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Oaths. Ku-Klux-Klan. 1868

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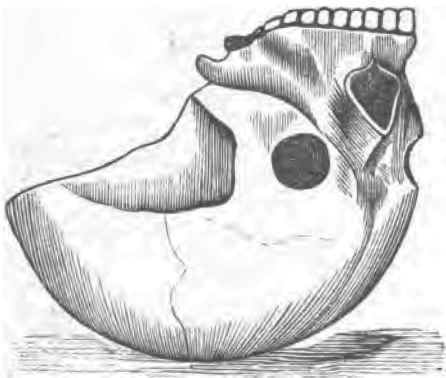
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*See  
page 110*

**THE**

**K. K. K.**



**THE CONSECRATING BOWL.**

**EXPOSED!**

**BY A MEMBER.**

THE OATHS,  
SIGNS, CEREMONIES AND OBJECTS  
OF THE  
KU-KLUX-KLAN.

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A FULL EXPOSÉ.

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BY A LATE MEMBER.

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

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CLEVELAND,  
1868.

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## PERSONAL.

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It does not matter who is the writer of the following pages. If it did, no inducement likely to be offered, would tempt him to publish his name. He has no desire to be tracked out by the Brothers of the Southern Cross, and he knows too much of their deathless hatred and hound-like pertinacity, their numbers, and the ramifications of their organization, already encroaching on southern Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, to carelessly take the slightest risk of anything of the kind.

It is due to the public, however, that one who pretends to make an exposure like this, in which the whole nation is interested, should offer some plausible explanation of the means by which he became possessed of the information. For this explanation the reader is referred to the narrative following.

As to the truthfulness of the exposure, the writer is content to leave its vindication to

the events of the future, confident that so far as the workings of the K. K. K. are ever discovered, they will confirm the main facts as given here. Of course there are many minor points on which it is not likely there will ever be more positive testimony than that here given. This must be so from the nature of the case, as will plainly appear in the following pages.

## MY INITIATION.

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After the war, which had not benefited my purse extravagantly, I wandered off into the interior of Georgia, and finally engaged in business in one of the interior counties. I knew the southern people pretty well before the war, had been much among them, and was familiar with their habits, prejudices, etc. For my own convenience and safety, when I went into business I passed as a Kentuckian, and thereby avoided many personal and business annoyances. At first this was not particularly disagreeable, as no very decided opinions were expected while the country was still thoroughly under the national armies. Gradually, however, it became worse and worse, until at length, to keep up my pretensions, and save my business, I was compelled to profess the most ultra southern views and prejudices. I thought that there would never be further active opposition to the national authority, and



so submitted to the situation, rather than lose what little I had by leaving it. To sell it for anything worth taking, was simply impossible in the state of the country. So much for the way I came to know what is about to be told.

In the summer of 1867, one of my neighbors called one morning, and said that an important meeting was to come off that night, at a house about three miles from our town. Every good Southerner, he said, was interested, and he wanted me to go. Of course I had heard of organizations throughout the South, and knew from the manner of this man's talk, that something of the kind was in the wind now. I knew, too, that it would not do to disregard the appeal to "every good Southerner," and so I went with him.

The meeting was not at any house, however. Half a mile from the house he had named, my escort turned his horse into a bridle-path, leading up into a wild, hilly district, and I followed, of course. A mile or so on this path, away from any habitation, my companion suddenly slackened his horse's pace, and proceeded very cautiously, bidding me be silent. In a few minutes I distinctly heard the click of a musket lock, as the piece was brought to a full cock. It was too dark to see anything. My

companion carried an Enfield rifle, and instantly stopping his horse, he cocked his piece and pulled the trigger, almost without a pause. Of course I was somewhat alarmed and astonished; but before I could do more than stop my horse, my escort dismounted, handed me his reins, and whispering that I was to remain there, walked slowly forward toward the spot where I had heard the first click of the gunlock. In a moment or so he returned as quietly, and we proceeded as silently as before. As we passed the spot where I supposed a sentinel to be standing, there was no one there! Whatever had been there had vanished, and as I turned to say something about it to my escort, I saw that he too had gone! It was another man riding by my side, his face covered partly by a handkerchief, drawn tightly across the nose. It was too dark in those woods to see much, but to the best of my knowledge I had never seen my new escort before. This operation was repeated twice within three-quarters of a mile, and each time I was silently turned over to a new guard, whose face was partially covered, like that of the first.

I was thoroughly alarmed, and more than half suspected that I had been tried and condemned beforehand, and was now being led

away to be murdered. There was nothing to be done but to go on, for I was completely lost in the woods, and knew nothing of how soon I might stumble on a dozen enemies, if I should attempt to escape.

Finally my guard halted in a dense thicket, and told me in a low tone to dismount and hitch my horse, while he did the same. Then he once more cocked his piece, and at the sound at least a score of gun-locks, in the hands of men all round us, but concealed in the darkness, were cocked and the triggers pulled, as I have described in the case of meeting the first sentinel. It was still as death when we halted, but I now heard horses which were hitched about us, so that I knew the whole party came there mounted. They began to come around us too, moving slowly, and as silently as possible, each man having his gun, and a handkerchief or something of the kind over his face. The man who brought me there spoke to several of the dimly-seen figures, but so low I could not hear. Then one stepped toward me, leaving the others standing in a circle about us. This was the captain of the band, and he at once proceeded to my initiation, not a word being spoken by any one but him, and the whole formula being of course

repeated from memory, for the place was dark as night could make it. The following was the form, not half of which I could have remembered from hearing it at that time, but which has since become familiar by attendance at the initiations of others :

CAPTAIN.—(Addressing me, the candidate for initiation.) “When a noble people are crushed by the servile minions of a tyrant, will they submit tamely and basely ?”

CANDIDATE.—“No.”

CAPTAIN.—“When a noble cause is lost in the field, when its spotless banners are trailed in the dust by the base hordes of the oppressor, when appeal to the God of Battles is no longer possible, should the friends of that cause fold their arms in abject submission ?”

CANDIDATE.—“No.”

CAPTAIN.—“When the homes of a noble people are devastated by fire and pillage, when their women are violated by a brutal soldiery, should that people mete out the same to the destroyers ?”

CANDIDATE.—“Yes.”

CAPTAIN.—“When a brave people are trampled in the dust by tyrants, what is their remedy ?”

[The whole band answer this by cocking

their pieces and snapping the hammers, and the Captain then interprets as follows:]

“Silence, Darkness, and Cold Lead! Do you agree?”

CANDIDATE.—“Yes!”

CAPTAIN.—“To be of us and not with us, is Treason, and the reward of Treason is DEATH! Every Southron belongs to us, by birth, by education, by the love of liberty inhaled with the balmy breezes of the sunny South, by the hatred of the northern clans imbibed with his mother’s milk, by the inherent detestation of hypocrisy and the myriad social and political abominations of the North! You are of us, you must be with us! THE REWARD OF TREASON IS DEATH! You are prepared to take the oath.”

[The Captain here recites the following oath, the candidate repeating it after him:]

“By all the loved memories of my native land, by all the hallowed associations of home and family, by the memory of friends and brothers slain, by the lurid flames of war and desolation spread over our happy homes by the Lincoln hordes, I swear that by day-light and darkness, at all times and on all occasions, THE STEEL SHALL PAY THE DEBT OF STEEL, THE LEAD SHALL RECOMPENSE FOR LEAD, THE SOUTHERN CROSS SHALL YET DEFY THE WORLD!”

The Southern Cross in the order has a double significance. It represents the dagger of the assassin as well as the cross.

The Captain then declares:

**“ WELCOME THE NEW BROTHER OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS ! ”**

And thereupon the band make the challenging sign of the order, by cocking and snapping their gun-locks. The Captain then proposes the second oath, the candidate repeating it, as follows:

**“ By southern homes despoiled and broken, by southern women outraged, by the lingering torments of northern prisons, by all the desolation brought on our people by famine, pestilence and sword, I swear that DESOLATION SHALL ANSWER DESOLATION, PESTILENCE SHALL PAY FOR PESTILENCE, UNTIL THE SOUTHERN CRESCENT SPAN THE CONTINENT, AND CARRY OVER THE NORTH THE FURIES THAT HAVE DESOLATED THE SOUTH. ”**

The Captain then declares again:

**“ WELCOME THE NEW BROTHER OF THE SOUTHERN CRESCENT ! ”**

And the band respond as before.

Then comes the third and final oath, as follows:

**“ By all that is sacred, I swear to remember Jackson, and Johnston, and the thousands dead;**

the humiliation of Davis, and Lee, and Bragg, and Beauregard ; the noble deeds of Southrons on many a gory field ; and by the memory of all these, I swear to be TRUE TO THE LONE STAR OF THE SOUTH, TILL THESE AND ALL OUR WOES ARE A THOUSAND TIMES AVENGED ! ”

The Captain again declares :

“ WELCOME THE NEW BROTHER OF THE LONE STAR OF THE SOUTH ! ”

And the band respond as before.

The Captain then spoke the following adjuration :

“ Let the heavens be lit with the lurid flames of worse than fratricidal war ! Let the dagger, the bullet, the flames and the pestilence, smite every vulnerable point ! Let the desolation of death reign in the Northern homes enriched by plunder of the South ! Let the audacious minions of the tyrants in our country, be met in silence and darkness, struck down by a power they see not ! Remember the oath ! The Crescent is broad enough to include all the enemies of the South ! The Lone Star shines brightest in the darkness ! The Dagger is the emblem of the silent work ! Remember the oath ! Bring the consecrating bowl. ”

The last sentence was responded to by one of the band, and something like a bowl was put into my hands.

“Dip your finger in the consecrating drink!” said the Captain.

I did as directed, and the Captain then continued:

“Now drink it to the dregs, to the enemies of the South!”

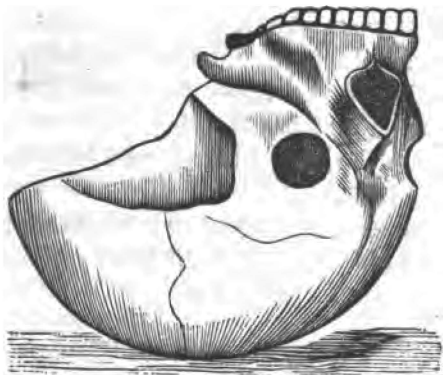
I raised the bowl to my lips, and drank its contents. It was like nothing I had ever tasted before. It was sickening, yet I could not tell what it was! Instantly the band closed around us, standing two or three deep, and the Captain struck a match. Holding the little blazing stick to the hand I had dipped in the bowl, he bid me look.

**THE FINGER WAS STAINED AS WITH BLOOD!**

He then bid me look at the bowl.

**IT WAS A HUMAN SKULL!**





**THE CONSECRATING BOWL.**

## MAKING A NEW COMPANY.

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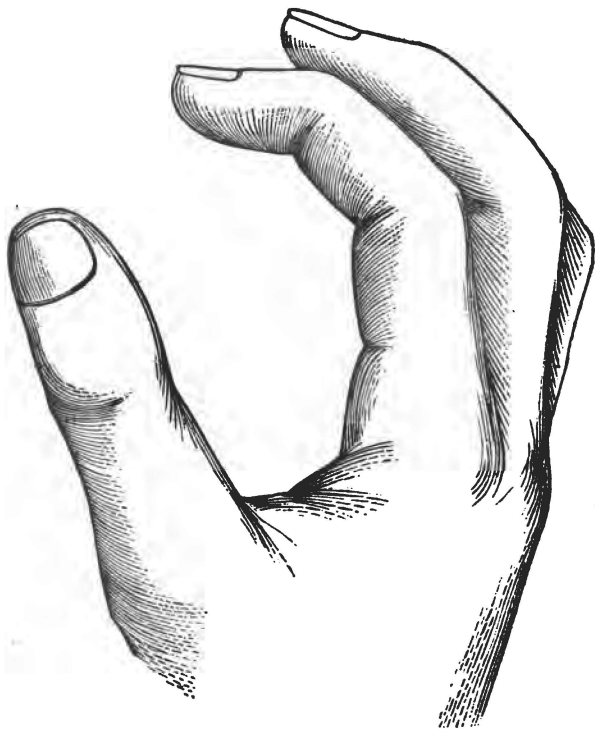
Some weeks after my initiation, I was detailed with an older Brother, to attend to the formation of a new company in a neighboring county. As usual, the source of the order was unknown, except that it came from the captain of our band. The order and detail were announced by our captain, no comment made, and myself and comrade in the duty started next night, in obedience to the order, for the location of the new company, in the adjoining county. He knew the mode of procedure in these cases, and I left the direction of all to him. We reached the place in the morning, and did nothing during the day. At night, by his direction, I notified a well known citizen, in much the same manner I had been notified myself before initiation, and we started after dark, out of the town. My comrade, with another citizen, was with me. Reaching a lonely spot in the country, we turned our

horses off the road into a wild tract, and being far from all habitations, at length stopped in the woods. Here we separated, I taking my man, and my comrade his, and going perhaps a quarter of a mile apart. We were both armed with Enfield rifles. The two men to be initiated on this occasion brought no arms with them. Had they done so they would have been required to lay them aside before the initiation commenced.

The mode of initiation of these men, who were to form the nucleus of a new company, was substantially that already narrated, as experienced by myself, except, of course, that there was no attendant band, and the final ceremony of the Consecrating Drink was deferred till half a dozen others had been initiated, when it was administered to all at the same time.

The instructions in the formation of a new band or Company, are to select two prominent citizens at first, as we did in this case, and after they are initiated they are used to bring in others, until the band is strong enough to do its own business. A special instruction to the Brothers detailed for the formation of a new band, is, that if the persons selected for initiation refuse any of the oaths, or falter in

their devotion to the cause, they are to be killed on the spot. This is the reason why two Brothers are always sent together, and take but two for initiation at first, and they are required to be unarmed while the oaths are proposed. At no time are two persons initiated at the same place, even when the band numbers fifty or a hundred. There is but one fate for any one who refuses the oaths. He is never seen again. The Brothers of the Southern Cross visit on him the reward of traitors—  
Death!



**THE SIGN OF RECOGNITION.**

## THE K. K. K.

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The Order or Society commonly known as the Ku-Klux-Klan, has no such name among its members. That is an approximation in letters and sound to the challenging signal of the Order. For instance, when a Brother approaches the spot where a band is assembled, the sentinels, always concealed, challenge him by bringing their rifles to a full cock. That operation, as every one knows, produces two sounds or clicks, one when the hammer reaches the half cock, and the other when it comes to the full cock. These sounds or clicks are represented by "Ku-Klux." The "Klan" is the sound of the hammer on the nipple of the piece when the trigger is pulled, and the hammer snapped. Bringing the piece to full cock is the challenge, and the answer is given by the challenged party full-cocking his piece,

and instantly pulling the trigger, snapping the hammer.

The Society really has NO NAME! It is never spoken of by its members, among themselves, as the Ku-Klux-Klan, or by any other name. The three emblems, the Cross, the Crescent, and the Lone Star, are used in the oaths of initiation, and to bring the companies together; but they do not, either singly or together, give the order any name recognised among its members as the proper distinctive designation of the association.

The Order has NO WRITTEN RECORDS. Not a line will ever be found of the official records of the Society, for it has none! No muster rolls can be produced, for there are none! No orders or communications are ever written, but on the contrary, every thing of the kind is strictly prohibited. The Brothers work in silence and in darkness! There are no witnesses against them but human witnesses, who are always liable to their vengeance as traitors! No tell-tale paper-and-ink witness will ever appear against them by their own acts!

At the meetings of the oldest companies, the Brothers always appear with their faces partially covered. If the meeting is in a build-

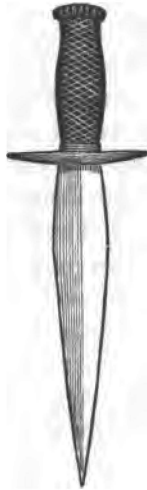
ing of any kind, there is never a light to show the faces of those assembled; and if there be a fire, the Brothers keep away from its light as much as possible. Always, when practicable, the meetings are held in some wilderness, and no meeting is ventured upon for any general business, that requires the presence of more men than might accidentally meet, without the utmost precaution in the way of sentinels, etc.

The organization includes fully officered companies, regiments and brigades. Of course every brother knows the officers of his own company, but that is all he is supposed to know. The commander of the company knows where his orders come from, and that is all he is expected to know. The matter is never discussed, but every one understands that the officers are men who have seen service in the late war, and are qualified for their positions. When a new company is organized, its officers are appointed by the commander of the regiment to which it is to belong, and the order of appointment is transmitted through the captain of a neighboring company, who details men to organize the new one.

The orders for my company I knew came from Columbus, and that, of course, was the



headquarters of the regiment to which I belonged. I never knew the name of our Colonel, but he was an old brigade commander in Longstreet's corps.



**THE SOUTHERN CROSS.**

## MODE OF RECOGNITION.

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When a Brother desires to ascertain whether a stranger belongs regularly to the order, he must not pursue the inquiry in the presence of others. Engaging the stranger in conversation, the brother finally says :

“I reckon you’re a true Southerner ?”

If the stranger answers directly, “Yes,” the Brother continues :

“May be, then, you’ve been tested ?”

The word “tested” refers to the initiation of the order. If the stranger be also a Brother, he replies :

“I know what is the work of Silence and Darkness.”

The Brother then with the right hand makes the sign of recognition, as given in the illustration, and the other responds by repeating the motion, and bringing the fore-finger and thumb together, the whole representing the hammer of a gun as it is cocked and snapped.

The Brothers are cautioned against the use of these signs without cause, and no one is allowed to seek out members by the above means, merely for the gratification of curiosity.

The sign of the Crescent is used for summoning meetings of the companies at irregular times, and when business of importance is to be attended to at once. In towns and hamlets this sign is made anywhere, so that it is likely to be seen on a fence, or sketched with a stick on a walk; and sometimes leaves torn in two, so that the halves resemble rude crescents, are dropped about where they will attract the attention of the Brothers, while no one else will notice them.

It must be understood that the companies never meet to discuss any proposition. That is done without a general meeting, which is only called when some initiation is to take place, or when some action requiring the whole or part of the band has been decided on.

A general rallying cry is provided for cases of emergency, as, for instance, if a party of Brothers were engaged in any expedition, and should encounter such resistance as to make aid necessary. The cry is: "THE CROSS! THE CROSS! THE CROSS!" I never knew this cry to be used, but when the time comes for active and extended operations in cities, it will be.

## THE WORK DONE.

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In the code of the Brothers of the Southern Cross, every loyal Southerner is a traitor, and every loyal Northerner is a born enemy. The command is to "smite every vulnerable point," and enough is published every week to show that "vulnerable points" are found every day; when the Brothers put an enemy out of the way. Details are made from the companies when the death of any person has been decided on. The precise time for the act is never given with the order—the Brothers wait the favorable moment for their work of Silence and Darkness. Always enough men are detailed to cover all possible contingences of ordinary resistance. When once detailed for such service, a Brother is never free until it is done, even if no opportunity occurs for months.

Every State in the South has its perfect organization of these Brothers, and the order is yet in its infancy. Members are at work in

the Northern border States, organizing among those who are Southern born, or who are known to side with the South against the North. This is the principal point where the "lurid flames" are to be brought to the aid of the South, though the Brothers have already been in every Northern city of any prominence and accessibility. The "pestilence" will go broadcast over the whole North; how, may be readily imagined from the events of the late war.

Any favorable opportunity during the impeachment proceeding, or afterward, would see this slumbering volcano throughout the South burst forth with frightful violence. Impeachment, or the coming presidential election, will, it is calculated, furnish an opportunity when the national power will be so embarrassed as to allow the new outbreak to get head before it can be met.

Let the people of the North be warned!

## THE GRAND SIGNAL.

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There is a central organization of the Order—a sort of Executive Council—composed of the commanders of districts, a district being usually a State. This executive body is called the Grand Council, and has no fixed place of meeting. It met once in Nashville, and the last time, in March, at Augusta, Ga. Two or three months ago there were but thirteen members of this Council, there being then no greater number of districts. New districts, however, are being constantly added.

The sole business of the Council, so far, is to extend the organization, and watch for the grand crisis in national affairs, when the Brothers need no longer work in secret, and in fear of their necks. The order will strike simultaneously in a thousand places when the day comes, and will leap into light, an army completely organized. The signal for the grand strike at every point, is THE LONE STAR. When

that emblem appears throughout the South, placarded in cities and towns, published in newspapers, carried everywhere by mail and telegraph and courier, the time for the open triumph of the Brothers will come within three days! Then will "the heavens be lit with the lurid flames of worse than fratricidal war!" It will be the day of doom for loyalty in the South, and many a Northern home will be put in mourning. Such is the plan.



**A BROTHER ON DUTY.**





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