

KANSAS.

IN PRISON AT LECOMPTON,
Saturday Morning, October 4, 1856.

To the Editor of the National Era:

Since my letter of Monday, there has been no visible change in affairs in Kansas. Influence and power, despotism still seems to predominate; yet they have not altogether been able completely to sever justice from hope. There is no little bitterness of feeling among us, when we think of our condition—of being packed together, like beasts or felons, into a small, damp, and loathsome prison, for nothing but a difference in political views, and a tenacity in upholding them—for the pretexts used by our enemies are as false as the assumption that liberty is a lie. Yet the feelings of the Bogusocracy seem terribly ground at the buoyancy of spirit we occasionally show, and appear to think we have no right to hope, that our very souls should be stricken with a terror of the horrors they would gladly inflict upon us.

Joseph C. Anderson, of Lexington, Mo., and occasionally prosecuting attorney before the Court of Judge Cato, said, the other day, that nothing but a knowledge that we could be rescued at any time we might desire, or a belief that we would not be very severely dealt with, could account for our uncrushed spirits, and often jubilant feelings; that Lane would be here in a few weeks, with several thousand armed men, of which we were perfectly aware; and that nothing but a speedy and terrible example would insure obedience to the bogus laws, and the safety of the Union.

Five prisoners were released on Monday evening, by order of the Governor. The circumstances of their arrest and imprisonment are these: One Fulton, who says he is "Sheriff of Calhoun county," some time during the last campaign went with a mob, and disarmed some Free State people, living near Indianola. He had also hired some oxen of others of his neighbors, and afterwards refused to give them up to their owners. His brother and two sons defended him in the commission of these outrages. The injured persons at last combined together, and went to him, demanding their property; with which demand he found it his interest to comply. Since the wholesale arrests of the last few weeks commenced, this Fulton laid in court a charge against the persons aforesaid, of "robbing his horse of one yoke of oxen, and other articles of personal property," for which they were seized and imprisoned. After a week's anxiety and suspense, they were brought up for examination. Before this was entered upon, however, Fulton came to the prisoners, and informed them of the sorrow he felt for having them arrested, saying that he should give no evidence that might convict them. He said he had been hasty in the course he had first taken, and, his cool reflection telling him how wrong it was to seek revenge upon his neighbors for such trifling offences, he had changed his determination. He hoped they would remember him kindly for his forbearance. The real cause, however, for this change was as follows: Evidence had lately been obtained of his having stolen several horses from his neighborhood, and run the same off to Missouri. Some of these horses belonged to one of the prisoners whom he had had arrested, who, not being one of the strictest of Free State men, threatening to prosecute Fulton, the latter concluded it best to back out. Well, the examination was commenced, but Fulton telling the truth about the matter, which was not deemed sufficient to commit them, the case was suspended indefinitely, I believe. The affair shortly afterwards coming before the Governor, he ordered their liberation.

This same Fulton had another man arrested, on a charge of stealing a cow. On examination, it was proven that the alleged theft was nothing more than a purchase, although the purchase money had not yet been paid.

The Court committed the defendant to prison, until payment should be made. The price of the cow was thirty-five dollars. He asked to be released by giving security for the payment of the sum in five days—but the Court refused. The officials have a design in keeping him here, and he will be kept until that design is accomplished, or until they are compelled to liberate him. Day before yesterday, one man was discharged, and yesterday four others—the causes in each case being similar to those which actuated Mr. Fulton in that first mentioned above. Otherwise, they would all have been kept imprisoned. Oh! that the people of the States could know the smallest proportion of the wrongs perpetrated against the people of Kansas by the mob-born Barons who try to rule over them!

Judge Lecompte arrived on Monday evening, and his examinations, since had, have been before him. A prisoner from Pleasant Hill was examined on a charge of stealing three *Shanghai chickens*, and recommitted in default of bail in the sum of five hundred dollars.

All the prisoners, except one, have had their preliminary trial. Eighty-eight are committed for murder, and fourteen for highway robbery. Another was brought upon a charge of robbing a man of "three stacks of oats and five acres of potatoes." No evidence was found against him, but the Court and prosecuting attorney say they will keep him until they get some.

Spies, under the name of guards, are still kept in the prison, for the purpose of catching whatever admissions we may make, and using the same in court as evidence against us. The threats and actions of the militia, as well as the citizens and hangers-on about town, are causes of much annoyance to us. No prisoner dare, without great precaution, venture to approach a window or door at night. But an evening or two since, three large stones were hurled in at us, but luckily hitting no one. The guard amuse themselves by punching us with their bayonets when we come near them—and they often leave their posts for the purpose—and by now and then taking sight upon us with cocked guns. A man living just across the street got three guns in his house one night, and gave directions to his household to prepare for three Abolitionists for breakfast. He swore he would kill ten of us before morning. By order of the Governor, he was put under guard for the night. Whether his relish for an Abolition diet has in any way diminished, I know not. Thirty Mississippians arrived here yesterday, and, of course, most of them were very anxious to get a fair view of a "Large Abolitionist;" so, the officials being disposed to gratify them, they were brought in to take a look at the caged lions. Their conversation was of the most insulting character possible. Their words may be given, but their manner of delivering them, never. One of them approached a prisoner, and pushed up his hat, at the same time coarsely exclaiming, "raise your hat, God damn you; I come from Mississippi." Many other of their expressions were ornamented with jewels similar to the above. These are characteristic of the whole course of Ruffianism in Kansas.

The Ruffians are making great preparations for the election which comes off on Monday. Four wagon loads of whisky have been brought into Leocompton alone, for use on that day. They will be left to have their fun all alone—the Free State men will not vote. But of this the Pro-Slavery party are not certain; and this, no doubt, accounts in a great measure for the arresting business, which has of late been carried on so largely, and which our enemies expected would have been much more extensive. Over seven hundred writs for the arrest of Free State men are now in the hands of marshals and sheriffs. They are a very numerous class here, but their virtues cannot be said to be in proportion to their number. Deputy Marshal Cramer, a few days since, refused to serve a writ against a Pro-Slavery man; but the Governor, hearing of the affair, gave him to understand that he was no longer an United States officer. Another of Donaldson's deputies took it into his head that he had to take and keep as his own the property of any person whom he might arrest—thus making himself a confiscating General. So the other day, after arresting two men who had come in from the country on horseback, he took possession of their horses. Complaint was made to Donaldson, who said he would inquire into the matter, and see justice done. He himself afterwards told me that he found the case to be as represented; he told the owners that he had sent the horses home; but they have not been heard from since.

Donaldson is as saintly an old hypocrite as I ever knew. He says that he takes sides with no party; that he is neither Free State nor Pro-Slavery, but merely in favor of "law and order." Nor am I sure but that he has at present something more to influence him than political desires. He receives from the Government three dollars and fifty cents per week, for the board of each prisoner under his charge, while it costs him just one seventh of that sum! And yet he is always scolding about our eating too much.

No little uneasiness is being felt, it is said, concerning the lately avowed political opinions of Judge Cato. I will explain: Mr. Ritchey, of Topeka, an aid-de-camp to General Lane, had been examined before Cato last week, on several charges—among others, one of rescuing a prisoner from the hands of a bogus Sheriff. Mr. Ritchey admitted the rescue; and, in a few plain, common sense remarks, went on to show "the invalidity of the Territorial laws, and commissions granted under them; and that the so-called 'Sheriff' had no more right to the custody of the prisoner than he; and said that when he saw a man in the situation in which he found the prisoner—who had a log chain around each ankle, and another about his body, and was compelled thus to labor in a saw mill—his ideas of duty prompted him to the course he had taken." The Judge listened very attentively, and said, in reply, "that he would not at that time argue the validity of those laws, but that, even considering them of no binding effect, it must be remembered that there was a higher law—one far above all laws made by man"—or "ruffian," he is accused of having mentally added. However, I do not think this "misunderstanding" will result in anything very serious. I have before neglected to note the arrival of the late Vermont and Massachusetts emigrant train, numbering about 150, under charge of Mr. Redpath. They reached Topeka on the 26th ultimo. On learning of their arrival, the Marshal, with a squad of troops, went up for the purpose of arresting Mr. Redpath, on a charge of "invading Kansas with a foreign army." Many of this "army" are women and children, who, I doubt not, thought themselves highly dignified on hearing themselves thus styled. Mr. Redpath happened to be out of town, and, I hear, was much grieved at finding himself the cause of so much trouble. The next day, he came down, and had a private interview with the Governor, who, on being told and satisfied that the great "invading army" was merely a company of emigrants, who had come here with the honest purpose of taking claims, bringing with them agricultural implements for their cultivation, building them comfortable homes, and becoming sober, quiet citizens, but had brought arms with them for the defence of their persons and rights, he told them to have no fears. He said that they had an undoubted right to come in this manner, and should be protected in doing so.

A few days ago, Captain Walker was sent for by the Governor, who desired an interview with him. The Governor wished to get Walker to raise a company of one hundred picked men, drill them well, and have them in readiness for any emergency. They had not been long in conference, before the Marshal entered, and, apologizing to the Governor, told him he was under the necessity of proceeding to arrest the Captain. Governor Geary doubted the necessity, and so informed the Marshal. He told him that Captain Walker was here under his safe conduct, and should be molested neither here nor while on his way home. Some Ruffians who were near offered their assistance to the Marshal, but Titus, who has always given Walker the credit of saving his life at the time he was taken prisoner, hearing of the difficulty, came, and, putting himself between the Marshal and his desired victim, declared that the Captain should be arrested only over his dead body! The Marshal and his friends then withdrew, and Colonel Titus himself escorted Captain Walker out of town.

I have just learned that H. Miles Moore, of Leavenworth, was taken prisoner at Kansas City, on Friday, by a squad of Kickapoo rangers, and has since been taken to Leavenworth, to be tried for "high treason," I suppose, at the next term of court, which will commence on the 15th. The object of this is easily to be seen. Moore and Parrott are engaged to conduct the defence of the prisoners. The course of the enemy is marked out. Every witness who has appeared in our behalf, or who it was thought would do so with effect, has been arrested. Our counsel are to be served in the same manner. Parrott will soon be a companion of Moore's. The game will then be nearly at an end. Scarcely a Free State lawyer in the Territory will remain at liberty, and what few there are will be frightened into silence.

The next four weeks will decide the question, whether Kansas is to obtain justice in a peaceable manner, or through the medium of blood. By that time, the Governor will have had an opportunity of serving us, and of proving himself able and willing to protect us from outrage and oppression. We are still able to protect ourselves; and when this question is decided, the course of the Free State party will be taken. K.