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The following extracts from the *Daily Record,* Greensboro, North Carolina, February 2nd and 3rd, 1911, setting forth the reminiscences of Captain Ball, a participant in the Reconstruction of the Southern States, gives valuable information as to the troublous times of that period:

New York, Feb. 2.—I have now told nearly all of the authenticated facts concerning the Stephens murder; the rest is merely speculative. There have been stories coming from the negroes which are interesting, even if not strictly true. A negro has quite an imagination. I will relate some of these stories, without expressing an opinion, leaving others to decide as to their accuracy and naturalness.

Much of what follows comes from Governor Holden, at the time an aged man, retired (perhaps not voluntarily) from public life. The tendency of his political opinions in his later years was toward "Conservation." I called upon him in February, 1885 (twenty-six years ago) and took notes of what he said, because of its inherent interest. His memory was clear and comprehensive. While governor—he was elected by the Republicans in 1868—and before his impeachment and removal from office by the Democratic legislature of 1870, he sought to unravel the mysteries of the Ku-klux brotherhoods; and tried in every way to discover the perpetrators of the Stephens assassination.

It has already been stated that Stephens, on the fatal Saturday, was in attendance upon a Conservative meeting in Yanceyville, and that he went out of it with Wiley. It is reported that Wiley, on his way home, took supper at the house of a Mr. Poteat. Now the negroes are not only full of curiosity, but take risks to gratify it. Nothing was more common than for them to listen from behind doors, through keyholes and in the corners of the houses where they were employed as servants. Thus it happened that the conversation at the supper-table at Poteat's—so the story goes—was overheard by a negro woman (and other servants), who had been waiting upon the table, and a most pitiful

recital it was! The servants had retired from the dining-room, and being in the passage way, outside, and hearing Stephens's name called, they listened.

Governor Holden said that Wiley was speaking of how Stephens had been killed that day; that he (Wiley) had done a good day's work and that he, and the others, had toled (that is enticed) Stephens down stairs to talk with Wiley about being a candidate for sheriff; that they got Stephens to the door and threw the noose over his neck and dragged him inside, and choked him down; that while this was going on, in the room below, old man Bedford Brown was making a speech up-stairs, and the applause was continuous, to drown any outcry; that after Stephens was choked the noose was loosened, as they wished if possible not to kill him; that he was told if he would denounce the Republican party and leave the State, they would spare his life; that he refused and said he would die first; that he then begged them, as their purpose was to kill him, to let him go and see his family; that he said to them, "Gentlemen, you know me, that I am a man of my word and will come back;" that they refused his request; that he then begged them to let him take a last look of his house; that they led him to the window, holding the rope behind him, and he saw his children playing upon the green; that they told him his time was up and pulled him back and again choked him down upon the table; that they loosened the rope when he said, "Gentlemen, I surrender—spare my life and I will do anything you say;" that a young man (whose name I will not give, as Governor Holden gave it to me) said, "No, damn you, you die," and struck him with his knife on his throat and vest, and then they finished him. The negro woman, horrified as she listened, upon hearing all this, exclaimed aloud, "There, by God!"

The supper party heard her words and the story ceased. Wiley left almost immediately; and then they asked the old woman why she said those words and she told them, "because the coffee burned her." They asked her if she had been listening and she declared she had not.

Next day, a younger brother of Poteat sent for her to work in his tobacco field, and asked her the second time the reason of her outcry the night before. He said, "You mind what you are doing—if you 'cheep,' (*i.e.*, tell) about this thing, I will put a ball through you."

Wiley went home (the story goes on) and walked up and down his piazza until late that night, attracting the attention of his family by his singular conduct. A negro man, on the watch, had followed him, and had hidden under the house, to hear what was said. The dwellings of the South are frequently without cellars and, in the country, are often sustained by brick and log supports; so it would be easy to crawl underneath. This negro claims to have heard some of Wiley's family ask him why he did not come to bed, and he replied that he was waiting for the wagon.

It was rumored among the negroes, that the purpose was to carry Stephens's corpse to a church near Wiley's, called "Republican Headquarters," and there leave it, to produce the impression that Stephens's political associates had killed him. There was a sprinkle of rain, after nightfall, and fresh wagon tracks were seen, which approached near to Yanceyville, and returned almost to Wiley's. Perhaps, if this was true, the scheme to steal away the body from the court house was baffled by the vigilance of the guards.

The effort was several times made to make it appear that Stephens had been slaughtered by his political friends, to get rid of him, or for effect. For instance, six years had elapsed when the Milton Chronicle, published in Caswell county, charged by innuendo, under the head of "Revelations," that "Hester, Holden, Settle, Smith, Albion (meaning Judge Tourgee), Albright, Boyd, Ball and Keogh" had accomplished this murder most foul. But Mr. Boyd, at the time of the Stephens homicide, was himself a member, in full standing, of the White Brotherhood. This silly charge was made during the Tilden-Hayes campaign of 1876; Judge Settle then being the Republican candidate for governor and William A. Smith for lieutenant-governor. The others named were all Republicans of more or less prominence. Of course the editor of the Chronicle, and his patrons, knew that the story was a lie.

While I was at Yanceyville, at the inquest, William Henry Stephens—(usually called Henry) as I could not at once go home, thought it would be better for me to stay all night at his late brother's residence. My sojourn at the dwelling, that night, gave me my first opportunity to see how it was fortified. The lower story was protected by thick planks, bullet-proof. The stairway was fixed with a trap door, which could be let down, by its hinges,

from above; and then no one could go upstairs without forcing his way against great odds. There was a plentiful supply of firearms with abundant ammunition. Twenty men could resist successfully a hundred, or more, if the attacking party had no artillery. But if a lodgment could be effected below, what could prevent the firing of the dwelling and the destruction of its inmates?

Here Stephens had lived and kept his enemies at bay; and he was as brave as any of them and much more desperate. The cowards who attacked negro cabins in the dead of night, with overwhelming numbers, never invaded Stephens's premises, for that sort took no risks. Yet he felt secure, for he had said that he suffered none to approach him, but those he knew to be his friends. I suppose he thought Wiley was his "friend."

Let us go back a few weeks. At spring term (April, 1870) of the Caswell Superior Court, an alarm was given that the Kuklux were coming to kill Stephens, Judge Tourgee, and all Republicans and break up the court. This disquieting intelligence was conveyed to me by Judge Tourgee himself. At the time, I occupied a room in Mitchell's house, already mentioned. My apartment, although joined to the dwelling, had no door opening into the main building, so that one had to go into the yard to get to the entrances of that part of the structure. Hon. James T. Morehead, an aged lawyer, who had been famous in his day, and now attended the court from habit, occupied a room of the same size as mine, and opening into it, and detached, as mine was, from the main building.

On Monday afternoon, the first day of the term, Judge Tourgee told me that one Hemphill had informed him of the contemplated raid, and that it was to occur the next Wednesday night. He desired me to go with him to Stephens's house (where the judge boarded during the court), as one of the garrison, to help defend it. The proposition looked absurd to me and it seemed that, if I went, it might subject me to ridicule. No one likes to be ridiculed; at least, I do not.

It may be remarked, in passing, that Judge Tourgee had offended the lawyers, because he boarded with Stephens. They considered it beneath the dignity of so high an official to make his home with a man so low in the social scale, and they were all the more hostile toward the judge because he would do this. They insisted that they would have treated him with respect, if not

with cordiality, had he not shown these degraded tastes. As it was, they had no more courtesy for him than for Stephens, believing the judge to have disgraced his office.

It was the effort of the lawyers of North Carolina, in those days, to avoid close contact with the populace and to preserve an esprit de corps. They believed that their only associates, on terms of equality, should be of their own order, as the clergy or medical profession, representing an educated aristocracy. The masses were illiterate, unpolished and, in the estimation of the lawyers, unfit for companionship with the cultivated classes, whose policy it was to inspire the plain people with profound respect for their superiors.

The statements here made of early ideas and feelings, largely result from conversations with Col. Thomas Ruffin, a man of aristocratic lineage and unusual powers of mind. He was a son of the late Chief Justice Ruffin, of the Supreme Court of North Carolina, and afterward himself was an associate justice of that eminent tribunal. He informed me of the sentiment among the lawyers against Tourgee, because of his intimacy with Stephens. And once, when as a matter of course, with my New York education, I had offered to make oath to an affidavit, in a Caswell county lawsuit, wherein I was associated with Col. Ruffin, he advised me against it, and said it had been the custom, in North Carolina, for lawyers never to be sworn, in the conduct of their cases, it being considered that their mere word was sufficient; and so, as I afterward understood, the judges generally so regarded it.

Any one can see, however, the mischiefs which might occur from such a custom; as, after the verbal statements of lawyers, disputes might arise as to what had been said, and no one would be able to decide, and no one would try to do so, for fear of a quarrel. Happily the people, in spite of the traditions of slavery, are rapidly emerging from their blind gropings, as an outcome of the freedom thrust upon them by the civil war, and the younger members of the legal profession now aid in the work of educating the illiterate, knowing that it is better for the commonwealth that all should be taught.

The social conditions existing in North Carolina in the early days mentioned, may help to explain the intense bitterness manifested on all occasions toward men like Stephens. He was of humble parentage, but had been put forward by Governor Holden

as a trusted agent of the State government. Thus was invaded the prerogatives of the privileged classes. The prejudices of the leaders were communicated to their followers (who did the voting to keep their rulers in power).

Judge Tourgee, and all carpet-baggers (myself included, of course), were esteemed to be opposed to the dominion of the aristocrats; some of whom, nevertheless, were themselves quite ordinary persons, but puffed up with pride, God knows what for!

Judge Tourgee also invited J. R. Bulla, Esquire, the solicitor, to help defend Stephens's house. Mr. Bulla was a native Republican. Neither he, nor I, believed at the time, that the Kuklux were banded together for serious mischief; although, as I afterward learned, a plot was laid, in those days, by the Randolph county Kuklux, to take Mr. Bulla out and whip him. Had this been done it would have been a wanton outrage. Mr. Bulla never knew of the plan. The scheme was prevented by the interference of a mere youth, Tom Worth, from whom I had the facts.

Both Mr. Bulla and myself decided to remain in our rooms. Out of deference, however, to Judge Tourgee's intelligence, I agreed, in case of an alarm, to go over and help fight it out. There were sixteen resolute fellows there, under the leadership of Judge Tourgee, all well armed and with enough ammunition. Had an attack been made it would have been a lively conflict. Mr. Bulla, born a Quaker, would not agree to join in the battle, preferring, I suppose, in accordance with his tenets, to be murdered in cold blood.

The raid did not take place, however. The judge had caused all the roads leading to Yanceyville to be patrolled, and it was understood that if any considerable body of men approached from any direction light-wood fires would be kindled as warnings.

Tuesday night of the same week, I was invited, and so was Mr. Bulla, to a supper at Judge Kerr's. Nearly all of the members of the bar in attendance upon the court, were guests. Among them I remember Col. Ruffin, General Alfred M. Scales, Col. Junius I. Scales and Col. Dillard. Judge Tourgee was not invited.

Before I went to the supper Judge Kerr, whose residence was not far off, came to my room and smoked his pipe, with its long reed stem. Sometimes he walked the floor, and then sat down, then walked again, and so on. His manner was uneasy, a char-

acteristic of the man. Several times he seemed ready to speak and then restrained himself. He had professed a liking for me, and as he was an impulsive man, I thought he might wish to say something about the threatenings in the air; but finally he kept whatever was on his mind to himself. He had fine traits, but was pompous in demeanor. Those who liked that style were fond of him.

At the April term of the court, the evidences of the presence of the Kuklux in Caswell county, accumulated. After partaking of supper with Judge Kerr and his guests, I retired to rest in my room, quite uneasy because of the rumors. I had fallen into a doze, when my ears were disturbed by voices and singing and a guitar tinkled. My venerable neighbor, Hon. James T. Morehead, was being serenaded. After the music (so-called) had ceased "Uncle Jimmy" made a little speech to the boys. From this, and the conversation ensuing, I learned that it was confessedly a Kuklux serenade. The venerable Nestor of the bar said to his visitors that there were many worse things than the Kuklux—among them the Union League and the Republican party. And so the young men were encouraged.

I was glad when the time came to go home; which I did on the 14th day of April, 1870. I started from Yanceyville in a buggy, with a Mr. Fowler, a resident of Greensboro. Had I previously doubted the existence of the Klans, I must have been convinced, after that ride, unimportant in itself, but memorable for the events which lately had taken place. The remarks and manners of my companion were peculiar. He had a furtive, scared expression as night enclosed us. He was a native Democrat—and I was amazed at his evident trepidation.

We were striving to reach Ruffin, a little station on the Richmond and Danville railroad (now called the Southern Railroad) a few miles south of Danville. Although spring was opening, there was no foliage on the trees, except tiny leaflets bursting into life. Night advanced and the moon shone effulgent, but her rays were obscured by the divergent limbs of the forest, when we sometimes plunged into its depths. The gloom was intensified by drifting clouds, hanging low; but these momentarily lifted, briefly restoring the cheery moonbeams and silver roadway. Many tree-trunks were white, contrasting with the darkness within the dense woods, glistening like spectres, as the tremulous light glimmered

through the branches. There was no sound in the forest, except the solemn wail of the wind, and the steady tramp, tramp—tramp, tramp of the hurrying horse. My flesh crept and shuddered under the drastic influence of the chill night and the doleful croakings of my companion; who talked continually of the Kuklux, and peered through the bushes and undergrowth, as if expecting to see rise from the ground a full cavalcade of shadowy night-riders.

We reached Ruffin, nevertheless, in good time, and went whirling home in a comfortable railway coach, filled—not with hobgoblins, but with civilized human beings.

Afterward I learned that the companion of my night-ride (who was a tailor) had sewn together the diabolical garbs of the White Brotherhood of his vicinity. Remembering this hideous livery of the devil, it was no wonder he was afraid, even of the peaceful moon, as she benignantly observed him through the arms of the forest.

New York, Feb. 2.—The result of the election (Nov. 8) was rather shocking, but not unexpected. I think the Republicans deserved the drubbing. A hundred and ninety thousand of them, in New York, did not vote; so to punish somebody for something, they let Tammany obtain control.

Governor Dix doesn't say anything; but Governor Wilson says enough for both. It remains to be seen whether or not the latter has not bitten off more than he can masticate.

In the course of my life I have been shocked more than once, mostly, while living in North Carolina. For instance, in 1876, when it was supposed that Tilden had been elected, the young men of Odell's store thought it a good joke and decorated my fence with black calico. Our colored cook, thinking it would hurt our feelings, stripped it all off early in the morning before we got a sight of it, much to our regret. But Madam was equal to the emergency and had the girl gather up the black stuff and take it to Odell's store to sell for paper-rags! The cook was received with shouts of applause, showing that Odell's young men fully appreciated the humor of the occasion.

Odell had a big store, but all the black calico in stock must have been cleaned out on that occasion. As I understand at the time, the fences of Judge Dick, Postmaster White, Col. Keogh, Judge Settle and Judge Tourgee were all decorated. The last

named, characteristically, sought to make capital out of the episode, which was only a joke.

When I went to bed very late the night before (or rather in the morning) I thought Tilden had really been elected and I did not enjoy the sensation. Nevertheless I did not feel as I did six years before, in the Ku Klux times. We lived then in the little cottage opposite the jail. The election was in August. Madam had gone North to visit her home-folks. I was alone in the house. Diagonally across the street was a disreputable bar-room, where all the "roughs" assembled every night; and for no less than three weeks after the "Conservative" victory these fellows kept up a shouting and howling, which was far from agreeable to me.

Those were the Kuklux days and the times were very uncomfortable, especially for a carpet-bagger, whose party had been overwhelmingly defeated. But I did not know anything about the Kuklux and was simple-minded enough not to fully credit their existence.

I had become a citizen of North Carolina in November, 1868; but being unaccustomed to the ways and prejudices of the people, I was not prepared to believe what was said about the Klans. Respectable Southern gentlemen denied their existence and I felt bound by their protestations. Yet a "den" met frequently in Greensboro; sometimes in Bogart's Hall; sometimes in the old Caldwell Institute (now torn down), again upstairs over the Lindsay corner (recently destroyed) opposite the court house and more often in the woods in the northern suburbs of the town, not a great ways from the residence of Judge Dick.

These meetings were occurring after the beginning of my residence in Greensboro, for nearly a year, but I did not know of them. Indeed, young men with whom I was well acquainted, actually were members of the fraternity—men whom I met every day, on social terms, in my boarding house at Mrs. Gilmer's. I had not reason to suspect their membership. Of course the assemblages were as secret as could be. When they were held in Bogart's Hall, for example—so I have since been told by participants—the only light was a candle, placed under a table, so that its rays could not shine through the curtained windows.

While I myself was incredulous, my political friends, Union men, natives of the South, familiar with the methods and peculiarities of the people, were firm believers in the entity of the Kuklux.

They saw and understood the most trivial signs and signals. These men had been on the spot when the rebellion raged and had, in many instances, belonged to the "Red Strings," and other secret societies, banded together for mutual help and protection, and to aid the Union cause, in which they implicitly believed; and to assist escaping prisoners of war through the military lines. If therefore they observed a peculiar mark upon a tree, or figures upon the ground, they knew there was some meaning intended.

But the time soon came when I had to believe. In the latter days of 1869, Judge Tourgée, then of the Superior Court, issued a bench warrant for the arrest of several citizens of Caswell county. They were charged with having visited in disguise the cabins of a number of negroes, whom they took out and whipped. I was employed by Gov. Holden to conduct the examination of witnesses for the State; but the defendants easily proved alibis, as usual in such cases.

A few months afterward I was notified by the Governor to attend similar examinations before Mr. John W. Stephens (called "Chicken Stephens" by Jo. Turner). Mr. Stephens was a justice of the peace in Yanceyville. He was likewise a State Senator, but the legislature was not then in session.

I proceeded to Yanceyville via Danville, Va., leaving the railroad at the latter town, and driving sixteen miles across the country. Reaching Yanceyville in the forenoon, I noticed several groups of men, apparently laboring under suppressed excitement. Beginning to understand the popular temper I feared a riot if the cases should go on before the magistrate that day.

I stated my apprehensions to the Honorable John Kerr, the leading attorney for the defendants and suggested that, to avoid a possible riot, his clients should waive examination, and give bail for their appearance at the next term of the Superior Court, which they could do easily.

All of the Yanceyville lawyers appeared with Judge Kerr for the defendants, doubtless volunteering their services with patriotic fervor. After further consultation, my suggestion was adopted and thus, it may be, bloodshed was then avoided. At any rate, events soon to follow in Yanceyville, justify the belief that Stephens would have been put out of the way on the spot, had the trials proceeded.

When the cases had been disposed of, Stephens came to my

room. He was a slender, sinewy man, with fair complexion, pale blue eyes and light brown hair, not prepossessing in manners or appearance; illiterate and unpolished, but very earnest; belonging to the plain classes of the South. His origin was respectable, although born into a poor family, in Guilford county. He had courage and tenacity. He was the leader of the Caswell county Republicans, being one of the few white men who dared to profess Republican principles in that locality. He was bitterly hated by the "Conservatives," and this boded him no good. Yet knowing it all, accused of petty crimes, which he had not committed, held up to ridicule by such a man as Jo. Turner, then a veritable potentate, Stephens had stood up boldly in the midst of a hostile population, with no backers but the timid negroes, which only intensified the hatred of his enemies. No romance of chivalry has ever invested its heroes with a nobler spirit than his, which was more than equal to that of the bravest of his traducers—for who of them all would have faced the dangers that he was facing?

He resided about a quarter of a mile from the Yanceyville court house, within plain view of it. His house was veritably his castle, where he had fortified himself. He was besieged at home and was under obsession everywhere; yet he seemed to hold danger in contempt.

On this occasion he wore a sack-coat of medium length, with side-pockets. He said he had been warned by anonymous letters to leave the State. "But," he said simply, "I have a right to be here and can't be scared away from my home and family." Continuing, Stephens told me how well he was prepared for emergencies; and he displayed two single-barreled, breech-loading Derringers. He showed me how rapidly he could load them and seemed expert in handling the weapons. He carried a pistol in each side-pocket of his coat, within easy reach. He said he never permitted any one to approach unless he knew him to be a friend; that he always carried the Derringers, but that on "public days," he also had with him what I understood to be a seven shooter.

In his estimation this was a public day, because a crowd was in town, attracted by the cases before his magistrate's court. Yanceyville was but a small village, with a court house and a few dwellings, stores and shops, and ordinarily not many persons were on the streets. There was no hotel. Throwing back his coat, Stephens, displayed to me his other weapon. With his temper

and dangerous surroundings, he was a man to be dreaded by his foes, for he meant to kill any assailant. He could be overcome only by treachery, as will be seen hereafter.

To me, his words had peculiar significance, when considered in connection with the occurrences of the next few days; for it should be noticed that he declared he never suffered any one to approach, unless he knew him to be a friend. "But," he added, "I think the worst is now over and they," (meaning the Kuklux) "are becoming frightened at their own acts." Alas, how little he knew or understood the venom of his enemies! Our conversation was on Monday. The next Saturday, May 21, 1870, Stephens was murdered in a lower room of the Yanceyville court house.

A vivid account of the assassination is given in "A Fool's Errand," where John Walter Stephens is called "John Walters." Whether it is all true as therein narrated, I cannot say for certain; but the story, confessedly fiction, is no more monstrous than the reality. It was a ghastly murder. As those who know best about it (if still alive) have told nothing, and will not, any narrative of the circumstances must be imperfect.

On the day of the homicide Stephens had attended a Democratic meeting, upstairs in the court house, in the audience-room. According to his custom he had been taking note of the speeches.

Sometimes he used the room where his body afterward was found, for the trial of his magistrate's cases. This room was at the time occupied for no other purpose, and was devoid of furniture, except an old table and a chair or two. A pile of fire-place wood extended across it, on the north side, next to the wall, one end of the pile being near a window. There were three windows, two of them overlooking the court house yard, opposite a street. On the other side of the street were several negro houses. Stephens's dwelling could be seen plainly from the windows, being southeast from the court house. The only door entering the room was from the hallway, which passed entirely through the building from north to south. The door of the room was within a few feet of the rear hall entrance.

Stephens, after being in the meeting upstairs, until about 5 o'clock in the afternoon, was called out by a man named Wiley; with whom Stephens had been in frequent conversation during the day, trying to induce Wiley to become an independent candidate for sheriff. Wiley was a Democrat and Stephens had pledged

him the Republican vote of Caswell county. After the two went out together Stephens was not seen alive by any one innocent of the murder.

No doubt Wiley enticed Stephens from the meeting and admitted it. But according to a letter from Hon. R. Z. Linney (recently deceased) published in the *News-Observer*, Dec. 29, 1891, credited to the *Statesville Landmark*, "a gentleman of intelligence who was at Yanceyville at the time of the tragedy," declared that he had information regarded by him as altogether reliable, that Wiley was not in the room when Stephens was killed, but had arranged to get him from the court-room, to extort from him a promise to leave the county; and the promise not being given Stephens was killed. According to the "gentleman of intelligence," Wiley was "very angry" with the men who had slain Stephens—a lame excuse, it must be admitted; although his "anger" was quite creditable.

Mr. Linney, it may be stated, in passing, said in his letter, that Wiley died at his (Linney's) house near Taylorsville, and that the "measure of the corpse was about seven feet in length." This statement seems astounding, but as I recollect him, Wiley was a very tall man. Upon one occasion, during the Kuklux troubles, I saw him on horseback, going from Yanceyville, with a long rifle resting in the hollow of his arm—an incident characteristic of the times. He looked like a wind mill on horse back.

MATERIALS FROM THE SCRAPBOOK OF W. A. HAYNE COLLECTED IN 1874[1]

William A. Hayne was a native of Charleston, and a free man of free parents. His mother's father and his father's father were white. He was educated in the Charleston school of free Negroes. He attained the position of Representative in the Legislature and served the State efficiently. Hayne passed away in 1889.

The recent meeting at Barnwell Courthouse was by far the largest held there since the war. The meeting was called to order by Dr. J. W. Ogilvie as temporary chairman. A committee of five, consisting of Col. Counts, Captain F. M. Wanamaker, Dr. J. C.

[1] These articles were arranged by Monroe N. Work.