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A CONSPIRACY.

TREASON TO THE STATE.

THE ORGANIC LAW VIOLATED WITH IMPUNITY.

(State Chronicle.)

ASHEVILLE, N. C., Oct. 6, '92.

DEAR SIR:—I have your recent favor enquiring about my connection with the order known as Gideon's Band, and in answer would say: S. Otho Wilson initiated me in the order of Gideonites at Goldsboro in August, 1891, on my return from State Alliance which met at Morehead. He kept the obligation I took and I do not know its exact terms, but will assure you it was a regular "raw head and bloody bones" affair. I was ashamed of it as soon as I found out what it was, and have had nothing to do with it since. If I had known before hand what it was I would not have joined it. But Wilson told me it was a good thing and would aid the Alliance cause, and being an earnest Allianceman I joined.

As soon as I thought about it after having learned what it was, I saw it was a dangerous thing, and no honest man could have anything to do with it.

Tom Long told me the other day I was the cause of the Third party being a failure up here. I reckon he had reference to my failure to work and fight in Gideon's army.

The plan of the Gideon's Band, as I remember it is about this: There is a State Chief, who was at that time, as I understood, S. Otho Wilson; there is also a Chief in each Congressional district; and a sub Chief in each county, whose duty is to obey and have executed the orders of their immediate Chiefs, they getting their orders from the State Chief. A failure to obey is made in the obligation a very serious offence. There are three hundred members of the band in each Congressional district—the number in each county I have forgotten.

I am thoroughly impressed with the idea that this is a dangerous order if it is being worked in North Carolina. About this I don't know, because, as I said, I concluded to have nothing to do with it as soon as I learned what it meant, and as I came out strong for the democrats soon after I was initiated by Mr. S. Otho Wilson afterwards I suppose they became afraid of me. At least, Wilson did not send the papers he said he would send to me.

Yours truly,
(Signed) M. L. REED.

HON. F. M. SIMMONS,
Raleigh, N. C.

BELL CROSS, Camden Co., N. C, October 12th, 1892.

HON. F. M. SIMMONS, Chairman,
Raleigh, N. C:

MY DEAR SIR.—Answering your favor of recent date, in which you ask me to give you for publication what I know abut the existence in North Carolina of an order known as the "Gideon Band," I would say, at Gatesville, in Gates county, in December, 1891, Mr. S. Otho Wilson, in the presence of Mr. James B. Brinson, of Pamlico county (District Lecturer for the First District), I being then State lecturer, proposed to me that I should become a member of the said order. I replied to Mr. Wilson that I could not consent to connect myself with the Band unless he would first reveal to me the character and purposes of the order. This he consented to do upon my promising secrecy. Mr. Wilson then read me the obligation which he wished me to take, and outlined the general objects and purposes of the order.

The obligation was a very rigid one, and according to my recollection the penalty of a disclosure of the secrets of the order was death.

The plan of organization was as follows: A National Chief, a State Chief, a District Chief and a county Chief. The State Chief received his orders from the National Chief, the District Chief from the State Chief, and the County Chief from the District Chief. The membership in each Congressional District was 300, and in each county, I think, no more than 30. This thirty were to be especially selected for their efficiency and influence, true and tried men who could be relied upon under all circumstances, in all meetings, etc.

It was the duty of these chiefs and members to obey and execute all orders emanating from their superiors. Mr. Wilson stated that the object of the organization was to aid and promote the Reform movement. The initation fee was $2.00. This conversation took place after Mr. Wilson's return from the Indianapolis Alliance Council.

After Mr. Wilson had revealed the whole thing to me, I told him I regarded the movement, as outlined by him, as being a very dangerous one, and that I thought it would result in the destruction of Alliance and the defeat of the reform movement then proposed, and I positively refused to have anything to do with it. Mr. Wilson then burned in my presence the obligation which he had read to me, and pretended he was merely considering the advisability of organizing the order, although I have since learned he had initiated Mr. M. L. Reed, of Buncombe, during the previous August, and appointed him chief in the 9th Congressional district.

During the conference Mr. Wilson stated to Mr. Brinson that he had selected him to be chief in the 1st Congressional district.

Yours respectfully,
(Signed.) J. S. BELL.

MR. EDITOR:—Through the medium of the press I desire to lay before the people of North Carolina two letters recently addressed to me by Mr. Reed, a member of the present House of Representatives and a prominent member of the Alliance, and Mr. J. S. Bell, a member of the present State Senate, and recently State Alliance Lecturer, disclosing the existence in this State of an unlawful and dangerous political society, whose chief is S Otho Wilson, the official head of the People's party in North Carolina

The letters show conclusively that this society did exist in this State but recently, and if it has ceased to exist, the duty of showing this fact rests upon the men who it shows introduced it.

In exposing this dangerous scheme to the liberties of the people and the peace and good will of society, these gentlemen but discharge the plain duty of good citizenship. The facts which they have disclosed clear the mists from the present anomalous political situation in North Carolina, and explain many things connected therewith, otherwise unaccountable because so radically at variance with all the known characteristics of our people. It accounts for the refusal on the part of many of those supposed to be under the influence of this society to hear discussions upon important questions affecting vitally their highest interest; it accounts for their refusal to read literature not having the stamp and sanction of the leaders in this movement; it accounts for their bad temper and the absence in their political conduct of that independence and conservatism which has ever been a distinguished characteristic of the North Carolina "breed" wherever found; it accounts for the automatic and subservient manner in which in their political evolutions they move and act; it accounts for the remark we frequently hear coming from the simpler but more honest of these people to the effect that they cannot do what they know and admit to be their political duty because they are sworn to do otherwise; and it accounts for the humiliating fact that a people hitherto brave and free have apparently surrendered their independence, fettered their consciences and ceased to act as free men.

I need not go into an explanation of how these results might logically flow from the means employed, for every intelligent man will readily understand how easily a few men acting together in secret under common orders and to a common end may shape and direct the action of a multitude, each individual acting for himself.

As the existence of this secret society, acting upon and directing the political convictions of these people accounts for the eccentricities which have marked their recent conduct, so that conduct corroborates and supports the evidence I now lay before the people of its active existence in our midst.

The presence here of the Band of Gideon recalls all too vividly the "Union Leage, or Heroes of America," that night mare of 1868, which in the name of charity and in the form of benevolence became the secret auxiliary of a corrupt, political party, and brought every home and fireside in the land under the shadow of a hand which neither the laws of God or man can stay against the inexorable command of its chief. It will be recalled how under the fostering care of that party this terrible organization gained such ascendency here that it required a counter secret society and all but revolution to break its hold upon the liberties of our people.

It was thought both of these societies and all similar organizations, admittedly dangerous in a free country like ours, had been crushed out in North Corolina never to return again. The rigorous law against secret political associations now upon our statute books were placed there with the experience of those days fresh in the minds of our people, and express their determination never again to tolerate in our midst such a menace to liberty.

Both of these societies, the one against which this legislation was aimed, and the one which defies it are of foreign inception, and were born of disorders and agitations from which we are happily exempt.

The "Union League" was of Northern birth, begotten of the troublous times which immediately preceded its introduction here, and the "Gideon's Band" is the offspring of that wild recklessness which characterizes the incongruous nationalities which constitute the lower strata of western metropolitan life, and which now and then breaks forth in Hay Market riots and Mafia butcheries.

A man better acquainted than Mr. Wilson with the sentiments of our people would not have introduced here an institution so obnoxious to our most cherished conceptions and ideas of free, open and honorable political action. If he was himself imbued with the wild vagaries and methods of the "Orders" and "Unions" with which he was thrown in contact on his visit to the west immediately preceding his overtures to Mr. Bell, his better judgment should have taught him they were out of joint with the pre-conceived notions of our people, and could only result in injury to the cause he wished to advance.

There have been many rumors and whisperings of the existence here of this dangerous "Band," but until the letters of Messrs. Bell and Reed there was no tangible evidence: and I now submit these proofs with full confidence that the conservatism of our people will not be slow to repudiate it, and fittingly rebuke the desperate agitators and demagogues who dared introduce it.

F. M. SIMMONS,
Chm'n Dem. State Ex. Com.

Republicans Dissatisfied.

Speaking of the Republican convention endorsing the Third party nominees in this county, the *Roanoke News* says:

"In many portions of the county the Republicans are dissatisfied with the action of the convention and refuse to be bound by it. Some say they prefer to vote the Democratic ticet, others say they will not vote at all, rather than vote with the Third party."

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(Sampson Democrat.)

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