

THE MISSIONARIES.

The following letter, written by Col. Nelson, in relation to the alleged abuses of power by the Georgia Guard in the Cherokee nation, gives quite a different aspect to that affair:

SEPTEMBER 10, 1831.

To His Excellency George R. Gilmer,—
Your Excellency's letter of the 3d of this inst. directed to Col. J. W. A. Sanford, enquiring of him whether the several statements contained in the public prints, in regard to the confinement of the Missionaries and other prisoners, in chains, while in our custody, were correct; if so confined, what led to the severity of such a measure, together with the cause of the arrest of others, &c. To your Excellency it is known that Col. Sanford's absence on official duties, at Milledgeville, during these transactions, makes me responsible for the measures adopted towards these men.

In answer, I have the honor of stating, that they were confined each night, from the time of their arrest till we reached these quarters, by having a common padlock and trace chain around one angle of each of them, after their retiring to rest, say from 8 o'clock P. M. till day light. In justification of the measure, I have to state, that on the first arrest of the missionaries in March last, I had them treated with all the respect due their profession, and all the humanity that men mistaking their duty without intending crime might be entitled to. Subsequent events, and information however, developed the character of these men; instead of finding them the meek innocently offending individuals we had believed them to be, they were found to be under the influence of the worst passions; they seemed to play at a game of the most desperate hazard, and there has been no expedient however criminal, that they have not resorted to, to affect their purpose. It was known from information at these quarters (though lodged by individuals whose testimony our laws would not recognize, but of the most respectable of that character) that there had been, (at their instance,) meetings held of the most incendiary and criminal character, that they had endeavored to excite the more ignorant Indians to oppose in force the Guard, with a view to effect the relief of themselves, or any other persons that might be apprehended in the violation of our laws, and, while the guard was on the route through the country, in discharge of their duties, murder them in detail. (If Worcester be not misrepresented, a gun for this purpose was fired from his own house, or near it.) On the first arrest, I overheard them myself discussing the probability of violence from the Indians: one of them remarked, that if the Indians knew the Supreme Court would not sustain them, that they the Indians would be for open war; this being their character, and a strong apparent disposition on the part of some to avoid arrest, on the approach of the Guard, induced me to take such measures as I believed necessary to secure their delivery to the civil authorities. I believed the act fully justified by these circumstances, when it is recollected that my whole force consisted of 15 men, detachments from this leaving with me but nine, in a remote and unfriendly part of the territory, and these much harrassed and fatigued, by having to ride from 30 to 35 miles after night, and a greater distance during the day, (which often occurs with us.) I believed it unsafe to risk prisoners in public rooms (where strangers often also sleep,) with such Guard as my little force would enable me to keep up, (considering too their drowsiness from excessive fatigue,) without some additional security. In no instance was this security used, but in the mildest manner, (leaving only an imaginary ill,) nor has it ever been towards any prisoner under my charge. Their detention was much longer than I wished at these quarters; Col. Sanford's absence and his being possessed of official papers necessary to their commitment, caused the delay. The day after his return, they were delivered over to the civil authorities. The Cherokee who was chained to the wagon, was caught in the act of digging for gold. He was and had been for eight years an outlaw from his own tribe, for killing one of their officers. His fear that he would be delivered to them for execution under their laws, caused him to make such desperate attempts at escape, that I was compelled to chain him. As regards the arrest and confinement of Mr. McLeod, I deem it sufficient for me to state the grounds of his arrest, which were distinctly made known to him on his discharge, together with the names of the individuals lodging the information, all which he has thought proper in his publications entirely to suppress, to be relieved from the base falsehood and calumny he has heaped upon me. The facts are simply these. An individual connected with the mission, reported him to Maj. Brooks, as residing in the territory in violation of our laws; another person of respectability and connected with the same denomination, to which McLeod belongs, made the same statement to myself. When we met with him on the morning of his arrest, he was not recognized by me as the individual against whom the information had been made. After joining the command, he and Wells, soon brought themselves into notice by their abuse of the administration of the General Government, and that of the State of Georgia, and by McLeod's giving some spirited recommendations to the prisoners in what way they should conduct themselves. This creating some stir with the members of the Guard near them, my attention was attracted; on learning the cause and not knowing that either of them were violators of our laws, I endeavored in mild and peaceable terms to get rid of them; finding that I could not, I enquired of Trott, if that individual (alluding to McLeod,) was one of their preachers who was itinerating in the territory of Georgia. By his answering in the affirmative and my hear-

ing his name, I had him arrested and treated as the balance of the prisoners. After arriving at these quarters and making such enquiries as caused me to believe the information not as well founded as I had believed, and making him fully acquainted with the whole, he was discharged, but with none of the threats or declarations attributed to me by him. They are all false. The affair of Wells, being entirely of a private and personal character, I deem it unnecessary to inform your Excellency further, than that the whole statement as made public is *misstated and false*.

As regards the language attributed to me by these men, I will only remark, that I would disdain to reflect upon the feelings of any man however base, or however much he might have injured me, were it in my power; as to these persons I am not conscious of having spoken to them, or of them in their hearing from the time of their arrest, till they were before the committing officer, and only then in the performance of my official duty. As to their sayings of Maj. Brooks, it is expected that a jury of Gwinnett county, will determine how far they misrepresented him.

I cannot close this communication to your Excellency, without expressing my regret, that the societies with which these men are connected, could not be fully informed of their conduct. I am very sensible that they would withdraw from them their support, and leave them deservedly to the contempt of all good men.

I have the honor to be, your Excellency's obedient servant. C. H. NELSON.

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Extract of a letter from Evans Shannon, Esq. to Gov. Gilmer.

Zebulon, Pike County, Sept. 16, 1831.

SIR,—“I have just seen in the Georgia Journal some statements about the cruel treatment of the Georgia Guard towards some of the Missionaries. When I was with the Guard, I saw no disposition in them to bear on the feelings of any one of the Missionaries. I was near the residence of Dr. Butler when he was arrested. He was taken a few miles and permitted to return home, by his promising to go to Head Quarters, when he could consistently leave home. The Guard had a Mr. Moore in custody; he was treated well, for I was with the Guard nearly two days and nights.”