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The Seventeenth Virginia Infantry at Flat Creek and Drewry's Bluff.

*By* COL. A. HERBERT.

REV. J. WILLIAM JONES, D. D.,

*Secretary Southern Historical Society :*

In response to invitations given by you in the SOUTHERN HISTORICAL PAPERS to officers and men of the late Southern Confederacy for incidents interesting in their character, but lost or submerged in weightier events of the late war, I feel encouraged to give a sketch of an engagement of my old command, the Seventeenth Virginia infantry, at Flat Creek bridge, Richmond and Danville railroad, with Kautz's cavalry on the 14th May, 1864, and events following. The time was fraught with events of great moment to the then struggling Confederacy. The great battle of the Wilderness commenced between Lee and Grant on the 6th May. Butler, with 20,000 men, had thrown himself between Petersburg and Richmond; Kautz, with a strong force of cavalry, had cut the Petersburg railroad in several places, and everywhere our small armies were confronted with the enemy in larger numbers, and every command and every Confederate soldier

loss not being much heavier. The order came quickly. At the command "Forward!"—rung out in loud tones all along the line—the regiment bounded forward as one man, with the old yell that rings in my ears as I now write, and starts my old blood in fresh surges through my veins.

As the ground in our front between us and the enemy was covered with felled timber, no alignment could be kept; there was one mad rush, and but few laggards. Our batteries opened with every gun, and with one desultory fire we carried the enemy's lines and captured over a hundred prisoners who did not know enough English to surrender.

The enemy's camps furnished the rations we failed to get in the morning, and the old regiment, with the loss of one field officer and thirty men killed and wounded, stood ready the next day to still farther tighten the cords around General Butler's lines in Bermuda Hundreds.

So ends my article, written with the hope of its meeting the eye of some old soldier of the Seventeenth, or comrades of other commands to whom it may give pleasure, and to whom the events narrated may bring up the stirring times of the past and cause their pulse to beat more quickly as the old scenes and the old comrades once more pass in review. To the survivors of my old regiment now widely scattered, in whose faces in the providence of God I may never look again, I would like to express how much their confidence, prompt obedience in many emergencies, and their friendship and sympathy, begotten of the time, have brightened many an hour when memory has brought up again those grand old days never to be forgotten.

ARTHUR HERBERT,  
*Colonel Commanding Seventeenth Virginia Infantry,  
Army Northern Virginia.*

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General Sherman's March from Atlanta to the Coast—Address Before the  
Survivors' Association of Augusta, Ga., April 20th, 1884.

By COLONEL C. C. JONES, JR.

*Friends and Comrades:*

When, a twelvemonth since, we assembled to celebrate the fifth anniversary of our Association and to testify our loyal appreciation of the holy memories which appertain to this Memorial

Day, the shadows of the great griefs caused by the recent deaths of Governor Alexander H. Stephens, Vice-President of the Confederacy, and of Senator Benjamin H. Hill, who during the Southern struggle for independence had been a close friend and trusted adviser of President Davis, were abroad in the land. And now, as we come together to revive the recollections of the past and to confirm the ties which unite us in the present, we find ourselves encompassed by kindred sorrows.

Since our last annual convocation General Josiah Gorgas, Chief of Ordnance of the Confederate States, whose special mission it was to arm for the war and to supply the thunderbolts of battle, has taken his chamber in those voiceless halls where are never heard reverberations from the "fatal cannon's womb" and the din of contending hosts. General J. F. Gilmer, Chief Engineer of the Confederacy, and an accomplished officer, but a few months since passed into that realm where

\* \* "The clang of steel,  
The human shout and cry,  
Are silent."

Only a little while ago the Hon. John Letcher, war Governor of Virginia, was gathered to his fathers; and of those who were foremost in the armies and the councils of the Confederacy, not a few are hastening rapidly to the extreme verge of human life.

In our own Association we have been called upon to mourn the demise of our beloved, honored, and venerable member, Professor L. D. Ford, M. D., LL.D., Surgeon in the Confederate army, whose long, useful, and patriotic labors were crowned by a peaceful and triumphant death. The memory of his stainless career, of his remarkable professional attainments, and of his medical skill and humane ministrations alike in peace and war, abides with us as a precious legacy. Major Samuel H. Crump, of the Twelfth Georgia infantry battalion, a gallant soldier, a true friend, and an upright, efficient public servant, will participate no more in these earthly reunions.

Our comrades, Robert M. Barnes, private Company B, Cobb's Legion, Georgia infantry; John Osley, private Company E, Eighth regiment Georgia infantry; and Dr. Sterling C. Eve, Assistant Surgeon in Confederate service, and an esteemed physician in this community, have also bade us a long farewell.

On this Memorial day, consecrated to the memory of our Confede-

rate dead, we reverently place a brother's garland upon their new-made graves.

"On Fame's eternal camping-ground  
Their snowy tents are spread,  
And Glory guards, with solemn round,  
The bivouac of the dead."

We have recently adopted a badge, the possession and exhibition of which are esteemed by us all not only as an honor, but as a genuine privilege. It is in the form of a shield, bearing upon its upper surface the word "Survivor." Just below appear the historic letters "C. S. A." On the right and left of the centre are delineated in realistic colors the flag of the Confederacy and the battle flag—symbols at once of national entity and of martial renown—both hallowed by associations the most patriotic and valorous. On the one hand is inscribed the date 1861, commemorating the commencement of the Confederate struggle for independence, and on the other the date 1865, perpetuating the year of the termination of the war between the States and the surrender of the Southern armies. Beneath the intersection of the staffs of the flags we have engraven the motto of the great seal of the Confederacy—*Deo Vindice*. With these words upon our lips, we confidently appeal from the arbitrament of the sword to the forum of conscience and that supreme tribunal where justice immaculate and eternal sits enthroned, and, thus appealing, solemnly protest that so far from being "rebels against legitimate authority and traitors to their country," all loyal Confederates were "lovers of liberty, combatants for constitutional rights, and, as exemplars of heroic virtue, benefactors of their race." Nay, more: in all reverence and fidelity we affirm that the issue furnished only a physical solution of the questions involved in the gigantic endeavor; that cannon and bayonet never did and never can compass other than an arbitrary award in matters of principle; and that the fundamental claims, political privileges, and vested rights, in support of which the Southern people expended their blood and treasure, although disallowed, denied and repressed by the mailed hand of superior force, are, in a moral point of view, undetermined by the result of the contest.

" 'Tis a cause, not the fate of a cause, that is glorious." .

Symbol of a past, consecrated by aspirations the purest, impulses the most patriotic, sentiments the most ennobling, examples of valor,



chivalry and loyalty the most illustrious, deeds of loftiest emprise, and privations the most marvellous, precious indeed is this badge in our eyes. Sure am I that no knight of St. John ever exhibited his *Croix de Malthe* with greater pride, or survivor of our primal Revolution esteemed in higher honor his Eagle of the Order of Cincinnati. Wear it bravely and cherish it holily, my comrades, for the memories which it perpetuates are sacred, grand, stainless, pathetic, soul-inspiring, and far beyond the reach of malediction or the "rasure of oblivion."

There is a sad chapter in the history of Georgia, which has been written chiefly by those who made light of her afflictions, laughed at her calamities, gloated over her losses, and lauded her spoilers. An invasion inaugurated with a full knowledge of her weakness, conceived largely in a spirit of wanton destruction, conducted in many respects in manifest violation of the rules of civilized warfare, and compassed in the face of feeble resistance, has been magnified into a grand military achievement worthy of all admiration. The easy march of a well-appointed army of more than sixty thousand men through the heart of a State abounding in all supplies, save men and materials of war, and at the most delightful season of the year, has been so talked of and written about by those who either participated in the enterprise or sympathized with its leaders and objects, that multitudes have come to regard this holiday excursion as a triumph of consummate military skill and valor—as one of the most wonderful exploits in the history of modern warfare. That this impression is not only exaggerated, but also positively erroneous, is capable of easy demonstration.

"Until we can repopulate Georgia, it is useless to occupy it ; but the utter destruction of its roads, houses, and people, will cripple their military resources. By attempting to hold the roads we will lose a thousand men monthly, and will gain no result. I can make the march and make Georgia howl. \* \* \* \* \* Hood may turn into Tennessee and Kentucky, but I believe he will be forced to follow me. Instead of being on the defensive I would be on the offensive. Instead of guessing at what he means, he would have to guess at my plans. The difference, in war is full twenty-five per cent. I can make Savannah, Charleston, or the mouth of the Chattahoochie. *I prefer to march through Georgia, smashing things to the sea.*"

So wrote Major-General Sherman, from Atlanta, to Lieutenant-General Grant. That officer having sanctioned the proposed move-

ment, and indicated a preference for Savannah as the objective point of the campaign, General Sherman, about the middle of November, 1864, put his columns in motion for their march of spoliation and devastation through the heart of Georgia. The "smashing" operation of this modern Alaric was fairly inaugurated by the wanton, merciless, and almost total destruction of the cities of Atlanta and Rome.

For the purposes of the incursion the Federal army was divided into two wings; the right—commanded by Major-General O. O. Howard—comprising the Fifteenth corps, under Major-General P. J. Osterhaus, and the Seventeenth corps, under Major-General Frank P. Blair, Jr., and the left, under Major-General H. W. Slocum, consisting of the Fourteenth corps, brevet Major-General J. C. Davis, and the Twentieth corps, Brigadier-General A. S. Williams. This infantry force of fifty-five thousand men, was accompanied by a cavalry division numbering fifty-five hundred sabres, commanded by Brigadier-General Judson Kilpatrick. There was an allowance of about one field-piece to every thousand men, aggregating between sixty-five and seventy guns, fully manned and thoroughly equipped. A pontoon train was assigned to each wing of the army, and an efficient pioneer battalion organized for each corps. The entire command was amply provided with good wagon trains, loaded with ammunition and carrying supplies approximating forty days' rations of bread, sugar and coffee, a double allowance of salt for the same period, and grain forage for three days. Beef cattle, sufficient for forty days' subsistence, attended the army. No equipment was lacking which could in anywise enhance the comfort, power and efficiency of this formidable expedition. Acquainted with the character of the country through which his route lay, and aware of the fact that he would meet with an abundance of provisions and forage everywhere, General Sherman anticipated little difficulty in subsisting his troops. At this season of the year plantation barns were filled with newly-gathered harvest. Corn, peas, fodder, sweet potatoes, syrup, hogs, cattle, mules and horses were to be expected without stint. The recent movement of General Hood, ill-advised and pregnant with disaster, left the State of Georgia fairly open to a Federal advance. She was destitute of offering substantial resistance. Few troops remained within her confines to dispute Sherman's passage to the coast. Such were the physical peculiarities of the country, that there existed only occasional and partial obstacles to a rapid and successful march; none which could not be readily

overcome by the pontoon trains and pioneer corps with which the Federal army was supplied. For his rear Sherman entertained no reasonable fears, because the forces of General Thomas were an overmatch for General Hood's advancing columns. Under no possible circumstances could Sherman have been overtaken by Hood, had the latter abandoned his plans and started in pursuit. Nor was there any likelihood of his encountering serious opposition from the Confederates in his front. They were far too weak to do more than skirmish in a desultory manner with his powerful army of invasion. Enveloped by an ample guard of cavalry, and presenting a front varying from thirty to sixty miles in extent during their sweeping march toward the Atlantic, the Federal General readily perceived that his columns could speedily overcome any local interruptions and partial hindrances which might be attempted by newly organized and feeble bodies of citizen soldiery hastily assembled for the defense of their immediate homes. At best there were, in the interior of the State, only old men and boys to shoulder their fowling-pieces and dispute the passage of swamps. General Lee, sore-pressed in Virginia, could not spare from his depleted ranks a single battle-scarred brigade for the emergency. A reinforcement of seventy-five thousand men would not have placed him in position to have coped, man for man, with the ever-multiplying hosts marshalled under the bloody banners of Grant. Such was the posture of affairs at Wilmington, Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, and elsewhere, that no disposable troops could be found with which to form even a tolerable army of observation. General Hood, as we have intimated, was now so far removed from the scene of action that no change in his plans would necessitate the postponement of the proposed advance. The once puissant armies of the Confederacy were sadly reduced by sickness, poverty, wounds and death. Tens of thousands of her bravest sons had been gathered to their patriot graves, and there were none to stand in their places. Her treasures and supplies of every kind were well-nigh exhausted, and no helping hand was outstretched in that hour of supreme need. Whole departments did not comprise within their limits troops requisite for the defence of a sub-district. Isolated in position and cut off from all avenues of succor, each drop of shed blood flowed from her single arm, every feather which warmed and sheltered her offspring was plucked from her own breast.

Lieutenant-General E. Kirby Smith, commanding the Trans-Mississippi Department, was capable of no demonstrations which would



compel the recall of the formidable reinforcements hastening to the relief of General Thomas. Such was the scarcity of troops in Alabama and Mississippi, that Lieutenant-General Richard Taylor could detach but a handful in aid of Generals Cobb and Smith, who, with the Georgia State forces, were concentrated in the vicinity of Griffin. Lieutenant-General Hardee could muster forces barely sufficient to constitute respectable garrisons for the fixed batteries on the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina. General Beauregard looked in vain throughout the length and breadth of his extensive military division of the West for the means of effectual resistance, and was disappointed in the amount of assistance which he hoped to realize from the militia, home guards and reserves of the respective States embraced within the geographical limits of his command.

By carefully concealing his objective, and, with the heavy masses at command, by well-conceived feints cloaking his real designs, General Sherman readily conjectured that the small army of observation which the Confederates might bring into the field would be so divided in the effort to defend various and important points, widely removed the one from the other, that unity of action would become quite difficult. For the same reason the chances of his encountering anything like formidable resistance were well-nigh dissipated.

At the outset, the cavalry corps of Major-General Joseph Wheeler, and the Georgia State troops under the command of Major-Generals Howell Cobb and Gustavus W. Smith constituted almost the only opposing forces on the Confederate side.

The season of the year selected for the movement was most propitious ; just the period of invigorating airs and delightful autumnal suns, of clear skies and bracing frosty mornings, of firm roads and abounding health. The stock upon the plantations, now in fine condition, could be relied on to supply any lack of transportation.

As, more than three hundred years before, the Spanish Adelantado in his quest for treasure compelled the red men of this region to bear the burdens of his command while despoiling the homes and graves of the sons of the forest, in like manner did it enter into the calculations of these modern expeditionists to utilize the negroes found on the plantations adjacent to the line of march by compelling them to accompany the columns and assist in transporting the booty which was to be collected on every side at the hands of unprotected women, fatherless children, and decrepit old men.

In all fairness, therefore, this vaunted undertaking of General Sher-

man might well have been characterized, in advance, as a holiday excursion on a gigantic military scale, and not as a martial enterprise involving exposures, dangers, and uncertainties.

Having completed his preliminary arrangements, General Sherman, on the morning of the 15th of November, 1864, put his right wing, accompanied by Kilpatrick's cavalry, in motion in the direction of Jonesboro and McDonough, with orders to make a strong feint on Macon, cross the Ocmulgee about Planter's Mills, and rendezvous in the neighborhood of Gordon in seven days, exclusive of the day of march. The same day General Slocum moved with the Twentieth Corps by Decatur and Stone Mountain, with instructions to tear up the railroad from Social Circle to Madison, burn the railroad bridge across the Oconee east of Madison, and, turning south, reach Milledgeville on the seventh day, exclusive of the day of march. General Sherman left Atlanta on the 16th in company with the Fourteenth Corps, brevet Major-General Jeff. C. Davis commanding, and moving by way of Lithonia, Covington, and Shady Dale, advanced directly on Milledgeville.

By the 23d General Slocum was occupying Milledgeville and the bridge across the Oconee, and Generals Howard and Kilpatrick had massed their troops in and around Gordon.

Promptly advised by Major-General Wheeler of the Federal movement, General Beauregard, then in command of the military division of the West, ordered a concentration of all available forces, with a view to an interruption of General Sherman's march. He also suggested to General Hood the necessity for immediate and continued offensive operations in the hope of distracting the enemy's advance. "Adopt the Fabian system." Thus did he telegraph to the Confederate General officers commanding in Georgia. "Do not run the risk of losing your active forces and guns, available for the field, to hold any one place or position, but harrass at all points."

The General Assembly being in session at Milledgeville, then the capital of the State, in acknowledgment of the imminent danger, and in earnest effort to compass the protection of the Commonwealth, on the 18th of November, 1864, passed an act authorizing a levy, *en masse*, of the population of Georgia for the preservation of her liberty and independence

So rapid, however, was the progress of the Federal columns, so strong were they, and so wide a front, completely enveloped by Kilpatrick's cavalry, did they present in their sweeping march toward the coast, that no Confederate forces sufficient to dispute their

passage, or powerful enough to administer even a moderate check, could be accumulated in their path. Roads were indeed blockaded, and bridges destroyed at important points, but these obstacles were quickly removed by pioneer corps, and crossings speedily re-established through the intervention of convenient pontoon trains. Constant and heavy was the skirmishing maintained between the Confederate cavalry, commanded by Major-General Joseph Wheeler, and the Federal cavalry, led by Brigadier-General Judson Kilpatrick. Sometimes affairs of moment transpired which might be almost classed as hotly-contested battles. Among these will be specially remembered the encounters near Sandersville, at Waynesboro', and near Buckhead Creek. "My force," says General Wheeler, "never exceeded 3,500 men, and was so distributed in front, rear, and on both flanks that I seldom had more than 2,000 under my immediate command, which 2,000 frequently charged and routed more than double their numbers. The enemy had been falsely informed by their officers that we took no prisoners, which caused them to fight with desperation and to run very dangerous gauntlets to escape capture, which frequently accounts for the large proportion of killed."

And now, my comrades, much as I desire to do so, time will not permit me to enter upon a detailed account of the Federal demonstration against Macon; of the battle of Griswoldville, which, while it reflected great credit upon the gallantry of the Confederate and State forces engaged, in no wise crippled the movements of the enemy, and entailed upon us a loss which, under the circumstances, was unnecessary and utterly unproductive of any good; of the stubborn tenure of the Oconee bridge; of the resistance offered at Milen, at No. 4½ on the Central railroad, and at Montieth, until these defensive lines were consecutively abandoned under heavy pressure by the overmastering United States columns; or of the rapid transfer of the Georgia State forces to Grahamville, in South Carolina, in the vicinity of which town, on the 30th of November, 1864, a noble battle was fought, which resulted in the effectual and bloody repulse of a Federal army, under General Hatch, seeking to sever the railway communication between the cities of Charleston and Savannah.

This victory at Honey Hill relieved the city of Savannah from an impending danger which, had it not been thus averted, would have necessitated its immediate evacuation under perilous conditions, maintained the only line of communication by which reinforcements were expected for the relief of the commercial metropolis of Georgia,

and finally afforded an avenue of retreat when, three weeks afterwards, its garrison, unable to cope longer with the enveloping legions of Sherman, evacuated that city. In acknowledgement of the gallantry, patriotism, and distinguished services of General Gustavus W. Smith and his command in this brilliant affair the General Assembly of Georgia on the 9th of March, 1865, passed the most complimentary resolutions. In this memorable and successful engagement the Augusta battalion, under the command of our comrade, Major George T. Jackson, bore a conspicuous and most efficient part.

Although every effort had been exhausted in concentrating the largest force for the defence of Savannah, such was the pressure upon the Confederacy, and so few were the troops capable of transfer from other points, that at the inception and during the progress of the siege not more than 10,000 men fit for duty could be depended upon for the tenure of the newly-constructed western lines extending from the Savannah river at Williamson's plantation to the Atlantic and Gulf Railway bridge across the Little Ogeechee. Georgia reserves and State militia constituted nearly one-half of this army.

The forts and fixed batteries commanding the water approaches to the city were well supplied with ammunition, guns, and artillerymen. Against these works the naval forces of the enemy, in anticipation of the advent of General Sherman, were preparing to demonstrate heavily.

By the afternoon of the 9th of December, 1864, the Confederate garrison was in position along the western line, and on the following day the Federals closed in upon our field works covering the land approaches to the city of Savannah. With this date commences the siege, a history of which lies not within the compass of this hour.

A few words more, touching the conduct of the Federals during this vaunted march of Gen. Sherman from Atlanta to the sea, and I will, my friends, trespass no longer upon your patience.

After alluding to the almost total demolition of the Central Railroad from Gordon to Savannah, and the partial destruction of the Macon and Western, the Augusta and Waynesboro, the Charleston and Savannah, and the Atlantic and Gulf Railways, Gen. Sherman, in his official report, says: "We have also consumed the corn and fodder in the region of country thirty miles on either side of a line from Atlanta to Savannah, as also the sweet potatoes, cattle, hogs, sheep and poultry, and have carried away more than ten thousand



horses and mules, as well as a countless number of their slaves. I estimate the damage done to the State of Georgia and its military resources at one hundred millions of dollars ; at least twenty millions of which have inured to our advantage, and the remainder is simple waste and destruction.”\*

Contrast this official confession with the address of Major-General Early to the citizens of York, when his invading columns were passing over Pennsylvania soil : “I have abstained from burning the railroad buildings and car shops in your town because, after examination, I am satisfied that the safety of the town would be endangered. Acting in the spirit of humanity which has ever characterized my government and its military authorities, I do not desire to involve the innocent in the same punishment with the guilty. Had I applied the torch without regard to consequences, I would have pursued a course which would have been fully vindicated as an act of just retaliation for the unparalleled acts of brutality perpetrated by your own army on our own soil. But we do not war upon women and children.”

Compare General Orders No. 72 of the immortal Lee—redolent, even amid the smoke and carnage of the hottest warfare, of exalted civilization and generous humanity—with the atrocious proclamations of General Butler or the vandal acts of Sheridan, and then listen to the words of Polybius, spoken when the world was two thousand years younger than it now is, and uttered not in the tone of passion and hate so rife in his day, but in inculcation of the soundest lessons of political and moral wisdom : “When men proceed to wreak their fury on senseless objects, whose destruction will neither be of advantage to themselves nor in the slightest degree disable their opponent from carrying on the war, especially if they burn the temples of the gods, destroy their statues, and waste their ornamental furniture, what else can we say of such proceedings except that they are the acts of men devoid of all feelings of propriety, and infected by frenzy ? For it is in no way the object of war, at least among men who have just notions of their duty, to annihilate and utterly subvert those from whom they may have received provocation, but to induce them to amend that in which they acted amiss ; not to involve the innocent and guilty in one common ruin, but rather to save them both. We may also observe that it is

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\*The total value, at this time, and upon a specie basis, of the taxable property in Georgia, including lands and slaves, did not exceed \$650,000,000.

the act of a tyrant only, who hates and is hated by his subjects, to exact by force and terror a reluctant and unwilling obedience."

While it is admitted that the chief of an army may levy contributions on the enemy's country in order to compass the maintenance of his troops ; while he may forage for corn, hay and provisions when circumstances render it impossible to proceed in the regular way of taxation ; it is absolutely obligatory upon a commander, who is actuated by sentiments of honor and observes the recognized rules of civilized warfare, that he take from the enemy "only what he strictly wants," and that he adopt all possible means to prevent extortion or personal violence at the hands of his subordinate. "He is guilty of revolting cruelty who permits his soldiers to put inhabitants of a belligerent nation to torture or otherwise subject them to bad treatment to force them to disclose the places where their wealth or provisions are concealed. Nothing may be taken as personal booty. Excepting the cases of taxation, contribution, or absolute necessity," international law commands that all property, personal or real, belonging to individuals, be scrupulously respected. Any infraction of that rule must be punished as pillage or marauding.

Tested by these accepted rules of civilized warfare, the conduct of General Sherman's army, and particularly of Kilpatrick's cavalry and the numerous detached parties swarming through the country in advance and on the flanks of the main columns during the march from Atlanta to the coast, is reprehensible in the extreme. Not content with the violent and inordinate destruction of everything which might be regarded as even remotely contributing to the military strength and resources of the country, and not satisfied with the appropriation of such animals and provisions as were necessary for the efficiency and maintenance of the army, the Federals indulged in wanton pillage, wasting and destroying what could not be used. Defenseless women and children, and weak old men were not infrequently driven from their homes, their dwellings fired, and these non-combatants subjected to insult and privation. The inhabitants, white and black, were often robbed of their personal effects, were intimidated by threats and temporary confinement, and occasionally were even hung up, to the verge of final strangulation, to compel a revelation of the places where money, plate, and jewelry were buried, or plantation animals concealed. Private residences along the line of march were not exempt from rude search and the application of the torch. Articles of value which they contained were carried off at

pleasure, and insults continually offered. Corn cribs emptied of so much of their contents as sufficed to fill the commissary wagons, were often either pulled to pieces or committed to the flames. Cotton-houses, gins, screws, and cotton were universally consumed. Agricultural implements were broken up or carried away, and horses, mules, cattle, and hogs were either driven off, shot in the fields, or uselessly butchered in the pens and lots. Such was the wholesale destruction of animal life that the region stank with putrefying carcasses. Earth and air were filled with innumerable turkey buzzards battenning upon their thickly strewn death feasts. Even churches did not escape the general wreck—their wooden benches, doors, and sides being used for camp-fires, and their pulpits stripped of their scanty vesture. Grist, flour, and sugar mills shared in the common ruin. Labor was sadly disorganized, and the entire region swept by the Federal columns was left in poverty, ruin, demoralization, and ashes. To repress the commission of these enormities and prevent this prodigal and unwarrantable waste, effort was seldom used or disposition manifested by subordinate officers. Soldiers often vied with each other in acts of violence, insult, outrage, pillage, desolation, and murder.

These intolerable violations of the rules of civilized warfare are, by the commanding General when, in the official report to which we have already referred, commenting upon the conduct of the rank and file of his army, cavalierly dismissed with the remark, "a little loose in foraging, they did some things they ought not to have done, yet, on the whole, they have supplied the wants of the army with as little violence as could be expected, and as little loss as I calculated." This General complacently and boastfully announces to his government that eighty million dollars' worth of the property destroyed in Georgia by his army while on this march was "simple waste and destruction," in no wise contributing to the wants of the invader, but plunging the unarmed invaded in a sea of sorrow, tribulation, and ruin. The picture is not overdrawn, and this march of Sherman through the heart of Georgia forms as memorable and mournful an epoch in the history of this State as in Roman annals does the passage of the victorious Goths, encumbered with weighty spoils, through the southern provinces of Italy, annihilating whatever opposed, and madly plundering an unresisting country. The key note to the conduct of the whole campaign is sounded in the letter to General Grant from which we quoted at the commencement of this address. General Sherman set out to "make Georgia howl," and

preferred to "march through that State smashing things to the sea." Unfortunately for the prosperity of Georgia, the good order of her plantations, and the peace of her defenseless women and children, he was able, almost unmolested, to carry into merciless execution this intention so ruthlessly formed. That he could thus easily compass the desolation of this Egypt of the South argued most plainly the growing weakness of the Confederacy—sore pressed at all points, isolated on every hand, overwhelmed by numbers, and despoiled of her defenders—and gave painful token that the aspirations which her sons had cherished in tears, agony, and blood, for right and liberty and independence, were doomed to early disappointment.

The student of history searching among the annals of modern warfare for examples of moderation, humanity, justice, honor, and a chivalrous recognition of the rights of an enemy, will turn with regret and disappointment from the pages containing a true narrative of "Sherman's March to the Sea."

It really seems as if the Federal General on this occasion sought to rival the conduct of Prevost when, in 1779, he raided through the richest plantations of South Carolina. Behold the picture painted by the historian, Bancroft: "The British forced their way into almost every house in a wide extent of country; sparing in some measure those who professed loyalty to the king, they rifled all others of the money, rings, personal ornaments and plate, stripped houses of furniture and linen, and even broke open tombs in search of hidden treasure. Objects of value, not transportable by land or water, were destroyed. Porcelain, mirrors, windows, were dashed in pieces, gardens carefully planted with exotics were laid waste, domestic animals, which could not be used or carried off, were wantonly shot, and in some places not even a chicken was left alive. \* \* Fugitive slaves perished of want in the woods, or of fever in the British camp."\*

The enormities of 1779 committed by the British soldiers in their effort to perpetuate English rule over a colony then in open revolt against the Crown which had planted and nurtured it, were more than repeated by the United States troops in their attempt in 1864 to subjugate and drive back into the Federal Union a sovereign State which had withdrawn from a political compact into which she at first voluntarily entered, and from which, more than three years before,

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\*"History of the United States," vol. x, p. 294, Boston, 1874.



she had freed herself because, in her judgment, that Confederation no longer promoted the ends of justice, the equal rights, general benefit, and mutual protection for which it was originally formed. If we unhesitatingly reprobate the rigor, revenge and cruelty of the royalist, Prevost, by what law, human or divine, do the raiding, devastating columns of the Republican Sherman stand acquitted of even severer condemnation?

It has been estimated that not less than ten thousand negro slaves were seduced from their allegiance by the Federals in their march through the Georgia plantations. Hundreds of them died of want, small-pox, and other diseases incident to neglect, privation, and the lack of suitable shelter and clothing. More than twenty thousand bales of cotton were consumed in gin-houses and sheds, and some twenty-five thousand more were seized in Savannah after that city was evacuated by the Confederates. In their official returns the United States officers account for thirteen thousand head of cattle, nine million five hundred thousand pounds of corn, and ten million five hundred thousand pounds of fodder taken from planters and issued to the troops and animals, but make no mention of horses and mules stolen *ad libitum*, or of the stock, cattle, hogs, sheep, and poultry killed on every hand and in the most irregular way to satisfy the wasteful appetite of prowling bands of bummers and freebooters, and, when that was glutted, uselessly shot in yards, pens, and fields of the owners and by the road-side to gratify wanton sport, barbaric cruelty, and ribald hate. Of the consumption of rice, sweet potatoes, syrup, peas, and vegetables, of the destruction of houses, furniture, fences and agricultural implements, of the quantity of personal property stolen and carried away, of the insults offered, the outrages perpetrated, and the crimes indulged in, no inventory has been taken.

The record exists however, and may be authenticated by thousands upon whose homes the shadows of dire calamity descended like the black vapors of hell. We quarrel not with the legitimate hardships of war, but in the name of humanity and civilization, we do protest against the wanton waste, the unnecessary ruin, and the unjustifiable cruelties inflicted upon Georgia by this expedition, led by an officer whose published order to his command was: "The army will forage liberally on the country during the march."

As a military movement this expedition can be justified only upon the hypothesis that it was planned and conducted with full knowledge

of the weakness of the Confederates. It reached its objective because General Beauregard could summon to the field not even a tolerable army of opposition. That it was not intercepted in its progress, and totally defeated in its execution, must be attributed to accident—to the utter inability of the Confederates to concentrate a force sufficiently strong to deliver battle along the line of march.

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**Reconstruction in South Carolina.**

*By* PROFESSOR F. A. PORCHER.

PAPER NO. 4.

JOINT DISCUSSIONS.

I have dwelt the longer on this riot because it was the first in a series of riots which gave a character to the election contest which was at hand ; because it was greedily received by Northern Republicans, and dinned into the ear of excitable masses willing to believe anything discreditable to the South, and because of the character and social position of many who were implicated in it. No opportunity was ever given by the State to sift the mass of conflicting testimony which it elicited. The government pretended that no trial could be had. One of two things must be true. The government discovered that it had no good ground for a prosecution; in that case it had slandered many of the best men in the State for political ends, or it was really unable to bring the criminals to justice, and therefore a failure, a sham, and a mockery, whose existence was an offence against civilization.

On the 12th August one of those scenes occurred in Edgefield, at which Chamberlain was deeply disgusted, but of which, as according to the statement of Judge Carpenter, he had four years before given, and led a striking example at Chester, he could not bitterly complain. The Radicals had called a meeting on that day, at which Chamberlain was to be present. As such meetings had always been attended with much boisterous and roystering conduct, it was determined by the whites to attend it in such numbers as would make riotous conduct on the part of the others a dangerous procedure. Accordingly, about six hundred men rode in town on the track of the Radicals and sent a civil message to the Governor that they were anxious to have an opportunity of speaking to the blacks, and