

WAR CLOUDS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The White and Black Clans Gathering for Battle.

Parade of the New Rifle Clubs in Columbia—The Aristocratic Sons of the Palmetto State Shouldering Their Muskets—Organization of Volunteer Militia Companies to Oppose the Colored National Guards—Description of the Organization of the Rival Armies—United States Troops Arriving in Columbia—The Ku Klux Law to be Enforced.

CHARLESTON, May 3, 1871.

Since that terrible day for South Carolina when the blue-coated cohorts of Sherman marched into Columbia, burning, destroying and looting as they came, this State has not been placed in such peril as she is to-day, morally, socially and politically. The people are now really face to face with an issue which will be determined in a few weeks. Events are crowding fast.

Three days ago, for the first time since the war, 800 white men, many of them belonging to the best families in the State, marched through the main streets of this city with the precision of veterans, each man uniformed and equipped in rifle green or gray, and carrying a Remington or a Winchester sixteen-shooting rifle on his shoulder. Bands played, and as a testimony of the feeling of the fair sex swarms of ladies of the first society gathered at window, balcony, doorstep and sidewalk to smile at and wave handkerchiefs to the young men, who, for the first time since 1865, have appeared openly with arms and uniforms in this State. These rifle clubs are chartered as clubs only, the Carolina Rifle Club carrying Winchester rifles, for which they pay thirty-five dollars apiece as private individuals—the State, of course, having nothing to do with this company; but the other companies lately organized, such as the Sumter Rifle Club, are yet without arms. The Charleston Rifle Club, the Adger Rifle Club and the Washington Rifle Club have, I believe, humbugged Governor Scott into giving them arms from the State, he receiving some kind of a verbal promise from their officers that they were to consider themselves as State militia. Their commissions, however, were issued in blank and not filled out, and the clubs are essentially clubs, and have neither company, letter nor regimental organization. An Irish rifle club will be raised in a few days and will probably be recruited from the Palmetto Fire Company (all fire companies here are voluntary), which to a large extent is composed of Irish citizens. Five or six companies are being organized beside, but as yet they are in embryo in this city, and events will no doubt hasten their birth.

Yesterday the Charlestonians came out in strong force on several of the streets to gaze at a very ominous sight. Twelve brass field guns, with forges, caissons and all the paraphernalia of guns in battery, swept through the streets to the citadel, the last place in this city where General O'Conner placed a sentry for the Confederacy, the night before the bridge across the Ashley was burned, when the Union troops arrived in front of the city. A few days since came one hundred cannoniers of the United States Third artillery, and last week came a troop of cavalry, and in the neighborhood of the citadel the hammer and chisel and saw are heard daily. Barracks and sheds are being erected for United States troops, who are being gradually poured into the State in view of the so-called Ku Klux troubles.

"Now," said a South Carolina gentleman to your correspondent yesterday, "What are we to judge from all these movements of troops through the State? Why, simply that Grant is determined first to frighten us, if he can, by a display of armed force, and then, while we are under the fright, carry the State when the time comes for a Presidential election; but we have all round us negro national guards armed and equipped by the Legislature and Governor at our expense, for they have no money to equip themselves and it must all come out of our pockets. Regiment after regiment is organized with nigger colonels. The Lieutenant Governor of our State is a nigger; there are seventy-four niggers in the State Legislature who cannot read or write; negro or mulatto prostitutes in carriages having curious crests on their paneling, are driven through the streets of the capital, and are in actual affiliation with the Governor of the once proud State of South Carolina. We are taxed until we can't draw breath, and, in the face of all this, you, as a correspondent of the HERALD, ask me what our boys are forming rifle clubs so suddenly for? I am astonished, but I will tell you. We don't mean that this thing shall go on any longer. We don't want to be robbed any longer by thieves with handies to their names. We are the white race, which, under no circumstances, can ever be held down for any length of time by negroes, and if they, with their uniformed National Guard niggers shall attempt to outlaw us and drive us into a fight in defending our property, why, then, by G—, we shall have a try for it, and in my calculation the niggers will go to the wall. We have been whipped by the North, but we do not intend the niggers shall confer the same honor on us. That's all, and that's why we are raising rifle clubs."

I find that this citizen is but one of hundreds like himself scattered over the State. The feeling, though suppressed, is absolutely dangerous. On both sides the fire is fanned by the existence of the negro National Guard. To show what the National Guard is I shall give some details.

The South Carolina National Guard is altogether a negro organization. In it are fourteen regiments of infantry, armed with Winchester rifles, a most formidable weapon. The Guard has one major general, C. L. Anderson; four brigadier generals, Swails, Whipper, Hoge and Winsmith, and an adjutant general, Moses, whose hands are dirty, it is said, with all kinds of official plunder. The inspector general is a negro, the paymaster general, Dennis, is a notorious character, and some of the officers, with rank as high as colonel, are as great rascals as live to-day in the United States. The First regiment of National Guards is located in Charleston district, having eleven companies, and is commanded by a rather gentlemanly young fellow named Taft. This regiment is well uniformed and well disciplined. I saw them at a right shoulder shift in column of four the other day. The men were all large-bodied, ignorant-looking negroes, and they number a thousand men. Nash's regiment has its headquarters at Columbia, with eleven companies. The third regiment belongs to Beaufort, and has for its lieutenant colonel Robert Smalls, who ran the Planter, a small steamer belonging to his master, out of Charleston during the war. It is needless to say that Smalls is the most bitter personal enemy of the white man in the State, and he would, it is hinted, only be too glad to draw a Winchester rifle on the entire white population of South Carolina if the rifle could only cover all the able-bodied men in the State. The adjutant, Langley, and quartermaster of the Third regiment, were sentenced to two years' imprisonment, with a heavy fine, by Judge Bond, of the United States Court in this city, some days ago, for stuffing ballot boxes, and thereby fraudulently electing Delarge, a negro barber, to Congress. The colonel of the Fourth regiment is George McIntyre, a Senator, like Smalls, and who is engaged to be married to one of the famous, or otherwise, well-known Rollins girls. His major is a half breed, named Hayne, who boasts of being connected by the bar sinister with the well-known family of that name in this State. The Fourth regiment is made up of negroes, chiefly from Barnwell and Colleton counties, and is quite full in officers and men. The Sixth regiment is located in Lancaster and Marlboro counties, and is under command of a man named Maxwell, who is distinguished for nothing but a furious appetite. The Eighth belongs to Darlington county and is commanded by a man named Tillabrown. There are quite a number of what is called Ku Klux outrages in Darlington county, and I have spoken with a number of negroes who have had to fly from that county and are now in Charleston hiding. The Ninth belongs to Hamburg and Edgefield, and has for its lieutenant colonel the famous Prince Rivers, a very oleaginous negro, who distinguished himself as a lecturer at the North some years ago. The other regiments are the Tenth, Colonel J. C. Smith, Orangeburg, Newbury and Lexington counties; Eleventh regiment, Colonel E. L. Mann, Abbeville and Anderson counties; Twelfth regiment, Oconee county; Thirteenth regiment, Colonel Fleming, Spartanburg, Union and Laurens counties; Fourteenth regiment, Colonel Yocom, Chester, York and Fairfield counties.

With all their arms and equipments, however, these negro militia are cowardly, except when filled with whiskey, although in frame and stature they are larger than the native white South Carolinian. Directly at the headquarters of the Thirteenth regiment, in Laurens county, lived a Senator Owens, who told me the other day that he had to come to Charleston or they would have killed him as dead as a door nail. I have received intelligence from Columbia to-day that Senator Baroer has been driven from Fairfield county, his house having been visited by disguised men, who also sent him threatening notices. A Mr. Benbow, a schoolmaster, was shot dead in Clarendon county on Saturday, and a negro was killed in Florence on Monday. David Hallstock, a commissioner, of Newbury county, I am informed, would have been killed last Saturday night by a party of the "Committee of Safety," which is the real name of the Ku Klux in South Carolina, but he was judicious enough to absent himself at the time.

Slowly but surely the white element is gaining ground in South Carolina, as it has in Georgia.

Although inferior in numbers in this State and in all the counties before Charleston, the secret organizations of the "Committee of Safety" is slowly but surely winning out all men who attempt to control negroes in voting, or who attempt to encourage negroes to burn, ravish or destroy white men's property or white men's lives. The conflict is coming with a vengeance in this State. In the State gubernatorial election of 1870 Scott received 83,071 votes, while the reform democratic candidate, Judge Carpenter, received 51,537 votes. This exhibits the number of the able bodied voters of the State pretty well. In other words, there are ninety thousand able bodied negroes and sixty thousand able bodied whites in the State, and, sooner or later, a fight must come, and I can only say that I believe that the negroes will be—as a Confederate officer told me yesterday—cut to pieces if they are mad enough to begin a row. It is useless to be blind to the fact that meets me everywhere I go, and stares me in the face.

That wonderful and powerful secret organization, which springs up in a night and disappears at dawn, no one knows where—the "Committee of Safety"—has, through its powerful agencies, complete possession of the State of South Carolina. Interested parties of both sides will contradict each other as to the magnitude of the organization. I firmly believe, from what I am told by men whose names I dare not use, that the "Committee of Safety" have determined to displace all white carpet-bagger or native renegade office holders gradually, in every instance waiting for some ostensible or real cause to justify the rude justice of their measures. I also believe that the adherents of this organization are drilling and preparing for something which I will not name, but must almost conjecture. I know that there is no feeling whatever among their men against the United States or its troops, for the majority of the men in the United States ranks hate the negro as bitterly as the Carolinian, but I believe that the doom of the thievish carpet-baggers is approaching, and once sent them away the dominant party in South Carolina will hold the negro as in a vice, although they do not intend to deprive them of the franchise by any means.

In the meantime a State convention will be held at Columbia on next Tuesday, May 9, at which about four delegates from each of the thirty-two counties of the State will be present. This convention is the fruit of some resolutions offered in the Charleston Chamber of Commerce by Mr. Richard Lathero, who is well known in New York, in which the enormous and scoundrelly taxation of \$4,000,000 for the current year passed by the State Legislature was denounced, which gave rumor to some false statements that repudiation was meant, which is not the case. Until today I believed that the convention would comprise delegates from the counties of both parties, but now I see that such will not be the case. I find that nearly all the delegates already chosen from the different counties either have served in the rebel ranks or have been always very prominent in their views. Such men as Generals Kershaw, Butler and Gary will attend, and it is possible that Wade Hampton may be present, but is very evident to me that the Convention will override such moderate men as Lathers, who seeks only for conciliation. There is no common ground between the two parties for them to meet upon, and the question of race is insuperable. It is expected that W. D. Porter, a distinguished lawyer of this city, will preside in the Convention. Some of the more moderate and sensible republicans, like Senator C. P. Leslie, General Gurney, Attorney General Chamberlain, District Attorney Corbin, of this city, and others, are growing more conservative daily, and would like to make some accommodation, if possible, but I don't believe in the result as if it were at all hopeful. One of the measures that will be certain to occupy the attention of the Convention will be shaped in the form of a resolution to do away with the Sterling Funding bill, which empowers the State to borrow the sum of \$6,000,000 or \$1,200,000, as best it can and where it can. Seven State Senators, as far back as last March, headed by the immaculate K. P. Whittemore, protested against this war, and their objection holds good to-day. It is a rascally and corrupt bill, and if the State does not throw down such legislative frauds, the thievish crew who rule her now will bankrupt South Carolina. Governor Scott, it is said, is becoming quite conservative in his tone of late, and in talk with me he gave me the idea and had the appearance of a young candidate for holy orders—his utterances were beautiful and his language so choice. In the meantime the State bonds hold good at sixty, and I believe will be redeemed, and I think that the South Carolina bank bills are perfectly good investments for purchase. And still there are very unpleasant facts to look at, some of which I may specify. First, these fourteen negro regiments filled with a blind hatred to the whites; secondly, the arming and organizing of numerous rifle clubs; thirdly, the inscrutable and all-pervading presence of this vast and powerful "Committee of Public Safety," which holds the destiny of South Carolina in the hollow of its mysterious hand, and lastly, the increasing antipathy and distrust of the whites, who do not desire to be ruled by ignorant and dishonest men, whom they and the educated population look upon as little better than savages. To me it looked very ominous, the passage of those twelve field guns in battery through the streets of Charleston. A spark, only just a little spark, may light a fire that the water of an ocean may not extinguish.