

Gen. W. W. Holden,

Governor of North Carolina:

Sir:

I feel it a duty to call to your attention, again, the prevalence of personal outrages, in that portion of the State which constitutes the Seventh Judicial District - I do not know that it lies within your ~~power~~ ^{power} as I am confident that it does not in the Courts of law, - to remedy this evil. I fear, however, that unless some effective measures, are soon adopted, ~~the~~ ^{it} evil will assume a magnitude beyond control, and involve the whole State in bloodshed. ~~These acts of violence are something more than mere out~~

The Character of the Acts.

These acts of violence are of a peculiar character. They do not partake of the nature of assaults upon a sudden quarrel, or in the heat of passion. This class of crime has very much diminished in frequency, during the past year. The crimes in question are marked with a deliberateness of purpose and similarity of essential ^{and peculiar} features, which renders them almost anomalous, in the history of crime -

Of their peculiar features the most notable are the following:

1- They are never perpetrated by a single individual, ^{acting alone,} but always by companies of men acting in concert and apparently under the command of some one of their number. This number varies considerably. In a majority of cases to which I have been very duty to investigate it has been either seven or nine; though in three or four cases the proof unquestionably showed a greater number.

2^d- The perpetrators are invariably masked or disguised, generally by some white sort of garment, and a blue mask. The style of disguise seems to vary somewhat in different sections, though its main features are the same in all, the blue mask and white cloak or wrap being found in all so far as I have been able to learn.

3^d- These acts are invariably committed in the night-time - and with such a show of force as usually to overcome all resistances on the part of those who are the victims.

4th In every instance that has come to my attention, except two, the men who have committed these acts have been mounted, and by all description given by witnesses, well-mounted and well-armed. In one instance an eye-witness stated - "There were thirty or forty men in the company as well-mounted as I ever saw" In another case another looker on said - "It was bright moonlight and as they came up the street I noticed that there were sixty or seventy of them, mounted on right good horses."

5th - ~~The acts were~~ These men committing these acts claim the name of "Ku-Klux" "Ku-Kluxes" or "Ku-Klux-ers", and accompany their acts by with a sort of clucking, half-guttural half-sibilant sound.

From these facts the following deductions may fairly be made -

- 1 - That there is a wide-spread unit of action arising either from some pre-concerted plan of proceeding by force

parties associated together for that purpose, — or from a wide-spread demoralization and disregard of law and order displaying itself under similar circumstances in different vicinities. — While the latter hypothesis might fully account for the commission of the acts, it would hardly seem to be equally satisfactory in regard to the identity of disguise adopted in widely dif distant localities.

Who are the victims.

In a very large proportion of the cases the victims have been colored men and women. In ~~a few~~ ^{some} instances white men have been interferred with and in a few white men and women have been ~~too~~ seriously injured. In almost every instance, ~~in a case~~, so far as I know, the victims have been ~~members~~ ^{considered} ~~members~~ ^{members} Republicans or their families and friends. The only exceptions which I know to this rule are one or two instances in which ~~one~~ ^{issues} in bastardy or indictment for fornication and adultery, were pending, and some female witnesses, were either killed or driven out of the country before the time of trial arrived.

The degree of violence.

This varies considerably on different occasions. It may perhaps be said that whipping is the usual form which it assumes. Sometimes however it is beating with clubs shooting, tying up by the thumbs, hanging, arson, and in one instance the compelling the sexual act between two of their victims -

The degree of violence

The degree of violence varies in different instances. Whipping is its most usual phase, either with rods or "hickories", or with straps or paddles previously prepared for the purpose. While I write, it is reported that a woman in this county, is ~~beaten~~ ^{blinded} and her life in danger from having been beaten almost to a jelly a week or more since, ^{and} ~~and~~.

Beating with clubs, tying up by the thumbs, hanging, shaving the head, shooting and in one instance compelling with unnumbered tortures, the sexual act between two of their victims. —

United with these acts of cruelty, in some instances there seems to be an inclination to rob and plunder, though this is not usual. Weapons of defence, guns, pistols, &c. are usually taken or destroyed. Furniture is frequently broken up ^{and} ~~or~~ demolished, and in a few instances arson has closed the scene.

The prevalence of these acts.

The first manifestation of these disorders in this district which came to my notice, ~~was~~ in this District, was in the County of Alamance. Several colored men were furiously whipped and beaten, and threatened with death if they made any disclosures. Shortly afterwards, "raids" of ~~from~~ the same character occurred in the County of Guilford in the neighborhood of Bruce's Cross Roads. Several persons were beaten, shot at, houses broken open and other outrages committed—Almost simultaneously "raids" (which has come to be the distinctive name of these outrages) occurred in the adjoining County of Rockingham. In this County, almost every species of atrocity has been committed in this manner, murder, arson, and men and women ~~whipped~~ stripped and their naked bodies beaten in a most brutal and shocking manner. Soon after the same class of outrages ~~was~~ ^{became} prevalent in the County of Orange

where they have been carried to an extent altogether unparalleled in any other county of this District. The number of cases in this county which have been judicially investigated, is comparatively small, for the simple reason that only in a few instances has any one been able to identify the perpetrators. Very many instances of these outrages have been reported however, without any attempted identification of the parties engaged in their commission. In this County the jail was broken open by a band of armed men, ^{who took the keys from the Sheriff,} two prisoners taken out and one of them shot ^{by intimidation}. He subsequently died of the wound. About the same time ~~there was~~ the same phenomena ^{appeared} in Chatham County. The jail was broken open, ^{and a} prisoner released. In all of these counties — except perhaps Rockingham ^{for} the last two months, — there have been occasional outrages of this character up to the present time.

The counties of Caswell, Person and ~~Alamance~~ ^{Randolph}, have been almost if not entirely free from these disorders. I do not now recollect a single instance

7

occurring in either of them. —

In the latter countries of the District two jails have been broken open, six murders committed, two houses burned, and a large number of men and women whipped and beaten, with different degrees of indignity and severity. —

Difficulty of ascertaining the precise number of the latter class.

It is almost impossible to ascertain with any degree of certainty the actual number who have been whipped or beaten, for the following reasons:

1— In most instances there is no identification of the perpetrators at all, and the matter is therefore never brought to the attention of any judicial officer. In such cases there is of course no inquiry, and the matter does not become public, nor appear of record.

2— The fear of the consequences of complaint deter very many from making any revelations, whatever, in relation to the treatment they have received. A man sent in his employ a white ~~man~~ mechanic, noticing one day some ^{wounds} scars upon his arm, he inquired the cause and

7

learned to his surprise that a few nights before he had been pulled out of bed and beaten by ~~the~~ a gang of armed men. He begged his employer to keep it a secret. However, as he ~~was~~ believed his "life would be in danger should it become known that he had revealed it." In all instances the victims are threatened with death in case of disclosure — and in some instances, the threat has been made good. The fear which has been engendered in this matter — has produced a terrorism which extends to almost every person who has been a victim of these outrages and has stopped the mouths of those who might otherwise have been troublesome witnesses. Many of the cases which have been brought to light would no doubt have been concealed had they not have been of such a serious nature that concealment was ~~was~~ impossible. Such has been the fear entertained of the perpetrators of these outrages, that placards, threatening parties with death or injury have been posted in various localities and no person dared to take them down. Men have been hanged by the neck