

## LETTER FROM A FREE-STATE PRISONER IN KANSAS.

The writer of the following letter is well known in this city. It was written to a friend here, who placed it in our hands for publication. [Editors Gazette.]

POLITICAL PRISON, LECOMPTON, K. T., Nov. 13.

DEAR SIR: Thinking a few lines from an old friend might possess some little interest to you, I write to let you know of my present situation and surroundings. I have written to many of my friends in Cincinnati since I left, and suppose you may have heard frequently from me, through them, during the summer. But my situation for the last few months may not have been so well known, for I am now where I am forbidden to write, unless my letters pass through the inspection of my bitter enemies, who have me a close prisoner, and rather than suffer this indignity I prefer to remain silent, unless I can smuggle my letters through the guards. They fear that their deeds of iniquity will become known to the world—that our correspondence will be of a treasonable character.

You have heard, no doubt, through the public prints, of the battle of Hickory Point, and the party of Free-State men who were there taken prisoners, while camped the night after the battle, by a company of United States dragoons, under the command of Capt. Ford. I am one of the 101 prisoners then taken. Since our imprisonment which has now been of two months' duration, we have suffered all that our enemies could heap upon us. Short of provisions; without coats or blankets, many sick, without care and attention necessary for their recovery, and all surrounded with the most abominable filth; added to all this, insults and contumely have been heaped upon us without stint. If we appeared near the windows of our prison at night, the guard would frequently amuse themselves by stoning us. Often have we had guns and pistols cocked and pointed at us, and if we chanced to come too near our guards we would have a sudden reminder of the fact by a sharp prick of the bayonet. One of our number has been cruelly murdered by inhuman conduct while sick—poor William Bowles of Missouri, a true lover of our cause, and we sadly mourn his fate.

Fifteen of our number were first tried and acquitted; we were released, and six held over on other charges. Immediately on their acquittal, twenty more took their place in the Court-room, and last Saturday morning, packed jury, mostly from Missouri, brought in a verdict of *Manslaughter*. Sentence, five years hard labor in the Penitentiary. The balance of the Hickory Point prisoners have succeeded in getting a change of venue, and to-morrow we go to Tecumseh to be ready for our trial next week, if our friends do not take the matter into their own hands and dispense with both judge and jury. Here in Lecompton, it has been the common street-talk that some of our number, at least, would be hung, no matter what the verdict of the jury might be.

The advent of Governor Geary into Kansas was a sad blow to the Free-State party. From his first appearance among us he has ever been blowing hot and cold with the same breath. He has ever been speaking sycophant words to both Free-State and Pro-Slavery men, but his whole power and all his acts have been sought to bear in crushing out the Free-State party.

At first we believed his protestations, but now he stands unmasked before us, a two-faced politician; one that would sell his very soul for popularity, and we estimate his words at their true value. The Federal Government also, that should throw its strong arm of protection around each of its subjects, is bearing down with its whole power upon those who love Freedom better than Slavery. Though there is at present such a dark cloud lowering over the Free-State party in Kansas, still to me that cloud has a golden fringe, a silver lining, that bids me look speedily for the dawn of a brighter, happier day, for the now crushed and oppressed freemen of this beautiful land. We were told to-day by Col. Titus, the Governor's newly-appointed aid, and who is also the life and soul of the Russian party, that they were getting ready the *ball and chain*, and the convicts' striped garb, as rapidly as possible, for those who had been convicted. Only think of these base ignominies, these foul wrongs, being heaped upon men, simply for defending their lives, homes and families from the worse than savage invaders—for preferring Freedom to Slavery. Will our friends and brothers of the North stand coolly by with folded arms, and make no effort to release us? I cannot, will not believe it until I see it. I expect no mercy at the hands of our foes. They will go just as far as they dare to in our case. I may be one of their victims; but if I am, I still have faith that Freedom in Kansas will finally triumph. I have not done the first act since I came to Kansas in relation to the difficulties here that I am sorry for, or that would cause a friend to blush for me. I will give you one or two instances showing the *partiality* of the administration of justice here. Chas. Hays, a Pro-Slavery man, was arrested for the cold blooded murder of David Buffam, and for whose arrest the Governor had offered a reward of \$500. He remained imprisoned for two nights only, and then was let out on straw bail. He is now at liberty. See the contrast. Mr. Wilson, a Free-State man of Prairie City, was arrested about four weeks ago, and brought here for confinement. For three weeks of that time the Grand Jury were in session, and finally adjourned without finding any bill against him. Though no bill was found against him, the Judge refused to liberate him. Last night one of his neighbors came with the news that his wife was dead. He applied to the Judge for permission to go home and attend the funeral, offering any amount of bail that might be required; Judge Lecompte positively refused to admit him to bail. After a short delay, the prosecuting attorney came down, and, on his own responsibility, let Mr. Wilson go home to see his wife buried, by his giving \$1,000 bail to appear at Court next week at Tecumseh. His only crime is in being a Free-State man. I will give one other little scene of prison-life of an affecting character. One of our number, and also one of the first settlers of Lawrence, has been sick for some three weeks past. A day or two since his family, consisting of a wife and four small children, came to see him. His wife has been in failing health for some years, and is slowly wasting away with consumption, being now very feeble. Just before she left her husband they wept in each other's arms, and among the last words spoken were, "We shall never meet on earth again." It was a sad sight. That wife and these children are dependent upon the daily labor of the husband and father for the bread they eat. He

is now sick and in a loathsome prison—and for what crime? Being a *Free-State* man!

I must close, as now I have a chance to smuggle this out. Remember me kindly to my friends at Old Christie. I often think of you all amid my troubles. My hope still reaches to that brighter inheritance above; to that land of rest where I hope to meet you again. My health has been very poor for the last two months. A large portion of the time I have been unable to sit up. If I should be so fortunate as to be cleared on my trial next week, I hardly know which way I shall turn. When I was driven from home by the Ruffians I lost my all, and now the cold Winter is upon us there is little chance to do anything, especially with my poor health. The Ruffians only left me the shirt I had upon my back. Still remember me at that Throne of Grace we have so often approached together. If there are any items of interest in this letter worth publishing, let any editor in the city have them for that purpose if you please. I should be happy to hear from you. Direct to Leavenworth City,

Yours, in the undying love of *Freedom*. O. M. MARSH.