

MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS.\*

LAWRENCE, K. T. Nov., 1855.

HON. CHARLES SUMNER :

*My Dear Sir,*—Waiting to-night in my cabin, for L—— and C—— to come in for their supper, L—— surprised me, coming in alone to ask if he might bring home Judge S. to tea; which of course was only a pleasure to me, if it added at all to the comfort of any one engaged in the wearisome work of taking care of this "Yankee" settlement.

While sitting at the "board," L—— explained to me the necessity of sending some person immediately to Washington; and, would I write to *you*, or any other person I knew there? so that all the light possible to throw upon our present position might be

---

\* The following letters are added by particular request, as throwing some rays of light upon Kansas Life, not so clearly detailed in the journal. I have also since learned that Mrs. Barbour has lost all consciousness, is dressed and fed as a child: her suffering is over; her mind totally paralyzed.

given? I can hardly refuse; and yet I feel wholly unequal to, and quite out of place on a subject of so much importance.

Judging from my own impressions, I fear you Eastern people hardly do justice to the patient forbearance and long suffering of Kansas immigrants. Here in Lawrence, no week has ever passed without more or less insult and contumely thrown at our people by our nearest neighbors, the Missourians. We never ride, even within our own territory, and meet them, but our ears are pained with words too wicked to repeat. And they shoot at defenceless people with as much cool indifference as they would at partridges or prairie chickens.

My poor woman's-head does not pretend to sift, or unravel this state of things. I am only cognizant of the present sad and dangerous condition in which, as a town, we find ourselves. You who are wise and benevolent should be able to help us who are so defenceless, and so far removed from the ordinary means of helping ourselves. Perhaps, like many other "wise men," you may have imbibed the impression that Lawrence is a good-

for-nothing fellow, always putting himself in the way disagreeably, or treading upon his neighbor's corns; if so, I wish I might be able to disabuse you of any such injustice. Lawrence is a hard-working, money-loving, mind-your-own-business sort of person; who, if it would not pay a good profit, probably would not take the time or trouble to look at or travel into his nearest neighbor's inhospitable domain. Through the most of this month, there has been more quiet and freedom from annoyance, than for many a week previous. Elections were over; the Free-State people had shown themselves three to one, and the question *seemed* to be at rest. But it was a mere *seeming*, a lull before a storm. There is not, there has not been, a single cabin *safe* from outrage *anywhere* in the territory for the two past weeks. Without the slightest provocation, men are cut down, leaving families in lone places without any protection; our cattle are taken; teams of freight stopped on the public way, and all the merchandize handled over, to see what it contains. Ammunition withdrawn, and then the luckless wagoner sent on his way. Market-men, too,

coming to bring us apples, and potatoes, and flour, are forbidden to proceed. Gentlemen whom I know and honor, some of them simply visitors, riding in their own carriages up from Kansas City, find their horses' heads seized, while beastly, half-drunk Missourians demand their business, and a *pledge* that they will not tell Lawrence people how near armed men are camping around them.

It gives me pleasure to be able to affirm that I have known of no outrage exciting to this on the part of these poor, hard-struggling immigrants. I can but believe it to be wholly the result of bitter opposition to Eastern people, having the prospective chance of a fee-simple in the fair and beautiful hills and plains of Kansas. I see and believe that this feeling has been strong enough to lead Missouri to put forth her mean and treacherous hand, with the will to tear up by the roots every settlement where the southern mark is not stamped upon its inhabitants. O, men of Congress! where is the use of your assembling together, if not for the good of those who are in need of your aid?

Last night a strong and noble specimen of

a man passed close by our cabin on his watch. I heard his cheerful voice, and the slow tramp of his horse, as though he did not wish to disturb our sleep, but only to assure us of safety. To-day, while off of duty, he is cut down as a butcher would an ox. Long before this reaches you, other victims will sleep their last sleep. Our houses are no protection. There is hardly a cabin which a strong man could not tear down.

Let me add, as a relief to myself, that I am proud of Kansas and Kansas men and women. They live in cabins; wear shabby clothes, and rusty boots; their whole appearance offends my intuitive love for whatsoever is beautiful, orderly, and graceful; but the energy, courage, good judgment, and noble magnanimity shown in these nights and days of danger, sweep away all antecedents. I see them in the majesty and power of a true and noble manhood.

H. A. R.

LAWRENCE, K. T., 8TH DEC., 1855.

MY DEAR MR. M.,—You are very kind to write to me twice without hearing from me between-whiles. I think I must have given quite a hapless picture of our condition to excite so much commiseration. But I made up my mind, when I left home, to give the "outs" of Kansas life, for I felt quite sure we had never heard them.

I am glad to be again able to write to you, and that my "old cheerful way" has come back with the putting on of my usual strength; and also, that I still have a fund of cheerful words for those who need them so much.

A— has been the sickest patient, with one exception, I have seen. There seemed, for a week, almost no chance of her recovery; and she is now a long, skinny animal, in whom you would find hard work to recognize the round-faced, romping little girl who was so long your pupil; but there is now everything to give us hope that she will recover.

E— is suffering from the badly-cooked food and awful accommodations of last winter;

added to which he has been for months a nurse and watchman for the sick, and finds himself listless and easily tired out.

The cabin is papered with many thicknesses of newspapers; glass has taken the place of cloth, for windows; and the cotton door has given place to one made of walnut. It is a funny looking place; and I wish, as a matter of mere curiosity, aside from the desire to see you, you could all look in and call as of old.

So much for us, personally; which I am sure it has been difficult for me to come back to or hunt up, amid all we have to do and plan for.

Long before this reaches you, the note of alarm will have sounded among you, and you will tremble for our safety. We are now a city under martial law. Many men are on guard every night; and the unfinished hotel is the head-quarters of our Commander-in-Chief, Dr. Robinson, where he and his aids, with an armed force, sleep, and have done so for more than a week. Our friend General Pomeroy is a prisoner of war in the camp, six miles east of us. As soon as this was known, martial law was instituted. Now it

will be known who comes and goes. So far, everything has been done to defend the town; but not to provoke blood-shed. General Robinson grows with our needs; and there is as fine a set of men now assembled as council of war, in the rude hotel, as could probably be gathered in any state in the Union. Young men of education, who, had they remained in old towns and cities, would have passed through life as agreeable, refined, literary men, of middle rank in some profession—transplanted here—stripped of all the appointments of effeminacy—pushed to exertion, with the penalty of starvation affixed—driven, by Missourians, to stand up tall, or be run down—to fire, or be shot—how can they help putting forth new powers? There is still another class here—men of the wisdom which comes even to the stupid, with age—whom the turning of the wheel of fortune has left *poor*. They renew life in this new state of things. Ministers of the gospel, even, are in the ranks to-day, at the drill. Gray hairs float in the breeze over furrowed brows, mounted on horses that show they have come a long journey from farther up the country. L. brought

home one with him, to partake of our cabin fare, who came here from New Jersey, and now lives at Leavenworth. Perhaps I may as well add, for the amusement of your girls, that they took refreshment from a walnut board, made into a cross-legged table, pushed, for want of room, half way under the shelf where I keep my dishes. The tea was from Mr. Kendall's store at home, which the gentleman pronounced the best he had tasted in the territory, and gave me the better proof by handing his cup many times to be filled. In the midst of all this, I ask L. if there is danger of famine. He replies, with his merry laugh, "One hundred bushels of corn were ground last night." One man, who fastens his horse at our stand, told me he should have four thousand bushels of corn from his claim. So you can see that we can stand something of a seige.

To-day, Gov. Shannon and Gen. Robinson are trying to make peace on some satisfactory terms to all parties. I am no politician, do not understand the ground of our offence, and cannot give you properly the results.

Tell D. the "shake-down" provided for him has rarely been vacant at all.

H. A. R.

LAWRENCE, K. T., 5TH FEB., 1856.

MY DEAR MRS. M.,—I always like to think there is a time for all things which we ought to do, or that it is our lawful pleasure to do; so, very many times in the autumn, after your very kind note, I said to myself, "the day or hour to give to Mrs. M. must be hereabouts." But the close-crowding of things to be done for some one, made it quite impossible for me to give aught to you and very many other friends, except long periods of thought, while watching in silence over the sick, or going through the routine of cabin house-keeping.

Our cabin is fifteen feet square, with a nice room over it. Our common clothing hangs over the walls, around the corners appropriated to our beds. Opposite these opens the door, at the right side of which are shelves of black walnut, very roughly put up, for dishes, and a table of the same beautiful wood. On the left side are arranged the materials for cooking; while pendant from the beams overhead, hang, in curious proximity, venison, beef, the potato-basket, bags for beans, nice dried-

apple, and patches, together with work-baskets.

The earth, everywhere where the turf is off, is the blackest and richest of garden-loam. When moistened by rain or heavy dew, it becomes like ink and flower. This, applied with many feet to the cotton boards, creates a decidedly brown color, which no person, after a week's experience, would ever attempt to remove with any other implement than a broom.

For a new country, this is surprisingly well provided with a variety of food. We get very fine, large apples in the fall, for a dollar a bushel; sweet potatoes, for a quarter more. These things are brought fifty miles, over deep ravines which would quite frighten you to look into.

The west portion of Missouri is mostly inhabited with a partially civilized race, fifty years behind you in all manner of improvements. In November a wagon load of thirty bushels of apples, none of which would measure less than a pint bowl, and one of which could hardly be stowed in a pie, were sold in this market at the price just mentioned.

They were a red-striped apple, somewhat like the "Baldwin" in appearance. The taste of all this fruit is peculiar; and though they vary in color, size and value, this flavor in a degree pervades them all. Another noticeable fact is their total freedom from worms. Much of this fruit is raised by the Indians of this Territory. The hard-working immigrants have, even during this first summer of their new life, raised an abundance of potatoes, squashes, pumpkins, tomatoes, together with a large amount of corn. We bought for our cow, pumpkins for nine shillings a hundred. Some of these things grow to an immense size. Squashes weighing from a hundred to a hundred and fifty pounds. A—says, one she saw at the hotel was large enough for a cradle. Corn-meal has sold at the same price of apples. It is very much nicer than any I ever saw before—sweet, delicate, as white as rice. A hot corn-cake never leaves a crumb to tell of its existence. The meats of the country are cheap, compared with Eastern prices. Flour is high, and never of the best quality. Butter poor, and thirty cents a pound. Milk, ten cents a quart, two thirds of the year.

Every advantage is taken of the necessities of new comers.

You will perceive that I have taken you back to the months of Autumn, the date and subject of your letter. Half the time, too, (and I am sure you will excuse it) it has seemed as I write, as though I was talking to your father, whose love for moral and political economy, in connection with every portion of his country, seems to reach and animate me.

You will hear, by other ways, of the necessary guard about our ill-fated little town. All that serves us now is the severity of cold winter weather and the deep snow, still dropping steadily; as though, in the absence of all pity in Congress, and all help from good men in the States, it would cover us securely with its shroud-like mantle.

How kind it is of you, to remember so constantly one whose life is almost too broken to come in the range of what you see and hear.

H. A. R.

ELM HALL, BROOKLINE, May 29, 1856.

To J. M. W. Esq.,

*Independence, Mo.*

*My Dear Sir,*—I have not forgotten the promise I made, to send you a paper from Boston, as a token of our safe arrival home. I suppose an apology will seem to you very much in want of another to cover it, when I say,—all the papers I read contained some items of intelligence about your State which it did not seem courteous for me to place upon your table.

Could I have given them to you personally, I dare say we should have talked the contents over as kindly and rationally as we did the same subject during those long, quiet, sunny days when together we “steamed” down your beautifully wide and grand old river.

Our party of returning emigrants had just come out from under the weight of evil foreboding, which rested alike upon everybody in Kansas. We gave ourselves up to the beauty of river-journeying and the pleasant

(220)

IN KANSAS.

221

society of your excursion-party of Missourians.

Almost always, in looking back, we discover more to mourn over than to rejoice in. Our self-gratulation is at the escapes we make from wrong, rather than the positive good we do. But this journey along the turbid waters of the Missouri, and subsequently in the cars to Indianapolis, the kindness we received, the good feeling expressed by you and most certainly felt by us, keep that week of adventure pleasantly green and fresh in my memory.

It was a phase of Missouri character quite unlike the brutal specimens we had seen and lived in constant fear of for a long winter, and compelled me almost into the belief that I had awakened from the horrors of the nightmare. And had there been no new outrage to remind us of what we had suffered from our cruel neighbors, that source of suffering would in time have been wholly forgotten, or remembered only as the result of misapprehension on the part of your people.

I am sorry now that I did not write to you immediately after my return home. I should have had so many pleasant things to say. My

19\*

faith in the race was quickened into new life by our friendly conversations. I now remember them sadly, as numbered with many other states of the strongest trust in man, — passed away to return no more.

Now, I wish to remind you of graphic descriptions given by different members of our party, of Kansas. Let me take you by the hand and go with you to the thrifty little town of Lawrence. Dear little village of cabins! a petted "Benjamin" to those of us who are no longer young. Stand outside my cabin, and look with me and listen. The sun sinks down with a train of glory never surpassed in any country. Many cabins nestle close to the ground before you, and hundreds of people trace their way to their own, busy with their own thoughts, plans and purposes for the future.

The laborer places away his hod, his trowel and his hammer. He sings as he plods along, for his work is done and his supper is ready. How still the place is, broken now only by the distant tinkle of the cow-bell. Night unfolds her tent-like curtain of darkness. Listen! "while he, the man of prayer, commends

to God the weary here;" across the stillness floats his voice, subdued with reverence, and earnest with thanksgiving and supplication. He asks that "those who wait to shed innocent blood may be forgiven, and that the hearts of unfeeling strangers may be turned towards us." He gives thanks for returning Spring. We return to our poor cabins full of peace.

—The last month of spring is come. Hope springs anew in hearts almost broken. The hotel is finished. Strangers now have a home in good earnest, for there never was a more hospitable landlord than Mr. Eldridge. Take heart, little city of immigrants, "for the time for the singing of birds is come," and you are not destroyed.—The last week of spring is here, and where, alas! is the little defenceless town?

What a boiling, surging chaldron your Missouri must be, to pour over a scum of robbers and assassins so often into a neighboring territory! Surely, after such a clarifying, there ought to remain an element clear, strong, and powerful, to work righteousness, justice, and mercy. If there is any such element, it seems

to be hid and useless; else it would come to our rescue.

Stretching along the north side of Lawrence, sweeps the Kansas River, making an impassible barrier between us and our friends, the Delaware Indians. Our southern limit is walled in by Mount Oread; upon the top of which stretches a dark line of Missourians. On the same highland is the house of Gov. Robinson; and midway from its base stands the unfinished church. East and west you will see a still more fearful army of armed men. Sweeping across the prairies, too, are groups of horsemen. Fastened in the town are tents of United States troops. All this parade is against us! incredible as it seems. What we have done, to be thus proscribed by Missouri, and, worse than all, unheeded by our President, it will certainly take the crooked head of a statesman to unravel. I willingly leave it to you lawyers. We, who suffer from this protracted apprehension, know very well what the sensation is. History will take account of the facts, in this unparalleled confusion of *right* and *wrong*. History will immortalize the brave and true men who had the courage to give

up their arms and surrender, when successful resistance to outrage was no longer possible. But only the "Recording Angel" keeps a truthful reckoning of the pitiful cry from the hopeless, despairing women, and frightened, bewildered children.

Sheriffs Jones and Donaldson ate of our bread and drank of our cup, and then, Judas-like, straightway went forth to destroy us.

The brave boy, who stood by us and gave them welcome, now sees, for the second time, his cabin destroyed by your people. God only knows if his life is spared. His last words to me were: "Mother, go back to Boston; I never knew how to value the laws of old Massachusetts till I came out here. Never you fear for me, mother; I must stand in my lot. Shouldn't you be ashamed of me if I went away?" And the answer was, "YES, MY SON."

Now I perceive more fully the rare wisdom of this boy-man.

On the 22d of May, your mob closed in around our little town. Spider-like, they wove their web of destruction.

For two weeks, the most intense anxiety

and fear have worn out the strength and hearts of our people. After midnight, when, if ever, the weary watcher falls asleep, there is a startling, wolflike whoop, penetrating every soul of man, woman or child, and they spring to their feet. Day has not yet dawned; but through the dim light preceding morning, may be seen the approaching army of madmen. Some little show of order is preserved, while a few more sham arrests are made—thus to secure all the leading men of the town. This done, all houses are broken into; everything of value stolen; all left behind, unsuitable to move, broken up. The next step was to assemble in Massachusetts Street, front of the hotel, with cannon. On the opposite side of the street stood a cabin, occupied by Mr. Brown, editor of the "Herald of Freedom;" and in the rear of the cabin, a fine stone building, three stories high, built, under great difficulty, and just finished, for a printing office. Close at the side of the hotel stood another cabin, occupied by Mrs. Wood, a beautiful young woman, wife of D. N. Wood, who is a prisoner. A printing office joined this cabin. In the centre of these proscribed

buildings were placed the cannon, and charge followed charge upon the strong stone hotel. The sturdy walls looked coolly at the fuss and noise, but did not move nor tremble. Now platoons fired at the windows of it. The sheriff refused any time, or aid, to remove women or children. This hotel had been built as a pleasant home for strangers; and also as a place of safety to all of us in the time of danger. But now, in the utmost terror, these people flee from it, and from the sheriff and his posse. Along the banks of the river they run wildly, creeping into deep ravines to hide from the fury of the drunken men.

Dear little children—God help them! What compensation can life ever give to atone for this page of awful reality?

My dear sir, you have but to imagine your *own wife* and *beautiful boy* among these exiles, to give force to the picture, and stir aright your sympathy. This wrong cries aloud—by blood, rapine, and robbery—to just Heaven for redress. In my humble opinion there is no page of history so revolting as this; and the wounds are doubly bitter because they come from a *SISTER STATE*.

After placing powder in the cellar, the hotel surrendered. The printing presses were laid to rest in the river; and at last the post office gave up its honored credentials of office to those hired assassins of that most *unmitigated calamity* Heaven ever suffered upon the earth —FRANKLIN PIERCE.

We who have escaped alive are in painful uncertainty of the small notes in this sad history. Some of us have risked our all in that territory, and LOST ALL. Our sons, if living, may now be hungry and naked; yet we have no power to reach and succor them.

The walls of this pleasant chamber have seemed like a prison, as, in the hours when others sleep, I walk up and down it; while every thought and affection overleaps your truly dreadful State, to stoop, in tearful sympathy, over the forsaken, dying Lawrence.

I open the blinds, and look forth for the early morning, "when the day begins to dawn;" but my thoughts will not come home. I now remember, and enter into the states of those women of old, who stood at the cross and the sepulchre weeping, and to whom was given the voice of hope and consolation, in

these words: "He is not here, but risen!"

Thought goes back a page farther in the old history, when two women wept over the grave of their only brother, and Jesus, standing by, "wept" also. He did not give us the example of expending all his sympathy in tears; no! "With a loud voice he said, 'Lazarus, come forth!'"

Lawrence is dead! but as surely as there is justice in Heaven, this death by violence, wholly unprovoked, will be avenged. As surely as there are disciples of Jesus still doing his work on the earth, so surely shall this martyrdom become the seed of a true church, to lighten the heathen world about it.

Lawrence shall hear the words, spoken by the up-rising better nature of man, saying, "come forth!" and the glory of the newly-built city shall far surpass the degradation of its present ruin.

I do not ask you to excuse the sorry words dropping from my pen. I hold you still by the hand, and, as your superior in years, demand your rational attention. You are young, earnest, and honest. I believe you truly desire to do what is right.

Lawrence is dead! toll the bells all over your State, for the skirts of your garments are dripping with blood. This is *murder*, deliberately planned, and coolly carried out. Which of you did it? You are a citizen of Missouri. Call your people together, and charge the deed where it belongs. There is restitution to be made.

As a State, pray try the experiment for once, of high minded magnanimity. If there is anywhere within your precincts a record of Jewish Laws, originally written upon "two tables of stone," and, by common consent, called "The Ten Commandments"—if the words of Jesus, "a new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another," are to be found within your territory—take them before your "wise men," for action. Your people have outraged society by the crimes of murder, arson, and robbery. No power of yours can give us back the slain! Our great Master gives us the prayer to meet your case, and we will use it always when we remember you: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The houses you have burnt you can rebuild;

and the goods you have stolen, you can restore. You as a State, are rich and strong; we were poor and weak, and from us you have taken the little that we had. We went to Kansas to make homes; and violated no law by so doing. We do not intend to give up the plan of remaining; and when you are better acquainted with us proscribed Yankees, your animosity will have passed away. Hoping that you will be able and willing to redeem your name from dishonor among the States, I remain yours very truly,

H. A. R.