

Diary of Rachel Cormany, 1866. June 14, 1863

Read the R. Telescope & wrote letters this A.M.--P.M. went to S. School, took Cora along--she did pretty well--was in Bro. Hokes Bible class. How much better I feel to get out to religious gathering. Intend to go more. Mrs. Dulany was there with her little one too. I got such a good book to read. Some excitement about the rebels come. Evening the excitement pretty high.

Diary of Rachel Cormany, 1866. June 15, 1863

Monday. This morning pretty early Gen Milroys wagon train (so we were told) came.¹ Contrabands² on ahead coming as fast as they could on all & any kind of horses, their eyes fairly protruding with fear--teams coming at the same rate--some with the covers half off--some lost--men without hats or coats--some lost their coats as they were flying, one darky woman astride of a horse going what she could. There really was a real panic. All reported that the rebels were just on their heels. Soon things became more quiet--& all day government wagons & horses were passing through. For awhile before dark the excitement abated a little--but it was only like the calm before a great storm. At dusk or a little before the news came that the rebels were in Greencastle & that said town was on fire. Soon after some of our guard came in reporting that they had a skirmish with them. Soon followed 100-200 cavalry men--the guard. Such a skedadling as their was among the women & children to get into the houses. All thought the Rebels had really come. The report now is that they will be here in an hour. If I could only hear of My Samuels safety--Many have packed nearly all of their packable goods--I have packed nothing. I do not think that we will be disturbed even should they come. I will trust in God even in the midst of flying shells--but of course shall seek the safest place possible in that case--which I hope will not come to us. I have just put my baby to sleep & will now sit at the front door awhile yet--then retire, knowing all will be well.

Diary of Rachel Cormany, 1866. June 16, 1863

Retired at 11 o'clock. All was very quiet, so we concluded that all those reports must be untrue about the Reb's being so near, or that they had struck off in some other direction. Mr. Plough took his horse away so as to be on the safe side. So Annie and I were all alone. At 11 1/2 I heard the clattering of horses hoofs. I hopped out of bed & ran to the front window & sure enough there the Greybacks were going by as fast as their horses could take them down to the Diamond. Next I heard the report of a gun then they came back faster if possible than they came in. But a short time after the whole body came. the front ones with their hands on the gun triggers ready to fire & calling out as they passed along that they would lay the town in ashes if fired on again. It took a long time for them all to pass, but I could not judge how many there were--not being accustomed to seeing troops in such a body--At 2 o'clock A.M. all was quiet again save an occasional reb. riding past. We went to bed again & slept soundly until 5 the morning. All seemed quiet yet. We almost came to the conclusion that the reb's had left again leaving only a small guard who took things quite leisurely. Soon however they became more active. Were hunting up the contrabands & driving them off by droves. O! How it grated on our hearts to have to sit quietly & look at such brutal deeds--I saw no men among the contrabands--all women & children. Some of the colored people who were raised here were taken along--I sat on the front step as they were driven by just like we would drive cattle. Some laughed & seemed not to care--but nearly all hung their heads. One woman was pleading wonderfully with her driver for her children--but all the sympathy she received from him was a rough "March along"--at which she would quicken her pace again. It is a query what they want with those little babies--whole families were taken. Of course when the mother was taken she would take her children. I suppose the men left thinking the women & children would not be disturbed. I cannot describe all the scenes--now--Noon--The Rebel horses with just enough men to take care of them & their teams, have just passed through town again on the retreat. Wonder what all this means. Just now the news came that the dismounted rebs are drawn up in line of battle out at McClures & expect a fight--so they sent their horses to the safe side of town in case a retreat is necessary. Some are walking or riding by every few minutes. The horses & wagons were taken back again. Evening--Had a good sleep this P.M. So had Pussy, & will retire trusting in God for safety.

Diary of Rachel Cormany, 1866. June 17, 1863

Had quite a visiter last night. She came and aske whether I was Mrs Cormany. I told her I was. she then told me she was preacher Millers daughter, & that they had fled from the Reb's & she had no place to stay. So of course I told her I would keep her. I afterwards learned that she was a thief &c but I had promised to keep her so I put all little things out of reach, & frightened her by telling her I always had a loaded pistol near so I could shoot if anyone molested me. She acted quite strangely--before going to bed--wanted me to blow the light & get in bed & she after having shaken off her fleas would lock the door & come too--but I let her know that I lock my own door & that she is to get into bed--she slept all night & left early this morning. All was so quiet during the night that I veryly thought the Reb's had left--but they are still here. All forenoon they were carrying away mens clothing & darkeys. shortly after dinner their horses & wagons were taken on the retreat again. Yes Generals and all went. Saw Gen Jenkins,³ he is not a bad looking man--Some of the officers tipped their hats to us I answered it with a curl of the lip. I knew they did it to taunt us. The one after he had tipped his hat most graciously & received in answer a toss of the head & curl of the lip took a good laugh over it. There were a few real inteligent good looking men among them. What a pity that they are rebels. After the main body had passed the news came that our soldiers were coming & just then some 1/2 doz reb's flew past as fast as their horses could take them. we learned since that one of them fired Oaks warehouse & that he was very near being shot by the citizens.⁴ Among the last to leave were some with darkeys on their horses behind them. How glad we are they are gone--None of our Soldiers came.