

INSURRECTION IN VIRGINIA.

The daily papers last week were filled with telegraphic dispatches of an insurrection at Harper's Ferry, Virginia. It is somewhat difficult to get a full and clear understanding of the affair. The gist of it seems, however, to be this:—Capt. John Brown, of Kansas notoriety, who was last heard of on his way from Missouri to Canada with a band of runaway slaves, now turns up as the leader of the insurrection of a few infuriated whites and deluded negroes at Harper's Ferry, where he seems to have been for some months plotting and preparing for a general stampede of slaves. There is an opinion current that this outbreak was the premature explosion of a widespread plot for exterminating slavery in Maryland and Western Virginia; that there was to be a general rising of negroes in that region, on the 24th of this month, and that the seizure of the government arms and stores at Harper's Ferry was to be the first step, though preceding the general movement only by a few hours. The whole affair seems the work of a madman, which was madly designed and madly managed. Still it turned out a sanguinary affair, for of the twenty-two insurgents, fifteen were killed and two mortally wounded. The following details are taken from the *Baltimore American*:

"The principal originator of the short but bloody existence of this insurrection was, undoubtedly, Capt. John Brown, whose connection with the scenes of violence in the border warfare of Kansas, then made his name familiarly notorious to the whole country. Brown made his first appearance in the vicinity of Harper's Ferry more than a year ago, accompanied by his two sons, the whole party assuming the name of Smith. He inquired about land in the vicinity, and made investigations about the probability of finding ores, and for some time boarded at Sandy Point, a mile east of the Ferry. After an absence of some months he re-appeared in the vicinity, and the elder Brown rented or leased a farm on the Maryland side, about four miles from the Ferry. They bought a large number of picks and spades, and this confirmed the belief that they intended to mine for ores. They were seen frequently in and about Harper's Ferry, but no suspicion seems to have existed that "Bill Smith" was Capt. Brown, or that he intended embarking in any movement so desperate or extraordinary. Yet the development of the plot leaves no doubt that his visits to the Ferry, and his lease of the farm, were all parts of his preparations for the insurrection, which he supposed would be successful in exterminating slavery in Maryland and Western Virginia.

Brown's chief aid was John E. Cook, a comparatively young man, who has resided in and near the Ferry for some years. He was first employed in tending a lock on the Canal, afterwards taught school on the Maryland side of the river, and after a brief residence in Kansas, where it is supposed he became acquainted with Brown, returned to the Ferry and married there. He was regarded as a man of some intelligence, known to be anti-slavery, but not so violent in the expression of his opinions as to excite any suspicions. These two men, with Brown's two sons, were the only white men connected with the insurrection that had been seen previously about the Ferry. All were brought by Brown from a distance, and nearly all had been with him in Kansas.

The first active movement in the insurrection was made about half past 10 o'clock on Sunday night. William Williamson, the watchman on the Harper's Ferry Bridge, whilst walking across towards the Maryland side, was seized

by a number of men who said that he was their prisoner and must come with them. He recognized Brown and Cook among the men, and knowing them he treated the matter as a joke, but enjoining silence, they conducted him to the armory, which he found already in their possession. He was retained until after daylight and then discharged. The watchman who was to relieve Williamson at midnight, found the bridge lights all out and was immediately seized. Supposing it an attempt at robbery he broke away and his pursuers stumbling over, he escaped.

The next appearance of the insurrectionists was at the house of Col. Lewis Washington, a large farmer and slave-owner, living about four miles from the Ferry. A party, headed by Cook, proceeded there, aroused Col. W. and told him he was their prisoner. They also seized all the slaves near the house, and took the carriage and horse, and a large wagon with two horses. When Col. Washington saw Cook he immediately recognized him as a man who had called upon him some months previous, to whom he had exhibited some valuable arms in his possession, including an antique sword presented by Frederick the Great to General George Washington, and a pair of pistols presented by Gen. Lafayette to Washington, both being heirlooms in the family. Before leaving, Cook challenged Col. Washington to a trial of skill at shooting, and exhibited considerable certainty as a marksman. When he made his visit on Sunday night he alluded to his previous visit, and the courtesy with which he had been treated, and regretted the necessity which made it his duty to arrest Col. W. He, however, took advantage of the knowledge he obtained by his former visit, to carry off all the valuable collection of arms, which Col. W. did not re-obtain till after the final defeat of the insurrection. From Col. Washington's the party proceeded with him, as a prisoner, in his own carriage, and twelve of his negroes in the wagon, to the house of Mr. Allstadt, another large farmer, on the same road. Mr. Allstadt and his son, a lad of 16 years of age, were taken prisoners, and all the negroes within reach being forced to join the movement, they returned to the armory at the Ferry. All these movements seem to have been made without exciting the slightest alarm in the town, nor did the detention of Capt. Phelps' train at the upper end of the town attract attention. It was not until the town thoroughly waked up and found the bridge guarded by armed men; and a guard stationed at all the avenues, that the people found they were prisoners. A panic appears to have immediately ensued, and the number of the insurrectionists at once increased from fifty (which was probably their greatest force, including the slaves who were forced to join them), to from five hundred to six hundred.

In the meanwhile a number of workmen, knowing nothing of what had occurred, entered the Armory and were successively taken prisoners, until they had at one time not less than sixty men confined in the Armory. Among those thus entrapped were Armistead Ball, Chief Draughtsman of the Armory; Benjamin Mills, Master of the Armory and J. E. P. Dangerfield, Pay Master's Clerk. These three gentlemen were imprisoned in the en-

gine house (which afterwards became the chief fortress of the insurgents) and were not released until after the final assault. The workmen were imprisoned in a large building farther down the yard, and were rescued by a brilliant Zouave dash, made by the Railroad Company's men, who came down from Martinsburg. This was the condition of affairs at daylight, about which time Captain Cook, with two white men, and accompanied by thirty negroes, and taking with them Colonel Washington's large wagon, went over the bridge and struck up the mountain on the road toward Pennsylvania.

It was then believed that the large wagon was used to convey away the Paymaster's safe, containing \$17,000 Government funds, and also, that it was filled with Minnie rifles, taken out to supply other bands in the mountains, who were to come down upon Harper's Ferry in overwhelming force. These suppositions both proved untrue, as neither money nor arms were disturbed. The news spread around, and as the people came into the Ferry, the first demonstrations of resistance were made to the insurrectionists. A general warfare commenced, chiefly led by a man named Chambers, whose house commanded the armory yard.

The colored man, Hayward, a railroad porter, was shot early in the morning, for refusing to join the movement. The next man shot was Joseph Burley, a citizen of the Ferry. He was shot standing in his own door. About this time Samuel P. Young, Esq., was killed while coming into town on horseback. The insurrectionists, by this time, finding a general disposition to resist them, had nearly all withdrawn within the Armory grounds, leaving only a guard on the bridge. About noon, the Charleston troops, under command of Colonel Robert W. Baylor, having crossed the river some distance up, and marched down on the Maryland side to the mouth of the bridge, firing a volley, they made a gallant dash across the bridge, clearing it of the insurrectionists, who retreated rapidly down towards the Armory. In this movement one of the insurrectionists, Wm. Thompson, was taken prisoner.

The Shepardstown troops next arrived and marched down the Shenandoah side and joined the Charleston forces at the bridge. A desultory exchange of shots followed, one of which struck Mr. Fountain Beckman, Mayor of the town and agent of the Railroad Company, in the breast, passing entirely through his body. The ball was a large elongated slug, making a dreadful wound. He died almost immediately. Beckman was without arms, and was exposed only for a moment whilst approaching the water station. His assailant, one of Brown's sons, was shot almost immediately, but managed to get back into the engine house, where his dead body was found to-day. The murder of Mr. Beckman excited the populace, and a cry was immediately made to bring out the prisoner Thompson. He was brought out on the bridge and shot down from the bridge. He fell into the water, and some appearance of life still remaining, he was again riddled with balls.

Sharp fighting ensued, and at this time a general charge was made down the street from the bridge towards the Armory gate, by the Charlestown and Shepardstown troops and the Ferry people from behind the Armory wall. A fusillade was kept and returned by the insurrectionists from the Armory buildings. Whilst this was going on the Martinsburg levies arrived at the upper end of the town, and entering the armory grounds by the rear, made an attack from that side. This force was largely composed of railroad employees, gathered

from the tonnage trains at Martinsburg, and their attack was spoken of as showing the greatest amount of fighting pluck exhibited during the day. Dashing on, firing and cheering, and gallantly led by Capt. Alburttis, they carried the building in which the armory men were imprisoned and released the whole of them. They were however, but poorly armed, some with pistols and others with shot guns, and when they came within range of the engine house, where the elite of the insurrectionists were gathered, and became exposed to the rapid and dexterous use of Sharpe's rifles, they were forced to fall back, suffering pretty severely. Conductor Evan Dorsey, of Baltimore, was killed instantly, and Conductor George Richardson received a wound from which he died during the day. Several others were wounded, among them a son of Dr. Hammond, of Martinsburg.

A guerilla warfare was maintained during the rest of the day, resulting in killing two insurrectionists, and the wounding of a third. One crawled out through the culvert leading into the Potomac, and attempted to cross to the Maryland side, whether to escape or to convey information to Cook, is not known. He was shot while crossing the river, and fell dead on the rocks. An adventurous lad waded out and secured his Sharpe's rifle, and his body was afterwards stripped of a portion of its clothing. In one of his pockets was found a Captain's commission drawn up in full form, and declaring that the bearer, Capt. Lehman, held that command under Major Gen. Brown.

A light mulatto was shot just outside the armory gate. The ball went through his throat, tearing away all the great arteries, and killing him instantly. His name is not known, but he was one of the free negroes who came with Brown. His body was left exposed in the street, up to noon yesterday, to every indignity that could be heaped upon it by the excited populace. At this time a tall, powerful man, named Evan Stephens, came out of the armory, conducting some prisoners, it was said, and was shot twice in the side and breast. He was captured and taken to a tavern, and after the insurrection was quelled, was turned over to the United States authorities, in a dying condition.

During the afternoon, a sharp little affair took place on the Shenandoah side of the town. The insurrectionists had also seized Hall's Rifle works, and a party of their assailants found their way in through the mill race and dislodged them. In this encounter, it was said, three of the insurrectionists were killed, but we found but one dead body—that of a negro—on that side of the town.

Night, by this time, had set in, and the operations ceased. Guards were placed around the Armory, and every precaution taken to prevent escaped.

The night passed without serious alarms, but not without excitement. The Marines marched over immediately after the arrival of Col. Lee, and were stationed within the Armory grounds, so as to completely surround the engine house. Occasionally shots were fired by the country volunteers—for what purpose was not understood, but there was only one return fire from the insurgents.

A dead stillness surrounded the buildings, and except that now and then a man might be seen peeping from the nearly closed centre door, and a dog's nose slightly protruding, no sign of life, much less of hostility was given.

Various opinions were given as to the number of persons within, and the amount of resistance they would be able to offer. Cannon could not be used without endangering the safety of Col. Washington, Mr. Dangerfield, Mr. Ball, and other citizens, whom they still held as prisoners. The doors and walls of the Armory had been pierced for rifles, but it was evident that from these holes no range could be had, and that without opening the door they would be shooting in the dark.

Shortly after 7 o'clock, Lieut. J.E.B. Stuart, of the First Cavalry, who was acting as Aid for Col. Lee, advanced to parley with the besieged; Samuel Strider, Esq., an old and respectable citizen, bearing a flag of truce. They were received at the door by Capt. Cook. Lieut. Stuart demanded an unconditional surrender, only promising them protection from immediate violence and trial by law. Capt. Brown refused all terms but those previously demanded, which were substantially, that they should be permitted to march out with their men and arms, taking their prisoners with them; that they should proceed unpursued to the second toll-gate, when they would free their prisoners. The soldiers would then be permitted to pursue them, and they would fight if they could not escape.

Of course this was refused, and Lieut. Stuart pressed upon Brown his desperate position and urged a surrender. The expostulation, though beyond ear-shot, was evidently very earnest, and the coolness of the Lieutenant, and the courage of his aged flag-bearer, won warm praise. At this moment, the interest of the scene was most intense. The volunteers were arranged all around the buildings, cutting off escape in every direction. The marines, divided in two squads, were ready for a dash at the door. Finally Lieut. Stuart having exhausted all argument with the determined Captain Brown, walked slowly from the door. Immediately the signal for attack was given and the marines, headed by Col. Harris and Lieut. Green, advanced in two lines on each side of the door. Two powerful fellows sprang between the lines, and with heavy sledge hammers attempted to batter down the door. The door swung and swayed, but appeared to be secured with a rope, the spring of which deadened the effect of the blows.

Failing to obtain a breach, the marines were ordered to fall back, and twenty of them took hold of a ladder, some forty feet long, and advancing at a run, brought it with tremendous effect against the door. At the second blow, one leaf falling inward in slanting position, the marines immediately advanced to the breach, Major Russell and Lieut. Green leading. A marine in the front fell, and the firing from the interior was rapid and sharp. They fired with deliberate aim, and for a moment the resistance was serious and desperate enough to excite the spectators to something like a pitch of frenzy. The next moment the marines poured in, the firing ceased, and the work was done, whilst cheers rang from every side, the general feeling being that the marines had done their part admirably.

When the insurgents were brought out, some dead and others wounded, they were greeted with execrations, and only the precautions that had been taken saved them from immediate execution. The crowd, nearly every man of which carried a gun, swayed with tumultuous excitement, and cries of "shoot them! shoot them!" rang from every side. The appearance of the liberated prisoners, all of whom, through the steadiness of the Marines, escaped injury, changed the current of feeling and prolonged cheers took the place of howls and execrations. In the assault Private Ruffert, of the Marines, received a ball in the stomach, and was believed to be fatally wounded. Another received a slight flesh wound.

The scene in front of the engine house, after the assault, presented a dreadful sight. Lying in it were two bodies of men killed the previous day and found inside of the house, and three wounded men, one just at the last gasp of life and the two others groaning in agony. One of the dead was Brown's son, Otway—the wounded man, his son Watson; whilst the father himself laid upon the grass a sorry spectacle, his face and hair clotted with blood, and a severe bayonet wound in his side. A short time after he was brought out he revived, and talked earnestly to those around him, and defended his cause and acts. He was asked, "Were any other persons, but those with you now, connected with the movement?" "No," he replied. "Did you expect aid from the North?" "No," he again replied, "there was no one connected with the movement but those who came with me."

Several important papers, and \$200 in gold, were found in his possession. The following fragment of a letter was also found in Brown's pocket. It occupies a page of fine note paper, straw tinted, and is written in pencil, evidently by a person of education. It is without date. The 'freight' alluded to was doubtless of that sort usually carried on the "underground railroad."

"CAPT. BROWN—Dear Sir: I have been disappointed at not seeing you here ere this, to take charge of your freight. They have been here now for two weeks, and as I have had to superintend the providing for them, it has imposed on me no small task besides—and if not soon taken on, some of them will go back to Missouri. I wish to know definitely what you propose doing. They cannot be kept here much longer without risk to themselves, and many of them conclude to go back to the State, it will be a bad termination to your enterprise." (No signature.)

The number of persons killed is: 5 citizens and 15 insurgents;—wounded, 3 insurgents;—prisoners, 5 insurgents.

In a school house were found tents, blankets, clothes and 1500 pikes, also the constitution and by-laws of the organization, a letter from Fred. Douglas containing \$10 sent by a lady, and another from Gerrit Smith with a check or draft for \$100.

An anonymous letter, dated Cincinnati, Aug. 9th, was received by Gov. Floyd, Secretary of War, apprising him of the contemplated movement. The writer seemed to be in the secret of the insurgents.