

The Sacking of Lawrence.

A little before sunrise on Wednesday morning, May 21st, a body of men armed with U. S. muskets and cannon, appeared upon the hill about three-fourths of a mile southeast from the town of Lawrence. Additional forces continued to arrive for several hours from the direction of Leocompton, and also from Franklin. Between eight and nine o'clock, part of the troops moved down to the north, by Gov. Robinson's house, to a hill immediately overlooking the town. About eleven o'clock, U. S. Deputy Marshal W. P. Fain (three weeks from Georgia) with a posse of eight men, came into Lawrence. They were respectfully received at the Eldridge House.

The Marshal first summoned several prominent citizens to aid his posse, and then proceeded to arrest Judge Smith and Colonel Deltzler on a charge of high treason. Judge Smith was sitting in the reading room of the hotel, and when informed that the Marshal wanted to see him, he cheerfully went into his room and submitted himself to the arrest. During these proceedings there was no stir or excitement in the town, and not more than twenty or thirty men were about the streets. The Marshal and his posse took dinner at the hotel, after which Col. Eldridge went with his hack, and conveyed the prisoners and a part of the posse to the camp.

The Marshal now dismissed his entire posse, and Sheriff Jones immediately summoned them all. And then commenced the scenes disgraceful to humanity, destruction to Kansas, and the end of which God only knows.

About one o'clock, P. M., Jones rode into town with a posse of twenty-five mounted men, armed with muskets and bayonets. They proceeded to the hotel, and Jones called for General Pomeroy. He came to the door. Jones stated he had several times been resisted in that place—attempts had been made to assassinate him—and he now declared that he was "determined to execute the law if he lost his life." And now, said he, I demand of you, as the most prominent man in the place, the surrender of all the cannon and Sharpe's rifles that you have, and I give you five minutes to decide whether you will give them up—taking out his watch, and noting the time.

The general went up to the committee room, and returned in a few minutes, and replied that the cannon would be given up, but that there were no Sharpe's rifles in the place, except such as were private property, and that those could not be surrendered. Jones seemed to be of opinion that they had rifles which were not private property, and requested him to stack all they had in the street, and said that such as could be proved private property would be returned. By this time the whole posse, variously estimated at from five to eight hundred men, were marching down the hill, and coming into town on the south side.

The cannon (four pieces) were produced and carried through the street. One was a brass six pounder; the others little pop-guns, which a man could comfortably carry on his shoulders. No rifles were delivered up. Jones now told Colonel Eldridge, who occupied the hotel and owned the furniture, that the hotel must be destroyed; that he was acting strictly under orders. The grand jury at Leocompton had declared the hotel and presses at Lawrence a nuisance, and ordered him to destroy them. He would give Colonel Eldridge an opportunity to remove his furniture, and for that purpose he might have until five o'clock. It was then fifteen minutes past three.

Col. Eldridge replied that the furniture could not be removed in less time than half a day, and desired a longer time. Jones refused. Then said Eldridge, give me time to remove my family, that is all I ask. A part of the furniture was afterwards removed by the posse as plunder, but most of it was burned with the house. By this time the "law and order" mob was pouring into the streets, and the residents, men, women and children, sought shelter in the adjoining woods.

The first property destroyed was the press of the Kansas Free State, which was thrown into the river, and everything pertaining to the office, with exchanges, paper, and a large quantity of miscellaneous books, was thrown into the street, mutilated and destroyed. The flag of the lone star ("South Carolina and Southern Rights") was hoisted first upon the house of G. W. Brown, of the Herald of Freedom, and afterwards upon the hotel. Brown's press and everything in the office shared the same fate as the other, and a wagon load of books and papers was trampled in the streets.

Jones promised in the commencement, that no private property should be destroyed. But houses were broken open and rifled of whatever suited the fancy of the mob. Locks, bolts or bars were no security. Windows and doors were broken and destroyed, and money and valuables to a large amount missing. It was currently reported, and uncontradicted, that eight thousand dollars, chiefly in money, was lost from one house.

About five o'clock three cannon were placed in the street, twelve or fifteen rods east of the hotel, and some thirty shots were fired, shattering the wall considerably, but proving altogether too slow a method of destruction for these "law and order" men. They then set fire to the building in different places, and put several kegs of powder under it. The flames and smoke soon burst out at the window, and the whole building was in a blaze. The walls trembled and fell, and the shouts and yells of the mob proclaimed the triumph of law and order in Lawrence. While the hotel was burning, the house of G. W. Brown was twice set on fire. The floor was burned through.

The fire was finally extinguished by some young men of Lawrence. The mob threatened to shoot them, but they were not deterred. If his house had burned, several others must certainly have been destroyed, and there would have been danger of burning nearly half the town. Many of the mob were bent on destroying every house in the place, and speeches were made urging the destruction of the town. Atchison, it is said, advised moderation. Col. Jackson, of Georgia, with many others, were opposed to the burning of the hotel. A tender-hearted man from Missouri, who had come out to exterminate the d—d abolitionists, shed tears at the sight of the destruction of the property of innocent, unoffending men, as he found them to be. The mob began to disperse an hour before sunset, and at sundown most of them had left the town. A few, overcome by excitement, or stupefied by liquor, lay insensible in the street. They were unharmed by the people of Lawrence.

In the evening Governor Robinson's house was set on fire and burned to the ground. And thus ended, for that day, the execution of the "law" in Lawrence.

The women and children of Lawrence slept that night either beneath the friendly sheltering trees along the banks of the Kansas, or huddled together in small houses and cabins in the outskirts of the town.

One man of the posse was killed by the falling of a brick from the hotel.

The report that a free state man was killed at Lawrence on the 21st is, I think, a mistake. I think it has reference to a most cold-blooded murder committed by them on the 19th instant, at Blanton's Bridge, three miles south of Lawrence, where a man named John Jones was shot after he had delivered up his revolver, the man who shot him saying as he did it, "I have shot one God d—d abolitionist, and I'll shoot another." Jones was from Illinois. He died the next night.

From the numbers whom I have seen returning, and from credible information, I am of opinion that there were three men from Missouri to one from the territory engaged in this invasion.

The free state men had made no preparation for defence, and no resistance was attempted. Men from all parts of the territory would have come to assist them but they did not desire it. So long as there was hope in peaceful measures they would resort to no other. I greatly fear that that time is past, and that the scenes of the 21st will prove to be the commencement of a civil war in Kansas.

AN EYE WITNESS.