

THAT BUTCHERY.

Thrilling Narrative of the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

Plunder the Object---and Treachery the Means.

John D. Lee and His Thirst for Booty and Beauty.

[Correspondence New York Herald.]

SALT LAKE CITY, Nov. 8, 1874.

You have, no doubt, already been advised by telegraph of the arrest of John D. Lee in Cedar City, Beaver county, on the charge of having been the leader in the horrible Mountain Meadows Massacre, the circumstances regarding which, the readers of the Herald, not perhaps, being familiar with, I will relate:

NARRATIVE OF THE MASSACRE.

William H. Rogers, a Government agent, crossed the plains with General A. S. Johnston's army in 1857, in charge of the treasure train. Rogers heard of the terrible massacre at Mountain Meadows on his way across the plains. It was reported that the emigrants were murdered by Indians. These emigrants were white men, American citizens of Arkansas. General Albert S. Johnston's army was unable to reach Salt Lake City in season, and was obliged to encamp at Fort Bridger for the winter of 1857. In the spring of '58, however, the army marched into the valley of Great Salt Lake. On approaching the valley they were met by Peace Commissioners, sent by our Government, who had preceded the army and had seen the great Prophet of the Latter-day Saints. Terms were made between General Johnston and the Mormon Prophet to the effect that the army should not camp within fifty miles of any Mormon settlement. Consequently the army was stationed at what is now called "Old Camp Floyd," a distance of fifty-five miles southwestward from Salt Lake City. While located here, information was received in regard to the Mountain Meadows Massacre, and the action of the Government at Washington, appropriating \$10,000 for the recovery of the children presumed to have been saved from the massacre, and supposed to have been in the hands of the Indians. Mr. Rogers being appointed Indian agent, was instructed during the summer of 1858, to proceed to the scene of the massacre and rescue the surviving children. He took a company of cavalry and left Camp Floyd for Cedar City, near the scene of the massacre. On arriving on the ground, he found the bones of a hundred and thirty human beings, men, women and children. In gathering up the remains for burial, he discovered that a large number of the murdered persons had been shot through the head—the ball entering the back part of the head and coming out at the front. The wolves and coyotes had eaten the flesh from the bones. A two bushel basket of women's hair that was strewn around among the sage brush was gathered up by Mr. Rogers. It might be here stated that Mountain Meadows is situated twelve miles from Cedar City, and the same distance from a temple of the Latter-day Saints.

THE CHARACTER OF THE MASSACRED EMIGRANTS.

It appears that in 1849, upon the excitement created by the gold discoveries in California, several pioneers of Arkansas went to California in search of the precious metal. They were very successful. In the fall of 1856, with their large accumulated gains, they returned to Arkansas for the purpose of taking their families and some of their relatives to set in the new El Dorado, in which they had been so fortunate. They purchased a large amount of blooded stock, and fitted out a train of about forty wagons. They numbered about one hundred and forty-six men, women and children. They were known to be a very wealthy train. In the spring of 1857, as we have stated, they started across the plains. On arriving at Salt Lake City, they were told by the Mormons that they were too late to cross the Sierra Nevada mountains by the old emigrant route. The Mormons assured them that there was a

BETTER PASS

by going down through Southern Utah, passing through Southern Nevada, going over the range of the mountains and coming out near Los Angeles, Lower California. This route the Mormons assured the emigrants to be practicable and safe. Placing confidence in the reports and statements of the Mormons, the emigrants started by the southern route. Passing down through the settlements of the Latter-day Saints unmolested, they encamped at what is known as

MOUNTAIN MEADOWS,

a little narrow valley dividing the hills and mountains on each side, with a plentiful supply of grass and water—a beautiful place to camp. Little did these emigrants think that this beautiful spot would in a short time be their sepulchre, the scene of a sanguinary massacre—the worst massacre that we have any record of in the history of the bloody deeds of the savages upon the early defenceless American settlements. The horrid story of the Indian murders in Wyoming Valley, which Campbell so eloquently depicts, affords no parallel to the butchery of these emigrants at Mountain Meadows. While encamped in this lovely spot they were attacked from behind the adjoining hills by, as they supposed, Indians. Several of their number were wounded. The pioneers, however, being used to Indian warfare and well skilled in the handling of the old Kentucky rifle, were able to keep their assailants at a long range. Their wagons were drawn into a circle, forming a sort of fortification. The wheels were suken down to their axles. Earthworks were thrown up on the outside of the wagons, making a temporary but somewhat formidable defence. A ditch was dug from this fortification to a spring near at hand to enable the emigrants to reach water under cover. For five long days they were able to sustain themselves here without any further loss in wounded or killed. Their stock had been captured and driven off early in the attack. On the sixth day, early in the morning, they discovered a large body of men coming up the road from toward Cedar City. No firing had been done that morning, and no supposed Indian in sight. A white flag was hoisted by the white men approaching them, and these doomed emigrants, believing the new comers to be friends, dressed

A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG GIRL

in white and placed her outside of the fortification in token of friendship. The presumed friends at once approached. They were Mormons—Latter day Saints—and headed by

JOHN D. LEE,

the man just arrested for criminal participation in the massacre that followed. A parley ensued. Lee told the emigrants that there were large numbers of Indians in the hills; but if they (the emigrants) would lay down their arms they would protect them and take them back to the Mormon settlements, they then being 300

miles southwest from Salt Lake City, and near the Nevada line. After a long parley the emigrants consented to the proposition of Lee. It may be here remarked that these emigrants had with them about

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND

DOLLARS IN GOLD.

which they had procured by their previous ventures in California. Lee told them that if they took their arms with them the Indians were in such great numbers that they would massacre them. Plunder, said the Mormon chief, was all the Indians were after. The pioneers thereupon laid down their arms, taking with them such of their valuables as they could conveniently carry, and consented to accompany the Mormons back to Cedar City—twelve miles. The emigrants marched out of their fortifications in the direction of the above named place. The Mormons,

HEADED BY LEE,

fell directly in their rear. At this time not an Indian was in sight, and 200 yards from the wagons of the emigrants was inaugurated the scene of this

TERRIBLE DEED.

Lee and his party commenced firing upon the emigrants, shooting several of the most prominent men through the head at the first fire. The emigrants being entirely unarmed, the slaughter was an easy task. After all the men and most of the women had been killed, a young lady of eighteen summers sprang forward, and, clasping her hands, fell upon her knees in front of Lee, begging him to

SPARE HER LIFE.

She then rose and clasped him around the neck, declaring to him that she had a lover in California to whom she owed her life; that she was engaged to marry him on her arrival there. Lee, after hearing her pitiful story, took her aside, ravished her, and then with his knife

CUT HER THROAT,

leaving her body on the spot to be eaten by wolves.

SIXTEEN INNOCENT CHILDREN

were saved from the general massacre. Two of the number were seven years of age.

TO RETURN TO MR. ROGERS' STATEMENT.

After Mr. Rogers, the Indian agent, had buried the bones of the emigrants that had been left to bleach within twelve miles of the Mormon temple, he returned to Cedar City, and found the children in the hands of the Mormons. Lee having two of the number. The Mormons

ASKED PAY

from the agent for taking care of the children. Up to this time the world supposed the emigrants were

MURDERED BY THE INDIANS,

but the subsequent relation will show how far the savage Indians were really connected with the affair.

Mr. Rogers gathered the children together, refusing to pay the ransom demanded for their release by the Mormons. After he had the children in his camp, near the Mormon settlement at Cedar City, two of them, then about eight years of age, told Mr. Rogers that Lee and the white men

MURDERED THEIR PARENTS,

Of course, Mr. Rogers was astounded at this, the first information he had received of the real authors of the diabolical massacre. He pursued his investigation among the children, and their testimony was corroborative of the intelligence he had previously obtained. It should be here stated that two Mormons came to the tent of Mr. Rogers at midnight, about this time, and told him that their

HEARTS WERE PRESSED WITH GRIEF. If he (the agent) would spare their lives they would give him a true history of the awful massacre. Rogers told them to proceed and open their hearts. These two Mormons (the names of whom Mr. Rogers does not recall) told him they were summoned by John D. Lee, the then commander of the Nauvoo Legion at Cedar City, to appear in

INDIAN COSTUME,

painted, with long hair, fully to represent the native savage, prepared to go to Mountain Meadows. The Mormons attacked the train of emigrants as Indians. Lee finding that the emigrants were too strongly fortified, after five days' siege, retired back and dressed in citizen's clothes, and as we have above described decoyed the emigrants into a surrender of their arms. This statement was made in full to Mr. Rogers by the two Mormons we have referred to, thus corroborating fully the statements made by the rescued children. Further-

more, they stated that the blooded stock and the wagons of the emigrants were taken back to Cedar City to the Mormon tithing establishment, and there sold at public auction for the benefit of the Mormon Church.