

Mountain Meadows

Here 120 men, women, and children were massacred in cold blood early in September, 1857.

They were from Arkansas. I observed that nearly every skull I saw had been shot through with rifle or revolver bullets. I did not see one that had been "broken in with stones." Dr. Brewer showed me one, that probably of a boy of 18, which had been fractured and slit, doubtless by two blows of a bowie knife or other instrument of that character.

I saw several bones of what must have been very small children. Dr. Brewer says from what he saw he thinks some infants were butchered. The mothers doubtless had these in their arms, and the same shot or blow may have deprived both of life.

The scene of the massacre, even at this late day, was horrible to look upon. Women's hair, in detached locks and in masses, hung to the sage bushes and was strewn over the ground in many places.

Parts of little children's dresses and of female costume dangled from the shrubbery or lay scattered about; and among these, here and there, on every hand, for at least a mile in the direction of the road, by 2 miles east and west, there gleamed, bleached white by the weather, the skulls and other bones of those who had suffered. A glance into the wagon when all these had been collected revealed a sight which can never be forgotten.

The idea of the melancholy procession of that great number of women and children, followed at a distance by their husbands and brothers, after all their suffering, their watching, their anxiety and grief, for so many gloomy days and dismal nights at the corral, thus moving slowly and sadly up to the point where the Mormons and Indians lay in wait to murder them; these doomed and unhappy people literally going to their own funeral; the chill shadows of night closing darkly around them, sad precursors of the approaching shadows of a deeper night, brings to the mind a picture of human suffering and wretchedness on the one hand, and of human treachery and ferocity upon the other, that can not possibly be excelled by any other scene that ever before occurred in real life...

The expenses of the army in Utah, past and to come (figure that), the massacre at the Mountain Meadows, the unnumbered other crimes, which have been and will yet be committed by this community, are but preliminary gusts of the whirlwind our Government has reaped and is yet to reap for the wind it has sowed in permitting the Mormons ever to gain foothold within our borders. They are an ulcer upon the body politic. An ulcer which it needs more than cautery to cure. It must have excision, complete and thorough extirpation, before we can ever hope for safety or tranquillity.

This is no rhetorical phrase made by a flourish of the pen, but is really what will prove to be an earnest and stubborn fact. This brotherhood may be contemplated from any point of view, and but one conclusion can be arrived at concerning it.

The Thugs of India were an inoffensive, moral, law-abiding people in comparison.

I have made this a special report, because the information here given, however crude, I thought to be of such grave importance it ought to be put permanently upon record and deserved to be kept separate and distinct from a report on the ordinary occurrences of a march. Some of the details might, perhaps, have been omitted.

But there has been a great and fearful crime perpetrated, and many of the circumstances connected with it have long been kept most artfully concealed. But few direct rays even now shine in upon the subject.

So that however indistinct and unimportant they may at present appear to be, even the faint side lights given by these details may yet lend assistance in exploring some obscure recess of the matter where the great truths, that should be diligently and persistently sought for, may yet happily be discovered.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant, James Henry Carleton, *Brevet Major, U. S. A., Captain in the First Dragoons.*

(Special Report of the Mountain Meadow Massacre by J. H. Carleton, Brevet Major, United States Army, Captain, First Dragoons, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902, 15-16, 17, e-book, Text and paragraph structure modified)