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National Museum of African American History and Culture

Extension of the Ku Klux Act

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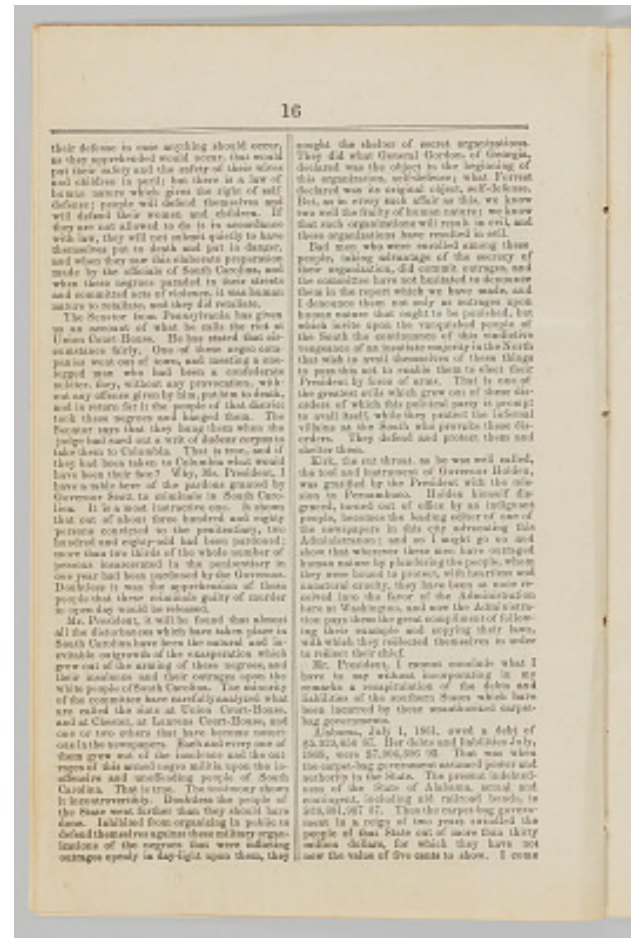
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their defense in case anything should occur, as they apprehended would occur, that would put their safety and the safety of their wives and children in peril: but there is a law of human nature which gives the right of self-defense: people will defend themselves and will defend their women and children. If they are not allowed to do it in accordance with law, they will not submit quietly to have themselves put to death and put in danger, and when they saw this elaborate preparation made by the officials of South Carolina, and when these negroes paraded in their streets and committed acts of violence, it was human nature to retaliate, and they did retaliate.

The Senator from Pennsylvania has given us an account of what he calls the riot at Union Court-House. He has stated that circumstance fairly. One of these negro companies went out of town, and meeting a one-legged man who had been a confederate soldier, they, without any provocation, without any offense given by him, put him to death, and in return for it the people of that district took these negroes and hanged them. The Senator says that they hung them when the judge had sued out a writ of habeas corpus to take them to Columbia. That is true, and if they had been taken to Columbia what would have been their fate? Why, Mr. President, I have a table here of the pardons granted by Governor Scott to criminals in South Carolina. It is a most instructive one. It shows that out of about three hundred and eighty persons convicted to the penitentiary, two hundred and eighty-odd had been pardoned: more than two thirds of the whole number of persons incarcerated in the penitentiary in one year had been pardoned by the Governor. Doubtless it was the apprehension of these people that these criminals guilty of murder in open day would be released.

Mr. President, it will be found that almost all the disturbances which have taken place in South Carolina have been the natural and inevitable outgrowth of the exasperation which grew out of the arming of these negroes, and their insolence and their outrages upon the white people of South Carolina. The minority of the committee have carefully analyzed what are called the riots at Union Court-House, and at Chester, at Laurens Court-House, and one or two others that have become notorious in the newspapers. Each and every one of them grew out of the insolence and the outrages of this armed negro militia upon the inoffensive and unoffending people of South Carolina. That is true. The testimony shows it incontrovertibly. Doubtless the people of the State went further than they should have done. Inhibited from organizing in public to defend themselves against these military organizations of the negroes that were inflicting outrages openly in day-light upon them, they sought the shelter of secret organizations. They did what General Gordon, of Georgia, declared was the object in the beginning of this organization, self-defense; what Forrest declared was its original object, self-defense. But, as in every such affair as this, we know two [too] well the frailty of human nature; we know that such organizations will result in evil, and these organizations have resulted in evil.

Bad men who were enrolled among these people, taking advantage of the secrecy of their organization, did commit outrages, and the committee have not hesitated to denounce them in the report which we have made, and I denounce them not only as outrages upon human nature that ought to be punished, but which invite upon the vanquished people of the South the continuance of this vindictive vengeance of an insatiate majority in the North that wish to avail themselves of these



things to pass this act to enable them to elect their President by force of arms. That is one of the greatest evils which grew out of these disorders of which this political party is prompt to avail itself, while they protect the infernal villains at the South who provoke these disorders. They defend and protect them and shelter them.

Kirk, the cut-throat, as he was well called, the tool and instrument of Governor Holden, was gratified by the President with the mission to Pernambuco. Holden himself disgraced, turned out of office by an indignant people, becomes the leading editor of one of the newspapers in this city advocating this Administration; and so I might go on and show that wherever these men have outraged human nature by plundering the people, whom they were bound to protect, with heartless and unnatural cruelty, they have been at once received into the favor of the Administration here at Washington, and now the Administration pays them the great compliment of following their example and copying their laws, with which they reelected themselves in order to reelect their chief.

Mr. President, I cannot conclude what I have to say without incorporating in my remarks a recapitulation of the debts and liabilities of the southern States which have been incurred by these unauthorized carpet-bag governments.

Alabama, July 1, 1861, owed by debt of \$5,939,654 87. Her debts and liabilities July, 1868, were \$7,904,396 92. That was when the carpet-bag government assumed power and authority in the State. The present indebtedness of the State of Alabama, actual and contingent, including aid railroad bonds, is \$38,381,967 37. Thus, the carpet-bag government in a reign of two years swindled the people of that State out of more than thirty million dollars, for which they have not now the value of five cents to show. I come

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