

# REPLY TO REV. UTTER

BY A SON OF "OLD JOHN BROWN."

Jason Brown Gives From His Own Experience Some Account of the Struggle for Freedom in Kansas.

To the Editor of the HERALD:

In reply to Rev. David N. Utter in the November number of the North American Review, I feel my inability to do the subject anything like justice from memory, and must refer the honest inquirer after truth to "Phillips' Conquest of Kansas" and "Life of Captain John Brown," by James Redpath.

Rev. David N. Utter, in his anxiety to hold up the character of my father as the prince of devils, brings up as entirely new the so-called massacre of five pro-slavery men on the Potawatomie Creek, Kansas, which has been part of the history of Kansas for more than twenty years. He quotes from Redpath's Life of John Brown, but purposely, it appears to me, withholds the principal causes which drove the Free State men of Kansas to armed resistance in defence of their homes and lives. In his zeal to give the readers of history the whole truth, he shut his eyes and entirely ignored more than half of the written history of Kansas concerning my father's career there, and shows a spirit of hatred worthy of his reverend brother Martin White, who shot and killed my brother Frederick before the battle of Osawatomie and afterwards boasted of it. He is evidently a Northern man, pining for "The Lost Cause," and still sighing for property in human flesh and blood. He did not see the paragraph quoted from B. F. Stringfellow's speech, delivered at St. Joseph, Mo., in 1854, a year before any of John Brown's family had moved to Kansas, in which he said: "I tell you to mark every scoundrel among you who is the least tainted with abolitionism or free soilism and exterminate him. Neither give or take quarter from the damned rascals. To those who have qualms of conscience as to violating laws, State or National, say the time has come when such impositions must be disregarded, as your rights and property are in danger. I advise you one and all to enter every election district in Kansas, in defiance of Reeder and his myrmidons, and vote at the point of the bowie knife and revolver. Neither take nor give quarter, as the cause demands it. It is enough that the slaveholding interest wills it, from which there is no appeal."

Mr. Utter said nothing about the murder of Dow, Barber, Johnston, Stuart and R. P. Brown, five Free State men, before the killing of the men on the Potawatomie. He was blind to the story of the barbarous murder of R. P. Brown at Easton. A single quotation from "Phillips' Conquest of Kansas" will show to "the youth of our country" that there is more than one side to be heard from, and enable them to see how the Reverend divine has hidden away a part of the truth in his noble effort to injure the few left living of John Brown's family and to blacken the character and motives of the dead.

"On the 15th of January, 1856, an election was held for State officers and Legislators, under the Topeka Constitution, throughout the Territory. The pro-slavery mayor of Leavenworth forbade an election being held there; but there was one man, a brave hero, R. P. Brown, who determined to resist this tyranny, and on his journey to the polls to a neighboring town, went out there with a few friends to defend the rights of the free men. "The Kickapoo Rangers," a gang of pro-slavery men, marched out there also. A skirmish ensued; they were successfully resisted and driven back, but Captain R. P. Brown, on the following day, on returning home was surrounded by an overwhelming force, and at the earnest entreaty of his companions, although against his own judgment, surrendered under a promise that their persons should be safe. But the moment this was complied with the terms were violated. One young man was knocked down and a ruffian was going to strike him with his hatchet (the Kickapoo Rangers carried hatchets) but was prevented by the captain of the company. The prisoners were taken back to Eaton, but Brown was separated from them and put in an adjoining building. A rope was purchased at the store and was shown to the prisoners with the intimation that they should be hanged with it. It was fiercely discussed for hours what should be done with them, meanwhile liquor was drunk freely, and they who were brutal without anything to make them more so, became ungovernably fierce. Unwilling that all these men should be murdered the captain allowed the other prisoners to escape. One of them hastened to Fort Leavenworth in hopes of getting troops to go and rescue Brown, but it was a vain attempt. Such protection was refused. Then followed a scene of atrocity and horror. Captain Brown had surrendered his arms, and was helpless. His enemies, who dared not to face him the night before, though they had a superior force, now crowded around him. When they began to strike him, he arose to his feet and asked to be permitted to fight any one of them. He challenged them to pit him against their best man; he would fight for his life; but not one of the cowards dared to give the prisoner a chance. Then he volunteered to fight two, and then three, but 'twas in vain. These men, or rather demons, rushed around Brown and literally hacked him to death with their hatchets. One of the Rangers, a large, coarse-looking wretch, named Gibson, inflicted the fatal blow. A large hatchet gash in the side of the head penetrated the skull and brain many inches. The gallant Brown fell, and his remorseless enemies jumped on him while thus prostrated and kicked him. Desperately wounded though he was, he still lived, and as they kicked him, he said: "Don't abuse me; it is useless. I am dying." It was a vain appeal. One of the wretches, since a United States Deputy Marshal, stooped over the prostrate man, and, with a refinement of cruelty exceeding the roughest savage, spit tobacco juice in his eyes. Satiated brutality at last went back to its carousals, and it was then that a few of their number, whom a little spark of conscience or fear of punishment had animated, raised the dying man, still groaning, and, placing him on a wagon, his gaping wounds but poorly sheltered from the bitter cold of that winter's day, drove him to the grocery, where they went through the farce of dressing his wounds, but, seeing the hopelessness of his case, took him home to his wife. The pulse of life was ebbing out. She asked him "what was the matter, and how he came thus." "I have been murdered by a gang of cowards, in cold blood, without any cause," he said, and as the poor wife stooped over the body of her gallant husband, he expired."

No notice was ever taken of these atrocious murders by the powers that were—never once did they interfere to preserve the purity of the ballot-box or the right of free speech. No attempt was ever made to bring these murderers to justice, that we ever heard of. We were all marked, as well as many others, for the bullet and the dagger, and there was no alternative but to fight for our own homes and lives and for others. Up to the time that my father left our camp near Ottawa Creek Mr. Utter's account is measurably true, ac-

ording to the best of my remembrance; but what was done by any one or all of that company after that, I have no personal knowledge, as I was in my brother's company and with Captain Dayton's at Palmyra, twelve miles south of Lawrence. We had been ordered by Colonel Sumner, of the United States cavalry, to disband and return home. We obeyed the order.

It only remains for me to add that from my earliest recollections of my father he was, in all that he said and did, the most conscientious man I ever knew, and I am sure that nothing but the sternest sense of duty could have induced him to cause the death of those men on Potawatomie Creek. I have always had a horror of war, and have thought it a mode of settling difficulties fit only for barbarous nations; and the best that I can think of it now is, that by the laws of nations, war is legalized wholesale butchery and murder; but so long as a people or nation will not live up to the Golden Rule there will be war, and defensive war will be justifiable.

Rev. Utter says "the real hero of Black Jack was Captain Shore. Osawatomie was not a victory but a defeat of the Free State party." The reverend has shown such a brave determination to hang onto the exact truth at all hazard that I will not dispute him for all the honor he will gain by such utterances. Captain Shore is a good and brave man, but I cannot learn that even he claims to be the hero of Black Jack. I care nothing for the honors of war. It matters but little whether the battles of Black Jack and Osawatomie are looked upon by Mr. Utter as victories or defeats. I was at the latter engagement, but I do not know whether I had the honor of killing (as it is looked upon by some persons) anybody at Osawatomie or not. If I did, I would gladly transfer the honor of the whole slaughtering part of it to the Rev. David N. Utter and his brother in divinity, Rev. Martin White. The only real comforting recollection of my part in it is, that I did all in my power to alleviate the sufferings of a young and very intelligent Mississippian named Kline, if I remember correctly, who was terribly wounded but able to talk. He had been wounded a day or two before in an attack by Free State men on a camp of Georgians seven or eight miles southeast of Osawatomie. The weather was hot, and the wound below the knee of the right leg, which was terribly shattered by a Sharp's rifle ball, was filled with maggots. How it was that he did not have the right care, I do not know. All about the house where he was lying was excitement and hurry to be ready to meet the enemy we expected soon to attack us. I got help, cleaned his wound of the vermin, and dressed it, bathed him and changed his clothes. While this was being done he asked my name. I told him. He said: "I thought the abolitionists were savages before I was brought here." As he lay there pale and exhausted from loss of blood and suffering, he spoke of his home and friends in Mississippi, and how he wished he had never come to Kansas. He said he would soon be at rest. He asked me if I would not take care of him for the few hours he had to live. I told him I would. As I was sitting by his bed and saw the tears flowing from a heart full of sorrow and trouble, alone, among strangers, and far from home. I thought this: If these are some of the things which make war glorious and honorable, deliver me from the honors of war. In a moment more I was suddenly called away to defend my own life, and probably to do more of such work. I would rather have the real good it did me than to care as best I could for a few hours for a misguided dying enemy than to have all the glory ever gained by the proudest and most successful warrior that ever shook the earth with the thunder of his guns and the tread of his mighty armies of beasts and men since the world began. I heard afterwards that this young man was rescued from "the abolition fiends" by Reed's army and thrown into a wagon with other wounded men and died some where on the way to Missouri. I don't know that this is true.

I would rather be called a fanatic and madman all my life, be abandoned by every friend on earth, persecuted by my enemies and yet have the consciousness that I have at least tried to undo some of the heavy burdens that afflict humanity; to help lift up the fallen, to be the means of opening the way for a single ray of sunshine to enter some sad and lonely heart, than to have all the wealth ever wrenched from the hands of unpaid toil.

I will briefly notice the last of Mr. Utter's malicious assertions. He says "John Brown's principles were those of the Russian Nihilist. First make a clean sweep of the present civilization and let the future build what it can." I have never seen what he means by anything about the principles of the Russian Nihilists, and will not accuse him of even using the truth expansively in that assertion, but would advise the pastor of the "Church of the Messiah of Chicago" to study more carefully that book which he has taken upon himself to expound to his fellow men, especially those portions of it that dwell on the value of truth and the fearful consequences to those who disregard it. When a true and full history of that struggle for freedom in Kansas shall be written, as it will be, then the Rev. David N. Utter will know, if he studies it carefully, that the blood of Dow, Barber, R. P. Brown, Frederick Brown, Johnson, Stuart, Kaiser, Garrison, Powers, Robertson, Kolpetz, Amos Hall, Austin Hall, Partridge Campbell, Snyder and others, most of them murdered, two of them after they had fallen wounded at the battle of Osawatomie, still cries from the ground as loudly as that of Wilkinson, the three Doyles and Sherman.

JASON BROWN.  
Akron, O.