

NARRATIVE OF JOHN E. HALL,

One of the gentlemen who defended Mr. Hanson and his property from the Mob at Baltimore, on the 27th July last.

Early in the morning of Monday, the 27th July, being informed that my friend, Mr. Hanson, was in Baltimore, and that he was at the house which Mr. Wagner had been compelled by the mob to abandon about five weeks before this time, after they had pulled down his office and press, I called to see him. I found him surrounded by about half a dozen gentlemen, to some of whom I had been introduced last summer, at his house in Montgomery county. Upon my asking what had brought him to the city, he said the Federal Republican had been printed at Georgetown, and he had come to Baltimore to superintend the publication of it.—I observed, in a jocular manner, that he would have another house pulled down, and added that he would be torn to pieces by the mob.—He said he hoped not; if the civil authority would not interfere, he trusted his friends would be able to protect him. I observed, that I should be occupied during the day, but, if he desired it, I would spend the night with him. The offer was accepted, and I was desired to be at the house by 6 o'clock in the evening. About the middle of the day, I called again, to ascertain what effect had been produced by the circulation of the paper, during the morning, and to suggest the propriety of communicating to the mayor any evidence of hostility that might have been observed. I learned that several suspicious looking persons had called, and upon asking for Mr. Hanson were shewn to him: that the owner of the house had waited upon the mayor, and demanded protection, which was refused. At neither of these visits did I perceive any sort of preparation for a defence of the house: if there were any munitions of warfare, they were in a remote part of the dwelling, far removed from public observation, and, therefore, only calculated to give provocation to those who obstinately and wilfully sought it. In the evening, when I repaired to the house, I found a number of gentlemen assembled, most of whose names are before the public. The mob were not less punctual. The street was thronged by 8 o'clock, *not with boys, but MEN.** There was no appearance of a civil authority at this time. A person was despatched to procure guns. As soon as they arrived, they were brought into the house and the door was closed. The windows had probably been shut the whole day. The shutting of the door was followed by volleys of stone

* This I assert, in the very teeth of the Report with the confidence of one who expects to be believed, because he knows he speaks the truth. If there be any who are anxious to believe the report of the committee (derived from what testimony no one knows) in preference to the various affidavits that have been published, I ask how it happens that this insignificant collection of "boys" could not be dispersed, notwithstanding all the exertions of a "neighbouring magistrate," and further how it happens that so soon after the gentlemen in the house were provoked to fire over the heads of these sweet little innocents, who were amusing themselves by breaking windows, &c. they become metamorphosed into an "assemblage of people" in the Report.

against the house, and torrents of abuse from the people in the street. When every sash in front of the house had been broken, and repeated attempts had been made to burst the door, Mr. Hanson appeared at a window up stairs, and cried out: "This house is my castle, I am about my lawful occupation, and will not be interrupted in this manner." The mob exclaimed, "tear the d—d toy out of his castle—break open the door," &c. Mr. Hanson continued: "I have arms in the house, and will fire if you do not desist." The assemblage in the street being at this time very large; the violence increasing; and there appearing no exertion from the police to prevent it, some guns were directed to be fired over the heads of the mob. This was done; and the people, finding themselves unhurt, made an attack upon the front door, which was broken open. At this time I was at the head of the stair case, on the second floor. I could not see the front door; but I heard Gen. Lee say in a very mild tone, "I assure you, sir, you have now entered that door as far as you can come this night." He appeared from the sound, to be standing at the door of the front parlour. The parley continued but a short time.

The general, and the person with whom it took place, must have been within the house; or we who were up stairs, remote from the street, could not have heard it; nor would Gen. Lee, or any of our party, have been suffered by the mob, to exist an instant at the front door; nor would any have gone thither, because it would have prevented the sentinels at the foot of the staircase from defending themselves effectually. From these circumstances, and from the general belief of our own party, I conclude that this man (Gale I suppose,) was shot in the very act of breaking into the house. Mr. Scott the chief justice of the criminal court, arrived at about 10 o'clock in the evening. He was immediately invited to enter the house, and a list of our names was offered to him. He was told, upon his requiring us to leave the house, that we were willing to do so when the mob should be dispersed; and that if the street were cleared we would immediately appear before him, and submit to whatever the law required. This the judge reported to the mob, but they refused to disperse, and he went home.—From this time until towards morning, when Maj. William B. Barney arrived with a detachment of horse, a desultory sort of warfare was carried on. The mob was fired at very rarely; and never without some violent provocation, and until after an urgent caution to all peaceable persons to withdraw. Within the house every thing was conducted with the utmost silence and regard to discipline.

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When the horse approached, the mob fled. The major addressed them as "friends and fellow-citizens." He said he was their "personal and political friend; that he came by order of Maj. Gen. Stricker, to protect persons and property" &c. They returned and cried out: "Then drag those damned murderers out of the house." He said he meant to take them into custody; "he pledged his honour" to them "that no man in the house should escape—that every man should be delivered to justice," but at the same time he begged they would go to their respective houses, like good citizens. Upon their demanding a sight of his authority, he took a paper from his pocket and they went a short distance from the house. What occurred there is not known, but the mob seemed to be well satisfied with the conference. Upon his return to the front of the house, a short conversation ensued between him and some of the gentlemen in the lower part of the house, in which the major said distinctly that he had no instructions inconsistent with our safety and honour. It was his business to preserve the peace and quiet of the city, and this he said he was determined to do, against any party that violated it. Maj. B. was then permitted to put a guard in the lower part of the house, and so matters remained for some hours; a part of our company still on guard, the mob hooting at the company, quarrelling with the troops, and the troops passive.

At length (at 6 o'clock A. M.) the mayor arrived, accompanied by Brig. Gen. Stricker, Maj. Calhoun, Mr. Montgomery the attorney general of the state, Mr. Cumberland Dugan, and some other gentlemen, of the democratic party whose names I do not recollect. By this time some companies of infantry were also drawn up before the door. Gen. Stricker, the mayor, and attorney general, were backwards and forwards several times from the "gentlemen in the street," as the general sometimes called them, to our party, with propositions from the former to us. Our answer invariably was, that having assembled as we thought on a lawful occasion, and having transgressed no law, we would not quit the house while our friend and his property were menaced by the mob. These three persons then begged as from considerations of regard to the peace of the city, and to prevent the further effusion of blood, to consent to go to gaol. They all admitted distinctly and repeatedly our right to do what we had done—but they said the mob could not be reasoned with. It was thought we had committed a murder and nothing would satisfy them but our submission to the civil authority. If we would consent to this measure, a military protection was offered.

promise was given that we should be liberated whenever we thought it would be expedient. We offered repeatedly to go, if the mob were dispersed, but gen. Stricker, as often consulted the mob and brought their answer that they would not disperse until we were confined or killed on the spot. This was about 7 o'clock in the morning. We had been all night under arms without eating and little drink since dinner the day before. The water, unfortunately, had been made useless early in the evening by a wounded person being washed in it. A majority of our party appearing to be inclined to accept the terms which were brought from the mob by Gen. Stricker, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Montgomery, we prepared to march with our arms. But we were told that this could not be permitted on any account. We observed, that as the military had been before the door several hours, and had not only submitted to insults themselves, but permitted them to be continued to us, there was no reason to believe they were able to protect us on the road. Mr. Hanson here exclaimed, that the delicacy of his own situation prevented him from saying much on the occasion—but this much he would say. Alluding to these three gentlemen, (the ambassadors from the mob,) he continued, I know these men better than most of you—There is no reliance to be placed upon them—they are not willing to protect you, if they were able. Remember, what I say, you will all be sacrificed if you quit this house." Gen. Stricker, appeared to be much hurt by these observations. He approached Gen. Lee, with whom the negotiations had been chiefly carried on, and extending his hand, said, "by G—d Mr. Hanson does me great injustice. Gen. Lee, you are a soldier, and know the value of a soldier's word. I pledge you my word and honour as a soldier, that I will protect you to the utmost of my power, until you are out of danger from this mob."

Mr. Johnson appeared to be affected in the same manner, and exclaimed with considerable emotion, and a violent appeal to Heaven, "that he felt his reputation at stake in this business—that he was as much interested for us, as our warmest friends could be, and that he would spill the last drop of his blood, before a hair of our heads should be touched." Mr. M. was more cool. He contented himself with observing, that such remarks were very unnecessary—that Mr. H. must see that every thing was doing which could be done for our safety. Gen. Stricker then proposed to form the military in a hollow square, within which we should walk, each of us holding the arm of some respectable gentleman of the democratic party. As a pledge of his own sincerity, he offered to walk with Mr. H. and took his arm; if we declined this offer, he said he must withdraw the military and leave us to our fates.

We proposed to send for carriages and horses and ride to gaol; but gen. Stricker, after going to the mob, said it was inadmissible, the gentlemen in the street would not permit it.

Thus we evacuated the house, accompanied by only three or four democratic gentlemen, instead of an equal number with ourselves as had been promised. I marched alone, with a pistol in each hand, expecting to be sacrificed in the streets. Of our treatment on the march, I have no disposition to speak. Some persons, from whom better things might have been expected, called for the "Rogues March;" and to that tune Brig. Gen. Stricker, with his detachment of the Maryland militia, marched to the gaol of Baltimore county, amidst the coarsest revilings against us and the soldiery, and the most cowardly insults to the persons of some of my companions.

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It was probably about 9 o'clock in the morning when we arrived at the jail, where we were thrust into an apartment with white and black criminals. We were obliged to rest ourselves as well as we could on the floor, there being but two stools to sit upon. Our military guard immediately left us and we saw no more of them. About the middle of the day, there being very few persons round the prison, we called the gaoler and told him as we thought we could depart with safety, we desired to be liberated. He objected to this, and we urged, in addition to the terms upon which we had consented to enter the walls, that he had no commitment. He went to town to consult judge Scott, and returned with a regular authority, as he said, to detain us, and the information that we should not be bailed. I know, from the information of the person himself, a gentleman of as much consideration as any in the city, that bail was offered for me and as many others as might wish to come out, to any amount, and refused; although some gentlemen who resided at Fell's Point assured the judge that they knew the ringleaders, and were confident they would break into the gaol during the night. This refusal of a right and violation of a solemn promise may be explained by the report of the committee, from which it appears that the mob received assurances that we should not be bailed or suffered to escape. In the afternoon we were visited by the mayor. He and the gaoler assured us that a sufficient force would be within the gaol for our protection. Several ill-looking fellows came into the cell with them, who looked about our room and at our persons very attentively.

How much the mayor might have done for our safety even at this period of the day, and what were his anticipations respecting the events of the night, may be inferred from this circumstance :

A young gentleman, named M' Cubbin, a relation of the mayor, was thrust into prison with us, through a mistake, by the mob. We informed the mayor and jailer that he did not belong to our party. He was suffered to remain with us until twilight, when he was taken out, as we understood, by order of the mayor.

As soon as darkness commenced the people seemed to spring from the ground like Roderick Dhu's soldiers; the gaol was encompassed in an instant by a countless multitude and the work of destruction commenced. As we were at a considerable distance from the outer doors, it is not known what resistance was made to them. They appeared to enter the outer doors without any personal opposition, after ineffectually beating with heavy hammers a long time. Instead of the military guards which had been promised, it seems from the report of the committee that they were met only by "the mayor and a few others," and further that "the door was opened by the turnkey." How long three massy iron doors and one of wood might have resisted these attacks, is not easy to calculate; but in time they must have yielded. As nothing was to be gained by delay, "the military" (which had been called out it is understood with blank cartridges) having been previously dismissed "by order of the general, with the approbation of the mayor," it was well enough to deliver up the keys and abandon the men, who had relied upon their solemn pledges of honour and their official oaths.

Well may the committee startle at the scene of horror which now ensued; well may they decline the task of describing atrocities which must cover the Baltimore democracy with everlasting infamy, which must make the names of the Baltimore police synonymous with all that is unworthy, ignoble, cowardly, & treacherous. They did not hesitate to publish the names of the gentlemen who staked their lives in support of the dearest rights which a freeman can boast, to rifle the pockets of the (apparently) murdered, to misrepresent facts, to palliate enormities, and compel respectable men to give the sanction of their names to an *ex parte*, partial, and garbled narrative.— They have described one of the most alarming violations of personal rights that ever occurred in a political community, and which was perpetrated with circumstances of ferocious barbarity the most inhuman that ever disgraced a civilized society; they were to speak of a general with a military force under his command becoming the contemptible fetch and carrying messenger of a lawless mob, a judge binding himself to the same gang not to bail men whom he had acknowledged had committed no offence, and police officers delivering up their prisoners to be butchered and yet not a sigh escapes them until they behold the mayor and turnkey conducting the assassins to their unarmed prey, and hear the unavailing prayers of the venerable Lingan that he might be spared to his wife and children!

We saw the mob beating at the iron doors

might be injured to his wife and children.

We saw the mob beating at the iron doors at the extremity, of the entry through the grating of our own cell. As there was no means of escape we prepared for the event with fortitude. Having but four pistols among us, it was thought advisable not to use them; but when our door should be forced, we agreed to rush upon them, beat out their lights and then make our way as well as we could. I placed my pistols on the stove and joined Mr. Winchester who was standing immediately behind Mr. Thompson and Capt. Murray at the entrance. The men at first went to the cell opposite ours, Capt. M. observed to his friends "it is possible they should kill the poor devils, instead of us" and then cried out—you are at the wrong door—here we are. Upon coming to our grate it was opened immediately without the slightest difficulty or delay. This was the third iron grate beside the large outer door, thro' which they had to pass, before they could enter our cell, Mr. Murray cried out: "My lads you had better retire; we shall shoot some of you." To the various replies of "how will you do it"—"you can't kill all of us," &c. he said to one "I can kill you at any rate with this pistol." The presenting of the pistol seemed to appal the foremost for an instant. We took advantage of their consternation and rushed upon them. Fortunately their lights were extinguished at the first instant. My two friends in front laid about them so effectually that I reached the front door without any other injury than a few blows with fists, and owing probably to the crowd being so great as to prevent the use of clubs. I was about to leap out, when Mr. Winchester was knocked down by my side. I stooped to assist him and was seized by two persons, who dragged me towards a corner, and exclaiming with horrid imprecations that they would take care of me. This was in the hall of the prison, from the ceiling of which or an upper staircase, a lamp was suspended. They held me by the wrist for about ten minutes, during which I saw several of my friends knocked down and their blood scattered over the pavement. They either cut or tore off my coat, leaving none of it on me

but the cape and sleeves. Having thus secured my pockets, they tore my shirt leaving my bosom bare. All this was done without any precipitation, & as I thought I recognized some of them as having been in the criminal court, and engaged in the other riots in Baltimore, at which I had been told I should be "marked," I concluded that I was to be reserved for some more refined species of cruelty.

I made another effort, but just as I escaped from their hands, I received a blow on my head which brought me senseless to the floor. I was revived by some one jumping on my arm, and I found myself on the steps leading from the front door, with my head downwards. It occurred to me to roll between them and fall under them, the height not being very great. But while I was feeling about, they cried out I was not dead, and I received several severe blows. They dragged me a few yards from the door and threw me on a heap of palpitating bodies. Here we experienced the most brutal and indecent outrages. General Lee, who was thrown across my shoulders, a considerable part of the time appeared to be in excessive pain, and frequently cried out. His exclamations only excited new outrages and curses. When my fresh recruits arrived, he was pointed out as "the d—d old tory general." It was said that "he died true game—huzzaing for king George to the last," and similar expressions, to provoke further cruelty. They were very desirous to identify the person of Mr. Hanson, who lay across my feet the greater part of the time; and as he and myself were the smallest bodies in the heap, we were rigidly scrutinized. They could not bear the reflection that he had escaped, and had they been convinced that he was the person they sought, his death would not have satisfied them, but they would have *torn his heart out*, as a ferocious monster of Baltimore, who is tolerated in decent company, has since expressed *her wish, and drank his blood*.

Exhausted by the fatigues of two nights and a day; and sated, if possible with blood, the cannibals would now have departed, had not one of them proposed, as the tories had all gone to hell, to give them a song. The proposition was hailed with acclamations, they joined hands around us, and a song was sung, which appeared to me rather tedious. The chorus, in which they united, seemed to run thus;

We'll feather and tar every d—d British tory,
And this is the way for American glory.

Before a new verse was commenced, the Orpheus, who made these beasts dance over our bodies, would propose three cheers for Jefferson or Madison, or some such worthy of democracy.

The song was at length interrupted by the arrival of Dr Hall, the attending physician of the penitentiary; a democrat to be sure; but unlike the generality of his detestable party, a man who fears God, and omits no opportunity of rendering a kindness to his neighbour. He addressed a man as their leader, (I think he called him captain White) he said he was as much of a republican as any of them—but his republicanism could not approve of such proceedings—it was shameful to insult a fallen foe, and shocking to murder our fellow citizens. He said much more to arrest their attention, and concluded by assuring them that some of us were dead, and probably none of us would recover. Much dispute had arisen whether we should be hung on trees, thrown into the walls, buried in one pit, or tarred and feathered and carted through the city; but upon a suggestion that the doctor sometimes wanted bodies to dissect and that we would be very good tory skeletons, we were very formally delivered over to him for that purpose. So pleased were they with the notion, that some of them assisted in carrying us back to the cell, which we had lately left. A few of them remained with us, glutting their cannibal appetites with the sight of our wounds, and the sound of our groans. Our worthy preserver, assisted by Drs. Owen, Bickhead and Smith, Thomas Kell, Esq. a gentleman whom I supposed to be Doctor Page, of Fell's Point, and some others, then administered to us, such cordials as they could procure. Finding that Mr. Hanson could move, I proposed to him to quit the prison instantly, but another *place of safety* might be provided for us, by the civil & military authorities of the city. To this he assented, and Mr. H. Nelson agreed to join us. We were accompanied by Dr. Owen and an unknown gentleman. At the door we shook hands and parted, with scarcely a hope of meeting again. Dr. Owen was to see them across the creek, and then rejoin me at the spot agreed upon. But I was obliged to lie down occasionally from weakness, and at one period to conceal myself in a dark gully, from the observation of two persons on the opposite side of the stream—and thus I suppose he missed me. At length, towards morning, I arrived at a house in the neighbourhood, where I was treated with the warmest kindness. The next day, upon hearing that the mob were exasperated by our escape, a carriage was provided for me, and I bade adieu to these scenes of licentiousness and perfidy.

J. E. HALL.

City of Philadelphia, ss.

On this 27th day of August, 1812, before me Michael Keppele, Mayor of the city aforesaid, personally appeared John E. Hall, attorney at law, who being duly sworn, did depose and say, that the foregoing statement is true, as far as the same relates to his own personal knowledge and observation. Witness my hand and seal this day and year aforesaid.

MICHAEL KEPPELE, Mayor.

(Seal)