

THE MOUNTAIN MEADOWS MASSACRE.

The general interest in that unparaleled crime in our domestic annals, the treacherous murder of one hundred and twenty peaceful Arkansas emigrants at Mountain Meadows, seems to be on the increase. Recently, the *Sacramento Record* devoted upwards of a page to recounting the thrilling tragedy, and later the *Chicago Tribune* and *Inter-Ocean* gave compendious narratives of the same dread occurrence. From all parts of the country our exchanges come with frequent references to the wholesale murder, and the question is frequently asked, when are the offenders to be brought to justice?

Yesterday Mrs. Stenhouse started west on an extended lecturing tour, taking with her three ably written and very interesting lectures on different phases of Mormonism. Two of them have been delivered in this city before crowded audiences, and were received with the heartiest approval. The third of the course has been expressly prepared for the present engagement, and is devoted to succinctly narrating the appalling incidents of the Mountain Meadows Massacre. We have been favored by this talented and very estimable lady with a perusal of the manuscript, and in justice feel bound to speak in the highest terms of her painstaking detail and the dramatic interest with which she has invested her subject.

The massacre of these emigrants she shows was not without adequate cause, and these may be thus generalized—a gloomy fanaticism pervading the Mormon faith, a settled hostility to the human race growing out of the murder of their prophet, Joseph Smith, and the more sordid lust of gaining possession of the valuable effects belonging to this devoted party of emigrants. At the time they reached Salt Lake the fury of Brigham and his slavish Priesthood was aroused against the government and people of the United States, by the attempt of President Buchanan to enforce the laws in Utah. An army under Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston was approaching, accompanied by a full set of Federal officials, who were to be installed in office by force of arms, if necessary, and supported in the performance of their duties by bayonets. The minds of the loyal citizens of Utah are at this day constantly outraged by the treasonable utterances of the brutal Priesthood and their servile scribes in maligning and defying the Federal authorities in Utah. But in those days the Lion of the Lord reigned supreme, and the approaching invasion of his Kingdom with the threatened curtailment of his absolute power, stirred him up to ungovernable rage. The credulous followers of the prophet were appealed to to resist the armed host, the favor of the Lord in behalf of his peculiar people was promised them, and scripture hyperbole was freely repeated to show that one soldier of the Most High would chase a thousand invaders and two would put ten thousand to flight. Our traitor-Major, Daniel H. Wells, then Lieutenant General of the prophet's army, sent orders far and wide to his "brothers in Christ," in command of various detachments, to destroy the provision trains of the struggling American forces, raid their stock, and burn up the country in advance.

Having this spirit to encounter, the Arkansas emigrants found hostility in all the settlements of Utah, and this feeling was rendered the more intense against them, because they came from a State where the high priest, Parley P. Pratt, had been killed for profaning a peaceful household in the indulgence of his polygamous practices. Their fine stock, their pleasure vehicles, their musical instruments, and abundant and elegant outfit, excited the cupidity of the sacerdotal robbers, and hence to the gratification of their gloomy ferocity, was added the inducement of capturing rich spoils.

It is not necessary for us to follow the too faithful writer through the whole of her painful narrative. The story is too well known in Zion for such labor to be necessary. One deduction of the author's, however, we cannot forbear producing. The guilt of ordering the massacre has never been brought home to Brigham, and in view of his insidious habits of caution, it is doubtful whether it ever can be. But although he cannot be held legally accountable for this most terrible crime of the nineteenth century, his moral responsibility is none the less sure. Day after day for many years, the destruction of the perverse human race was foretold, and the coming universality of the reign of the Saints portrayed. The red-hot vengeance of the Lord was to be poured with immitigable fury upon the devoted heads of the American nation, because the blood of the prophet Joseph Smith was upon their hands, and the Government had failed to avenge his taking off. With this prompting to blood guiltiness and revenge always held up to the Mormon mind, and murder being invested with the halo of religious duty, it is easy to understand how any criminal suggestion of the prophet would be carried into bloody execution by unsparring and fanatic hand. King John, in extenuation of an earlier deed of blood, says:

It is the curse of kings to be attended
By slaves that take their humor for a warrant

To break within the bloody house of life,
And on the winking of authority

To understand a law.

Mrs. Stenhouse reminds us that upwards of seventeen years have elapsed since this atrocious massacre was committed, and no attempt has ever been made by the Mormon authorities to discover the perpetrators. Brigham Young was Governor of the Territory at that time, and hence was responsible for the safety of the lives and property of all dwelling in or passing through Utah. An attempt has been made to charge the crime upon the Indians, but Brigham Young was Indian Superintendent, in constant intercourse with all the agents in his superintendency, and if the Indians had been the murderers, the facts could readily have been made known. That the red man only performed a subordinate part in

the massacre is evident from the fact that the spoils fell into the hands of the Church, and persons are yet living in this city who can identify the pleasure vehicles, jewelry, wearing apparel and other property of the murdered emigrants, which were divided up among the more prominent hierarchy and were worn or used in their families for years afterwards. Further than all this, Brigham's authority over his followers was so complete and all-pervading, that the smallest commercial undertaking and the most trifling domestic detail, were subject to his dictation. Is it possible, then, that a militia regiment could be mustered, the Indians summoned as allies, and this large party of emigrants hounded and exterminated without his having a full knowledge of the whole murderous details? Such a belief is too preposterous to entertain.

Two of the leading assassins are now in the hands of the officers, and the hiding places of many others are well known. Shall justice be meted to these inhuman butchers? The country has waited many years to see this crowning act of perfidy avenged, yet perfect immunity has been accorded the red-handed butchers! When King Theodorus of Abyssinia made captive half a score of British subjects, an army was promptly sent to procure their release or batter down the whole domain of the barbarous ruler who held them. And the same regard for the rights of the citizen has been shown by the American Government in the prompt action of Commodore Ingram, when the citizenship of Maria Kozta was disregarded by some Austrian officials. But the treacherous assassination of this party of American citizens traveling along a national high-road, and the indecent spoliation of their remains, have never been made the subject of inquiry by Congress, and no President has ever recommended that judicial quest be made into the appalling crime. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay; but the dread will of the Almighty is executed through human instruments, and his power to punish is delegated to Kings and the ministers of law. The country now looks with impatient interest to see whether the prosecution of these arch-criminals will be conducted in earnest.