



THE FEDERAL ARMY ENTERING RICHMOND, VA., APRIL 3, 1865.—RECEPTION OF THE TROOPS IN MAIN STREET.—FROM A SKETCH BY JOSEPH BECKER.

When Grant defeated Lee at Five Forks in 1865, and ordered a general advance to secure the final fruits of victory, General Lee telegraphed to Davis that he must abandon his position or be destroyed. President Davis received the message in church, and his hurried exit told the congregation that the crisis was at hand. Service was abruptly ended and the people rushed to their homes. Then the evacuation of Richmond began. The railroad trains, canal boats, and vehicles of every description were crowded by the inhabitants, fleeing from the expected entrance of a wrathful and destructive foe, while such as remained behind looted the shops undisturbed. As much of the stores and provisions as could be destroyed were thus gotten out of the reach of the Federal troops, and especially was all liquor destroyed, lest the victors become drunk and go to excesses. But it was the destroying Confederates that got drunk, and it was only the entrance of the conquering host that restored order and put an end to the indiscriminate plunder and saved the city from being completely wiped out by the fire that was started by the Confederates in order to get the warehouses and their stores out of Federal reach. So there was cause for welcoming them when they came, even for the whites. To the blacks it was indeed the day of deliverance for which they had been praying.