

THE FIENDISH MASSACRE BY NEGRO SOLDIERS NEAR ISLAND TEN.

In *The Crisis* of two weeks ago, was an account of the barbarous murder of the BECKHAM family. Several other descriptions of the terrible affair, have been published—all agreeing as to the facts of the case. Just before our last number went to press, and too late for printing, we received the following vivid description from a lady, almost an eye witness, to whom if she ever sees these lines we thus return our thanks. It is true she tells us that it is only by accident that a copy of *The Crisis* is seen by any in her neighborhood—and then it is perhaps months old. *The spirit, the power, which thus smuggles out of sight THE CRISIS, is the same that gave the negro actors in the bloody scenes so vividly described below, arms and uniforms, pays them out of the public treasury, and will smuggle them off from the punishment of death, which is LESS than their due!*

The white man who instigated the negroes to the act which was never surpassed in savagery by the Sepoys of India, has already been turned loose. Let it be distinctly remarked that such bloody work as this would not only be hailed with joy by the spirit of Abolitionism, if enacted on the families of every sympathizer and aider of "the Southern Confederacy;" but meet with no denunciation—excite no thrill of horror—be certain of no legal retribution—if committed on families whose only misfortune is the fact of their being white. To such a carnival of horrors have we been introduced by the miserable infatuation of Abolition politics. The Administration which refused to arm one tribe of Indians against another in Minnesota, gloats with worse than fiendish satisfaction over its success in uniforming and arming negroes against whites. Verily have we reached a degradation as a nation, the reproach of which, ages of returned civilization cannot wipe out. And are we as a people deserving of this disgrace? Have "we, the people," demanded the policy which has been pursued, consented to it, approved it?—Nay, not one man in ten thousand justifies it, whether Republican or not; it has been stolen and forced in upon us by a corrupt, depraved, besotted Administration. That, and that alone, with its minions "behind the throne," are responsible for the infamy that has attached to the American name—an infamy which makes every honest American hang his head in shame, but quickens his heart with intense resentment.

The following is but a simple narrative—written in the well founded belief that the facts would not otherwise get before the people. The picture is more complete however than has been elsewhere presented.—The pieces of the ears of those little children wrenched off by the wretches with the earrings, should be photographed and copies hung in every public room in the national buildings at Washington, so that they would meet the sight of LINCOLN and his Cabinet at the threshold of every door!!! Before angels and men are they responsible for this thing. Thousands of similar crimes—and worse if possible—are being daily committed. They will not long be confined to the South, if no perturbing element deranges the system now pursued. And every man who votes for any candidate sustained by the Administration, becomes to that extent a participant and abettor in these crimes.—We must withhold every act which can even be construed into a support of the Administration, if we would save our land from ruin, our name from eternal disgrace, ourselves from dangers not surpassed in the jungles of Africa:

For The Crisis.

NEW MADRID, August 11th, 1863.

GOV. MEDARY—Sir: Though a woman and unused to write for the public eye, and sensible that I wield not the "pen of a ready writer," yet I have determined to write to your able, widely circulated journal the thrilling story of one of the most fiendish tragedies that ever horrified a Christian land.

In any ordinary times, when writers and papers are willing, or, at least are not afraid, to tell the truth, this heart sickening story would be heralded in thunder tones throughout our land; but now, when the "powers that be" in our midst, are trying to garish over the truth, to palliate, by misstatements, or half statements, atrocities, the thought of which makes the blood run cold, I feel that unless some one outside of the "privileged" correspondents to the "privileged" papers—the administration organs in this department, does not write to some journal that dares to be true to humanity: that dares to tell when it hears the groans of the victims of Republican Aquisition; that dares to lift its voice when the blood of innocent victims—aye, of childhood and infancy—is smelking upon the sands—even if that blood was spilt by armed African savages—even if those African savages were United States soldiers—I say, if some one does not tell the story to such a journal, ere long negro worshiping editors will be telling the world of the heroic bravery of the negro troops in a war terribly contested, but nobly won, victory in New Madrid Bend.

But to the story, which I arrange from the statements of two white persons who passed the place while the murder was going on, and of an old servant of the family who saw the whole affair, and who begged with prayers and tears that the ruffians would spare her "good master Frank and his innocent children."

About two miles south of New Madrid, on the opposite side of the Mississippi, just on the line that separates Kentucky from Tennessee, there resided a Mr. Frank Beckham, whose white family consisted of himself, his aged father, his wife and seven or eight children. At the time of the murder, Mrs. B., with two of the children, was visiting in Owensboro Ky., and one or two of the children were at school in the neighborhood.

The members of the family at home, who all fell victims to these black murderers, were as follows: Mr. Beckham, sen, aged seventy years; Frank Beckham, aged forty years; and four chil-

dren of the later—Laura, aged fourteen years; Kate, ten; Caroline, seven; and Richard two.

It was about nine o'clock on the morning of Monday, August 3d, when twelve negro soldiers from Island No. 10, armed with muskets, side-arms, and some of them with bowie-knives, went to Mr. Beckham's house and demanded of him his money and valuables; telling him they meant both to rob and to kill him. This demand and threat of course greatly alarmed the other members of the family, who gathered around Mr. B. at the front door.

On his failing immediately to surrender to them the key to his money safe, three of them seized hold of him and bound him by tying his elbows behind him. They then commenced threatening him and cutting him with a bowie knife. When they thus assaulted Mr. B., his father, old Major Beckham, disregarding the menaces of the negroes, sprang to the assistance of his son, when three of the ruffians pounced upon him, threw him upon the ground and endeavored to hold him there, telling him they did not come there to kill him, but that they would do so, if he stirred—Old as he was, nerved by the agony of seeing his son bleeding beneath the knife of these assassins, he rose in spite of the exertions of all of them to prevent it, and fighting his way with his strong arm, when they saw a young lady, a niece of Mr. Beckham's, riding up to the gate. Seeing the negroes, and the family in such a condition, she paused a moment before alighting, when Mr. Beckham called out to her for God's sake not to stop, but to run for the negroes would kill her—One of the negroes, enraged at the warning having been given whereby some one might escape who could give evidence against them, instantly struck Mr. B. with a bowie knife, nearly severing his head from his body.

The young lady seeing this, whipped the animal she was riding into a run, while those wretches fired a dozen or more shots at her. Presently the mule fell from the effects of one of the shots, when the fiends who were pursuing her, shouted and laughed, confident of securing their victim. But the Providence of God, and the self-possession of the young lady, saved her. Seating herself in the saddle again as soon as she saw that the mule was not seriously wounded and vigorously plying the whip, she made it rise and start at once into a brisk gallop. Had she waited till the animal had regained its footing before she mounted she would have been lost, as her pursuers were only a few yards behind her when she again started off.

The negroes finding it was vain to pursue her, and apparently having expended every shot they had in their guns and pistols, turned back to assist the others in their bloody work.

Meeting a citizen of the Bend before she had got entirely out of sight, the young lady communicated to him what she had seen, and going to a spot from which they could see the house, they saw the negroes dragging to the river the bodies of Mr. Beckham and his father. The children followed, weeping and terror stricken. The bodies were then pushed into the river with bayonets, when the negroes, with the same cruel implements, attempted to drive the children into the water. Going into the edge of the water they refused to go farther, when the black fiends seized Kate and Caroline, throw them on the beach, stamped their young innocent heads beneath their feet and beat them with their muskets till their brains were dashed out, then thrusting their bayonets into their bodies shoved them into the river. Next came little Richard, a little lisping boy of two years. Him they lifted up and cast as far as their brute force could send him into the river. Laura at once sprang in to rescue him, but seeing the current carry him down she stopped resolutely, when in the water up to her chin. They stuck their bayonets into her; but to no purpose; go she would not; then they reversed their muskets and beat her over the head till they washed her skull, and she sunk lifeless in the river—the sixth victim.

The negroes then went back to the house, unlocked the iron safe, took from it seven thousand dollars in gold, a few hundreds in "greenbacks," and notes, &c., to the amount of thirty thousand dollars more, with a large quantity of jewelry and valuables. Most of these things were recovered by the cavalry scouts that took the negroes.—Among the jewelry when recovered was a piece of a human ear; and when the body of Laura was raised, the lower part of both her ears had been torn or twisted off, and the fingers on which her rings had been, had the skin scratched off. One of the wretches owned that he twisted her ears off to get her ear-rings, and scratched her fingers in getting the rings while she was following her father's body to the river.

When the negroes were arrested they were carried right back to the house, and though from the house to the river there was a path of blood, and everything around bore heart-sickening marks of horror, they all seemed totally indifferent; not one betrayed the slightest appearance of remorse, or regret even, and "Corporal Jim," their leader, said that people need not think so much of this, that down on the coast in Banks' army, he had helped to kill a hundred families; that the work would not stop here till every family in New Madrid Bend was killed, that government needed their property any way, and that it was the design to kill by families till all the white folks were got rid of.

A white man, mate on a steamer that landed at Beckham's just as the negroes were taken back to the house, as he walked up the bank and saw the fresh gore as it steamed on those sands in the morning sun, said: "Thank God! if the white folks cannot avenge the death of John Brown, the niggers can." Many, many are the men in the army that thus encourage the negroes, and the only wonder is that the work has not commenced sooner.

The negroes implicated in the murder, as well as those at the Island were greatly surprised and enraged when the murderers were sent to Columbus for trial. Those on the island (several hundred) stand pledged that if these sent to Columbus are punished, they will avenge their death by killing every white man, woman, and child in the country. The people are in great alarm, many of the women taking their children and sleeping in the corn-fields because they dare not lie down in their houses to sleep at night.

I have been more minute than I should have been were it not that this affair is such a faithful exposition of negro character, and at the same time such a natural and oft-predicted result of clothing him with power.

The bodies have all been recovered, those of the two men more frightfully mutilated than were the children's.

The negroes have been sent to Columbus, Ky., that place being headquarters of Gen. Asboth, whose department embraces Island No. 10. Every lover of humanity should desire that the murderers should meet a punishment commensurate with their crimes, if such a punishment could be devised.

E. H. B.