

**Life of Capt. John Brown, by James Redpath.**

Soon after the country was startled by the raid of JOHN BROWN upon Virginia, MR. JAMES REDPATH began to advertise himself, in a series of communications to the Boston Atlas and Bee, as a person who knew an awful amount of secret history, and who could, if he would, tell tales that would make each particular hair of each particular conservative citizen of the United States, stand up like "quills of the fretful porcupine"—and continually up to this time Mr. R. has become more demonstrative in words, and more mysterious in dreadful insinuations. He has, in short, been, in this JOHN BROWN business, in a small way, a more extraordinary individual than HENRY A. WISE himself. WISE said in his late dinner speech at Richmond:

"I am not going into the facts of the scenes of Harper's Ferry. I have not said all I have to say on that subject, and I shall guard myself particularly through life not to say all I could say upon it; rubrics would not win me to tell all the facts of the raid of John Brown."

That is REDPATH's fix exactly. He would not tell for mountains of gold. As Mr. Jas. Redpath's name is familiar to newspaper readers, it might be well to say something of him. He first distinguished himself as a Kansas letter writer during the early troubles in that territory, and was a good sensational newspaper correspondent, who made, as was evident, the most out of the raw material of fact. He had the art—and it is a valuable one in its way—of manufacturing a readable letter out of a small circumstance. There was a great deal to write about, and he wrote profusely and vigorously, and in high colors; and his letters were published throughout the north. He continued constantly to give himself conspicuity. The most important fact in the current history of Kansas, except the Border Ruffian raid, judging from his letters, was his tremendous and fortuitous presence in that unhappy territory. It appeared that he was a fire-eater, free-State, but furious—a puritan with a sanctified thirst for blood. In personal appearance, however, he is certainly not a terrible object. He is one of the most diminutive desperadoes we ever encountered—small but savage, brief in stature but intelligent in purpose, freckled but ferocious. He is but about five feet five inches in height, and is as insignificant, when viewed with the naked eye, as Mr. Filibuster Walker—and his eye is perhaps as large and brilliant as that of an exasperated pig. His conversation, like his writings, is bloody and unambiguous. He disposes of the wicked slaveholders as ruthlessly as EMERSON BENNETT slays savages in a novel. He has traveled extensively in the southern States, and is exceedingly knowing on all subjects connected with them. He was for some years employed in newspapers in Charleston, S. C., and all that time was unceasingly in his indignation at the aggressions of Abolitionists upon Southern Rights. He wrote such terrible articles about the atrocious and infernal nigger-stealing North, that Southern editors in dismay struck them out.

The life of Capt. JOHN BROWN by this person is before us. It is dedicated to WENDELL PHILLIPS, RALPH WALDO EMERSON, and HENRY D. THOREAU, "Defenders of the Faithful." EMERSON is quoted as to the glorification of the gallows "like the cross." THOREAU is reckoned upon as authority for the statement that JOHN BROWN "could not have been tried by his peers, for his peers did not exist,"—therefore according to the highest law he should not have been tried. From WENDELL PHILLIPS a pleasing passage is culled—one of those in which the superiority of JOHN BROWN to GEORGE WASHINGTON is set forth.

Concerning the fitness of MR. REDPATH for the task of writing the life of JOHN BROWN, the Browns family are called upon. Mrs. Brown writes she is satisfied Mr. R. "is THE man"—and SALMON BROWN considers him "an able biographer and THE MAN ABOVE ALL OTHERS to write the life of my beloved father."

This man above all others says in his preface:

"A publisher of New York asked me to write a life of JOHN BROWN. He wanted it as a Republican campaign document. I declined. I would not help to light cigars from the fire above the altar."

The publisher must have been as acute as REDPATH was conscientious. A brilliant specimen of Republican campaign document MR. REDPATH would produce with JOHN BROWN for the theme! It would, we imagine, be very largely circulated—by the Administrationists.

MR. REDPATH begins, of course, by talking of himself. He mentions the interesting circumstance that when he heard of JOHN BROWN's arrest he "could neither work nor sleep." He knew Old Brown, loved him, had confidence in his plan of emancipation; and he defended his friend when no other voice was heard to praise him. It is to be hoped that he is greatly comforted by the reflection that he was the first man to proclaim JOHN BROWN a saint.

One of the first features in the life of BROWN is a brief autobiographical sketch of his childhood. He was "a descendent on the side of his father of one of the company of the Mayflower." Certainly, every body had an ancestor in that prolific company of the Mayflower! The descendants of the Mayflower cargo, outnumber the first families of Virginia. Likewise there was an immense amount of fighting done by the Browns folks in the Revolution. Everybody's folks saved the country in the Revolution. But as to the life of this, the great Browns—there is a paragraph of the autobiography detailing "the first thing in his life worth mentioning."

"I cannot tell you of anything in the first four years of John's life worth mentioning, save that at that early age, he was tempted by three large brass pins, belonging to a girl who lived in the family, and stole them. In this, he was detected by his mother, and after having a full day to think of the wrong, received from her a thorough whipping."

This incident is recorded in a chapter entitled "The Father of the Man." There are, we suspect, persons so far gone in unbelief in JOHN BROWN, as to affirm that there was a similarity, possibly faint, but positively distinguishable, between the first and last incidents in his career.

A great many scraps are raked together and thrown into the chapters of this book, MR. REDPATH stitching them together in a very loose way, with his opinions on all subjects bearing upon assassination and emancipation, and personal details regarding those mighty men of war—JOHN BROWN and JAMES REDPATH. He never thinks of comparing the former with any historical person below the stature of WASHINGTON. This is the style:

"History will place John Brown, in her American pantheon, not among Virginia's culprits, but as high, at least, as Virginia's greatest chief."

The repeal of the Missouri Compromise is mentioned in this way: "An infamous statute had been still more infamously repealed."

A good deal of space is given the war in Kansas, all of which MR. REDPATH would have us understand he saw, while he was a considerable portion thereof.

We pass over this, however, and come to the point, where JOHN BROWN, from fighting on the defensive against slavery, became the aggressor. The biographer says:

"John Brown returned to Kansas in the month of November, 1857. What had he been doing since January, when we reported him in Boston? Whetting his sword."

We are explicitly informed he had been doing this by raising funds to arm a company of young men.

He well knew, from his power over men, that should the Kansas difficulties cease, the youths thus drilled would follow him to Harper's Ferry, which for many years he had selected as the grand point of attack on slavery."

REDPATH met BROWN in June, 1858, in Lawrence, K. T. BROWN had disguised himself by allowing his beard to grow, but REDPATH knew him instantly, and BROWN traveled about through Kansas under the name of Capt. Morgan. Here our biographer becomes mysterious, and gives us what a friend heard of Capt. Brown alias Morgan's plans at that time. This friend is MR. REDPATH himself, but he finds it convenient to retire behind the scenes for a few pages and let his "friend" speak. Kagi, who was a correspondent of the N. Y. Tribune, and was killed at Harper's Ferry, invited this "friend" to go a fishing, and sitting on a fence, unfolded the "great plan." We quote a passage here:

"Kagi asked me what I supposed was the plan of Capt. Brown? My answer was, that I thought it had reference to the Indian territory and the Southwestern States. He shook his head, and gradually unfolded the whole of their plans, a portion of which only has been elucidated in the Harper's Ferry outbreak. I shall not, for obvious reasons, give the full details. A full account of the convention in Canada was made, as well as of the organization, its extent and objects thereby effected.

The mountains of Virginia were named as the place of refuge, and as a country admirably

bly adapted in which to carry on a guerilla warfare. In the course of the conversation Harper's Ferry was mentioned as a point to be seized but not held, on account of the arsenal. The white members of the company were to act as officers of different guerilla bands, under the general command of John Brown, were to be composed of Canadian refugees, and the Virginia slaves who would join them. A different time of the year was mentioned for the commencement of the warfare from that which has lately been chosen. It was not anticipated that the first movement would have any other appearance to the masters than a slave stampede, or local insurrection at worst. The planters would pursue their chattels and be defeated. The military would then be called out and would also be defeated. It was not intended that the movement should appear to be of large dimensions, but that gradually increasing in magnitude, it should as it opened, strike terror into the heart of slave States, by the amount of organization it would exhibit and the strength it gathered. They anticipated after the first blow had been struck that by the aid of the free and Canadian negroes who would join them, they would inspire confidence in the slaves and induce them to rally. No intention was expressed of gathering a large body of slaves and removing them to Canada. On the contrary, Kagi clearly stated in answer to my inquiries, that the design was to make the fight in the mountains of Virginia, extending it to North Carolina and Tennessee, and also to the swamps of South Carolina if possible. Their purpose was not the extradition of one or of a thousand slaves, but their liberation in the States where they were born, and where now held in bondage. "The mountains and swamps of the South were intended by the Almighty," said John Brown to me afterwards, "for a refuge for the slave, and a defence against the oppressor." Kagi spoke of having marked out a chain of counties, extending continuously through South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi. He had traveled over a large portion of the region indicated, and from his own personal knowledge and with the assistance of Canadian negroes who had escaped from those States, they had arranged a general plan of attack. The blow struck at Harper's Ferry was to have been in the spring, when the planters were busy and the slaves most needed. The arms in the arsenal were to be taken to the mountains, with such slaves as joined. The telegraph wires were to be cut, and the rail road tracks torn up in all directions. As fast as possible other bands beside the original ones were to be formed, and a continuous chain of posts established in the mountains. They were to be supported by provisions taken from the farms of the oppressors. They expected to be speedily and constantly reinforced—first, by Canadian negroes, and next by slaves themselves. The intention was to hold the egress to the free States as long as possible, in order to retreat when that was advisable. Kagi, however, expected to retreat Southward. \* \* \*

The constitution adopted at Chatham was intended as the framework of organization.—Men were more easily managed by forms of law. This was one of the purposes to be served by the Brown raid Government. Another was to alarm the oligarchy by discipline and the show of organization. In their terror they would imagine the whole North was upon them pell-mell, as well as all their slaves. Kagi said John Brown anticipated that by a system of forbearance to non-slaveholders many of them might be induced to join them."

Here again the mysterious REDPATH (by the way, what a sanguinary name!) comes forth in his own person, and says:

"My friend here explained at great length another well devised plan of an extended insurrection in the Southern States; but as its publication might prevent its successful execution—and of that, or an attempt to fulfil it, there is no doubt in my own mind—I deem it more prudent to suppress this portion of his narrative."

As to how well John Brown's plans were known, Mr. Kagi's friend said:

Kagi stated that no politician in the Republican or any other party knew of their plans, and but few of the Abolitionists.

Among the sayings of John Brown recorded at this time are the following:

"Nat Turner, with fifty men, held Virginia five weeks. The same number, well organized and armed, can shake the system out of the State."

"Twenty men in the Alleghenies could break Slavery in pieces in two years."

The next thing in order is a highly inflated account of the invasion of Missouri by Brown and Kagi, and their exploits in running off slaves. One incident of this foray is related as follows:

Kagi went on the Southern side of the Little Osage, and called at several houses for the purpose of rescuing slaves. But he failed to find one until he reached the house of David Cruse. That robber of God's poor children, on learning the purpose of the party raised his rifle to fire, but he was shot dead before he pulled the trigger. He had one slave only—who immediately filled his place in the census of freemen.

The terrible Redpath thinks, we have no doubt, there is an appearance of bravery in telling of a murder in this cool style. Under the head "Assembling to Conspire," we read:

"In the Canadian provinces there are thousands of fugitive slaves, \* \* \* all of them are deadly enemies of the South. Five hundred of them at least annually visit the slave States, passing from Florida to Harper's Ferry, on heroic errands of mercy and deliverance.—They have carried the underground railroad and the underground telegraph into nearly every Southern State."

Speaking of the Harper's Ferry raid, Mr. Redpath says:

People called the attempt an insane one; but they didn't know that many hundreds of men,

earnest haters of the slavery whose terrors they had known, and drilled for the service were eagerly awaiting in the Canadian provinces for the signal to be given at Harper's Ferry, to hasten Southward and join the army of Immediate Emancipation.

And Mr. REDPATH informs us that he has light on the subject of the constitution of the JOHN BROWN Provisional Government, which he cannot impart to the world. He says:

"To persons familiar with it, there is neither insanity nor inconsistency in the instrument; but on the contrary, every evidence of a judicious and humane statesmanship. *The day will yet come when John Brown's name will stand first in the list of American statesmen.*"

Certainly Browns will be remembered according to this conceited and malignant fanatic, and others of the same stripe, when WASHINGTON is forgotten. JEFFERSON, HAMILTON, and MADISON, must pale their ineffectual fires before his statesmanship!

One more extract and we leave this book, which if it serves no other useful purpose than that of contributing largely to make the memory of the Harper's Ferry raid more abhorrent than ever to the feelings of every intelligent man in the country, will not have been published in vain:

"It was the original intention of Captain Brown to seize the Arsenal at Harper's Ferry on the night of the 24th of October, and to take the arms there deposited to the neighboring mountains, with a number of the wealthier citizens of the vicinity as hostages, until they should redeem themselves by liberating an equal number of their slaves. When at Baltimore, for satisfactory reasons, he determined to strike the blow that was to shake the slave system to its foundations, on the night of the 17th. One of the men who fought at Harper's Ferry gave me as the chief reason for the precipitate movement, that they suspected there was a Judas in their company.—

\* \* \* But this decision, however necessary, was unfortunate; for the men from Canada, Kansas and New England, and the neighboring free States, who had been told to be prepared for the 24th of October, and were ready to do their duty at Harper's Ferry at that time, were unable to join their captain at this earlier period. Many who started to join the Liberators, halted half way; for the blow had already been struck, and their captain made a captive. Had there been no precipitation, the mountains of Virginia to-day would have been peopled with free blacks, properly officered and ready for field action. John Brown had engaged a competent military officer to take charge of the liberated slaves as soon as it became necessary to descend from the mountains, and meet the militia forces in the field. The negroes, also, in the neighboring counties, who had promised to be ready on the 24th of October, were confused by the precipitate attack, and before they could act in concert—which they can only do by secret nocturnal meetings—were watched, overpowered, and deprived of every chance to join their heroic Liberators."