



War Crimes Of The Yankee Invaders

A letter dated Charleston September 14, 1865, written by Rev. Dr. John Bachman, then pastor of the Lutheran Church in that city, presents many facts respecting the devastation and robberies by the enemy in South Carolina. So much relates to the march of Sherman's army through part of the state is here presented:

When Sherman's army came sweeping through Carolina, leaving a broad track of desolation for hundreds of miles, whose steps were accompanied with fire, and sword, and blood, reminding us to the tender mercies of the Duke of Alva, I happened to be at Cash's Depot six miles from Cheraw. The owner was a widow, Mrs. Ellerbe, seventy-one years of age. Her son, Colonel Cash, was absent. I witness the barbarities inflicted on the aged widow, and young and delicate females. Officers, high in command, were engaged in tearing from the ladies their watches, their ear and wedding rings, the daguerreotypes of those they loved and cherished. A lady of delicacy and refinement, a personal friend, was compelled to strip before them, that they might find concealed watches and other valuables under her dress. A system of torture was practiced towards the unarmed and defenseless, which, as far as I know and believe was universal throughout the whole course of that invading army. Before they arrived at a plantation, they inquired the names of the most faithful and trustworthy family servants; these were immediately seized, pistols were presented at their heads; with most terrific curses, they were threaten to be shot if they did not assist them in finding buried treasures. If this did not succeed they were tied up and cruelly beaten. Several poor creatures died under the infliction. The last resort is of that of hanging, and the officers and men of the triumphant army of General Sherman were enraged in erecting gallows and hanging up these faithful and devoted servants. They were strung up until life was nearly extinct, when they were let down, suffered to rest awhile, then threaten and hung again. It is not surprising that some should have left hanging so long that they were taken down dead. Cooly and deliberately these harden men proceeded their on their way, as if they had perpetrated no crime, and as if the God of heaven would not pursue them with vengeance. But it was not alone the poor blacks (to whom they professed to come as liberators) that were thus subject to torture and death. Gentlemen of high character, pure and honorable and gray-headed unconnected with the military, were dragged from their fields or their beds, and subjected to this process of threats and beating, and hanging. Along the whole track of Sherman's army, traces remains of the cruelty and inhumanity practiced on the aged and the defenseless. Some of those were hung up died under the rope, while their cruel murderers have not only left unreprieved and unhung, but hailed as heroes and patriots. The list of those martyrs, whom the culpidity of the officers and men of Sherman's army sacrificed for their gold and silver, is large and most revolting. If the editors of this paper will give their consent to publish it, I will give it in full attested by their names of the purest and best women and children of our Southland.

I, who have witnessed barbarity that are revolting to every feeling of humanity and mercy, was doomed to feel in my own person the effects of the avarice, cruelty, and despotism which characterized the men of that army. I was the only male guardian of the refined and delicate females who had fled there for shelter and protection. I soon ascertained the plan was adopted in this wholesale system of plunder, insult, blasphemy, and brutality. The first party came was headed by officers, from a colonel to a lieutenant, who acted with seeming politeness, and told me they only came to secure our firearms, and when these were delivered up nothing in the house would be touched. Out of the house, they said they were authorized to press forage for their large army. I told them that along the whole line of the march of Sherman's army, from Columbia to Cheraw, it had

been ascertained that ladies had been robbed and personally insulted. I asked for a guard to protect the females. They said that there was no necessity for this, as the men dare not act contrary to orders. If they did not treat the ladies with proper respect, I might blow their brains out. "But", said I, "you have taken away our arms, and we are defenseless." They did not blush much, and made no reply. Shortly after this came the second party, before the first had left. They demanded the keys to the ladies drawers, took away such articles as they wanted, then locked the drawers and put the keys in their pockets. In the mean time they gathered up spoons, knives, forks, towels, table clothes, etc. As they were carrying them off, I appealed to the officers of the first party; they ordered the men to put back the things; the officer of the second party said he would see them done first; and, without further ado, packed them up, and they glanced at each other and smiled.

The elegant carriages and all the vehicles on the premises were seized and filled with bacon and plunder. The smokehouses were emptied of their contents and carried off. Every head of poultry was seized and flung over their mules; and they presented the hideous picture in some scenes in "Forty Thieves." Every article of harness they did not wish to cut to pieces.

By this time the second parties had left and the third appeared on the field. They demanded the keys of the drawers, and being informed that they had been carried off, coolly and deliberately proceeded to break open the locks, took what they wanted, and when we uttered words of complaint were cursed. Every horse, mule, and carriage even carts, was taken away, and for hundreds of miles, the last animal that cultivated the widow's corn field, and vehicles that once bore them to the house of worship, were carried off or broken into pieces and burned.

The first party promised to leave ten days' provisions, the rest they carried off. An hour afterwards other hordes of marauders from the same army came and demanded the last pound of bacon and the last quart of meal. On Sunday, the Negroes were dressed in their best suits. They were kicked and knocked down and robbed of all their clothing, and they came to us in their shirt sleeves, having lost their hats, clothes and shoes. Most of our own clothes had been hid in the woods. The Negroes who had assisted in removing them were beaten and threaten with death, and compelled to show them where they were concealed. They cut open trunks, threw my manuscript and devotional books into a mud-hole, stole the ladies jewelry, hair ornaments, etc., tore many garments into tatters, or gave the rest to Negro women to bribe them into criminal intercourse. These women afterwards returned to us those articles that, after the mutilations, were scarcely worth preserving. The plantation, of one hundred and sixty Negroes, was some distance from the house, and to these place successive parties of fifty at a time resorted for three long days and nights, the husbands and fathers being fired at and compelled to fly to the woods.

Now comes scenes of licentiousness, brutality, and ravishment that have scarcely had an equal in the acts of heathen barbarity. I conversed with aged men and women, who were witnesses to these infamous acts of Sherman's unbridled soldiery, and several of them, from the cruel treatment they had received, were confined to their beds for weeks afterwards. The time will come when the judgment of Heaven will await these libidinous, beastly barbarians. During this time the fourth party, who I was informed by others, we had the most reason to dread, had made their appearance. They came as they said, in the name of the great General Sherman, who was next to God Almighty. They came to burn and lay in ashes all that were left. They had burned bridges and depots, cotton-gins, mills, barns and stables. They swore they would make damned rebel women pound their corn with rocks, and eat their raw meal without cooking. They succeeded in thousands of instances. I walked out at night, and innumerable fires were burning as far as the eye could reach, in hundreds of places, illuminated the whole heavens, and testified to the vindictive barbarity of the foe. I presumed they had orders not to burn occupied houses, but they strove all in their power to compel families to fly from their houses that they may afterwards burn them. The neighborhood was filled with refugees who had been compelled to fly from their plantations on the seaboard. As soon as they fled, the torch was applied, and, for hundreds of miles, those elegant mansions, once the ornament and pride of our inland country, were burned to the ground.

All manner of expedients were now adopted to make the residence leave their homes for a second time. I heard them saying, "This is too large a house to homes for the second time. I heard them

saying, "This is too large a house to be left standing, we must contrive to burn it." Canisters of powder were placed all around the house, and an expedient resorted to that promised almost certain success. The house was to be burned down by firing on the out buildings. These were so near each other that the firing of one would lead to the destruction of all. I had already succeeded in having a few bales of cotton rolled out of the building, and hoped if they had to burn the rest would also be rolled out, which could have been done in ten minutes by several hundred men who were looking on, gloating over the prospect of another elegant mansion in South Carolina left to ashes. The torch was applied and soon the large storehouse was on fire. This communicated to several other buildings in the vicinity, which, one by one were burned to the ground. At length the fire reached the smoke-house, where they had carried off the bacon of two hundred and fifty hogs. This was burned and rapidly approaching the kitchen, which was so near the dwelling-house that, should the former burn, the destruction of the large noble edifice would be inevitable.

A captain of the United States service, a native of England, whose name I would like to mention here, if I did not fear to bring down upon him the censure of the abolitionist as a friend of the rebels, mounted on the roof, and the wet blankets we sent up to him prevented the now smoking roof from bursting into flames. I called for help to assist us from procuring water from a deep well; a young lieutenant stepped up, condemned the infamous conduct of the burners and called on his company for aid; a portion of them came sheer fully to our assistance; the wind seemed almost by a miracle to subside; the house was saved and the trembling females thanked God for their deliverance. All this time, about one hundred mounted men were looking on refusing to raise a hand to help us; laughing at the idea that no efforts of ours could save the house from flames.

My trials, however, were not yet over. I had already suffered much in a pecuniary point of view. I had been collecting a library on natural history during a long life. The most valuable of these books had been presented by various societies in England, France, Germany, Russia, etc., who had honored me with membership, and they or the author presented me with these works, which had never been for sale, and could not be purchased. My herbarium, the labor of myself and the ladies of the house for many years, was also among these books. I had left them as a legacy to the library of Newbury College, and concluded to send them at once. They were detained in Columbia and there the torch was applied, and all were burned. The stealing and burning of books appear to be one of the programmes which the army acted. I had assisted in laying the foundation and dedicating the Lutheran Church at Columbia, and there near its walls, had recently been laid the remains of one who was dearer to me than life itself. To set that brick church on fire from below was impossible. The building stood by itself on a square but little built up. One of Sherman's bummers was sent up to the roof. He was seen applying the torch to the cupola. The church was burned to the ground, and the grave of my loved one desecrated. The story had circulated that the citizens had set their own city on fire; General Sherman had his army under control. The burning was by his orders, and ceased when he gave the command.

I was now doomed to experience in person the effects of avarice and barbarous cruelty. The robbers had been informed in the neighborhood that the family which I was protecting had buried one thousand dollars in gold and silver. They first demanded my watch, which I had effectually secured from their grasp. They then asked me where the money had been hid. I told them I knew nothing about it, and did not believe there was a thousand dollars worth in all, and what there had been carried off by the owner, Colonel Cash. All this was literally true. They then concluded to try an experiment on me which had proved so successful in hundreds of other instances. Coolly and deliberately they prepared to inflict torture on a defenseless, gray-headed old man. They carried me behind the stable and once again demanded where the money was buried, or "I should be sent to hell in five minutes." They cocked their pistols and held them to my head. I told them to fire away. One of them, a square built, broad face, large mouth clumsy lieutenant, who had the face of a demon, and who did not utter five words without awful blasphemy, now kicked me in the stomach until I fell breathless and prostrate. As soon as I was able, I rose again. He once more asked me where the silver was. I answered as before "I don't know." With his heavy elephant foot he now kicked me back until I fell again. Once more I arose, and he put the same question to me. I was nearly breathless, but answered as before. Thus was I either kicked or knocked down seven or eight times. I then told him it was perfectly useless for him to continue his threats and blows. He might shoot me if he chose. I was

ready and did not budge an inch, but requested him not to bruise and batter an unarmed defenseless man. "Now," said he, "I'll try a new plan. How would you like to have both of your arms cut off," He did not wait for an answer, but his heavy sheath sword, struck me on my left arm, near the shoulder. I heard it crack; it hung powerless at my side, and I supposed it was broken, He then repeated the blow to the other arm. The pain was excruciating, and it was several days before I could carve my food or take my arm out of a sling, and it was black and blue for weeks. (I refer to Dr. Kollock of Cheraw.) At that moment the ladies, headed by my daughter, who had only been made aware of the brutality practice upon me, rushed from the house, and came flying to my rescue. "You dare not murder my father," said my child; "he has been a minister in the same church for fifty years, and God has protected him." "Do you believe in a God miss?" said one of the brutal wretches; "I don't believe in a God, a heaven, nor hell." "Carry me," said I, "to your General." I did not intend to go to Sherman, who was at Cheraw, from whom, I was informed; no redress could be obtained, but to a general in the neighborhood, said to be a religious man. Our horses and carriages had all been taken away and I was too much bruised to be able to walk. The other young officers came crowding around me very officiously, telling me they would represent the case to the General, and they would have him shot by ten o'clock the next morning. I saw the winks and glances that were interchanged between them. Every one gave a different name to the officers. The brute remained unpunished, as I saw him on the following morning, as insolent and profane as he had been on the proceeding day.

As yet, no punishment had fallen on the brutal hyena, and I strove to nurse my bruised body and heal my wounds, and forget the insults and injuries of the past. A few weeks after this I was sent for to perform a parochial duty at Mars Bluff, some twenty miles distant. Arriving at Florence in the vicinity, I was met by a crowd of young men connected to the militia. They were excited to the highest pitch of rage, and thirsted for revenge. They believed that among the prisoners that have just arrived on a railroad car, on their way to Sumter, were the very men who committed such horrible outrages in the neighborhood. Many of their houses had been laid to ashes. They had been robbed of every means of support. Their horses had been seized; their cattle and hogs bayoneted; their mothers and sisters had been insulted, and robbed of their watches, ear, and wedding rings. Some of their parents had been murdered in cold blood. The aged pastor, to whose voice they had so often listened, had been kicked and knocked down by repeated blows, and his hoary head had been dragged about in the sand. They entreated me to examine the prisoners and see whether I could identify the men that had inflicted the barbarities on me. I told them I would do so, provided they would remain where they were and not to follow me. The prisoners saw me at a distance, held down their guilty heads, and trembled like aspen leaves. All cruel men are cowards. One of my arms was still in a sling. With the other I raised some of their hats. They all begged for mercy. I said to them, "the other day you were tigers ---you sheep now." But a hideous object soon arrested my attention. There sat my brutal enemy---the vulgar, swaggering lieutenant, who had ridden to the steps of the house, insulted the ladies, and beaten me most unmercifully. I approached him slowly, and in a whisper asked him : "Do you know me sir?---the old man whose pockets you first searched, to whether he might not have a pen knife to defend himself, and then kicked and knocked down with your fist and heavy scabbard?" He presented a picture of an arrant coward, and in a trembling voice implored me to have mercy; don't let me be shot; have pity! Old man begs for me! I won't do it again! For God's sake save me! O God help me! "Did you not tell my daughter there was no God? Why call on him now." I turned and saw the impatient flushed and indignant crowd approaching. "What are they going to do with me? Said he. "Do you hear that sound---click, click? Yes, said he, "they are cocking their pistols." "True said I; "and if I raise a finger you will have a dozen bullets through your brain." "Then I will go to hell; "don't let them kill me. O Lord have Mercy!" "Speak low," said I "and don't open your lips." The men advanced. Already one had pulled me by my coat. "Show us the men." I gave no clue by which the guilty could be identified. I walked slowly through the car, sprang into the waiting carriage, and drove off.

The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government; by Jefferson Davis

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