

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Riot of November 7th—Destruction of the fourth press—
The murder of Lovejoy—His funeral.

We have now arrived at the fatal night of the 7th of Nov., 1837, and I give the details of the occurrences from personal notes of my own. The fourth press had been shipped to Alton from Cincinnati, and had been received in the dead of the night (on the 6th)* by the friends of Mr. Lovejoy, in presence of the mayor, and taken to its final destination.

All was quiet in the City, and we considered the press safe from harm, as it lay on storage with the most responsible and most respected firm in the city. No one had any occasion to fear it, so quietly it lay in an upper loft, a mass of iron boxed up, the innocent cause of so much bitter feeling. As night (of the 7th) approached, we gathered in the building to talk over the situation, and congratulated each other on peace. About nine o'clock, the company of men began to disperse to their homes, when Mr. Gilman asked if some few of the number would not volunteer to remain through the night with him, for he intended staying as a

* When the press was received, on the night of the 6th, we were fully prepared to receive and defend it, having, in the building, about sixty men, well armed and drilled, stationed on different floors in squads or companies of sufficient strength to do full execution if the mob should attempt to take the press when landed from the boat. I have preserved one original order issued on that night to the captain of one of these companies, by Orderly Sergt. J. W. Chickering. And a fac-simile of the order is hereto attached.—H. T.

THE MARTYRDOM OF LOVEJOY.

precaution in case the warehouse was attacked. Nineteen men answered the call, and the devoted little band prepared themselves for whatever might occur. An hour had elapsed before any signs of disturbance were noticed, but then it was evident that a mob was gathering. Messrs. Keating and West asked permission to enter into the warehouse to confer with Mr. Gilman, and were incautiously admitted by some one, who, in my opinion, was not possessed of much judgment, for they immediately discovered the fact that there was a very small force inside, against which to contend.

They informed us that unless the press was given up to the gentlemen outside, the building would be burned over our heads or blown up with powder. We had, early in the evening, selected for our captain, Enoch Long, who had seen some service, thinking occasion might require concerted action on our part. His method of defence was much milder than some of us advocated, for we considered it best to fire on the mob and make short work of it; but he commanded that no one should shoot without his order, an order which, from mistaken motives of mercy, he hesitated to give until it was too late to intimidate the besiegers.

The crowd gathered and attempted to force an entrance into the building, but were temporarily checked in consequence of the order of our captain to one of his men to fire upon them, in return for their shot which had entered the building. Our shot proved a fatal one: a man named Bishop, one of the mob, was wounded and died before he could be taken off from the ground. The lull was a short

one: the mob returned, reinforced by ruffians who had been drinking to inspire themselves with courage, and with savage yells they shouted that they would "fire the building and shoot every d—d Abolitionist as he tried to make his escape!" No orders were given us for any concentrated fire at any time; it was all hap-hazard, and every man did as he thought best. At this juncture, the mayor appeared, and we asked him to lead us out to face the mob, and, if they would not disperse upon his command, that he should order us to fire upon them. His answer was, that he had too much regard for our lives to do that,—but he, at the same time, most distinctly justified us in our defence. He attempted, afterward, to disperse them himself, but his power was gone—they merely laughed at his authority, as his weak and nerveless treatment of them, then and on former occasions of lawlessness, had destroyed all his influence as a magistrate.

Attempts were now made to fire the building, and against one side, in which there were no openings, a ladder was placed to reach the roof, on which a man ascended with a burning torch. Captain Long called for volunteers to make a sortie, in order to prevent the accomplishment of their purpose, and Amos B. Roff, Royal Weller, and Elijah P. Lovejoy promptly stepped forth to execute his commission. As they emerged from the building into the brilliant calm moonlight, shots were fired from behind a shelter, and five balls were lodged in the body of Mr. Lovejoy, others wounding Mr. Roff and Mr. Weller. Mr. Lovejoy had strength enough to run back and up the stairs, crying out, as he went, "I am shot! I am shot! I am dead!"

When he reached the counting-room, he fell back into the arms of a bystander and was laid upon the floor, where he instantly passed away without a struggle and without speaking again.

Soon Messrs. Keating and West again approached the building, and informed Mr. Gilman that the roof was on fire, but that "the boys" would put it out if the press should be given up—that was all they wanted and nothing should be destroyed or any one harmed if the surrender were made. Mr. Gilman then, consulting with us all, said that there was property of great value on storage, and the interests of firms all over the State were represented there, that he felt great responsibility as Mr. Godfrey, his partner, was absent. To save these interests, he thought the building had better be abandoned and the press given up. Others coinciding in this opinion, it was decided to surrender the press, on condition that the mob would not attempt to enter the warehouse until we had left, and, further, that our departure should be without molestation. These terms being accepted, we secreted our arms and left the building together.

The dead body of Mr. Lovejoy and the two wounded men were guarded by S. J. Thompson, until after the mob entered. I remember, very well, delaying after the rest as I had an unusually good rifle, which I desired to place where the mob could not possibly discover it. I, thereby, escaped the risk the others ran of being shot, for no sooner had they left the building than the rioters broke their truce and fired more than a hundred bullets after them, but, owing to the slope of the ground, the shots passed harmlessly over their heads.

The friends then went sadly to their homes, thinking of the stain upon the fair name of their City, and the terrible injustice that was there being countenanced. The fire in the warehouse was extinguished, and the press was taken out and destroyed.

The next morning, we returned to where the dead body of Lovejoy lay, and removed it to his late home. His wife was absent at the house of a friend, so prostrated by the shock of these terrible events that her life was despaired of for many days. Owen Lovejoy received the corpse of his brother at the house, and preparations for the funeral, to take place the following day, were then made.

It was a rainy, depressing day, and I well remember now how Abram Breath, still a resident of Alton, and myself walked through mud and water, together, to the grave. We chafed in an angry mood as we thought of the silence then enforced upon us! The burial service was simple, consisting merely of prayers, by Mr. Lovejoy's constant friend, the Rev. Thomas Lippincott, no remarks being made, lest the mob should disturb the last sacred rites of our beloved friend. There had been no inquest over his body, no flowers were strewn upon his coffin. Mob-law not only reigned, but was insultingly triumphant.

It was thought that the silence of death, under such circumstances, well became the burial of liberty.