

advertis in the papers, and call for the owners to come forward and claim it, and also to give evidence of the acts of outrage committed or commanded by any of the band at their houses respectively; Then those who had stolen money or plate should be sent to the State Penitentiary; those who had forced or seduced negroes away from their owners should be hanged.

For the present we speak only of the comparatively paltry affair of merely stealing or destroying property. But we all know there is far blacker crime than this calling aloud for vengeance upon the miscreant. From many a fair and once peaceful county of our State rises one long, wild wail—the shrieks of violated women, gone crazy with despair and shame, seem to load the air, and to demand of earth and heaven the base blood of their ravishers. Grey-haired old men and women; driven insane by rage and terror, have died with maniac yells or idiot drivellings. Draw a curtain over all that, and take the comparatively slight affair of property stolen and negroes instigated to revolt. We have laws in this country, and by those laws the criminals should expiate their crimes in the galley or on the gallows.

The fighting men of those desolated counties are absent; they are in the army. If they were at home, and if such forays were attempted upon their farms, of course they would band themselves together, load their weapons, lie in wait for the brigands at every convenient place, and exterminate them by every possible means, taking every possible advantage, trapping them like wolves, "still-hunting" them; using no more ceremony with them than with wild beasts of the field. And when caught, their trial would be short, under the tree from which the noose already dangled.

But it seems there is a war, a Westpoint war, and there are laws and usages of war; and these require (it is said) that persons caught seeking a plantation, or robbing a country house, should be handed over to the military authorities, and by them treated as prisoners taken in battle. Now the men from eighteen to forty-five, the fighting men of those counties, and natural protectors of their homes and neighbourhoods, have been called away, and even forced away, to be placed in the military service of the country; the Government has said to them, and rightly said: For your defence against invasion, trust not to your unorganized, undisciplined local force—place the gathered power of the country in our hands, to be wielded with skill and science, and with such combination and effect as may best relieve the whole land of the presence of its enemies. They have done it, and done it cheerfully: but what have they gained? Won a great battle, perhaps, hundreds of miles from their homes, while on the very day of their triumph in the field a prowling gang of thieves and cut-throats, far off in some quiet valley descends upon the homestead that shelters their families;—and the house is a blackened ruin, its inmates are hungry beggars; the mother mourns over her desolated hearthstone, and the enraged sister tears her hair. What has the soldier gained then by going to fight the battles of his country? If he and his neighbours had been at home they could at least have struck one good blow for their hearths and homes:—by placing their combined power in the hands of their Government, were they to have less protection, instead of more?

This is indeed a question to be asked. The Government having undertaken to raise an army, and having summoned all the fighting men under its banner, has bound itself to protect the helpless people they left at home, and to protect them in the usual manner—that is to say, by enforcing the laws of the country strictly against such malefactors as make a pretence of the war to pillage and outrage the peaceable population.

It is not true that the laws and usages of war require us to treat such persons as prisoners of war. It is not war they are engaged in, but simply "marauding," for which they ought to be punished by their own commanding officers, if they escape the legitimate vengeance of the people they have outraged. This military crime of marauding has been always visited with severity by the commanding officers of the marauders themselves, in wars conducted upon civilized principles. When the Duke of Wellington entered France, he issued a stern prohibition of all such proceedings; and after stating the alleged crimes of the French Government, he added, "To avenge this conduct on the peaceable inhabitants of France would be unmanly, and unworthy of the troops to which the commander of the forces addressed himself." In short, the matter is not capable of argument: marauding, or pillage and outrage inflicted on non-combatants, is not war, and those who practise it cannot be considered prisoners of war, but enemies of the human race, to be exterminated without delay.

If we have any delicate squeamishness upon this point, our enemies have none—as General MORDECAI knows to his cost. When he went raiding last year through Ohio, (though not as they are now doing through Virginia), they treated him as a horse-stealer and penitentiary convict; and this, we repeat, though there was no comparison between the gallant MORDECAI's raid and theirs, because, in the first place, his invasion of Ohio was really defensive, not aggressive, meant to divert hostile forces from his own State;—and because MORDECAI's men destroyed only public property, and took only such horses and forage as were needful to his progress; but never insulted women, nor pillaged houses of plate and money.

And again, only the other day, when General MORDECAI, in his own State of Kentucky, (but which they now claim to be Federal country,) sent General BURKINSON's Flag of Truce, accompanied by the captured Yankee General HOBSON, the said BURKINSON refused to recognize the Flag of Truce, seized the two officers who bore it, and sent HOBSON back to his command. That is to say, BURKINSON steadily refused to recognize MORDECAI as a soldier, engaged in making war, and privileged to send a Flag of Truce, but treated him as a common outlaw.

And if our enemies so deal with Confederate officers fighting for the independence of their own yet unconquered State, shall we not deal in like manner with the God-forsaken scoundrels who infest our Virginia valleys, making a pretence of war, only to gratify their own covetousness, cruelty and lust?

But then, it is said,—the Yankees have so many prisoners of ours in their hands; and they will murder some of them, under pretence of retaliation. To this there is no answer; if we are afraid to protect our citizens from robbers lest our enemy should murder their prisoners; if we must continue to endure outrage at the hands of our enemy, which we cannot or dare not punish, lest he should heap on us more and more outrage; if we are to go on

showing to our enemy and the rest of mankind a shining example of dignified patience and Christian-courtesy under wrong and insult—as if hoping that the wicked may at length grow ashamed of themselves, or trying how much of our suffering they can bear, why in that case we are nearly conquered; and the less we say about it the better. General GRANT is said to go into battle wearing "spotless white kid gloves" on his hands; but we Confederates make war with the white kids upon our souls. Perhaps, after all, there is some hope that our military chiefs will at last think them that they have a duty to discharge towards their own tortured fellow-citizens at home, as well as that sacred duty of giving themselves a chivalrous air in the eyes of posterity and of the other hemisphere. If they should awaken to this home duty, then there would speedily become order taken with the marauding thieves and assassins. And, after all, posterity and the other hemisphere will not admire them half so much as they think; will even record them in history as the most illustrious examples of very genteel, christian, and dignified idiots.

The precise number of mounted thieves lately captured by our forces near Petersburg, as they were returning from a pillaging expedition, is not yet, perhaps, exactly ascertained; nor is it material to our present purpose. Our present purpose is to show that those thieves are not prisoners of war, and that their case falls strictly within the province of Police.

Whatever be the number of delinquents thus taken in the fact, there will be found in their knapsacks, haversacks, hblers, pockets—especially in those of the persons claiming to be officers—the very silver plate, the very gold coin, watches and sugar tongs which they had just taken from the drawers and presses of our citizens; there will be found in their possession the very horses and mules they had stolen, whose owners will be but too happy to identify their property—also, the slaves, in very large numbers, that they have carried off from their masters. Yesterday we published a partial list of some few of those who had suffered by these depredations under the brigands KAUF, WILSON, &c.—from EDWARD SCOTT and brother; forty or fifty negroes; from THOMAS H. CAMPBELL, all his silver plate, all his negro men but two; from Mr. PROHAM, a watch and money; from EDWARD BROOKS, a sett of silver service, for which was paid \$5,000 before the war; also "much gold and silver coin," and so forth.—Now when General LOMAX captured the baggage of the bandit CURTIS lately, he very properly advertised in the public papers for the owners of the stolen goods found in that robber's trunk. Here we have at Petersburg a certain number of the same sort of characters; be it two hundred, eight hundred, or twelve hundred, the number is nothing—this point is what to do with them, both for restitution of pillaged property and prevention of such marauding for the future.

If our military authorities could forget for a little that false chivalry of theirs, and think of the real anguish of their own outraged people, who are earnestly looking to them for protection, it were easy to say what should be done. A guard should be ordered to strip and search those prisoners, especially the "officers" of the gang, make an inventory of the plunder,