AFTER THE MASSACRE!

Graphic Account by Deputy United States Marshal W. H. Rogers.

Visit to Mountain Meadows With Dr. Forney and United States Troops.

Successful Search for the Children of the Murdered Emigrants.

Interview with the Indians and the Mormons who were at the Slaughter.

Brigham Young and the Church Implicated in the Massacre.

Judge Cradlebaugh's First Attempt to Bring the Butchers to Justice.

The following interesting letter was written for the Salt Lake Valley Tan, in 1860, by Wm. H. Rogers, who accompanied Dr. Forney to the slaughter field in 1859, in search of the children. It is a truthful statement and implicates Brigham Young and the leaders of the Mormon Church in the bloody massacre.

I have observed on the part of one or two of the Mormon newspapers published in this city, an evident purpose to treat with slight contempt the statements which have appeared in the Tan, which, if such be the case, the Mormons were concerned in the Mountain Meadows Massacre, and that, in relation thereto, to the matter, they would evidently produce the impression that the whole story in regard to the Mormons, if there be any were concerned in the transaction, is one that has been framed for the purpose of disarming the prejudices against them with which they are already regarded by the great body of the people of Territory. As a matter of conversation, I will say a word of the facts connected with the wholesale butchery, so far as the facts in regard to it have been brought to light. I have determined to supply this omission, by a statement of facts and circumstances in relation to it, gathered during a trip which I made with Dr. Forney, superintendent of Indian Affairs for Utah Territory, into the region of the massacre occurred, in the spring of 1859.

AFTER INFORMATION.

Dr. Forney left Camp Floyd in the last of March, 1859, to go down to the Pauta Creek settlement, 350 miles south of Salt Lake City, to obtain and bring back with him the children saved from the Mountain Meadows Massacre, who had been captured, and were then in charge of Mr. Jacob Hamblin, Dr. Forney having some time previously employed him to collect the children and take care of them till he could take them away. On this trip Dr. Forney employed me to accompany him as assistant, and I first joined him at the ranch of Naph 30 or 20 miles south of Salt Lake City. From Naph we proceeded through Fillmore to the Indian farm on Corn Creek, 15 miles south, where we disposed some goods to the Indians; from there, accompanied by Kanosh, an Indian chief belonging to the Pahvant tribe, we proceeded to Pacer, Provonan, Coddell's and Pahsimeroi Creek. The last is a small place in the immediate vicinity of the Mountain Meadows, where the celebrated massacre occurred in September, 1857. In passing through each of the towns named, as Doctor and myself made diligent inquiry concerning the massacre of the party of emigrants, the number of persons concerning the emigrant party, and other concerning the conduct of the Mormons in relation to them. We however ascertained but little. The number of emigrants was generally estimated at from 120 to 140; but no one pretended to have any knowledge of the number, except that they had heard that it was one by the Indians. At Pahsimeroi, an Indian guide that had been sent to us by Jacob Hamblin, already referred to as the man that Dr. Forney had employed to collect and take charge of the children saved from the Mountain Meadows Massacre, came up with us. This guide conducted us to the scene of the massacre.

THE MEADOWS.

The small valley known as the Mountain Meadows, in which it occurred, and which therefore import to its appropriate and most striking name a sad and horrible history, is situated about six miles south of Pinto Creek, a small Mormon settlement in the county. The valley is about five miles in length, and in the widest place about one mile in breadth. It is covered pretty during the summer with a rich and luxuriant grass, and is nearly the last place from grass can be found on the southern road to California, before striking the desert. In the north end of the valley, near where the road crosses it, a spring has been constructed for the purpose of herding and taking care of the cattle brought there during the season for grass. The tract is owned by Jacob Hamblin. He frequently only during the summer months the cattle, and at other times with his family at Santa Clara settlement, some distance south of the Mountain Meadows. This tract was in cultivation at the time that our Indian guide conducted us into the valley. The immediate locality of the spring, and the place where the massacre occurred, is about four miles from the ranche on the road leading south. The valley at the place spoken of is about two miles south. A small ravine runs parallel with the road on the right hand side at the spot.

THE ROBBED SCENE.

When we arrived here in April, 1859, more than a year and a half after the massacre occurred, the ground, for a distance of more than a hundred yards around a spot where it was carried, was the sticks bones and bones of human beings, interspersed in places with rolls or bunches of hooped and matted hair, which, from its length, evidently belonged to females. In front the bones of small children were strewed by the wolves, those of grown persons, as if parted and child had not death the same manner and with the same brutal cruelty. Small quantities of dresses, and scraps of female apparel were also to be seen in places on the ground there, like the bones of those who had worn them, bleached from long exposure, but their shape was, in many instances, still so. In a gulch or hole in the hillside on the side of the road, a large number of leg and arm bones, and bones of ankles, could be seen sticking above the surface, as if they had been buried there, but the action of the water and digging of wolves had again exposed them to view. The sight was one too horrible and sickening for language adequately to describe.

THE DEFENSE.

From this spot we proceeded south about one mile to a large spring, where the emigrants were encamped when the attack was made. Making this previous to the massacre, the spring, a few yards off the road, we could distinctly define the form and size of the corral, which they made, by a number of wagons placed in form of a circle in the shape of a corral. The wheels were dug for the purpose of lowering the wheels of their wagons to them, so as to form a better protection. Here the attack began. In the centre of the corral a pit about twenty feet long, and four or five feet wide and deep, was dug for the purpose, no doubt, of placing the women and children in it in order to protect them from the fire of the assailants. To the side of this corral, and about one hundred and fifty or sixty yards distant on a small mound or knoll, a number of stones had been piled up in a way to form a partial breastwork or protection against the fire which the emigrants no doubt returned for several days against their assailants. Hundreds of musket balls lodged in the stones which were then on the side to the corral, fully supporting the theory of the attack in the first place. In the mound the corral, human bones and implements of abodness were lying on the ground, indicating with the corral and the breastwork on the knoll, that it was here, and at the place spoken of where the great body of the bones were found, that the work of slaughter began.

CARL SHIRTZ.

From this spot we proceeded south about two miles to a large spring, where the emigrants were encamped when the attack was first made upon them previous to the massacre, at the spring. A few yards off the road, we could distinctly define the form and size of the corral which they made, by a number of wagons placed in form of a circle in the shape of a corral. The wheels were dug for the purpose of lowering the wheels of their wagons to them, so as to form a better protection. Here the attack began. In the centre of the corral a pit about twenty feet long, and four or five feet wide and deep, was dug for the purpose, no doubt, of placing the women and children in it in order to protect them from the fire of the assailants. To the side of this corral, and about one hundred and fifty or sixty yards distant on a small mound or knoll, a number of stones had been piled up in a way to form a partial breastwork or protection against the fire which the emigrants no doubt returned for several days against their assailants. Hundreds of musket ball lodged in the stones which were then on the side to the corral, fully supporting the theory of the attack in the first place. In the mound the corral, human bones and implements of abodness were lying on the ground, indicating with the corral and the breastwork on the knoll, that it was here, and at the place spoken of where the great body of the bones were found, that the work of slaughter began.

CARL SHIRTZ.

From this spring we proceeded onwards the settlement on the South Fork for the purpose of obtaining the children from Mr. Hamblin, who resided there. On the same evening that we had struck our camp, for the night, we were joined by a man with an ox wagon, coming also in the direction of Santa Clara and turning out his oxen, he came to our camp and very soon informed us that he had lived at Santa Clara, and that he was bringing home from Cedar City with a load of wheat, which he had been up to the latter place to obtain. The conversation had a very personal explanations, turned very hastily after what we had witnessed during the day, upon the Mountain Meadows Massacre. And this man, whose name was Carl or Carlos Shirtz, informed us that he had lived at the time the massacre occurred, at the ranch owned by Mr. Hamblin, at the south end of the Mountain Meadows. He was employed by Mr. Hamblin in making adobies at the time. He saw the emigrants at the time when they entered the fort, and talked with some of the men belonging to it. They expressed perfectly civil and gentlemanly, he thought, he supposed, contained about twenty wagons and seven or eight hundred head of cattle, including 10 or 20 milch cows, herds a considerable number of horses and mules. The emigrants entered the valley on Friday, and the man with them he conversed told him that they intended to stop a few days and rest and recruit their stock before entering the desert, and inquired of him a good place for the purpose. He recommended the vicinity of the spring in the south end of the Meadows, as being well adapted for the purpose. Following the advice, they proceeded to the place and encamped. The next morning he said he saw some of the men, who info med him that they were looking for lost stock. In the evening, he saw the men return, driving a few loose cattle. He never saw any of the party afterwards. Early on Saturday morning following, he stated that he heard the firing of a great many guns in the south, in the direction of the spring where they were; he also saw on the hills around a good many Indians passing back and forwards, as if in a state of considerable excitement. His impression from hearing the guns and seeing the Indians, was that the latter had attacked the emigrants, and fearing lest they had not go to Fault Creek and give the alarm if he thought so, he stated that he supposed the emigrants had been at it not in the words, the foregoing to the exact estimation of the statement made by Shirtz.

THE CHILDREN.

On the day following we reached the Santa Clara settlement, and found in the possession of Mr. Hamblin thirteen of the children preserved from the massacre, ranging in ages from five to ten years, and two at Cedar City, was all that had been heard of. These children were well with the exception of some trifling ailments, they had, and which prevailed at that time an epidemic to the place or vicinity where they were. Immediately on a few days in Santa Clara in distributing some cattle to the Indians, we set out with these children on our return. We did not take the same route in returning by the southern one, but proceeded direct to Harmony, leaving the Mountain Meadows some 15 or 20 miles to our left.

MEET LEE.

On arriving at Harmony, Dr. Forney called on John D. Lee, who had failed at that time, and may be at present, a bishop in the Mormon church. The Doctor had received information which led him to believe that Lee had a portion of the property belonging to these murdered emigrants in his possession, and he had written to inform him was to demand a surrender of the property. On the demand being made, Bishop Lee declared that he had nothing of any of the property, or any knowledge concerning it, further than that he had heard that the Indians had it.

I was not present when this demand was made, but was informed of it as stated by Dr. Forney on our return to Santa Clara. Dr. Forney also informed me that a conversation which he had held with Lee upon the subject, was of a character that he was not at the massacre, but received more just after it ended. Lee also stated that Cedar City was the place where the emigrants had been destroyed, and that the Indians had the property, and that the whole affair was managed by the Mormon church, holding an office equal to "prophet," and a bishop higher than that of a bishop, also arrived on the spot soon after him. In the same conversation Lee said that he was a poor man, and had endeavored to do his duty, and that they were slandering the Mormons while treating alone, and in general terms justified the Mormons. Dr. Forney, in the conversation with Lee we started for Cedar City, Bishop Lee also set out with us for the avowed purpose of going to the Indian Hamblin and Bishop Higbee at Cedar City, and chatting over with these men, in the presence of Dr. Forney, the circumstances in relation to the massacre, and its implicitness which had been expressed, and that they were guilty of it, that is, as actual participants in the deed itself or as inciting the Indians to the crime, and then charged with the express purpose of getting