

# The Nation

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A telegram of Gen. U. S. Grant of great historical importance was put up at auction this week. It is dated at City Point, Virginia, October 12, 1864, is addressed to Gen. Sherman, and reads in part as follows:

On reflection I think better of your proposition. It will be much better to go South than to be forced to come North. You will no doubt clean the country where you go of railroad tracks and supplies. I would also move every wagon, horse, mule, and hoof of stock, as well as the negroes. As far as arms can be supplied . . . I would put them in the hands of the negro men. Give them such organization as you can. They will be of some use.

U. S. GRANT, Lt.-Gen.

Now, the significance of this is that Gen. Sherman's commander deliberately ordered that policy of laying waste the country which Gen. Sherman followed in his march. For this policy of ruining the territory in which he operated, Gen. Sherman has ever since been severely criticised, partly because of the operations of the "bummers" who followed his troops. It is still the custom in many sections of the South to lay at his door any and all loss of property. What Sherman did on his march to the sea, Sheridan did in the Shenandoah, ravaging that wonderful granary from which Lee's armies drew so large a portion of their food each year until Sheridan made good his threat that a crow flying over it would have to carry his rations on his back. In Grant's telegram, cited above, we have the clearest proof that, after three and one-half years of warfare, he, too, had come to the conclusion that the most humane method of conducting war was so completely to impoverish and wreck the enemy's country as to make a long-drawn-out resistance impossible.