

A short account of the MURDERS, ROBBERIES, BURNINGS, THEFTS, and other outrages committed by the MOB and MILITIA of the State of Missouri, upon the LATTER DAY SAINTS. The Persecutions they have endured for their Religion, and their Banishment from that State by the Authorities thereof. By JOHN TAYLOR, Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter Day Saints.*

As many reports have been put in circulation relative to the circumstances that have taken place in Missouri, concerning the persecutions of the Mormons, (so called,) and as the public are unable to arrive at any just conclusions relative to the events that have taken place, I thought it best to lay this short account before the world, as I was an eye and an ear witness to most of the things mentioned in this account. And what I did not witness, I have documentary evidence or testimony that could not be impeached from those that did see and hear.

It is almost unnecessary for me to state that those circumstances have been to us, of a very painful nature, and calculated to harrow up every feeling of the soul. That every possible means have been made use of, in order to misrepresent us as a people, calumniate our characters, rob us of our rights as citizens, take away our liberty of conscience, and deprive us of all those privileges for which our fathers bled. For this, ingenuity has been put to the rack, and calumny has spun its last thread. The difficulties under which our people have labored ever since their settlement in Jackson county, in Missouri, have been nothing more nor less than religious persecutions; for had our people violated the law, that jealousy with which they have been watched, would not have been backward in accusing the aggressors; nor would the power have been wanting to execute the law as constables and lawyers, priests and magistrates, civilians and officers have been arrayed against us, in a great measure from that time to the present, and had it been otherwise, there was no need of their declaring their determination, as expressed in one of their resolutions in Jackson county, to "expell them peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must." And the very fact of our people being dispossessed of their lands in Jackson county, and not now being allowed to inherit them, is a standing monument of our wrongs, and a circumstance that would make every true republican to blush. That principle of intolerance and religious bigotry has followed us, from that time to this, and has grown with our growth, until it has ended in the authorities of the State being arrayed against us. Relative to the difficulties that have recently transpired, the first commencement of them was at Gallatin, in Davies county, where a number of our brethren were assembled in order to exercise their elective franchise. They were struck at and insulted by a number of men who seemed determined to deprive them of that privilege which our Constitution guarantees to every free citizen. Indignant at such treatment, they would not thus be repelled, but stood up in the defence of their rights, when an affray took place, which ended in two or three being wounded on each side. This excitement it would appear was raised chiefly by an inflammatory speech being delivered by Wm. Pendleton, one of the candidates. A report came to Far West, that several of our brethren were wounded, and that two were killed, and that our adversaries would not allow their bodies to be buried. Upon which a number of our brethren repaired to Davies county for the purpose of ascertaining the facts of the case; not in a large body as has been reported, but in small companies of three or four each, at their own discretion, and not at the command of Joseph Smith Jr. But as many in this place had friends there, they felt anxious for their welfare, and repaired to the place in order to satisfy themselves as to the truth of the matter.

I have the affidavits concerning this affair now laying before me, and were it not that it might swell this address to too great a length, I might here transcribe them. When these companies got together, they possibly might appear formidable to some. This was the time that our brethren called upon Esq. Black for the purpose of reconciling difficulties, and coming to some terms, whereby a permanent settlement might be made, and a recurrence of difficulties avoided.— They did not visit him in a large body as has been stated, but three or four individuals waited on Mr. Black. Joseph Smith Jr. was not among the number, but being afterwards invited by Mr. Black, he attended upon his invitation. As much has been said relative to coercion having been used by Joseph Smith jr., and those that were with him, and that the document which it was said he was forced to sign, was unconstitutional and subversive of the rights of American citizens, &c. &c.; I here insert a copy of the instrument that Mr. Black drew and signed with his own hand, as I have the original in my possession I shall give it verbatim, not being accountable either for its composition or orthography.

* Mr. Sidney Rigdon has a work in the press which will be published in Commerce, Hancock county, Ill. in two or three weeks, showing our persecutions, imprisonments, the plots, schemes and intrigues of their official characters, the history of the mobs, &c. from the commencement of our settlement in the State of Missouri, supported by well authenticated testimony.

I Adam Black a justice of the peace of Davis County do here by certify to the People caled mormin that he is bound to suport the constitution of this State & the united State & he is not attached to eny mob nor willnt attach his self to eny such peope and so long as they will not molst me I will not molest them.

ADAM BLACK, J. P.

This the 8 day of august 1838.

Mr. Black afterwards made oath that he was forced to sign this document by a number of armed men, but it was not so; when our people went, they told him that their intention was to seek to establish peace, and the subsequent investigation by Judge King and Gen. Atchison proved that no coercion was intended, nor used by our people; and their dockets will establish that fact. But the truth of the matter is, that Mr. Black and others had sold their pre-emption rights, corn, &c. to our people, and had obtained remuneration, some in part, other for all their property; which however they said they cared little about, as they would soon drive the Mormons, and possess their properties again. This is a fact well known in Davies County, and Mr. Black, after riding through the county to stir up excitement and collect a mob, treated his friends (the mob) with a payment of \$200 which he had received from our brethren, stating that he had cheated the Mormons out of it, and would soon possess his land again, &c.— And the events which have subsequently transpired evidently show that he has accomplished his design, and that too from the support of the highest authorities of this state. Whilst this mob were thus collected together, they commenced their depredations by shooting at our men, taking arms and prisoners, driving off cattle, hogs, &c.

The militia were called upon to defend our brethren, and Gen. Atchison with a company repaired to the place, and finally succeeded in dispersing the mob. Mean-while a number of our brethren who had located themselves and bought property at De Witt, on the banks of the Missouri river, in Carroll county, were threatened with extermination by the mob, if they would not evacuate that place and leave the county. Several messages of this kind were sent but no attention was paid to them. An anonymous letter was then sent to a Mrs. Smith, a widow, in De Witt, who did not belong to the church; as they said they did not wish her destroyed in the general massacre that would shortly come upon the Mormons. She showed this letter to some of the brethren, who however disregarded it, as they had been taught from their infancy, that they were the free born sons of liberty, citizens of the United States, a country that has always boasted of an enlightened policy, a liberty of conscience and of worship, impartial laws, and an equitable administration, and they never yet had been inducted into the mysteries of mobocracy. At the appointed time the mob came amounting to upwards of a hundred with the Rev. Sessiel Woods, and Abbot Hancock, two Presbyterian Priests, at their head in company with the sheriff. Mr. Woods had sworn out a writ against Mr. Hinkle, stating that he was in danger of his life in conse-

quence of some expressions made by Mr. Hinkle. The sheriff apprized Mr. Hinkle of this, who as soon as he was told that they had a civil process against him, delivered himself up on condition that the sheriff would disperse the mob; he agreed to do so, but the mob instead of dispersing, came into the village, threatening the women and children, and stating that they would throw their property into the Missouri river, &c.

They paraded the streets in a very hostile manner for two or three hours, and after throwing out many threats, they held a council, at which they passed resolutions, that regardless of all law, the Mormons should leave that place in ten days, or they would exterminate them, without regard to age or sex, and throw their goods, chattels, &c. into the river, after which they discharged their guns and left the place. Although the Rev. Sessiel Woods had sworn that he was afraid of his life, yet he did not appear against Mr. Hinkle, but came with the mob into the village, and was one of the principal actors in the scene; and thus his company which had assembled as the sheriff stated for the purpose of seeing justice administered on Mr. Hinkle, lost their errand, as when he appeared before the Justice of the Peace, his accusers were not to be found, but were engaged in a more favorite pursuit, viz: in the acts above alluded to. I would here observe that this company were part of the mob that were dispersed from Davies county, who were on their way home, and got the sheriff to accompany them that they might have some legal pretext for their assembling in that hostile manner, and if Hinkle had not given himself up, they could have circulated the report that the Mormons would not be subject to law. But if he would, they were there, and according to the before-mentioned resolutions "law or no law" the Mormons should leave the county or be exterminated.

The time appointed arrived, and about the first of October, the mob assembled in number between three and four hundred, and encamped within one mile of De Witt. They had one or more cannon with them. They commenced burning dwelling houses and other buildings, and destroying other property; they several times sent their committee with threats of destruction if we did not immediately leave. At the appearance of the mob we placed guards about the town who were frequently shot at. In the mean time, Gen. Parks marched a company of militia to our assistance, but when he arrived, he said that he could do nothing for us on account of the mob spirit that was in his men, and he withdrew his company about the eleventh of October. We used every means in our power to obtain redress from the civil authorities, but in vain. A petition was sent to his Excellency, the Governor, the last of September, with about fifty names attached to it. On the first of October we sent a petition for redress to Mr. King, Circuit Judge. About the sixth, we sent Mr. Henry Root in person to the Judge. On the third we agreed with Mr. Caldwell to go to the Governor on the same business, and about the same time that Gen. Parks withdrew his men. After we had defended the place ten days, we obtained the heartless intelligence that his Excellency

could do nothing for us. Thus after appealing in vain to the chief authorities of the state, we were left to compromise matters with a lawless banditti of men, who, regardless of all law, were tearing from us our privileges, and trampling under foot with impunity the Constitution and laws of the United States. We at length made a treaty to the effect, that provided we would leave, they would not molest us any further, and that they would pay us for our lands and for the losses which we had sustained, this however they have not done, and say they never will do; and instead of dispersing according to agreement, their next threat was, to drive us from Davies, and then from Caldwell county. Accordingly as a number of our brethren were on their way from De Witt to Davies county, they were stopped by the Davies people and obliged to go to Caldwell county. The mob immediately began to assemble in Davies county, at which time Gen. Donophon, an officer of the Missouri militia came to Far West, and requested that the militia of Caldwell county might be sent out to the relief of their brethren, stating that he had not a sufficient force then under his command to repel the aggressions of the mob. Accordingly our militia marched to Davies county, and on their way there, they met with many families and individuals fleeing from their homes who had refused to take up arms against the Mormons, and on that account were threatened by the mob. These mob characters also removed their families, that they might be out of the way of difficulty, should they fail in their attempt to drive the Mormons. One cannon which they obtained in Jackson county, they still retained in their hands, and they on their way to Davies, (although they had made a treaty with us,) took two of our brethren prisoners, and made them ride on the cannon from Carroll county to Davies, threatening at the same time, that they would drive the Mormons from Davies to Caldwell, and from Caldwell to hell, and that they should have no quarters, but at the mouth of the cannon. They accordingly came to Davies and commenced their depredations, sending out scouting parties shooting cattle, driving families, and burning houses. In this way they were engaged when Gen. Parks, a Missouri officer came to the scene of action. A lady came running into the house where he and Col. Wight, (one of our officers were,) with a child under each arm, stating that the mob had burned her house and all that was in it. Upon this he directed Col. Wight to disperse the mob. This proved quite an easy matter, the mob fled at the approach of our militia. The cannon was taken by our men and brought to Adamondiahman, together with some property which had been stolen by the mob, during their nefarious career in this county.

The manner in which the cannon was obtained is worthy of notice, the mob had thought it safer to bury it in the earth, than to make use of it, but some hogs came along, and uncovered a portion of it, and by this means it was discovered. And now in our situation what was to be done. We had appealed to the authorities of the State, time and again, we had made every exertion in our power to sue for peace and obtain redress for our grievances, by the laws of our land, but in

vain; numbers of our brethren had been torn from their homes, robbed of their lands, and forced to remove with their families, to seek other abodes, in an inclement season of the year, in order to obtain peace on some terms, however unfair, but all to no purpose. So that we had now no alternative but that of standing up in our own defence and protecting our rights and properties, our lives, and what was to us still more dear, the lives of our wives and children, and others besides who looked to us for protection at a time so critical, that the well disposed of the adjoining counties could render us no assistance, because of the mob spirit which in general pervaded the minds of those who in ordinary circumstances, had heretofore acted as regular militia, in defence of the laws of the land; and were even-handed justice even now administered, and an impartial investigation entered into, it would develope circumstances, that would cause every true republican to blush, and every patriot to tremble for the fate of his country, that so great infractions of the laws, have been not only suffered, but afterwards upheld by the authorities of the State.

About eight or ten days after the before-mentioned difficulties, a number of the mob from different parts assembled in the vicinity of Far West. Messengers came in to inform us that they were burning houses, driving off cattle, taking prisoners and depriving them of their arms, and committing many outrages. It was the aggressions of one of those companies, who had for their leader or Captain, the Rev. Mr. Bogart, a Methodist Priest, that led to the painful circumstances which transpired at Crooked river. It has been asserted by some, that they were militia; but we presume that the public are sufficiently apprized that this was not the case; and if they were militia, they bore none of the marks whereby they could be designated as such. Many of our brethren had their arms taken from them, and were warned to leave their homes, by them; one had his house burned, and another, a traveller, who had just arrived, had his wagon and goods burned by this same party. Several messengers came to Far West, informing us of these circumstances, when a small party repaired to the place to defend the lives and property of their brethren, when a skirmish took place, which ended in the flight of the Rev. Captain Bogart and his company; three of our brethren were killed, how many of their company has not yet been ascertained by us. About the time that the militia came to this place, a number of the mob, amounting to between two and three hundred, attacked about thirty of our brethren, who were convened at a place in the neighborhood of Hawn's mill, consulting together upon their critical situation, although a day or two previous they had made a treaty of peace with a company who had assembled against them, yet knowing that little reliance could be placed in a mob, they had met to consult for their future safety, thinking themselves however secure for the present. When this mob appeared our brethren sued for peace, but in vain; they then ran into a log building when they were fired upon, and shot down by their murderers, through the apertures in the wall; upwards of eighteen fell victims to the rage of this banditti, besides numbers of others who

made their escape from them, after being severely wounded. Among these was a woman, who after being shot at several times, was wounded in the hand; a boy about ten years old, after being wounded, sued for mercy, when one of these fiends in human shape, put a rifle to his head and blew his skull off; a brother of his, a boy about eight years old, who was wounded in the hip, seeing the fate of his brother, lay down among the dead and escaped observation.

One of the wounded who is still living, has thirteen ball holes in his skin; all however who stayed in the building were massacred except two, who escaped the fury of these men by being covered by heaps of dead bodies that fell upon them. And they were thus preserved not being observed by the enemy. An aged man, a Revolutionist, after the massacre was partially over, threw himself into their hands, and begged for quarters, when he was instantly shot down; that not killing him, they took an old corn-cutter and literally mangled him to pieces. Any that they thought were not dead, were shot at again by those furies; but not contented with their lives, while they yet lay gasping for breath, and groaning in the agonies of death; whilst the spirit yet fluttered in the body, waiting its release, they were robbed of their apparel, boots, coats, &c., by their exulting foes, who immediately proceeded to plunder the houses and wagons of those they had just butchered, of every thing that was of value; bedding, wearing apparel, &c., and thus were the wretched survivors of this tragedy, left naked and destitute, widowed or fatherless in one day.

They then proceeded to a place where seven wagons were stationed, about five miles distant from the massacre, and after plundering them made the following propositions to them: 1st. If you will deny your faith you can live with us. 2d. If you will not do this, you must leave the country. 3d. If you will not do this we will massacre you as we have done your brethren.

Relative to the assembling of the militia, we had no knowledge of, until they appeared before Far West, in the attitude of war; and had we been apprised of it, we should have rejoiced rather than otherwise, as we should have expected redress for our grievances, and deliverance from the hands of our enemies; as we have at all times been subject to and supported the Constitution of the United States, and the laws of this State. Had the authorities of government sent out a committee to have counselled with us, and investigate the matter, they would have been treated with respect, and their counsel adhered to, as we never had any quarrel with our country, and if we or any of us had broken the laws, we were willing to be tried by and adhere to those laws, and that Constitution which the blood of our Fathers still endears to our memory. But instead of any such proceeding being observed towards us, it is a fact well known by all parties, that when a company of our men under Col. Hinkle were sent out with a flag of truce, in order to ascertain whether or no they were militia, our flag was disregarded and insulted, and we have reason to believe that our brethren who composed this party would have been cut off, had those militia succeeded in their attempts to surround them.

Which attempts however proved unsuccessful, and by reason of the fleetness of their horses they were enabled to reach Far West, shortly after the army of Gen. Lucas formed in line of battle, in the immediate vicinity of our city. From this their abrupt manner of proceeding we supposed them to be the mob, and of course made preparation for self-defence. They sent in a flag of truce, with a message, that as there were some in the place who were not Mormons, they had better leave, as they (the militia as they called themselves) were going to massacre the Mormons, and burn the city that night. Believing that regular militia would not send us any such message, we still stood to our arms, until it was ascertained that they were such. As soon as this was known, (however astonishing it was to hear that the authorities of the State were arrayed against us,) we felt willing to submit to them, and when some of our principal men were called for as hostages, they gave themselves up.

We were next called upon to give up our arms, this we as readily complied with; we then expected to be protected by that authority, but in vain; for while we were thus deprived of our arms, we were insulted and threatened, and had to submit to the most shameful abuses that ever disgraced the annals of our country. The mob which had been in our neighborhood previous to the arrival of the militia, joined their ranks and became part and parcel of their number; many of these mob characters were painted and their faces disfigured, and looked more like barbarians than American citizens; and indeed the conduct of the whole (militia and mob thus amalgamated) comported more with the first than the last of those characters. Several of the houses of our brethren were robbed by them of their blankets, wearing apparel, money, &c.; a great number of horses and some wagons were stolen; one man had upwards of three hundred dollars in specie taken; another lost one hundred dollars. Our corn-fields in the vicinity of Far West, were laid waste, cattle were killed in great numbers, the best parts of them taken and the remainder left to rot on the ground. Hogs and sheep in many instances were shot for amusement, and left laying for dogs, hogs, or birds of prey to feed upon.— Many of our women were obliged to fly from these desperadoes. One of our men while a prisoner, was struck on the head with a gun, the lock of which entered his skull and caused his death a day or two after; during which time his friends were not allowed to administer to his relief, nor was he administered to by his enemies. A number of those wicked men combined together and perpetrated personal violence too disgraceful to insert in this paper, upon two defenceless women. Many other outrages were committed by these troops under command of Gen. Lucas, while we were prisoners under a strong guard; and though scores of bushels of our corn was laid strewed in heaps on the ground for cattle and hogs to feed upon, and our pork and beef much in the same condition, here were we shut up in Far West, (our numbers much augmented by those who had recently come in for protection,) with little else in general than boiled corn to live upon, until the troops were withdrawn, when we were allowed the

great privilege of "getting our own corn, fetching our own wood, and obtaining our own provisions." Oh Liberty! Whither hast thou fled? Oh Patriotism! Whither hast thou gone? Surely the balances are fallen from the hands of Justice; the wreath no longer encircles the head of Liberty. And Republicanism has bowed at the shrine of despotism and tyranny. In the meantime, we were called together and presented with a deed of trust, by signing of which we were forced to make over all our properties to pay the debts of some private individuals; and also to pay the expenses, &c. of the war. This we were obliged to do at the point of the bayonet. It is true, when we had each signed his name, we were separately asked if we acknowledged it; but be it hereby known unto all men, that we were during this ceremony surrounded by a strong guard of armed men, and not allowed to leave the pen until we had signed the document and acknowledged the same.

General Clark having arrived, a committee of our people convened for the purpose of soliciting an interview with him. We sent a note to him to that effect, and obtained for answer that he would be in Far West in the morning; but we did not obtain an interview. We next presented a memorial to him, representing a statement of facts from the beginning, as we could not believe from the treatment which we had received, that he was acquainted with our state, and requested an interview with him, but all to no purpose. At length we were called together at his command; upwards of fifty prisoners taken from amongst us, and then had the following speech delivered to us by the General.

"GENTLEMEN,—You whose names are not attached to this list of names, will now have the privilege of going to your fields, and of providing corn, wood, &c. for your families. Those that are now taken will go from this to prison, be tried, and receive the due demerit of their crimes; but you, (except such as charges may hereafter be preferred against,) are at liberty as soon as the troops are removed that now guard the place, which I shall cause to be done immediately. It now devolves upon you to fulfil the treaty that you have entered into, the leading items of which I shall now lay before you. The first requires that your leading men be given up to be tried according to law; this you have complied with.—The second is, that you deliver up your arms; this has been attended to. The third stipulation is, that you sign over your properties to defray the expenses that have been incurred on your account, this you have also done. Another article yet remains for you to comply with,—and that is, that you leave the State forthwith. And whatever may be your feelings concerning this, or whatever your innocence is, it is nothing to me. Gen. Lucas (whose military rank is equal with mine,) has made this treaty with you; I approve of it. I should have done the same had I been here, and am therefore determined to see it executed. The character of this State has suffered almost beyond redemption, from the character, conduct and influence that you have exerted; and we deem it an act of justice to restore her character by every proper means. The order of the Governor to me was, that you should be exterminated, and not allowed to remain in the State. And had not your leaders been given up, and the terms of the treaty complied with before this time, your families would have been destroyed, and your houses in ashes. There is a discretionary power vested in my hands, which, considering your circumstances, I shall exercise for a season. You are indebted to me for this clemency. I do not say that you shall go now, but you must not think of staying here another season, or of putting in crops; for the moment you do this the citizens will be upon you; and if I am called here again in case of non-compliance with the treaty made, do not think that I shall act any more as I have done now. You need not expect any mercy, but extermination, for I am determined the Governor's order shall be executed. As for your Leaders, do not think, do not imagine for a moment, do not let it enter into your minds that they will be delivered and restored to you again, for their fate is fixed, the die is cast, their doom is sealed. I am sorry, Gentlemen, to see so many apparently intelligent men found in the situation that you are; and Oh! if I could invoke that Great Spirit of the unknown God to rest upon and deliver you from that awful chain of superstition, and liberate you from those fetters of fanaticism with which you are bound—that you no longer do homage to a man. I would advise you to scatter abroad, and never again organize yourselves with Bishops, Presidents, &c. lest you excite the jealousies of the people and subject yourselves to the same calamities that have now come upon you. You have always been the aggressors—you have bro't upon yourselves these difficulties, by being disaffected, and not being subject to rule. And my advice is, that you become as other citizens, lest by a recurrence of these events you bring upon yourselves irretrievable ruin."

This requires no comment, but I would just observe that we are laid under peculiar obligations to the General, that we are not exterminated; and that if he should again visit us we should not experience such unbounded mercies as we did during his last visit. It evidently shows that he was determined to execute the Governor's exterminating order, whether we were innocent or not."

P. S. I wrote this article at the request of the Editor of the St. Louis Gazette, but as he has refused to publish it, for reasons best known to himself, I have taken this means to lay it before the public.

JOHN TAYLOR.