

[Original.]

The Church of God in Ashes.

Isaiah LXXIV.—Paraphrase.

Alas! our beautiful and sacred hall,
Wherein our fathers met of old to praise,
Is in consuming fire destroyed, and all
Our pleasant things are perished in the blaze.
Our Holy City is a wilderness,
And desolation grows beneath our eyes—
Abi Father, we have sinned, but spare and bless;
Be pitious, where thy justice might despise.

II.

Suffer that we this ruin may repair,
Rebuild the house our fathers raised to thee;
Renew the covenant that bids thee spare,
Call back the flock thy wrath hath made to
See.
True, they have wandered from thy shepherd's
fold,
Have heeded not his call, but still astray,
Have turn'd the deafen'd ear, with hearts too
cold,
And merit not the mercy that we pray.

III.

Yet, spare them, Father—and the holy hall
That still we loved to seek in happier days,
Restore and hallow—nor again recall,
The awful terrors of the midnight blaze.
Make beautiful the walks we loved of yore,
Make green once more the trees that felt thy
scath,
That, seeing how gracious art thou to restore,
Our gratitude may help our feeble faith.

CAPTURE, SACK and DESTRUCTION
OF THE
City of Columbia

XXVII.

We have already passingly adverted to the difficulty of saving the South Carolina College library from the flames, and lest we should have conveyed a false impression in respect to the degree of effort made in saving it, we give some particulars which may be found of interest. We need scarcely say that the professors clung to their sacred charge with a tenacity which never once abandoned it or forebore the exertions necessary for its safety; while the officers of the several hospitals, to which the College buildings were generally given up, were equally prompt to give their co-operation. Very soon after the entrance of the enemy into the city, Dr. Thompson, of the hospital, with Professors LaBorde, Reynolds and Rivers, took their places at the gate of the College Campus, and awaited their approach. Towards noon, a body of Yankees, led by a Captain Young, made their appearance at the gate, and the surgeon, with the professors, made a special appeal to the captain for the protection of the library and the College buildings; to which he replied with a solemn assurance that the place should be spared, and that he would station a

sufficient guard within and without the walls. He remarked, with some surprise, upon the great size of the enclosure and establishment. The guard was placed, and no serious occasion for alarm was experienced throughout the day; but, from an early hour of the night, the buildings began to be endangered by showers of sparks from contiguous houses, which fell upon their roofs. This danger increased hourly by hour, as the flames continued to advance, and finally, the roofs of the several dwellings of Professors LaBorde and Rivers burst out in flames. Their families were forced to fly, and it required all the efforts of professors, surgeons, servants, even aided by a file of the Yankees, to arrest the conflagration. Every building within the campus was thus in danger, and Professor Reynolds spent most of the night upon his roof, in order to secure its safety. The destruction of any one building would to a certainty have led to the loss of all. The most painful apprehensions were quickened into a sense of horror, when the feeble inmates of the hospital were remembered. There were numbers of noble soldiers, brave Kentuckians and others, desperately wounded, to whom—lacking, as the establishment did at that moment, the necessary labor—but little assistance could be rendered. They were required to shift for themselves, while the few able-bodied men within the campus were on the house-tops fighting the fire. The poor fellows were to be seen dragging their maimed and feeble bodies, as best they could, along the floors, adown the stairs, and crawling out, with great pain and labor, and by the saddest process, into that atmosphere of reeking flame, which now girdled the establishment. Others, again, unable to leave their beds, resigned themselves to their fate. We can better conceive than describe the terrible agonies, to them, of those hours of dreadful anticipation in which they lay. Happily, the fires were subdued by 4 in the morning of Saturday.

But the danger, even then, was not over. About 8 a. m., the College gate was assaulted by a band of, drunken cavalry, 150 or more, savage, infuriate, bent upon penetrating the campus, and swearing to fire the buildings. The officer in command of the guard reported to the professors that his force was not adequate to the protection of the establishment, and that he was about to be overwhelmed. Professors LaBorde and Rivers, followed by Surgeon Thompson, at once sped, in all haste, to the headquarters of Gen. Howard, appealing to him, in the most passionate terms, to redeem his pledge for the protection of the College and its library. He promptly commanded his Chief of Staff, Col. Stone, to repair to the scene and arrest the danger. This—revolver in hand—he promptly did, and succeeded in dispersing the incendiary cavalry.

It may not be out of place to mention that Professors LaBorde, Reynolds and Rivers were the only members of the Faculty present during the invasion of the Yankee hordes. Professor

LeConte was not captured within the city, but while in Confederate service, at several miles distance.

It is with profound regret that we add that the Legislative library, consisting of 25,000 choice volumes, was wholly destroyed in the old Capitol.

XXVIII.

Among the moral and charitable institutions which suffered greatly in the fire, were the several Masonic bodies. They lost everything, with rare exceptions: houses, lodges, realias, charts, charters, jewels, and every form of implement and paraphernalia. Much of this property had been accumulated in Columbia from Charleston and other places—had been sent hither for safe keeping. Their losses will for a long while be wholly irreparable, and cannot be repaired, unless, indeed, through the liberality of remote and wealthy fraternities in other sections. The furniture and jewels were, in the largest number of cases, of the richest and most valuable order, wholly of silver, and in great proportion were gifts and bequests of favorite brothers who had reached the highest ranks in the order. We enumerate the following lodges as the chief sufferers:

1. Richland Lodge No. 39, A. F. M.
2. Acacia Lodge No. 94, A. F. M.
3. True Brotherhood Lodge No. 84, A. F. M. [These all met in Columbia.]
4. Union* Kilwinning No. 4, A. F. M.
5. Orange No. 14, A. F. M. [These met in Charleston.]
6. Carolina Chapter No. 1, R. A. M.
7. Columbia Chapter No. 5, R. A. M.
8. Union Council No. 5, R. A. M.
9. Enoch Lodge of Perfection—Ineffable degrees.
10. DeMolay Council, Knights of Kadosch—Ineffable degrees.

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows and other orders were sufferers in like degree with the Masonic bodies. These were:

1. Palmetto Lodge No. 5.
2. Congaree Lodge No. 29.
3. Eutaw Encampment Lodge No. 2.
4. Sons of Temperance.
5. Sons of Malta.

The buildings, chambers, and lodges which contained the treasures of these bodies, were first plundered and then given to the flames. The soldiers were to be seen about the streets, dressed up in the aprons, scarfs and regalia. Some of the Yankee Masons were active in endeavoring to arrest the robbers in their work, but without success. In a conversation with one of the Western Masons, he responded to the signs and behaved courteously, but he said: "We are told that all fraternization with your Masonic bodies of the South, has been cut off, in consequence of your Masons renouncing all connection, or tie between them and the Masons of the North." We replied to him that the story was absurd, and evidently set afloat in order to prevent the Northern Masons from affording succor to a Southern brother in the