
**The burning of
Chambersburg, July
30th, 1864, a poem**

Fisher Samuel R

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The author of this Poem was a citizen of Chambersburg, for a period of twenty-five years prior to the burning of that place, and was an eye witness to the scenes therein described. It contains a succinct, yet accurate account of the leading incidents connected with that memorable, but sad event. He has written it in the interest of history as well as in vindication of a deeply suffering, but much misrepresented and grievously wronged people. It is hoped it will render some service in the direction indicated.

PHILADELPHIA, MARCH 31st. 1879.

THE
BURNING OF CHAMBERSBURG,

JULY 30th, 1864.

A Poem

BY

SAMUEL R. FISHER, D. D.

PHILADELPHIA:
REFORMED CHURCH PUBLICATION BOARD 907 ARCH STREET,
1879.

THE DOOMED TOWN.

Though high on freedom's roll of fame,
And seemingly from strife afar,
Our favored land yet once became
Involved in fratricidal war.

One portion 'gainst the other rose,
In bitter, fierce and deadly strife,
And neither would the contest close,
Except at fearful cost of life.

In all directions dreadful acts
Of carnage and of blood were done ;
So terrible were oft the facts,
They seemed beyond all credence run.

One special case among the rest
From mem'ry ne'er shall pass away ;
So deeply are on it impressed
The scenes which marked that dreadful day.

A quiet town, it seems, was doomed
To be destroyed by vandal hands.
Retaliation, 'twas assumed,
Most plainly such an act demands. (1.)

Though rumors of approaching foe
Were set afloat on previous day,
Its citizens seemed not to know
What dread ordeal before them lay.

Whilst they were wrapt in quiet sleep,
Enjoying its refreshing power,
The rebel hordes their vigils keep
On neighb'ring heights, at midnight hour. (2.)

Their leaders held a council there,
As to the plan they should pursue
In doing what they ordered were,
In reference to the town in view.

(1.) Captain Fitzhugh, before the burning was commenced, exhibited to J. W. Douglas, Esq., an attorney of the place, a written order, with the name of Jubal A. Early affixed to it, directing that Chambersburg should be burned, in retaliation for the burning of six houses in Virginia, by Hunter.

(2.) Rebel cavalry had crossed the Potomac in three divisions of about equal strength, one at Shepherdstown, another at Williamsport, and the third at Clearspring. The former two were evidently designed to keep General Averill in check, who was North of the Potomac in command of about twenty-five hundred cavalry, whilst the last should execute the fiendish work committed to them. They passed through the mountain gorge back of Clearspring, and came almost unobserved upon Mercersburg. Through various detaining causes, they did not reach the heights West of Chambersburg, until in the night previous to the burning of the town.