

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### AN APPEAL TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

Two years have passed since the territory of Kansas was thrown open to settlement. Under the Squatter Sovereignty bill, expecting to be protected, settlers came from the far East and North, as well as from the more Southern and Western States. They had a right to look for such protection to the President of these United States in the very provisions of that bill. How have they been protected? Let his infamous appointees in the territory — the vile tools of tyranny — answer to an enlightened public sentiment. Let freemen, imprisoned for months on the prairie, under the burning sun, and amid drenching rains, for no crime but the innate love of freedom, tell the tale. Let the booming cannon battering down hotels, and printing-presses thrown into the Kansas river, tell afar the bloody despotism that rules our land. Let the bristling bayonets of the United States army tell how the free settlers have been outraged and plundered, while ruffian bands have been protected by it, under Gov. Shannon's orders. Let the loud moan of lone men, murdered by these hordes of the administration, and the bitter wail of desolate homes, borne on every gale, tell to the world the blackness of the demon Slavery, and the unmitigated villany of those who have aided, abetted, and connived at all these atrocities — those who have brought disgrace upon our country's name, and clothed their own in darkness so dense, that no after acts of a lifetime can erase the stains of blood and guilt. While the ghost-like forms of their murdered victims flit around their nightly pillows, and the cry, "O, God! I am murdered!" comes to them on every morning breeze, and the low plaint of the insane widow, as she starts and listens at every footstep, saying,

"Is it my husband?" as he comes never more, "O, my soul, come not thou into their secrets!"

The appointees of the President in this territory, both judicial and executive, have, with two or three exceptions, in every possible way aided these invasions of the territory, the mobs, the murders, the downfall of freedom by fire and sword. When Gov. Reeder acted out his manliness, and refused to be a tool to carry out the nefarious plans of the administration, he was dismissed on a charge so false that even the vile minions of slavery denounced the President.

This dismissal did not come, however, until the President had urged Gov. Reeder to resign, promising him an appointment upon a foreign mission. Then a new governor was appointed. He declined the appointment. Then another was found mean enough to accept the appointment, after a dismissal of the former governor under such circumstances, and the refusal to accept of the second appointee. And well has he fulfilled the promise of meanness, heartlessness, and perfect servility to the great Moloch of Slavery, an acceptance, at such a time, warranted us to expect. He made a league with our enemies before he set foot in the territory. He brought them against Lawrence, in December, 1855, by a tissue of lies. He made a treaty with his own people, when he found his fiat was not sufficient to annihilate them. When he feared his own life was in danger, he gave the people of Lawrence a right to protect themselves, and him. In May a new horde of blood was brought against Lawrence. The protection of this instrument of the slave power was implored again and again; but the last conference was closed by his demand of the guns being given up, because one hundred South Carolinians, just arrived in the territory, would not be satisfied without, and the hotel must be destroyed for the same laudable reason. Magnanimous governor! What laurels will crown his brow, as his name goes down to posterity; and how the closing remark of that conference will add lustre to them!

This brave champion for slavery has dared to tell lone women on the Kansas prairies he would "cut their d—d hearts out!" He has given passes to a few men travelling in the territory, show-

ing his connection with the murders and outrages daily committed. He has at all times, when outrages have been committed by his accomplices, and he feared the just wrath of the people, protected them by United States troops. He has, when fearing an attack upon Lecompton, been seen entering the scow to cross the river to save himself, and, under the protection of Major Sedgwick, has made his second visit to the people of Lawrence, and made another treaty with them. He has asked for an escort to get him out of the country. But the President, at last, seeing the Democratic party in danger, has numbered the days of the governor. Let "de mortuis nisi bonum" be our motto. Judge Lecompte was particularly qualified to be the chief justice in Kansas, by his want of legal knowledge, and lack of intellectual ability. His particular forte in packing juries, and instructing grand jurors to indict freedom-loving citizens for high treason, as well as hotels and printing-presses as nuisances, has probably fulfilled the President's expectations in regard to him, as well as made him a worthy fellow-worker with the decapitated governor. Another of the judges declared that he would leave the bench to assist in arresting persons who said they would pay no regard to the territorial laws. Such has been the partisan character of all these appointees.

When Congress was memorialized as to these grievances of the people, and a plain statement was laid before the President of the invasion of March thirtieth, he signified his alliance with the ruffians by removing Gov. Reeder. During the siege of Lawrence, in which Gov. Shannon had for his counsellors men from Westport and Independence, when Clark, the Indian agent, in a most wanton manner, murdered an unarmed man, Judges Lecompte, Elmore, Johnson, Cato, and Burrill, being of the same party, as they left Lecompton, on their way to head-quarters on the Wakarusa, the President was silent. He offered no protection to the people of Lawrence. He has done nothing since towards the removal of the murderer. When, however, a new invasion being in preparation, word was sent to him, he suddenly found that some things in Kansas required his interposition. His special message was crowded upon the House, and his proclamation soon followed. Did he speak of the murder by his official? Not one word. Did he

reprove the governor — the very man after his own heart in guilty weakness — for his unparalleled course of oppression? O, no! He told the peaceable settlers in Kansas, who had asked his protection, that he would “enforce the laws” of the Legislature, elected by Missourians, “with the army and navy of the United States.” He, moreover, intimated very strongly that treason had been or would be committed.

Again and again irruptions were made into the territory. The ballot-boxes were taken by force; and on the seventeenth of January another murder, so terrible in all its barbarities that the mind shudders at the thought, was committed in the territory. The people, oppressed by cold unprecedented, and many of them suffering for the actual wants of life, were harassed hourly by fears of the assassin. Yet the President was dumb. Spring came, and earth and sky rejoiced with mutual gladness in the balmy airs and up-springing verdure. Business revived, and the people hoped in some measure to retrieve their losses of the last fall's invasion; but the demon Slavery was yet insatiate. Armed bands from Missouri, South Carolina, and Alabama, poured into the territory. They openly proclaimed they came to “fight and to vote, and would return to their homes.” These things were known to the country. Was the President one of those who, “having eyes, see not, and ears, hear not”? They came, and were enrolled as the militia of the territory — men so degraded, so debauched, that one of their officers in camp said “they never had had so good a home as that before.” They were the proper instruments to do the work desired by the administration — sacking towns, robbing and murdering innocent people; and this they did under the orders of the United States Marshal. The way, they thought, was open for a general extermination of free-state people, because, by the orders of Judge Lecompte, a few of the leaders had been thrown into prison, and others driven off.

Lawrence was destroyed. Osawattomie was sacked. Guerilla bands blockaded the highways, and murdered peaceable citizens. Did the President do anything? When by a word he could have given Kansas the long-sought-for peace, he said it not.

The White House rose between him and the suffering dwellers in Kansas. He had been struck with official blindness, and saw not how, when he had been their willing agent, their pliant tool the southern party would cast him off as a worthless thing. He had gone too low; he had crouched too humbly; he could not be trusted. So they gave him a complimentary vote when he came before that Cincinnati Convention, in the words of a Massachusetts senator, “with the lurid light of the sacked and burning dwellings of Kansas flashing on his brazen brow, and with the blood of the people of Kansas dripping from his hands.” When our people attempted to right their wrongs by assembling to memorialize Congress, an armed body of United States troops rushed in upon them, and commanded their dispersion. This act, on the Fourth of July, 1856, makes the third act of this kind chronicled in history. While such things are being sanctioned in Kansas, the Missouri river is infested by pirates, and closed to peaceable citizens. The President still looks on unmoved, and permits outrages which long ago would have been made the pretext for a bloody war, had one tenth part of the wrongs been committed by a foreign power.

We have fallen upon the evil times, in our country's history, when it is treason to think, to speak a word against the evil of slavery, or in favor of free labor. In Kansas, prisons or instant death by barbarians are the reward; and in the Senate, wielders of bludgeons are honored by the state which has sent ruffians to desolate Kansas. But in this reign of misrule the President and his advisers have failed to note the true effect of such oppression. The fires of liberty have been rekindled in the hearts of our people, and burn in yet brighter flame under midnight skies illumined by their own burning dwellings. The sight of lawless, ruthless invaders, acting under the United States government, has filled them with that “deep, dark, sullen, teeth-clenched silence, bespeaking their hatred of tyranny, which armed a William Tell and Charlotte Corday.” The best, the boldest utterance of man's spirit for freedom will not be withheld. The administration, with the most insane malignity, has prepared the way for a - vil war, and the extermination of freemen in Kansas. Wit-

untiring malice, it has endeavored to effect this by the aid of a corrupt judiciary, packed juries, and reckless officials. In violation of the Constitution of the United States, no regard was paid to the sacred rights of freemen in their persons and property. Against the known sentiment and conviction of half the nation these deeds of infamy have been plotted, and have been diligently carried on. That a people are down-trodden is not evidence that they are subdued. The crushed energies are gathering strength; and, like a strong man resting from the heats and toils of the day, the people of Kansas will arise to do battle for liberty; and, when their mighty shouts for freedom shall ascend over her hills and prairies, slavery will shrink back abashed. Life, without liberty, is valueless, and there are times which demand the noble sacrifice of life. The people of Kansas are in the midst of such times; and amid discomfiture and defeat men will be found who for the right will stand with sterner purpose and bolder front. Kansas will never be surrendered to the slave power. God has willed it! Lawrence, the city where the plunderer feasted at the hospitable table, and, Judas-like, went out to betray it, will come forth from its early burial clothed with yet more exceeding beauty. Out of its charred and blood-stained ruins, where the flag of rapine floated, will spring the high walls and strong parapets of freedom. The sad tragedies in Kansas will be avenged, when freedom of speech, of the press, and of the person, are made sure by the downfall of those now in power, and when the song of the reaper is heard again over our prairies, and, instead of the clashing of arms, we see the gleam of the ploughshare in her peaceful valleys. Men of the North, shall the brave hearts in Kansas struggle alone?