KANSAS.

The following letter from one of the Free State prisoners gives a most graphic account of the oppressions inflicted in the name of law upon the people of Kansas. It explains some transactions left obscure in telegraphic despatches.

IN PRISON AT LECOMPTON,
Monday Morning, September 29, 1856.
To the Editor of the National Era:

Just at this time, perhaps, the Freedom-loving people of the States are congratulating themselves upon the prospect of justice being at last dealt out to Kansas. Such a boon would certainly be worth any rejoicings which the devotees of Liberty could bestow; and surely no people on earth could receive it with more of gratitude than we. We too have seen these prospects, but only to see them vanish, leaving in their stead nothing but misery, pain, and sorrow. It was known, previous to the arrival of Governor Geary, that he had been on intimate terms with General Lane, and that he was his friend in the affair last winter between Lane and Douglas. From this, we thought we had reason to hope, and on the evening of the 11th inst., a few days after the arrival of the new Governor, and while the people seemed filled with joy over the liberation of Charles Robinson, their own Governor and idol, General Lane came to Topeka, and, being called upon by the troops and citizens, made them a speech overflowing with congratulations. He said of the transactions of the few weeks since his return to the Territory, that "one long to be remembered campaign in the history of Kansas has closed—favorably to the cause of Liberty, but covering all over with shame the great mob army which came over with the avowed purpose of subduing us forever. Such a contrast between two opposing armies has never before existed. The enemy have numbered us in every engagement, they have been better armed, clothed, and fed; and, being mostly well-mounted, they have been able to come into action with freshness and vigor, while we have had to meet them after long forced marches on foot, with but little food, and that of the poorest quality. They published to the world that they would show no quarter: that every Free State man who fell into their power should suffer death; and, cruel as was the threat, it has resulted in a terrible truth. But we have murdered no prisoners, burned no private dwellings; we have sought but one thing, *Liberty*, and endeavored to obtain it by the use of prudence and humanity."

Speaking of Governor Geary, he said:

"I know him well, and believe that he is true to us and to our cause. He has promised all the protection in his power, and says he can call 50,000 militia to his aid. He promises to disband the present Territorial militia, and to canvass the Territory, and enlist under a new organization all the bona fide citizens of whom military duty may be justly required. I advise you to enroll yourselves on certain conditions, or, rather, in the absence of certain conditions—that is, if nothing is said concerning obedience to the Territorial laws, enlist; but if he requires of you a pledge to support those so-called *laws*, tell him you have no pledge to make. Geary has no more doubts than we concerning the invalidity of these laws, yet he cannot positively refuse to execute them. There is but one course left for us to pursue. Just let the wagon go on, while we are getting in motion one of our own. *Our* Governor, the one elected by our own suffrages, will, in a few weeks, call together the only legislative body ever chosen by the people of Kansas, and in this and the election of Fremont there is great hope. The Missourians have promised to go home and cease their depredations. If they do so, we have little more to do. I am, however, reliably informed that thousands of our men are hold in readiness of war at Iowa Point, and to-morrow I shall go to their rescue. There are also some emigrants waiting at Nebraska city, for an escort to this place. For that purpose, I shall go there when I shall have accomplished my object at Iowa Point. When I return, we will lay down the implements of war, and trust for protection the newly appointed Governor, until such a time when experience shall have proven that our reliance has been misplaced."

At noon the next day, agreeably to his intention, General Lane, with forty horsemen, left for Iowa Point. On the road, fifteen miles from Topeka, he was met by a messenger from Grasshopper Falls, with the information that he Missourians were then in that town, sacking and burning everything in their reach. The messenger had been dispatched to Topeka for aid. The enemy were estimated at from two o four hundred in number. Lane, thinking it rashness to attack them with the numbers he hen had, yet desirous of punishing them for heir insolence, sent back to Topeka for re-enforcements, while he went on and encamped at Pleasant Hill, eight miles further, and within about ten miles from Grasshopper Falls. The re-enforcements, forty in number, left Topeka he same evening about ten o'clock, and arrived at Lane's camp at sunrise the next morning, and all immediately started for Hickory Point, by which place, it had been ascertained during the night, the enemy had withdrawn. This place contains not more than a dozen houses, and is located some ten miles northeast from Pleasant Hill. On his way there, Lane was joined by twenty men from Grasshopper Falls. About noon he arrived before the place, and it three-quarters of a mile's distance from it, drew up his men in line of battle. Capt. Lenhart, with fifteen mounted sharp-shooters, was sent around to the other side of the town, to harass the enemy and cut off their retreat, in case they should attempt to make one. But the enemy had all withdrawn into a blacksmith's shop and two other log buildings, which they had converted into forts. Over the blacksmith's shop there waved the *black flag*, the emblem of *no quarter*. After several shots from the enemy, an irregular fire began and was kept up for an hour or more, with no other effect than wounding six of the enemy, killing one of their horses, and wounding two others on each side. Finding it useless to attempt a storming of the forts without cannon, Lane dispatched a messenger to Lawrence, instructing Colonel Harvey to proceed with one hundred men and the six-pounder Sacramento to Topeka, cross the Kaw at that place, and take the Leavenworth military road—the same by which Lane had went—to Hickory Point. In the mean time he fell back to Pleasant Hill, in hopes of drawing the enemy out in pursuit of him, and giving them battle before the arrival of Col. Harvey. It was about sunset when he halted at Pleasant Hill, and prepared to camp. But here he was handed a copy of the inaugural Address and Proclamation of Governor Geary, issued two days previous, upon reading which, he called his men together, and told them that, in consequence of this proclamation, he had changed his plans; that he, with the cavalry, would go immediately to Nebraska, to escort down the emigration from there, and that the infantry should return to Topeka for rest, and disband. He said the probability was that the people of Lawrence had had a conference with the new Governor, during which an arrangement had at last been made, which would prevent Col. Harvey's coming to his aid with the cannon. But, thinking it possible that he might yet come, he sent back to Topeka an order for him to return. But Harvey, after consultation with the State Central Committee, saw fit to disobey the orders of Lane, so far as to go directly to Hickory Point, through the enemy's country, instead of the route he had been directed to go. On arriving at the town at 11 o'clock, the following day, he was fired upon, and at once commenced a cannonade upon it. After keeping up a slow fire for three or four hours, during which one of the enemy was killed and eight wounded on their side, and one wounded on the other, and the fortifications pretty much destroyed, the black flag was struck, and a white one sent up in its place. Harvey himself went in to treat with them, and they signed a written treaty, the terms of which were, that they should disband and go home, never again to take up arms against our cause. This they did very willingly, and would have done much more, had it been asked of them. Harvey then got his command under way for Lawrence, and encamped five miles from the scene of action. Late at night they awoke and found themselves surrounded by two companies of U. S. troops, who had been sent for by some of the more treacherous of the defeated enemy. Harvey took to his horse, which was a fleet one, and fled; the rest were all taken prisoners, disarmed, and marched to the camp near Lecompton.

On Thursday, the 18th, U. S. Marshal Donaldson, backed up by two hundred United States troops, came to Topeka, and arrested twelve of her citizens—among others, your correspondent. Some of the arrests—if they may be called such, for they were, in reality, nothing but *seizures*—were made in the presence of the Governor, who had come into town a short time before the entrance of the troops, and while the persons so seized were in private conversation with him. In all cases, the Marshal refused to show any *writ* or authority whatever. We demanded to know the cause of our arrest, but no one could tell us. A guard was detailed for each prisoner, and fifteen minutes were allowed us, in which to arrange our business, and prepare to leave, for what length of time none knew. We arrived at camp about sunset, and were placed under the same guard with our comrades from Lawrence. Since then, Company "Q," as some wags of our number jocularly style us, has daily been receiving additions—in all, twenty-one new prisoners have been brought in, making the whole number arrested, up to this time, one HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THREE. On Monday, the 21st, we were escorted to within a short distance of town by the United States troops, and then turned over to the bogus militia under Colonel Titus, who marched us into town, and quartered us in a building one-story and a half in height, the siding of which is cottonwood, placed upright, and so shrunken as to leave cracks between each board three-fourths of an inch wide, and placed around it a guard of ten men, several of whom have stolen Sharpe's rifles. One common cooking stove accommodates—I was going to say—the whole number; such, at least, is all we have. Our cooking utensils and articles of table furniture are very few. While in the camp of the United States troops, the officers all treated us with the greatest kindness, and many of them, with all the privates, were profuse in their expressions of sympathy for us. In some instances, this was manifested by "material" aid. One evening, a sentinel passed out three prisoners, and, in order to escape punishment, deserted, and went with them. During that time, the Marshal refused to furnish provisions for us, and the officers, unwilling to see us suffer, gave us a portion of the rations of the soldiers, and thus kept us from starvation. Since we have been in the charge of Titus, we have mostly been treated as though we were so many swine. Titus himself has been kind enough to us, in consideration, it is presumed, of the good treatment he received when a prisoner at Lawrence, of which he often speaks. But his duty is only to prevent our escape; Marshal Donaldson's, to supply our other wants. The day we came from the Dragoons' camp, we had an early though scanty breakfast of coffee and crackers, but nothing after that, until nearly eleven o'clock at night, when the Marshal brought us a basket of—well, *he* called it *bread*. It was made of *horse feed*, which Titus gave to Donaldson for our use, and contained at least ten per cent. of pearlash—a perfect wedge for the separation of soul and body. Next day, we had to bake it for ourselves, and bettered it some. After much entreaty, Donaldson went in search of some sugar, coffee, and saleratus. He returned with two pounds each of the former, and one of the latter: and giving it to our commissary, remarked, that "*if carefully and economically used, they would last a long time.*" Occasionally, we were given a piece of Missouri "BACON," but of such a character that the more seldom it came, the better for us. Day before yesterday, however, the Marshal brought us a sack of flour, and yesterday another. For this, *favor* we are indebted to the Governor, who, it is said, threatened to release us, unless better provided for. On the 18th, eighty eight of the prisoners—taken on their return from Hickory Point, thirteen having escaped—had an examination before Judge Cato, and were committed to prison, to answer at the next term of Court, on a charge of *murder in the first degree*. The next day, the eight remaining of those arrested at Topeka—for we had deputized and sent home four of our number—were examined; and then, for the first time, we found out what were the charges against us. They were for attacking and robbing Osawkee. We, like the others, made no defence whatever, as we found in the beginning that it would all be for nought. After the examination, four were discharged. The Court offered to admit the others to bail, in the sum of fifteen hundred dollars, to answer on a charge of *highway robbery* in the first degree. We refused to give bail, as that might be construed into an admission of the legality of the Territorial laws—so we, too, were remanded to prison. On account of the courtroom being guarded by the military, but four whom the Judge discharged were kept for nearly an hour, and until a new writ was gotten out and served against one of them.

Governor Geary has several times been in to see us. He tells us that he sympathizes with us, and will see that we have a fair and speedy trial. Judge Cato was accidentally shot in the leg on Saturday night, and the Governor has sent for Lecompte to come and try us. We will probably have our trial next week. A great many have no faith in Geary—in fact, the number among us who have, is very small—nor is there any secret of causes for this lack of faith.

When Colonel Cooke took prisoners Colonel Harvey's company, he made no attempt to arrest the Pro-Slavery force at Hickory Point, simply because he had no authority from the Governor to do so. And when on the same day the Missourians came up and attacked Lawrence, threatening to demolish the town, "troops or no troops," nothing was done, further than to quietly invite them to go home, and take all their implements of war with them. Further, while in the camp of the dragoons, one day, a company of Titus's Territorial militia, in changing their camp, passed within a few yards of the sentries' posts, while over them they carried a black flag, with undescribable yells and devilish pride. The soldiers could hardly be restrained from pitching into them, but the officers had no power to "interfere."

Governor Robinson visits us occasionally, and advises us to remain and defend our characters and past actions by our presence at court. Nothing can equal the enthusiasm which the prisoners feel for him. He has been the pioneer in suffering in Kansas, and none who really love the cause of Free Kansas can complain of following him.

Yesterday, a company of United States infantry relieved the Territorial militia which has been on guard over us. We felt almost as if we were free once more. The militia kept one guard in the house, as a kind of spy, and closely watched all visiters coming in—seven ladies, and wives of prisoners. Clothing coming in to the prisoners was sneakingly searched. The Topeka ladies sent us down some pies and cakes, the other day. The guards examined them, as though they expected to find a twenty-four pounder or keg of powder rolled up in some of them. But United States troops could not be brought to such meanness as this. All were sorry and disheartened, when, at eight o'clock this morning, the militia returned. The Federal troops have all left. It is said they have gone up to Nebraska, to arrest General Lane and the emigration with him. If they succeed in it, he will give them battle. He has been hunted, as a wild beast, as long as his spirit will bear.

At about eighty yards distance from our prison stand two cannon pointed at us, and it is said both are heavily loaded with grape and canister. Many of the sentinels carry their guns whole-cocked, and but a few days since one of them attempted to shoot a prisoner, without any provocation whatever being offered. They often remark, how they would like to shoot us, and that they would, if they could do so without fear of revenge or punishment. Last night, several of them were overheard talking about going back South. They feared the Missouri river would be closed up before the term of their enlistment was out, so that they would be unable to *get home*.

So far, let it be remembered, *not a single Pro-Slavery man has been arrested*, although many openly boast of the crimes they have committed. One was asked the other day, in the presence of Judge Cato, whether he had killed any Free State man, except in honorable warfare. He replied, that *he had killed his share*—all to the infinite amusement of the Judge.

In my next, I will endeavor to give you the name and activity of each of the prisoners.

K.

LANDS IN KANSAS.—Gov. Robinson and two associates left Lawrence recently for Wyandot, a place at the mouth of the Kaw river, to try and buy it from the Wyandot half-breeds, who own it. If they succeed, they expect to make the town the largest in the Territory. A recent letter from Gov. Robinson, received in Boston, says that many persons are leaving Kansas for want of the means of support, and many more must leave, if help is not soon secured.

CHICAGO, OCT. 8.—Private advices received here from Kansas mention a rumor that Gov. Robinson was about to convene the Free State Legislature. One hundred and ten Free State men arrested under Harvey, at Hickory Point, have all been committed on the charge of murder.

Every stage and conveyance into the Territory is crowded with settlers returning to their claims, from which they were driven by Lane.

Gov. Geary is discharging his duty with fearless energy.

ST. LOUIS, OCT. 9.—A letter in the *Democrat*, dated Lawrence, Oct. 2, says a Convention has been called at Topeka on the 30th, to form a Republican electoral ticket, with a view of ascertaining the strength of the party. If the ticket is elected, and Kansas should be admitted as a State in December, the electors will ask seats in the electoral college. The Pro-Slavery party are expected to nominate Fillmore and Buchanan electoral tickets.

A letter to the *Democrat* says that at a meeting at Lawrence, on the 1st instant, the following was unanimously adopted:

"Whereas expediency and principle alike enjoin the people to ignore the coming election of members of the Assembly; and whereas Congress rejected our Delegate, on the ground of the invalidity of the election law, another application, identical in fact and principle with the one just determined, will doubtless be refused; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That the people of Kansas, regarding the so-called election law as invalid, refuse to participate in any election held by virtue of its enactments."

CHICAGO, OCT. 10.—Gov. Robinson, of Kansas, arrived here last evening, and speaks in Indiana to-day and to-morrow. Gen. Lane passed through this morning, for Indianapolis. Judge Smith proceeded to Pennsylvania, via St. Louis. Messrs. Deitzler and Jenkins are expected here on Monday.

CHICAGO, OCT. 12.—A party of Kansas emigrants, chiefly from Ohio and Wisconsin, numbering 200 men, women, and children, while at Salors, Iowa, received intelligence that Gov. Geary was approaching with a party of dragoons, to oppose their entrance into the Territory. The party, however, determined to proceed until they should be forcibly compelled to retire.

Testimony from a Virginia Slave Owner.

We copy the following letter from the Richmond (Va) *Whig* of October 9th. It is the testimony of a Virginian and a slaveholder in Kansas, confessing all that has been charged by Free State men. Read it:

PLATTE COUNTY, MISSOURI,
Sept. 10, 1856.
To the Editors of the Richmond Whig:

I send you a few facts in writing, believing that you know very little of what is daily transpiring in the great West. What information you Virginians get, coming from some little papers in Kansas and the borders thereof, is not to be relied on. What those papers contain is false in part—is false *in toto*. I send you a printed sample. I have lived long in Richmond, but am now here in this goodly land, the "Platte Purchase." "A fairer land than this never sun viewed in his wide career. A lovely spot for all that life can ask. Salubrious, mild."

The settlers of Kansas are from almost every State in the Confederacy, but chiefly from the free States; the rest are mostly Missourians. It is doubtless known to you that the Missourians have made repeated invasions of Kansas. When the election came off, (the first one particularly,) hundreds of wagons, loaded with provisions, arms of every calibre and name, ammunition, and barrels of whisky, were driven to within a half a mile of the polls; there the invaders encamped; and such shouting, swearing, drinking, firing, halloing, roaring, damning, &c., this world never saw before. Next morning they marched to the polls, and gave a Democratic vote. After voting, they returned to their camp, renewed their Bacchanalian orgies, and the next day crossed over to Missouri. This is as true as any record in the United States. It would require many sheets of foolscap to contain a tithe of the barbarities, robberies, and murders, that have been committed in Kansas. You know the Missourians have thrown every printing press into the Missouri river that did not Loist the negro flag. It is thus you hear *ex parte* testimony, and nine eighths of that is fabrication. A majority of the people in Kansas were and are for making it a free State. They are not Abolitionists, but Free State men. The Missourians, knowing this, have had recourse to various expedients. The last or dernier resort is to expel or ostracise them. About ten days ago, the Missourians invested Leavenworth city, the largest town in Kansas, and gave peremptory orders to every man in the city, whom they suspected of Free State sentiments, to leave in one hour and a half, or d*e. One hundred peaceable, orderly artisans, merchants, &c., were thus compelled to leave their houses, furniture, shops, tools, stores, &c., to the honesty and mercy of——. One of them had in his store $20,000 worth of goods, as per invoices. If you have any idea what were the feelings of the Athenians when they abandoned Athens, and Cimon took with him only a part of his horse's furniture, then you may form some opinion of the great calamity that fell on these one hundred families. They left their homes—their *all*. One might have bought houses and lots worth thousands of dollars for $8 to $10; might have bought a wagon load of furniture, or rich and costly cloths, cassimeres, and silks, for $10 to $20. From what I hear, one might have bought enough to load fifty wagons for one or two hundred dollars or less. Many did buy wagon loads for a mere pittance. The great bulk was left. I have my information from a reliable source—from a highly respectable Missouri merchant. You will ask, Why this cruelty? Why this great injustice? It is because the Missourians have either heard, or they suspect, the heads of these one hundred families actually prefer living in a free State to that of a slave State. They are peaceable, orderly, well behaved people; were rich, or becoming so rapidly. They are a go-ahead people. They are not Abolitionists.

To add to the above, the Missourians make frequent excursions in the Territory, and they will shoot down a Free State man just as soon as they would a deer, and sooner, too. Nor is this all. They have a right to all enormities, in or out of the cabin. Merciful God! This may be *vice versa*.

A Free State man was found eight days ago murdered and scalped. The supposed murderer and scalper lives in my county, (Platte,) and was heard to say the day previous that he was *determined* to have a scalp, and he was seen after that in the Territory, and near the dead body.

I have lived long in Richmond. I own slaves; but I do not like, nor can I like, an Abolitionist; a Free-Soiler I do not hate nor blame. He has a right to wish, and to pray, too, if he choose, that Kansas be made a Free State, legally, constitutionally.

The truth is, the nation should immediately cause the little giant corn-cracker Douglas, Cass, Pierce, and a half dozen more agitators to be arrested, carried to the Potomac, and there right opposite to the Capitol, each one should have a mill stone fastened about his neck with iron cable, and then cast into the middle of that stream. These "Squatter Sovereigns" should not be permitted to live another week nor to die a natural death.

I am no croaker, but I believe human endurance has been carried to its utmost tension and that a long, a cruel and bloody civil war is about to commence.

God save the Commonwealth!

Yours, truly, VERITY.

Only an Armistice with the Border Ruffians—Another Raid on Foot.

St. Louis, Oct. 13.—I have just received letter from a perfectly reliable man in Lawrence K. T., of which the following is an extract:

"LAWRENCE, *Oct.* 3, 1856.

"Many of our people are leaving, for fear of famine in the winter. Can they be reassured? We are having an armistice till after election then we expect a storm to come. Gov. Geary is a failure. His only object is to make Buchanan capital for the East.

"I have learned from a reliable source that it is the intention of the Missouri Ruffians to make an attempt upon the Free State men of the Territory, and to drive them out, some time between the middle of November and the first of December. This can only be prevented by an immediate effort to supply and strengthen the Free State men, who are now suffering and struggling with despotism.

"I trust our friends in New York and New England will see the necessity of forwarding all the means they can spare before the 1st of December, so as to supply provisions and clothing for the suffering."

From Kansas.

St. Louis, Oct. 11.—The *Democrat* learns from a gentleman just arrived in this city, that on Thursday last, a report having reached Platte City, (Mo.) that Messrs. Berry & Walker, merchants of Weston, had sold some citizens of Kansas a quantity of flour, a party of one hundred marched to arrest the parties implicated, and on arriving at Weston they laid the case before B. F. Stringfellow, who placed himself at their head, and proceeded to the store of Messrs. Berry & Walker, and arrested the former, denouncing him as an Abolitionist, and threatening to hang him.

Mr. Berry appealed to the citizens of Weston, who assembled in force, and ordered the Platte party to leave the place in ten minutes, which they did. The people of Weston then publicly denounced Mr. Stringfellow's conduct, and commanded him to leave the country in five days, or suffer the consequences.

Milwaukie, Oct. 11.—We have advices from Kansas to the 1st inst, stating that Gov. Geary had caused to be arrested and confined in Lecompton, on the charge of murder in the first degree, one hundred and seven Free State men, who are mostly under the charge of Col. Titus.

H. Miles Moore, of Leavenworth, was arrested on the 2d inst., while at Kansas city, *en route* east, by Surveyor General Calhoun, and carried to Wyandotte city and imprisoned.