JOHN BROWN
AND HIS MEN

With Some Account of the Roads They Traveled to Reach Harper's Ferry

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CHAPTER VII.

REACHING TO A CULMINATION.

The Chatham, Canada, Convention—The refuge of the fugitives—Movements in the East—Telling Gerrit Smith and Frank B. Sanborn of his intention to raid slavery—The six friends and councilors—Martin R. Delaney's misapprehension—"The League of Liberty"—Dr. Ross, of Canada—What was meant by the Provisional Constitution—Hugh Forbes and his evil acts—Delay almost fatal—Throwing Forbes off the scent—The Lecompton Constitution—Massacre of free-state men—Reuniting the little band.

John Brown arrived at the farm of Mr. Whitman, near Lawrence, on the 5th November. On the next day he sent for John E. Cook and myself. At that date I was temporarily absent and had also concluded a contract for twelve months' newspaper work. Richard Realf and Luke F. Parsons were named to John Brown by John E. Cook. On the 14th Cook, Realf, and Parsons reached Topeka, joining John Brown there, leaving almost immediately for Tabor, Iowa, with "Colonel Whipple," as Aaron D. Stevens was then known, Charles W. Moffett, from Montour, Iowa, and Richard Richardson, an intelligent man of color, who had the year before been assisted from slavery in Missouri. After reaching Canada, however,
in May, 1858, he does not again appear in the record. Captain Brown's presence in Kansas at this period was known to a very few persons. The status of the Territory was by no means a settled one, owing to the pendency of the Lecompton Constitution, and it was a favorable element on the free-state side to have it believed that John Brown was supposed to be mysteriously hovering along the northern line. The active resistance at this period of James Montgomery, afterwards colonel of the Second South Carolina Colored Volunteers, to the policy of voting under the "bogus laws," was keeping southern Kansas in a state of ferment, which had, however, a sufficient basis in the existence of plots and ruffianly efforts to drive free-state settlers in that section from their public land entries and settlements.¹ From Tabor John Brown soon moved to

¹ There were other questions embraced in the opposition to voting for State officers under the Lecompton Constitution, besides that of the recognition of the "bogus laws" it directly involved. In Southern Kansas, especially, the so-called "black law" free-state Democracy had a stronghold. To some extent the leaders of this faction were more unfair than were the pro-slavery party proper. A movement was on foot at this time to break down the real free-state party, by substituting for it a so-called Democratic one, which would have virtually served all the interests of the slave-power, without having "chattelism" actually established. Some of the more sagacious pro-slavery men had ere this realized the impossibility of making Kansas a slave State. The special obstacles to this Democratic movement were the John Brown feeling, though the Captain had no partisan relations whatever; Captain Montgomery's defense of the free-state settlers, and the uniring hostility of the Northern newspaper correspondents of 1855-'6-'7. They were not many in numbers; their pens actually shaped the policy of the free-soil and anti-Lecompton press. Governor Robert J. Walker found this out when he first bent his astute
Springdale, the Quaker community he had selected for temporary residence. When assembled the party consisted of John Brown himself, his son Owen, Aaron Dwight Stevens, John Henri Kagi, John Edwin Cook, Richard Realf, Charles Plummer Tidd, William Henry Leeman, Luke F. Parsons, Charles W. Moffett, with Richard Richardson, colored, eleven in all. John Brown departed almost immediately for the East, leaving Stevens in charge as military instructor. Before spring came the company was strengthened by the accession of George B. Gill, Steward Taylor, Edwin and Barclay Coppoc. George B. Gill and Barclay Coppoc had entered Kansas the previous year with the Eldridge-Perry emigrant trains and had met therein Richard Realf and others; also met John Brown coming out, and finding Stevens on the road guarding the trains into Kansas.

Owen Brown's diary locates the arrival of Hugh Forbes at Tabor on August 9th. He writes of reading for the first time "The Manual of the Patriotic Volunteers"; mentions one of the Coppocs, probably Barclay, under the name of Carpenter. On the 4th of November Owen writes that he was thirty-three years old. A few days later he mentions the arrival of intellect to the task of making a free-state Democracy. Some among us may have considered the courage of the Republican party as not up to the measure of its occasion or duty, but there was no hesitation in sustaining it as against an administration Democracy and "squatter sovereignty." In this way the correspondents earned the bitter hatred of G. W. Brown, Eli Thayer, and others it is utterly useless to name. They certainly have been entitled by service to something different from the "cold shoulder," historically speaking, which is all their work has in the main received from Kansas writers of later years.
“eleven desperadoes,” as he jestingly termed his father and their new comrades.

John Henri Kagi, who had visited a short time at Camp Creek, Nebraska, with his father and sister, soon joined the command, and remained with it until the Chatham, Canada, movement was made in April. The Sharpe’s rifles, revolvers, ammunition and other material which Captain Brown had found at Tabor and taken possession of were shipped as freight to northern Ohio in John Brown, Jr.’s, care. The original intention was to take part of the men to Ashtabula County, Ohio, Hugh Forbes being expected to be in charge there, and Colonel Whipple (Stevens) remain behind among the Iowa Quakers. With the withdrawal of Forbes, concentration in Iowa was the most reasonable plan. The men were boarded by the Maxsons at the very small rate of one dollar each per week, the entire cost of their winter’s residence not exceeding $250. Most of the men did some work in addition to the drilling and gun practice they regularly followed. Stevens, a very competent drillmaster and swordsman, found apt pupils. Cook, who was almost a phenomenal marksman and had a passion for firearms, readily led the record at the target. Stevens had served several years as a United States dragoon at frontier posts, and had learned much of rough campaigning. His lessons were all of a practical order. There was no attempt to make a secret of their drilling, and as Gill shows and Cook stated in his “confession,” the neighborhood folks all understood that this band of earnest young men were pre-

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1 See the account given by George B. Gill in the Appendix.
paring for something far out of the ordinary. Of course Kansas was presumed to be the objective point. But generally the impression prevailed that when the party moved again it would be somewhere in the direction of the slave States. The atmosphere of those days was charged with disturbance. It is difficult to determine how many of the party actually knew that John Brown designed to invade Virginia. All the testimony goes to show that it is most probable that not until after the assembling at the Maryland farm in 1859 was there a full, definite announcement of Harper's Ferry as the objective point. That he fully explained his purpose to make reprisals on slavery wherever the opportunity offered is without question, but except to Owen, who was vowed to the work in his early youth, and Kagi, who informed me at Osawatomie in July, 1858, that Brown gave him his fullest confidence upon their second interview at Topeka in 1857, there is every reason to believe that among the men the details of the intended movement were matters of after confidence. My own experience illustrates this: I was absent from Lawrence when John Brown recruited his little company. He had left already for Iowa before I returned. I met Realf just as he was leaving, and we talked without reserve, he assuring me that the purpose was just to prepare a fighting nucleus for resisting the enforcement of the Lecompton Constitution, which it was then expected Congress might try to impose upon us. Through this advantage was to be taken of the agitation to prepare for a movement against slavery in Missouri, Arkansas, the Indian Territory and possibly Louisiana. At Kagi's request (with whom I maintained for nearly two
years an important, if irregular, correspondence), I began a systematic investigation of the conditions, roads and topography of the Southwest, visiting a good deal of the Indian Territory, with portions of southwest Missouri, western Arkansas, and northern Texas, also, under the guise of examining railroad routes, etc. The letters I wrote Kagi from time to time were signed William Harrison by an understanding with him. It was this name Albert Hazlett gave when taken prisoner at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and, with John E. Cook at Chambersburg, was illegally extradited to Virginia. Under it he was tried at Charlestown, and executed in the following March, 1860. It will be recalled by those familiar with the drama of events that John Brown always declined publicly to recognize Hazlett, after the latter was imprisoned at Charlestown, as one of his men. He did not wish to throw any obstacles in the way of his possible escape before the Virginia courts.¹ It was un-

¹ The only witness before the Virginian Court who swore to Albert Hazlett's presence in the Harper’s Ferry fight was a man named Barry, an Irish-American schoolmaster, whose life Hazlett is reported to have saved. This statement is made on the authority of George Alfred Townsend, who gives it as coming from Barry himself. The latter is the author of the pamphlet on Harper’s Ferry, published under the name of “Josephus” as author, referred to and quoted in other chapters.
doubtlessly the signature to my letters that made him use the name of Harrison when arrested. These letters were captured in the carpet-bag at the Virginia schoolhouse, and Governor Wise himself told me at Richmond in 1857, that two were secretly lithographed and sent to many leading men of the South and Southwest as evidence of the plots that were being formed. It is to be presumed that these were two that gave an account of discontent among the slaves in southwest Arkansas, northwest Louisiana, and those held by the Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Cherokee Indians; planning at the same time to ferment an outbreak among them, aided by Kansas men, led, perhaps, by Captain Montgomery. These things are recalled in connection with the open drilling within a Northern State of a body of men, however small in numbers, having the avowed purpose of carrying the free-state war into the Africa of slavery itself. They serve to prove how charged and vital was the public mentality in those days. A conflict seems to have been expected, denounced or tolerated by all sides. It was this condition that enabled John Brown to hold his small force together without the fullest confidence to them on his part, and, at the same time, keep from active suspicion the public feeling around himself and party. The roads they traveled would never have been so accessible but for the currents that were set in vibration by the aggressions of the slave-holders, their leaders, and politicians.

Hugh Forbes must have left Tabor immediately after Captain Brown left for Kansas, for he was at Rochester, New York, in the latter part of November. The latter with his party arrived at Springdale, and
himself moved eastward about the 20th instant, called chiefly by the fact that Forbes had already begun a campaign against his chief.¹ His earlier letters were addressed to Dr. Howe, Senator Sumner, and some other of the more radical anti-slavery men. He demanded that Brown be withdrawn from command, and that he himself or some other person be placed in charge. Evidently he thought there was a political revolutionary conspiracy on foot. Of course such letters produced commotion and caused annoyance. Dr. Howe seems to have been most seriously affected by them. Forbes had received sufficient confidences from John Brown to be able to apprehend some of the weaker points, or rather he knew where the joints in the armor were. The fact that the Captain's "tools" were apparently the "property" of the Massachusetts Kansas Committee, and that Brown had been made their "agent," would seem to have caused a fear that that body might be charged with a breach of trust if Forbes's allegations should become public property. There is no evidence that Messrs. Stearns, Howe, Parker, Gerrit Smith, Sanborn, Higginson, or even Senator Sumner—who knew nothing of the Committee's work except by hearsay—were troubled as to reprisals on slavery itself. Mr. Stearns certainly was not, nor Higginson, Sanborn, Parker. Dr. Howe, sometimes overwrought by the multiplicity of his laborious duties, was evidently excited by the possibility of reflections on the integrity of the Kansas Aid Committee, of which he had been an active member. As a matter of fact, the material in John Brown's

¹ I am here indebted chiefly to Mr. Sanborn's "Life and Letters of John Brown," Chap. XII., pp. 418, et al., for dates, etc.
possession as "agent" was not the property of any committee, but of George L. Stearns, who had paid for and owned it. The relations of the Massachusetts Committee were protected by later letters (May, 1858) from Mr. Stearns, as chairman, notifying John Brown that said arms were to be used only "for the defense of Kansas," and shortly after their final disposition was made by his absolute and personal gift of them to John Brown direct. This action was not had, however, till Hugh Forbes found that his letters to the more intimate friends of Captain Brown in Massachusetts did not produce the effect he sought, and he had begun to extend his correspondence of assailment to public men like Senators Wilson, Hale, and Seward, as well as to Horace Greeley and William Cullen Bryant, having evidently been posted on the idea that they as party and political leaders could have no relations with direct attacks on the institution of slavery. It must be borne in mind that the aim of the new politics, its party, and policy, was simply to denationalize slavery: John Brown's purpose to render it unsafe and dangerous to hold slaves by attacks which would show the system's inherent weakness. He had no theory to substitute therefor, except that of the Declaration of Independence; and his convictions that constitutional provisions guarding and preserving, or aiming to, the rights of the individual and of the citizen, were more potential than evasive and temporary compromises. Naturally, however, the organizers and leaders of the new party, already realizing that success was before them, dreaded all action by the "fanatics" of the day. Every period has its sneer. That was the way it
sounded then. Now the term is "crank," or worse. Ethics are brushed aside for "practical" success, and faith is lost in sacerdotalism. Plutocracy loves ceremony, and hierarchical forms are the natural product of class and privilege. The fanatics are denounced; the cranks are derided, but lo! Time changes, and the "practical" men who have feared or sneered, become the active administrators of the ideas and ideals they denounced and derided. The administrators "win"; the others fail of personal reward and often even of recognition. But the work they do goes on. So it was with John Brown.

The Captain left Iowa late in December. Letters had reached him there, at Springdale, and at West Andover, Ohio, very early in January, with accounts of the Boston-wise perturbations. Forbes was at Rochester, N. Y., in November, calling on Frederick Douglass, presenting a letter from Captain Brown. Mr. Douglass says he was not favorably impressed, but he took him to a hotel and paid his bill while there. He also gave him a little money, and through a German lady friend he received introductions also to other Germans in New York. For a short period he did not attack John Brown, but that reticence soon wore off. Mr. Douglass did not hesitate to say that Forbes betrayed the movement to the authorities at Washington. In that, however, I believe he was mistaken. There are details of this imbroglio which tend to show that Colonel Forbes must have about this time got into relations with a small coterie of clever colored men in New York City, revolving around a well-known physician of that race, now deceased, who were notoriously at variance with the
efforts and associations of many others of their race leaders. They held the theory that it was the duty of all educated colored men to mould their people into separate and violent resistance. In their minds the reaction to race oppression and outrage led to a counter race contempt, antagonism, and rage. They wanted no help from white men, and some of them spent a good deal of misdirected intellectual effort in the endeavor to prove that somewhere in the historic past their race had been one of the ruling forces of the world. They did not realize that it mattered not to them if it ever had; the living issues were the potential ones of present wrong-doing and oppression, hurting the wrong-doer as well as the wronged ones. From such sources as these, limited though they were, Hugh Forbes received many hints of possible relations, which his imperfect conception of American affairs turned into remarks that very naturally assumed a malignant aspect when put into letters to prominent men.

A letter of John Brown to his son John, written at Rochester to West Andover, Ohio, early in February, shows the manner in which he was disposed to deal with Forbes.\(^1\) At this date Captain Brown was fully

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\(^1\) After referring to a letter from the Garibaldian, of January 27th, the Captain outlines a reply to be written to Forbes by John, saying: "I am anxious to draw him out more fully, and would also like to keep him a little encouraged and avoid an open rupture for a few weeks at any rate." He then adds: Suppose you write Forbes thus:

"Your letter to my father, ... after mature reflection, I have decided to return to you, as I am unwilling he should, with all his other cares, ... be vexed with what I am apprehensive he will accept as highly offensive and insulting, while I know..."
bent on delivering his intended blow, and came to the East determined to strain every nerve to obtain the moderate means needed to begin with. He realized that his handful of keen-witted, brave, and devoted young men, then at Springdale, while heated through to the annealing point by the furnace of Kansas warfare, were liable to all the cooling influences of their years and temperaments, and such modifying conditions as the shifting phases of Time might readily bring to bear on them. He wanted to strike. Besides he desired to use the colored people if possible. It must

he is disposed to do all he consistently can for you . . . unless you are yourself the cause of his disgust." The letter then suggests the statement that he, John, understands from his father, that $600 or "six months' pay" had already been advanced in the face of his own disappointments, "to enable" Forbes to "provide for his family." The contract was to be $100 per month as long as Forbes continued to serve. "Now," continues the draft of the letter to John Brown, Jr., "you (Forbes) undertake to instruct him (Brown) to say that he had positively engaged you for one year. I fear he will not accept it well to be asked or told to state what he considers an untruth." The draft adds that he, Captain Brown, will hardly take kindly to be instructed as to how he should transact "his own business and correspondence." Reference is made to "the seemingly spiteful letters " Forbes owns to have written as having not only done himself "great injury," but "also weakened him (Captain Brown) with his friends to whom they were sent." This draft is a very shrewd yet kindly forbearing with all, and closes with suggesting that a draft of $40 may be sent to him (Forbes) if the rebuke intended had its effect. It closes by saying, "I do not mean to dictate to you as he does to me, but I am anxious to understand him fully before we go any further, and shall be glad of the earliest information of the result." No reply is alluded to, and presumably therefore, as the facts show, the "rebuke" had no effect.—"Life and Letters of John Brown," pp. 432-34.
have been within the brooding, observant purview of his perceptive brain to understand that they, too, growing in apprehension of larger political growth, were likely to feel their personal animosity lessened. Knowing their helplessness as a despised minority they might grow timid, more or less disposed to wait upon the changes that the rising tide of northern opinion would bring in favorable drifts towards them. John Brown comprehended with undaunted clearness that respect was only won by compelling it. A blow for freedom was always a victory. That was his view. So he pushed forward on the hard and stern road he had blazed for himself.

At Rochester in January and February, staying at the Douglass House for three weeks, where he wrote industriously, combating the mischief Forbes's attacks were doing. He was urged to visit Boston, but thought it not safe for him to pass through Albany and Springfield, where he was so well known. An extract of a letter to Thomas W. Higginson shows generally how he was pressing his friends to the conclusion of such assistance as he needs. Evidently Higginson had suggested underground railroad work on a scale larger than was then practised. It was in him to do that, as he was always open to the direct conception of resistance to oppression and the duty of each of us to aid therein. Here is John Brown's suggestive note:

"Railroad business on a somewhat extended scale is the identical object for which I am trying to get means. I have been connected with that business, as commonly conducted, from boyhood, and never let an opportunity slip. I have been operating to some
purpose the past season, but I now have a measure on foot that I feel sure would awaken in you something more than a common interest if you could understand it. I have just written my friends G. L. Stearns and F. B. Sanborn, asking them to meet me for consultation at Peterboro, New York."

It was in Peterboro, New York, at the home of Gerrit Smith, that the definite direction of John Brown was made known to the friends who had so far aided. They were indeed few in numbers. All of the Emigrant Aid Society organizers had fallen. John Brown himself still clung to the belief that Eli Thayer might "hook on his team," as he later suggested to John, Jr., when planning out some trips of observation and inquiry. His experience with Amos A. Lawrence, especially over the matter of the North Elba homestead and the $1,000 to be raised for its protection, did not induce any desire to ask his aid. He had never sought assistance from the Abolitionists proper—that is, the Garrisonians. And of course the National Kansas Committee people were of no avail. The two sources of monetary support open to him, were Gerrit Smith, his personal friend as well as faithful anti-slavery ally, and the very small coterie of Boston gentlemen, whose names are linked forever with his own. Frank B. Sanborn arrived at Mr. Smith's residence on the evening of February 22, 1858, representing also Messrs. Stearns, Parker, Howe, and Higginson. It was on this occasion that John Brown unfolded in detail the fulness of his purpose, with the possible reservation of not in words naming Harper's Ferry, though his general purport must have led directly thereto. Of the three persons
to whom this high-wrought conception was thus presented, Gerrit Smith and Frank B. Sanborn do not appear to have accepted it unquestioningly. ¹ According to Mr. Sanborn's very interesting account, the conference lasted till after midnight, and began again briefly on the morrow, being concluded by Gerrit Smith saying:

"You see how it is; our dear old friend has made up his mind to this course and cannot be turned from it. We cannot give him up to die alone; we must support him."

Captain Brown had named $800, even $500, as the extent of his need. Then $1,000 was decided upon, and Mr. Sanborn left on the 24th for Boston, to present the matter and raise the balance of the amount. Mr. Smith's share became $500 before

¹ Mr. Sanborn mentioned Edwin Morton as one who was confided in. At the time that gentleman was an inmate of Mr. Smith's house as a tutor to his sons, and he acted also as secretary or confidential amanuensis. Captain Brown, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Sanborn adjourned to Mr. Morton's room. He was a classmate of Mr. Sanborn, and, in the familiar relations he bore, had necessarily to be trusted. But there is no other evidence than this of Mr. Morton's association with the movement. Mr. Smith, after the blow was struck at Harper's Ferry, had a severe recurrence of a nervous trouble he had been afflicted with at the time of the long legislative struggle in the United States House of Representatives over the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in 1854, and was sent again to the institution in which he was first treated. The family deemed it wise to send Mr. Morton to Europe for two years. No one in Massachusetts or Kansas, or in John Brown's home circle, seems, besides Mr. Sanborn, to have considered Mr. Morton as directly identified. John Brown, Jr., in letters during 1859, speaks of once meeting and talking with him,
the conclusion was reached. In Boston, Parker agreed; thought the matter worth trying, though except for effect on opinion, he did not believe it would accomplish much. Dr. Howe accepted the idea with earnestness. He never doubted that within the lines to be worked upon, were real military possibilities, and that it was not necessarily a foredoomed failure. Mr. Stearns accepted, with an utterly loyal belief in the old covenanter. Higginson also held the same view, and Mr. Sanborn almost decided to take a personal share in the movement. To those who knew him then, the wonder is that he was not found at the Kennedy Farm. John Brown, however, knew that some men were more valuable alive just then, than they would be as sacrifices.

From the 23d of February the Captain was a busy man. The "freight" stored at Conneaut, Ohio, about which embarrassing questions were arising, had to be placed where John, Jr., and Jason, could control it. Letters were written from North Elba, asking Ruth that Henry, her husband, might "go to school"—join in the pending raid. The incident had a pathetic ending in inducing Oliver and Watson to volunteer on that which was their death-errand. On the 4th of March, the Captain was in Boston, stopping at the American House, where he was visited by all his little circle of friends. While they resolved themselves into a committee of aid and advice, Sanborn is convinced \(^1\) that Harper's Ferry was never named as the first or chief point of attack. On leaving Boston,

\(^1\) See Chapter XII. "Life and Letters of John Brown,"
March 8th, he carried with him $500 in gold and assurances of other support. He passed through New York on the 2d, preferring to go round rather than take the risk of being recognized in western Massachusetts. On the 10th of March, Frederick Douglass, Henry Highland Garnet, of New York, Stephen Smith and William Still, of Philadelphia, with John Brown, Jr., met the Captain in conference at the dwelling of either Smith or Still. Others may have been present, but their names are nowhere given.

Earlier letters to his eldest son show in part what must have been discussed, among other matters, at the Philadelphia meetings. On the 4th of February, the Captain wrote John, that: "I have been thinking that I would like to have you make a trip to Bedford, Chambersburg, Gettysburg, and Uniontown, in Pennsylvania, traveling slowly along, and inquiring of every man on the way, or every family of the right stripe, and getting acquainted with them as much as you could. When you look at the location of those places, you will readily perceive the advantage of getting up some acquaintance in those parts."

He further advised with his son to visit Washington and see certain Congressmen, with the hope of "getting some money for secret service"; and then he continued,—"You can say to our friends that I am out from Kansas for that express purpose." In subsequent letters he withdrew the Washington suggestion, remarking that he had but little "faith in princes." He mentions, however, that Anson Burlingame gave him $50; and then he directs John to go to Hagerstown, Martinsburg, and even to Harper's Ferry itself in pursuing the inquiries he desired to have
made. Of course, the object of these was to find out the underground railroad routes and stations, to ascertain the persons who were actually to be relied upon, places to stop at, means of conveyance, and especially to learn of the colored men who could be trusted. The Philadelphia conference, must have gone over this ground with the two Browns, and the experience of those who were the most active of U. G. R. R. directors in that section, could not but have been very useful. In the early part of April, John Brown visited St. Catherine, Ingersoll, Hamilton, and Chatham, in Canada West, to prepare for the convention he wished to convene just before he entered on his active work. He was also reported at Sandusky, Ohio, and Detroit, Michigan. A visit had been made to North Elba, and it was arranged, that Henry Thompson should manage both farms, while Oliver and Watson would "go to school" with their father. The Captain was hastening his steps in order to return to Iowa and bring his men on to Chatham, and from there, as he then expected, to the border of Virginia, to begin working out the serious aim of his life.

John Brown's purpose in calling and holding the convention at Chatham, Canada West, was in harmony with the conception and plans he had evolved. There was a large number of colored residents under the British flag. They were mainly fugitive slaves; among whom necessarily were many bold, even daring men. In the section, of which Chatham was one of the centers, considerable direction had been given to the settlement of these people. There were among them (and still are) a good many far-
mers, mechanics, storekeepers, as well as laborers. It would not be correct to say that no prejudice existed against them, but it was not strong enough, as in the land from which they fled, to prevent industry and sobriety from having a fair chance, while intelligence, well directed, made its way to civic and business recognition. There were probably not less than 75,000 fugitive residents in Canada West at the time of the Chatham gathering. Their presence, well-ordered lives, and fair degree of prosperity, had brought also to live with them as doctors, clergymen, teachers, lawyers, printers, surveyors, etc., educated freemen of their own race. Martin R. Delany, a physician, editor, ethnologist, and naturalist, was one of them. Mr. Holden, a well-trained surveyor and civil engineer, at whose residence in Chatham, John Brown stayed, the Rev. William Charles Munroe, Osborne Perry Anderson, and others, were among these helpers. Dr. Alexander M. Ross, of Toronto, Canada, physician and ornithologist, who is still living, honored by all who know him, then a young (white) man who devoted himself for years to aiding the American slave, was a frequent visitor to this section. He was a faithful friend of John Brown, efficient as an ally also, seeking to serve under all conditions of need and peril. But it was not simply the presence of these forces which took John Brown to Chatham. As one may naturally understand, looking at conditions then existing, there existed something of an organization to assist fugitives and of resistance to their masters. It was found all along the Lake borders from Syracuse, New York, to Detroit, Michigan. As none but colored men were admitted into direct and
active membership with this "League of Freedom," it is quite difficult to trace its workings, or know how far its ramifications extended. One of the most interesting phases of slave life, so far as the whites were enabled to see or impinge upon it, was the extent and rapidity of communication among them. Four geographical lines seem to have been chiefly followed. One was that of the coast south of the Potomac, whose almost continuous line of swamps from the vicinity of Norfolk, Va., to the northern border of Florida afforded a refuge for many who could not escape and became "marooned" in their depths, while giving facility to the more enduring to work their way out to the North Star land. The great Appalachian range and its abutting mountains were long a rugged, lonely, but comparatively safe route to freedom. It was used, too, for many years. Doubtless, a knowledge of that fact, for John Brown was always an active underground railroad man, had very much to do, apart from its immediate use strategically considered, with the Captain's decision to begin operations therein. Harriet Tubman, whom John Brown met for the first time at St. Catherine's in March or April, 1858, was a constant user of the Appalachian route, in her efforts to aid escaping slaves. "Moses," as Mrs. Tubman was called by her own people, was a most remarkable black woman, unlettered and very nigrine, but with a great degree of intelligence and perceptive insight, amazing courage, and a simple steadfastness of devotion which lifts her career into the ranks of heroism. Herself a fugitive slave, she devoted her life after her own freedom was won, to the work of aiding others to escape. First
and last Harriet brought out several thousand slaves.\(^1\) John Brown always called her "General," and once introduced her to Wendell Phillips by saying "I bring you one of the best and bravest persons on this continent—General Tubman, as we call her." William Lambert, who died in Detroit a few years since, being very nearly one hundred years old, was another of those of the race who devoted themselves to the work for which John Brown hoped to strike a culminating blow. Between 1829 and 1862—thirty-three years—William is reported to have aided in the escape of 30,000 slaves. He lived in Detroit, and was one of the foremost representatives of his people in both Michigan and Ontario. Underground-railroad operations culminating chiefly at Cleveland, Sandusky, and Detroit, led by broad and defined routes through Ohio, to the border of Kentucky. Through that State, into the heart of the Cumberland Mountains, northern Georgia, east Tennessee, and northern Alabama, the limestone caves of the region served a useful purpose. And it is a fact that the colored people living in Ohio were often bolder and more determined than was the rule elsewhere. The Ohio-Kentucky routes probably served more fugitives than others in the North. The valley of the Mississippi was the most westerly channel, until Kansas opened a bolder way of escape from the Southwest slave section. John Brown knew whatever was to be known of all this unrest, and he also must have known of

\(^1\) "Harriet—The Moses of her People." By Sarah H. Bradford. George R. Lockwood, New York, 1886. Mrs. Tubman died soon after the publication of this little volume.
the existence of the secret organization which George B. Gill mentions (see Appendix) in his interesting paper. This organization served a purpose of some value to the Government in the earlier parts of the Civil War, a fact, that lies within my own knowledge, and then fell into disuse, as the hours moved swifter to the one in which the gateway of the Union swung aside, and the pathway of the Law opened, to allow

1 A letter from Dr. Alexander Milton Ross, bearing date Toronto, January 21st, 1893, contains two points of interest. The first is that relative to the time of moving on Harper's Ferry. Dr. Ross writes: "On the occasion of my last interview with John Brown I asked him directly—'When do you intend to begin your work?' After a moment's reflection he replied in these words, as near as my recollection serves me: 'God willing, I shall move between the 15th and 27th of October.' I replied: 'Then you will wish me to be in Richmond between the 15th and 27th!' He said: 'Yes, not later than the 27th.'"

"Now, in reference to the 'Liberty League'—I was one of their members at large—Gerrit Smith and Lewis Tappan were the others. As to the actual members I had very little acquaintance. I knew of George J. Reynolds, of Hamilton (Sandusky also), George W. Brown and Glover Harrison, of this city (Toronto). The branch of the League in Upper Canada had no connection with the armed and drilled men along the United States border, whose duty it was to help the slaves to escape to Canada. Of course, I knew many of them—Liberators, as they were called—from Erie to Sandusky and Cleveland. I never had much in them and but little to do with the organization, always fearing treachery. I never had any military taste or predilection, and but little to do with armed men. Except to my friends, I was not known as Doctor Ross, and my friends took pains to shield me." . . . I frequently heard the slaves speak of insurrectionary movements in progress, but never anything definite. The slaves were very simple, childlike, and superstitious—ready to believe anything told them by those in their confidence."
the colored American to reach emancipation and citizenship.

These were some of the forces John Brown hoped without doubt to use. He never expected any more aid from them than that which would give a first impetus. Had he got away from Harper's Ferry and kept in the mountains for a brief period, no doubt exists whatever in my mind, that there would have been more or less sporadic outbreaks along the central lines I have suggested. The underground railroaders from Ohio and in Kentucky could not have kept out of the struggle.

The home of Isaac Holden, Chatham, Canada West, is an old-fashioned red brick, two-storied, comfortable-looking dwelling-house, nearly square, with brick gables higher than the roof, having a broad, outside chimney at each end, with the side to the street. Five low, broad windows light the parlor floor, one portion of which John Brown occupied. Mr. Holden, who had resided twenty-five years in Canada at the time of this visit, is a native of Louisiana, a man of means and liberal education. It was in John Brown's room that a committee met to examine the constitution. Dr. Delany was chairman, and J. H. Kagi and Osborne P. Anderson acted as secretaries. The meetings of the convention itself were held in a Baptist Church, of which Mr. Munroe was the pastor. Osborne P. Anderson describes some of the incidents as follows:

"The first visit of John Brown to Chatham was in April, 1858. Wherever he went around, although an entire stranger, he made a profound impression upon those who saw or became acquainted with him. Some supposed him a staid but modern-
ized Quaker, others a solid business man from 'somewhere,' and without question a philanthropist. His long white beard, thoughtful and reverend brow and physiognomy, his sturdy, measured tread, as he circulated about with hands under the pendant coat skirts of plain brown tweed, with other garments to match, revived to those honored with his acquaintance and knowing of his history, the memory of a Puritan of the most exalted type.” (“A Voice from Harper's Ferry,” 1861, p. 9.)

Dr. Delany in the Rollins biography gives a more detailed account. The doctor's statement seems to be at variance with those made by Anderson, Gill, Realf, and Moffett, who were present. It must be borne in mind that Captain Brown had not only alternative methods of action in his own mind, but ample reason for not drawing the close attention even of friends to the one which he most desired to put into operation, viz., an attack on Harper's Ferry itself. In the first place, he knew that Forbes had sources of information, and was disposed to use them adversely to success, and, next, he never felt sure of the way in which his daring conception would be received.  

The “Subterranean Pass Way” represented ideas and methods in accord with and enlarging the work on the underground railroad. The essential difference was that, the rescued fugitives or runaways should be planted in or near to a Northern or Western community and not brought under the British flag. One purpose was to educate Northern people to defend fugitives, and the other would have been to teach the runaways to defend themselves. No report exists from any other source of any such plan having been

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1 See Appendix for extract from the Delany biography.
discussed within the Chatham Convention itself. I have talked it over with Gill and Realf who were actively participating; incidentally I have asked Tidd and Osborne P. Anderson, but from none did I ever gather the idea of any discussion, as Dr. Delany intimates. Yet it doubtless occurred, and in all probability within the preliminary committee meeting. The convention talk was general. It is also certain that more criticism and resistant views came from colored men in the body than ever appears to have been urged at any time by the white men (except Hugh Forbes), who were knowing to Captain Brown's purposes or associated with him. It is also a fact that he received very little of the aid it was presumable he had a right to expect from colored men. Osborne P. Anderson was the only man of his race who reported from Canada, none of those who had Brown's confidence to a greater or lesser degree were on hand at the Kennedy farm, the two Ohio (Oberlin) recruits being the fruits of a near and preceding fugitive slave excitement. It is not necessary to comment on this; it is essential though to state the fact.

John Brown was at Springdale, Iowa, on the 27th of April, 1858, having arrived from Canada, via Chicago, on the 25th, for the purpose of removing eastward his "band of shepherds," as he termed them, or "surveyors," as they termed themselves. At this date the Boston and Peterboro friends, according to Mr. Sanborn, expected to hear of "his flock" being turned "loose about the 15th of May." J. H. Kagi, C. P. Tidd, and L. F. Parsons had preceded by a few days the main body, which left West Liberty on the
27th. At Chatham, where they arrived on the 30th inst., they were joined by these three associates. There were in all of the Brown party, including the Captain himself, thirteen persons, one being colored. The convention did not assemble till the 8th of May, and there were only forty-six present, twelve of whom were white men. The others were all colored men; Doctor Delany being the only one of any wide reputation. There is no evidence to show that Douglass, Loguen, Garnet, Stephen Smith, Gloucester, Langston, or others of the prominent men of color in the States who knew John Brown, were invited to the Chatham meeting. It is doubtful if their appearance would have been wise, as it would assuredly have been commented on and aroused suspicion. But the singular fact remains, looked at in either way, whether asked or not, that their influence had no visible representation or presence. John and Owen Brown, father and son, John Henri Kagi, Aaron Dwight Stevens, still known as Charles Whipple, John Edwin Cook, Richard Realf, George B. Gill, Charles Plummer Tidd, William Henry Leeman, Charles W. Moffett, Luke F. Parsons, all of Kansas, and Steward Taylor, of Canada, who had joined in Iowa; twelve in all. Richard Richardson, a member of the party, was a colored man. The remaining members, thirty-three, were all colored. The president of the convention, William Charles Munroe, was pastor of the church in which the sessions were held on Saturday the 8th and Monday the 10th of May. Other delegates were Dr. Martin A. Delany, and Alfred Whipper, Pennsylvania; William Lambert and I. D. Shadd, of Detroit, Michigan; James H. Harris,
of Cleveland, Ohio (after the war a Representative in Congress for two terms from North Carolina); G. J. Reynolds, J. C. Grant, A. J. Smith, James M. Jones, M. F. Bailey, S. Hunton, John J. Jackson, Jeremiah Anderson, James M. Buel, Alfred M. Ellsworth, James W. Purnell, George Aiken, Stephen Dettin, Thomas Hickerson, John Cannel, Robinson Alexander, Thomas F. Cary, Thomas M. Kinnard, Robert Vanvauken, Thomas M. Stringer, John A. Thomas (believed to be John Brown's earlier confidant and employé at Springfield, Massachusetts, afterwards employed by Abraham Lincoln in his Illinois home and at the White House also; he died recently at Springfield, Illinois); Robert Newman, Charles Smith, Simon Fisher, Isaac Holden, and James Smith; making thirty-four colored and twelve white members. John Henri Kagi was made secretary. The entire proceedings did not occupy over fifteen hours in both days, and practically consisted of ratifying what had already been agreed upon in the various conferences held during the preceding three weeks. The points of difference were of no great consequence, except one. That was a discussion of the forty-sixth article of the proposed Constitution, which reads as follows:

THE ARTICLES NOT FOR THE OVERTHROW OF GOVERNMENT.

"The foregoing Articles shall not be construed so as in any way to encourage the overthrow of any State Government, or of the General Government of the United States, and look to no dissolution of the

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1 See Appendix for minutes of proceedings.
Union, but simply to Amendment and Repeal. And our flag shall be the same that our Fathers fought under in the Revolution."

The motion to strike this out came from George J. Reynolds. He is mentioned both by Dr. Ross and Mr. Gill, as a leading member of the "League of Liberty." When John Brown, Jr., was engaged during August and September of the next year in the effort to get the Chatham Convention men together for the Harper's Ferry movement, he wrote from Sandusky, Ohio, to Kagi at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, that the "Coppersmith" was "one of those men who must be obtained if possible." This reference is understood to be to Mr. Reynolds. In the discussion which followed, Reynolds was the only advocate of the motion. Dr. Delany, Elder Munroe, and Mr. Kinnard, all colored, were strenuous in opposing; and Captain Brown Kagi, and Realf made earnest argument against the motion. Article XLVI. was in fact the keynote of John Brown's position. He was defending the Union and the Government under it, threatened as he reasoned, by the existence of chattel slavery, having, under misapprehended provisions, political powers which necessitated and encouraged the formation of a dangerous and continuous pro-slavery conspiracy. The presence of this Article makes consistent the declaration subsequently embodied in his last speech in the Virginia Court, in response to the usual question "Why sentence should not be passed upon him?" In that reply he declared, as will be seen, that he had not "raised" insurrection, committed "treason," incited to "civil war," or "instructed" slaves to kill their masters. Right or wrong, as he
may be judged, it is necessary to apprehend clearly, in order to estimate justly, the mental processes of this remarkable personality. Certainly, there is nothing anarchistic in them. The "roads" John Brown mapped out and which he sought to travel, carried, in his mind at least, the highest respect for law, and recognized to the full the responsibility to social order and equity. The difference between him (as he saw it) and the established "disorder," was that the latter had its strength in wrong-doing, and threatened free institutions to the degree that the reserved rights of the citizen could justly be called upon for resistance. Kennedy's motion had the support only of his own vote. Messrs. Kagi and Realf were particularly vigorous and eloquent in their arguments, as Gill and others report.

John Brown made the opening and principal speech of the convention. No orator, certainly no rhetorician, yet he was sententious, logical, direct, very apt in illustration, and, like all men of intellectual reserve, brooding usually on solitude and silence over large issues, quite aphoristic and terse in expression. John Brown had read well and thought clearly within the deep lines his brain and character wrought out for action.1 In his evidence before the United States

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1In childhood, youth, and manhood the Bible was his constant study. Mr. Gill says that a volume of the "Sayings of Confucius," was one of his later favorites. He read "Pilgrim's Progress," the "Life of Franklin," "Æsop's Fables," "Plutarch's Lives," "Biography of Washington," all Revolutionary material, and made a study of Marion and Sumpter's careers, "Napoleon and His Marshals," Baxter's "Saints' Rest," "Herodotus," "Josephus," and several theological works. He read the newspapers and was well informed in current history and invention.
Senate Committee on the "Harper's Ferry Invasion," that was the way in which the Virginian and the Southern Statesmen put it in order to maintain the idea of John Brown's movement being concerted with the aid of Republican and Northern leaders. Richard Realf thus outlined John Brown's opening speech in the Chatham Convention. His report is no doubt substantially correct, though more rhetorical in tone than were the Captain's actual words. Estimating the quality and temper of the latter, especially at a "supreme moment" like this one, it may readily be accepted that John Brown's actual speech was far more vigorous and striking even than is shown in the picturesque report of his poet follower.

"John Brown, on rising," said Realf to the Committee (p. 96-97 of Report), "stated that for twenty or thirty years the idea had possessed him like a passion of giving liberty to the slaves. He stated immediately thereafter, that he made a journey to England in 1851, in which year he took to the International Exhibition at London samples of wool from Ohio, during which period he made a tour upon the European continent, inspecting all fortifications, and especially all earthwork forts which he could find, with a view, as he stated, of applying the knowledge thus gained, with modifications and inventions of his own, to such a mountain warfare as he thereafter spoke upon in the United States. John Brown stated, moreover, that he had not been indebted to anybody for the suggestion of this plan; that it arose spontaneously in his own mind; that through a series of from twenty to thirty years it had gradually formed and developed itself into shape and plan. He stated that he had read all the books upon insurrectionary warfare which he could lay his hands upon—the Roman warfare; the successful opposition of the Spanish chieftains during the period when Spain was a Roman province; how with ten thousand men divided
and subdivided into small companies, acting simultaneously, yet separately, they withstood the whole consolidated power of the Roman Empire through a number of years. In addition to this, he said he had become very familiar with the successful warfare waged by Schamyl, the Circassian chief, against the Russians; he had posted himself in relation to the wars of Toussaint L'Overture, and the other phases of the wars in Hayti and the islands round about; and from all these things he had drawn the conclusion, believing, as he stated there he did believe, and as we all (if I may judge from myself) believed, that upon the first intimation of a plan formed for the liberation of the slaves, they would immediately rise all over the Southern States. He supposed that they would come into the mountains to join him, where he proposed to work, and that by flocking to his standard they would enable him (by making the line of mountains which cuts diagonally through Maryland and Virginia down through the Southern States into Tennessee and Alabama, the base of his operations) to act upon the plantations on the plains lying on each side of that range of mountains, and we should be able to establish ourselves in the fastnesses, and if any hostile action (as would be) were taken against us, either by the militia of the separate States, or by the armies of the United States, we proposed to defeat first the militia, and next, if it were possible, the troops of the United States, and then organize the freed blacks under this provisional constitution, which would carve out for the locality of its jurisdiction all that mountainous region in which the blacks were to be established, and in which they were to be taught the useful and mechanical arts, and to be instructed in all the business of life. Schools were also to be established, and so on. That was it.

"The negroes were to constitute the soldiers. John Brown expected that all the free negroes in the Northern States would immediately flock to his standard. He expected that all the slaves in the Southern States would do the same. He believed, too, that as many of the free negroes in Canada as could accompany him, would do so.
The slaveholders were to be taken as hostages, if they refused to let their slaves go. It is a mistake to suppose that they were to be killed; they were not to be. They were to be held as hostages for the safe treatment of any prisoners of John Brown’s who might fall into the hands of hostile parties.

“All the non-slaveholders were to be protected. Those who would not join the organization of John Brown, but who would not oppose it, were to be protected; but those who did oppose it were to be treated as the slaveholders themselves.”

“John Brown said,” continued Realf, summing up the proceedings, “that he believed a successful incursion could be made; that it could be successfully maintained; that the several slave States could be forced (from the position in which they found themselves) to recognize the freedom of those who had been slaves within their respective limits; that immediately such recognitions were made, then the places of all officers elected under this provisional constitution became vacant, and new elections were to be made. Moreover, no salaries were to be paid to the officeholders under this constitution. It was purely out of that which we supposed to be philanthropy—love for the slave. Moreover, it is a mistake to suppose, as Cook in his confession has stated—and I now get away from John Brown’s speech—that at the period of that convention the people present took an oath to support that constitution. They did no such thing. Dr. Delany, of whom I have spoken, proposed, immediately the convention was organized, that an oath should be taken by all who were present, not to divulge any of the proceedings that might transpire, whereupon John Brown rose and stated his objections to such an oath. He had himself conscientious scruples against taking an oath, and all he requested was a promise that any person who should thereafter divulge any of the proceedings that might transpire, agreed to forfeit the protection which that organization could extend over him.”

George B. Gill gives briefly his recollections, written to me, as follows:
"William Munroe, as president of the convention, signed the commissions issued. The sessions were not fully harmonious. There were some small points of difference, which were satisfactorily adjusted in the end. I only remember a few of the colored men; amongst them was Dr. M. R. Delany, J. J. Jackson, Wm. C. Munroe, of Chatham, G. J. Reynolds, of Sandusky City. The only whites present were members of our party. The most of us at that time did not appreciate the necessity of keeping journals. I am, however, indebted to abbreviated notes for the precision in my memory on many points.

The main business of the convention was the adoption of a constitution, which Brown had already prepared, and the organization of a provisional government under that instrument. The election of officers occurred on the 10th. John Brown was, of course, elected commander-in-chief, Kagl, secretary of war, Realf, secretary of state, the treasurer was Owen Brown, and the secretary of the treasury was George B. Gill. Members of congress chosen were Alfred M. Ellsworth and Osborne P. Anderson, colored. I am sure that Brown did not communicate the details of his plans to the members of the convention, more than in a very general way. Indeed, I do not now remember that he gave them any more than the impressions which they could gather from the methods of organization. From those who were directly connected with his movements he solicited plans and methods—including localities—of operations in writing. Of course, we had an almost precise knowledge of his methods, but all of us perhaps did not know just the locality selected by him, or, if knowing, did not comprehend the resources and surroundings."

Had John Brown been able to have moved at once from Canada to Harper's Ferry, the result would have been more startling than even when the blow did come. The delay was caused by Hugh Forbes's letter of exposure to Senator Henry Wilson and some other leading politicians. Mr. Wilson bestirred himself actively. He had been in Kansas some months
before, and knew the intense hostility that existed, and heard both approval and adverse criticism of Captain Brown's views of aggression. He also apprehended clearly the spirit of influential persons in Massachusetts. There was no escape from his demands on the members of the Kansas Aid Committee, even though it was practically defunct. Mr. Stearns felt compelled, under pressure, to inform Captain Brown that he must not use the "tools" in his possession except "in the defense of Kansas." He was also notified that an agent would come to Chatham to see him. This policy was changed, and John Brown arranged a visit to Boston. "The news," says Osborne P. Anderson, in "A Voice from Harper's Ferry" (p. 16), "caused an entire change in the programme for a time. The old gentleman went one way, the young men another, but ultimately to meet in Kansas, where the summer was spent." Speculation may be idle, but it is reasonably certain that the movement would, had it then taken place, have been bolder and with more men in it, as there was then unquestioned earnestness in Canada and along the lake borders. Superficial students, failing to put themselves in the other man's place, condemn as insanely inadequate John Brown's force, while his organization has been derided as absurd. The fairest criticism yet published is found in the admirable monograph on "John Brown," by Dr. Von Holst.1

That able historical writer speaks of the "Provisional Constitution" as "a confused medley of absurd because absolutely inapplicable forms, and of measures well calculated for the end in view,—of sound common sense and of absurd systematizing; of cool computation and of inconceivable overestimates of the resources at hand; of true, keen-sighted humanity and of reckless severity." It was insane "to create such a Government and to want to carry on such a war," while declaring there "was no intention of overthrowing existing Governments. But the Chatham men certainly "saw farther than their noses," in seeking to provide for the negro slaves, they designed to consider as "men and citizens." It was entirely rational to form and "create a strong organization" and "sensible to appoint a supreme commander," though absurd to suppose "that a little band, . . . without influence, should secretly put their heads together, . . . to give a constitution to the United States;" this latter being, with all due deference to Von Holst, exactly what they did not intend or mean to attempt doing. The absurdity of copying the offices of the Federal Constitution is very palpable to the critics, but the logic of it is not quite so plain. To one who understands that John Brown was above all other things a plain, believing, American citizen, there was the common-sense thought that with the impressionable people to be dealt with and controlled, large forms and sounding names or titles were of value, especially if they led to such direct connection with patriotic terms and ideas as might be likely to affect the minds of other sympathetic persons. Dr. Von Holst, strangely enough in the light
of the Franco-Prussian war, regards as severe provisions for taking from all who held slaves willingly, and from those who assisted them, all they possessed, whether in free or in slave-holding States."

The recognition of "any kind of neutrality," the enforcement of "fair trial," provisions against "all useless destruction of property," and forbidding the use of ill words or abuse of "defeated enemy," are esteemed by him as proofs of humanity. What Von Holst fails to see is, that these seemingly petty and even contradictory details were all used upon shrewd conceptions of the limitations of the people to be freed, and a clear understanding of the conditions that would exist in such fugitive camps as should be created. Even the learned doctor sees the significance of providing for "bringing together again of separated families, for schools, and for the furtherance of 'personal cleanliness.'"

In all criticism, the one palpable omission is the failure to perceive how far removed John Brown's mental processes were from revolutionary bias or lawless intent. The trouble is, and strangely, too, that the fact seems the hardest one to understand, that John Brown actually believed in the idea of freedom, just as he believed in the existence of God. There was no "if," "but," or "and"; no qualification for him in one or the other matters of faith. Without question, he accepted as a conviction the idea that the real and actual purpose of the Federal Constitution, and of the Union formed under it, was to "establish justice," "maintain peace," and "promote public tranquility." He could not and did not conceive of it as merely a mechanism for courts, a machine for
money-making, a means only for opening new lands and building more towns; something by which debts could be collected and order maintained, plus the constable and the cannon. This was not John Brown's conception. It is no wonder, therefore, that he was deemed "insane."

It will be observed in the papers adopted and plans proposed at Chatham, that certain objects were definitely kept in view:

First. That slavery was in derogation of the Republic and contrary to just law, its righteous interpretation, and to the purposes of the American Union.

Second. That, therefore, it was slaveholders, not liberators, who were traitors and rebels. Hence John Brown's justification of his constitution and his denial, when on trial, of having raised an insurrection.

Third. His purpose to organize authority among his adherents. With this idea in view, the simple organization John Brown projected is seen to be admirably adapted for the conditions he anticipated creating—a widely scattered state of resistance among an untrained but willing set of people, to a system of oppression,—then resistance being presumed to be set in conditions half leaning to their own views and necessities.

Fourth. The military plans can be seen by the flexible form of organization, seen in "General Order No. 1,"¹ to be adapted to an insurgent warfare. The bands, sections, platoons, and companies were designed to act separately or together. In this will also be seen some explanation of why an

¹ See Appendix.
attack was made with so small a force. Each one of that band was fitted for some separate command, however small. If the best slaves had joined the liberators, and they, as originally designed, had gone into the Alleghany Mountains, and not been cooped up in the Harper's Ferry cul de sac, how soon would they have been subdued? It is reasonably assured that a number of neighborhood negroes did know of Brown's intention. At least they knew something was in the air. Osborne P. Anderson declares,¹ that visits were made to plantations, "and the slaves rejoiced. At the slaves' quarters there was apparently a general jubilee, and they stepped forward manfully, without impressing or coaxing. In one case only was there any hesitation. A dark-complexioned, free-born man refused to take up arms. . . . Of the slaves who followed us to the Ferry, some were sent to help remove stores, and the others, . . . furnished by me with pikes, acted as a guard to the prisoners, to prevent their escape." Captain Brown's purpose was to make of his white men, and of others as soon as possible, independent commanders of some small detachments.

The Chatham Convention adjourned on the 10th of May, 1858. An active and acrid correspondence had been progressing while the "Liberators" were in council. A letter of Hugh Forbes, dated May 5th, showed that he followed somewhat closely each of the next moves. John Brown on the 14th wrote his eldest son to watch him close and forward all details.

Following Mr. Sanborn's narrative, it is stated that G. L. Stearns and Theodore Parker were for postponing for a year. Mr. Sanborn was in doubt; T. W. Higginson in favor of immediate action; Dr. Howe, on the 9th of May, held the same view; on the 18th he demanded immediate postponement; Gerrit Smith on the 7th wished to go no further; Higginson, and probably Howe, suggested that "when the thing is well started, who cares what he (Forbes) will say."

Steps were taken on May 20th to change the location of the arms and material, for "reasons that cannot be written." A meeting of the Captain's friends, Messrs. Smith, Stearns, Howe, Parker, Higginson, and Sanborn was held at the Revere House, Boston, on the 24th of May, when, as Mr. Sanborn writes, it was "resolved that Brown ought to go to Kansas at once." On the 31st inst., the Captain reached Boston. He was full of regret and much discouraged by the assumed necessity of postponement. The Revere House meeting decided that no effort should be made till the next winter, when a considerable sum, from two thousand to three thousand dollars, would be raised. Brown, in the meantime, according to the notes made by Col. Higginson at the time, was "to blind Forbes by going to Kansas, and to transfer the property so as to relieve the Massachusetts Kansas Committee of responsibility, and they in future were not to know his plans." To all this, the Captain objected that his force would be demoralized; "it would not cost twenty-five dollars apiece to move his thirteen men

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1 "Life and Letters of John Brown," p. 460, _et al._
from Ohio;” he would start if he had but three hundred dollars. The knowledge Forbes could give to his opponents “would be injurious, for he wished” them “to underrate him, but still . . . the increased terror produced would perhaps counterbalance this, and it would not make much difference. If he had the means, he would not lose a day.” Higginson’s report is undoubtedly a faithful one, and those who knew him then can realize that his own views were coincident with Brown’s. Still, the latter said he did not wish his friends to think him “reckless,” as they “held the purse, he was powerless without them,” that some of them were “not men of action,” and had allowed themselves “to be intimidated” by “Senator Wilson’s letter.” The Chatham episode had cost him nearly all his funds; so he was obliged to submit. Looking back, one can perceive that for what he was aiming at, and others were sympathizing with, John Brown was right and they were wrong. The blow may have been severer and longer fought. Its direct effect as a blow would have been more immediate and widely extended; its moral effect would doubtless have been much less, and no one can now judge with any reasonableness as to what might have been the political consequences following a continued and far-spread slave uprising. The Boston incident closed, however, with Captain Brown leaving for the West on the 3d of June “in good spirits,” with $500 in gold, and liberty from Mr. Stearns, their legal owner, to retain all the arms as his own property. Doubtless his willingness to return to Kansas, apart from the need of confusing Forbes, which that movement most effectually did,
was due to a real emergency that had arisen in the much-harried Territory.

The Lecompton Constitution still cast its portentous shadow along the path of the free-state people. Though rejected in different ways,—the people, in order to accomplish this peacefully, having even "stooped to conquer," by voting under the fraudulent Missouri code;—yet the national pro-slavery administration and party had endeavored in Congress to force the admission of Kansas under it as a slave State. They failed finally in this. A compromise measure, known as the "English bill" was adopted on the 18th of May, by which the Governor of Kansas (James W. Denver) was to appoint a day for voting for or against the wretched instrument. The Governor soon after named August 2d for the polling of this foregone conclusion.¹

¹ The votes cast upon the final effort to force slavery upon Kansas are instructive. They were: Election of delegates to Lecompton Constitutional Convention (apportionment fraudulent), June 15, 1857, 2,200 votes. Election of State officers under the Lecompton Constitution, Dec. 21, 1857; vote for or against slavery 6,143, with 569 against; fraudulent vote proven, 3,006. The free-state men did not vote on the Constitution, but elected a majority of the Legislature; their vote on State ticket and Member of Congress averaged, 6,908; the pro-slavery vote nominally averaged 6,509, a numerical free-state majority of 399. The Constitution itself was not submitted, and Congress was asked to provide for that, or, better still, to reject the whole instrument; and, judging by the unchallenged votes on the question "with" or "without" slavery, the actual pro-slavery vote in 1857 was 3,733. But there were many small frauds perpetrated, and 2,500 would be a liberal number. The Territorial Legislature (free-state) ordered an election on the Lecompton Constitution, and it was held January 4.
But this was not all, nor the chief incident which decided John Brown's friends and John Brown himself, that it was a duty as well as the best policy for him to return forthwith to Kansas. On the 18th of May, along the eastern border of Linn County, southern Kansas, eleven peaceable, unarmed citizens, at work in field, forge, and dwelling, or on the unthreatened highway, were suddenly captured at different points within a small radius by an armed band of twenty-five men, who appeared to rise as it were from the ground, so sudden and unexpected was their presence and action. I speak from personal knowledge of the terrible deed, known as the "Marais des Cygnes" massacre. The twenty-five armed men were a remnant of the Buford gang of two years before. They were led by one Charles Hamilton, who was with most of his associates openly sheltered at Fort Smith, Arkansas, and whose terrible and unqualified act of assassination was boastingly defended all along the southwest slave borders.  

1858; vote was as follows: against 10,226; for, with slavery 138, without 25; total 10,389. Congress submitted the instrument over again by act signed May 18, 1858, and under it a vote was had August 2d. It stood for it 1,788; against it 11,300; free-state majority, 9,512.

1 The names of all the assassins are not at my hands. The Hon. D. W. Wilder ("Annals of Kansas," p. 183) gives from "Kansas in 1858," William P. Tomlinson, the following names: Charles A. Hamilton, Dr. John Hamilton, Algernon Hamilton (three brothers), Luke and William Yealock, Thomas Jackson, James Tate, Lewis Henderson, W. B. Brockett, Harlin, Beech, and Mattock. The names of the other thirteen scoundrels appear to be lost—a fate that is merited. The Hamiltons were men of education, residing, I believe, at or near West Point, Mo.; all of them
REACHING TO A CULMINATION.

These inoffensive men, eleven in number, were marched to a point near the Snyder forge, an open log building,—sometimes called by the frightened correspondents and politicians of those days, "Snyder's Fort,"—there made to stand in line, while a volley was fired into them, killing five outright, and wounding five others very severely. It was a lovely afternoon, and the scene of murder is the centre of a landscape remarkable for its placid features and rural beauty. The deed startled the country; the North, slow of anger, was roused to passionate heat; the free-state people, who were divided into savage factions, melted and fused together again under a common horror and a single purpose. Robert B. Mitchell, a leading free-state conservative, rode with James Montgomery, the fighting radical of southern Kansas, in the endeavor to overtake the Hamilton gang. At Fort Scott, just before this deed, Sheriff Samuel J. Walker, of Douglass county, acting as deputy United States marshal, had placed Montgomery under ar-

were, I believe, killed as Confederate guerillas in the Civil War, and one was slain in combat in the Price campaign of 1864, at or near the point of the murder in 1858—the Chateau Trading Post. The eleven free-state men, all quiet citizens, were: William Robertson, William Colpetzer, Patrick Ross, Thomas Stillwell, John F. Campbell—killed at the first fire;—Asa and William Hairgrove, Charles Snyder, Amos Hall, and Charles F. Reed, a Methodist circuit rider and preacher. These were all severely wounded by the same fire. Amos Hall fell unhurt when the other volley was fired, and, feigning death, escaped unhurt, to be shot to death, as stated in the "Annals of Kansas," after in some later border trouble. The two Hairgroves were natives of Georgia. Mr. Snyder was a border-state man; none of the assailed party were identified with the radical wing of the free-state men.
rest, for acts previously done in defense of his neighbors' and his own rights. At the same time leaders of the ruffian element were also arrested by this same cool and fearless officer. Montgomery was released on his parole; the United States Court discharged the pro-slavery criminals. No reward was offered by any authority for the capture of the Hamilton murderers. The Governor of Missouri did not feel his jurisdiction outraged, and the President offered no reward. The Governor of Kansas contented himself with placating the angered citizens, not in pursuing the assassins. When, however, seven months later, John Brown rescued eleven slaves from their Missouri masters, and Aaron D. Stevens slew one of these while he was in the act of leveling a revolver on him, the Governor of Missouri hastened to put a price on John Brown; President Buchanan offered a reward for his capture; United States marshals and posses were sent after him, while the army of the United States was required to join in the pursuit by Governor Medary, of Kansas. In the one case, the lives of non-slave-holding "poor whites" alone were sacrificed to the malignant passions of the "chivalry," while in the other the sacred rights of property in human flesh and blood was sternly assailed by armed "Abolitionists." The Hamilton gang coolly and without haste made their way further south. I learned of their movements day after day, and soon after saw the leading assassin strutted as a hero in the streets of Fort Smith, Arkansas. One of the most stirring of John G. Whittier's lyrics is that of "Le Marais du Cygne," ("The Swamp of the Swan") a picturesque name given to the portion of the Osage River valley by the early
French voyageurs, who served at Chouteau's Trading Post, close by which the terrible deed occurred. The closing stanzas of Whittier's poem have that prophetic tone, which in the supreme moments of human conflict, always make the true poet a seer—proclaiming what will be. How prescient are the words:

"Not in vain on the dial
The shade moves along
To point the great contrasts
Of right and of wrong;
Free homes and free altars,
And fields of ripe food;
The reeds of the swan's march
Whose bloom is of blood.

"On the lintels of Kansas
That blood shall not dry;
Henceforth the bad angel
Shall harmless go by;
Henceforth to the sunset
Unchecked on her way,
Shall liberty follow
The march of the day."

The John Brown men were scattered after the adjournment of the Chatham Convention, a little discouraged, too, as Steward Taylor wrote on the 13th of May to Dr. H. C. Gill at Tabor, Iowa, by the aspect of what was "the most critical point" in their endeavors. Owen Brown went to visit his brother Jason at Akron, Ohio. Cook left Cleveland for the neighborhood of Harper's Ferry. Realf left for New York, and from there went to England, not to be heard of or from again until arrested in Texas, dur-
ing the winter of 1859-60. Gill, who tells the story elsewhere in a simple narrative full also of unconscious art, went to work in a Shaker settlement, probably Lebanon, Ohio, where Tidd was already employed. Steward Taylor went to Illinois where he had acquaintances. Kagi and Stevens waited Brown’s return at Cleveland. Parsons and Moffett stayed a short time in northern Ohio, and then departed for Iowa. Leeman got some work to do in Ashtabula County. John Brown left Boston, as already stated, on the 3d of June, proceeding to Vermont, where he was joined by his son John, and both went to the North Elba homestead for a very short visit. Kagi, Stevens, Leeman, Gill, Parsons, Moffett, and Owen were gathered up and the party pushed through to Kansas, arriving at Lawrence on the 25th of June. On that day and the following one, Captain Brown was the guest of James Redpath and myself, at the Whitney Hotel. How he blazed his road from southern Kansas and Missouri through Canada back to Harper’s Ferry, must, with the four months of the life at Kennedy Farm, be told in bold outline in the next succeeding pages.