

**FOURTEEN MONTHS
IN AMERICAN
BASTILES**

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Fourteen Months in American Bastiles by F. K. Howard

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F. K. HOWARD

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Fourteen Months

IN

AMERICAN BASTILES.

Daniel Webster

"R" (free speech) "is a homebred right—a fireside privilege. It has ever been enjoyed in every house, cottage and cabin in the nation. It is not to be drowned in controversy. It is as undoubted as the right of breathing the air and walking on the earth. It is a right to be maintained in peace and in war. It is a right which cannot be invaded without destroying constitutional liberty. Hence this right should be guarded and protected by the freemen of this Country with a jealous care, unless they are prepared for chains and anarchy."

[DANIEL WEBSTER.

"Say at once that a free Constitution is no longer suitable to us; say at once, in a manly manner, that, upon an ample review of the state of the world, a free Constitution is not fit for you; conduct yourselves at once as the Senators of Denmark; lay down your freedom, and acknowledge and accept of despotism. But do not mock the understandings and feelings of mankind by telling the world that you are free,—by telling me that if, for the purpose of expressing my sense of the public administration of this country, of the calamities which this war has occasioned, I state a grievance, or make any declaration of my sentiments in a manner that may be thought seditious, I am to be subjected to penalties hitherto unknown to the law."

[CHARLES JAMES FOX.

BALTIMORE:

PUBLISHED BY KELLY, HEDIAN & PIET,

No. 174 BALTIMORE STREET,

1868.

P R E F A C E .

THE unlawful and oppressive acts of Mr. LINCOLN, his advisers, and subordinates, during the war between this Government and that of the Confederate States, will hereafter constitute no insignificant portion of the history of these times. As one of the victims of the despotism, which he succeeded in maintaining, in the Northern and Border States, for so long a period, I desire to add my testimony to that which has been heretofore furnished, in relation to the outrages perpetrated under his Administration; and I give publicity to this statement now, while the facts are fresh in the recollection of the public, lest any one should at some remoter period venture to doubt its accuracy. I do not propose to discuss the absurdity of the theories on which Mr. LINCOLN claimed to exercise arbitrary power, nor the imbecility of his course. It is proper, however, in giving an account of the treatment to which, in common with hundreds of other men, I was subjected, to refer briefly to the position of affairs in Maryland, and the object of Mr. LINCOLN in inflicting on myself and my fellow sufferers the indignities and wrongs which we so long endured. Up to the time when the dissolution of the Union became, to most intelligent men, a patent fact, the people of Maryland had unanimously desired and striven for its perpetuation. Though they feared that the aggressive principles and growing power of the Republican party would, before many years, bring about a separation of the two sections of the country, and though they believed that the conduct of Mr. LINCOLN and his party justified the action of the South, they still hoped and labored for the

maintenance of the Union. They earnestly desired that some compromise should be proposed by Congress, which would restore peace between the two sections, and they believed that such a settlement could readily be effected. When Congress refused to make any effort in that direction, they looked to what was called the "Peace Conference" to recommend some plan by which all dissensions might be healed. When all these hopes were disappointed by the action of Northern men, and especially when Mr. LINCOLN, on his accession to office, appointed some of the most extreme partisans to high office at home, and selected others to represent the country abroad, and gave ample evidence of his incapacity to understand the questions at issue, and of his determination neither to conciliate the Southern people, nor to deal with what he called the "rebellion" according to the mode provided by the Constitution and laws, then a large proportion of the people of Maryland expressed their sympathy for the South, and their conviction of the justice of its cause. They then asserted that the conquest of the South was an impossibility, that the Union was in point of fact dissolved, and they insisted that in such case the people of the State had the right to decide their own destiny for themselves. These views I also entertained and expressed, as one of the editors of a Baltimore journal "*The Daily Exchange*." But neither I, nor those who were afterwards my fellow prisoners, ever violated in any way, the Constitution or the laws. We defended the rights of our State, and criticized the policy of the Administration at Washington. We advanced our views with perfect freedom, as we had the right to do, and we did no more. But Mr. LINCOLN had determined to suppress everything like free speech, not only in Maryland, but throughout the North. He had made up his mind that he would carry out his own projects irrespectively of the laws, or his constitutional obligations. Having therefore introduced Northern troops into the city of Baltimore and various parts of the State, and having fortified numerous points so far as to render resistance unavailing, he proceeded to execute his schemes. The Commissioners and Marshal of Police were arrested in Baltimore, and

the Police force was disbanded. Many of the most prominent members of the Legislature, on the eve of the meeting of that body, the Mayor of Baltimore, and one the members of Congress for that city, were arrested at midnight, and dragged off to prison. Editors and other private citizens were also among the proscribed. Newspapers were suppressed, and the functions of the State and Municipal authorities usurped or suspended by agents of the Administration. Neither against me nor the vast majority of my fellow prisoners did the officers of the Government ever venture to prefer any specific charge. We were arrested simply for daring to defend our unquestionable rights and to exercise the liberty of free speech. Under these circumstances, it might have been supposed that we would be treated with some regard to our health and comfort. As we were detained, as was frequently admitted by Government officials, only as a precautionary measure, it might have been expected that those who chose to perpetrate so gross a wrong, would at least recognize the right of innocent and honorable men under such circumstances to be considerately or decently dealt with. I do not propose, as I have said, to discuss the enormity of the outrage inflicted on us, or to measure the infamy which will attach to those who were the authors or agents of that wrong. I only wish to show how men, who were guiltless of any offence whatever, and who had been thrown into prison because of their political opinions, were treated in this age, and in this country. I submit the facts to the public, with the assertion that the fairness and accuracy of my statement cannot be successfully challenged. As I have not intended, in the ensuing pages, to discuss the cases of "political prisoners" generally, but merely to detail, in the form of a personal narrative, my own experiences, I have been compelled to speak mainly of myself. Under these circumstances, this continual reference to my own views and situation has been unavoidable.

F. K. HOWARD.

BALTIMORE, *December*, 1862.

Fort Mifflin.

ON the morning of the 13th of September, 1861, at my residence in the city of Baltimore, I was awakened about 12½ or 1 o'clock, by the ringing of the bell. On going to the window, I saw a man standing on the steps below, who told me he had a message for me from Mr. S. T. WALLIS. I desired to know the purport of it, when he informed me that he could only deliver it to me privately. As it had been rumored that the Government intended to arrest the members of the Legislature, and as Mr. WALLIS was one of the most prominent of the Delegates from the City of Baltimore, I thought it probable that the threatened outrage had been consummated, and I hurried down to the door. When I opened it, two men entered, leaving the door ajar. One of them informed me that he had an order for my arrest. In answer to my demand that he should produce the warrant or order under which he was acting, he declined to do so, but said he had instructions from Mr. SEWARD, the Secretary of State.

I replied that I could recognize no such authority, when he stated that he intended to execute his orders, and that resistance would be idle, as he had a force with him sufficient to render it unavailing. As he spoke, several men entered the house, more than one of whom were armed with revolvers, which I saw in their belts. There was no one in the house when it was thus invaded, except my wife, children and servants, and under such circumstances, I of course, abandoned all idea of resistance. I went into my library and sent for my wife, who soon joined me there, when I was

informed that neither of us would be permitted to leave the room until the house had been searched. How many men were present, I am unable to say, but two or three were stationed in my library, and one at the front door, and I saw several others passing, from time to time, along the passage. The leader of the gang then began to search the apartment. Every drawer and box was thoroughly ransacked, as also were my portfolio and writing desk, and every other place that could possibly be supposed to hold any papers. All my private memoranda, bills, note-books, and letters were collected together to be carried off. Every room in the house subsequently underwent a similar search. After the first two rooms had been thus searched, I was told that I could not remain longer, but must prepare to go to Fort McHenry. I went up stairs to finish dressing, accompanied by the leader of the party, and I saw that men were stationed in all parts of the house, one even standing sentinel at the door of my children's nursery. Having dressed and packed up a change of clothes and a few other articles, I went down into the library, and was notified that I must at once depart. I demanded permission to send for my wife's brother or father, who were in the immediate neighborhood, but this was refused. My wife then desired to go to her children's room, and this request was also refused. I was forced to submit, and ordering my servants to remain in the room with my wife, and giving decided expression to my feelings concerning the outrage perpetrated upon me, and the miserable tyrants who had authorized it, I got into the carriage which was waiting to convey me to Fort McHenry. Two men, wearing the badges of the police force which the Government had organized, escorted me to the Fort. It was with a bitter pang that I left my house in possession of the miscreants who had invaded it. I afterwards learned that the search was continued for some time, and it was not until after 3 o'clock in the morning that they left the premises.

I reached Fort McHenry about 2 o'clock in the morning. There I found several of my friends, and others were brought in a few minutes afterwards. One or two were brought in later in the day, making fifteen in all. Among them were