

A STORY  
OF THE  
ORIGINAL  
KU KLUX KLAN

By

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THE PULASKI CITIZEN

Pulaski, Tenn.

**P**ULASKI, the county seat of Giles County, Tenn., birthplace of the original Ku Klux Klan, is a town of about four thousand population, situated on the L. and N. Railroad, eighty miles south of Nashville, Tenn., and at the crossing of the highways extending from Nashville to Birmingham and from Chattanooga to Memphis.

The town was in antebellum days and still remains the seat of much culture and wealth. It's citizenship is, and has always been composed of representative old families of the South. Many of their beautiful, old colonial homes have passed away and are passing day by day to decay. Many still remain as monuments to the classic architectural ideas of their builders and to the high-bred, hospitable people who once possessed them and whose spirits still seem with aristocratic, stately mien to tread their vaulted corridors, with "the tender grace of a day that is dead." Early settlers of this country came largely from North Carolina and Virginia, and there has been very little immigration from elsewhere.

Most of these rare old homesteads had splendid plantations connected with them. The situation was ideal for these plantations occupying as they did, in the language of another Tennessee writer, the "Dimple of the Universe."

The owners of these homesteads and plantations were also owners of large numbers of negro slaves whose occupation it was to work in these fields of cotton and of corn. The relation between slave and slave holder here in Middle Tennessee was nearly always one of mutual trust, kindness and friendly interest. It may not be generally known, but it is a fact, that Tennessee freed her own slaves and was not included in the emancipation proclamation.

The Ku Klux Klan which was organized following the war between the states was not organized for the purpose, as some have believed, of oppressing and punishing the negroes who had recently been freed and who were as yet unaccustomed to their new circumstances and conditions of life and were as "children crying in the night, children crying for the light and with no language but a cry."

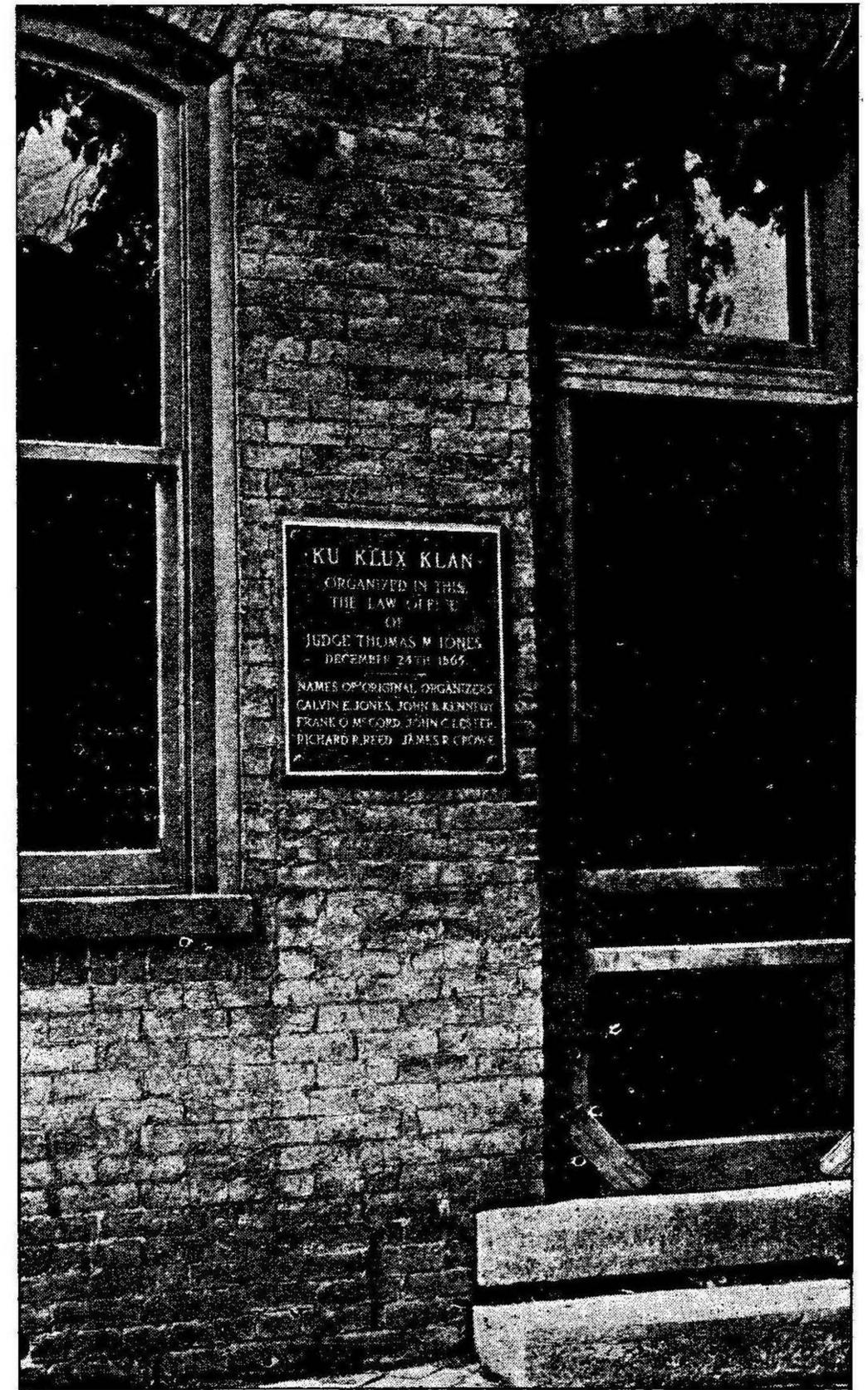
The truth is, the men who composed the membership of the Klan accidentally discovered the power their order wielded

over the minds of the superstitious negroes, so lately set at liberty, and also over the ignorant and lawless white element, both being rendered unruly by atrocious political influences. These influences and conditions in general called upon the Klan to use this power to protect and defend their helpless and disorganized land. In the beginning this position of Law and Order League had never been even remotely anticipated by the members of the order but it was thrust upon them by numerous wanton acts, and the Klan rose as one man to meet the demand, proclaiming with no doubtful voice, that it stood for peace, law and order. That it was not a political or military party, but a protective organization and would "never use violence except in resisting violence."

The original inception and organization of the Klan was most unique and interesting. Ex-Confederate soldiers returning to their homes, overpowered, disfranchised and unrepresented, found on every side, wrecked homes, broken fortunes, desolate fields. Business, professions and money, all gone. They were returning to a land that once had known "the glory which was Rome, and the grandeur which was Greece" but that was now a "land which had known sorrows, a land which had broken the ashen crust and moistened it with her tears, a land scarred and riven by the plowshare of war, and billowed with the graves of her dead." Their hearts and minds were naturally sickened with the sight of it all and to divert their minds and occupy their thoughts, several young men of the town of Pulaski, viz—Calvin Jones, John B. Kennedy, Frank O. McCord, John C. Lester, Richard B. Reed and James R. Crowe conceived the idea of forming a social club which was organized Dec. 24, 1865 in the law office of Judge Thos. M. Jones, which office now bears upon its historic walls in the town of Pulaski, a tablet to these immortal men. The widow of John B. Kennedy, who was the last of the six organizers to answer the final roll call, unveiled this tablet May 21, 1917, shortly after the fifty-first anniversary of the organization.

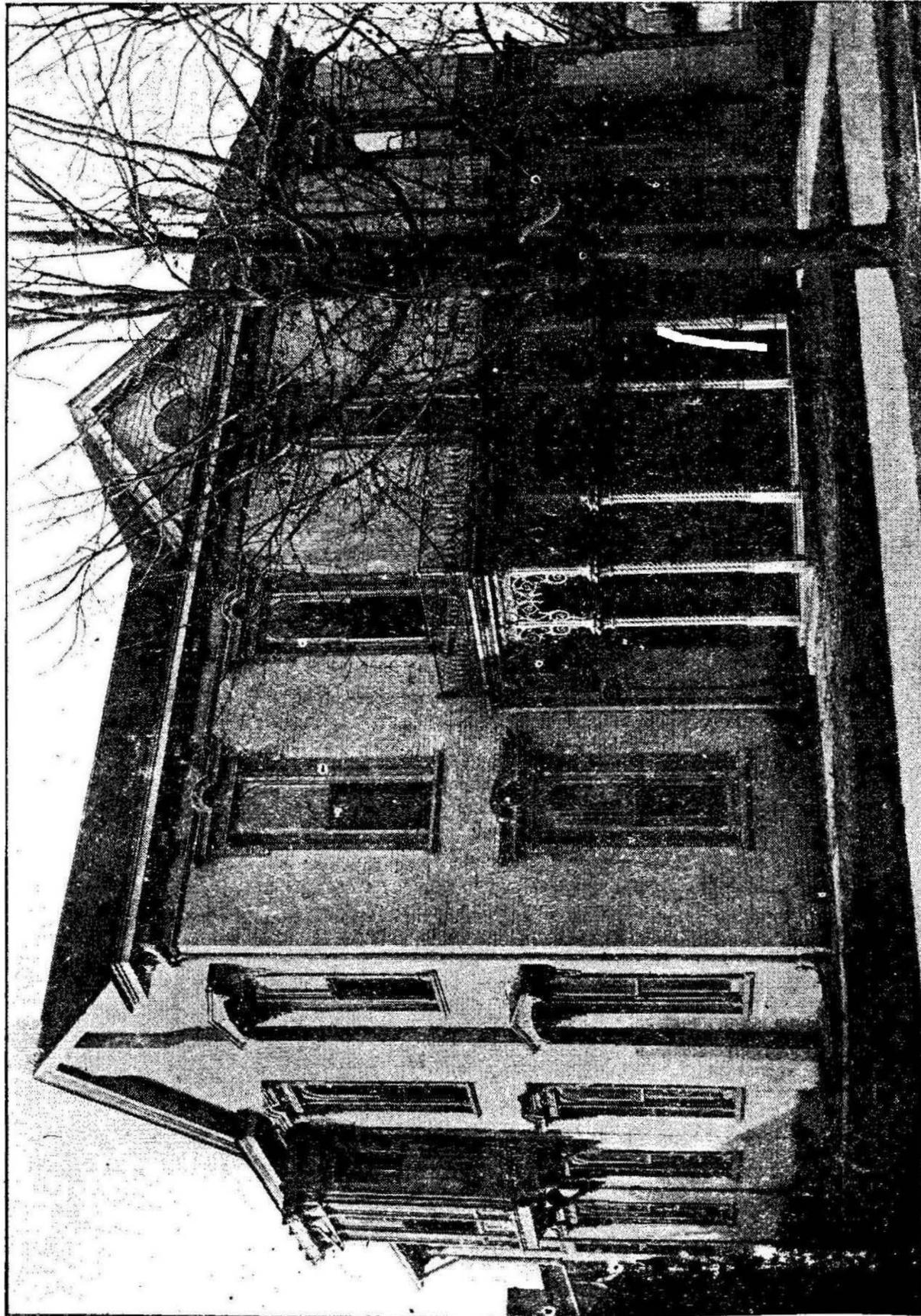
The next meeting was held at the palatial Spofford home which is now owned and operated as an Apartment House. The Spofford family was away from home, and one of the young men had been asked to sleep in the house. It was at this meeting, Calvin Jones, chairman of the committee on By-Laws and Ritual submitted a draft of the same which after discussion and amendment was adopted. At this meeting also a name was selected for the Club.

The name, Ku Klux Klan, has been a puzzle to most people giving any study to the subject. It has usually been assumed that it was derived from a Greek word meaning a band or circle of friends, with the Scottish Clan added for



**LAW OFFICE OF JUDGE T. M. JONES  
Pulaski, Tenn.**

Where the idea of the Original Ku Klux Klan originated.  
The office is still standing, unchanged, and has recently been purchased to be kept as a shrine by the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.



**THE SPOFFORD HOUSE**

Pulaski, Tenn.

Where meeting was held that adopted name and prescript of the original Ku Klux Klan. Now used as an Apartment House.

alliteration.

The writer holds a different idea, but is without authentic information on the subject, as the idea did not occur to him in time to secure necessary information from those in position to know. It is well known that when Tennessee was called upon to furnish three thousand men for the War with Mexico more than thirty thousand volunteered for service. That is the way Tennessee won her title, The Volunteer State. Pulaski and Giles County furnished a goodly share of those volunteers. In old Mexican mythology, the god of light was called Cukulcan. This god was often represented in conflict with the Vampire god of darkness, over which Cukulcan was always victorious in the dawning of a new day. A poetic idea with an appeal to these young men seeking a name for their new and wiered organization. The fact that members of the Klan occasionally referred to themselves as "sons of light," suggests the idea that some of them may have learned the story of Cukulcan from their fathers or uncles who were soldiers in Mexico. And with slight changes created a word which admirably served their purpose.

The only object of the Klan at first was fun by means of farsical initiations, and ceremonies attending the reception of new members.

A basement left intact when a large house was wrecked by a storm made an ideal "den." A large mirror which in some mysterious way escaped the fury of the storm, had been stored in the basement, and was utilized in the ceremony.

The Klansmen would assemble. The inside sentinel would take his station, a large stump of a tree that had stood near the house. The sentinel's robe extending down over the stump, and a high hat, gave him the appearance of a man about ten feet tall. The outside sentinel, similarly robed, but not so tall would take his station at the entrance to the grounds. Then the candidate invited by a member to join him in an evening walk would come upon the scene.

The outside sentinel would challenge the men as they approached with something like this: "Who are ye that dare to intrude upon our sacred precincts?" The member, previously trained in his part, would explain that no intrusion was intended. That he and his friend, giving their names, were simply taking a walk and happened to come this way. But since we have come upon you, we may say that we have been talking over the matter, and would like to become members of the Klan, if acceptable. A shrill whistle from the sentinel would be responded to promptly by guards, robed and hooded, who were instructed to conduct these strangers who desire to learn more of the Klan.

The candidate and his friend were then conducted to the inside sentinel standing high on his perch, who, after several question were satisfactorily answered, gave a whistle,

and ordered the attendants who responded, to blind-fold the candidates and conduct them onward. Of course only the candidate was blindfolded, but he supposed his friend was likewise a candidate and also blindfolded.

In the basement or "Den," the candidate still blindfolded was solemnly sworn to secrecy, he must not under any circumstances let it be known that he was a member of the Klan, must not reveal the identity of any other member to any one except it be a brother Klansman, must keep secret everything pertaining to the Klan, and yield unquestioning obedience to legally constituted authority.

At the conclusion of the obligation, the presiding officer, after a few appropriate remarks would ask, "What shall be done to the new brother whom we delight to honor?" Several suggestions were usually offered, but the agreement would be reached that he should be arrayed in royal apparel.

Attendants were then ordered to bring forth the royal robe and put it on him; belt a sword about his waist; and place the royal crown on his head. Bear in mind gentle reader, that the candidate is still blindfolded. But as you are not, you may observe that the "royal robe" is a donkey's skin carefully tanned with the hair left on it; the sword-belt, is a surcingle, and the crown is a piece of stage property used in the presentation of "Mid-Summer Night's Dream," a donkey's head. Then as the attendants chanted:

"O wad the powers some giftie gie us,  
To see ourselves as others see us."

The hood-wink was removed, and the candidate was permitted to observe his full length reflection in the mirror. Instead of a prince in royal robes with a crown on his head, behold a jackass standing on his hind legs.

After laughing at the candidates' embarrassment, order would be restored, and the Klansmen would take up the discussion of some enterprise, apparently suspended for the initiation. At the proper time the new brother would be assigned some imaginary post of important duty on which great and far-reaching consequences were said to depend. Then another brother would object to placing an untried and comparatively unknown man in a position of such responsibility. Pretty soon a lively discussion was in progress as to whether the new brother could be depended upon to obey the orders of his superiors without hesitation or investigation. Friends who knew him well would vouch for his dependability, while some would insist that he was as yet untried, and unknown, and that it would be hazardous to assign him to a position on which so much depended. When this discussion had proceeded far enough, some one would suggest that the new brother be subjected to a test, something that would try his bravery and daring, and prove his willingness to obey. This proposi-

tion would be readily agreed to.

Near the entrance to the basement room which was being used as a "Den," there had been, as was generally known in the community, a very large cistern in which the water was often twelve to twenty feet deep. As if the thought of a proper test had just occurred to him, the Cyclops would rise, order the men to follow him, and stalk from the room. When near the cistern he would suddenly stop, turn upon the new member, and with all the dignity and authority at his command, would order him to jump into the open cistern. Of course he would not leap to what appeared to be almost certain death. Then the commanding officer would order, "Attendants, do your duty." Stout men would seize the candidate and pitch him feet foremost into what appeared to be the familiar cistern. But instead of going down into the deep dark, cold water, the candidate landed on the same blue-grass sod on which his companions were standing. The top of the cistern had been removed a few feet, and the mouth was covered over with plank. But in the darkness and excitement of the occasion, no one ever noticed this until too late to save his boasted reputation for bravery and obedience. The initiation was usually completed with a few words of admonition to the effect that those in authority would not make unreasonable demands, and that such commands as they issued, even though danger might attend, were for the best interest of all, and should be obeyed.

Usually undesirables were avoided with little difficulty. But occasionally one of these would become persistent in his efforts to gain admission to the ranks of the Klansmen. One insistent citizen was blindfolded and obligated in the usual way. Then he was placed in an empty barrel near the top of a hill and the barrel was given a good start with nothing but a smooth pasture of blue grass and white clover to impede its progress.

Another undesirable, after being obligated to secrecy, was conducted to a ravine in a dense forest some two miles from town, and told to wait there till he should be called. After waiting patiently for several hours, when the birds began chirping at the approach of day, it finally dawned upon the fellow that he was not to be called for, and he quietly made his way home.

To their credit, it is said they faithfully kept their obligation, and never by word or act intimated that they had been initiated, or knew anything about the secrets of the Klan.

The change from a crowd of young men at play to the serious mission which caused the Ku Klux Klan to be known and feared everywhere, came about by accident. The men who organized the Klan and took part in those early initiations, never dreamed of the development and results, which

came almost with the suddenness of an explosion.

One night when the outside sentinel was standing at his post waiting for the approach of a brother with a candidate, a young negro man from a nearby farm came along, coming into town. He did not see the white robed figure standing by the road-side till directly opposite. When he did see the sentinel, he called out in fright: "Who's that?" On the spur of the moment, the sentinel in a deep, sepulchral voice responded: "I'm a ghost." Several people had been killed in the storm that struck that part of town a few months before. And the combination of circumstances was too much for Ham's nerves, and his feet ran away with him.

When the initiation of the evening was over, the sentinel told, simply as a joke, the story of his adventure with the young negro man. The members joined in a hearty laugh. Then the thought occurred to one man, and he suggested to others, the possibility of utilizing the new and mysterious organization, to restrain young negroes, who were beginning to run amuck at social conditions, by taking advantage of the negroes' superstitious fear of ghosts. It was agreed to give this man's theory a trial.

On Third Street in the best residence section of the town was a house occupied temporarily by a family of negroes in which were three or four grown-up girls. This house was a general rendezvous for the disorderly element of negroes in the community. These girls, their friends and visitors, made conditions intolerable for their refined neighbors. A request that they conduct themselves in a more decent and orderly manner would be met with insult. They were not merely noisy, but rough, profane and vulgar, took special delight in being offensive and aggressive in their attitude toward white people who knew that to resent such conduct as self-respecting people always do, would precipitate trouble. And before a court martial composed largely of ignorant, prejudiced negroes, no white man could hope for anything but more trouble. So it was agreed to try an experiment on this family. And to make it impressive and give the appearance of great numbers, they decided to conduct a horseback parade. Robes were prepared for the horses as well as men. And one evening about nine o'clock there was formed a procession of silent ghost-like men, each mounted on an equally ghost-like horse, all covered with long, white robes so that the blacks, bays and sorrels, all looked alike. The procession moved slow and silent. Not a sound was heard except the foot falls of the horses, and moving at a moderate walk, they made very little noise. The men rode two and two, and kept a good distance apart so as to form quite a long procession. When the leader stopped, all stopped and when he moved, all followed. So the procession turned into Third Street and moved

forward till the leader came to the house occupied by the disorderly negro family. The leader silently reined up at the front gate and politely asked one of the young negroes in the yard for a drink of water. The negro brought a dipper of water which the horseman drank, said it was good, and asked if he might have some more. A second dipper was brought. Again the negro was thanked, and asked to bring the water bucket. The horseman had a rubber bag concealed under his robe, into which he emptied the contents of the bucket. But to the astonished negro it looked like he drank it. Then passing the empty bucket back to the negro with polite thanks, he remarked that was the best water he had tasted since Shiloh. The bloody battle of Shiloh was less than a hundred miles west of Pulaski, and the negroes especially had been deeply impressed with the stories about how the wounded men of both armies begged for water. The parting reference to Shiloh was the studied climax of the interview. No reference was made to the boisterous conduct of the negroes. No threat nor admonition. The horseman silently returned to his place at the head of the procession and the procession silently moved on till it turned the corner, then vanished from sight. The men removed their own robes, and those of the horses, and the ghost-like procession had vanished into thin air. But the effect of that visit remained. Boisterous revelry ceased in that yard quite as suddenly as if there had been a funeral in the family. Visitors came no more at night, and soon the negroes found more congenial quarters in another locality.

It is impossible to describe, and difficult even to imagine, the general effect. Men sought admission to the ranks of the Ku Klux Klan by the hundred, then by the thousand. All fun and boyish pranks were cut out of the initiation, and the ceremony became a simple obligation of secrecy. Committees went from Pulaski to other communities, even to other states, to establish new dens. The messenger who took the organization to South Carolina has often told the writer the story of his adventure. Other committees came to Pulaski for initiation and instruction, and then returned to their homes to establish the organization there. Each new organization became a new centre of activity. There were no fees or dues at first and no general head or central organization except the deference shown by common consent to the original den at Pulaski. Any man who had been initiated might initiate whom he would. Only the character of the men, the experiences through which they had recently passed as soldiers in the Confederate army, and general conditions of the country at that time, saved the new organization from shipwreck.

No one can understand the phenomenal growth of the Ku Klux Klan, nor the reasons for its existence, without some general idea of conditions in the South during what is known as the period of reconstruction. Give free rein to the imagi-

nation for a little while and try to picture conditions as they existed here at that time. Practically all the white men of the South had been soldiers in the Confederate army. Those who survived had not only lost their fortunes, but were disfranchised. Nearly all the Southern States were under military government. The war was over but civil government had not been restored. Here in Tennessee a kind of civil government existed. But it was worse, if possible, than the military government of the other Southern States. Few representative white men could vote, hold office or serve on a jury. Many northern men who had enlisted for the war had been mustered out of service, and had returned home. The ranks of the army of occupation during the period of reconstruction contained many negroes, foreigners, and fellows who preferred service in the army rather than citizenship at home.

No more faithful or reliable servants were ever known than the Southern negroes. Not only before the war, but while their masters were away in the army, as a rule with few exceptions, they stayed at home and took care of the women and children. There was mutual trust and confidence, and never a thought that the negro man might turn upon his white friends like a snarling, savage beast. But the negro slave was not a soldier or voter and never had much whisky. His master would sometimes give him a drink, but he could not go to the saloon and buy it. But as a free American citizen, serving in the army, voting, holding office, serving on juries, and getting drunk along with carpet baggers and scalawags, he became a very different individual.

The South at that time was a particularly inviting field for the individual who came to be known by the expressive term, carpet bagger. The carpet bag was a kind of cheap satchel or hand bag made of carpet or coarse cloth because that material was cheaper than leather. The term carpet bagger came into general use to designate a worthless, irresponsible fellow recently come into the South, who took an active interest in politics, could vote and hold office, but owned no real estate, and usually no more personal property than was carried about with him in his carpet bag. He was not the kind of citizen to be missed from the community whence he came.

The scalawag was very much the same kind of individual, only he was a home-grown product. As the tides of battle ebbed and flowed back and forth over the South, he enlisted first in one army, then in the other. Not that he might stand up and fight, as brave men do, but that he might keep out of the war, steal horses and commit other crimes. When the war ended he secured his discharge papers, and so was able to qualify as a member of the Loyal Union League, an organization composed largely of carpet baggers, scalawags and mulattoes. These would gather such negroes as they could assemble at meeting places, usually at night, and by false and

prejudicial appeals, and vague promises, and the liberal use of cheap whisky, they were driving the negroes wild, and securing their own election to office. One of the stock arguments, and one of the most effective used by these people, was that the large plantations of the South, had been cleared and put into cultivation by the negro slaves who had never been paid for the labor. And with the boasting assurance that when they get into office, they would see to it that all these big plantations were divided up, and each negro would be given forty acres and a mule.

The carpet baggers, scalawags and a few negroes who would do their bidding, filled practically all the offices. There was such an orgie of extravagant waste of public funds as the county had never known. Why should these people care about high taxes or bonded indebtedness? They paid no taxes and owned no real estate to be burdened with bonds.

There were a few honest and honorable gentlemen in the South who enlisted in the Federal army when the war came on because they didn't agree with the majority of the Southern people. But as a factor during reconstruction, intelligent, honest, white men of the South who could vote were in a helpless minority.

A large majority of negroes remained the kind hearted faithful people they have always been and are yet. But under the combined influence of liquor and evil associates, some of them became dangerous savages. Men dared not leave their wives and daughters alone lest they be insulted, or assaulted. And the condition of large numbers of widows and orphans of Confederate soldiers was distressing.

It was when these conditions had reached their climax that the Ku Klux Klan burst upon the scene like Elijah of old.

Thoughtful men had been studying and praying over conditions as they were. But, though they sought diligently, no ray of light penetrated the blackness of despair which surrounded them, till the thought came like the voice of inspiration to one of God's prophets, that there is power in organization and cooperation, and that the negro by nature has a superstitious fear of ghosts. Not even a drink of whisky or the promise of forty acres of good cotton land and a mule, could tempt him to cross his threshold at night, when there was a probability that he might encounter "them Kluxes."

Very few acts of violence or lawlessness were committed by members of the Klan. They relied almost exclusively on the negro's fear of ghosts, and cunningly devised tricks and schemes which made the offender the laughing-stock of his fellows. One incident may serve to illustrate the few rare occasions when men took drastic action as a means of self protection. A man who had been initiated a member of the Klan conceived the idea of turning traitor and betraying all

members he knew to the officials who at that time were trying to annihilate the organization, relying upon very drastic Acts recently passed by the legislature.

This man's activity in visiting different Dens and prying into their activities, and especially his efforts to meet and find out the names of members, aroused suspicion. And when the men began to study and keep watch on his movements, they secured proof positive of his plans. Other plans were then made to check-mate his efforts. When ready, as he supposed, to spring his great surprise, with all necessary papers in his possession, he took the train at Pulaski for some Northern destination. A message was sent by wire to a Klansman at Columbia, thirty miles north of Pulaski. The message read: "Wheat is going up." The telegraph operator who handled the message probably supposed it referred to some transaction in grain. But the man who received it understood its purport.

When the train reached Columbia a committee quietly called the traitor to one side, and when the train proceeded, he was not among the passengers. Perhaps very few ever knew what became of him. Not many ever heard of the incident. At that time the few who knew dared not talk about it. The traitor, is supposed to have fallen into Duck River, and as he was never heard of afterward, it is supposed he was drowned.

The Klan which at first fought shy of all kinds of publicity later changed and gradually sought more and more publicity through the newspapers, and through every imaginable form of public, mysterious and grotesque demonstration such as marching and counter marching through the streets, doubling back and forth, so as to make the impression that their numbers very far exceeded what they really were. In the notable parade which took place at Pulaski July 4, 1867 crowds of people who thronged the streets to witness it, as they had been informed of its coming by numerous posters distributed about, declared it equaled in numbers at least ten thousand riders, when the truth of the matter was, there were not more than a few hundred participating. During the parade a laughable incident is said to have occurred on the north side of the Public Square. As the parade reached that point one of the riders spying an old negro man standing close by and with wide, terrified eyes looking on, dismounted from his horse and in the most dignified manner requested the old darkey to hold the bridle for him. The old darkey was in that precarious position it seemed to him when it was "d— if you do, and d— if you don't." So he extended his hand to grasp the bridle when to his utter horror and amazement the rider deposited not only the bridle, but his own head in the outstretched hands of the negro who immediately declined any further service and left the scene post haste, while all who looked on joined in a laugh, negroes no less than whites.

A word about the regalia worn by the members of the Ku Klux Klan.

As the Klan stood primarily for the purity and preservation of the home and for the protection of the women and children, especially the widows and orphans of Confederate soldiers, white, the emblem of purity was chosen for the robes. And to render them startling and conspicuous red, emblem of the blood which Klansmen were ready to shed in defense of the helpless was chosen for the trimmings. Also a sentimental thought probably was present in adopting the color scheme, as white and red were the Confederate colors. Be it said to the credit of the women of the South who designed and made with their own hands more than four hundred thousand of these Klan robes for both horses and riders, not a word was said by these women to any one about them and not one single secret concerning them was ever revealed.

In view of the rapid growth of the order, and the absence of any form of central government or authority, men who were not members of the order began going about at night, masked, and often committing crimes and depredations which naturally were charged to the Ku Klux. And there were a few clashes of authority when men from different dens would meet. So a general council was called, and all the Dens, as far as could be reached, were asked to send delegates. After due consideration, it was agreed to effect a strong central organization, each Den surrendering its independence and becoming a unit in the general scheme.

A constitution, called a Prescript, was adopted, and was printed in the office of the Pulaski Citizen. The Prescript named the different officers of the organization, set out the territory over which each had jurisdiction, and the duties to be performed by each.

The following order from the Grand Dragon of Realm No. 1 will give an idea of the plans and purposes of the Klan at the beginning of its active operations in this new and broader field:

Headquarters, Realm No. I.

General Order No. I.

Whereas information of an authentic character has reached these headquarters that the blacks in the counties of Marshall, Maury, Giles and Lawrence, are organized into military companies with the avowed purpose to make war upon and exterminate the Ku Klux Klan, destroy our homes, desolate our land, heap indignities upon our fair good women, ten thousand times worse than death itself, said blacks are hereby solemnly warned and ordered to desist from further action in such organizations, if they exist.

The Grand Dragon regrets the necessity for such an order, but this Klan shall not be outraged and interfered

with by lawless negroes and meaner white men, who do not and never have understood our purposes.

In the first place this Klan is not an institution of violence, lawlessness, and cruelty; it is not lawless, it is not aggressive, it is not military, it is not revolutionary. It is essentially, originally and inherently a protective organization. It proposes to execute law instead of resisting it; and to protect all good men, whether white or black, from the outrages of bad men of both colors, who have been for the past three years a terror to society and an injury to us all. The blacks seem to be impressed with the belief that this Klan is especially their enemy. We are not the enemy of the blacks, as long as they behave themselves, make no threats upon us, and do not attack or interfere with us.

But if they make war upon us they must abide the awful retribution that will follow.

This Klan, while in its peaceful movements, and disturbing no one, has been fired into three times. This will not be endured any longer; and if it occurs again, and the parties be discovered, a remorseless vengeance will be wreaked upon them.

We reiterate that we are for peace and law and order. No man, white or black, shall be molested for his political sentiments. This Klan is not a political party; it is not a military party; it is a protective organization, and will never use violence except in resisting violence.

Outrages have been perpetrated by irresponsible parties, in the name of the Klan. Should these parties be apprehended they will be dealt with in a manner to insure us future exemption from such imposition. These imposters have, in some instances, whipped negroes. This is wrong! Wrong! It is denounced by this Klan as it must be by all good and humane men.

The Klan now as in the past is prohibited from doing such things. We are striving to protect all good, peaceful, well disposed and law-abiding men, whether white or black.

The Grand Dragon deems this order due to the public, due to the Klan, and due to those who are misguided and misinformed. We therefore, request that all newspapers who are friendly to law, and peace, and public welfare, will publish the same.

By order of the Grand Dragon of Realm No. I.

By the Grand Scribe."

We appeal to you, fair-minded reader, if the Klan was not right, and ask you this question, that you may answer from the depths of your being: If you had lived under such conditions, and such horrible outrages as the people of the

wrecked Southland were enduring, would you not whether from North, South, East or West, have acted just as these Klansmen did? We are sure you would for it has been truly said, "A noble soul salutes a noble soul, though the boundaries of the earth divide them." A good man hates a bad one wherever he may be found and between the two everywhere there is even "to all eternity" "a great gulf fixed."

The Klan was made stronger and more efficient by organization. But opposition became correspondingly more bitter and general. A Congressional investigation was conducted, and very drastic legislation was enacted both by the legislature of Tennessee, and by Congress for enforcement by military authority.

A second general council was called to assemble in Nashville in June 1867, to take into consideration all the circumstances and determine what course to pursue. Conditions were serious. Everyone recognized the danger. A clash might occur at any time and might precipitate civil war again. But with such a large percentage of the population disfranchised and under military government, or a nominal civil government sustained by militia, and administered by ignorant, prejudiced men who had little understanding of the people and no interest in the well being of the state and its citizens, what could be done? Without the restraining influence of the Klan, the whole people, women as well as men, were at the mercy of the drunken mob. The Klan offered the only hope for something better. So it was agreed to revise and perfect still further the Prescript, and effect a reorganization, under the leadership of the gallant Confederate General, N. B. Forrest, as Grand Wizard. Authority was conferred upon the Grand Wizard to take whatever action he might deem best. With perfect understanding of the consequences, Gen. Forrest was, to all intents and purposes, clothed with the authority of dictator. This revised Prescript has been preserved in the American Historical Magazine published at Nashville, Tenn., January 1900, from which extracts are reproduced as follows:

**Revised And Amended Prescript of the Order of the \* \* \*  
Appellation**

This Organization shall be styled and denominated, the Order of the \* \* \*.

**Creed**

We the Order of the \* \* \*, reverentially acknowledge the majesty and supremacy of the Divine Being, and recognize the goodness and providence of the same. And we recognize our relation to the United States Government, the supremacy of the Constitution, the Constitutional laws thereof, and the Union of States thereunder.

### Character And Objects of the Order

This is an institution of Chivalry, Humanity, Mercy, and Patriotism; embodying in its genius and its principles all that is chivalric in conduct, noble in sentiment, generous in manhood, and patriotic in purpose; its peculiar objects being:

First. To protect the weak, the innocent, and the defenseless, from the indignities, wrongs, and outrages of the lawless, the violent, and the brutal; to relieve the injured and oppressed; to succor the suffering and unfortunate, and especially the widows and orphans of Confederate soldiers.

Second. To protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, and all laws passed in conformity thereto, and to protect the States and the people thereof from all invasion from any source whatever.

Third. To aid and assist in the execution of all constitutional laws, and to protect the people from unlawful seizure, and from trial except by their peers in conformity to the laws of the land.

### ARTICLE I

#### Titles

Section 1. The officers of this Order shall consist of a Grand Wizard of the Empire, and his ten Genii; a Grand Dragon of the Realm, and his eight Hydras; a Grand Titan of the Dominion, and his six Furies; a Grand Giant of the Province, and his four Goblins; a Grand Cyclops of the Den, and his two Night-hawks; a Grand Magi, and Grand Monk, a Grand Scribe, a Grand Exchequer, a Grand Turk, and a Grand Sentinel.

Section 2. The body politic of this Order shall be known and designated as "Ghouls."

### ARTICLE II

#### Territory And Its Divisions

Section 1. The territory embraced within the jurisdiction of this Order shall be coterminous with the States of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, Kentucky and Tennessee; all combined constituting the Empire.

Section 2. The Empire shall be divided into four departments, the first to be styled the Realm, and coterminous with the boundaries of the several States; the second to be styled the Dominion, and to be coterminous with such counties as the Grand Dragons of the several Realms may assign to the charge of the Grand Titan. The third to be styled the Province; and to be coterminous with the several counties: provided, the Grand Titan may, when he deems it necessary, assign two Grand Giants to one Province, prescribing, at the

same time, the jurisdiction of each. The fourth department to be styled the Den, and shall embrace such part of a Province as the Grand Giant shall assign to the charge of a Grand Cyclops.

### ARTICLE III

#### Powers And Duties of Officers

##### Grand Wizard

Section 1. The Grand Wizard, who is the supreme officer of the Empire, shall have power, and he shall be required to appoint Grand Dragons for the different Realms of the Empire; and he shall have power to appoint his Genii; also a Grand Scribe, and Grand Exchequer for his Department, and he shall have the sole power to issue copies of this Prescript, through his subalterns, for the organization and dissemination of the Order; and when a question of paramount importance to the interests or prosperity of the Order arises, not provided for in this Prescript, he shall have power to determine such question, and his decision shall be final until the same shall be provided for by amendment as hereinafter provided. It shall be his duty to communicate with, and receive reports from, the Grand Dragons of Realms, as to the condition, strength, efficiency, and progress of the Order within their respective Realms. And it shall further be his duty to keep, by his Grand Scribe, a list of the names (without any caption or explanation whatever) of the Grand Dragons of the different Realms of the Empire, and shall number such Realms with the Arabic numerals 1, 2, 3, etc., ad finem; and he shall direct and instruct his Grand Exchequer as to the appropriation and disbursement he shall make of the revenue of the Order that comes to his hands.

##### Grand Dragon

Section 2. The Grand Dragon, who is the chief officer of the Realm, shall have power, and he shall be required, to appoint and instruct a Grand Titan for each Dominion of his Realm, (such Dominion not to exceed three in number for any Congressional District) said appointments being subject to the approval of the Grand Wizard of the Empire. He shall have power to appoint his Hydras; also, a Grand Scribe and a Grand Exchequer for his Department.

It shall be his duty to report to the Grand Wizard, when required by that officer, the condition, strength, efficiency, and progress of the Order within his Realm, and to transmit, through the Grand Titan, or other authorized sources, to the Order, all information, intelligence, or instruction conveyed to him by the Grand Wizard for that purpose, and all such other information or instruction as he may think will promote the interest and utility of the Order. He shall keep

by his Grand Scribe, a list of the names (without caption) of the Grand Titans of the different Dominions of his Realm, and shall report the same to the Grand Wizard when required, and shall number the Dominions of his Realm with the Arabic numerals 1, 2, 3, etc., ad finem. And he shall direct and instruct his Grand Exchequer as to the appropriation and disbursement he shall make of the revenue of the Order that comes to his hands.

#### Grand Titans

Section 3. The Grand Titan, who is the chief officer of the Dominion, shall have power, and he shall be required, to appoint and instruct a Grand Giant for each Province of his Dominion, such appointments, however, being subject to the approval of the Grand Dragon of the Realm. He shall have the power to appoint his Furies; also, a Grand Scribe and a Grand Exchequer for his Department. It shall be his duty to report to the Grand Dragon when required by that officer, the condition, strength, efficiency, and progress of the Order within his Dominion, and to transmit through the Grand Giant, or other authorized channels, to the Order, all information, intelligence, instruction or direction conveyed to him by the grand Dragon for that purpose, and all such other information or instruction as he may think will enhance the interest or efficiency of the Order.

He shall keep, by his Grand Scribe, a list of the names (without caption or explanation) of the Grand Giants of the different Provinces of his Dominion, and shall report the same to the Grand Dragon when required; and shall number the Provinces of his Dominion with the Arabic numerals 1, 2, 3, etc., ad finem. And he shall direct and instruct his Grand Exchequer as to the appropriation and disbursement he shall make of the revenue of the Order that comes to his hands.

#### Grand Giant

Sec. 4. The Grand Giant, who is the chief officer of the Province, shall have power, and he is required to appoint and instruct a Grand Cyclops for each Den of his Province, such appointments, however, being subject to the approval of the Grand Titan of the Dominion. And he shall have the further power to appoint his Goblins; also a Grand Scribe and a Grand Exchequer for his Department.

It shall be his duty to supervise and administer general and special instructions in the organization and establishment of the Order within his Province, and to report to the Grand Titan, when required by that officer, the condition, strength, efficiency, and progress of the Order within his Province, and to transmit through the Grand Cyclops, or other legitimate sources, to the Order, all information, intelligence, instruction, or directions conveyed to him by the Grand Titan or other higher authority for that purpose, and all such other

information or instruction as he may think would advance the purposes or prosperity of the Order. He shall keep, by his Grand Scribe, a list of the names (without caption or explanation) of the Grand Cyclops of the various Dens of his Province, and shall report the same to the Grand Titan when required; and shall number the Dens of his Province with the Arabic numerals 1, 2, 3, etc., ad finem. He shall determine and limit the number of Dens to be organized and established in his Province; and he shall direct and instruct his Grand Exchequer as to the appropriation and disbursement he shall make of the revenue of the Order that comes to his hands.

#### Grand Cyclops

Sec. 5. The Grand Cyclops, who is the chief officer of the Den, shall have power to appoint his Night-hawks, his Grand Scribe, his Grand Turk, his Grand Exchequer, and his Grand Sentinel. And for small offenses he may punish any member by fine, and may reprimand him for the same. And he is further empowered to admonish and reprimand his Den, or any member thereof, for any imprudence, irregularity, or transgression, whenever he may think that the interests, welfare, reputation or safety of the Order demand it. It shall be his duty to take charge of his Den under the instruction and with the assistance (when practicable) of the Grand Giant, and in accordance with and in conformity to the provisions of this Prescript—a copy of which shall in all cases be obtained before the formation of a Den begins. It shall further be his duty to appoint all regular meetings of his Den, and to preside at the same; to appoint irregular meetings when he deems it expedient; to preserve order and enforce discipline in his Den; to impose fines for irregularities or disobedience of orders; and to receive and initiate candidates for admission into the Order, after the same shall have been pronounced competent and worthy to become members, by the Investigating Committee herein after provided for. And it shall further be his duty to make a quarterly report to the Grand Giant of the condition, strength, efficiency, and progress of his Den, and shall communicate to the Officers and Ghouls of his Den, all information, intelligence, instruction, or direction, conveyed to him by the Grand Giant or other higher authority for the purpose; and shall from time to time administer all such other counsel, instruction or direction, as in his sound discretion, will conduce to the interests, and more effectually accomplish, the real objects and designs of the Order.

#### ARTICLE IV

##### Election of Officers

Section 1. The Grand Wizard shall be elected biennially by the Grand Dragons of Realms. The first election for this

office to take place on the 1st Monday in May, 1870, (a Grand Wizard having been created, by the original Prescript, to serve three years from the 1st Monday in May, 1867); all subsequent elections to take place every two years thereafter. And the incumbent Grand Wizard shall notify the Grand Dragons of the different Realms, at least six months before said election, at what time and place the same will be held; a majority vote of all the Grand Dragons present being necessary and sufficient to elect a Grand Wizard. Such election shall be by ballot, and shall be held by three Commissioners appointed by the Grand Wizard for that purpose; and in the event of a tie, the Grand Wizard shall have the casting-vote.

Sec. 2. The Grand Magi and the Grand Monk of Dens shall be elected annually by the Ghouls of Dens; and the first election for these officers may take place as soon as ten Ghouls have been initiated for the formation of a Den. All subsequent elections to take place every year thereafter.

Sec. 3. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Grand Wizard, by death, resignation, removal, or otherwise, the senior Grand Dragon of the Empire shall immediately assume and enter upon the discharge of the duties of the Grand Wizard, and shall exercise the powers and perform the duties of said office until the same shall be filled by election; and the said senior Grand Dragon, as soon as practicable after the happening of such vacancy, shall call a convention of the Grand Dragons of Realms, to be held at such time and place as in his discretion he may deem convenient and proper. Provided, however, that the time for assembling such Convention for the election of a Grand Wizard shall in no case exceed six months from the time such vacancy occurred; and in the event of a vacancy in any other office, the same shall immediately be filled in the manner herein before mentioned.

Sec. 4. The officers heretofore elected or appointed may retain their offices during the time for which they have been so elected or appointed, at the expiration of which time said offices shall be filled as herein-before provided.

(Sections prescribing the duties of minor officers, and details, are omitted. Also expressive Latin quotations which were used as head lines for each page of the pamphlet.)

## ARTICLE VII

### Eligibility For Membership

Section 1. No one shall be presented for admission into the Order until he shall have first been recommended by some friend or intimate who is a member, to the Investigating Committee, (which shall be composed of the Grand Cyclops, the Grand Magi, and the Grand Monk,) and who shall have investigated his antecedents and his past and present standing and connections; and after such investigation, shall

have pronounced him competent and worthy to become a member. Provided, no one shall be presented for admission into, or become a member of this Order who shall not have attained the age of eighteen years.

Section 2. No one shall become a member of this Order unless he shall voluntarily take the following oaths or obligations, and shall satisfactorily answer the following interrogatories, while kneeling, with his right hand raised to heaven, and his left hand resting on the Bible:

### Preliminary Obligation

"I——solemnly swear or affirm that I will never reveal any thing that I may this day (or night) learn concerning the Order of the \* \* \*, and that I will true answer make to such interrogatories as may be put to me touching my competency for admission into the same. So help me God."

(Several questions were then asked.)

If the interrogatories are satisfactorily answered, and the candidate desires to go further (after something of the character and nature of the Order has thus been indicated to him) and to be admitted to the benefits, mysteries, secrets and purposes of the Order, he shall then be required to take the following final oath or obligation. But if said interrogatories are not satisfactorily answered, or the candidate declines to proceed further, he shall be discharged, after being solemnly admonished by the initiating officer of the deep secrecy to which the oath already taken has bound him, and that the extreme penalty of the law will follow a violation of the same.

### Final Obligation

"I——of my own free will and accord, and in the presence of Almighty God, do solemnly swear or affirm, that I will never reveal to any one not a member of the Order of the \* \* \* by any intimation, sign, symbol, word or act, or in any other manner whatever, any of the secrets, signs, passwords, or mysteries of the Order of the \* \* \*, or that I am a member of the same, or that I know any one who is a member; and that I will abide by the Prescript and Edicts of the Order of the \* \* \*. So help me God."

The initiating officer will then proceed to explain to the new member the character and objects of the Order, and introduce him to the mysteries and secrets of the same; and shall read to him this Prescript and the Edicts thereof, or present the same to him for personal perusal.

## ARTICLE IX

### Interdiction

The origin, mysteries, and Ritual of this Order shall never be written, but the same shall be communicated orally.

9. The most profound and rigid secrecy concerning any and everything that relates to the Order, shall at all times be maintained.

10. Any member who shall reveal or betray the secrets of this Order, shall suffer the extreme penalty of the law.

#### Admonition

Hush! thou art not to utter what I am; bethink thee! it was our covenant!

#### Register

##### I

1. Dismal. 2. Mystic. 3. Stormy. 4. Peculiar. 5. Blooming. 6. Brilliant. 7. Painful. 8. Portentous. 9. Fading. 10. Melancholy. 11. Glorious. 12. Gloomy.

##### II

1. White. 2. Green. 3. Yellow. 4. Amber. 5. Purple. 6. Crimson. 8. Emerald.

##### III

1. Fearful. 2. Startling. 3. Wonderful. 4. Alarming. 5. Mournful. 6. Appalling. 7. Hideous. 8. Frightful. 9. Awful. 10. Horrible. 11. Dreadful. 12. Last.

#### Cumberland

#### L'ENVOI

To the lovers of law and order, peace and justice, we send greeting; and to the shades of the venerated dead we affectionately dedicate the Order of the \* \* \*.

#### Dissolution

After the reorganization from which so much was expected, matters grew worse instead of better.

Most writers who have attempted to explain the order of the Grand Wizard disbanding the Ku Klux Klan in March 1869, have given two general reasons. First, acts of violence by men not members of the order, and which the Klan could not control. Second, drastic legislation, and especially a proclamation of Gov. Brownlow of Tennessee, placing certain counties of that State under martial law.

Knowing something of the character of Gen. Forrest, who was at that time Grand Wizard, vested with practically absolute authority over the Klan, and of his confidential advisers, we do not believe that either of these was a determining factor. Why should a great military genius, a born fighter, disband a compact organization of four hundred thousand men, extending over a dozen states, because the Governor of

one state declared martial law in a few counties? Or because a few men outside the organization committed unlawful acts in disguise, when a thousand fold more unlawful acts were being committed openly?

A story told by a member of the inner circle appears much more plausible. Probably no documentary evidence of its authenticity ever existed, and as both the principals are dead, the truth of the story may never be established as a historic fact. But believing it is worth preserving it is here given.

The story as it came to the writer is that soon after Gen. U. S. Grant became President of the United States, March 4, 1869, he sought a personal interview with Gen. Forrest. Gen. Forrest went quietly to Washington to meet the President, when a frank, heart to heart talk over conditions and dangers confronting the country was had. The possibility of a clash, or an outbreak which might lead to Civil War was discussed. Finally the President asked Gen. Forrest what he and his friends wanted; or on what conditions the Ku Klux organization would disband. With characteristic directness, Gen. Forrest replied, that if the President would use his influence to terminate military government in the South, and permit the Southern States to reestablish civil government in which their representative citizens might take part, that he, Forrest, would use whatever influence he might have with his friends to disband the Ku Klux Klan. The two great soldiers looked each other straight in the eye, each extended his right hand, and so they parted. And it is significant that the order disbanding the Ku Klux Klan was issued in a few days and was followed in less than a month by a special message of the President to Congress, recommending the restoration of the States to their proper relations to the Government at as early a period as the people of these States shall be found willing to become peaceful and orderly communities and to adopt and maintain such constitutions and laws as will effectually secure the civil and political rights of all persons within their borders. It is also significant, that whereas during the four years which had intervened since the surrender of Lee at Appomattox, practically no advance had been made toward reestablishment of civil government in the South, during the first year of Grant's administration civil government was reestablished in seven of the eleven states which were still under military government when President Grant was inaugurated. And rapid progress was being made toward reestablishment of civil government in the remaining four states. See Messages and Papers of the Presidents. Vol. VII. Special Message of April 7, 1869, and President Grant's first Annual Message to Congress.

It is probable that the President in his message suggesting constitutions that would secure civil and political

rights for all persons, was not understood exactly alike by all. Certain persons in Congress and elsewhere, no doubt thought of the recently emancipated slaves. Other persons no doubt thought of the disfranchised Confederate soldiers. Gen. Grant, no doubt thought of both classes and carefully prepared his special message and secured the passage of necessary legislation to restore the southern states to their places in the national government.

Having met the needs for which it came into being at a time when all other means had failed the Grand Wizard who had the authority vested in him to do so, ordered that the organization known as the Ku Klux Klan be disbanded, that all regalia and equipment of every kind be burned, and that all assemblies and activities as Klansmen cease.

The disbanding of the Klan was featured by strange and mysterious ceremonies, as was the organization and its initiations. One of the most notable of these ceremonies was that held at Nashville, led by Capt. John W. Morton, who was at that time Grand Cyclops of the Nashville Den. A party of mounted Klansmen in full regalia proceeded to give a final parade through the streets of Nashville, and this in face of the fact that the city was then in charge of several thousand militia men who had taken the oath to capture any Klansman dead or alive, wheresoever he might appear. But in spite of this oath this squad of Klansmen made their appearance, from the surrounding country side and moving down the city street they passed silently and stately and solemnly as the dead, on past the beautiful Capitol building where a thousand hostile camp fires burned. They rode straight through and not a word was spoken, not a hand lifted against them, not a command given to halt them. They rode on and on past the outskirts of the city into the darkness of the night and the denseness of the forest. The men dismounted, the chaplain spoke a last prayer, and for the last time the riders tenderly removed regalia of both horses and men, placed it in a grave, sprinkled it with the ashes of their burned rituals, and with bowed heads passed out again down the shadowy paths of the forest glens. And so ended the original Ku Klux Klan.

But the memory of its men, their exalted purposes and dauntless spirit, and the principles for which it stood, will live as long as civilization endures, and chivalrous men protect defenseless women.

So it was, and so ended the organization which brought the only relief to the desolated Southland in the dark days of reconstruction, immediately following that awful contest between the States, when brother's hand was lifted against brother; when the moan of Rizpah for her sons who came not again, was heard throughout this great and beloved land of ours, when so many of her gallant sons wearing the blue and



**R. J. BRUNSON, AGE 82. (Now Deceased.)**

An Original Klansman Wearing an Original Robe. Believed to be the only original robe in existence.

the gray fought and died for their convictions.

We are thankful to God that at last we can say:

"No more shall the war cry sever,  
And the winding rivers be red  
They banish our anger forever,  
When they laurel the graves of our dead.

Under the sod and the dew,  
Waiting the Judgment day;  
Tears and love for the blue,  
Love and tears for the gray."



**MRS. MILDRED VOORHIES**  
Pulaski, Tenn.

Who designed and made the first Ku Klux robe for her brother, John B. Kennedy, one of the organizers of the original Klan. This original design became the pattern for all others.