duty of all citizens and soldiers, as well as officers, to arrest such parties as are named in this and the preceding Section or Article, without formality of complaint or warrant: and they shall be placed in charge of proper officer for examination or for safe keeping.

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ARTICLE XLVI

THESE ARTICLES NOT FOR THE OVERTHROW OF GOVERNMENT

The foregoing articles shall not be construed so as in any way to encourage the overthrow of any State Government of the United States: and look to no dissolution of the Union, but simply to Amendment and Repeal. And our Flag shall be the same as our Fathers fought under in the Revolution.

ARTICLE XLVII

NO PLURALITY OF OFFICES

No two offices specially provided for, by this Instrument, shall be filled by the same person at the same time.

ARTICLE XLVIII

OATH

Every Officer, civil or military, connected with this organization, shall, before entering upon the duties of his office, make solemn oath or affirmation, to abide by and support this Provisional Constitution and these Ordinances. Also, every Citizen and Soldier, before being fully recognized as such, shall do the same.

APPENDIX IV

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JOHN BROWN'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Written to Henry L. Stearns, son of George L. Stearns, and bearing date Red Rock, Iowa, July 7, 1857.[515]

John was born May 9th, 1800, at Torrington, Litchfield County, Connecticut; of poor but respectable parents: a descendant on the side of his father of one of the company of the *Mayflower* who landed at Plymouth 1620. His mother was descended from a man who came at an early period to New England from Amsterdam, in Holland. Both his Father's & Mother's Fathers served in the war of the revolution: His Father's Father died in a barn at New York while in the service, in 1776.

I cannot tell you of anything in the first Four years of John's life worth mentioning save that at that *early age* he was tempted by Three large Brass Pins belonging to a girl who lived in the family & *stole them*. In this he was detected by his Mother; & after having a full day to think of the wrong: received from her a thorough whipping. When he was Five years old his Father moved to Ohio; then a wilderness filled with wild beasts, & Indians. During the long journey which was performed in part or mostly with an *ox team*; he was called on by turns to assist a boy Five years older (who had been adopted by his Father & Mother) & learned to think he could accomplish *smart things* in driving the cows, and riding the horses. Some times he met with Rattle Snakes which were very large; & which some of the company generally managed to kill. After getting to Ohio in 1805 he was for some time rather afraid of the Indians, & of their Rifles; but this soon wore off; & he used to hang about them quite as much as was consistent with good manners; & learned a trifle of their talk. His Father learned to dress Deer Skins, & at 6 years old John was [Pg 432] installed a young Buck Skin—He was perhaps rather observing as he ever after remembered the entire process of Deer Skin *dressing*; so that he could at any time dress his own leather such as Squirl, Raccoon, Cat, Wolf, or Dog Skin; & also learned to make Whip Lashes: which brought him some change at times; & was of considerable service in many ways. At Six years old John began to be quite a rambler in the wild new country finding birds & Squirels, and sometimes a wild Turkey's nest. But about this period he was placed in the school of *adversity*: which my young friend was a most necessary part of his early training. You may *laugh* when you come to read about it; but these were *sore trials* to John: whose earthly treasures were very *few & small*. These were the beginnings of a severe but *much needed course* of discipline which he afterwards was to pass through; & which it is to be hoped has learned him before this time that the Heavenly Father sees it best to take all the little things out of his hand which he has ever placed in them. When John was in his Sixth year a poor *Indian boy* gave him a Yellow Marble the first he had ever seen. This he thought a great deal of; & kept it a good while; but at last he lost it beyond

recovery. *It took years to heal the wound*; & I *think* he cried at times about it. About Five months after this he caught a young Squirrel tearing off his tail in doing it; & getting severely bitten at the same time himself. He however held *to the little bob tail* Squirrel; & finally got him perfectly tamed, so that he almost idolized his pet. *This too he lost*; by wandering away; or by getting killed: & for a year or Two John was *in mourning*; and looking at all the Squirrels he could see to try and discover Bobtail if *possible*, I must not neglect to tell you of a very *bad & foolish* habbit to which John was somewhat addicted. I mean *telling lies*: generally to screen himself from blame; or from punishment. He could not well endure to be reproached; & I now think had he been oftener encouraged to be entirely frank; *by making frankness a kind of atonement* for some of his faults; he would not have been so often guilty of this fault; nor have been obliged to struggle *so long* in after life with *so mean* a habit.

John was *never quarrelsome*; but was *excessively* fond of the *hardest & roughest* kind of plays; & [Pg 433]
could *never get enough* [of] them. Indeed when for a short time he was sometimes sent to School the opportunity it afforded to wrestle & Snow ball & run & jump & knock off old seedy wool hats; offered to him almost the only compensation for the confinement & restraints of school. I need not tell you that with such a feeling & but little chance of going to school *at all*: he did not become much of a schollar. He would always choose to stay at home & work hard rather than be sent to school; & during the warm season might generally be seen *barefooted & bareheaded*: with Buck skin Breeches suspended often with one leather strap over his shoulder but sometimes with Two. To be sent off through the wilderness alone to very considerable distances was particularly his delight; & in this he was often indulged so that by the time he was Twelve years old he was sent off more than a Hundred Miles with companies of cattle; & he would have thought his character much injured had he been obliged to be helped in any such job. This was a boyish kind of feeling but characteristic however.

At Eight years old John was left a Motherless boy which loss was complete & permanent, for notwithstanding his Father again married to a sensible, inteligent, & on many accounts a very estimable woman: *yet he never adopted her in feeling*: but continued to pine after his own Mother for years. This opperated very unfavorably uppon him: as he was both naturally fond of females; & withall extremely diffident; & deprived him of a suitable link between the different sexes; the want of which might under some circumstances have proved his ruin.

When the war broke out *with England*, his Father soon commenced furnishing the troops with beef cattle, the collecting & driving of which *afforded* him some opportunity for the chase (on foot) of wild steers & other cattle through the woods. During this war he had some chance to form his own boyish judgement of *men & measures*: & to become somewhat familiarly acquainted with some who have figured before the country since that time. The effect of what he saw during the war was to so far disgust him with military affairs that he would neither train, *or drill*: but [Pg 434]
paid fines; and got along like a Quaker untill his age had finally cleared him of Military duty.

During the war with England a circumstance occurred that in the end made him a most *determined Abolitionist*: & led him to declare, *or Swear*: *Eternal war with Slavery*. He was staying for a short time with a very gentlemanly landlord once a United States Marshal who held a slave boy near his own age very active, intelligent and good feeling; & to whom John was under considerable obligation for numerous little acts of kindness. *The master* made a great pet of John: brought him to table with his first company; & friends; called their attention to every little smart thing he *said or did*: & to the fact of his being more than a hundred miles from home with a company of cattle alone; while the *negro boy* (who was fully if not more than his equal) was badly clothed, poorly fed: & *lodged in cold weather*; & beaten before his eyes with Iron Shovels or any other thing that came first to hand. This brought John to reflect on the wretched; hopeless condition, of *Fatherless & Motherless* slave *children*: for such children have neither Father nor Mothers to protect, & provide for them. He would sometimes raise the question *is God their Father*?

At the age of Ten years an old friend induced him to read a little history; & offered him the free use of a good library; by which he acquired some taste for reading: which formed the principle part of his early education: & diverted him in a great measure from bad company, & conversation of old & inteligent persons. He never attempted to dance in his life; nor did he ever learn to know *one* of a pack of *cards* from *another*. He learned nothing of Grammar; nor did he get at school so much knowledge of common Arithmetic as the Four ground rules. This will give you some idea of the first Fifteen years of his life; during which time he became very strong and large of his age and ambitious to perform the full labour of a man; at almost any kind of hard work. By reading the lives of great, wise & good men their sayings, and writings; he grew to a dislike of vain & frivolous *conversation* & *persons*; & was often greatly obliged by the kind manner in which older & more intelligent persons treated him at their houses: & in conversation; which was a great relief on account of his extreme bashfulness.

He very early in life became ambitious to excell in doing anything he undertook to perform. This [Pg 435]
kind of feeling I would recomend to all persons both *male & female*: as it will certainly tend to secure admission to the company of the more intelligent & better portion of every community. By all means endeavor to excell in some laudable pursuit.

I had like to forgotten to tell you of one of John's misfortunes which set rather hard on him while a young boy. He had by some means *perhaps* by gift of his father become the owner of a little Ewe Lamb which did finely till it was about Two Thirds grown; and then sickened & died. This brought another protracted *mourning season*: not that he felt the pecuniary loss so much: for that was never his disposition: but so strong and earnest were his attachments.

John had been taught from earliest childhood to fear God and keep his commandments; & though quite skeptical he had always by turns felt much serious doubt as to his future well being & about this time became to some extent a convert to Christianity & ever after a firm believer in the divine authenticity of the Bible. With this book he became very familiar, & possessed a most unusual memory of its entire contents.

Now some of the things I have been *telling of*; were just such as I would recomend to you: & I wd like to know that you had selected these out; & adopted them as part of your own plan of life; & I wish you to have *some definite plan*. Many seem to have none; & others never stick to any that they do form. This was not the case with John. He followed up with *tenacity* whatever he set about so long as it answered his general purpose: & hence he rarely failed in some good decree to effect the things he undertook. This was so much the case that he *habitually expected to succeed* in his undertakings. With this feeling *should be coupled*; the consciousness that our plans are right in themselves.

During the period I have named John had acquired a kind of ownership to certain animals of some little value but as he had come to understand that the *title of minor's* might be a little imperfect: he had recource to various means in order to secure a more *independent*; & perfect right of property. One of those means was to exchange with his Father for something of far less value. Another was trading with other persons for something his Father had never owned. Older persons have some times found difficulty with *titles*. [Pg 436]

From fifteen to Twenty years old, he spent most of his time working at the Tanner & Currier's trade keeping Bachelors hall; & he was acting as Cook; & for most of the time as foreman of the establishment under his father. During this period he found much trouble with some of the bad habits I have mentioned & with some that I have not told you of: his conscience urging him forward with great power in this matter: but his close attention to *business*; & success in his management; together with the way he got along with a company of men; & boys; made him quite a favorite with the serious & more intelligent portion of older persons. This was so much the case; & secured for him so many little notices from those he esteemed; that his vanity was very much fed by it; & he came forward to manhood quite full of self-conceit; & self-confidence; notwithstanding his *extreme* bashfulness. A younger brother used sometimes to remind him of this: and to repeat to him *this expression* which you may somewhere find, 'A King against whome there is no rising up.' The habit so early formed of being obeyed rendered him in after life too much disposed to speak in an imperious & dictating way. From Fifteen years & upward he felt a good deal of anxiety to learn; but could only read and study a little; both for want of time; & on account of inflammation of the eyes. He however managed by the help of books to make himself tolerably well acquainted with common arithmetic; & Surveying; which he practiced more or less after he was Twenty years old.

At a little past Twenty years led by his own inclination & *prompted also* by his Father, he married a *remarkably plain*; but neat industrious & economical girl; of excellent character; earnest piety; & good practical common sense; about one year younger than himself. This woman, by her mild, frank, & *more than all else*: by her very consistent conduct; acquired & ever while she lived maintained a most powerful; & good influence over him. Her plain but kind admonitions generally had the right effect; without arousing his hauty obstinate temper. John began early in life to discover a great liking to fine Cattle, Horses, Sheep, & Swine; & as soon as circumstances would enable him he began to be a practical *Shepherd*: *it being* a calling for which *in early* life he had a kind of *enthusiastic longing*: with the idea that as a business it bid fair to afford him the means of carrying out his greatest or principle object. I have now given you a kind of general idea of the early life of this boy; & if I believed it would be worth the trouble; or afford much interest to any good feeling person: I might be tempted to tell you something of his course in after life; or manhood. I do not say that I *will do it*. [Pg 437]

You will discover that in using up my *half sheets to save paper*; I have written Two pages, so that one does not follow the other as it should. I have no time to write it over; & but for unavoidable hindrances in traveling I can hardly say when I should have written what I have. With an honest desire for your best good, I subscribe myself,

Your Friend,
J. Brown

P. S. I had like to have forgotten to acknowledge your contribution in aid of the cause in which I serve. God Allmighty *bless you*; my son.

J. B.

INDEX [Pg 439]

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Redpath, *Roving Editor*, 300.
[2] Atlantic Monthly. March, 1860.
[3] Atlantic Monthly.
[4] Panegyrics or eulogies on Brown would more accurately describe these writings.
[5] Villard, 170.
[6] Sanborn, 236.
[7] Villard, vii.
[8] Sanborn, 230.
[9] Villard, 673.
[10] Villard, 148.
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] Sanborn, 240.
[13] Villard, 335.
[14] Hinton, *John Brown and His Men*, 66.
[15] Villard, 10.
[16] Villard, 591, *note* 6.
[17] Villard, 26.
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] Villard, 28.
[20] Villard, 38.
[21] For a full account of this, see Villard, 37-41.
[22] Sanborn, 69.
[23] Villard, 37.
[24] Villard, 30.
[25] Villard, 30.
[26] Sanborn, 55.
[27] Sanborn, 56.
[28] Villard, 31.
[29] Now in Doddridge and Tyler Counties, West Virginia.
[30] Villard, 31.
[31] Villard, 32-33.

[32] Villard, 34.

[33] Sanborn, 64.

[34] For an interesting account of this transaction, see Sanborn, 67-68.

[35] Villard, 63.

[36] Villard, 64-66.

[37] Sanborn, 78.

[38] Villard, 36-37.

[39] Villard, 84.

[40] Villard, 76.

[41] Brown relates: "From fifteen to twenty years old, he spent most of his time at the Tanner & Currier's trade keeping Bachelor's hall; & he officiating as Cook; & for most of the time as foreman of the establishment under his Father. During this time he found much trouble with some of the bad habits I have mentioned:... but his close attention to *business*; & success in its management; together with the way he got along with a company of men & boys made him quite a favorite;... From Fifteen years and upward he felt a good deal of anxiety to learn; but could only read & study a little; both for want of time; & on account of inflamation of the eyes. He however managed by the help of books to make himself tolerably well acquainted with common Arithmetic; & Surveying: which he practiced more or less after he was Twenty years old."—Appendix. IV.

[42] Villard, 299.

[43] Sanborn, 614.

[44] Sanborn, 46.

[45] Villard, 236.

[46] *Mason Report*, 72. Testimony of Wm. F. Arny.

[47] Villard, 18, and Sanborn, 35.

[48] Villard, 45.

[49] *Ibid.*

[50] Villard, 45.

[51] Villard, 43-44.

[52] Villard, 659-661.

[53] Sanborn, 127.

[54] Sanborn, 124-125.

[55] Sanborn, 132.

[56] Villard, 48.

[57] Redpath, 64.

[58] Sanborn, 134.

[59] Villard, 48.

[60] Schouler, vol. iv, 251.

[61] Burgess, 302.

[62] McMaster, vol. vi, 481.

[63] Burgess, 290.

[64] *Twenty Years of Congress*, vol. ii, 50.

[65] Von Holst, vol. iii, 479.

[66] Douglas's Speech at Cincinnati, September 9, 1859.

[67] W. W. Corcoran sent Mr. Webster a check for $10,000 as an expression of thanks and recognition for his speech on this occasion.—Von Holst, vol. iii, 503.

[68] *Congressional Globe*. 31st Cong., 1 Sen., 28.

[69] Von Holst, vol. iii, 472.

[70] Von Holst, vol. iii, 482.

[71] Rhodes, vol. i, 217.

[72] Rhodes, vol. ii, 33.

[73] Rhodes, vol. ii, 37.

[74] Von Holst, vol. iv, 61.

[75] Von Holst, vol. iv, 322.

[76] The passing off of this obscuration was "hastened and secured" by the initiative of Eli Thayer and Charles Robinson. Under the able leadership of the latter, the political control of Kansas Territory passed into the hands of the Free-State men at the elections in October, 1857.

[77] Thayer, *Kansas Crusade*, 232.

[78] Burgess, *Middle Period*, 471-472.

[79] Sanborn, 248.

[80] New York *Weekly Tribune*, February 22, 1856.

[81] De Bow's *Review*, August, 1856.

[82] South Carolina *Courier*, July 5, 1856.

[83] Charleston (S. C.) *Mercury*. August 5, 1856.

[84] *Ibid.*, January, 1858.

[85] New York *Herald*, January, 1858.

[86] *Kansas Crusade*, 110.

[87] Sanborn, 157.

[88] Villard, 83.

[89] Villard, 83-84.

[90] Villard, 85.

[91] Villard, 88.

[92] Villard, 108.

[93] Redpath, 81-82.

[94] Villard, 77.

[95] Sanborn, 198.

[96] Sanborn's *Recollections of Seventy Years*, 152.

[97] *Mason Report*, 86. Testimony of Wm. F. Arny.

[98] *Mason Report*, 225. Testimony of Augustus Wattles.

[99] *Mason Report*, 75.

[100] Sanborn, 397.

[101] Sanborn, 203.

[102] Sanborn, 217.

[103] Villard, 123.

[104] Copy in possession of Mr. Paul Brooks, Lawrence, Kansas.

[105] Redpath, 103.

[106] Redpath, 104.

[107] *Herald of Freedom*, December 15, 1855.

[108] Villard, 127.

[109] *Ibid.*

[110] Sanborn, 222.

[111] Villard, 31.

[112] Villard, 136.

[113] Sanborn, 237, *note* 3.

[114] Villard, 158.

[115] Villard, 159.

[116] Villard, 545.

[117] L. W. Spring in his *History of Kansas* says of him on page 138: "Whatever else may be laid to his charge—whatever rashness, unwisdom, equivocation, bloodiness—no faintest trace of self-seeking stains his Kansas life."

[118] *Howard Report*, 1175.

[119] *Howard Report*, 1179.

[120] *Howard Report*, 1177.

[121] Villard, 171.

[122] Sanborn, 373, and Redpath, 184.

[123] Von Holst, 301.

[124] Sanborn, 236.

[125] Italicised by the author.

[126] "In the original something has been effaced and this note seems to have been appended: 'There are but very few who wish the real facts about these matters to go out.' Then is inserted the date 'June 26' as below."—Sanborn, 237.

[127] Sanborn, 275.

[128] Sanborn, 271.

[129] Villard, 175.

[130] Sanborn, 241.

[131] Villard, 338.

[132] Sanborn, 296, *note* 2.

[133] Salmon Brown died in California during the fall of 1912.

[134] Villard, 158.

[135] Sanborn, 272.

[136] Kansas farmers usually own from twelve to forty head of horse stock.

[137] Villard, 168.

[138] Villard, 610, *note*, 54.

[139] *Kansas Historical Collections*, vol. xii, 345.

[140] Villard, 156.

[141] *Ante*, *note* 90.

[142] *Post*, page 138.

[143] Sanborn, 261.

[144] Villard, 170.

[145] Villard, 176.

[146] Sanborn, 237.

[147] Villard, 153.

[148] Villard, 152.

[149] Villard, 151.

[150] *Ibid.*

[151] It has heretofore been supposed that John Brown's career of violence began with the tragedies on the Pottawatomie.

[152] Villard, 153.

[153] Villard, 165.

[154] Villard, 185-188.

[155] Sanborn, 388.

[156] Kansas Historical Society, *Hinton Papers*.

[157] Sanborn, 293.

[158] Sanborn, 298.

[159] *Howard Report*. Testimony of Thomas S. Hamilton.

[160] *Howard Report*, 1178.

[161] Redpath received the information, probably, from either John E. Cook or Charles Lenhart.

[162] Redpath, 112.

[163] The character of Salmon's wound and the nature of the exploit on which he was engaged when he received it, have not been made public.

[164] Villard, 210.

[165] Villard, 167.

[166] Villard, 210.

[167] Villard, 220.

[168] Villard, 222.

[169] Villard, 222.

[170] Villard, 673.

[171] Villard, 222.

[172] Villard, 616, *note* 68.

[173] Sanborn, 336.

[174] Villard, 228.

[175] Villard, 235.

[176] Villard, 616, *note* 64.

[177] Sanborn, 336.

[178] Sanborn, 314.

[179] Villard, 673.

[180] Villard, 231.

[181] Sanborn, 308.

[182] Villard, 231.

[183] Villard, 235.

[184] Redpath, 285, and Sanborn, 569, but omitted by Mr. Villard from his narrative.

[185] Villard, 235.

[186] Villard, 622.

[187] Villard, 235.

[188] Villard, 235.

[189] Villard, 622.

[190] Villard, 238.

[191] Villard, 238.

[192] Villard, 239.

[193] Villard, 246.
[194] Letter to the author, date, June 29, 1912.
[195] Villard, 243.
[196] Sanborn, 317.
[197] Sanborn, 318.
[198] Sanborn, 291.
[199] Villard, 239.
[200] Sanborn, 322.
[201] Villard, 246.
[202] Villard, 247.
[203] Villard, 234.
[204] Villard, 242.
[205] Villard, 224.
[206] Villard, 246.
[207] Villard, 235.
[208] Hinton, *John Brown and His Men*, 696.
[209] Villard, 254.
[210] Villard, 756.
[211] Villard, 260.
[212] Villard, 254.
[213] Villard, 258.
[214] Villard, 257.
[215] Villard, 673.
[216] Sanborn, 330.
[217] Villard, 262.
[218] Villard, 261.
[219] Sanborn, 241.
[220] Villard, 271.
[221] *Ibid.*
[222] Villard, 272.
[223] *Mason Report*, 245. Testimony of H. B. Hurd.
[224] Original in files of Kansas Historical Society.
[225] Villard, 276.
[226] *Ibid.*
[227] Sanborn, 370.
[228] Redpath, 177-184.
[229] Sanborn, 386.
[230] Villard, 274.
[231] Sanborn, 503.
[232] Sanborn, 501.
[233] *Mason Report*, 229.
[234] Villard, 614.
[235] Sanborn, 379.
[236] Sanborn, 379.
[237] Villard, 279.
[238] Villard, 281.
[239] Villard, 282.
[240] Villard, 287.
[241] Sanborn, 512.
[242] *Ibid.*
[243] Villard, 86.
[244] Villard, 630, *note* 20.
[245] Sanborn, 509-510.
[246] Sanborn, 508.
[247] Sanborn, 418.
[248] See Appendix IV.
[249] Sanborn, 392.
[250] *Ibid.*

[251] Sanborn, 396.
[252] Sanborn, 411.
[253] His son Owen was the teamster herein referred to.
[254] Sanborn, 411.
[255] Sanborn, 412.
[256] Sanborn, 414.
[257] Villard, 303.
[258] Sanborn, 400.
[259] Villard, 202.
[260] Villard, 303.
[261] Sanborn, 412-414.
[262] *Ante, note* 226.
[263] Villard, 300.
[264] Sanborn, 401.
[265] Sanborn, 402.
[266] Sanborn, 404.
[267] Villard, 304.
[268] Villard, 306.
[269] *Mason Report,* 123-125. Testimony of Charles Blair.
[270] Villard, 674.
[271] Villard, 285.
[272] Sanborn, 398.
[273] Villard, 303.
[274] Hinton, *John Brown and His Men*, 615.
[275] Villard, 297.
[276] Villard, 297.
[277] Villard, 298.
[278] Sanborn, 448.
[279] Sanborn, 422.
[280] Villard, 308.
[281] *Ibid.*
[282] *Mason Report,* 23.
[283] Villard, 310.
[284] Villard, 315.
[285] Sanborn, 443.
[286] Sanborn, 431.
[287] *Mason Report,* 176.
[288] Sanborn, 434.
[289] Sanborn, 434.
[290] Sanborn, 439.
[291] Sanborn, 439.
[292] Villard, 287.
[293] Sanborn, 444-445.
[294] Mr. Morton was Mr. Smith's secretary. He and Mr. Sanborn had been classmates at Harvard.
[295] Sanborn, 451.
[296] *Mason Report,* 96.
[297] Redpath, 251.
[298] *Mason Report,* 48. See Appendix III.
[299] Villard, 335-336.
[300] *Mason Report,* 59-60.
[301] Villard, 330.
[302] *Ibid.*
[303] Sanborn, 470; also Villard, 338.
[304] Sanborn, 458.
[305] *Ibid.*
[306] *Mason Report,* 176.
[307] *Ibid.*
[308] *Ibid.*

[309] Rear Admiral Chadwick, *Causes of the Civil War*, 75-76.
[310] Sanborn, 456.
[311] *Mason Report*, 231.
[312] Sanborn, 465-466.
[313] Sanborn, 464.
[314] Redpath, 237.
[315] Villard, 353.
[316] Villard, 349.
[317] Villard, 357.
[318] Villard, 354.
[319] Sanborn, 478.
[320] Villard, 363.
[321] Villard, 634, *note* 98.
[322] *Ante, note* 156.
[323] Villard, 354.
[324] Villard, 360.
[325] Villard, 363.
[326] Villard, 364.
[327] Villard, 666.
[328] Sanborn, 477.
[329] Sanborn, 479.
[330] Villard, 365.
[331] Villard, 366.
[332] Villard, 369.
[333] Villard, 368.
[334] *Ibid.*
[335] Villard, 372.
[336] *Ibid.*
[337] *Ibid.*
[338] *Kansas Conflict*, 408.
[339] Sanborn, 476.
[340] Villard, 377.
[341] *Kansas Conflict*, 405-407.
[342] Villard, 379.
[343] Villard, 378.
[344] Villard, 382.
[345] *Ibid.*
[346] Villard, 383.
[347] Villard, 384.
[348] Villard, 385.
[349] Villard, 385.
[350] Ibid.
[351] Villard, 387.
[352] Villard, 386.
[353] It is the personal opinion of the writer that Jennison got the "long end" of the loot taken in this raid; an opinion that will not be challenged by anyone who knew him.
[354] Villard, 389-390.
[355] Villard, 391.
[356] Villard, 393.
[357] Ibid.
[358] Sanborn, 504.
[359] Villard, 396.
[360] Sanborn, 423.
[361] Villard, 406.
[362] Villard, 407.
[363] *Ibid.*
[364] Villard, 408.
[365] *Mason Report*, 250. Testimony of Hon. John B. Floyd.
[366] Gue. *History of Iowa*, vol. ii., 26-30; Villard, 411.

[367] Villard, 421.

[368] Villard, 424.

[369] Villard, 416-420.

[370] Villard, 338.

[371] The writer knew Jennison personally, but the acquaintance with him was made "after the War"; after the "Red Legs" had gone out of commission. Jennison had reformed by that time and was running a gambling house at Leavenworth, Kansas, in a very orderly manner.

[372] Villard, 678.

[373] *Ante*, *note* 191.

[374] *Mason Report*, 22.

[375] *Mason Report*, 22.

[376] Villard, 431.

[377] *Mason Report*, 29-40. Testimony of Lewis T. Washington.

[378] Villard, 432.

[379] Villard, 434.

[380] Villard, 435.

[381] Villard, 435.

[382] Sanborn, 557.

[383] Villard, 443-444.

[384] Villard, 447.

[385] *Mason Report*, 43.

[386] Major Russell was in citizen's clothes and unarmed.

[387] *North American Review*, December, 1885.

[388] Report of Colonel Lee to Secretary of War, *Mason Report*, 40. An excellent account of what occurred under Brown's immediate direction during the 17th and 18th, was given out by Mr. J. E. P. Dangerfield and published in the *Century Magazine*, June, 1885.

[389] Sanborn, 562-569.

[390] Sanborn, 571, *note* 1.

[391] Villard, 456.

[392] *Ibid.*

[393] *Mason Report*. Testimony of Andrew Hunter.

[394] *Mason Report*, 63-66.

[395] Redpath, 269.

[396] Redpath, 243-246.

[397] Redpath, 8.

[398] Sanborn, 556.

[399] Sanborn, 450.

[400] *Ante*, *note* 281.

[401] Villard, 427, 430.

[402] Villard, 469.

[403] Villard, 427.

[404] Villard, 510.

[405] *The Underground Railroad*, 167.

[406] *Mason Report*, 63-66. Testimony of Andrew Hunter.

[407] *Mason Report*, 1-12.

[408] *Mason Report*, 56.

[409] Villard, 438.

[410] Redpath, 244.

[411] Sanborn, 545.

[412] *Ante*, *note* 290.

[413] Chadwick, *Causes of the Civil War*, 87.

[414] Villard, 415.

[415] Sanborn, 557.

[416] Mansfield had been killed and Crawford wounded, on the 17th, at Antietam.

[417] A recollection of the scene at the top of Maryland Heights by a survivor of Knipe's column, is of a mound of stones raised over a shallow grave. It was located near where the Confederate line of battle had been formed. Upon a piece of cracker-box, that was held in place by the stones marking the grave, a comrade's hand had cut in rude letters this tribute to a gallant soul who had met a soldier's death upon these rugged heights. It read:

"SERGT.—[Name forgotten]
CO. H. 7th. S. C.
THE BRAVE DIE
BUT ONCE."

[418] *Mason Report*, 66-67.

[419] Redpath, 8.

[420] Sanborn, 122.

[421] Villard, 436.

[422] Williams, *History of Negro Race in America*, 59.

[423] Villard, 314.

[424] Villard, 682.

[425] *Hinton Papers*, Kansas Historical Society.

[426] Villard, 424.

[427] Villard, 406.

[428] Sanborn, 539.

[429] Sanborn, 545.

[430] *Mason Report*, 59-60.

[431] *Mason Report*, 60.

[432] Frothingham, *Parker*, 475.

[433] Sanborn, 491, *note* 2.

[434] Two paintings of Brown were made by Nathan B. Onthank; the other one is in the Boston Athenaeum. Villard, xiii.

[435] Henry Adams, *History of the United States*, vol. i. 380.

[436] Frothingham, *Gerrit Smith*, 249.

[437] Villard, 468.

[438] Redpath, 285.

[439] Williams, *History of the Negro Race in America*, 84.

[440] *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. x. 339.

[441] *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. vii, 737.

[442] Williams, *History of the Negro Race in America*, vol. ii, 88.

[443] Richmond *Inquirer*, August 26, 1831.

[444] Villard, 560.

[445] Villard, 480.

[446] Villard, 478.

[447] *Ibid.*

[448] *Ibid.*

[449] Redpath, 292.

[450] Villard, 485.

[451] Villard, 484.

[452] *Ibid.*

[453] Villard, 485.

[454] Sanborn, 588.

[455] *Mason Report*, 138.

[456] Villard, 506.

[457] Redpath, 509.

[458] Villard, 507.

[459] *Ibid.*

[460] Villard, 509.

[461] Redpath, 325.

[462] Villard, 492.

[463] *Ibid.*

[464] Redpath, 331-339.

[465] Redpath, 334.

[466] Redpath, 340-342.

[467] Villard, 500.

[468] Villard, 497.

[469] Redpath, 340.

[470] *Mason Report*. Testimony of Andrew Hunter.

[471] Sanborn, 584.

[472] Villard, 646, *note* 81.
[473] *Ante*, *note* 436.
[474] Villard, 502.
[475] Villard, 513.
[476] *Ibid.*
[477] Sanborn, 586.
[478] Villard, 514.
[479] Villard, 537.
[480] See Appendix II. Recollection of Hon. Alexander R. Boteler of Virginia.
[481] Sanborn, 611.
[482] Villard, 537.
[483] Villard, 540.
[484] Sanborn, 603.
[485] Sanborn, 581.
[486] Sanborn, 582.
[487] Sanborn, 610.
[488] Sanborn, 620.
[489] Villard, 523.
[490] Villard, 527.
[491] Villard, 549.
[492] Villard, 669.
[493] *Mason Report*, 47.
[494] Villard, 554.
[495] Sanborn, 506.
[496] Sanborn, *Recollections of Seventy Years*, 75.
[497] Villard, 545.
[498] The Chicago *Reminder*, vol. x, no. 5.
[499] Villard, 457.
[500] *Ante*, *note* 281.
[501] Villard, 42.
[502] Sanborn, 562.
[503] Mr. Villard omits this question and answer from his account of the interview.
[504] *Ante*, *note* 340.
[505] Autobiography, 433.
[506] Villard, 69-70.
[507] Villard, 56.
[508] *Ante*, *note* 281.
[509] Villard, 50.
[510] *Mason Report*, 220. Testimony of Augustus Wattles; letter of April 8, 1857.
[511] Letter to Mrs. E. B., November 1st, *ante*, *note* 473.
[512] *Ante*, *note* 233.
[513] Sanborn to Higginson, *ante*, *note* 248.
[514] Original in possession of the author.
[515] *Ante* p. 165.

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