



right arms. When we got there we found the dead and the wounded. When you left you bore the character of gentlemen, when you arrived at Harper's Ferry, then you bore not only the character of gentlemen, but the character of soldiers. Though you were not called upon to pull a trigger, you preserved order, composure, drill, and discipline, in the midst of the highest excitement I have ever witnessed.

Let me also thank the corps who left this city, the next morning, and their commander, Col. August. All, all were on the way as prompt as preparation could be made, and steam carry them. We met many on the way, and let me pay an eulogium to Capt. Marge of the Alexandria Rifles, who, with the accession of his corps, enabled me to proceed with 91 Virginia soldiers to Harper's Ferry.

I was compelled, at the Relay House, to order the return of the companies which followed me. There were enough without them. The volunteers of Jefferson, and of Berkeley were there. The farmers were there with their long guns and rifles. The people were there with arms and without arms. They expected to get some there, but to the disgrace—not of Virginia—but of somebody who is responsible, fourteen white ruffians and five negroes had taken the Armory—the Thermopylae of Harper's Ferry—at night, where thousands of muskets were kept. The Governor then briefly recapitulated the particulars of the surprise and capture of the place; mentioned the seizure of 1,000 spears, and referred to the disappointment of the invaders in not finding the negroes ready and willing to arm themselves with those weapons. They carried off a few slaves, but one negro escaped from them, and was drowned in an attempt to get back to his master. The fanatic, the "Border Ruffian," the "Chief of Kansas," who had been denouncing the people of Missouri as "Border Ruffians," is now a prisoner of treason. He made a great mistake as to the disposition of the slaves. The Abolitionists cannot comprehend that they are held among us by a patriarchal tenure.

After a brief allusion to the outlaw, Cooke, and the unguarded condition of Harper's Ferry, the Governor said: There ought to be a guard kept there, and as the General Government has not provided one, either military or civil, I, as Governor, proclaim to you that I have put a guard there. I have put Capt. Brown's own Sharpe's rifles into the hands of the people [laughter and applause], and I will not stop until I send an ample supply of Virginia muskets, with flint, percussion, or some sort of a lock, to secure the proper defense of the place. [Cheers.] He would have given his right arm if our Virginia boys had been there to take the ruffians who surprised the town. He was ready to weep when he heard that their force consisted of only twelve men, and that they had taken the town in ten minutes. There was no cowardice in that part of the people there, because their unguarded citizens were prisoners. They loved Washington, they loved Alstead, they loved the operatives who were prisoners. But he (Gov. W.) told them that they had made a mistake; and that if Gen. Washington had been a prisoner, and his life imperiled by an attack, he (the Gov.) would have risked his own, and other lives as well, in making that attack without delay. [This is the spirit, and not the exact language, of the Governor's remarks.]

The Governor then proceeded to speak of "Captain Brown," awarding to him credit for bravery, fortitude, and humanity toward his prisoners. He dwelt, with an appropriate and climax, on the fact that Brown had armed himself with a sword which Frederick the Great had sent to Gen. George Washington! The sword belonged to Mr. Lewis Washington, one of Brown's prisoners. He said that he had a bushel of Brown's correspondence—not all of it. A carpet bag full was taken to Baltimore by the troops of that city, and manused (by publication). The letters in his possession proved that prominent men at the North were implicated in the affair. Whether our sister States of the North will allow such men to remain among them unrebuked or expatriated, remains to be seen. If any one should smuggle off Gerrit Smith, some night, and bring him to me, I would read him a moral lecture and then send him back home. The Governor said he remained at Harper's Ferry to prevent anything like "Lynch law" in Virginia. There was no question of jurisdiction to be settled, as he had made up his mind fully, and after determining that the prisoners should be tried in Virginia, he would not have obeyed an order to the contrary from the President of the United States. [Laughter and applause.]

In conclusion, the Governor urged the importance of the organization of the military throughout the State, and the exercise of vigilance to guard against the disgrace of a similar surprise. He thanked the soldiers and citizens for the compliment they had paid him, and declared that he had done nothing but his duty in repairing to Harper's Ferry.