

## XII.

### SPEECH TO THE MASSACHUSETTS LEGISLATURE.

**J**OHN BROWN arrived in Boston in January, 1857. At that period there was an effort made, by the friends of freedom in the Commonwealth, to induce the legislature of Massachusetts to vote an appropriation of ten thousand dollars, for the purpose of protecting the interests of the North, and the rights of her citizens in Kansas, if the Territory should be again invaded by organized marauders from the Southern States.

A Joint Committee was appointed by the General Court to consider the petitions in favor of a State appropriation. It held its sittings publicly. Eminent champions of freedom in Massachusetts, and men who had distinguished themselves during the conflict in Kansas, were invited to address the Committee. Among the Kansas men was Captain John Brown, who, on the 18th of February, appeared at the capitol to make a statement of his views.

The writer was present at this sitting, and reported the old man's speech.

Captain Brown, as he stepped forward, was received

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with applause. He said he intended to speak exclusively of matters of which he was personally cognizant; and, therefore, the committee must excuse him if he should refer more particularly to himself and family than he otherwise would do.

He then read the following statement in a clear, ringing tone:

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"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 travelled, 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, by 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.\*

\* By a federal office-holder, who was *afterwards* promoted to a more lucrative post.

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"I, with six sons and a son-in-law, was called out, and travelled, most of the way on 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 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 a burning sun, by federal troops, to a distant prison, on a charge of treason. The cruelties he there endured, added to

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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:

"At Black Jack, the invading Missourians wounded three free state men, one of them my son-in-law; and, a few days afterwards, one of my sons was so wounded that he will be a cripple for life.

"In August, I was present and saw the mangled and disfigured body of the murdered Hoyt, of Deerfield, Massachusetts, brought into our camp. I knew him well.

"I saw the ruins of many free state men's houses in different parts of the Territory, together with grain in the stack, burning, and wasted in other ways, to the amount, at least, of fifty thousand dollars.

"I saw several other free state men, besides those I have named, during the summer, who were badly wounded by the invaders of the Territory.

"I know that for much of the time during the summer, the travel over portions of the Territory was entirely cut off, and that none but bodies of armed men dared to move at all.

"I know that for a considerable time the mails on different routes were entirely stopped; and notwithstanding there were abundant troops in the Territory to escort the mails, I know that such escorts were not furnished, as they ought to have been.

"I saw while it was standing, and afterwards saw

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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 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-Cygnos, 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.

"Deserted houses and cornfields were to be found in almost every direction south of the Kansas River.

"I have not yet told all I saw in Kansas.

"I once saw three mangled bodies, two of which were dead, and one alive, but with twenty bullet and buck shot holes in him, after the two murdered men had lain on the ground, to be worked at by flies, for some eighteen hours. One of these young men was *my own son.*"

The stern old man faltered. He struggled long to suppress all exhibition of his feelings; and soon, but with a subdued, and in a faltering tone, continued:

"I saw Mr. Parker, whom I well know, all bruised about the head, and with his throat partly cut, after he had been dragged, sick, from the house of Ottawa

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Jones, and thrown over the bank of the Ottawa Creek for dead.

"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 before named, and his wife.

"I saw Dr. Graham, of Prairie City, who was a prisoner with the ruffians on the 2d of June, and was present when they wounded him, in an attempt to kill him, as he was trying to save himself from being murdered by them during the fight at Black Jack.

"I know that numerous other persons, whose names I cannot now remember, suffered like hardships and exposures to those I have mentioned.

"I know well that on or about the 14th of September, 1856, a large force of Missourians and other ruffians, said by Governor Geary to be twenty-seven hundred in number, invaded the Territory, burned Franklin, and, while the smoke of that place was going up behind them, they, on the same day, made their appearance in full view of, and within about a mile of Lawrence; and I know of no reason why they did not attack that place, except that about one hundred free state men volunteered to go out, and did go out on the open plain before the town, and give them the offer of a fight; which, after getting scattering shots from our men, they declined, and retreated back towards Franklin. I saw that whole thing. The government troops, at this time, were at Lecompton, a distance of twelve

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miles only from Lawrence, with Governor Geary; and yet, notwithstanding runners had been despatched to advise him, in good time, of the approach and setting out of the enemy, (who had to march some forty miles to reach Lawrence,) he did not, on that memorable occasion, get a single soldier on the ground until after the enemy had retreated to Franklin, and been gone for more than five hours. This is the way he saved Lawrence. (Laughter.) And it is just the kind of protection the free state men have received from the Administration from the first."

These things the old man saw in Kansas.

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 made 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 — Captain Brown, I wish to ask you regarding Buford's men.\* Did you ever mingle with them? And if so, what did you see or hear?

CAPTAIN BROWN replied, that he saw a great deal of

\* Colonel Buford was the leader of several companies of Georgia and Alabama bandits, who came to Kansas, in the spring of 1860, with the avowed intention of expelling or exterminating the emigrants from the North.

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them at first; that they spoke without hesitation before him, because he employed himself as a surveyor; and, as nearly all the surveyors were pro-slavery men, they probably thought he was "sound on the goose."\* They told him all their plans; what they intended to do; how they were determined to drive off the free state men, and possess themselves of the Territory, and make it a Slave State at all hazards: cost what it might. They said that the Yankees could not be whipped, coaxed, nor driven into a fight, and that one pro-slavery man could whip a dozen abolitionists. They said that Kansas must be a Slave State to save Missouri from abolition; that both must stand or fall together. They did not hesitate to threaten that they would burn, kill, scalp, and drive out the entire free state population of the Territory, if it was necessary to do so to accomplish their object.

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.

"We want," he said, "good men, industrious men,

\* Western phrase: equivalent to, a reliable friend of slavery.

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men who respect themselves; who act only from the dictates of conscience; *men who fear God too much to fear any thing human.*"

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?

CAPTAIN BROWN—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."

Book Third.

THE SWORD OF GIDEON.

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