

SHOOTING OF LEE!

The Journey from Prison to the Slaughter Field.

The Doomed Man Talks Freely to The Tribune Reporter,

And Tells Him Some Interesting Incidents of the Bloody Days.

He Dies Game and Curses Brigham Young, the Butcher.

The Last Scene on the Memorable Mountain Meadows.

Special Correspondence Tribune,] BEAVER CITY, U. T., March 25, 77.

The readers of THE TRIBUNE have already been apprised of some of the most striking features of the execution of John Doyle Lee, at Mountain Meadows, on the 23d inst. In this letter at length your correspondent undertakes to elaborate the tragic scene more minutely, and portray to the mind of the reader a more vivid picture of the dramatic events of the journey to the Meadows and the solemn vindication of

POETIC JUSTICE ON THE BLOODY FIELD.

About 5:30 p. m. on the 21st inst., Marshal Nelson drove to Camp Cameron in a close carriage and requested the prisoner to prepare himself for a journey. He asked permission to take a bath and change his clothing, which was granted, remarking that he "wanted to die clean." Lee at first supposed he was to be taken to Fremont's Pass to be shot, and did not know that the real place of destination was the Mountain Meadows, until the following morning at Leech's Springs, he was told by the Rev. Mr. Stokes. He was perceptibly affected, and exclaimed, "What, going to take me to the old ground—the old ground?" Without stopping to rest or to feed the animals, the Marshal and posse drove seventy miles the first night, and went into camp about 7 o'clock the next morning

AT LEECH'S SPRING,

where we overtook Lieut. Patterson and twenty-two infantry. In the sombre twilight of evening we stealthily turned our backs upon the unsuspecting denizens of Beaver and wended our way southward. The low rumbling of the carriages and wagons on the highway; the constant tramping of the horses' feet against the hard ground, and the crack of the whips and encouraging "get up" of the impatient drivers resounding in the still night, made strange and weird impressions upon the mind and foreboded the terrible mission that the Marshal and trusted retinue were going upon. Every noise was as a funeral dirge and every sound as a death knell for the old man, hoary-headed and gory-handed, who sat in the close covered carriage taking his last ride on earth. What strange fancies filled his mind and to what extent he realized the dreadful doom so soon awaiting him, is not for me to say, but a more composed and unperturbable human being in such a trying ordeal we never wish to see; and many a man whom the world calls brave may well wish to pass through death's gate as coolly and resigned as did this noted criminal. At Leech's Spring Lee alighted from the carriage, talked freely to all present of the long drive, the condition of the horses and teams. He took a few crackers and

A PIECE OF BOLOGNA SAUSAGE

from the wagon in which your correspondent rode, sat down upon the boards already fashioned for his coffin and with a cup of coffee he ate his breakfast with a relish and appetite quite amazing to most of us.

About 8 o'clock he rolled himself in blankets and under a cedar tree he rested and slept quietly until nearly 2 o'clock in the afternoon. The only thing he complained of was that the boys talked a little too loud for him to sleep much. To witness the old man lying there he voraciously looked as one who had folded the drapery of his couch around him and was lying down to pleasant dreams.

Before reaching this point he confessed to Rev. Mr. Stokes that he killed five emigrants and possibly six, but characterized as a lie McMurdy's evidence in which the witness stated he killed a man by knocking him on the head with the butt of his gun.

"ALL I KILLED,"

he said, "I did by shooting them and never struck either with my gun or a club." Just before leaving camp he arose, ate again, sitting on his blankets, and walked about the camp smoking a pipe and seemed engaged in deep thought. He went to the carriage and rubbed his limbs with consecrated oil, and about 3 p. m. we were on our way to the Meadows, where we arrived about 8 o'clock. We had some trouble in finding the spring, and Lee's voice could be distinctly heard from the carriage telling where the spring was, although he had not been on the ground since the massacre. He did not get out of the carriage but slept soundly the whole night—his snoring at times almost disturbing the more nervous sleepers in his vicinity. That morning he drank a cup of coffee, made over the campfire, and several times remarked in conversation that he felt as calm as a summer's morning.

The following interview had with Lee about an hour before going down to the place of execution, which we give in the narrative, furnishes a fair illustration of the condemned man's feelings and views of his situation. Lee said:

"I fully appreciate my situation, and feel as calm as the summer's sun. I have not full faith in my religion. Some things I do not believe in. I have full faith in the pure principles of Mormonism, and am as strong a Mormon as ever, as my statement when published will show. I was born in Kaskaskia, Randolph county, Illinois, Sept. 6th, 1812. I left Nauvoo with the first company of Mormons, and was with them in all of their hardships in Missouri. I tried to save the emigrants, and opposed the massacre. I am the only man that did.

"I was with the wagon. The Indians were concealed in the sage brush on both sides of the Meadows. I saw nothing of it at the time. I saw the dead bodies the next morning, and with my little Indian boy crossed the mountains, and have never been on the ground since until now. I saw nothing of the property until three months afterwards, when some of

THE CATTLE WERE TURNED OVER TO ME for the benefit of the Indians. Mr. Bishop, he said, will get my history, and in it I have fully explained. I have on this ground moved years before the massacre in company with Charley Dalton, my son-in-law. I came over to regard to the Indians. Ten days before the massacre I was here with George A. Smith. He was below at Washington, and requested me to come with him. Smith was preaching to the people about expecting war with the United States, and spoke of the emigrants passing through."

Your reporter asked Lee what was George A. Smith's business at the Meadows? Lee said, "If you know the situation and feelings of the peo-

ple at that time you would know for yourself."

Reporter.—Did he preach hostile to the emigrants?
Lee.—He was visiting all the settlements and

PREACHING AGAINST THE EMIGRANTS.

I don't know that he meant those particular emigrants. (Lee referred to his journal as fully explaining his visit to the Meadows with George A. Smith.) I have no right to say whether other participants in the massacre acted under orders or not. Men came to the ground with the Indians. I consider myself sacrificed. Some of the witnesses swore to barefaced lies. In regard to the two young women Hamblin swore to, it was a lie, and so did Nephi Johnson. It was Bateman who took the flag of truce. I went on under orders afterwards to the camp. I can face the hereafter with a clear conscience. I did all in my power to save those people. I believe every man is amenable according to the deeds done in the body. I believe a man that is prepared will go in the presence of his God and kindred spirits, and if not prepared will go into a prison. My parents were Catholics, I was christened a Catholic; I feel that my strength will continue to the end, at least I hope so. I took one of the children home with me and treated it as my own child; I had no feelings against the emigrants. I regret to leave my family (weeping). I am a man with like passions as others. I don't know that I dread the physical suffering of coming to my death; I want them to make quick work of me and not to mangle my limbs. I believe

I COULD GIVE THE WORD OF COMMAND MYSELF.

I hate to leave my friends; I am satisfied that Idaho Bill was one of the children saved. I saved him from an Indian who had cut his hair. He recollects a great deal about it. I have fifty children living, and sixty-three in all. I am willing to leave my enemies in the hands of God. Marshal Nelson has treated me as a gentleman, he has been very kind and good to me, and I have no reflections to cast on him. He is a man of honor and integrity. Deputy Marshal Stokes I respect very much. He advised me. He is very kind and courteous, and a prompt officer in the discharge of his duty. Mr. Howard has treated me as a father since I have known him. I have given my life to Mr. Bishop for publication. He is to pay himself and then pay the balance to my families. Mr. Bishop is a faithful and honorable man. He has been a good friend to me during the whole time and used his best endeavors in defending me.

At this point the interview ended. Lee remained

TALKING TO MR HOWARD,

during most of the time the soldiers and wagoners, under command of Lieut. Patterson, were getting ready to march to the place of execution, about half a mile from camp. In sight and sound of us Lee's coffin was put together. Lee was conveyed to the ground in a government wagon, headed by a squad of soldiers in double file. Sentinels of soldiers were placed around on the different promontories to keep out intruders.

On arriving at the spot, Lee for some time sat under the foot of one of the hills on the right, and talked to Nelson and Howard.

HE MADE HIS WILL,

dividing his property equally between his three wives, and sent nine and a half dollars to Rachel to defray his funeral expenses. He also made a statement to Mr. Howard, but the purport of it was kept a secret. He presented his card written "John D. Lee, Mountain Meadows, March 23d, 1877." The coffin had by this time been placed in position, and the three wagons arranged together in such a manner as to conceal the executioners from view, about twenty-five feet distant. Lee walked to the coffin in company with Nelson and Howard, resting on the arm of the Rev. Mr. Stokes.

HE TALKED JUST PERCEPTIBLY,

before getting to the coffin, but then deliberately threw off his overcoat and sat down as naturally on the head end of the coffin, as though it was an every day business. Marshal Nelson read the death warrant and Lee sat calm and undisturbed. His manner was somewhat abstracted and he looked around at those present. His hand rested on his knees. Before the reading was finished he crossed his legs. At the conclusion, Marshal Nelson asked the condemned man if he had anything to say. The prisoner arose and asked the privilege of keeping his hat on. All present uncovered their heads deferentially and eagerly listened to the last words of this notorious man. The statement has already been telegraphed, but

SOME OF IT WAS LEFT OUT,

in relation to Brigham Young. In speaking of himself as being sacrificed, he said: "I am a true believer in the gospel of Jesus Christ. I do not believe everything that is now being taught and practiced by Brigham Young. I do not care who hears it. They are my last words. It is so. I believe he is leading the people astray downward to destruction. But I believe in the gospel as it was taught in us purity by Joseph Smith in former days. I have my reasons for it. I studied to make this man's (Brigham Young) will my pleasure for thirty years. See, now, what I have come to this day. I have been sacrificed in a cowardly and dastardly manner." He then spoke of the falsity of the evidence brought against him, and concluded: "There is a kind of alluring charm and magnetic influence which has come over the people, and I cannot compare it to anything else than

THE REPTILE,

which charms his prey till it captivates it, paralyzes it, and it rushes to the jaws of death. I cannot compare it to anything else. It is so. I know it. I am satisfied of it." Lee compared Brigham Young to the reptile and the people to the prey. He had evidently studied his speech. He was deeply moved in speaking of his family.

DESEATED HIMSELF ON HIS COFFIN,

and the Rev. Mr. Stokes offered up a fervent prayer, during which time the condemned man knelt. Marshal Nelson requested the crowd to withdraw. After some little delay, the marshal adjusted the handkerchief around Lee's eyes, and Lee raised his hands over his head facing the wagons. He spoke in a firm voice to the executioners and told them "not to mangle his limbs, but aim well for his heart." He was perfectly cool, and remarked to Deputy Marshal Pratt:

"WELL, PRATT, THIS IS PRETTY SERIOUS."

He gave his scarf to Mr. Howard and his hat to Marshal Nelson. Marshal Nelson then bade the doomed man farewell, stepped back and asked, "Ready?" "A voice from the wagon answered "Ready." "Fire!" exclaimed the Marshal, and John D. Lee was no more forever. His feet still rested on the ground, and he fell without a struggle lengthwise on the lid of his coffin, his left hand by his side, and all was over. Five balls penetrated within the compass of a hand the heart and region, perhaps, have been instantly fatal. The balls struck about eighteen feet distant, ploughed up the ground for about fifteen feet, and ricocheted and did the same thing, and then seemed to go into the ground.

Lee's body was immediately placed in the coffin. His mouth was open and the face looked pale. The bandage was left over his eyes. He was

dressed in dark clothes, a sack coat and

HAD ON A RED FLANNEL SHIRT.

Lee was so cool and collected during the whole terrible ordeal as to inspire every man in the same manner. He was executed on or about the same spot where the emigrants were encamped, and one hundred yards from the monument. He requested the Marshal not to take him to the monument, as it would bring up unpleasant recollections. Whether Lee died in the belief that he was a hero or martyr, or as one fully prepared to meet his fate, or in the sense that the responsibility of his great crime rests upon others, or as a calloused, obtuse man, I do not know, but

HE DIED GAME,

and met his fate as stoically as the bravest could do. He died with a curse in his mouth against Brigham Young, whom he accused to the last moment of going back on him. In a little while the bloody and tragic field was all quiet, and one of the foul murderers had suffered death on the field of Mountain Meadows. It was an extraordinary spectacle, and one never to be forgotten. John D. Lee is now gone forever, and as we dropped the curtain over his strange, eventful and wicked life, let the officers turn their attention towards

OTHERS EQUALLY GUILTY,

and punish them with the law's strong hand, even to the head most of the Mormon Church, for the guilt rests on Brigham Young, more directly for that terrible and unhalloved crime at Mountain Meadows, than on any one else living or dead. John D. Lee never slow 130 human beings with his own hands, and it is the sincerest wish to assert that he and others went into it on their own accord and without the sanction of high authority.

C. J. S.