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Charles Robinson and the Kansas Epoch



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CHARLES ROBINSON
AND THE
KANSAS EPOCH

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1871

Charles Robinson and the Kansas Epoch

*There are no greater heroes in the history of our country than
Eli Thayer of Massachusetts and Charles Robinson of Kansas.*

WILLIAM H. TAFT.

NEXT to the Revolutionary Period, the Kansas Epoch furnishes the chapter of importance and absorbing interest in the history of our country.

The creation of Kansas Territory was a political expedient, undertaken and exploited at the instance of Southern statesmen for the purpose of restoring, between the Free States and the Slave States, the "equilibrium," or balance, of power, that had been disturbed by the admission of California into the Union as a Free State.

The maintenance of this equilibrium between the sections had been the special concern of the South from the time of its establishment by the admission into the Union of Louisiana. The loss of it was, to the South, a political catastrophe; and the reinstatement of it was in the highest degree necessary to safeguard the institution of slavery against legislation inimical thereto, then becoming imminent as a result of the growth of anti-slavery sentiment. The heroic measures adopted by the South in its attempt to further this end precipitated a crisis in public affairs that shook the foundations of the Government and involved the existence of the Nation.

The importance of the public services rendered by Charles Robinson in this contention is not exceeded by those of any citizen in the history of our country, and entitles him to a broader fame than has yet been accorded to him. It is true the events which he promoted and controlled were localized within the boundaries of Kansas Territory, but the struggle for supremacy here was the affair of the Nation. It was between the two great factions of the country, the North and the South, then practically divided in sympathy and interest upon the subject of the further extension of slavery. No American was ever charged with greater responsibility; the future of a race and the destiny of this Nation were in his hands.

The slavery question was not new. It was a disturbing factor in the first councils of the Republic, and had evoked the intense solicitude of every subsequent generation. The differences that patriotism and statesmanship had failed to adjust during more than sixty years of debate and diplomatic effort had, at that time, been transferred from the forum to the people, from Congress to the field of actual physical conflict.

Slavery was originally a merciful institution, suggested by the earlier promptings of humanity. Instead of giving up prisoners of war to indiscriminate slaughter, it gradually became the practice of victors to make slaves of them, and there were no exceptions to the rule because of race, color or social conditions. Our Pilgrim Fathers made slaves of Indians. They made a slave of the son of the Indian King Philip, and sold him in the Barbadoes, where he died under the lash of the slave-driver. White men were sold into

slavery in this country for debt. They were called "redemptioners." Lord Altham, of Ireland, was thus sold at Philadelphia in 1728, and during twelve years he was bought and sold by different masters in Lancaster County of that State. It is only a little more than a hundred years since the corsairs of the Barbary States raided the seas, and captured hundreds of American sailors, whom they sold into slavery.

Negro slavery existed at one time or another in all of the Thirteen Colonies; but by the year 1804 it had been abolished in the seven Northern States. That portion of our population then, having no further pecuniary interest in the matter, moved up onto higher ground and became critical. It began to take cognizance of the objectionable features of slavery, and to contemplate with horror that which it had theretofore observed with complacency. The inhumanity of the system, the heartless cruelties inflicted upon the helpless slaves, the notorious immorality inseparably connected therewith, the enervating and demoralizing influence it wrought upon society—all these were taken up and enlarged upon until public sentiment revolted at the spectacle, and organizations along political lines were formed to oppose the further extension of this crime against humanity.

In the South the trend of public sentiment was in the opposite direction. Broadening markets for Southern products awakened that section into new life and activity. With the invention and use of improved machinery for the culture and care of their great staple, cotton, came a season of unparalleled prosperity which disclosed before the Southern vision a vista of illimitable possibilities. The demand for

slaves increased beyond precedent; the slave markets presented scenes of wild excitement and speculation, and the breeding of slaves and the traffic in them became an established and profitable industry. It was only natural that the South should resent, as both an infringement upon its rights under the Constitution and a menace to its prosperity, any attempt on the part of the North to abridge its sphere of operations or "meddle with its domestic affairs." Thus were the two sections of the Union arrayed against each other upon this question.

The claims of the two factions to the public domain lying west of the "States" had been satisfactorily adjusted in 1787, both sections accepting the Ohio River as the line of division between them. But with the acquisition of Louisiana the problem of "dividing the public domain" was revived. Beyond the Mississippi lay the great plains, devoid of any topographical suggestion of a line that might demark the sections. The question of partitioning this territory between the free and the slave-holding sections thereof was precipitated upon Congress in 1817 by the presence of Missouri at the portals of the Union, asking for admission into the family of States. The northern boundary of the new State was drawn at nearly forty-one degrees north latitude, suggesting the Platte River as the dividing line from the Missouri River to the Mountains. Slavery had existed in Missouri Territory under the Territorial Government, and the Constitution of the new State provided for its continuance. To receive Missouri thus into the Union was to fix the new line dividing the Trans-Mississippi country much farther north than the anti-slavery sentiment of the

country was willing to concede. It was accepted, however, after exhaustive debate and bitter controversy, with a stipulation forever prohibiting slavery in all of the remaining territory acquired by the Louisiana purchase north of thirty-six degrees thirty minutes north latitude.

In this contention, the aggressive attitude of the North against slavery was clearly developed; and the South, learning the lesson that only by force of numbers and representation could the institution of slavery be preserved, gave itself diligently to the work of extending its territory and strengthening its resources. The scheme adopted to accomplish these results was the most comprehensive ever attempted in American politics. It involved upon a grand scale the reformation of the boundaries of our country; providing for territorial expansion on the south and an abridgement of territory on the north. All of which was, in due process of time, successfully executed.

The United States claimed the "Oregon Country" at that time, up to fifty-four degrees and forty minutes north latitude. We held the Spanish title thereto, and had rights of our own by virtue of discoveries and occupation to offset the claims of England. These pretensions were supported by public sentiment in the South, although especially accented in the Northern States. So popular had this sentiment become that the Democratic party, in the presidential campaign of 1844, took advantage of the fact, and appealed with great success to the patriotic spirit and war spirit of the voters with a campaign cry in the catchy alliteration "Fifty-four Forty or Fight." It transpired after the election that Mr. Calhoun, Secretary of State, had

already proposed to Her Majesty's Minister, Pakenham, to settle the boundary dispute by adopting the forty-ninth parallel as the line of division between the two countries, with Vancouver and its strategic advantages thrown in for good measure. The territory thus voluntarily given up to Great Britain would have made three Northern States each as large as Oregon. In the meantime, the Republic of Texas had been annexed, and admitted into the Union as a Slave State, with a provision that it might subsequently be divided into four States. The Conquest of Mexico, and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo completed the list of these undertakings.

By this treaty a million square miles—an area from which twenty States of the size of Pennsylvania could be made—were added to “southern” territory, and the problem of maintaining the “parity” for all time was apparently solved.

Such, however, was not the fact. The immediate results of the war, and of the annexation of Mexican territory, were exactly the reverse of what had been expected. Instead of strengthening the position of the South in the Union, they laid the foundation for the destruction of the Southern oligarchy. The South sowed the seeds; but the North gathered in the sheaves. The first disaster was the defeat of the Administration in the election of 1848, which made possible the admission of California as a Free State.

While the war was strictly a Democratic conception and was being promoted expressly to exploit the fortunes of the Democratic party, there were no generals of that political faith to lead, and win the laurels of victory. Scott and Taylor, both Whigs, by virtue of

their military rank commanded the armies of invasion. These Generals would inevitably win the splendid victories of the war and become popular candidates for the presidency. The danger was anticipated, and the "situation" corrected as far as possible. The increased military establishment, requiring the appointment of three Major-Generals and seven Brigadier-Generals, Democrats without military education or experience were promptly selected for these places, and a bill was introduced in Congress, and passed the House, to create the grade of Lieutenant-General, in order that Thomas H. Benton might be appointed to supersede General Scott. Taylor's army was depleted immediately after Buena Vista, and Scott was relieved of command by General William O. Butler immediately after the capture of the City of Mexico; but it was too late. The war was over. "Old Rough and Ready" and Scott were the heroes, and Taylor was elected President in a whirl of military enthusiasm.

The maximum of disaster was to follow. Immediately after the conclusion of the Peace Treaty with Mexico, gold was discovered on the Pacific Coast, and the allurements of fortune invited thereto ambitious and adventurous spirits from every land. The sturdy, rugged men who went there to dig for the precious metal were opposed to slavery on general principles, and had neither time nor inclination to study the philosophy of Southern Rights. In 1849 the people of California adopted a constitution, by the terms of which slavery was forever prohibited, and sought to be admitted into the Union. After a memorable struggle in Congress, second only to the contention over the admission of Missouri and over the adoption of the

"Wilmot proviso," California was admitted as a Free State. There were compromises and concessions in the premises, one being the passage of the "Fugitive Slave Law," but none that could in any degree compensate the South. It had lost a State from the very territory it had secured for its exclusive benefit and use; the "equilibrium" between the sections had been destroyed; the North held the balance of power; and there was no territory south of the "dead line" available for the creation of a compensating Slave State.*

From a political point of view, the plight of the South was absolutely deplorable. One sole resource remained, namely, to create a Territory and from it make such a State. The only portion of the public domain that could by any possibility be made available for the purpose was that lying immediately west of Missouri; but from this, slavery had been expressly excluded by the terms of the Missouri Compromise. And, besides, the lands were occupied under treaties by various tribes of Indians. These were serious complications and might have deterred more conservative statesmen; but, spurred by the direst necessity, the South faced the problem, and, in 1853, with the change of the Administration, undertook the creation of a Slave State upon this territory.

The political situation at the time was favorable for the accomplishment of the task; the Administra-

*During the pendency of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mr. Trist, the American Commissioner, said to the Mexican Commissioners, who desired to have slavery excluded from the territory to be ceded: "Were this territory increased tenfold in value, and, in addition to that, covered a foot thick with pure gold, on the single condition that slavery should be forever excluded therefrom, I would not entertain the offer for a moment, nor even think of sending it to Washington. No American President would dare to submit such a treaty to the Senate."

tion was Democratic; its ablest leaders were Southern men; and upon a question affecting so vitally the welfare of the whole South, the Administration could be depended upon to render such aid and assistance as might be necessary. The danger attending the attempt to execute the undertaking lay in the shock to the public conscience that would result from the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and the effect that might have upon public affairs. The gravity of the situation was not overlooked nor lightly considered. The crisis had long been anticipated. The ultimate repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the opening of the territory west of Missouri to slavery had been incorporated into the program with the annexation of Texas and the conquest of Mexico. The loss of California forced the issue. It then became an immediate political necessity; the redemption from failure of the whole Southern scheme depended upon the successful execution of this movement. It was to be the last act of that great political drama. With Kansas admitted as a Slave State, the commanding position of the South in the Union would be restored. It could then prevent for all time the admission of other Free States, unless balanced by compensating Slave States; and when the existing territorial limits should become exhausted, another conquest could secure for it the remainder of Mexico. The necessary legislation was therefore decided upon, and, without reserve or apology, Mr. Dixon, who had succeeded to the seat of Henry Clay in the Senate, arose in his place and announced that when the bill to create the Territory of Nebraska should come before that body he would move "that the Missouri Compromise be repealed, and that the citizens

of the several States shall be at liberty to take and hold their slaves in any of the Territories." This peremptory challenge by the Southern Democracy was ominous of the coming storm. The demand for this concession was in the nature of an ultimatum to the North, or an alternative proposition; namely, if the North would consent to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the restoration of the equilibrium between the sections by the admission of Kansas as a Slave State, the Southern States preferred to, and would, remain in the Union; otherwise, they would disrupt it and set up a Government for themselves. There was no middle ground for agreement or compromise upon the questions at issue, and none was attempted.

May 30th, 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska bill became a law, and by its terms the Missouri Compromise was repealed. The result was greeted with wild demonstrations of joy throughout the South. In Washington a salute of one hundred guns greeted the passage of the act; in the North bells were tolled, announcing "the death of Freedom."

Because of the geographical situation, the Southern statesmen expected an easy victory. According to their estimates, they could colonize the Territory from Missouri and the South, elect a Territorial Legislature, frame a State Constitution, and, with the Congress and National Administration favorable to their course, be admitted into the Union before any considerable immigration could arrive from the North.

These propositions were all reasonable, and would have been successfully executed but for the prompt and systematic organization of colonization societies in the North, in aid of emigration to Kansas. The

plan originated with Hon. Eli Thayer, a member of the Massachusetts Legislature, who, while the Kansas-Nebraska bill was pending in Congress, obtained a charter for the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Society, which, within sixty days after the passage of the act, placed the first band of colonists in the Territory. The affairs of the Company were placed under the direction of Charles Robinson, who located the colony in what is now Douglas County, and founded the town of Lawrence, named by him in honor of Amos A. Lawrence, of Massachusetts. This was the advance guard of the Army of Freedom that was moving up to resist the designs of the Slave Power and prevent the further extension of its dominions. Only the prompt arrival of these colonists upon the scene, and the timely and intelligent intervention in affairs by their wise and courageous leader, secured the success of the movement. Delay, which often impedes such efforts, would in this case have proved fatal. If these colonists had not been present in force, there would have been no invasions of the polls by citizens of Missouri, nor any necessity for them, nor any of the disgraceful scenes incident thereto, that aroused the righteous indignation of all Christendom. The Border Ruffians and the Red Legs would have found no place in history, and civilization would have been spared the spectacle of crimes and atrocities being perpetrated upon citizens of the United States by officers of the Federal Government. Kansas would have quietly and peacefully entered the Union as a Slave State; the supremacy of the South would have been reestablished and slavery intrenched for all time. These prospective conditions were all reversed by the Northern invasion.

Robinson was especially equipped by heredity, education and experience for the difficult role he was to assume in the Kansas struggle. The blood of the French and English kings coursed through his veins* and gave him the commanding poise and mein that make leaders of men and masters of destiny.

Attracted to California by the public interest the discovery of gold there had awakened, he crossed the plains in 1849, and settled at Sacramento, where public affairs, rather than prospecting for gold, absorbed his attention. A class of settlers called "Squatters" were involved in controversy about the titles to their lands, with speculators who claimed title by virtue of deeds from one Captain Sutter, who held under a grant of land from a former Mexican governor. Recognition of such titles had been provided by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The boundaries of these grants were very indefinitely described, and this one was interpreted to cover almost any property that was desirable. In the attempt of the speculators to eject the Squatters from their claims, before the validity of their titles had been determined, Robinson espoused the cause of the Squatters and became their counsellor and leader. His position in relation to the controversy was defined in a resolution adopted by the Squatters, to wit:

"WHEREAS, The land in California is presumed to be public land; therefore

"Resolved, That we will protect any settler in possession of land to the extent of one lot in the city and

*NOTE:—The ancestry of Charles Robinson runs back through twenty-two generations to Queen Isabelle, mother of Henry III. and wife of King John of England. Through Isabelle his line of descent runs through the long line of Carlovingian Kings and Emperors back to Charles Martel and Pepin Heristal.

one hundred and sixty acres in the country, until a valid title shall be shown for it."

A crisis was reached August 13th, 1850, when the Sheriff of Sacramento County ejected a Squatter and seized his property. An armed band of Squatters, led by Robinson and "Captain" Maloney, retook the property and reinstated the settler. In the fighting several persons were killed, including "Captain" Maloney, on one side, and the Sheriff and the City Auditor of Sacramento on the other. Robinson was among those severely wounded; a rifle ball had passed through his body two inches below his heart. He was held a prisoner and placed aboard a prison ship on the Sacramento River. The speculators won the victory in the battle, but the Squatters won their contention. In the District Court of Sacramento, the Grand Jury found four true bills against Robinson: one for murder, two for assault with intent to kill, and one for conspiracy. While still a prisoner and resting under these indictments, he was elected to the Legislature for the Sacramento District. After the election, the cases against him were dismissed for want of prosecution. While a member of the Legislature, he voted for John C. Fremont for United States Senator, and against a bill to extend slavery over that portion of the State south of thirty-six degrees thirty minutes north latitude. In 1851 he returned to Massachusetts.

Early in July, 1854, a little more than thirty days after the passage of the Enabling Act, Charles Robinson arrived in Kansas Territory.*

*A year after this, attracted by the spectacular struggle then in progress, General Lane arrived in Kansas, and a few months later John Brown came and took up his residence at the home of his son, John Brown, Jr.

The South had not been idle. It, too, had organized colonization societies; and in addition to all such proper methods to promote immigration, it attempted to discourage and obstruct the immigration of Northern men by methods of annoyance, intimidation and violence. In pursuance of this policy, residents of Missouri came into the Territory in great numbers and "marked for preemption" the most desirable tracts of land. These Proslavery men, like the "speculators" at Sacramento, claimed everything; and whenever a Free State man attempted to locate a preemption, a Proslavery man could always be found to assert a prior claim. As Robinson expressed it, "It was the Sacramento game over again, with Squatters' titles instead of Sutter's deeds." Immediately the Lawrence Town Company had purchased the site for the city of Lawrence, numerous claimants appeared, demanding possession, among them John Baldwin. Robinson suggested the plan of settlement adopted in California—"That each settler be protected in his occupancy until a legal decision could be had." This was rejected. October 5th eighteen men, armed and mounted, collected at Baldwin's tent, and the next day war was declared in the following terms:

"KANSAS TERRITORY, October 6th.

"*Dr. Robinson:* Yourself and friends are hereby notified that you will have one-half hour to move the tent which you have on my undisputed claim, and from this date desist from surveying on said claim. If the tent is not moved in one-half hour, we shall take the trouble to move the same.

(Signed) JOHN BALDWIN AND FRIENDS."

The challenge was promptly accepted, as follows:

"To John Baldwin and Friends: If you molest our property, you do it at your peril.

(Signed) C. ROBINSON AND FRIENDS."

After this exchange of courtesies, some thirty Free State men, well armed, joined the Doctor's party and took a position about ten rods from the tent in dispute. The demonstration was sufficient. The incident closed with an indignation meeting, called by the Proslavery element, to "adopt measures that will protect us from all moneyed associations and influences; also the tyrannical encroachments made by the Lawrence Association. On which occasion there will be speeches made to vindicate the Squatter's right of preemption and the protection of his claim until entered." Later an attempt was made to cut down Robinson's house on Mount Oread, but it was abandoned upon his arrival with a few friends.

As the time approached for the selection of a Territorial Delegate to Congress, it transpired that preparations were being made by the Proslavery men to carry the elections; and in pursuance of these arrangements, large numbers of citizens of Missouri appeared at the polls on election day, November 29th, 1854, and voted. The total vote cast was 2,833, of which 1,729 were illegal. The importation of voters was unnecessary, for at that time the Territory was Proslavery by a large majority. Robinson, however, protested to the Governor (Reeder) and asked that the entire vote of the districts receiving the votes of citizens of Missouri be not counted.

The crisis in the whole contention was reached March 30th, 1855, when the election for members of the

Territorial Legislature was carried by the Proslavery party. The Legislature would determine the question of slavery in the Territory and provide the machinery for its admission into the Union as a Slave State. The control of this Legislature was the acme of Southern hope; it was the goal that had been set up a third of a century before by the Southern Propaganda. The scenes enacted in connection with this election were without a parallel in the history of political atrocities. Organized bands of citizens of Missouri invaded the Territory, and in the most brutal and offensive manner took possession of the polls and elected a Proslavery Legislature. They claimed, in justification of their conduct, that the North had sent citizens of the Northern States into the Territory to vote at the elections, and the South had an equal right to do the same thing. When a judge of the election at one of the polls resigned rather than receive the votes of the non-residents, the leader of them said: "We will appoint a judge to represent Missouri. You have two judges on the board, and it is only fair that we should have one to look after our interests."

The victory for the South seemed complete and decisive. Overwhelmed and brushed aside by the force of numbers, the handful of Free State men stood aghast, mute witnesses of the ruthless invasion of their sacred rights. Never was a cause, apparently, more hopelessly and irretrievably lost. The great contention seemed to have been determined. It was the hour of fate. There was one man there, however, whose dauntless spirit no force nor circumstance could intimidate. Amid the bluster and the brawling, the shouting and the swearing, and the tumult of the

drunken, swaggering vandals that had invaded the polls, he stood self-contained and undismayed—the man of destiny, whom the fates had ordained for this emergency and thrown into the breach in the hour of victory to wrest from the victors its priceless trophies. That man was Charles Robinson. In silence he contemplated the carnival of political spoliation, but the next day he despatched George W. Deitzler to Boston with an order for one hundred Sharp's rifles, which were received within thirty days and distributed among his followers at Lawrence. And an intelligent policy of resistance was thereupon formulated and put into practical operation. June 25th, 1855, after publicly resolving to repudiate the fraudulently elected Legislature, and to disregard the laws by it enacted, the people of Lawrence further "*Resolved*, That, in reply to the threats of war so frequently made in our neighboring State, our answer is, '*We are ready*'." His clear comprehension of the magnitude of his responsibility is shown by the closing words of a request written July 26th, 1855, to Eli Thayer, for *more rifles* with which to arm the company organized by Captain Henry Saunders, of which J. B. Abbott was First Lieutenant: "In haste, *Yours for Freedom for the World*." Thus, under his sole leadership, was inaugurated the revolt against the Southern program that won the great victory for the North, that made Kansas a Free State, and involved in its ultimate results the War of the Rebellion and the extinction of slavery.

The outrages committed at the election March 30th were formally reported to the Territorial Governor, and another election was ordered for some of the precincts, to be held the following May. Of these elections

the Southerners took no notice; but when the Legislature convened at Pawnee, they declared vacant the seats of the members chosen at the May election and seated the Proslavery members elected in March. Then, after changing the capital of the Territory to Shawnee Mission, which was voted over the veto of the Governor, they proceeded to enact a code of laws for the Territory. The sections relating to slavery were unique; in a collection of legislative curios they would have distinctive merit. They were intended to encourage the ownership of slaves, and in every possible way promote sentiment favorable thereto, and to stamp out and repress even a semblance of opposition to it by either word or action. The bare expression of dissenting opinion to it constituted a misdemeanor. The theft of a slave was made a capital crime, punishable by death.

The Free State men gained substantially by the passage of these harsh proscriptive measures, which were at once a justification of the rebellion and a confirmation and publication of their grievances to be read of all men; and this, in a contest where the ultimate appeal lay to public sentiment, was invaluable. They strengthened their position further by the movement to form a constitution, and under it seek admission into the Union. The organization of a State Government, with Charles Robinson as Governor, was effected. It brought into their lines ambitious men from the "outs" of the Democratic party, whose power and influence were valuable. The experiment was dangerous, but the substantial gains to be secured thereby warranted the risk. Their situation, under any circumstances, was extremely critical, and the

most serious complications confronted them. To create a standard of loyalty that would justify avowed rebellion against the Territorial Government, created and recognized by the Federal Government, required fine discrimination. To oppose the former and nullify its acts without giving offense to the latter was a delicate problem.

Except in one essential element, the situation and outlook were altogether favorable for the Southerners. "Missouri was nearer than Boston." They were the majority party in the Territory, had the Territorial organization and Legislature, and supporting these were the Federal Administration and its forces. The Northerners had the advantage in *leadership*. Their colonization bureau could be depended upon, in time, to reverse the relations of the parties as to numbers, while the local organization, directed by its wise leader and supported by able, conservative and courageous men, inspired by a single purpose, the creation of a Free State, was incomparable and invincible. From every assault upon it, the South recoiled in defeat and humiliation. They murdered Dow, and Barber, and Brown, and Stewart, and Jones; they attempted to prosecute and punish the Free State men for treason, and, in pursuance thereof, arrested Charles Robinson, who had been elected Governor under the Free State Constitution, and other prominent citizens, and held them for months as prisoners without bail, guarded by United States troops. July 4th, 1856, with a battalion of United States Cavalry and a section of Artillery, under the command of Colonel E. V. Sumner, United States Army, they dispersed the Free State Legislature. They sought by force to prevent Free State men from

entering the Territory, and closed the Missouri River against such travel; and, with United States troops and a Deputy United States Marshal, arrested immigrants who attempted to come into the Territory through Iowa and Nebraska.

Notwithstanding these extreme measures, they made no substantial progress; they won no victories. Passion and prejudice prevailed where calm judgment should have been enthroned, and reason forsook their councils. Outgeneraled and outwitted in their military invasion, the "Wakarusa War," they became the derision and jeer of all parties. By prostituting the opportunities of victory to exploit their vengeance, May 21st, 1856, they discredited their cause and largely alienated the support of their Northern allies. In the sack of Lawrence they set the seal of their defeat; the country refused to uphold such vandalism. That triumph was their Waterloo.

One blot upon the Free State men's escutcheon, one awful crime, the most reprehensible and brutal of all the shocking events of that sanguinary struggle, sullies their otherwise irreproachable record. During the night of May 24th, 1856, three Proslavery men, Allen Wilkinson, William Sherman and John P. Doyle, and two boys, sons of the latter, all living on Pottawatomie Creek, were aroused from their beds, taken a few yards from their homes, and hacked to death with swords, their skulls being split open and their bodies otherwise horribly mutilated. The identity of the perpetrators of this tragedy remained concealed for a long time; later it was proved to be the work of John Brown, assisted by three of the younger members of his family and two Free State men. The motive for

committing the crime was to get the horses owned by the victims. With the possession of these horses, Brown began his spectacular career.

Whittier's famous lines on the affair on the Marais des Cygnes apply with equal force to Brown's work on the Pottawatomie.

These murders stirred the South into a frenzy, and preparations for reprisals were made upon a scale that augured ill for the Free State men. Colonel Sumner, appearing on the scene with his Cavalry, turned back some of the raiders, and for a time prevented the invasion. In September they mobilized their forces and entered the Territory in formidable numbers. What the result of this invasion would have been had their operations been allowed to proceed unchecked to ultimate conclusion, none can say. Fortune again smiled upon the Free State cause. This time, the exigencies of the general political situation intervened. "Bleeding Kansas" had become the paramount issue. The country, North and South, was aflame with excitement. The success of the Democratic party in the Presidential campaign then pending was imperilled by the implication of the Administration with the Proslavery atrocities, and a halt in the proceedings had been ordered from Washington. The Territorial Governor, Wilson Shannon, was removed, and Colonel John W. Geary, a Pennsylvanian, appointed to succeed him. The appointment of Geary was highly gratifying to Charles Robinson. Each had known the other by reputation during the trying times in California, and when they met in Kansas they became frank and confidential friends.

The arrival of Geary at Lecompton September 10th,

1856, was opportune. The most distracting conditions imaginable existed throughout the Territory. In addition to the armed bands of both parties that were raiding the country, fighting battles and despoiling and terrorizing the inhabitants, war upon a grander scale was imminent. A hostile army, twenty-seven hundred strong, led by David R. Atchison, a United States Senator from Missouri, was marching upon Lawrence. The Governor, upon being apprised of the movement, ordered Colonel Philip St. George Cooke, of the United States Army, with five hundred men, then stationed at Lecompton, to move at once to the protection of Lawrence. He arrived on Mount Oread at midnight, September 14th, and placed his command in position to defend the town. Governor Geary arrived the next morning, proceeded to the camp of what now had suddenly become the insurgents, at the mouth of the Wakarusa, and commanded them to retire and disperse. The order was imperative, and, supplemented by the military demonstration, was reluctantly obeyed.

From this blow the Proslavery men never rallied. It was their last invasion in force from Missouri. The Democratic party was victorious at the National election in November; Governor Geary was forced to resign, and Hon. Robert J. Walker was appointed to succeed him. But by the time the new Administration was fairly inaugurated, it was plainly evident that the Free State men had occupied the Territory in such overwhelming numbers that they could never be dislodged. The South stood beaten. The end was at hand. At the election in 1857, the Free State party secured a majority of both branches of the Territorial Legislature. A futile effort to bring the State into the

Union with slavery, under a constitution framed at Lecompton, failed to secure the support of the Democratic majority in the Senate. Even Douglas, the erstwhile champion of the Proslavery party, repudiated it. Thus terminated the heroic struggle on the part of the South to regain its supremacy within the Union; and immediately upon the adverse decision of that struggle it proceeded to devise and formulate ways and means to establish an empire outside of the Union, which led to secession and its consequences.

The record of the work accomplished by Charles Robinson in connection with this political crisis cannot be produced in the space allotted to this article. It is in itself one of the most thrilling chapters in the history of our country. He was Commander-in-Chief as Major-General of the Free State forces in the Wakarusa War, in which the Proslavery leaders were outwitted and outgeneraled and compelled to disband their "Army of Invasion" and retire in ignominy and derision from the State. By his personal courage and heroic bearing he inspired the Free State men to deeds of noble sacrifice and daring. With artistic skill he interested the ambitious in a scheme for Statehood, rich in promise of emoluments and rewards. He was elected Governor, January, 1856, under the "Topeka Constitution," and set up the State Government at Topeka in opposition to the Territorial Legislature, which was dispersed at the point of the sword. With unerring judgment he avoided the pitfalls and snares set for the Free State men to bring them in direct conflict with the authority of the United States, which would have been fatal to the cause. His life was in constant danger. His home was pillaged and burned

to the ground by the Sheriff of Douglas County. The delicate and dangerous role he assumed led into the shadow of treason. He organized the Free State men as a military force and armed them with the most modern implements of war, which gave them courage to resolve at the Big Springs Convention, September 5th, 1855, referring to the laws enacted by the Territorial Legislature, "That we will endure and submit to these laws no longer than the best interests of the Territory require, as the less of two evils, and will resist them to a bloody issue as soon as we ascertain that peaceable remedies shall fail and forcible resistance shall furnish any reasonable prospect of success." This was treason, pure and simple, but it was justified by the higher tests of exalted citizenship. He was arrested and held a prisoner upon the charge; but the General Government dared not bring him to trial before the Nation. He would have been murdered at Leavenworth, while in arrest there, had his captors dared to give him up to death. Throughout the whole of that heroic struggle, his was the master spirit that inspired and the guiding hand that pointed out the path to victory. His speech delivered at Lawrence July 4th, 1855, is a classic in patriotism and loyalty; it is the utterance of a great man impressed by the responsibility of a great cause.

The student of history is invited to an investigation of the results of the work accomplished by Charles Robinson in their influence upon the course of National events. He broke the autocratic power of the South that had theretofore dominated the Government, and smashed the slate that would have perpetuated that power forever. To the Nation he gave the dawn of its

new birth of freedom, and to its Declaration of Independence consistency and dignity. Had he faltered March 30th, 1855, or failed in any subsequent emergency in the Kansas Rebellion, the Emancipation Proclamation would not have been written. He created the conditions from which sprang the immortal paper, and deserves to stand in history upon equal terms with the man who wrote it. Upon the admission of Kansas into the Union, he was elected Governor; but the strength and efficiency of his administration was weakened by the intrigues and machinations of his political enemies, especially those of Senator Lane, who, in the furtherance of his own political fortunes, sought to discredit the Governor at Washington, and appropriate to himself a portion of the Executive's prerogative. The action of Mr. Lincoln in the premises is not creditable. He placed reliance in the representations of Senator Lane and grossly wronged and insulted the dignity of the man whom, above all others in this Nation, he should have honored. By a cruel blow* dealt him by the Administration, to the existence of which he had so largely contributed, his political fortunes were shattered, ~~and the remainder of his life embittered.~~ After the close of his term of office, he gradually severed his relations with the Republican

*In September, 1862, Senator Lane was appointed Brigadier-General, United States Volunteers, and authorized by Secretary of War Staunton to organize three regiments of Volunteers in Kansas, and to appoint the necessary commissioned officers. Governor Robinson refused to issue commissions to the persons selected by Lane, whereupon the Secretary of War ordered Robinson to issue them, saying if he refused, the necessary commissions would be issued from Washington; to which Robinson sent the following characteristic reply: "You have the power to override the Constitution and the laws, but you cannot compel the Governor of Kansas to dishonor his State."

party and ceased to wield a controlling interest in State affairs. The University of Kansas thereafter became the object of his special interest. He promoted its establishment and endowed it with his fortune. In honor of his memory, the Legislature caused a marble bust of the Governor to be placed in the Chapel of that institution. This was unveiled with appropriate ceremony February 22d, 1898. He died at his home, "Oakridge," near Lawrence, August 17th, 1894.*

*His wife, who was his constant and devoted companion through all these perils in Kansas, still survives him. She was Miss Sara T. D. Lawrence. They were married October 30th, 1851. She is a woman of strong character and great literary ability, and enjoyed to the fullest extent her husband's confidence and love.

GENEALOGY OF CHARLES ROBINSON

The Carolingian House.

(Fisher's Outlines of History, p. 233.)

Pepin of Heristal, d. 714.

Charles Martel, d. 741.

Pepin the Short. (King 752-768.)

Charlemagne, 768-814. (Emperor 800.)

Louis the Pious, 814-840.

Louis the German, 843-876.

Carloman, d. 880.

Arnulf, King of Germany, 887-899. (Emperor 896.)

daughter m. —.

Henry I of Germany, 918-936.

Robert "the Strong," d. 866, A. D. (Invested with the County of Paris, in 861, by "Charles the Bold," grandson of Charlemagne.)

Robert, Duke of Normandy. (King 922-923.)

Hugh the Great, d. 956, m. 3. . married Hedwiga.

Hugh Capet, 987-996.

Robert I, 996-1031.

Henry I, 1031-1060.

Philip I, 1060-1108, m. Bertha, dau. of Florence I, Count of Holland.

Louis VI, 1108-1187 (styled "Louis le Gros").

Peter, Lord of Courtenay (fifth son of Louis VI).

Alice, m. Agnew Taillefer, Count of Angouleme.

John, King of England, m. ISABELLE OF ANGOULEME, . . . married Count de la Marche.

1. Henry III.

2. Edward I.

3. Edward II.

4. Edward III.

5. Duke of York.

6. Earl of Cambridge.

7. Duke of York.

8. Edward IV.

Isabelle, Baroness.

Isabel.

Thomas, Lord Berkeley.

Margaret, Lady Bassett.

— Bassett.

— Bassett.

— Bassett.

Sir Symond Bassett.

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 9. Elizabeth, m. Henry VII. | Robert Bassett. |
| 10. Margaret, m. James IV, King of Scots. | Gyles Bassett. |
| 11. James V, King of Scots. | Robert Bassett. |
| 12. Mary, Queen of Scots. | William Bassett. |
| 13. James I. | Edward Bassett. |
| 14. Elizabeth, m. Frederick, Elector of Palatine. | Jane Dighton. |
| 15. Sophia, m. Ernest Augustus, Elector of Hanover. | Frances Dighton, m. Richard Williams. |
| 16. George I. | Samuel. Thomas. |
| 17. George II. | Seth. Jonathan. |
| 18. Frederick, Prince of Wales. | David, m. Elizabeth. |
| 19. George III. | Jonathan Robinson, m. Phebe Williams. |
| 20. Duke of Dent. | Jonathan Robinson, m. Hulda Woodward. |
| 21. Victoria. | CHARLES ROBINSON. |
| 22. Edward VII. | |

Isabelle of Angouleme, m. { (1) King John of England. Son, Henry III. .
(2) Count de la Marche of France. Four sons
(one of whom was Wm. de la Valence,
Earl of Pembroke), and a daughter,
ISABELLE, "interine sister" of Henry III.

ISABELLE, m. Maurice de Creonn, a baron of note.
Isabelle, m. Maurice de Berkeley, d. April, 1281.
Thomas, Lord Berkeley, m. Jane, dau. of Wm. de Ferress, Earl of Derby.
Margaret Berkeley, m. Sir Anselm Bassett.
— Bassett.
— Sir Henry Furnealx. Walter Rawley [Raleigh] m. Jane, the
Lord Boteler's dau.
— Bassett. Sir Matthew Furnealx, . . . m. . . Maud Rawley.
— Bassett. Sir John Bytton, m. Avis Furnealx.
Sir Symond Bassett, . . . m. . . Maud Bytton.
Robert Bassett, m. Margaret Harwell.
Gyles Bassett, m. Jane Davis.
Robert Bassett, m. Anne Spycer.
William Bassett, m. Jane, dau. of John of Ashe, of Yewley.
Edward Bassett, m. Elizabeth, dau. of Henry Sygon, of Yewley.
Jane Bassett, m. Dr. John Dighton, of Gloucester, England, eminent surgeon, of
St. Nicholas parish.
Frances Dighton, m. Richard Williams, both of Gloucester, England.

Alden de Cromwell, 1066.

Hugh.

Ralph.

Ralph.

Ralph.

Ralph.

Ralph.

Ralph.

Ralph.

Ulker.

Richard.

John.

Robert. Dau. Margaret, m. William Smyth, bro. of Margaret.

William, m. Margaret Smyth.

John, m. Joan Smyth, dau. of William Smyth, above.

Walter, son Thomas, Vicar General, 1535.

Katherine Cromwell, m. Morgan Williams.

Thomas.

Sir Richard Williams.*

John Williams.

Sir Henry Williams, *alias* Cromwell.

Richard Williams.

Robert Cromwell.

John Williams.

Oliver Cromwell.

William Williams, m. Jane Woodward.

Richard Williams, of Taunton, m. Frances Dighton.

Samuel.

Thomas.

Seth.

Jonathan.

David, m. Elizabeth.

Phebe Williams, m. Jonathan Robinson.

Jonathan Robinson, m. Hulda Woodward.

CHARLES ROBINSON.

* Sir Richard Williams changed his name to Cromwell in honor of his uncle, Thomas Cromwell, vicar general under Henry VIII, and wrote his name "William, *alias* Cromwell," as did his son Henry, grandson Robert, and great-grandson, Oliver Cromwell, in his youth. (1620.)

McL...

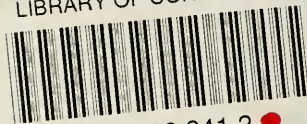
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