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Campbell Bryce

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PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

OF

MRS. CAMPBELL BRYCE

DURING

THE BURNING OF COLUMBIA,
SOUTH CAROLINA

BY

GENERAL W. T. SHERMAN'S ARMY

FEBRUARY 17, 1865

PHILADELPHIA
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THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF MRS. CAMPBELL BRYCE DURING THE BURNING OF COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA BY GENERAL W. T. SHERMAN'S ARMY

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PREFACE

This record of my personal experiences during the occupation of Columbia by the Federal army under General W. T. Sherman, I dedicate to you, my dear children, remembering well how eagerly I sought for and cherished every tradition and scrap of history handed down to me by my parents of their parents, who were participants in the War of the Revolution. Though this story has often been told, and is old and familiar, I flatter myself that your children and your children's children will appreciate my record far more than you do now, to whom it is more than a twicetold tale.
I feel it a duty to myself and my ancestors to make this explanation to those of my children who were not born to the responsibility and heavy burden of being slave-owners. Perhaps, in the years to come, you, too, will think that your Southern ancestors, and the people of the South, were responsible for this institution. Such was not the case. The English were engaged in the slave-trade long before the American Revolution. Queen Elizabeth herself engaged in the traffic, and many people in England owned slaves during her reign. After our separation from the mother country, the responsibility for this institution rested on the shoulders of the slave-traders of New York and New England; the Southern people protested against it.

In the Convention which framed the Constitution of the United States in 1788, the majority wished the immediate abolition of the slave-trade, and threats were even then made to withdraw from the confedera-
tion of States; but New York and some of the New England States bitterly opposed this on account of their large investments in the "traffic." The matter was compromised by the adoption in the Constitution of Section IX., Article 1, which limited the slave-trade to twenty years. You will see the sin (if sin it was) rested quite as much on the people of New York and New England who kidnapped these barbarians and sold them to the people of the South.

These same people of New England could not find words strong enough to vilify the Southern people for holding them in bondage, though they had received payment for them. It is an open question, if they would not have kept them for their own use had their climate suited, and could they have utilized their labor all the year round, as the Southern people could.

Be that as it may, the lot of the Southern slave was far less unhappy than that of the white political slaves in the New England cotton-mills of to-day.

In the days of slavery, the negro children were not compelled to labor until they were ten and twelve years old; and then it was light work, suited to their years. They lived in the open air and sunshine, amusing themselves according to their own sweet will. Compare their lot with the white children, even younger, in the cotton-mills of the present day in the New England States.

What is the condition of the African at this time in his own land, in spite of all the labors of the missionaries? The negro when brought to the South was what they are now in Africa,—savages. They knew nothing of decency, civilization, or religion.

Southern masters and mistresses had an arduous and heavy task to perform in teaching and training these savages. After all that has been said of the cruelty and wrong-doing of the Southern slave-owners, it was owing to their teaching and example that the negro became so civilized, enlightened, and christianized that the Northern people in 1863 declared them "their equals in civil and political rights."

Many good and pious people of the South believed they had Scripture authority for holding the negro in bondage (see chap. xxv. of Leviticus). "Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. . . . And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever."

The people of both Old and New England must have thought the African the heathen referred to. God, in His all-wise providence, permitted the enslavement of the negro as a means of bringing him to a knowledge of Christ and His religion. There can be no doubt of this, as the African has been so much benefited by it. There certainly never was a better
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cared for or happier peasantry in the world than the negro slaves of the South in the "ante-bellum" days. As an illustration, I will give a conversation overheard between two old women who had been slaves.

"Aunt Ha'yet, don't you think we does have to wuk a heap ha'der den we did in slavery times?"

"Well, I don't know 'bout dat, honey; but it's so constant, we ain't got no time fer res', not even when we sick; we jist has to keep a gwine."

Just here I should like to add my testimony to that of many others as to the loyalty and faithfulness of our slaves during the fearful and trying times of which I write. I was never for one moment afraid of my slaves, though surrounded by them, both men and women. On the contrary, I relied upon them, and looked to them for help and protection. The people of the North seemed to think there was bitter enmity between master and slave. Could they have had better proof that such was not the case at the time of the John Brown raid in Virginia?

When that noble martyr (heaven save the mark!) came to Virginia with his eighteen men and fifteen hundred guns and pikes, he expected to find the negroes ready to join him. When he told the women they must set fire to the staircases and burn up the women and children, he knew nothing of the tender tie which bound these women to their nurslings, and of the affection which existed between them and the mothers of these helpless babes, with whom they had grown up from childhood.

These women were overwhelmed with horror at his fiendish advice, and at once reported his vile and wicked plans to their owners. He was ignorant of the fact that many of these people were true and sincere Christians. What must have been his mortification to find that not a single negro would join him. They all to a man refused to have anything to do with his barbarous scheme. He reaped the just reward of his crimes. They tell us his sinful soul can find no rest, but "still goes marching on." Can it be his teaching which has developed such frightful traits of character in the negro men since their freedom? And is it in this way his restless soul is occupied on its onward march? They share his fate, but without judge or jury.

Other pens than mine have told, and others will tell far better than mine, of the victories won by our gallant and brave soldiers who fought and died in defence of their country, their homes, and firesides; historians of the future will do justice to their brave and heroic deeds in their struggle for our beloved cause. And to them, too, I leave the duty of recording the reasons for this struggle for our rights under the Constitution of the United States, which had been fought for, framed, and maintained by our ancestors.

I shall not attempt to tell of all our trials and sacri-
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fices during the long four years of the war, nor of our
alternate hopes and fears, our prayers and tears, our
triumphs and disappointments.

We, the women of the South, toiled unceasingly for
our soldiers; we nursed them in sickness and when
wounded; we begged for them; we sewed and knitted
for them.

We suffered, uncomplainingly, hardships, losses, and
privations of all kinds. We wore the "homespun"
dress; we made our hats from our palmetto; we made
our own shoes, and knitted our gloves and stockings.
We drank coffee made of wheat okra or parched sweet
potatoes, and tea made of the dried leaves of the rasp­
berry. We took care of our children and slaves, and
when our men were in the army we superintended the
plantations.

We have been called a self-indulgent, indolent class
of women; but in the annals of the past, few more
helpful, energetic, courageous, self-reliant women could
be found than were those of the South in our fight for
independence. Alas! it was in vain: the blood of our
noble heroes shed for naught; our holy cause was lost.

But

"No nation rose so white and fair,
None fell so free of crime."
(Earl Derby to General Lee.)

After the fall of Atlanta, and when General Sherman
began his vainglorious march to the sea, we were told

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he had said he was marching through Georgia with
gloves on; but when he reached South Carolina he
would come with bare hands. He had said that "war
was hell," and surely he made it so.

The people of the North never could have known
the fearful acts of cruelty, thieving, and butchery
committed by his army on that terrible march. They
could not have known how wantonly they destroyed
property, shot down cattle, sheep, and hogs (which
they did not need), leaving women, children, and
slaves to starve.

It would be difficult to imagine our feelings when
we heard all this, knowing such was done with gloved
hands. What would it be with bared hands? We
were soon made to realize.

After the capture of Savannah, we knew he had
commenced his march through South Carolina. His
line of march was marked by the light of burning
houses. And, oh, in more than one home was an
agony far more bitter than death!

I copy a description of this march written by Major
Nichols, one of General Sherman's staff:

"The actual invasion of South Carolina had begun.
The well-known sight of columns of black smoke
meets our gaze again. This time, houses are burning;
wherever our footsteps pass, fire, ashes, and desolation
follow in the path. In the record of great armies
marching through an enemy's country, carrying death
and destruction in their path, villages burned, cities pillaged, history will be searched in vain for a parallel to the scattering and destructive effects of this invasion of South Carolina. Cotton-gins, presses, factories, and mills were burned to the ground. On every side—the head, centre, and rear of our columns—might be traced columns of smoke by day and the glare of fires by night."

It was often said that a crow flying over this devastated country would have to carry its rations with it.

This heroic march, so renowned in song and story, which tells of an army of sixty thousand men passing through a country chiefly occupied by old men, women, and children, whom they maltreated, whose homes they burned, whose provisions they destroyed, and left them and their negroes (for whom they professed to be fighting) to starve; this famous march, and the treatment of the people by Sherman and his "bummers," will be found much the same as the mode of warfare now practised by the Spaniards in Cuba; and when you compare the two commanding generals, you will find a very slight difference between "Weyler the Butcher" and "Sherman the Hero."

Early on the morning of the 14th of February, my husband announced to me that a man with a wagon and four mules had just arrived from the plantation, and he wished to have it loaded with bedding, clothing, and other necessaries for myself and the children, and

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we were to take the carriage and seek a place of safety in the up-country. I said, "I cannot go; and I am going to say to you what I have never said in all our married life, nor ever expected to say, I will not go." I told him I had seen too much of the trials and tribulations of our poor refugees from the low country, who had been driven from their homes and thrown upon charity for their bread; and more than that, I thought by my remaining I might be able to save our home. I then told him our friend Mrs. Palmer (wife of Rev. B. M. Palmer, now of New Orleans) and I had held a council of war. And as we believed they had both done their duty in the service of their country, the one as chaplain, the other as an officer, and had been honorably discharged (Dr. Palmer had been chaplain in General Beauregard's army until his health failed, and Mr. Bryce had materially aided in mounting and equipping the company known as the "Congaree Troop," had been elected its first lieutenant, and accompanied it to Virginia, where he remained until compelled to leave, owing to his imperfect hearing and delicate health), Mrs. Palmer and I decided that instead of our leaving, Dr. Palmer and he must go before the entrance of the Federal army. We knew that clergymen and gentlemen were often subjected to insults and indignities, to compel them to tell where their own or other people's money was concealed. The Rev. Dr. Bachman, the naturalist (who after the death of Audubon completed
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his work on the "Quadrupeds of North America"),
told me himself how cruelly he had been treated by a
Federal lieutenant to compel him to reveal the place
where his host, with whom he had taken refuge, had
concealed his silver and valuables. His right arm was
so injured he never afterwards had the use of it. He
proved his Christianity by leaving vengeance to whom
it belonged when he had it in his power to exact it, for
shortly afterwards this lieutenant and his company were
captured by a Confederate company from Charleston
(Dr. Bachman's home), and was entreated by them to
point out the man who had so cruelly treated him. He
was on the same train with the prisoners, and the guilty
wretch gave him such an imploring look that Dr.
Bachman feared the man would betray himself; had he
been discovered, his hours would have been numbered.

Having heard such reliable statements as this from
many sources, was it not natural that we should fear
the same treatment for our husbands, and that we
should do all in our power to persuade them to go?
We could not brook the thought of seeing them treated
in this way. It was with great difficulty we at length
succeeded in gaining their consent to leave town. We
feared up to the last moment that something would
occur to make them change their minds. It was with
great reluctance and with eyes overflowing they left us.
Never shall I forget that parting, though I smiled and
tried to show a courage I did not feel. For the two

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days after their departure we were in a constant state
of excitement. The alarm-bells would ring out at
midnight, and we would spring from our beds in terror
and spend the remainder of the weary hours listening
for the signal which would tell us of the arrival of the
army which had uttered such dire threats against us.

For hours we were kept in this sickening state of sus­
pense and dread. On the 16th of February, 1865, we
heard the roar of cannon and knew they were ap­
proaching, and very soon we could hear the sound of
the small-arms. These warlike sounds sent our hearts
to our mouths, and we trembled in our shoes, but we
did not then realize all that was in store for us.

When they reached the Broad River they com­
meneced shelling the city, and continued to do so dur­
ing the day without demanding its surrender. A large
piece of shell fell in front of your grandmother's house
(Mrs. John Bryce) on Blanding Street. The enemy
crossed the river on pontoon-bridges on the memorable
morning of the 17th. Some of our own troops still
lingered, as if loath to leave us so exposed to our ruth­
less foe. Our two generals, Hampton and Butler, re­
mained until after the enemy had entered the city. I
was fearful lest they should be captured.

Soon after their departure, our Mayor, Dr. Jefferson
Goodwyn, accompanied by three Aldermen bearing a
white flag, met Colonel Stone, to whom they sur­
rendered the city. He guaranteed protection until
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General Sherman came. Later in the day the Mayor saw General Sherman, who said to him,—

"Go home, and rest assured your city will be as safe in my hands as if under your control." He asked the condition of the fire-engines and water-works, and when told they were in good order, said, "I am pleased to hear it."

At that time there was no fire visible in any part of the town. We relied on his word, but soon found we were leaning on a broken reed. He most faithfully kept his promise to General Halleck, "that salt would not be needed after the Fifteenth Army Corps had done its work in Columbia." It was that corps which burned our city.

But there were some Western men who proved themselves most honorable exceptions, and to whom many of us owe the preservation of our homes.

I had in my service two white maids, who asked permission to go to the main street and try and secure some of the dry-goods offered by our merchants to the citizens. About two o'clock in the afternoon they returned, and came into my dining-room accompanied by two Federal soldiers, who were smoking, though otherwise respectful. One of them came up to me with a handful of spool cotton and papers of needles (though they were worth their weight in gold to us at that time). I refused them; I could not take them from his hands.

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He said, "Madam, I am a South Carolinian. I have an uncle living in Orangeburg."

I told him he should be ashamed to tell it, and asked if he had robbed him and left him and his family to starve.

He said, "Don't be so hard on me. I was a little boy when my father moved to the West, and I had to join this army." He went on to say, "My reason for telling you I was a South Carolinian is this: I wish to give you some advice." I asked what it was. He said, "If you have anything stored in out-houses, have them brought into your house, and put them under lock and key, and then get a guard."

I saw he meant this honestly, and at once set to work to follow his advice. We had a large supply of provisions, which, thanks to my husband's forethought, had been sent up from our plantation some time before. I called up my servants, and we commenced the work of putting them in a place of safety. Some of these supplies were already in the cellar; but we had to move barrels of corn-beef and molasses, hams, pork, cow-peas, sweet potatoes, hominy, meal, flour, lard and tallow, bacon, and not forgetting that blessing of Southern people, a wagon-load of light wood, besides many other necessaries of life.

The cellar was a very large one, containing four rooms and a wide hall. I had my chickens, ducks, and turkeys caught and locked up in one of these
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rooms, where they remained during the three days and nights the Federal army occupied the town. They must have known instinctively they were surrounded by enemies, as they neither cheeped, quacked, nor crowed during all of that time. Poor things, no doubt they thought it a very long night.

I also had my two cows and their calves locked up. I then bethought me of my large family carriage. How could I save that? After looking at it, I decided to have the wheels taken off, and called two of my negro men and told them to remove the wheels and place the body of the carriage on the floor of the carriage-house. Then they took the wheels off my husband's road-cart. This they did without comment or question. I had these locked up also, thinking to myself, "necessity is the mother of invention." I left in the carriage-house a pony carriage and a two-seated buggy.

We had a very short time to accomplish all this, but fear lent wings to our feet and strength to our arms. My servants were perfectly obedient to all my commands, and but for them I could not have accomplished so much in so short a space of time.

After we had made everything secure, I determined to go in search of General Sherman to ask him for a guard. I requested my friend Miss Graeser to accompany me. At first she demurred, thinking it beneath our dignity to ask protection; but I insisted that our whilom South Carolinian had given good advice, and,

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moreover, some of our own soldiers had given the same advice.

We were compelled to walk (as my husband had taken two pairs of horses with him and we had given our other horses to aid in mounting General M. C. Butler's cavalry). I never encountered such a wind storm in all my life; it was almost impossible to resist it.

In passing along Blanding Street, we were asked by a number of ladies where we were going, and when we told them, they begged to be allowed to join us; and thus reinforced we made our way down the main street through drunken soldiers and negroes carousing, shouting, embracing, cursing, and preaching. One man was standing on a pile of boxes with frantic gesticulations, reminding the officers and men who stood around him that this was the hot-bed of Secession, and telling them they were free to do what they pleased. We did not wait to hear more, but hurried on with trembling limbs in search of General Sherman, believing him to be all-powerful. At length we were told we could not see him, but to go to the Provost-Marshal's office.

When we arrived there, we found it so crowded we could not reach his desk. After waiting for some time, I asked the Catholic priest, who was standing near me, if he would be good enough to ask for a guard for myself and the ladies with me. He very kindly said, "I will do the best I can for you, Mrs. Bryce, but I
Personal Experiences of have been waiting here for two hours, and have not yet been able to reach the desk."

At that moment a captain stepped up to me and said, "If you ladies will go with me, I will show you where you can get a good faithful set of fellows to guard your houses."

While we wondered at this voluntary offer, we were fain to accept it, and followed him. He led us to the quarters of his own men near the Town Hall, and called out, "Don't some of you boys want to go with these ladies and guard their houses?" Several came out and offered their services. We each took one or two. I took two young men whose faces I thought looked honest and kindly, and I was not deceived in them, as they proved most faithful guards for three days and nights. Their names were Wrenn and Knight.

As we were turning our faces homeward, a fat, ruddy, clean-shaven man came up to us, and as he was not in uniform I looked at him earnestly for a moment, thinking he might be one of our own citizens. He answered my look by saying, "I am a released prisoner just from your Lunatic Asylum," making me a low bow. I said, "You certainly cannot say you were starved there?" The whole crowd burst into a loud laugh, he among them. We had been accused of having starved our prisoners in the Asylum.

On our way home our guards apologized for their appearance, saying they had been skirmishing all morn-

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ing, and their faces were blackened with powder. I told them them they ought to apologize, as they were using their powder in a bad cause. They replied in one breath, "Do you think we are fighting for the niggers? If I thought I was, I would lay down my arms and go home." They asked, "What makes you say ours is a bad cause?" I answered, "Because you have no right to invade the South, and bring so much bloodshed, sorrow, and desolation on its people." They said, "We are fighting to save the Union, and for the flag."

I said, "Yes, and my forefathers fought for and helped to make the Union and the flag; and I, too, loved it once, and my eyes filled with tears when I saw it in a foreign land." They asked, "Do you love it now?" I said, "How can I when those who bear it treat the Southern people as they do?" They looked at me in astonishment, and said, "You are a secessionist." I asked, "What else did you expect to find in South Carolina?" One of them stopped, and looked straight in my face, at the same time lowering his gun. I am free to confess his action frightened me; but I was greatly relieved when he said, "Madam, I like that spirit in you. I knew you were a secesh; but I wanted to hear what you would say. So many women tell us, 'We were always for the Union.' We did not believe them; we knew they were scared into telling the falsehood." I said, "We did love it, and would never have left it,
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could we have had justice and our rights while we were a part of it."

Soon after our return home, our servant, Henry Reeves (in whose charge Mr. Bryce had left us, arming him with a gun for our protection), came to me and said, "There is a soldier at the gate who wishes to speak to you." "Tell him I cannot see him," I said. Soon he returned and said, "Please, ma'am, come out on the piazza and speak to him. I am afraid he will come into the house if you do not see him." At his earnest request I complied. The soldier called out to me, "Wh'ere are your horses? they are not in your stables, and I want them!" I said, "Thank heaven, I gave them away this morning to help to mount General Butler's cavalry." Henry entreated, "Please, misses, don't talk to him that way; it will only make him worse; and he is a bad man." The soldier heard some of this conversation, and shook his fist at me, saying, "You are a d—d secesh, and your house shall be burned over your head this night." The effect this fearful threat had upon me cannot easily be described. Fortunately, at that moment an officer was passing. I sent the servant to call him. He came, and I told him what the soldier had said. He immediately ordered him under arrest, and said to him, "How dare you say such a thing? General Sherman will say what is to be burned."

Soon after this experience, another soldier wanted to see me. I went to the front door this time. He de-

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manded my carriage. I told him it was in the carriage-house. "But," said he, "it has no wheels; and this little 'nigger' says you have the wheels locked up."

The little boy stood by me with the tears streaming down his face, protesting he had not told him. I told the child to dry his tears. If he had told him, he had only spoken the truth; they were locked up. I had many such demands for my carriage, but, being encouraged by my guards, I always gave the same answer, "It is in the carriage-house."

At length a written order came from a general. This seemed to frighten the guards, and they hesitated about giving me advice. My courage had become strengthened, however, by my previous success, and I gave them the stereotyped answer, "It is in the carriage-house; go and take it." Two men had brought the general's order. One of them said, "But, madam, you have the wheels locked up."

By this time I had become desperate, and said, "Yes; and I do not intend to give them up." They both laughed, and one said to the other, "It is such a d—d good Yankee trick she deserves to keep it." The other assented, and we enjoyed many a pleasant drive in it thereafter.

I found my two guards most efficient. They were from Iowa, and were as obedient as servants. When the corporal came to relieve them they refused to go, as they preferred to stay where they were well fed and cared for.
I had a bed made for them; but they had little time to sleep, as they were almost all the time on the alert protecting the house from robbers and, later, from fire. I told them of my mother-in-law’s large and valuable house, and of its being unoccupied. They advised me to get a guard at once; one of them saying he had just seen General Sherman go into a house near by, and it would be well for me to go and see him myself and ask for a guard for that property.

I confess I had no desire to see the man who had expressed such bitter feelings against us, but felt it my duty to go. Though the streets were swarming with soldiers and negroes, Miss Graeser and I again set out in search of General Sherman. Fortunately for us, he was in the house of my friend Mrs. Simons, not far away.

When we entered this house Mrs. Simons met us (it seems, some little time before, two soldiers had entered her house for the purpose of robbing it. She ran into the street, and, luckily for her, General Sherman was passing on horseback,—she had known him when he was stationed at Fort Moultrie. He recognized her, came to her, and drove the men from her house) and ushered us into the room where he was seated at a table writing. The Reverend Toomer Porter and Dr. Gibbs, Jr., were with him. Mrs. Simons introduced us. He rose and bowed very smilingly, then excused himself until he had finished writing.

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I was very tired, and took a chair beside him at the table and waited. When he had finished, he turned to me and said, “What can I do for you?” I said, “I want a guard.” He exclaimed, “What are you afraid of?” “Of your soldiers.” “Oh, you need not be; the poor fellows are hungry, and want a chicken. Give them a chicken.”

All the chicken coops in Columbia except my own had already been robbed, and I made no reply, but picked up a piece of paper which he had just torn from the sheet on which he had been writing and handing it to him, I said, “Will you please give me an order for a guard?” He said, “Oh, yes; but you will not need one.”

He wrote the order, and signed it “W. T. Sherman, Lieutenant-General.” As he handed it to me, he said, “Now don’t take this yourself, but send a servant.”

While he was writing the order, a little boy came into the room making a good deal of noise. He looked up at me smilingly, saying, “Children should be cashiered; do you not think so?”

I scarcely knew how to answer. I was in no mood for pleasantry, nor could I return his smile, although his manner was kind and respectful. It was impossible for me to sustain a conversation with him, feeling towards him as I did; my impulse being to get away as soon as possible. I thanked him for the order, and we bowed ourselves out.
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While he was writing the order, a little boy came into the room making a good deal of noise. He looked up at me smilingly, saying, “Children should be cashiered; do you not think so?” I scarcely knew how to answer. I was in no mood for pleasantry, nor could I return his smile, although his manner was kind and respectful. It was impossible for me to sustain a conversation with him, feeling towards him as I did; my impulse being to get away as soon as possible. I thanked him for the order, and we bowed ourselves out.
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He was in civilian's dress, looking decidedly untidy. His shirt front was rumpled and soiled; he seemed to me to be of medium height; he was quite pale; his hair light and stood up from his brow; his eyes blue and penetrating, and a large firm mouth. Altogether, his appearance to me was rather that of a pedagogue than a great general.

On my return home, I sent one of my guards with his order, telling him to get two of his own company, which he did. While I was giving him my instructions, the two white maids said they would go, too, and help to save my mother-in-law's house if I would give it to them if they saved it. I told them on those conditions they need not go. They did go, however, but soon returned, saying it could not be saved. Of course, they had been told the town was doomed.

About dusk I saw three sky-rockets, red, white, and blue, go up. I asked one of the guards what that meant. He shook his head, and said, "Don't ask me; you will know soon enough."

In a very short time I saw fires springing up all around the city. The citizens brought out the fire-engines and hose; but they were quickly rendered useless by the Federal soldiers, who cut the hose with axes and stuck their bayonets in them. Our people soon realized that it was all premeditated, and it was useless to resist. They destroyed the engines, pierced and cut the hose, destroyed the water-works and then the gas-works. We were in the hands of our bitter enemies, without engines or water and in black darkness, except for the lurid light of our burning houses.

Could anything more terrible be imagined? Where was Sherman and his promises of protection? All night long we were flying from one side of the house to the other, our faithful guards with us. They would permit no one to enter, neither officers nor men; often driving them away when attempting to set fire to the wood-work of the house. One of the guards (Knight) came to me, and said, "One of your good deeds saved your house just now. Some officers were striking matches and sticking them in the pillars of the piazza, and I asked them, 'Would you burn the house of a lady who fed and harbored one of our men?' They asked, 'Did she do that?' 'Of course she did,' said I. 'Then, of course, we will spare her house.'"

I looked at the man in astonishment. I had never spoken to nor seen a prisoner except behind closed blinds when they passed my house. I confess to having been so cowardly that I feared to ask what he meant. He must have invented this story. I certainly knew nothing of it. At any rate, it saved my home from the flames.

My friend Miss Graeser and I did watch duty with my maids, to allow our guards to get a little sleep. We would watch with one of them while the other slept, and then he would be called to allow the other
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where you may sleep if you can.” He looked disgusted, but said, “Have it brought,” which I did, thinking to myself, at the same time, much sleep you will get in the midst of this yelling and howling crowd, and awful glare. I kept watch on him, and soon saw that he in turn was watching our guards. We gave him no chance to slip into the house, if such was his intention; he certainly did not sleep. I felt so much afraid he would demand a more quiet resting-place, I kept out of his sight as much as possible. He soon found his quarters untenable and left them. He came to me and very sarcastically thanked me for my “hospitality,” and greatly to my comfort mounted his horse and rode away. We feared him, and both we and the guards would gladly have put him out had we dared.

Every moment the fire extended and came nearer. We were constantly on the watch to prevent torches and matches being applied to the house or out-houses. When I look back at that night, I wonder how the people of Columbia lived through it,—the horrible roar of the flames, the glare, the crowds of soldiers yelling, screaming, and threatening with torches to burn our homes, and turn us out in a bitter cold night. Our poor slaves, though frightened almost to death, were faithful and loyal to me, trying to take care of their own belongings as well as mine. Two of the women were constantly by me, never allowing me to go any distance from them alone. I did not think of this at
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the time, but remembered it afterwards; and they told me they gave up everything and followed me to protect me. They had tried in vain to conceal their belongings. In vain they buried their prized pieces of china and their looking-glasses; their places of concealment would soon be discovered, their buried treasures unearthed and broken to pieces. I have often wondered why the "Union" soldiers had such a pronounced spite at looking-glasses. Very few escaped them, from the small glasses of the poor darkies to the handsome mirrors of white people; they all alike shared the same fate. Sometimes a kick in the centre of a large mirror would seem to satisfy the vandal, and many a beautiful and costly pier or Cheval glass will be handed down to posterity in this forlorn condition as a faint evidence of the chivalrous treatment of the Southern people by the civilized troops of the North.

About three o'clock in the morning of the 18th, I saw an out-building on the premises of a near neighbor on fire, and realized that the whole town was doomed. I went up-stairs to rouse my little children and dress them, for they had been put to bed, as I, with the rest of the people of Columbia, relied on General Sherman's promise of protection. Soon after I went up-stairs I was followed by my cook, Harriet, who said, "I just came up-stairs to tell you I thought you ought to try and save some clothes for the children. I can carry one of the children, and Billy (my own little boy) can hold on to my skirts, and Nancy Charlotte and Manda must carry some bedding for you and the children to sleep on. And I want to tell you, I never mean to leave you, and will stand by you through thick and thin." For the first time, during that awful night, I wept. We clasped hands and cried together. Her words gave me untold comfort. In sending away my valuables, I had kept a few forks and spoons; but after the entrance of the Federal troops, I had forgotten all about them; indeed, I scarcely needed them, as I rarely felt like eating, and scarcely ever sat down to a meal. Whenever they were used, Harriet would wash them and carefully roll them in a napkin, and put them in her pocket, saying, "I am obliged to save dem for my misses and de chillun, 'cause I know if I lef em out, dem people will take um." Poor Harriet, she sleeps her last sleep on the old plantation, near her old home, and her memory is affectionately cherished by those who owned her as a slave, and those who knew her as a free woman. She and I packed a few things in bags, and tied up two or three sheets containing clothing and blankets, and, with the children, we descended the stairs, as I thought, for the last time. The two guards met me, and said, "We are sorry to see you go, but it may be for the best." I told them I wished them to stay as long as possible. One of them said, "We will stay and save your house for you." The Irish girls said they, too, would stay, but thought I did right
to take the children away. Miss Graeser left everything to me, and I decided to go across the street to old Mrs. Hampton’s, where General Logan had made his headquarters.

Just before leaving the house, I remembered a small pistol my husband had given me, and had carefully taught me to load and shoot. I did not dare carry it in my hand, of course; it would have been taken away from me. I had no convenient way of concealing it. I looked for some cloth with which to make a pocket; but vain was my search, nothing could be found. In my hurry, distress, and despair, I called upon the Lord to help me, when, lo, just in front of me, slightly concealed by a curtain, lay a whole bolt of long cloth. It may be called presumption, but, nevertheless, I felt my prayer had been heard even in this small matter, for it was earnest and sincere, and I felt sustained and encouraged. By the light of the burning city, I made a pocket, and concealed the little shooter in my dress. A few minutes after, my little daughter Mamie came flying to me, looking very pale, exclaiming, “Oh! mamma, I was standing by one of the guards, and a man shot at him. The ball passed just between us. There was a crowd with him. They had come to rob the house.” The guard told me they meant to overpower him and take possession of the house. He threatened them with his bayonet, but they fired on him. He then told them the lady had an order from General 

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Sherman for the protection of her house. That statement proved effective; they soon disappeared.

This confirmed me in my resolution to leave the house and place myself and charges under the care of General Logan. With my little cavalcade, I prepared to leave the dear old home, the home of so many tender memories. The house had been built for us, and there we had spent many happy years; it was hard, so hard, to give it up and under such circumstances.

We had sent away many of our valuables, but very many still remained, such as portraits, pictures, piano, mirrors, etc., too numerous to mention, and which never could be replaced, owing to the associations connected with them. Of course I went forth firmly believing I should never see them again.

We bade good-by to our faithful guards and thanked them for all they had done, and all they promised to do; and our little procession took up its line of march, Miss Graeser, Mamie, and I in front. Dear little Mamie had a small bag in each hand, saying, “I must save something.” Then came the servants, one carrying a small mattress, another pillows, and another a roll of blankets. Two men carried some clothing tied up in sheets (all trunks had been sent away). The street was literally swarming with soldiers, who looked at us in astonishment, no doubt wondering at our temerity. We crossed the street, made our way to Mrs. Hampton’s house, where we found General Logan
and some of the members of his staff who were standing at the gate, which the general opened. I said, "I have come to place myself and children under your protection, as I fear my house will be burned." He said, "I do not see how it can escape; of course, you are safe here." He assisted me up the steps, and ushered us into the drawing-room; there we found Dr. Gibbs, Sen., and his daughter, Mrs. Thomas, with her three little children, and Mr. Nat Ramsey. Dr. Gibbs had a large blanket around him, in which I saw several large burnt holes. On a mattress on the floor lay an officer asleep. General Logan placed chairs for us and the children; his manner was kind and sympathetic, and I appreciated it. He then left the room, and we—Dr. Gibbs and daughter, and Mr. Ramsey with the sleeping soldier—were left alone. There we sat speechless and almost motionless, not a sound was heard in that room except when the sleeper turned or stirred, and then we could hear the spoons and forks rattle in his pockets. We sat thus for about twenty minutes, when some one rushed in and told us the roof of the house was on fire. We ran out, and I then noticed that my servants were not in the hall. Of course I left the bedding and blankets which had been placed on the floor. The gate was again opened for us, and after we had passed into the street, I said, "Dr. Gibbs, where shall we go?" He mournfully shook his head and said, "God only knows." It was bitter cold, the streets filled with blue coats wild with delight at their success; it was a perfect carnival of robbery and pillage. I suddenly thought of the lunatic asylum, and suggested that as a shelter, saying, "Surely they will not burn up the poor crazy people." Our little procession started in that direction, but soon we were separated, and Miss Graeser and I and the poor little children found ourselves alone. Miss Graeser had gathered a few garments in her skirt, and as we passed along the street she would lose some of them,—first an umbrella which she carried under her arm (the gift of a dear friend), then she would say, "There goes my last pair of stockings," and then, "Oh! my night-gown is gone." In spite of the horror and terror of the situation, we both burst into an hysterical laugh. By this time we had reached what had once been the enclosure of the Male Academy, and I became so exhausted I sank down on the ground. Miss Amanda and Mamie did the same. We were all glad to rest; a little negro boy joined us, and Miss Graeser offered him a small reward if he would find her umbrella. He burst into a loud laugh. In the first place, the reward was no temptation; and then the idea of attempting to recover anything at such a time seemed so ridiculous. I could not help another hysterical laugh, in which she joined. After this little episode, which saved me from tears, we resumed our journey to the Asylum; for a veritable journey it seemed on that night. At length
we reached our haven, and shall I ever forget that scene? The whole front of the enclosure was covered with people, their little effects tied up in sheets, and some few had boxes and small trunks. My friend Mrs. Simons, Sr., called out to me, "Have you, too, lost your home?" I said we were compelled to leave it. She kindly offered me a part of the box on which she was seated. The scene and that gathering are indelibly impressed on my memory. Old ladies and gentlemen (I use the terms meaningly), mothers with their young daughters, and little sleepy children clinging to their knees, and in the midst of it all not one tear did I see, not one complaint did I hear. Even then the thought came to me, "Was there ever a braver people than these?" After a while my dear old family physician came up, and, knowing that I had recently recovered from an illness, he said, "You must not sit out here in the cold; I will see if you cannot find shelter inside." During his absence, I listened to the conversations carried on around me. One young girl would say, "I have saved my prayer-book and photographs." Another would cry, "I have saved my Bible and my cloak." And still another would call out, "I have saved three dresses, and I have them all on my back."

Many of these people were refugees, and had already lost nearly their all; and now the last of their possessions was gone; and yet not a murmur did I hear.

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After a while, Dr. Trezvant returned and took us into the chapel. Soon after, my friend Mrs. Parker, the wife of the resident physician, came and took us into a room where there was a fire, and kindly cared for us until daylight. About sunrise, a little boy came to me, and said, "Mrs. Bryce, your house is still standing; it must have been robbed, though I did not see any one in it." I sprang up, and started at once to see if it could be true, and, to my unspeakable joy, I found it so. I walked into my dining-room, where I found a bright wood-fire blazing, and the guard, named Wrenn, seated in a large arm-chair, fast asleep. I touched him on the shoulder; he sprang to his feet at once, and said, "You did not expect to find your house safe, did you?" I said, "No; and you are a good fellow, if you are a Yankee, for saving it for me." He said, "I told the cook to get some breakfast ready, as we are awful hungry."

The other young man, Knight, said, "I don't think she means to do it," and, turning to me, said, "I hate the niggers as bad as you do." I told him he was very much mistaken if he thought Southern people hated their slaves; that I was very much attached to many of mine. I asked if he had seen any of them do me any harm. And now I will tell them to get you a nice breakfast as quickly as possible. Very soon after, Harriet seated them down to a good breakfast of hominy, and ham and eggs, flaky, hot biscuits, and true,
Personal Experiences of true coffee. I had still a little reserved for special occasions, and thought these men deserved the best we had. Perhaps, too, I was actuated by a kind of false pride. I did not wish them to know what substitutes we had been using. They took their meals in the piazza previously, but on this morning I had the table nicely laid in the dining-room, by a comfortable fire, and induced Harriet to let them use the silver forks and spoons. We were soon joined by the rest of my little family. Then I remembered the clothing, mattress, and blankets which had been left over at Mrs. Hampton's, "General Logan's headquarters," and, accompanied by one of my servants, I went for them. The general met me at the door, placed a chair for me, and asked, "What can I do for you?"

I told him I had come to recover some clothing and blankets which I had left in that room. He said, "If they are in this house, you shall have them, of course; we have no use for your clothing." He then called a negro man, and told him to find the articles and restore them to me; he also told some of his officers to institute a search for them. One of them said, "Blankets are greatly in demand, and I fear you will never recover them." General Logan seated himself beside me, evidently curious to hear what I should have to say with regard to the burning of our city. As I felt somewhat aggrieved at his lack of courtesy in keep-

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ing his hat on in my presence, I sat perfectly quiet. At length he said, "I suppose it will be said General Sherman burned Columbia." I replied, "You will find it difficult to convince the world otherwise." One of his staff, standing near, said, "Madam, it was your own slaves who did it." My servant, Manda, started forward, exclaiming, "Lord, listen to that." I said, "I saw your servants, in your uniform, applying matches to my house." General Logan said, "Your people were much to be blamed for leaving so much whiskey in the city; our troops got drunk and went wild." I said nothing, as I knew nothing about the whiskey, except what was in our own house, and that I had poured into the bath-tub, and had seen it all flow away. They found my mattress and pillows, but I never again saw my blankets. Several of the officers and some negroes were searching for the sheet-enclosed clothing, but it could not be found; for a very good reason, as I found them quietly reposing on my own piazza when I returned home.

It seems the negro men, who had the two bundles in charge and were behind me as we were going across the way, soon found they could not protect them, so they returned quickly and put them under the care of the guards. At five o'clock that morning I had heard a bugle sound. I was told the sacking and burning ceased at once. I know the streets became quiet soon after. There was a number of troops camped in our
Personal Experiences of vegetable garden. All of the fencing in the rear of the premises had been torn down, and, of course, everything trampled upon. But that was a small matter, when I looked around and saw so many beautiful homes laid waste, their former occupants scattered over the city and dependent on charity for bread, and a large majority of them helpless women, and children, and old men. Just here I will quote from the testimony of Mrs. Agnes Law, an old and respectable citizen of Columbia:

"My dwelling-house was at the corner of Main and Laurel Streets, a brick house, three stories high, slate roof, with large gardens on each side, when General Sherman took possession. I got four guards; they were well-behaved and sober men; one lay down on the sofa, the others walked about. I gave them supper. When the city began to burn, I wished to move my furniture out. They objected; said my house was in no danger; it was fire-proof. I insisted on moving out; but one replied, 'If I were as safe till the end of the war as this house is from fire, I would be satisfied.'

"Not long afterwards, these guards themselves took candles from the mantle-piece and went up-stairs, at the same time other soldiers crowded into the house. My sister followed them up-stairs, but came down very soon to say, 'They are setting the curtains on fire.' Soon the whole house was in a blaze. When those who had

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set fire up-stairs came down, they said, to me, 'Old woman, if you don’t want to burn up with your house, you had better get out of it.' My niece had been carried to the Taylor house, on Arsenal Hill. I went to the door to see if I could get any person I knew to assist me up there. I had been very sick; am liable to convulsions, and could not walk alone. I could see no friend; only crowds of Federal soldiers. I was afraid I should fall in the street, and be burned up in the flames of the blazing houses on both sides of the streets. "I had to go alone. I spent that night at the Taylor house, which a Federal officer said should not be burned out of pity for my niece. The next two nights I spent in my garden, without any shelter. Nothing was saved out of my house but one chair, two mattresses, and one large looking-glass. I have been over fifty years a member of the Presbyterian Church. I cannot live long. I shall meet General Sherman and his soldiers at the bar of God. I give this testimony against them in full view of that dread tribunal. Agnes Law.

"Sworn to before me, this the 6th June, 1886.

"D. B. MILLER, C.C.P., "Ex-officio Magistrate."

This old lady sent to me for food, as did many others, and, oh, how thankful I was to have it to give! During the day, Saturday, we could not yet know, or take in altogether, the frightful calamity which had befallen

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Personal Experiences of us. We were so exhausted, mentally and physically, that nature demanded some rest, and we succumbed to her demand for a few hours. In the afternoon, accompanied by Miss Graeser, we went across the street to see how our dear friends and neighbors, the Howes and Palmers, had come out of the fiery trial. I knew the doctor had spent the night on the top of his house. He had taken up his carpets and spread them on the roof, and in that way and by constant vigilance he and his coachman, Joe, had saved his house. His family, and other inmates, had spent the night under the Pines, in front of the Theological Seminary, just across the street. One lady, a Mrs. Lewis, a refugee from Charleston, who occupied a part of his house, took a violent cold that night from exposure, which developed into pneumonia. She gave birth to an infant a few days after, and she and her infant both died. We found several members of the family asleep in the dining-room on the bundles of clothing which they had carried out with them the night before. Dr. Palmer’s young daughters were sleeping quietly on these impromptu beds.

While we were talking of the fearful night through which we had passed, the coachman, Joe, came to the door, and said, “Master, for God’s sake, come out here.” Dr. Howe got up and followed him. We all sat paralyzed with fear. The negro was ashen-colored from fright, though a black man. Dr. Howe returned at once, and told us there was a man under the house, in the basement, with a keg of powder, preparing a train to blow it up. We flew to the door, I to my little ones; but Miss Graeser called to an officer, who happened to be near, and told him what the soldier was doing. He instantly went in and dragged the man out. The wretch cursed the officer for not allowing him to carry out his fiendish design. Of course this fearful experience did not tend to quiet our nerves. Why this man wished to blow up Dr. Howe’s house, I cannot explain, unless it was owing to the fact that Dr. Howe was from New England and was a slave-owner.

All through that day the soldiers would make taunting remarks to us. For instance, one would say, “What a queer people you are,” “Why do you build your chimneys before you build your houses?” “I suppose you call your town Chimneyville,” or “Was not that a grand old fire?” “You women must be very hard-hearted, I have never seen one of you cry.” Numbers of our people fled to Sydney Park on that awful Friday night, and I have heard that several children were born prematurely. Even here they were pursued by fire, as the soldiers threw balls of combustible material into the dry grass, setting it on fire. On Saturday night exhausted nature claimed her dues, and we slept peacefully. But, oh! what a forlorn and desolate Sabbath morning dawned upon us.”

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the sound of a church-going bell" was heard. In spite of the presence of the army, the place was as silent as if the shouting, irrepressible horde had magically disappeared. After a while groups of soldiers could be seen in their clean Sunday shirts. No doubt these same shirts had been "captured," as they expressed it, from the poor Confederates' scanty supply. When they would seize a lady's watch and tear it from her belt or bosom, they would boast of having "captured" it. Dr. Howe told me how nearly he came to losing his watch on Friday afternoon. He was standing on his pavement, some little distance from his home, when a soldier came up to him and asked the time. The old gentleman politely took out his watch to tell him, when the man grabbed it. The doctor held on firmly; he was very lame and always walked with crutches. He laughed and said he held on, and made his way back to his house crab-fashion, and then called his guard to the rescue. He said he pulled and the robber pulled. His great fear was that the man would pull his crutches from him, but he saved his watch.

During the day (Sunday) quite a number of the members of the company to which our guards belonged came to see them. They all had clean hands and faces and clean shirts. They were very curious to see the inside of the house, and asked me what each piece of furniture cost. They loved to linger before a large mirror in the drawing-room. I feared for a time it

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would share the fate of nearly all others in the State, but, thanks to my Western guard, it escaped. One of these visitors, evidently a down-easter from his accent and manner, reproached me with the way we treated their prisoners at Andersonville. I told him it was not our fault, but the fault of General Grant. They all asked what I meant. I said, "Did you not know our government wanted to exchange prisoners, and he refused; and when he was offered them without exchange, he still said he did not want them? He knew it embarrassed us to feed them. We had our own soldiers and our negroes to feed, and of course your people would prefer that we should feed your colored brothers rather than your white soldiers."

On Sunday afternoon our guards came to me and said, "We will have to leave you to report for duty." They expressed much regret at having to go. They said they were very sorry for us, as they feared the stragglers, who were more to be dreaded than the soldiers. Just then we heard a loud explosion which shook the house and caused the windows to rattle. I at first thought they were going to blow up all the houses. One of the guards ran out to find what caused it. He soon returned, saying their men were filling their ammunition-wagons from the magazine on the "Arsenal Hill," and some of the shells had exploded, "killing thirty of our fellows." I quickly covered my face with my hands. When I removed them, they
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gave me a very queer look, which I easily read, and answered by asking, "Did you expect me to be sorry, after all the trouble and sorrow you have brought on my people?" They shook their heads, and the subject was discussed no further. They advised me to go to General Sherman again and ask for a guard. So Miss Amanda Graeser and I took up our line of march again in search of the "Hero." Some of his men told me "Billy could flank God Almighty out of heaven." I shudder to write it, but it was their opinion. We passed through crowds of vile-looking foreigners. I took great comfort in having my six-shooter in my pocket. General Sherman had made his head-quarters in Colonel Blanton Duncan's house. When we reached the gate, we found a number of officers standing, talking and smoking. One of them said to Miss Graeser, before she had spoken, "You cannot see the general; he is tired and needs rest." I waited to hear no more, but rushed in, fearing I would be prevented from securing another guard.

I heard General Sherman's voice and went immediately into the room. He recognized me at once, and smilingly held out his hand, saying, "How are you, Mrs. Bryce?" My hands dropped to my side and stole behind my back. An angry flush flashed over his face as I bowed and said, "General Sherman, I have come to you again for a guard." He said, "Do you women of Columbia think my soldiers have nothing else to do but to guard your houses? Where are your fathers and husbands and sons? Why are they not here to protect you? Or why do you need protection?" At these questions I felt my lips begin to quiver, and feared to speak lest I should break down. I pointed out of the window to the smoking ruins. A change came over his face. He told a youth standing near to tell Colonel McCoy to come to him. When he came, he said to him, "Colonel McCoy, go with this lady to General Wood, and tell him to give her a 'regiment' to guard her house." I felt the sarcasm, but gravely bowed my thanks, and turned and left the room, followed by Colonel McCoy and Miss Graeser. We walked on for some time without speaking. At length the colonel began complaining of the unreasonable askings of the people of Columbia asking for guards, when their men were worn out and needed rest. Miss Graeser replied to him with trembling voice. I did not hear the conversation, as I walked at some little distance to avoid the smoke from his cigar.

When we reached General Wood's head-quarters (Mrs. Lucy P. Green's house), we were at once shown into the room where he was. He was seated at a table writing. We found Mr. Harris Simons and Mr. John Crawford there on the same errand. Mr. Crawford introduced me to General Wood, and both gentlemen begged him to give me a guard. I dropped into
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a chair quite near him. He looked at me a moment, and then said, "What do you people of Columbia mean? Our men have not time to rest, but are kept on guard all the time." By this time I had recovered my spirit, and could not bear to hear any more reproaches, which were so undeserved. I looked in his face and said, "Have we not suffered enough to make us afraid? If you have mother, wife, or sister, pray God they may never be called upon to suffer the anguish and terror the women of Columbia have been called upon to endure since the occupation of our city by your army."

He gave me a quick, sympathetic look, and turned to an orderly and said, "Tell Snead, the old Virginian, to come to me." When the man came, he said, "You are to go with this lady and guard her house with your life. If officer or private attempts to enter without her consent, fire on him, or use your bayonet." I thanked him, for he looked kindly at me. By this time it was quite dark.

On our way home, I said to the man, "How is it, that you, a Virginian, are in this army?" He asked "How did you know I was a Virginian?" "General Wood said so," I replied. "That's why he sent for me," said he, laughing. "I am from the Panhandle (West Virginia). Bless your heart, honey, my old woman is as good a secesh as you are; and as for me, I never shot a 'Johnny Reb' in my life. I always shoot up." When we reached home, we found

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our two young men had returned, having obtained permission to remain until dawn the next day, when the army would leave. We gave them all a good supper, after which they quietly disposed of themselves on the floor of the dining-room for a good night's rest.

Miss Graeser and I went up-stairs, but not to sleep; we were still too anxious and fearful to think of undressing. Before daylight we heard the men in motion. Young Wrenn met me at the foot of the steps and said, "You did not know my canteen was full of whiskey ever since I have been here?" "No, indeed," said I, "or I should have poured it out long ago." The other said, "Mrs. Bryce, do you ever wear rings?" I thought, oh, my wedding-ring and its guard; will they be taken? I felt great relief when I looked at my hand and remembered that one of my daughters had taken them from my finger when she left the State. I said, "Yes, I wear rings sometimes;" whereupon he presented me with one made of gutta-percha, and thickly studded with little silver stars. I declined receiving it, saying I should not like to deprive him of it. But he seemed so hurt I took it. He said, "Please try it on." I could not help thinking what would my husband and children think could they see me. I have it still, and it will be handed down to posterity as an heirloom and souvenir as well. I gave each of them a silver fork and spoon (much to Harriet's disgust),
for which they seemed very grateful. To our great joy the whole army left that morning. My servants recognized some of my husband’s horses and mules which had been left on the plantation. And some of them told me afterwards of a pathetic scene between old Daddy Joe and some of the soldiers. We had a very fine gin-house, grist-mill, and saw-mill, all run by steam. The old man grieved to see them burned. He fell on his knees and begged that they might be spared, saying, “Please, massa, don’t burn dem; dat’s where we make our bread. We have a good owner; he is good to his people; for God’s sake, don’t burn dem.” But his prayers were in vain. Everything was burned up, stock shot down, and all agricultural implements destroyed.

But I was deeply grateful to my guards for having saved my home in Columbia. Of course, if I had left the city, it would have been burned with the rest of the unprotected houses; and I was so thankful that I had been able to save the provisions my husband had provided. I was thus enabled to help many others. I sent food to Mrs. Law; my dear old Doctor Trezvant came to me for food, as did many others. Mr. Nickerson, who had kept a large hotel on Main Street, came to me, and said, “Mrs. Bryce, on Friday morning I was worth over a hundred thousand dollars; to-day, I have nothing for my wife and child to eat, nor have I the means to procure it.” I loaded up a wheelbarrow with provisions for him. I helped Dr. Parker, superintendent of “Insane Asylum,” to feed his patients. I also had it in my power to help in feeding others, and to give a home for a couple of months to the father and sisters of a young brigadier-general, who were refugees from Charleston.

My old Virginia guard stayed until two o’clock on Monday, saying he could not leave until I discharged him. I then told him to go. A dead and solemn silence seemed to have fallen upon the town. No sound of wheels or horse-hoofs. There was nothing left to disturb the mournful silence. General Sherman had said in Georgia that he meant to grease South Carolina over, and burn it up; that he would have her people howling after him for bread. He must have been gratified, for that was just what occurred. He told our people that “a greater general than he would soon visit us;” and, when asked to whom he referred, he said, “General Starvation.”

How shall I describe the desolation and ruin that army left behind it? I will leave the task to one who was an eye-witness.

Whitelaw Reid describes it thus in his “Ohio in the War:”—

“But, as if by concert, there suddenly came cries from a dozen different quarters; the city was on fire in as many different places. Before morning, a large portion of the city was in ruins; thus, women and children were suddenly made homeless in an hour, in the
Personal Experiences of night, and in the winter. It was the most monstrous barbarity of that barbarous march."

After more than thirty years, our dear Southern land is still feeling severely the effects of the ruin brought upon it then. God alone knows what were the feelings of our sorrow-laden, weary soldiers when they returned, after their unexampled and brave, but fruitless, struggle for their rights, to find only a heap of brick and ashes where once stood their happy homes, their families scattered and suffering the most severe privations, and many of them dependent on charity for daily bread.

We are at peace, and we are told to "forgive our enemies." May our dear Lord help us so to do.

"Father, I kneel 'mid ruin, wreck, and grave,
A desert waste, where all was erst so fair,
And for my children, and my foes, I crave
Pity and pardon. Father, hear my prayer.
(The prayer of the South.)"

Father Ryan.

"The red scars on Virginia hills
Are healing one by one;
And golden grain on Malvern's side
Is waving in the sun."