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## DEFENCE OF KANSAS.

By Henry Ward Beecher.

A battle is to be fought. If we are wise, it will be bloodless. If we listen to the pusillanimous counsels of men who have never shown one throb of sympathy for Liberty, we shall have blood to the horses' bridles. If we are firm and prompt to obvious duty, if we stand by the men of Kansas, and give them all the help that they need, the flame of war will be quenched before it bursts forth, and both they of the West, and we of the East, shall, after some angry mutterings, rest down in peace. But if our ears are poisoned by the advice of men who never rebuke violence on the side of power, and never fail to inveigh against the self-defence of wronged Liberty, we shall invite aggression and civil war. And let us know assuredly that civil war will not burst forth in Kansas without spreading. Now, if bold wisdom prevails, the conflict will be settled afar off, in Kansas, and without blows or blood. But timidity and indifference will bring down blows there, which will not only echo in our houses, hitherward, but will, by and by, lay the foundation for an armed struggle between the whole North and the South. Shall we let the spark kindle? or shall we quench it now? But, that intelligent citizens may the better judge, let the facts of this case be reviewed.

At the adoption of our Constitution, a system of Slavery, thought to be then declining, and that would be ejected by the *vis medicatrix* of the spirit of Liberty among the people and in their institutions, received unexpected vigor and growth from various commercial and political reasons; and from being a mere peccant humor in the blood, it has well nigh come to be the blood itself of this great Government! So that, with an outward form of Freedom, with laws and institutions bearing the civil aspect of Liberty, the veins of this Government are filled with black blood, and the heart and every artery beat with the fatal current of Slavery.

In 1819, Slavery demanded a portion of free territory. It was refused. The fierce battle that followed was not fought



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out to the end, as it should have been. The Compromise of 1820—like every compromise since, and like all compromises since the world began, between unscrupulous Power and timid Liberty—was but a device of Knavery for taking breath. The peace always promised for such concession is a peace for repairing damages, for forging arms, and for arraying new influences and implements. Liberty was bribed to yield a noble province to the devastations of Slavery, with the solemn guarantee, that no Slavery should ever touch the soil north of a given line; *that*, by the moral pledge of the whole South, expressed through a legislative act, was made inviolate to Freedom. It was a treacherous pact. It was hollow from the beginning. While the territory concerned lay far beyond the reach of emigration, while it was a hunter's wilderness, it was not molested. The moment that the growth of our country brought our population to the borders of this Territory, and it was soon to be settled, Slavery, without an appeal to the people, without the suspicion of the coming up of such a question in Congress, by a *coup d'état*, annulled this agreement for Liberty, and declared Kansas and Nebraska alike open to all settlers, and that their institutions should be determined for Freedom or Slavery by the will of their actual settlers.

The feet of Freedom are nimble. The feet of Slavery, shod with iron for crushing, move slowly. A thousand free settlers will move with all their utensils to a region, before a hundred men with the torpid foot of Slavery can move or start.

Liberty is so rich, that it is apt to ferment. Slavery has but a single selfishness, and is not embarrassed by conflicting interests. Liberty, breeding innumerable industries, and stirring within men life and independence, is full of divisions and strifes. Slavery cannot split. It is thin, gaunt, compact, tenacious. In productive organizing force, Liberty is mighty; in councils and concert, she is weak. In creative force, Slavery is imbecile; but in ambition and in council, a unit and efficient.

If the South were to attempt to cope with the North, on the field of Kansas, by simple emigration, by taking possession of the land for industry, they would be defeated before they began. This was apparent. The only hope lay in violence. Violence was tried. At the hiss of an unscrupulous man, hordes of wild and indolent fellows, that hang about the towns and cities of slave States, as gigantic vermin, rushed into Kansas, crushed the free and actual settlers at the polls, and by a wholesale fraud, not even denied or disguised, reared up a Legislature whose office it was to forge law for the benefit of Slavery and for the extinction of Liberty. And well they performed their work.

Consider this wrong, O ye freemen of the North! This was the Territory given to Freedom by the God who made it; by the



institutions and spirit of the country which owned it; by the desires of the North, and by the most solemn agreements of the South.

When the day came for Freedom to take it, the South broke down its treacherous promises, opened the gates, and let forth its children to enter the race against Liberty; yet, solemnly declaring that the one which took possession first, should hold and control it. Free settlers took it. Slavery lagged behind, and lost it.

Seeing itself defeated in this nefarious scheme, the South, treacherous again, poured armed men across her border, to plant by violence a Legislature there; and this coerced and fraudulent Legislature dared to legalize Slavery, to defend it against even discussion, by binding a law around every free throat like a halter. Lest it be thought that we exaggerate, we give two sections of the laws of this pseudo-Legislature.

“SEC. 11. If any person print, write, introduce into, publish, or circulate, or cause to be brought into, printed, written, published, or circulated, or shall knowingly aid or assist in bringing into, printing, publishing, or circulating, within this Territory, any book, paper, pamphlet, magazine, handbill, or circular, containing any statements, arguments, opinions sentiment, doctrine, advice, or innuendo, calculated to produce a disorderly, dangerous, or rebellious disaffection among the slaves in this Territory, or to induce such slaves to escape from the service of their masters, or to resist their authority, he shall be guilty of felony, and be punished by imprisonment at hard labor for a term not less than five years.”

“SEC. 12. If any free person, by speaking or writing, assert or maintain that persons have not the right to hold slaves in this Territory, or shall introduce into this Territory, print, publish, write, circulate, or cause to be introduced in this Territory, written, printed, published, or circulated, in this Territory, any book, paper, magazine, pamphlet, or circular, containing any denial of the right of persons to hold slaves in this Territory, such person shall be deemed guilty of felony, and punished by imprisonment at hard labor for a term of not less than two years.”

It was to such laws that armed scoundrels of Missouri swore that the free settlers of Kansas should submit. Northern men, taught to think, to read, to discuss, to make the commerce of opinions free as the air that surrounded them, though in an immense majority, were required, by a pitiful crew of wretches thrust over the border of the State for a mere purpose of violence, to accept these laws, that outrage every institution of the land, and every historic antecedent of our country, or be cut down and shot. It was thought, perhaps, that these sturdy set-



tlers could be made to throw up the undigested milk of Liberty, as easily as they do who disgrace New England in the chief places of Government at Washington. But the men of Kansas were men of stomach. They had digested every crumb of Liberty. It had gone into their blood and bones. It had fashioned their heart and conscience. It had made men and Christians of them.

When the ill-gathered rabble drew near to Lawrence, threatening to raze it to the ground unless they would yield up every sentiment of honor, and fall down before Satan and worship him, the men of Lawrence raised their defences, took their arms, determined to beat off violence by force.

That courage saved them. The rifle brought peace. Had they been unarmed, had they been pusillanimous, had they had such Christians as infest the North, who justify arms for tyrants, but inveigh against self-defence on the side of Freedom, we should have had a monstrous tragedy of violence and blood.

The storm was held back, but not dispersed. The same men are still in Kansas, face to face. The same ruthless assault from the South will be renewed. The same manly breasts will meet the war. Already we hear the muttering in the clouds of those thunder voices which will yet roll over the prairies and reverberate along the Alleghanies! There is but little time, but that little may save us from civil war! It is a spark now. A foot may tread it out. But if it kindles, it will sweep the prairies in sheets of flame. The foot that should tread it out was bred among the New Hampshire hills. But the shadow of the Government, black as midnight, falls upon Free State men; its lurid smile is with the aggressor. When God stood among the oppressed, Egypt was dark, and Goshen was light. In our day, Rulers cast the blaze of full favor upon Egypt, and the scorn and blackness of their wrath upon the land of Goshen!

Who, then, are these armed men, that already confront each other, and between whom this whole land is called to decide? How have they come into this Territory, and what are their errands? On the one side are the representatives of civilization; on the other, of barbarism. On the one side, stand men of Liberty, Christianity, industry, arts, and of universal prosperity; on the other, are the waste and refuse materials of a worn-out Slave State population—men whose ideas of society and civilization are comprised in the terms, a rifle, a horse, a hound, a slave, tobacco, and whisky; beyond these there is nothing but an annual uproarious camp-meeting, where they get just enough religion to enable them to find out that the Bible justifies all the immeasurable vices and wrongs of Slavery. The Free State men come hither with books, with newspapers, with free schools, with



Lyceums, with churches, and the whole retinue of beneficent institutions of Christian civilization.

The Slave State men come without books—without enough education to read, if they had them—without schools, or a wish for them. They come with statutes framed for making free thought a sin, free speech a penitentiary offence, a free press punishable with death if it in the least loosens the bonds of oppression.

The men of the North come with rare industry, with mechanic arts, with all improved implements of husbandry. They build towns, they found cities, they convert a wilderness to a garden, and will transmit to coming generations an inheritance such as Old England and such as New England never saw.

The men of the South, reared where labor was a disgrace, are without mechanic arts, without habits of industry, without organizing tendencies, without the creative force which builds up new societies. They come to curse the land with a system of husbandry which the earth detests, as well it may, for the foot of the slave burns the soil like fire. It is the agriculture of exhaustion. It is the husbandry of impoverishment. If the South inoculates the State with her leprosy, the plains of Kansas are fairer and richer to-day as a wilderness, than they ever will be again. For Slavery robs first the slave, and then the soil. It sucks the blood from everything it touches. And nothing can fatten upon it, except the cunning few that sit upon the middle of the web—over-swollen spiders—while the rest swing in the edges thereof, mere skeleton insects.

The men of the North come upon the best, and the men of the South upon the worst, errand that ever engaged men. Peace, and light, and love, and hope, and joy, go with the one—war, and blood, and cruelty, wasting and despair, go with the other.

The representatives of civilization have come lawfully, peacefully, to become actual settlers. The representatives of barbarism have come unlawfully, violently, with no intent of residence, but only to put the sword to the throat of freemen, and the brand to their dwellings, and then to leave to the slow immigration of Slavery this stained victory.

There was never so strong an appeal to public sympathy as that which is presented in the case of Kansas free settlers. Their emigration was a mission of mercy, full of the ripest fruits of Christianity. Their conduct has been noble. They have borne hardships without faltering; they have borne outrage and persecution with patience, returning good for evil. They have suffered wrongs, manifold and infinitely provoking, without retaliation. When aggression on one occasion was pushed so sorely that their patience failed, some of the men said, "We cannot bear such wrongs." The reply made by Pomeroy will become



a maxim of Christian men—"Be patient! your wrongs are your very strength!"

When the armed day came, and their adversaries came out to consume them, then, and only then, they took up arms, and surrounded their homes with living men, determined not to attack, but never to surrender.

They stood on free soil. They felt free hearts beating in their bosoms. But no flag of their country waved over their head. An army of the United States, made up mostly of aliens, carried the flag of their country over to the side of their persecutors. Yet, deserted, betrayed, and wronged beyond the measure of any but heroic patience, they nobly redeemed their lives, and, without one drop of blood spilt, scattered their foes. Shall the prayers, the help, the sympathy of the free men of the North be withheld, while the bugle is sounding through the South, and men are gathering, and weeks only are left between this day and that on which battle shall once more unfold its wings, not again to be closed until the earth has drunk blood to its fill?

But if, with prompt liberality, we fortify those heroic men that are there, the emissaries of evil will come up, look, be afraid, and pass away. False peace will bring certain war. Arms and courage will inevitably secure an unbroken peace.

Once, when England only asserted the right to tax the colonies without representation, the colonies rebelled, and went to war. But now a foreign Legislature has been imposed upon Kansas. That Legislature has legalized Slavery, against the known wishes of nine-tenths of the actual settlers. It has decreed that no man shall enter the Territory, who will not take an oath of allegiance to this spurious legislation. It has made it death to give liberty to men escaping from oppression. It has muzzled the press. It has forbidden discussion. It has made free speech a penitentiary offence. The rights for which the old colonists fought were superficial, compared with these. These are rights which lie at the very heart of personal liberty. Indeed, there can be no personal freedom, when free speech, a free press, a free canvass and discussion, are penitentiary offences! These are the laws that the President is determined to enforce! Congress is to be asked money to sustain this government in Kansas, and to pay for an army to cut the throats of every free citizen that will not yield to this infamy!

Already the Senate, controlled by the slave interest, arrogantly offers to snatch from the House its immemorial right of originating appropriation bills. The *pretence* is to save money. The *reason* is to gain money for Kansas butchery. They fear that the House will not appropriate for such a nefarious abomination as that which broods the plains. The Senate knows that every dollar voted for the army and for Kansas, will, in the



hands of the Administration, be a bullet in the heart of a free settler. The House ought to know it too, and act accordingly. The whole country ought to know it.

New England has given to the land a President who is determined that Kansas shall have Slavery or blood. His second proclamation is like the apocalyptic vision. "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain, burning with fire, was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood." So will armed Slavery be cast into Kansas. But will not these rivers of blood dash against the Alleghanies, and that fire flash along the line between the North and South?

Peace in Kansas will be peace everywhere. War there will be war all over the land. Now it can be stopped. But fear will not do it. A truculent peace will not do it. Indolence and presumptuous prayer will but hasten the mischief. When tyrants are in arms, they who cry peace become their confederates. Manliness, action, courage, and ample preparations for defence, will stop the danger. The Providence that will help us is that Providence which we help. God works for those who work for Him. When He answers prayer for harvests, He inspires men to work, and petitions for crops and harvests are answered through ploughs and spades. And God will answer prayers for peace, by inspiring men with justice, with abhorrence of oppression, by making good men bold and active, and bad men feeble and cowardly; by stopping the ears of the community to the counsels of cowards and hypocrites.

Let every man in this awful crisis not fail to PRAY. And, that they may pray without hypocrisy, let them watch and work! How shall we dare ask God to save us from bloodshed, when we will not use the means which He has put into our hands? Faith without works, and prayer without works, are dead—stone dead. Let emigrants go thither by hundreds, and pray as they go! Let them that have money now pour it out, and pray as they give! Let them that have sons in Kansas send them arms, and pray that they may have no occasion to use them; but that if they must be used, that the son may so wield them that the mother be not ashamed of the son whom she bore! Let men that have influence speak out! Let ministers and Christian freemen now, if ever, speak against barbarism, and uphold the whole retinue of Christian institutions! Let those whose tongue has been hitherto palsied by evil advisers, now loosen their tongue and speak!

*Of whom will the land take counsel?* There have been two sorts of counsellors hitherto. One has pointed out for twenty years the nature of Slavery, its tendencies, the dangers which it threatened; and all the prophecies have come true. The other kind of counsellors have predicted peace, dissuaded from action,