

CAUSE OF CAROLINA RIOTS.

Crime, Insult and Corruption in Office  
Were the Provocations of the  
Outbreak Yesterday.

The bloodshed in Wilmington yesterday was the culmination of a long series of provocations and an epidemic of crime, the victims of which were respectable white citizens and the perpetrators blacks and low whites.

Yesterday's riot was a parallel to the uprising of the citizens of New Orleans a few years ago, when they marched in a body to the jail and shot to death a dozen or more members of the Italian Mafia. The Mafia had made war on society and the police, though willing, were unable to suppress the cut-throats. When Chief Hennessy was assassinated the best citizens assembled in broad daylight and proceeded to the jail without the slightest attempt at disguise.

Just so has Wilmington been terrorized by a criminal elements of the blacks. The negroes had control of the city government, not by virtue of election, but through the connivance of the legislature and the governor, Daniel Russell, who desired the humiliation of the decent people among whom he had lived prior to his elevation.

The whites could have controlled the city government had not the legislature forced upon the people a new charter, which provided for the appointment of five members of council by the governor. These appointees were republicans, and that party having a majority on the board and having been vested with the power to elect the mayor and other city officers, ward politicians were selected.

The mayor and chief of police were white, but the policemen and all the sanitary inspectors and most of the other appointees were negroes. The police had no control over the criminal classes. Burglaries were frequent and the citizens had to keep guns in their homes for protection. When burglaries were reported to the police no apparent effort was made to arrest the guilty ones. One citizen captured a negro on the street carrying articles which had been stolen from the citizen's house several days before. The police had been given a description of the articles stolen and the prisoner stated that he had passed five policemen with the plunder in his arms.

Last winter a negro policeman entered the store of a prominent merchant and beat him unmercifully. The policeman said that the merchant had insulted his little daughter. The merchant had waited on her during the morning, and not having what she wanted she went home. The negro policeman was never punished.

White ladies and children were constantly annoyed and insulted when on the streets. Country people were especial marks of the negro boys, who followed them and guyed them.

This is one reason why so many farmers went into Wilmington last night. They have long waited for an opportunity of this kind.

A ruffian, named Alex L. Manly, was editor of a negro paper called The Record. This paper was continually stirring up feeling among the blacks against the whites. Manly was deputy register of deeds of New Hanover county and had an office in the courthouse. His newspaper office was a square or two away.

On August 18th last, The Daily Record published an editorial reflecting on the virtue of the poor white women of the state. This letter raised a storm of indignation throughout all North Carolina, and was one of the things which helped on the union of the whites over the state. Manly took as his text an address which Mrs. Felton, of Cartersville, Ga., made on lynching before the State Agricultural Society.

The Constitution has given extracts from this infamous article and has referred to it several times. It was sent broadcast through North Carolina prior to the election as a campaign document, and it was tremendously effective.

The editorial was as follows:

**Mrs. Felton's Speech.**  
"A Mrs. Felton, from Georgia, makes a speech before the Agricultural Society at Tybee, Ga., in which she advocates lynching as an extreme measure. This woman makes a strong plea for womanhood, and if the alleged crimes of rape were half so frequent as is oftentimes reported, her plea would be worthy of consideration.

"Mrs. Felton, like many other so-called Christians, loses sight of the basic principle of the religion of Christ in her plea for one class of people as against another. If a missionary spirit is essential for the uplifting of the poor white girls, why is it? The morals of the poor white people are on a par with their colored neighbors of like conditions, and if any one doubts the statement let him visit among them. The whole lump needs to be leavened by those who profess so much religion and showing them that the preservation of virtue is an essential for the life of any people.

"Mrs. Felton begins well, for she admits that education will better protect girls on the farm from the assaulter. This we admit and it should not be confined to the white any more than to the colored girls. The papers are filled often with reports of rapes of white women, and the subsequent lynching of the alleged rapists. The editors pour forth volleys of aspersions

against all negroes because of the few who may be guilty. If the papers and speakers of the other race would condemn the commission of crime because it is crime and not try to make it appear that the negroes were the only criminals, they would find their strongest allies in the intelligent negroes themselves, and together the whites and blacks would root the evil out of both races.

"We suggest that the whites guard their women more closely, as Mrs. Felton says, thus giving no opportunity for the human fiend, be he white or black. You leave your goods out of doors and then complain because they are taken away. Poor white men are careless in the matter of protecting their women, especially on farms. They are careless of their conduct toward them and our experience among poor white people in the country teaches us that the women of that race are not any more particular in the matter of clandestine meetings with colored men, than are the white men with colored women. Meetings of this kind go on for some time, until the woman's infatuation or the man's boldness bring attention to them and the man is lynched for rape. Every negro lynched is called a 'big, burly, black brute,' when in fact many of those who have thus been dealt with had white men for their fathers, and were not only not 'black' and 'burly,' but were sufficiently attractive for white girls of culture and refinement to fall in love with them, as is well known to all.

"Mrs. Felton must begin at the fountain head, if she wishes to purify the stream. "Teach your men purity. Let virtue be something more than an excuse for them

to intimidate and torture a helpless people. Tell your men that it is no worse for a black man to be intimate with a white woman than for a white man to be intimate with a colored woman.

"You set yourselves down as a lot of carping hypocrites; in fact, you cry aloud for the virtue of your women, while you seek to destroy the morality of ours. Don't think ever that your women will remain pure while you are debauching ours. You sow the seed—the harvest will come in due time."

The publication set the state on fire. The white republicans and the populist fusionists saw at once what a terrible political blunder had been made. The campaign was just opening and the democrats had pitched their fight on the recovery of the state from negro domination, declaring that the lives, virtue and property of the people were at stake.

Governor Russell and his henchmen immediately denounced the publication, and they soon followed that up with the childish assertion that Manly had been induced to write the article by democrats. They said that it was a democratic dodge. That was absolutely untrue, and the declaration fooled no one.

The white people of Wilmington were excited, and they talked of lynching Manly, but the negro policemen rallied to his support and a meeting of colored ministers passed resolutions recommending the editor to the consideration of his people. The negroes assembled around the newspaper office armed to defend it, and the whites did not make any attack.

But all through the campaign they inwardly raged at the insults which had been

heaped upon them, and as the election approached, the whites determined to win. They had every reason to fear riots, and they began to buy rifles and rapid-fire guns. It is said that so many rifles were ordered from North Carolina that wholesale prices were given to the purchasers.

Election day passed without a collision. As The Constitution's specialists predicted, the thorough preparations which had been made averted trouble. Riots do not occur when expected. The colored voters voted without let or hindrance. To illustrate their latitude, an eye witness relates that he saw a negro go to a box and give the name of George Harris. There was no such name on the book, and when he was so informed, he said that his name was George Purdy, and as that name did appear on the books, he was allowed to vote as George Purdy. He was a repeater.

The postoffice, which was one point of assembly yesterday for the mob, is on the main street of the city and right in the business heart of the town. The leading hotel is right across the street, and the cotton compresses are not 100 yards distant.

During the latter half of October employers began to turn off their black labor. There was a concerted movement to force the blacks by peaceable means to leave the city, and a bureau was organized to secure white labor in place of the blacks.

The meeting at which the committee of twenty-five was appointed was held publicly on the day after the election, and the resolutions were signed by hundreds of prominent citizens. At that time it was not thought that bloodshed would follow, although all who signed the resolutions ordering Manly out of the city and calling on the negro administration to resign, were prepared for trouble if it came.

The leading business and professional men of Wilmington hoped that bloodshed would be prevented. They did not want the peaceable, law-abiding, industrious black men disturbed, but they made up their minds to get rid of the corrupt gang which was in control of the city, county and federal offices.