

4/97
Sunday Night

THE
LOWRIE HISTORY,

AS ACTED IN PART BY

Henry Berry Lowrie

THE GREAT

NORTH CAROLINA BANDIT

WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF

His Associates,

Being a Complete History of the Modern Robber Band in the County of Robeson
and State of North Carolina.

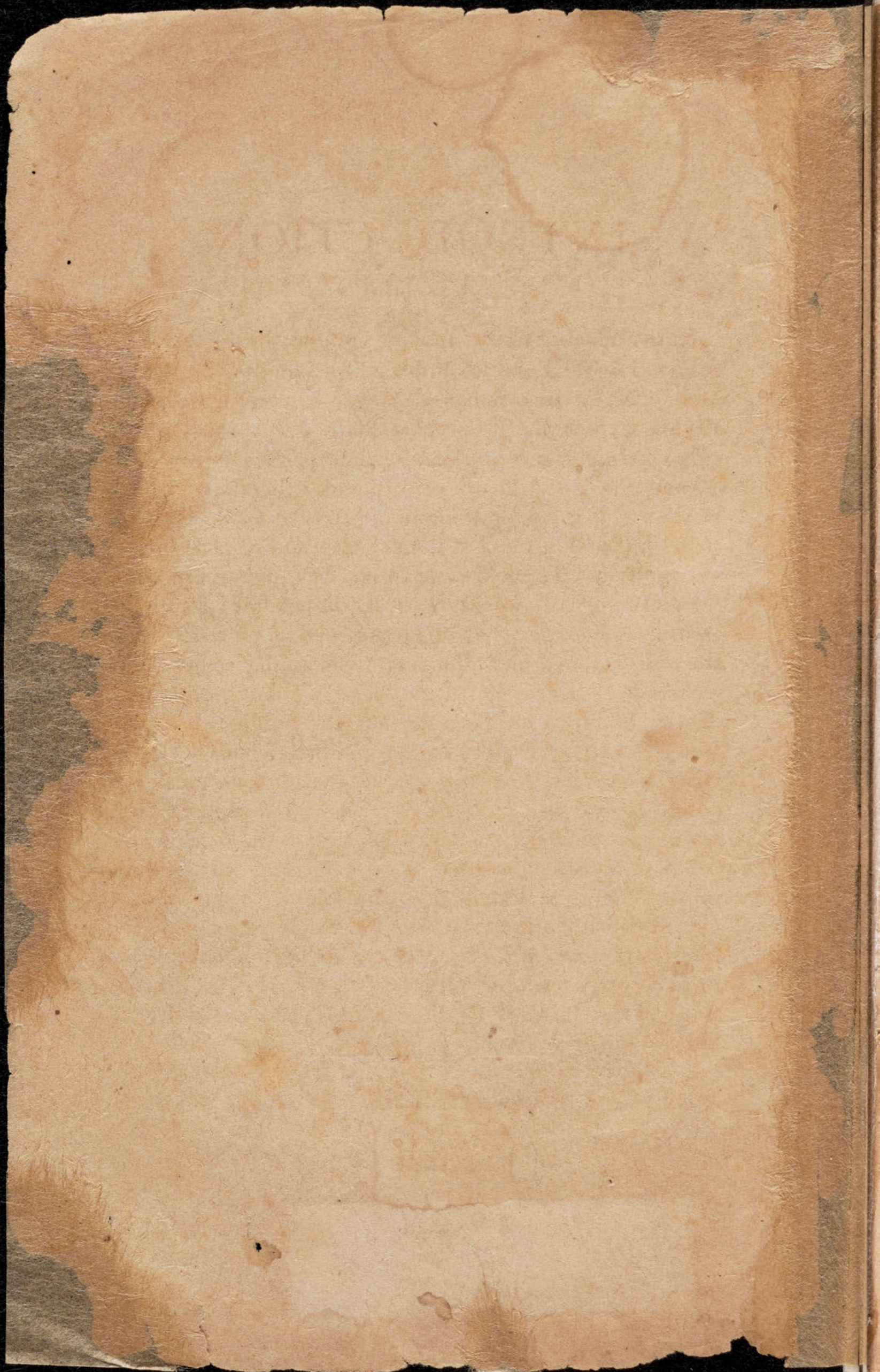
BY MRS. MARY C. NORMENT,

Whose Husband was Killed by the Outlaws.

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1875.

G. C. GRAVES,
DRUGGIST & APOTHECARY
Carthage, N. C.



INTRODUCTION.

In introducing to the reading public the history of the outlaw Lowrie Band of Robbers, or Bandits in Robeson county, N. C., some remarks by way of preface will naturally be expected. To prepare for any historical work of value or importance, an appropriate preface is justly considered a task of difficult performance; therefore, we must be allowed to invoke a generous indulgence, for we feel deeply impressed with a sense of the delicacy and responsibility of our position. To meet the expectations and secure the approbation of all, we know to be impossible; a conscious assurance, however, that we have spared no pains to perform the task assigned us to the best of our ability under the circumstances, nerves us to go ahead without hesitation or delay. So much has been written and published by newsmongers and correspondents of the press about the Lowrie Bandits that was incorrect and untruthful, that really the public abroad were at a loss what reports to believe and what not to give credence to. We therefore, at the earnest solicitation of friends, consented to write out their history for the press. "Being native and to the manner born," and acquainted with all the Robber Band, we propose to give a plain and unvarnished statement of facts connected with their history, from its inception to the close of "the last scene in the drama." With these remarks we submit the following pages to a discerning public.

MARY C. NORMENT.

RED BANK, ROBESON Co., N. C., Nov. 27TH, 1875.

Genealogy of the Lowrie Robbers or Bandits,

IN THE

COUNTY OF ROBESON,

AND

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

James Lowrie, a tall, well-proportioned, fine looking, respectable mulatto, first settled in Robeson county about the year 1769. This was Bladen county at that time. On the 9th of August, 1769, James Lowrie bought a tract of land containing one hundred acres from William Fort, to whom it was granted by George II. in 1748. He also entered another tract of land containing three hundred acres, adjoining the above tract, the grant being signed by George III. On the above mentioned tracts of land, now owned by the heirs of the late Col. Archibald McEachern, James Lowrie first settled.

About five hundred yards below the residence of Col. McEachern, in a bend of the swamp, is shown the place where James Lowrie resided. McPhaul's mills, on the same swamp, are distant about three miles. This swamp was called Lowrie Swamp, after James Lowrie, who resided on it. A ford at the time he lived there crossed the swamp at his residence. Here he raised stock, farmed in a small way and kept a tavern during the Revolutionary War. James Lowrie first came to Robeson (being then Bladen county) from Bute county, (now Franklin and Warren counties) in company with Silas Atkins, who emigrated also from Bute county, from that portion now called Franklin. Other families also, viz: the Thompsons, Kitchens, Coles, Drakes,

Moore, Humphreys, Bridgers, and whose descendants still live in Robeson, came to Bladen county (now Robeson) from that part of North Carolina embraced now in the counties of Franklin, Warren, Nash and Edgecombe and settled here about the time that Silas Atkins first built on the tract of land now owned by William H. Graham.

James Lowrie, from whom all the Lowries in Robeson descended, lived in Franklin county before he emigrated to Robeson. It was in Franklin county, N. C., that he was manumitted by his father, James Lowrie, of Virginia, who when Virginia became one of the United States, was elected a Judge, and was ever afterwards known as Judge Lowrie. He was of cavalier stock and characterized by elegance and refinement of manners, tall and commanding in personal appearance, urbane, courtly and genteel in his whole deportment. It was in Franklin county that James Lowrie married. His wife's maiden name was Sarah Kearsey, (nicknamed Sally Kearsey) a half-breed Tuscarora Indian woman, and from this couple all the Lowries in Robeson trace back their origin.

The above statement in regard to the origin of the Lowrie family in Robeson county is not current rumor, but a true statement, as given by James Lowrie himself and corroborated by Silas Atkins, with whom he came to Robeson county in 1769, also confirmed by the late Neil Brown, Esq., who lived on Richland Swamp; by the late Mrs. Nancy Smith, mother of Rev. A. Smith, who also lived on Richland Swamp; by the late Sampson Bridgers, father of J. D. Bridgers, Esq., now living on Ashpole Swamp; by Henry Thompson; by Nathan Thompson; by John Thompson, now in his ninety eighth year; by Peter Monroe, now in the one hundredth year of his age, and last, though not least, by the late John Gilchrist, Esq., long a practicing lawyer at the Lumberton Bar, whose father bought out James Lowrie in 1791, at the close of the Revolutionary War.

James Lowrie had three sons, viz: William, Thomas and James, and at the commencement of the Revolutionary War William, his oldest, being then about grown, entered into the struggle for independence and joined the brave and patriotic band, then under the command of that noble Whig patriot, Col. Thomas Robeson, after whom and in honor of whom Robeson county was named. William Lowrie made a good Whig soldier and fought side by side with the whites in every skirmish and battle in which Col. Robeson was engaged. Whilst piloting Col. Wade and his men across Drowning Creek, after the massacre at Piney Bottom, in Cumberland county, William Lowrie received a severe sword cut in his left hand from a Tory named James McPherson, who resided on the place now owned by Col. Charles Malloy, now Laurel Hill Church, in Richmond county.

The skirmish between Col. Wade's men and the Tories took place on the spot of ground on which Montpelier Church was erected, near Betties's bridge, now Gilchrist's bridge, in the upper portion of Robeson county, immediately on Drowning Creek, in Robeson county, and William Lowrie carried the marks of this wound to his grave as a token of his devotion to the Whig cause. After the close of the Revolutionary War, William Lowrie received a pension for this same sword cut from the General Government up to the day of his death, as the records in the Pension Office at Washington City will show.

The other two sons of James Lowrie, viz: Thomas and James, were of tender age and too young to enter the service. The feelings and sentiments of James Lowrie, their father, were on the Whig side, although he took no active part either way. Living, however, so near to *McPhaul's Mill*, (a distance of not more than three miles) the then general rendezvous or head-quarters of the Tories from the whole adjacent country, he became obnoxious to them on account of his son William being in the Whig ranks.

Soon after the close of the Revolutionary War, prejudices becoming so rife against him and his son William, on account of Whig principles, James Lowrie sold out on Lowrie Swamp to John Gilchrist in 1791, and moved down on Drowning Creek, near his old friend Silas Atkins and settled on the place now known as "the Harper Ferry place." Here he kept a house of entertainment for the travelling public, in connection with a grocery or drinking saloon. Here he died, leaving land and negroes to his children and a good name to his posterity. Here, in Lowrie's grocery, Col. Vick, then merchandising at Fair Bluff, in Robeson county, (Vicksburg in Mississippi being named after him) CHRISTENED (to use a Scotch phrase) all that region lying East of Drowning Creek and extending one or two miles East of Bear Swamp with the euphonious soubriquet of *Scuffle-town*, from the act of the mulattoes inhabiting that region congregating in Lowrie's grocery and after imbibing pretty freely of whiskey, in engaging in the *broad shuffle*, and also from the fact that it was generally a scuffle with the mulattoes to live--"to keep soul and body together," owing to their improvident habits. This portion of Robeson county no respectable, enterprising white man will live in, owing to the fact that it is not productive, lying too low to be drained and improved, being interspersed with bogs and swamps, which are covered with an almost impenetrable under-growth, together with a more potent reason that the white race do not believe in the intermingling of different races.

After the death of James Lowrie, his son William Lowrie married Bettie Locklayer, a half-breed Tuscarora Indian woman (Locklayer meaning "*hold fast*"). Thomas Lowrie, his second son, married Nancy Deas, a white woman. James Lowrie, his third son, never married. Allen Lowrie, a son of William Lowrie, married *Pollie Cumba*, a woman of Portuguese extraction. He raised a large family of sons and daughters; and four of his sons, viz: William Lowrie, Steve

Lowrie, Thomas Lowrie, Henry Berry Lowrie, were concerned in the depredations committed in the county of Robeson, from their inception, while it is due to history to record that his other sons had no connection whatever with their four brothers engaged in robbing. Henry Berry Lowrie, one of the younger brothers, assumed the command of the Robber Band and was styled Chief. Two other members of the Robber Band, viz: Calvin and Henderson Oxendine, (another Portuguese name,) lineally descended from the Lowrie family, on the mother's side. Boss and Andrew Strong, two other members of the band, had Lowrie blood coursing their veins, their mother being of the Lowrie stock; their father was a white man, who on coming into Robeson county and settling in Scuffletown, assumed the name of John Strong, but whose real name was John Gorman. An incident connected with the history of John Gorman was related to the writer several years ago. At the Fall Term of the Superior Court of Robeson in 1843, John B. Kelly, Esq., of Moore county, then a practicing Lawyer at the Lumberton Bar, met up with John Gorman, whom he knew personally, and addressed him as Gorman. Gorman replied and said his name was Strong. John B. Kelly replied and told him to be off, for he was a villain. Having killed a man in Alamance county, he fled to Robeson to save his neck and assumed the name of Strong, but his real name was Gorman. Two other members of the Robber Band, viz: Willian Chavis and George Applewhite, (formerly a slave,) were connected with the Lowrie family by marriage. The only members of the Robber gang that were not connected with the Lowrie family by affinity or consanguinity, were Zack T. McLaughlin, a low-bred youth of Scottish descent, Shoemaker John, a regular negro and William Chavis, a bright mulatto. These namely: Henry Berry Lowrie, Chief, Stephen Lowrie, William Lowrie, Thomas Lowrie, Calvin Oxendine, Henderson Ox-

endine, Boss Strong, Andrew Strong, William Chavis, George Applewhite, being all kinsfolk, together with Zack T. McLaughlin, Shoemaker John, and William Chavis, were concerned all of them, in the Robberies, murder and depredations committed in the county of Robeson, from the latter part of the year, A. D. 1864, to Februrary 24th, A. D. 1874. Of course many others of the mulatto and negro race sympathised with them and often aided and abetted them. Having now given their origin, we next proceed to give a description of the Robber Band.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOWRIE ROBBERS.

Pen and ink sketches of personages convey very often but faint ideas of individuals, although they may be correct in every particular. It is very difficult to impress most minds with distinct ideas of things without the presentation of the object to the eyes, they being the mirror, as it were, that reflect Images on the mental vision. However, we will attempt a description of the Lowrie Bandits, for the benefit of those who have never seen them :

HENRY BERRY LOWRIE, THE LEADER OF THE BAND.

Henry Berry Lowrie, the leader of the band, is a son of Allen Lowrie, and a great grand-son of James Lowrie, from whom all the Lowries in Robeson descended. He is of mixed blood, strangely commingled, having coursing his veins the blood of the Tuscarora Indian, the Cavalier blood of England and also that of the descendants of Ham in Africa, his great-great grand mother being a copper colored negress, raised on the banks of James river in Virginia. He makes a handsome personal appearance when dressed up. The color of his skin is of a mixed white and yellow, par-

taking of an admixture, resembling copper, the Indian color however, still predenominating, although the white and black remain apparent. Such a skin is affected very little by heat or cold, by sickness or health, or by exposure, or good housing. A scar in the shape of a crescent and of a blackish color is on his face just below his left eye, said to have been made by an iron pot falling on him when a child. The contour of his face is that of a Southron. His countenance is expressive in the highest degree of firmness, decision of character and courage. Generally he is reticent, a good listener, seldom talkative, manifesting in his demeanor little or no disposition at self-importance. When he converses, he talks like an illiterate man, conversant with no books except of nature, and human nature. Considering his long career of lawlessness, his want of education and his mixed race, he is a prodigy. Phrenologically speaking, his forehead is good, high, broad and massive; the color of his eyes is a grayish hazel, and when excited and agitated, would dilate and expand. A smile generally played over his countenance when quiet, but when aroused it was a smile of a demon. He wore a dark goatee, his hair was strait and black like an Indian's. He is twenty-six (26) years old, five feet ten inches high, and weighs about one hundred and fifty pounds. Physically, he was well knit, straight in the back, his arms and shoulders fitting on well, a deep broad chest; in short, proportioned throughout without a flaw in his frame. Like an india rubber ball, he was elastic all over. In his dress he was rather careless and negligent. He generally wore calf-skin boots, a woolen frock coat or blouse, breeches or trousers of the same material, mostly, however, of Salem or Kentucky Jeans, with a wide brimmed felt hat. Although a tippler, he was never known to be intoxicated; he invariably carried a flask of whiskey with him wheresoever he went. He did this to avoid being poisoned by promiscuous drinking.

In regard to his arms: a belt around his waist keeps in place five six barrellled revolvers—long shooters; from this belt a shoulder strap passes up and supports behind, slinging style, a Henry rifle, which carries the extraordinary number of sixteen cartridges. In addition to these fifty-two charges, he carries a long bladed knife and a double-barrellled shot gun, his whole equipment weighing not less than eighty pounds. His main object in thus equipping himself was doubtless to stand a long campaign, or to be ready with almost an arsenal at his command, to encounter a large body of men in pursuit of him. With all his armor on he could run, swim, stand weeks of exposure in the swamps, walk day and night and take sleep by little snatches, which in a few days would tire out white or negro. Being fond of blood he has waged for the past ten years a savage and predatory warfare against the county, State, Confederate and United States authority. Without advantages other than nature gave him, without fear, without hope, defying society, he carried out his tactics in a peculiar way, impressing the whole negro population with his superiority, power and influence as a brigand leader and executive spirit. Occasionally his blood and inclinations will crop out, and his three natures of white, Indian and negro, will come forward and show themselves to the close observer, and in a way unlooked for. In his love for rude music may be discovered the negro trace. He plays on the banjo, and accompanies the playing with singing. This banjo, together with the Juba beating and dancing of the mulatto girls, the yellow-tinted Syrens of Scuffletown, has on several occasions come very near betraying him to his pursuers. His Indian nature may be traced in his character, by his using mulatto women as an auxiliary to war and plunder. He himself is the Don Juan of Scuffletown. Mulatto women have been employed to betray him, but they either repent or he discovers their purpose. He sleeps on his arms and never seems tired; ever

active, ever vigilant, he is never taken by surprise. His cavalier scrupulousness may also be observed in the matter of a promise or a treaty. Those most robbed and outraged by this bandit give him credit for complying strictly to his word. Like the rattlesnake, he generally warned before he struck. Two things he has never done—he has never committed arson, nor offered to insult white females. In these two things may be traced his cavalier blood.

The price offered (\$10,000) for his capture by the constituted authorities of the State is probably the greatest that has ever been offered for any offender of common law—any criminal or outlaw in American history since Jefferson Davis' flight; and why should it not be? for Henry Berry Lowrie, the Robber Chief, has made a personal and bloody campaign against society, longer than the whole Revolutionary war, killing sometimes for plunder, sometimes for revenge, sometimes for defense, refusing to trust any, even of his own color, except those who, like himself, had shed innocent blood and put themselves out of the path of society. In this way he collected a pack of murderers, whom he commanded with absolute sway. He also arrogated to himself a protectorate over the interests of all the mulattoes in Scuffletown, which they returned by a sort of hero-worship. Cold-blooded, malignant and murderous bandit and robber he is, and blood-stained with many murders, he is without defenders even in well informed Republican circles. He claimed the Republicans as his political allies and friends.

In the twentieth year of his age he led up to the marriage altar, as his bride, Rhoda Strong, a cousin of his, a daughter of John Strong, alias Gorman, deceased, said to be in her sixteenth year, and one of the handsomest and prettiest mulatto girls in all Scuffletown, satirically nick-named by some white young wag "the Queen of Scuffletown." The marriage ceremony was performed by Hector J. McLean, Esq., at the old Lowrie homestead, in presence of

Alexander Cobb, a white man, and a score or two of mulattoes, relations of the bride and bridegroom. As soon as the ceremony was through with, A. J. McNair, with a posse of men, arrested Henry Berry Lowrie as the murderer of James P. Barnes, and hurried him off to jail in Lumberton, from whence he was carried to Whitesville, in Columbus county and placed in jail there, where he was heavily ironed. Here he filed his way out of the grated iron window bars, escaped to the woods with hand cuffs on, and made his way back to his wife in Scuffletown. This was in 1866. This was the first escape ever effected by a criminal confined in the jail at Whitesville. How he came in possession of a file, no one in the confidence of the whites can tell. Again in 1868 Henry Berry Lowrie was formally committed to jail in Lumberton by B. A. Howell, Sheriff of Robeson. This time also he made his escape by frightening the jailor when he carried him his allowance of food, with a cocked pistol in his hand. He told the jailor to stand aside and let him pass out of the door, threatening to kill him if he made an alarm in fifteen minutes. Although twice in the hands of the officers of the law, he has never been held to answer at the bar of justice for his many crimes.

From the day he made his escape from the jail in Lumberton, he has led the precarious life of a hunted man, robber and murderer, showing at all times and under all circumstances a ferocity, insolence and premeditation frightful to behold, destructive of all order and subversive of all good government.

Here an incident showing the insolence of this outlaw to the civil authorities of the county will be sketched for the outside world, which is literally true in every particular. When for prudential reasons the County Commissioners ordered the Sheriff of the county to arrest Rhoda Lowrie, the wife of the outlaw chief, he, with the whole robber band, went to Mr. John McNair's residence (Mr. John McNair hav-

ing been robbed by them more than a score of times). The Robber Chief addressed Mr. McNair as follows: "Mr. McNair I want you to gear up and go to Lumberton, where they have put my wife in jail, for no crime, but because she is my wife. That ain't her fault and they can't make it so. You go to Lumberton and tell the Sheriff and County Commissioners that if they don't let her out of jail, I'll retaliate on the white women of Burnt Swamp Township. Some of them shall come to the swamp with me, if she is kept in jail, because they can't get me."

The swamp alluded to above, was the Back Swamp, in which the outlaw band had their secret camp, and on the banks of which Henry Berry Lowrie had erected a log cabin for his wife to live in. This cabin was built pretty much after the style of the other cabins in Scuffletown, except that it had two doors, on the sides opposite each other, a plank floor, a small window on the end near the chimney, with a trap-door on the floor, leading into an underground passage some sixty yards in length, which terminated in the swamp near by, through which the Robber Chief had escaped on several occasions when surprised by his pursuers. This cabin now lies in ruins, being deserted, the yard covered with tall weeds and the underground passage filled up. Desolation seems to brood over it, and nothing but the long, foreboding note of the ill-omened owl, when he utters his "tuwhit" near by in the swamps, breaks the silence of the night there.

SKETCH OF SWARTHY STEVE LOWRIE.

Steve Lowrie, when killed in February last, was in his thirty sixth year; he was five feet ten inches high, and would weigh about one hundred and seventy pounds; thick

set, round shouldered, heavy and of great muscular power; impudent in manner; insolent in speech, showing the highway-robber superadded to the vagabond, and exhibiting in his personal appearance more of the Indian brigand than any of the outlaw gang. His hair was thick, black and straight; his moustache thin, black and short; a mean countenance, with blackish hazel eyes, indicating the robber and murderer of the Murrell stamp; just such a character as needed no provocation to prowl around the country by day and by night. He, too, is a son of Allen Lowrie, and the oldest of the gang. He had an insatiable love for robbery, and possessed an imperious temper, which involved him on one occasion in a quarrel with his younger brother, Henry Berry Lowrie, who shot him in the eye for insubordination. He had the meanest look of any of the gang, and he was more feared by any unlucky victim that happened to fall into the hands of the outlaws. Steve Lowrie has been concerned in every robbery and shooting committed by the outlaw gang. He it was that raised his gun and filled the unfortunate prisoner, John Sanders, the detective, with a charge of buckshot when blindfolded and tied to a tree. For being implicated in the murder of ex-Sheriff Reuben King he was outlawed, apprehended, confined in jail and tried as a murderer at Whitesville Court and found guilty. His lawyer taking an appeal to the Supreme Court, Steve was remanded back to jail, and before his case came up for a hearing before the Judges on the Supreme Court Bench, Steve Lowrie made his escape and returned to his old haunts in Scuffletown.

TOM LOWRIE,

Another member of the outlaw gang, and a brother to Henry Berry and Steve Lowrie, was Indian-Gipsy looking. Tom

Lowrie, who showed more of the African in his color than any of his brothers, being of a darker hue and exhibiting in his countenance a stealing and sneaking look. He has been described elsewhere under the caption, "The Killing of Tom Lowrie," which the reader can see by referring to that head. An incident not mentioned there will be related here. When the unfortunate John Sanders, the detective, was condemned to be killed, Tom Lowrie plead for his life, and being unwilling to see his blood shed, slunk away until after the affair was over.

Andrew and Boss Strong, two brothers, were also members of the robber band, and are sketched elsewhere. They were nearly white, their father being a white man and their grand mother a white woman. These five, viz: Henry Berry Lowrie, Chief, Steve Lowrie, Tom Lowrie, Andrew and Boss Strong constituted the robber band after the general jail delivery in Wilmington.

John Dial, who turned State's evidence, is a light mulatto and was probably as bad as any of the gang. He has a wart as large as a marble, directly under the left eye on the side of his nose. He has a fierce look, and when quiet very much resembles a vagrant. The other members of the gang charged him with perjury on his evidence before Court at Whitesville. He charged George Applewhite with the killing of ex-Sheriff King. The rest of the outlaws say that it was John Dial who fired the fatal shot, with a pistol, that terminated the earthly career of that hale old citizen. It was John Dial who shot S. E. Ward in Reuben King's parlor.

Henderson Oxendine, another one of the gang, has been portrayed in the section headed "the fate of Henderson Oxendine," which see. Calvin Oxendine a brother of Henderson, belonged also to the gang. They are both mulattoes, rather bright, and somewhat resemble each other. Calvin has black eyes and in their searching round, are indescr-

bable in their glare. They partake of the expression of the Bummer and of the Gypsy, furtive, plaintive, touching and at the same time repelling. They look like genius, but are not; the study of them is a mystery.

SHOEMAKER JOHN.

Shoemaker John, so named from his occupation, being a shoemaker by trade, was a regular negro, as black as a crow. He possessed a round, full face, and if he were good for anything it was stealing, being an adept in that business. He, together with some of the *followers* of Lowrie's gang, went on a robbing expedition some time in the autumn of 1869. They first went to the house of Mrs. Elizabeth Carlisle, on the "Saddle Tree Swamp," in the north-eastern part of the county. Here they broke into the smoke house of Mrs. Carlisle, took nearly all of her bacon and then entered her dwelling by *force* and robbed it of all its valuables. From Mrs. Carlisle's they went to the store of Messrs. Biggs & Hodgins, at Antioch Presbyterian Church, in upper Robeson, and with augurs bored into their store and took various articles of merchandise. They next went to Billy Purcell's residence, a colored freeman, and took every thing from him of any value. They then went to Flora McFarland's residence, near Blue's Bridge, in Richmond county, and robbed her. They then pounced on the gun shop of ex-Sheriff William Buchanan, of Richmond county, and depleted it of every gun in it. They then wended their way back to Scuffletown, in Robeson county, with their booty. For this offence Shoemaker John was apprehended and tried at the March term of the Superior Court held in Robeson in 1871, and found guilty and sentenced to serve ten years in the State's penitentiary. He

appeared to be glad to get in the penitentiary, for the Lowrie gang had threatened to kill him on sight, having utterly repudiated him and his acts.

WILLIAM CHAVIS.

The Chavis family in Robeson claim their origin from the celebrated Cheves family of the South, Chavis being an abbreviation of the name Cheves; but this version of their origin can hardly be correct, unless it be admitted that the founder of the family in Robeson was a runaway slave, many years ago, who made his escape to Scuffletown in North Carolina, and took up his abode in this large free-negro settlement. Be this as it may, there are a good many of the name now in Robeson county, and among the number William Chavis has become distinguished as an outlaw. He is a tall, bright, fine looking mulatto, about thirty years of age, well built and very muscular. As soon as he was outlawed by the civil authorities in Robeson county he made his escape to Effingham county in Georgia, near Savannah, where he broke into a store, and made his way across the Savannah River into the State of South Carolina. When in Georgia he was employed by a man who owned a saw-mill by the name of Foy. Since he came over into South Carolina nothing has been heard about him.

The only white man outlawed by the civil authorities of the county was Zack T. McLaughlin, who was hired by Henry Berry Lowry, for fifty dollars, to inflict the mortal wound on the lamented Owen C. Norment. This man Zack T. McLaughlin was probably the meanest specimen of the Scotch that could be found in the county. He justly merited the fate he met up with, at the hands of Henry Biggs.

One other white man, viz : Bryan Gilbert, not a native of the county, had dealings with the outlaw gang. On the day the outlaws made what is known in Robeson county as the "Brandy Raid" on Angus Leach, this George Gilbert was along and accompanied the outlaws to Mrs. William McKay's residence, near Floral College, and being disguised, that is, blackened, was not recognized by Miss Pat McKay, nor by Mrs. William McKay. Here he played several pieces on the piano forte in Mrs. McKay's parlor. Subsequently he went with the outlaws to Mr. David Townsend's residence, on Aurora Swamp, near Asbury Church. Having gone into Mr. Townsend's yard and being discovered, Mr. Townsend opened fire on them with a double-barreled shot gun. Here Bryan Gilbert was wounded and carried off by the outlaws to their secret camp in the Back Swamp, where he lingered a short time and died. Thus fell another one of the associates of the outlaws; and now, as we have given an imperfect outline of these land pirates, or human moccasins, we will proceed to delineate their mode of warfare.

MODE OF WARFARE, EQUIPMENTS, &c.

A stranger, to see these outlaws armed as they appeared sometimes at Moss Neck, Eureka and Red Banks, would be surprised at the load they carried. They generally moved about armed with a Spencer rifle, two double-barreled shot guns, one of the latter and the rifle being slung from their shoulders by a leather strap, and three or four six barreled revolvers in their belts, with cartridge boxes in a heavy canvass haversack, the whole armor weighing not less than ninety or one hundred pounds. Where these outlaws procured their improved fire-arms (breech-loading guns) remains

to this day a mystery, but they had them and knew how to use them.

In regard to their mode of warfare, it may be stated that they seldom went about at night, except when they wished to commit robberies; they would then take advantage of the darkness to put their adversary to a disadvantage, slip up and arrest a whole family before they would be discovered, and then plunder at their leisure. They generally slept at night in the cabins of their relatives and well-wishers and befrienders. Seldom were they exposed to the inclemencies of the weather or night air; every negro and every mulatto in Robeson county would befriend them and share with them their last morsel of bread and meat.

When they wished to put one of their enemies—one who was hunting them—out of the way, they would go and make a blind or two on the road or path he was expected to travel, and get in this blind, and remain there until their victim would come along, and then fire on him without even halting him, killing him without a moment's warning. They were such adepts in constructing blinds that the traveler along the road, unless his attention had been called to these blinds by one who understood them, would pass them by unnoticed.

It was by *ambuscading* that they succeeded in killing J. Brantley Harris, James P. Barnes, Owen C. Norment, Murdoch A. McLean and his brother Hugh, John Taylor, Archibald A. McMillan, Hector McNeil, Alexander Brown, Col. F. M. Wishart and Giles Innman. All these most excellent citizens of Robeson county met their sad fate at the hands of these modern Robeson county Apaches—these North Carolina Modocs; not in a civilized warfare—not in accordance with modern military tactics, but by the bullet of the high-way robber and midnight assassin. Even ex-Sheriff King, although in his own house, sitting by his own fireside, reading the news of the day, came unfortunately to the end

of his earthly career through the Indian stealthiness of these subtle villians, who blackened their faces and hands to disguise their identity and race, and then crept up slyly and pushed the door open as easily as possible and demanded him to surrender.

Daniel Baker, too, as peaceable and harmless a man as could be found in the county, was shot in his own yard, after nightfall, by these inhuman bandits.

It is a misnomer to call the Lowrie war in Robeson county by any other name than the war of the *Bushmen*, or the Bushman War. It was waged on the part of Henry Berry Lowrie and brothers in a spirit of revenge. They wished to retaliate on the white race because the Home Guard of the county found Allen Lowrie, their father, and William Lowrie, their brother, receivers of stolen goods from various parts of the surrounding country in the month of February, 1864, and having courtmartialed them and found them guilty, sentenced them to be shot. There is but one opinion in regard to this whole matter among the law-abiding citizens of Robeson county, and that is that Allen Lowrie, the old man, as he is termed, should have acted a better part to his white neighbors, who had often befriended him, than to have received into his house stolen goods, taken from his neighbors, and then found to endeavor to screen himself and his son William from punishment. The verdict of the public is that he was "particeps criminis," equally guilty with his son William, and that the Home Guard did right in passing sentence of death on them both and in carrying that sentence into execution. And right here is a moral lesson: "The way of the transgressor is hard;" "Vengeance is mine and I will repay, saith the Lord," "The wicked live not out half their days." Behold—see! Henry Berry Lowrie and his associates in crime have gone to the criminals bourne, "to answer for the deeds done in the flesh," and *may their like never again* appear on this world's arena, for

they were the veriest cowards—the most arrant poltroons, that ever disgraced the annals of warfare.

A GEOGRAPHICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION OF SCUFFLETOWN *

Scuffletown proper is located a little to the north-west of the centre of Robeson county, the centre being near Barker's cut, about five or six miles north-west of Lumberton, on the Carolina Central Railway. Eight miles north-westward of Lumberton, on the Carolina Central Railway, is the station of Moss Neck. Seven miles from Moss Neck, on the Carolina Central Railway, is the station of Red Banks; between Moss Neck and Red Banks are Eureka and Blue's Store, so that properly speaking the Carolina Central Railway cuts into two parts the territory of Scuffletown, which extends on both sides of the railway track some three or four miles, interspersed with branches, swamps and bays. It is a part of the great swamp district of North Carolina below the sand hills. Standing at Lumberton, the county site, and looking north-westward you see the Ten Mile Swamp, with Dockerey's mill on it (formerly Rhode's mill), then the Big Raft Swamp, then Richland Swamp, then Burnt Swamp, then Bear Swamp—all north of the railway track, traversing the country and running into Lumber River south of the Carolina Central Railway. North of the railway track "the Lowrie Band" never committed a murder. South of the railway track runs Lumber River; and parallel with Lumber River runs Back Swamp for twenty miles, the river and swamp being at some places two miles apart, at others

*Scuffletown, in the common parlance of the country, means a large free negro or mulatto settlement, without streets or public buildings, having no municipal laws or regulations.

three miles. On Back Swamp, about ten miles from Innman's bridge across Lumber River is the place where the Lowrie Robbers kept their secret camp. Around Moss Neck station are the scenes of their boldest murders and assassinations.

This part of Robeson county was doubtless first settled by the ancestors of the present mulattoes, on account of the poverty of the soil and the half inundated condition of that region, it being within the reach of their means, or in other words, lands there being cheap. In wet weather, when much rain has fallen, and the Lumber River and its *tributaries rise*, this region is almost flooded, and remains so for some considerable time. In summer a luxuriant undergrowth covers all the swamps and low places, and even the pine land; while in winter the streams are full of water and the swamps more extensive. The growth is sweet gum, black gum, maple, ash, poplar, cypress, post oak, white oak, hickory and the gallberry bush in abundance. In the margins of the swamps the yellow jessamine, poison oak and bamboo vines grow luxuriantly and stretch out eccentrically, making almost an impenetrable abattis; in short, Scuffletown is a tract of country interspersed and traversed by swamps, covered at wide intervals with hills, with here and there a log cabin of rude and simple construction; sometimes, however, a half dozen of these huts are in sight of each other. As many of the Scuffletonians are intemperate, where those huts or dwellings are densest, there will also be found in some cabin mean whiskey for sale.

The mulattoes of Scuffletown have few or no horses. They generally, however, manage to keep a poor, stunted ox to do their hauling, and if in addition to their ox they can manage to keep a pair of old wheels, they deem themselves rich. They are great lovers of tobacco, and are always begging a chew of tobacco from those they meet up with. An anecdote is handed down in regard to Duncan McAlpin, a

former Sheriff of Robeson. He lived on the borders of Scuffletown, near Philadelphus Presbyterian Church, at the mills on Richland Swamp now owned by W. J. Brown. It is related of Duncan McAlpin that whenever he would meet a mulatto on the road, knowing the habit of begging tobacco, that he would say: "How do you—how do you? Can't you give me a chew of tobacco? Good-bye—good bye."

If a traveler wishes to visit a Scuffletown shanty he will be compelled to leave the public road and take a foot-path leading through the woods, across branches and swamps, until he reaches a worm fence made of pine rails, inclosing a half cleared patch of land containing three or four acres, in the centre of which generally stands the mulatto cabin, constructed of pine poles about five or six inches in diameter, notched one above the other until it reaches the height of eight feet and then covered with pine boards; the chimney built against one end of the house on the outside of poles and clay as far up as the body of the house goes, and the balance of the chimney with sticks and clay, where it narrows to the funnel or smoke hole; a door is cut on the front side and the chinks stopped with clay; no windows generally; sometimes a cut hole is left on the door with numerous peep holes in the body of the cabin. A little distance from the cabin will be found in the yard a well of water, or rather a hole dug in the ground, surrounded with a cypress gum or curb to keep the children from falling in and getting drowned. In the corner of the chimney on the outside will be found a half barrel sawed off and set up on boards one foot above the ground for running off lye, from wood ashes, for the purpose of making soap, the other half of the barrel being used as a washtub. A poor, half-starved *fice dog*, used for hunting "possums" and "wild varmints," will generally be found inside of the enclosure. The two or three acres cleared are ploughed and planted in corn, pota

toes and rice, which come up *puny*, grow *puny* and mature *puny*. The yellow mulatto woman of the house commonly has a baby at the breast, and from a half dozen to a dozen children playing outside of the inclosure in the woods. The bed is made on the floor (generally a clay floor); two or three stools to sit on; no division in the cabin, one apartment comprising the whole establishment.

The above picture is true of the great majority of the Scuffletonians, but there are a few honorable exceptions. The Oxendines lived in better style and in much more comfortable dwellings; in fact, were well-to-do citizens, whilst the old set of the Lowrie family lived in good, comfortable frame houses, several of them being good mechanics, or house carpenters.

ETHICAL SCIENCE IN SCUFFLETOWN.

The habits of the Scuffletonians are peculiar and eccentric, sometimes assuming a religious aspect as austere as the most rigid Pharisee could desire, at other times plunging headlong into immoral excesses degrading to human nature. Pilfering chickens, stealing pigs and killing sheep for mutton were of frequent occurrence among the denizens of Scuffletown from time immemorial. A love for spirituous liquors characterized the whole population with some few exceptions. The entire mulatto race are intemperate whenever they have the means of gratifying their taste for spirituous liquors, and when under the influence of liquor they are remarkably quarrelsome and fussy, often fighting and cutting and stabbing each other with knives, or shooting each other with guns or pistols. But notwithstanding these immoral evils, nearly all Scuffletonians, when they arrive at years of discretion, join either the Baptist or Methodist

church in Scuffletown, which they claim as their church or churches, being supplied with ministers of the mulatto race, educated, licensed and ordained in their peculiar style.

Ever since the Methodist denomination had a circuit in the county the ministers of that denomination preached regularly to the mulattoes in Scuffletown, and seemed to outsiders to take an unusual interest in the spiritual welfare of the Scuffletonians, sometimes admitting to membership, on the profession of their faith, in the course of the year as many as fifty or sixty. Presbyterian ministers also labored assiduously among them for a number of years. The Baptist denomination also sent their ministers in among them to impart spiritual instruction to their benighted minds, *but all seemingly to no purpose*. They are barely civilized and by no means christianized. Religion to-day is at a low ebb among them, virtue at a discount and honesty and integrity "*nowhere*" to be found in their vocabularies.

Since the late war between the States, they have shut the doors of their churches against all ministers of the white race and installed in their places in the pulpit persons of their own color "*to explainify*" the Scriptures and elucidate them into "a mist of obscurity," literally "the blind leading the blind."

THE ORIGIN OF SCUFFLETOWN.

When the Scotch first commenced settling in Robeson county in 1747, after the disastrous battle of Culloden, (Robeson being then a part of Bladen county) the ancestors of the Locklears, Revels, Cumbas and Chavis' of to-day were living where their descendants now live. After the Revolutionary War, the Lowries moved down into Scuffletown and built on the place now known as the "Harper Ferry

place," and kept a ferry there across Lumber River. In process of time the Ransoms (probably runaway negroes) came from Halifax county and took up their abode in this free-negro settlement. The Woods' came from Sampson; the Oxendines from Franklin, also the Cummings', the Goins and the Braboys. The Jacobs, Hunts, Morgans, Scotts and Dials, with the Flavishes, were probably runaway slaves, who made their way to Robeson and passed themselves off as free, and who were never caught and taken back to their owners. Other free colored families since the Revolutionary War also came and settled in Robeson, but not in Scuffletown, such as the Murpheys, the Wilsons, the Bryans and the Bells. James Murphy lived on the farm now owned by the heirs of the late Daniel H. McLean, in Shoe Heel, near Shoe Heel Station, on the Carolina Central Railway. He was said to be as black as any negro, with kinky, curly and woolly hair on his cranium. He amassed considerable property and was the owner of slaves as black as himself. He married a Cumba—a half-breed Tuscarora Indian woman—nearly white, with straight black hair and a good countenance. He left Robeson county about 1792, with one of the Hunts, and settled on the Great Pee Dee in South Carolina, near Hunt's Bluff, Hunt's Bluff taking its name from a free negro of Robeson as black as *jet*, who settled there and kept a ferry across the Great Pee Dee.

The Bell family lived on Saddle Tree Swamp, some ten or twelve miles from Lumberton, on the old stage road from Lumberton to Fayetteville. One of the family, namely Hardy Bell, moved to Lumberton about 1840, and commenced merchandising. He succeeded in this line of business very well until he died. For several years he was the most prominent merchant in Lumberton, Lumberton being called in Robeson "Hardy Bell's town," as a burlesque.

At the commencement of the late war between the States in 1860, there was very little difference in the color of the

free negroes or mulattoes of Robeson. They all had more or less a swarthy, yellow tinge of color, some whiter than others, of course. They married and intermarried with each other so often that the distinctive features of one was representative of all. Straight black hair, high cheek bones, straight backs and great muscular power characterized the whole mulatto race. Traces of the Indian, Anglo-Saxon and African race can be discovered in the contour of their faces and observed in their demeanor and deportment. As a race they are remarkably *superstitious*. They believe in fairies, elves, spirits, ghosts and goblins and in conjuration. They are as a race *very prolific*. It is no uncommon occurrence to find women among them who have borne a dozen of children, and some few as many as fifteen or sixteen. They generally, as a race, notwithstanding their love for whiskey, die of old age; seldom sick—seldom in bad health. By the census of 1860 Robeson county contained the extraordinary number of 1,459 free mulattoes—more than any other county in the State, except Halifax. There were no counties in the State that had more than a few hundred. The average to each county was not above fifty. In accounting, therefore, for the rapid growth of Scuffletown in Robeson county in so short a period as intervened since the Revolutionary War, the conclusion is inevitable that no inconsiderable portion of the Scuffletonians in 1860 were fugitive slaves from other counties and from South Carolina, who begged the charity of this large free negro settlement in Robeson county. Be this conclusion true or not, *one thing is very certain, Scuffletown has always been, now is, and probably ever will be a great incubus—a great drawback* on Robeson county, not only in religion and morals, but in a money point of view. Before the late war Scuffletown demoralized the entire slave population and not a few of the “white trash,” *whilst the interminable diabolism of the Scuffletonians forever kept the State Docket in the county crowded with cases, so much*

so that in each and every year an extra term of the court had to be held to finish the cases on the docket, and the worst feature in the whole business was that the county had to "foot the bills," or pay the costs in almost every trial, even to paying jail fees; consequently taxes have ever been high in Robeson when compared with other counties in the State, so that in the language of the immortal Cicero, we might exclaim, somewhat paraphrased: "Quandier, oh! Scuffletown, *abutere* nostru patientia?"—"How long, oh! Scuffletown, will you abuse our patience?")

Very few of the Scuffletonians can either read or write; they seem to have no love for letters. Efforts have been made time and again by the whites to induce them to send their children to school, but it was "love's labor lost." As a race they are illiterate and unlearned, notwithstanding they exhibit on many occasions the cunning of the Indian, along with the shrewdness of the Anglo-Saxon.

CONDITION OF AFFAIRS IN ROBESON.

This chapter will give the true condition of affairs in Robeson county, commencing in the latter part of the year 1864, and continuing until the latter part of 1870. At the time the Lowrie robbers commenced their operations in the year 1864, all our able men were at the front, fighting for rights and homes, while their unprotected families were exposed to a band of merciless marauders, who, when requisition was made by the Confederate authorities for their labor on our fortifications, betook themselves to the forests and swamps.

That portion of the county in which this gang organized and commenced operations was not *Scuffletown*, as has been made to appear by false representations as to the locality.

The Lowries *did not* live in Scuffletown. Old Allen Lowrie, holding in contempt the common Scuffletonians, would not live among them, but purchased a tract of land from a white man, who was a small farmer, in a neighborhood which comprised families equal in point of education, refinement and wealth to any community in the county of Robeson or elsewhere throughout the State. The immediate vicinity in which commenced the horrible scenes of plunder, so soon to be followed by bloodshed, was not thickly settled, the plantations being large; consequently families in some instances lived a little remote from each other. This neighborhood is situated on the west side of Lumber River, about twelve miles north-west of Lumberton, and fifteen south from Floral College.

At the time of their organization in the year 1864 there were no men at home, except a few who were exempt from service by age and other causes; in some families there was no gentleman left. The citizens of upper Robeson, becoming aware of our utter helplessness to defend ourselves, formed into a Home Guard and very kindly came down to endeavor to learn who comprised the gang, their strength, and also to become conversant with their mode and line of operation. They quartered themselves at McLaughlin's Bridge, on Lumber River, for about two weeks. Within that time they were convinced that their force was entirely too weak to effect much with the gang, as it was positively learned that it numbered as high as forty or fifty. An appeal for aid was sent to Richmond county. The Home Guard of that county, though few in number, hesitated not to join the gallant few who were chaffing to be in action. They soon succeeded in capturing and killing their leader, William Lowrie, and his father, Allen Lowrie, as his house was their headquarters, and therein was found some of the stolen property. This did little towards ending the troubles in Robeson; it ceased only for a short time, to break out

with renewed zeal and ardor. Younger sons, with those allied by blood, re-organize, and with the Indian stealthiness and spirit of revenge, go forth plundering and spreading terror throughout the community, by their unlimited acts of lawlessness and terrible threats of vengeance. In the meantime, peace being declared, our men returned, worn down and disheartened, not only by the turn affairs had taken, but also the condition in which they found their families. For months the robber gang go on undisturbed—and why? Simply this: those who were willing and ready to make an attempt to arrest them, could get no aid from others in their vicinity. When they would go and request them to “come with us and we will stop it,” almost the invariable reply was, “No; if they will let us alone, we will let them alone,” refusing even to lend their guns to those without arms. Some gave as a reason that they lived too near the line of their operations; their hands were tied, for if the robbers found it out they would be revenged on their persons or property. A refusal in such cases seemed to say: “They may kill my friend, or devastate my neighbor’s property, but if they will let me and my interests alone, why then I will be content for them to remain forever at large.”

Prompted by selfish motives to refuse to aid and abet the noble men who would have risked life and all to secure a peace and quiet for those in the more immediate vicinity of the gang, they thereby secured to themselves, by permitting those living fiends to go unmolested, a punishment equal in some degree to those who did all in their power to arrest them. Nearly every family for miles, who was possessed of any property, were annoyed by their visits and depredations.

The first election held there after the surrender, as in almost every other county in the State, placed Radicals in office; and in our county some of her petty officers assumed more power in the control of local affairs than the Constitu-

tion of the State allowed; yet they were quietly permitted to use that authority. Such was our condition when the citizens of Robeson rose up to throw off the yoke that was galling them sorely. They started out, determined not only to demolish the robber gang, but all against whom they had unquestionable evidence as being friends and informants for the gang. They killed one or two of their allies; the supposed perpetrators were pointed out by friends of the robber gang, and evidence taken sufficiently to outlaw by a Radical Judge, a company of nine as noble young men, from good families, as our connty can boast, and forced to flee beyond the limits of their native State to seek that protection they could not claim within her borders. To further intimidate the citizens of Robeson, the hue and cry of "Ku Klux, Ku Klux," is raised, and loud threats by her officials of Kirk and his men are heard. Some of our best men were arrested and kept before a "Justice" Court for days. All the young men who were engaged in hunting the robbers stood in daily expectation of undergoing the same ordeal. Surrounded on the one hand by the robber gang and their friends, through the thick pine woods, and to a white man, the almost impenetrable swamps; on the other, Radical officials dispensing their so-called justice to the noble fellows who would have captured them, and you have the situation. Instances could be given where young men received orders from the High-Sheriff to search the houses of some of the suspected parties, and on obeying their orders were notified to appear before the "Justice of the Peace" in Lumberton, to answer charges preferred against them for ill treatment to inmates of said houses. On appearing for trial, the parties alleged to have been ill treated, sworn in open court to the falsity of the charge. They were therefore necessitated to release the men without having a chance to vent their individual spite on the heads of their innocent prisoners. Thus the citizens of Robeson were in-

timidated. Their situation not being realized beyond their county limits, they were branded in many places throughout the country as cowards; but could their nightly vigils and midnight tramps, with knapsack and gun, all be chronicled, their days of exposure to cold and often to hunger, in the dense woods watching for the enemy be recorded, "Cowards of Robeson" would be changed to her gallant heroes.

STATEMENT OF REV. C. M. PEPPER.

This chapter comprises the statement of Rev. C. M. Pepper, of the North Carolina Conference, giving a correct account of the state of affairs during his sojourn in Robeson county. He says: I resided in the neighborhood in which the Lowries lived in the year 1865. I was well acquainted with Allen Lowrie, the father of Henry Berry, and have, I suppose, often seen the latter, as I knew several of the old man's sons, though not well enough to distinguish all of them by name.

Allen Lowrie was a sort of chief in the community of free negroes in which he lived. Although he did not live in Scuffletown, yet he attended the Scuffletonian church every Sabbath, and therefore was often with them. He was perhaps the wealthiest, most intelligent and respectable of all the free people of color in that community. He was a tall, fine looking mulatto, with straight hair, and a physiognomy that indicated Indian blood greatly predominant in his extraction. He lived in a comfortable frame building, had a farm and made a good living. He was respected by the whites of the community and looked up to by the colored.

I do not know so much about his sons, but if I remember correctly, they were all of them like their father in com-

plexion, and hair indicating a large mixture of Indian blood.

I found when I reached the neighborhood of that settlement that the free negroes had been in some excitement, the cause of which was an attempt on the part of the authorities to put them in the army. Some of them were skulking in the bushes and swamps, and among these were some of the sons of Lowrie. I was startled at the account they gave me of the murder of a good man, an excellent citizen (J. P. Barnes) of that community, whom I had known for years. This was about the first of the long list of outrages which have been perpetrated in that community since that time; this was the beginning, I may say, of a reign of terror.

Soon after the murder of James Barnes, the people were almost petrified with fear at the intelligence of the fact that there was an organized band of marauders, of how great a number no one knew. We had been informed, or did afterwards learn, that this band was composed of Yankee prisoners, escaped from the Florence prison in South Carolina, of free negroes, and as we supposed of some few mean white men and slaves.

The community was terror-stricken as they heard of new depredations and outrages committed each night. Almost every day we heard that the robbers had entered a house the night before, ransacked and taken whatever they wanted, caroused, insulted or attacked some of the family, and producing terror and consternation. In every instance they took all the ammunition and liquor they could find, and generally seized or broke the fire-arms. There was a panic in the community; so great was the fear that persons were afraid to step out into the yard after dark—everything was done before night. The doors were bolted securely; the inmates would gather around the fire and sit with hearts palpitating at every sound they heard, momentarily expecting

the appearance of the dreaded band of desperadoes. No one knew how many were in the gang, or who belonged to it, except a few who had been recognized. They went in the dark, and on entering a house extinguished the lights, or only those entered who were strangers to the household. The gang had been estimated as high as fifty in number, and we were satisfied that the Lowries had in it a prominent place. The evidence was satisfactory that one of them killed Mr. Barnes, and some of them had been identified amongst the clan.

I was boarding at that time at Mrs. Nash's, widow of Dr. Nash, who was a son of Judge Nash. Her house was right on the border of Lumber River Swamp. It was on an island in that swamp, as we afterward learned, and in a quarter of a mile of Mrs. Nash's, that the robbers rendezvoused during the day, and from this den sallied forth at night. They visited Mrs. Nash's house on several occasions, but did her no damage in any way. We had prepared for them, or at least made out our plan of receiving them. I advised Mrs. Nash if they should come to treat them with as much kindness as possible. They came the first time when I was from home, and although there was not a white man on the premises, and the three ladies were almost paralyzed with fear, Mrs. Nash went out and spoke to them in the yard. The first intimation the ladies had of their presence was from the servant girl, who came in hurriedly and told them that the robbers were there, and had sent her to tell the ladies to send out all the keys at once. Mrs. McCormic, a sister of Mrs. N., handed the key basket to the girl, and told her to tell them if they pleased not to enter the house, that they were alone. Mrs. Nash was more calm; she stopped the girl and bade her light a candle, that she would go with her. The other ladies objected strongly to this, but she thought best to put on as bold a front as possible, which she did, and stepped out to speak with them. She addressed

them in a pleasant tone, and told them that they were three unprotected ladies, requested and begged them not to harm their persons, that they could have anything they wanted. The man who seemed to be leader, and who was an escaped Yankee prisoner, was completely disarmed and tamed by the eloquence of her tongue and blandness of her manners. In the case of their leader, "the lion seemed changed into the lamb," and he said: "Madam, we are obliged to have something to eat." "Certainly," said Mrs. Nash, "walk into the house and be seated, and I will have supper prepared." Two strange white men came in, filthy and ragged, well armed with double barreled shot guns, &c. They sat down, and while supper was being prepared, Mrs. Nash entered into conversation with them, and entertained them as few ladies in North Carolina could have done under the circumstances. She told them of the gang of robbers in the neighborhood, endeavored in and no doubt succeeded in making the impression on their mind that she did not even suspect them of being connected with the gang, and begged their protection against their assaults. While she was talking with these men, quite a number of their accomplices were stationed as a guard outside, and standing in the yard awaiting orders. After awhile they seemed to get impatient for booty and began to complain, and several times one of the men walked out and cursed them. After supper they remained until a late hour, sang some for the ladies and had Mrs. N. to perform some pieces for them on the piano. They finally bade the ladies good night and went off, taking nothing except a case knife, to which the fingers of one of the company stuck, and which was afterwards returned.

In a few nights they came again, dressed in broadcloth and boots, shaved and washed, making really a genteel appearance. I was again from home, or rather I was off on duty. They remained as before until a late hour of the night, and left doing no damage.

The third time they came I was at home. Hearing their heavy footfalls on the long piazza of the old mansion, the ladies insisted that Mr. D. M. McCormick (who was there also) and I should retire to another room, which I afterward concluded Mr. Mc. was very willing to do. I wished to see them, but yielded to the entreaties of the ladies, and we walked out of the room just in time to avoid their knowledge of our presence. This time they were evidently very uneasy. The Home Guard, in considerable force, was stationed four miles up the river and in search of the robbers. They seemed very restless, sat with their guns across their knees, and were not so pleasant and communicative as before. Presently they arose hurriedly, stepped out at the door and were gone for a few minutes, when the silence was broken by several loud reports from shot guns, then all was quiet and still as death for half an hour. They then walked into the house again.

In our room we had two double-barreled shot guns, one six-shooter and one rifle. I proposed to Mr. McCormick that we should take them, but he seemed rather nervous for the undertaking, and I then made the proposition to slip out at the window and go to where we knew the Home Guard were stationed. This seemed to him also to be rather perilous, so we let them *slide*. This time they did not stay long, and when they left, left not to return there again. On the next morning, to our surprise, we were informed by the negroes that they had left one of their number in the negro cabin sick, and requested Mrs. Nash, through the servants, to let him stay there until he would get well. Mrs. N. went out to see and speak with him. He told her that he had been with the robber gang only for concealment and sustenance; that he had never joined with them in their marauding operations, as he was taken sick the first night he reached Allen Lowrie's, and had been sick up to that time. He also told her that he was one of the escaped Yankee prisoners

from Florence, and was with the band because he had no where else to go. He gave his name as Owen T. Wright. He had with him a bible, which had the appearance of having been much used. His plausible story was received by Mrs. N., who began at once to sympathize with him. She had the negroes to wash and dress him in clean clothes, carry him into her dwelling house and put him in a comfortable bed. This was scarcely done before the house was surrounded by a company of armed men, who proved to be the Home Guard. I walked out and spoke to one of them in the yard. He asked me hurriedly about the Yankee. I stated to him the facts of the case, and others coming up and hearing my statement, rushed to the room where the invalid Yankee was, and I suppose would, but for the interposition of that kind lady, have put an end to his life without taking him out of sight of the house. Pocahontas like, Mrs. Nash plead for his life and stood between him and destruction until the excitement had subsided. They consented to take him and give the case an investigation. Putting him in a cart they hurried him off towards their headquarters; from there he was sent to Lumberton and a comfortable room provided for him by Mrs. S. A. McQueen, where he remained for a few days. Sherman's men made a raid into Lumberton, and carried him off with the rest of their booty.

The evening previous to their visit to Mrs. Nash's, they went to the house of Allen Lowrie, where they found William Lowrie, his son, who was identified as one of the gang, mending or fixing his gun. They arrested him. They searched his father's house, and finding much of the stolen property concealed in his house, arrested him also. A brief court-martial was held. Allen and William Lowrie were both found guilty and sentenced to be shot. William attempted to make his escape but a shot from one of the company brought him down, but did not kill him. They carried him to Mr. Robert McKinzie's, where they had several

others, who had been also arrested and held in confinement by members of the same company for examination. Sufficient evidence was not obtained to criminate any of the party except Allen and William Lowrie; the others were released. According to the rules of war a certain number of men were detailed to execute the sentence. Allen requested time to pray, which was granted him. They were then led out and bound—a short pause—a loud report—and the prisoners fell lifeless to the earth. This trial and execution meted out summary justice to one of the notorious gang and an accomplice in crime, who though not yet recognized among the desperadoes, was as guilty as those who perpetrated the crimes.

The event of the Lowries death which I have just mentioned, it is thought, kindled afresh in the bosom of Henry Berry the fires of revenge which are always so difficult to extinguish in the breasts of Indians. Nothing would quench that fire but blood.

But now for a time the robberies in the community ceased and for a while the minds of the people were comparatively quiet. The assault upon them by the Home Guard seemed to scatter the band and destroy their organization. Before that they had entered nearly every house in an area of six or ten miles square, the particulars of which and the names of those robbed will be given by one better acquainted with the facts than I am.

Henry Berry went to his home, and after a little time he became so bold that he did not pretend to conceal himself at all. The other negroes went home also. The people felt for several months that there was an end to trouble of this sort; and doubtless there would have been but few more outrages committed after that but for the remarkable turn which government matters took at the close of the war. Emboldened by the policy of the dominant party, they commenced the work of revenge, in which they were so anxious

to engage, such as robbing and murdering those in opposition to them.

MURDER OF JAMES P. BARNES.

We will now proceed to give a list of the crimes as they were perpetrated, and every outrage committed by the Lowrie band, as it occurred :

The first murder committed by the Lowries was that of James P. Barnes, a most estimable man and good citizen. He was shot about 9 o'clock A. M., December 21st, A. D. 1864, and died in the afternoon of the same day. The particulars of his murder are these: he was post master at Clay Valley in Robeson county, about a mile and a half from his residence, and was on his way to the post office, when he was fired on by three men in ambush, twenty-eight shot lodging in his breast. He had fallen when Henry B. Lowrie ran up with his gun cocked; Mr. Barnes recognized him and entreated him not to shoot him any more, that he would die from the wounds already received, but regardless of his look of agony, or his earnest pleading, he raised his gun and discharged it in the face of Mr. B., knocking out several teeth, and taking off part of his under-jaw. The cruel, heartless wretches then left him alone in the back-woods, almost in the last agonies of death. The hour passed for him to be at the office, but still he did not come. His brother, Dr. John A. Barnes, who was there, knowing his strict punctuality to business, and his rigid observance of every duty, felt somewhat alarmed at his prolonged absence, and started to his house to learn the cause. About three-fourths of a mile from the office he found him, wounded in the manner above stated. He removed him as quickly as possible, but all efforts to prolong his life proved unavail-

ing; he died in a few hours. Although so badly wounded, the power of speech was not denied him; he told them it was H. B. Lowrie, and two white men whom he did not recognize; those were supposed to be Yankee prisoners, who afterwards became members of the band. Mr. Barnes lived on the Back Swamp, and was a man very fond of hunting deer and turkeys; he had no family, and his leisure hours were spent in this way. H. B. Lowrie lived out back of Mr. Barnes, and was lurking at that time in the woods to avoid being carried to the Forts below Wilmington to work. It was then he was making up his band to rob and plunder the citizens of that community. Knowing the habits of Mr. B., and for fear of detection by him, it is supposed for this reason only, he determined to put him out of the way by murdering him in the cruel manner already described. There had been some little disagreement between Mr. B. and old man Lowrie about some cattle, and also some hogs that had been stolen from Mr. B., but admitting it to be either one or the other, it was a trivial cause for which to way-lay and murder in cold blood, a good man, beloved by all, just and honest in all his dealings.

J. BRANTLY HARRISS.

The next on record comes the murder of Mr. Harriss. This occurred in January, 1865. During the war a call was made upon the colored people to work on the defences below Wilmington. George Lowrie, a brother of Allen Lowrie, had several sons—two of whom were carried off, and did work where they were sent. After remaining there sometime, they got furloughs to come home for a few days; they were at home but a short time when Harriss had them arrested as deserters. It seems that prior to this, there had

been some feud existing between the Lowries and Harriss. However, Harriss had them, and left with them, for the purpose as he stated, of putting them aboard the train at Moss Neck Depot to send them back to their work on the fortifications. On the way thither, when some evil demon took possession of him, he murdered them both, cruelly and inhumanly. A jury of inquest was held over them, and the facts of the murder was clearly set forth on Harriss. A warrant was issued for Harriss' arrest and placed in the hands of Sheriff King on Friday. The Sunday following Harriss was riding out with a mulatto woman in his buggy; after she got out of the buggy, he went but a short distance when he was shot and killed. The young Lowries killed by Harriss were near relatives of H. B. Lowrie, and it was H. B. Lowrie that shot Harriss. Harriss was the only man killed by the Lowrie Gang that did not sustain a fair character. He has been living for several years in or near Scuffletown, and was a man feared by all who knew him. He had a wife and two children, but they did not seem to possess much influence over him for good.

ROBBERIES.

It was in February, 1865, that they commenced so openly to rob and plunder. There was a few families that escaped; although each night they were expected by all whom they had not visited. It was certainly a time to be remembered by all, both old and young. The nights of miserable terror, and days of dread suspense, which all endured during their operations in the neighborhood are indescribable. The first place that the robbers entered a house openly for plunder, was Mrs. Alexander Bullard's. She was alone in the house with her five little children, her husband being

in the army, when four men armed and disguised walked in. They told her they wanted her husband's gun and clothing, which they took without much ceremony. A negro boy, belonging to Mr. J. D. Bridgers, had a wife at Mrs. Bullard's; he was in the kitchen, hearing voices in the house, with that curiosity characteristic of the race, slipped out to see who it was. As soon as he saw the situation of Mrs. Bullard, he turned and ran a mile and a quarter to his master's, and on reaching the gate, had only strength to call the name of his young master, and fainted. As soon as he could be restored to consciousness, in broken sentences he explained the situation of Mrs. B. Mr. Bridgers and his son, A. C. Bridgers, (then 15 years of age) armed themselves and the negro boy, and went as quickly as possible to her aid. On reaching there, they found all quiet; the robbers had gone, taking the gun and a few articles of wearing apparel. At this place they behaved quietly, used no insulting language, nor did not seem to have any desire to frighten her.

MR. JOHN McNAIR.

Mr. McNair lived in a few miles of the Lowries. He carried on a large farm, having many hands in his employ; this necessarily compelled him to have much building done on his plantation. Several of the Lowries being carpenters, good workmen, and in good standing among the whites, were employed by Mr. McNair for this purpose. Being so employed from time to time, they had the advantage of learning the situation of affairs in general about the premises, which they made free use of, much to Mr. McNair's discomfiture. It may be well to speak here of Mr. McNair's kindness to many of the mulattoes, their treatment after-

wards showing how utterly devoid of gratitude they were when it conflicted with their love of gain. Mr. McNair was an excellent farmer, and made much produce for sale. The mulattoes having very small farms, many of them none at all, were often reduced to the necessity of going among the whites to purchase the necessaries of life. Mr. McNair generously supplied their wants when they called upon him, never turning them from his door empty; sometimes they paid him, but as often failed in making any return for it. The following lines will show how much he suffered by them pecuniarily, despite all his kindness to them: Their first visit to his house for plunder was in April, A. D. 1864. This was before any regular band of robbers existed, and the Lowries were not suspected at all as having anything to do with the stealing at this time that was going on, but it was afterwards proven to be them by the missing articles being found in their possession and identified. At the time of the above mentioned visit, they entered the study, which was apart from the main dwelling but in the same enclosure, and took a feather-bed. In the following June they again entered the study, but as everything had been removed except one bed-quilt, they did not get anything but that, and it was found sometime afterwards in a fodder stack near Allen Lowrie's house. It was supposed that numbers of the gang had been sleeping in the stack, and as they were operating on a small scale, being about the commencement of their operations, they were afraid to have anything in their houses that could be identified in case search was made. Up to this, and for sometime afterwards, the citizens of the community did not suspicion the Lowries, and were astonished when some of them were recognized among the band, as they had heretofore been considered honest, hard working people. Old Allen Lowrie, in his youthful days, had been guilty of taking a sheep which he supposed belonged to an uncle of his, but it turned out to be the property of a

white man. He was punished for this, and the circumstance almost entirely forgotten except by some of our oldest citizens, when the fact of his aiding the robber clan was disclosed. In December, 1864, Mr. McNair's gin-house was burned down, containing twelve or fourteen bales of cotton and a good many other articles of much value. In January, 1865, they robbed his smoke-house and store-room; this time taking a large quantity of pork and a good many other valuable things. After this, except an occasional visit to their poultry yard, they were undisturbed until June, 1867, when they again entered the study and dining-room. From the study they took another bed, bolster, pillows, blankets, sheets, combs, brushes, a quantity of clothing, &c. From the dining-room they took crockery-ware, knives, silver forks and spoons. On the night of the 23rd of January, 1868, they entered the dwelling-house by means unknown to the family, though the probability is that some of the gang were secreted in the house before the doors were closed for the night, and after the family were locked in slumber, admitted the balance of their party. They entered the bed-room where the family were sleeping, took the candle from the mantle-piece where Mrs. McNair had placed it on retiring, lit it with a match and searched the entire house thoroughly. They took from Mr. McNair's pockets his pocket-book containing one hundred and twenty-five (\$125) dollars in money, valuable notes and other articles. They took his guns, nearly all the keys in the house, and a fine gold watch. Four years afterwards, when those brave men killed Tom Lowrie, they took a watch off his person which was identified as Mr. McNair's and returned it to him. But to return: They robbed the dining room and pantry and searched the pocket of Mrs. McNair's dress, taking two bunches of keys from it. They then went into a back room, broke open a trunk, took everything out of it, evidently searching for money, but finding nothing but Mrs. McNair's

summer clothing, left it piled on the floor, with the contents of the pocket-book, except the money, lying on top. About midnight Mr. McNair was taken with a violent headache, to which he was subject, and aroused Mrs. McNair, to give him something to relieve it. She arose and went to get the candle where she was sure she had placed it, and it was gone; she unlocked a closet in her room, and got another candle and lighted it. She looked around and found Mr. McNair's clothes missing. On further examination, she discovered that the house had been robbed of a good deal. They both then went out into the yard, and about the out-houses, hoping that the robbers might have dropped some of the keys, but in this they were disappointed. Between that and the summer of 1871 they made frequent raids on the dining-room, pantry and fowl-house, each time taking a good supply. At one of their visits about this time, they shot the yard dog on the porch. In all their raids at his house, Mr. McNair did not discover them but once; he found they were in his pantry. They soon learned that they were discovered and made good their retreat. Mr. McNair fired two or three times after them, but they did not return the fire.

In February, 1871, Mr. McNair was on his way to Red Banks; when about a mile or so from the Banks, he met four of the robber clan in a turpentine wagon; they ordered him to stop or they would shoot him. He checked his horse, and Steve Lowrie walked up and caught his bridle; H. B. Lowrie and Boss Strong then went up to him, took him by his hands, one on each side, and inquired if he had a pistol; he told them he had not, and pushed Boss Strong from him. Boss Strong then took his buggy whip and struck him across the head with it one time, and one of the others struck him with his gun; Steve Lowrie then called out and said: "Boys, I told you not to hurt him." Henry Berry then searched his pockets, taking his pocket-book and

several letters that he was carrying to the office to be mailed. He handed the letters to Tom Lowrie and he kept the pocket-book, stepping to one side to examine its contents. After he had satisfied himself as to what it contained, he turned to Mr. McNair and asked him which he preferred, to have his pocket-book and go back home, or for him (H. B. Lowrie) to keep the pocket-book and allow Mr. McNair to go on to the Banks. He replied that he had business at the Banks, and he intended going unless they killed him, and he wanted both the pocket-book and letters, which Tom Lowrie had still in possession. Henry Berry gave him the pocket-book, telling him as he had but fifteen (\$15) dollars in it he would not take it. Tom Lowrie handed him two of the letters, retaining five. They then told him he could go on, but to say nothing to any one about meeting them, but he payed no attention to the last order. There was a young lady with Mr. McNair at the time, and she was badly frightened.

The last raid made on Mr. McNair was in June, 1871. They entered the dining-room and pantry, this time taking nearly everything they could find, leaving no place unsearched. They took a barrel and a half of flour, a lot of silverware, some clothing, and numerous other articles.

On the morning of the 14th of July, 1871, about daylight, five armed men were seen approaching the house of Mr. McNair. They supposed them to be the militia, who were out at the time in search of the gang. They came up in front of the house, and called Mr. McNair out to them. They conversed with him for perhaps a half hour. Mrs. McNair, thinking that it was some of our men who were tired and hungry, went out and ordered breakfast prepared for them. She knew no better until breakfast was ready, and Mr. McNair came in and told her it was the Lowrie band, and they wanted something to eat. She sent them word to go around to the dining-room, where they would

find breakfast waiting. They went into breakfast, taking their arms with them. Their object on this visit was to get Mr. McNair to write a letter for them, to take it down to Lumberton and deliver it to Col. Sinclair and Sheriff McMillan, ordering the release of their wives, who had been arrested a few days previous. Soon after the robber clan eat their breakfast they left. Mr. McNair made ready and went to Lumberton, not only to deliver the letter to the parties named, but also to use his influence in behalf of the women kept in confinement, for the people in the country were entirely at their mercy, and they had made such threats with regard to the ladies of the community that the excitement was so great that several families moved from their homes to places more remote from their lines of action. Further particulars with regard to the success of Mr. McNair's visit to Lumberton will be given more fully hereafter. A guard of fifty men were proffered Mr. McNair on his leaving the village, to accompany him home; this he refused, well knowing should he return so accompanied that it would raise the ire of the robber gang, and as soon as his guard would leave him he would be liable to be murdered by them.

Mrs. McNair was left entirely alone (except the servants) during the day of this visit, and suffered much uneasiness. She expected they would lurk around the premises, and in the absence of Mr. McNair, return and commit more of their depredations, but they did not. She talked to them freely of their frequent robberies there, which they did not deny. Her greatest anxiety, though, was for Mr. McNair's safety. She feared that he might be unsuccessful, and they would probably meet him somewhere on the road on his return, and on learning the truth would become so enraged as to wreak their vengeance of him. They did meet him, but forbore to injure him personally. This was on Friday, and they said if their wives were not released by the following

Monday afternoon, that Robeson county would be deluged in blood; after that time they would know no man, but would shoot down every one that passed them; that hitherto they had not interfered with the *women*, that they had scorned it, but after then they might take care, that they were safe no longer. Many such threats were made by them on this occasion, which is needless to mention.

A half mile below Mr. McNair's, on the Lumberton road, they called in at Mr. McRakens, and ordered his wife to cook some provision for them, which they had with them. They stayed until it was cooked, behaving very quietly. They took it and left; came on a short distance to Mr. Patterson's, and finding no one at the house but the ladies, they remained only a short time, but proceeded to a field where Mr. McN. Patterson (who afterwards assisted in the killing of Steve Lowrie) and his father were at work. They called Mr. McP. to them and conversed with him for some time, making threats to him also, as to what they intended doing with the ladies of the community. They then came on to the house of Mr. Jas. D. Bridgers, where they remained until nearly time for McNair's return, when they left, going down the road in the direction which Mr. McNair would come. A further account of this will be given in the chapter containing the particulars of their depredations at Mr. Bridgers. The United States soldiers, as well as the militia in command of Capt. F. M. Wishart, were stationed only a few miles above. The friends of the robber gang, scattered here and there throughout the county, would convey to them the whereabouts of the enemy, and thus they succeeded in eluding them on every occasion.

MR. RICHARD TOWNSEND.

On the night of the 14th of December, 1864, they went to

the house of Mr. Richard Townsend and took his gun. It was sometime after supper; Mrs. T. was sitting in her room with all the doors of the house open. She heard some one speak to a servant in an adjoining room, and immediately afterwards footsteps approaching towards her room door; she raised her eyes, and standing at the door was a man she had never seen before. He asked her where her husband was; she pointed to the bed, where Mr. T. was asleep; he then asked why he was not in the army, and went on to say that he (the robber) was hunting deserters, and was out of ammunition, and wanted Mr. Townsend to give him some powder and his gun. She told him that he was not hunting deserters, that he was one himself, with a courage and fearlessness that belong only to the ladies of the South. "Well," replied the robber, "if I am, what is that to you? Give me a shirt, the gun and powder." Mrs. T. then arose from her seat, awoke her husband, who went to get the gun, while she got the shirt. The things brought, the bandit took them, bidding them both good evening, joined his party, who were awaiting him on the piazza at the front of the house, and departed for that night. They were there several times afterwards, the particulars of which will be seen on another page.

MR. JACKSON TOWNSEND.

In a few weeks after their visit to Mr. Richard Townsend's, they called at the house of his brother Jackson. He was in the army, and no one with his wife, except her children and the servants. Mrs. T. had just gone in from supper, and hearing footsteps on the piazza, looked out through the window, and discovered a man standing in the piazza, near the window; he was a white man. As soon as he saw

he was discovered he raised the window, and Mrs. T. pulled it down; he then put his gun under it and raised it again. This time she stepped to one side, and he came in. He asked her why she did not open the door. She replied that she did not know there was any one there. He was the only one that came in on this occasion, and he would not suffer the doors to be opened. Mrs. Townsend looked out to see if there was any more, and counted five others on the piazza. The one in the house asked her if she saw them all. She told him she did. He said: "No, you have'nt; I have a dozen more out in the road." He then searched the house, taking the gun and several other articles. He then left. A few nights afterwards they came again. This time two entered the house—one a very tall, heavy built man, answering the description of one Williamson, from Columbus county, who was afterwards identified as belonging to the robber clan, and killed by some unknown person or persons, near his old home in Columbus. His companion was a very small man, also white. The tall man did all the searching that was done each time. They asked Mrs. Townsend for wine; she told them she had some she was keeping for sickness. They told her to get it. She brought it out, in a demijohn and jug. They took it all and set it in the piazza; but when they started off they gave her back the demijohn, telling her she might keep that and they would take the other, as she would not need it all for sickness. They called a few nights afterwards for the demijohn, all took a drink, and gave her back the balance. The tall man was in the dining-room, and she requested his comrade to ask him to come out, which he did. As he came out she saw that he was wrapped in one of her blankets. She told him it was hers, but he said no, he had brought it with him. She believed it to be false, and was convinced of the fact when she found hers was missing. Mrs. Townsend went through some of the rooms with him, all the

time watching, as she thought, his every move, but he was such an adept at stealing that he carried off a good many articles that she did not see him take. After they were through plundering, they told her they wanted her horse and buggy, and on her objecting, told her they would take them whether she was willing or not. They took a lighted candle, went out to examine the buggy, and finding it insufficient for their purpose, left without taking it. They proceeded again to Mr. Richard Townsend's, one mile distant, and took his buggy, carriage and horses, and went on to Mr. Joseph Thompson's and Henry Bullock's, Jr. They took a negro to drive the carriage, and sent them back just before daylight the next morning, very much jaded. Sometime during the year 1865 they visited Mr. Townsend's again. This time they beat and banged against the doors, and on failing to get in, retired a short distance and fired two guns into the house, but did no further damage. They robbed his smoke-house after this, taking a large lot of bacon. In April, 1869, Mrs. Townsend, with her sister, went into a back room, and discovered a dark mulatto under the bed. She retired hastily to inform her husband; but he, guessing from her hasty retreat that he had been seen, sprung through the window and made his escape. The rest of the gang were waiting for the family to retire, and this fellow, who had by some means gotten into the house, was to admit the others. The tracks of their party were plainly discernible the next morning in the garden, where they had stolen all of Mrs. Townsend's onions. They came several times afterwards, but did no damage, except to kill their yard dog. Their purposes were so often thwarted there that they desisted from any further molestation at his house.

MR. JOSEPH THOMPSON.

The first visit to Mr. Thompson's by the clan was in March, 1865. Only white men entered the house, eight in number. It was after night, and they came up cheering and shouting, "the Yankees are coming." The first thing they done after entering the house, was to take Mr. Thompson, with three other gentlemen who were his guests for the night, prisoners. They behaved here very roughly, cursing loudly and firing off their guns in the house. Mrs. Thompson, an aged lady, insisted on their giving her some articles that they were taking, which she prized, but they refused, at the same time firing a pistol over her head, the contents lodging in the wall beyond. From their conduct on this occasion, they were undoubtedly drunk, as it was a short time previous to this that they had stolen a large quantity of brandy from Mr. Bullock. They took guns, clothing and bed clothing to a large amount. They took the hats of the gentlemen who were there, and left them to go home bare-headed. They went so far as to parole the men as prisoners of war. The Lowries remained in the yard receiving and stowing away the stolen property.

In the year 1870 they visited Mr. T. again, this time, as they avowed, for the purpose of murdering a man by the name of Perry, who was superintending Mr. Thompson's farm. When the militia were ordered out in the county, Perry was among them. He, with a small squad of men, fired on the robber gang. Some of their friends and informants reported to them that Perry was at the head of the party. This was sufficient to arouse their resentment, and it was their intention on this occasion to sate their thirst for revenge by taking his life. They had been prowling around Mr. Thompson's plantation for some time for this purpose, but Mr. Perry being very cautious, they had not succeeded in meeting him. On this night Mr. T. was walk-

ing out, when he was hailed and arrested by three armed men, headed by Stephen Lowrie. He demanded of Mr. T. the whereabouts of Mr. Perry, and compelled him to conduct them to his house, saying they intended killing him that night. Mr. Perry, hearing voices and suspecting it to be the robber clan, made his escape through a back door, thus eluding them. After they learned that Mr. Perry had escaped, they returned with Mr. Thompson to his house, and asked him for some tobacco and bacon, which he gave them, well knowing that they would take it if he refused.

HENRY BULLOCK, JR.

In February, 1865, the robber clan drove up to Mr. Henry Bullock's in the vehicles pressed into their service at Mr. Richard Townsend's. On reaching his gate, they sprang out, entered his yard and burst into his house. Eight men came in, several others remaining in the yard; one of those in the house kept his hat pulled over his face, fearing no doubt that he might be recognized. The Captain of the band sat down in a corner by the hearth, and ordered Mr. Bullock in a very peremptory manner to "raise a light, or they would do it for him." With that cool courage that the nature of the case demanded he replied, "if you can make a light quicker than I can, you may do it;" but the renegade Yankee kept his seat, allowing Mr. B. to make the fire. After he was through, he looked around on his unwelcome visitors and discovered seven ransacking his house from garret to cellar. Their leader kept his seat quietly during the plundering, no doubt having issued all orders necessary before reaching their destination. Those in the house threw the things from the windows, when they were taken by their comrades on the outside and stowed

away in the waiting vehicles. The Lowries had just commenced their career of stealing and plundering, and had not grown bold enough to enter houses when there was the least probability of their being recognized. They carried off a large quantity of clothing, bed-clothing, &c. Mr. Bullock had a lot of brandy on hand, of his own make, of which they partook of pretty freely while there, and carried off about thirty gallons. After they were through plundering, they turned to Mr. Bullock and told him they would not hurt him; he replied: "The d—l you won't." They referred to his person, but he considered himself badly treated in a pecuniary point of view. They visited Mr. B. again after this; there was only three this time, supposed to be a portion of the band, or at least co-operating with the Lowries. It was afterwards learned that they were deserters from the Confederate ranks, two of whom were killed; the other is still living. A night or two after the robbing of Mr. Bullock, a colored man was passing Allen Lowrie's, called in to have a chat with him; on going in he fell in with the whole robber gang. They were drinking, and some of them were drunk; now and then one of the number would take a drink and say, "This tastes like old Henry Bullock's brandy;" which convinced the visitor that it was their party which not only robbed Mr. Bullock, but who were also committing all the depredations in the neighborhood. One of the escaped Yankee prisoners would go up to the old man Lowrie, pat him on the head and say, "Ah my old gentleman or friend, after this war is over, you will be a great General." In this way they took advantage of his credulity, gained his confidence, and by their flattery led him to permit them to make his house their headquarters, which eventually was the cause of the old man's death. The man who called in was badly frightened, and made it convenient to leave as soon as he could without exciting suspicion.

MRS. MARTHA ASHLEY.

Sometime during January or the first of February, 1865, they went to Mrs. Ashley's and demanded admittance; she inquired what they wanted; one answered in a feminine voice, "we want your money." She told them they could not get it, that she had it in her pocket. They then tried doors and windows, but failed to get in; left to return in a few nights afterwards. Mrs. Ashley was away from home this time, but she had a man employed to carry on her farm by the name of Paul, and he was there. They had fallen on another plan to effect an entrance; they hailed at the door, and Mr. Paul inquired who it was; they answered him saying, it was Needham Thompson (a brother of Mrs. Ashley) and Council, (a negro belonging to her father.) Mr. Paul opened the door, and in rushed the robber gang, blackened and otherwise disguised, and also heavily armed. They ransacked the house, taking off bed-clothing, wearing apparel and anything else they could conveniently carry. This was the first time that the whole band entered a house in disguise. The news spread from house to house in a few hours, and the reign of terror which had in some degree subsided, again held sway over the entire community.

DAVID TOWNSEND, ESQ.

February, 1865, they entered the house of Mr. Townsend sometime during the night, after the family had retired. They raised a window of a back room, which was unoccupied, and came in; they could easily go over the house after getting in the room, as none of the doors were locked except those on the outside. They took a large trunk, containing all of Mr. Townsend's valuable papers, a small

amount of specie, a good deal of Confederate money, &c. The trunk was sitting in a room adjoining the one in which the family slept. A hat, coat, some guns and a blanket off of one of the beds comprised about all they took there on that visit; they took the guns from a closet in the room where the family were sleeping. Several months afterwards the trunk was found in the woods some distance from the house; they had left the Confederate money, and most of his papers in the trunk. They visited Mr. Townsend's several times after this. At one time they took his buggy-apron and harness, then went into a little out-house, where he kept his carpenter-tools and also had a bale of cotton, which they cut open, and carried off the most of his valuable tools; awhile after this, they went to his black-smith shop and took a good many of his tools from there. In July, 1870, they went again; that time for provisions. Mr. Townsend, like every one else, was expecting them every night, and slept with his fire-arms at his side, all in good fix for an attack; he heard a slight noise and slipped out; he found they were trying to enter his smoke-house by boring, so as to cut out the logs. He quietly went back, prepared himself and fired upon them; they immediately returned the fire and kept it up for sometime pretty sharply. He passed from room to room in both the upper and lower stories of his dwelling and kept up a continual fire, without being exposed outside his walls; they, on this account being unable to locate him, fired into the house from all sides, leaving as the marks of this visit fully five hundred shot-holes. There was no one injured in the house except Mrs. Alfred Rowland, (a daughter of Mrs. Townsend) who was on a visit there at the time; she had retired and was asleep, but was aroused by the firing, and learning that they were shooting into the house, rolled off of the bed and just as she reached the floor a spent-ball struck her in the breast, and almost buried itself in the flesh; she picked

it out with her fingers, and did not suffer any great inconvenience from it. Mr. Townsend made a very narrow escape at one time during the fire; he stepped out into the piazza and immediately two fired on him, scattering the shot all around him, one ball passing over his head, crashing the glass and lodging in the wall beyond. He, with a renewed energy, opened fire upon them again, when one of the gang stepped out and called to him with an oath, to shoot—that they were fond of such music; he fired at once to the spot from whence the voice proceeded, and gave him the wound that sent him in a few days to list to music less congenial. The name of this man was said to be Gilberts, the murderer of young Lutterloh, of Fayetteville; he was with the gang under the assumed name of Smith. While some of the crowd were firing, others succeeded in entering the smoke-house, and carried off a large lot of bacon, lard, wool, &c. There was more than one of their party who carried off samples of Mr. Townsend's shot on this occasion; they openly threatened to take his life, and went to his house several times for this purpose, but he, unknown to them, had removed to Lumberton for safety. They were seen by some of the negroes very early one morning, soon after Mr. T. left home, lurking around his premises; they reported it to Mrs. Townsend, and she at once dispatched messengers to her neighbors for assistance. Several armed themselves, mounted their horses and speedily hastened to meet the desperadoes, but on reaching Mr. Townsend's found all quiet; they did not enter the house, only went up to the back gate, surveyed the surroundings and retired. It is very probable that some of those around the place gave them an inkling of affairs, and they concluded that discretion was the better part of valor this time. On their return to their homes on that day, they called at the house of Mr. Sandy McKenzie; there was no one at the house except Mrs. Nevin, (Mr. McKenzie's mother-in-law) and an old

black woman; those they put under guard, and ransacked the house, taking all the gentlemen's clothing they could find. There were two young ladies from Anson county on a visit there at the time, the Misses Lilly, and they were out spending the day, but had left their money concealed between the bed and mattress; in their search they found that, and took it as a *matter of course*. The last visit of the robber clan to Mr. Townsend's was in November, 1870. Some one hailed at the gate. Mr. Jones, a man employed at Mr. Townsend's, went out to see who it was, and found four of the clan; they conversed with him a short time, and requested him to go in and tell Mrs. T. that they were there, and wished to come in. He started in, they followed on and waited at the door until he should acquaint Mrs. T. of their presence; they went in and behaved very respectfully. They asked her for something to eat; she sent out and had supper brought into the room where they were sitting. Henry Berry Lowrie did not eat anything, but the others, George Applewhite, Henderson Oxendine and Boss Strong ate very heartily. Mrs. Townsend then asked them if they wanted anything else, and they told her they would like to have a few potatoes; she sent Mr. Jones out with them to the potato-hill, where they had deposited their sacks; they took about five bushels and left without further damage. They no doubt went there with far different intentions, but were completely overcome by Mrs. Townsend's kindness. On the night of the 6th of January, 1874, Mr. Townsend's dwelling-house and kitchen were burned down, his loss amounting to between five or six thousand dollars; there is no doubt but Steve Lowrie led the party that applied the torch, as he had threatened to kill or burn out those who fed or in any way aided the men who were in search of him.

THE ROBBING OF DANIEL BAKER, McKAY SELLARS, WILLIAM A. SELLARS AND MRS. DR. NEILL McNAIR.

These foul robberies were all committed on the same night, viz: 28th of February, A. D. 1865. The robber band on this night was composed of about thirty men. They first went to the house of Mr. Daniel Baker, who lived about two miles from the Red Bank bridge across Lumber River. Here (at Baker's) they forced their way into the main dwelling and at once commenced their diabolical work, taking everything of value, and when they could not get keys to open locks, they broke them, bursting open trunks, drawers, &c. Not being satisfied with what they obtained in the dwelling house, they proceeded to the smoke-house and helped themselves to the finest and best bacon there. They then hitched up Mr. Baker's horse in his buggy, and putting their plunder in the buggy they proceeded up the road about four miles to the residence of Mr. McKay Sellars. At Mr. Sellars' they enacted the same, taking everything in his house of value. Here also they hitched Mr. Sellars' horse to his buggy, placing their plunder in the buggy. They went up the main road to Mr. William A. Sellars, about a mile off (a brother of McKay Sellars). Here they arrested all the negroes on the premises, and demanded Mr. Sellars' keys and put him also under arrest. Some delay occurring in regard to finding all the keys, they proceeded to ransack the house of Mr. Sellars, taking everything of value, \$800 in Confederate bonds and a small amount of specie. Piling everything in front of the dwelling, they divided the plunder among themselves and then ordered a negro to gear up a pair of mules to Mr. Sellars' carriage, and placing everything in the carriage they drove up the road about half a mile to the residence of Mrs. Dr. Neil McNair, at Argyle. Acting here pretty much after the manner at

other places, they ransacked the house, taking all the valuables. Here they were fired on by a sick Confederate soldier. They returned the fire and acted very roughly to the inmates of the house. After consultation here among themselves, the captain of the band ordered the others to take up their line of march in the direction of Scuffletown, inasmuch as they had as many things as they could carry conveniently. So to Scuffletown they went. About sunrise next morning the vehicles that were taken to haul off their plunder were brought back by the negroes that were forced to go with them.

At the time these robberies were committed, the Lowries were not "outlawed," and in all probability they were led and instigated by some Yankee prisoners, who had escaped from Florence, S. C., and made their way over into Robeson county, N. C. Mr. William A. Sellars says that this robbery broke him up and did him more real injury than Sherman's army.

THE ROBBERY OF MR. JOHN PURNELL.

In the year 1870, on the 21st of April, H. B. Lowrie, Boss Strong, Andrew Strong and George Applewhite made their appearance at the house of Mr. John Purnell, about sundown. Here they took the gun of Mr. Purnell, and ordered Mrs. Purnell to prepare supper for them, which she immediately set about doing. After they had partaken of a bountiful supper, they ransacked the house and took everything of value, and went to the smoke-house and took therefrom about fifteen hundred pounds of meat, together with other things. At last, about ten o'clock at night, they started off with their load to Scuffletown, telling Mrs. Purnell that if she or Mr. Purnell would tell any one of their

being there they would come back and kill Mr. Purnell. Many other robberies were committed about this time, such as the one committed on Mr. Peter McFarland, from whom was taken one hundred and fifty dollars in currency; Mr. Duncan McNair's smoke-house of seven or eight hundred pounds of meat; Mr. J. C. McMillan's smoke-house; Mr. John McCallum's; Mr. James H. McQueen's residence of all its valuables. But whether or not the Lowrie bandits did any or all of these outrages is unknown, inasmuch as the race of freedmen, together with the mulatto tribe, had become so demoralized that it is now a difficult task to say who committed this or that robbery, for they sympathized with each other to such an extent that no white individual knows, nor ever will.

ROBERT McKENZIE, ESQ.

It was during the month of February, 1865, that they went to the house of this gentleman, and finding all the doors closed and securely fastened, called loudly to Mr. McK. for admittance. He, with his family seated around the fireside, gave no heed to their demands; whereupon, they burst out a panel of the door and crowded through into the room. They acted there in the roughest manner, going from room to room, turning up beds, cutting open mattresses, breaking locks, searching bureaus and trunks, behaving after the manner of Sherman's raiders. Failing to find money, which was the object of their search, two of them seized Mr. McKenzie, placed a rope around his neck, and told him if he did not produce it they would hang him. He told them he had none. They went out and consulted with his servants, returned, and in a furious manner renewed the search, failing as before; held another consulta-

tion with those in the yard, came in and searched more thoroughly with a like result. They turned to Mrs. McKenzie and told her if she did not give them their money they would hang her husband, and started out with him for this purpose; she screamed and begged them to spare his life. They told her then to tell them where the silver was concealed. She told them they had none, all the time entreating and pleading with them, as only a wife can plead when the life of the one who is all the world to her is at stake. Perhaps it was her agonized appeals that touched their stony hearts and caused them to desist from their fiendish purpose. They, too, had wives and little ones, and it is to be hoped that, notwithstanding their many crimes, they were not wholly lost to the influence of home affection. After releasing Mr. McKenzie from custody they took his watch, (a fine gold one) dishes, knives, forks, spoons, clothing, bed-clothing and everything of value that they could carry.

When the band became disorganized from the killing of their leader, the Federal prisoners who belonged to the band made their escape to their Northern homes. On their way to Wilmington one of them was conversing with a lady on the train and acknowledged to her that he had been with the robber gang in Robeson county, and as a proof of it showed the watch of Mr. McKenzie, which he had in his possession.

Allen Lowrie lived in less than a mile of Mr. McK., and continued to annoy him in almost every way possible, robbing his smoke-house, gin, pantry, cutting and spoiling his fruit trees, grape arbors, &c. He finally moved away from his plantation, and went to Florence, South Carolina, where he continued to reside up to the time of his death, in the fall of 1872. A brother of Mr. McKenzie took charge of his plantation in Robeson, and fared but little better so far as robberies were concerned. They were driving his hogs off

one morning. He followed them. They told him to go back, but he refused. They turned and fired on him, wounding him in the leg, which disabled him for some time. He finally left the place with Mr. Phipkin in charge. They did not trouble him so much, but he frequently met them around the place and they were several times at his house, but offered no personal injury. At one time H. B. Lowrie hung his canteen of brandy on the fence and went off, forgetting it. He, however, returned in a few days and found it as he had left it, but being very cautious, and knowing he justly deserved death at the hands of the Robersonians, concluded that his brandy might possibly be drugged. He called on Mr. P. to take a drink before he would touch it. Mr. P. told him it was not poisoned unless he (H. B. L.) had done it. He told him he had not. He then drank some, thus setting the fears of the outlaw at rest.

MR. DUGALD McCALLUM.

Sometime in February, 1865, the family of Mr. McCallum were very much startled by a band of armed men in their dwelling, numbering from eighteen to twenty—four white men, the balance mulattoes. They called for supper, which was prepared and set for them in the dining-room. Before calling in all their band to supper, those that were in the house lowered the curtains of the windows, tucking them down at the sides in order to prevent the family from seeing and recognizing the Lowries. After eating their supper they proceeded to search the different rooms of the house thoroughly, throwing the things from the windows to the party on the outside. Here they robbed the ladies wardrobe, an act they had omitted at any of their preceding

visits at other places. The sons of Mr. McCallum were at that time in the army, and he, a gray-headed citizen, the sole protector of his wife and two daughters. They took his clothing, guns, and seven hundred dollars in Confederate money, which was almost valueless, being a short time before the surrender. A lot of clothing, bed-clothing and a purse of silver comprised the balance of their booty on this occasion. They had a quarrel over the silver, in the yard, before leaving. After their search was completed, they prepared to convey away their gains by going to the horse-lot and harnessing two horses to separate buggies, and removed the things to some place of deposit and continued their raid by visiting the house of Messrs. John McCallum and Robert Graham.

MR. JOHN MCCALLUM.

They reached this place about 11 o'clock. Mr. McCallum and his niece were the only white persons on the premises, and the first intimation they had of the presence of this marauding party was the report of a pistol on the front piazza of their dwelling. The yard dog felt the effects of this, as he was found dead the next morning in the piazza. They called loudly to Mr. McCallum to open the door, threatening him in a rough manner; he very reluctantly admitted them, about thirty in number, as near as he could guess. They stationed a guard at every door, and the parlor was crowded with them. The white men told Mr. McC. that they were escaped Federal prisoners. They would only allow a dim light, and when that would chance to fall on their faces, they would immediately drop their blankets over them. They were very profane, and showed no respect for age or sex. They thoroughly searched the

house, upper and lower story, emptied all the bureaus and trunks, taking every key on the place. They did not leave a change of wearing apparel, and scarcely any bed-clothing. Two guns and nearly everything else of value that could be carried off conveniently, was taken. After they completed their search, a few of the party went down to Mr. Robert Graham's, taking a horse and buggy, with one of the negroes to drive it, and the balance remained there until their return. They came back before day and demanded of Mr. McCallum his money and brandy. He told them that he did not have any; whereupon, they cursed and threatened to kill him if he did not produce it. They compelled him to accompany them to his gin-house, taking with them a lighted candle to search in the cotton for it. They would make him dig down in the cotton, while they stood sticking the burning candle to it. He begged them not to burn it, and kept trying to assure them that he had neither money or brandy. The negro boy who had accompanied the party to Mr. Graham's told them that his master had something concealed in his gin-house, and he thought it was money and brandy; for this reason they renewed the search on their return. Meeting with no success, and it then being near daylight, they took their departure, still retaining the negro, horse and buggy in their service. The boy returned in a few hours, but was too much intoxicated to tell anything about it.

Mr. John Purcell lived about a half mile from Mr. McCallum's, on their direct route home, and in passing there T. C. Bridgers was standing in the piazza, and they saluted him by firing a pistol into the house, the ball passing just over his head. They never at any time entered the dwelling of Mr. Purcell, but his gin, store and smoke-house were robbed several times by the gang. They were often seen in the day lurking around his plantation. Mr. P., in the spring of 1872, came upon Steve Lowrie asleep in the corner

of the fence, with his gun standing a short distance from him. This was near the house of a family of mulattoes, who were Mr. Purcell's tenants. Steve, no doubt, was waiting for his breakfast, as the family were known not only to cook and wash for him, but also to give the band all the information they could gather. They were near relatives of the Strongs and Lowries. The same day that Mr. Purcell saw Steve Lowrie, he, with Andrew Strong, went to the house of Mr. Henry McCallum, a son of Mr. John McCallum, and took his gun and watch. Mrs. McCallum asked them to give her the watch, and they did it.

Thus, for years, they continued to roam the country, day and night, plundering, dropping in here and there when least expected. The citizens were afraid to let more than one or two at a time into a plan to capture them; the friends of the gang were so numerous, scattered throughout the country, that it was impossible to make a move without their becoming apprised of it. Their friends were as loud in denunciation of them as their enemies; for this reason it was impossible in many cases to discover between the two.

MR. ROBERT GRAHAM.

When the party, fifteen or twenty in number, which left Mr. McCallum's for Mr. Graham's, reached there it was between twelve and four o'clock in the morning. They immediately posted sentinels in and around the yard, and on every road leading to the house, with instructions to allow no one to pass in, out or advance from any direction. These warlike orders were issued and obeyed with promptness. Some of the band—three whites, the other mulattoes—rushed into the piazza of the dwelling, and with loud oaths and threats, demanded admittance. None of the

family were at home except Mr. Graham and his daughter. He went to the door and asked who it was and what they wanted. They replied with horrid oaths for him to open the door, saying if he did not they would set fire to his house. Hearing this awful threat, he opened the door; they went in, at once making him prisoner, at the same time demanding his guns, ammunition, and every key on the place. This demand was made by a white man, who termed himself Captain. After getting the guns and keys in possession, they lighted their candles, with which they seemed well supplied, and proceeded to plunder and ransack the house of many valuables. In this they seemed to be well disciplined, as they would take according to rank, viz: Captain, first of the most valuable articles, and so on. The three white men being all officers, had the best of the spoils, consisting of money to the amount of two thousand dollars, a purse of silver, a watch which Mr. Graham prized very highly, having worn it from boyhood, several pieces of jewelry belonging to different members of the family, and also the rings from Miss Graham's fingers. The privates all being well supplied with large bags and haversacks, took wearing apparel of every description, bed-clothing, boots, shoes, hats, &c. After they had completed their search they ordered supper to be prepared immediately, with directions how and what to prepare; they then ordered Mr. Graham and his daughter to take seats in the parlor for their entertainment. None were allowed to enter except the officers, the privates being left out in the cold, who, by the way, seemed highly elated over the spoils they had captured. After some time spent in asking Mr. Graham (the old man, as they called him) many questions about his sons in the army, war matters and the "rebs" generally, they told him that he or his daughter had to go with them as prisoners of war. This they positively refused to hear, when some of the officers proposed to take them by force, and put a hand-

kerchief around Miss Graham's neck for this purpose, when the Captain, with a military air, ordered that no violence should be used. To this they quietly yielded. Finding that their time (night) was limited, they issued orders to prepare to leave, not waiting for supper, as they had countermanded their orders to have it prepared. This was supposed to have been done for fear that some of the servants would recognize their colored soldiery, which was afterwards found to be true.

On leaving they went to the smoke-house and helped themselves to the largest bacon hams they could find. Here the captain again interfered, saying: "Boys, we have done enough here, let us go." They took one or two hams, and said they would be back in a few nights for a large supply of bacon and corn. They made ready to leave, which was to Mr. Graham the most agreeable part of their nights proceedings. In bidding them good night, the Captain handed Mr. Graham one of his guns, first discharging it, then breaking the rammer and throwing the flint away, saying: "Take this, old man, it will do to shoot the robbers with; they are becoming very troublesome these war times, and everybody should be prepared for them." After this piece of advice, they left for headquarters, then in the Back Swamp.

CALVIN OXENDINE.

On evidence of John Dial, a member of the robber clan, but who turned State's evidence against the clan, Calvin Oxendine was arrested and lodged in Wilmington jail with Steve Lowrie and George Applewhite, as one of their number, at the time of the robbery and murder of ex-Sheriff King. Calvin refused to leave jail with them at the time

of their escape, alleging afterwards as his reason, that he was innocent and would be proven so on trial. He being cousin to the outlaws, did not believe that he could get a fair trial in Robeson, his native county, where all their bloody scenes were enacted; it was therefore removed to Smithville, in Brunswick county, where he proved an alibi by a gentleman from Richmond county, in whose employ he had been, and was at the time of the said robbery and murder. He also proved by the same gentleman so good a character for honest industry, that the evidence of the notorious Dial was discredited by the jury, and consequently a verdict of "not guilty" was rendered, and he was acquitted.

He was brother to Henderson Oxendine, the only outlaw that died on the gallows.

MR. DANIEL BAKER SHOT.

On November 18th, 1866, (Monday night) the Lowrie bandits visited the house of Mr. Daniel Baker, who resides about two miles from the Red Banks Bridge across Lumber river. Here they commenced plundering, taking cotton from his cotton house, &c. Mr. Baker discovering them, ordered them away, whereupon they fired on him, shattering the bones in his right leg *so terribly* that amputation had to be resorted to in order to save his life, which was successfully accomplished soon after the occurrence by Dr. W. D. McCallum, the family physician. Now this act of the Lowrie bandits was nothing more nor less than wanton cruelty, inasmuch as Mr. Baker was their neighbor and friend. A more industrious, hard-working, clever and kind-hearted man could not be found in the county than was Mr. Daniel Baker, yet this act of the Lowrie bandits made him a crip-

ple for life, and hastened doubtless his earthly career, for he suffered much pain ever afterwards until death released him from his sufferings.

MR. ANGUS S. BAKER.

On the 1st of November, 1871, the Lowrie robbers went to the residence of Mr. Angus S. Baker, broke into his house about 9 o'clock P. M., arrested Mr. Baker and wife, and ransacked the house, taking beds, bedding, blankets and wearing apparel, in short, everything of value they could find, and left about 2 o'clock A. M. with their plunder for Scuffletown.

MR. MALLOY McPHAUL.

In the year 1868, the robber clan would sometimes employ artifice to gain access into dwellings to obtain such articles of food or clothing as they deemed necessary. As an instance of their cunning, I give the following particulars of a visit by them to Mr. McPhaul's: A white man, appearing to be a traveler, called at his house and told him he was from Whitesville, (the county-seat of an adjoining county, where a brother of Mr. McPhaul resided) that his brother was at the point of death and desired him to go down immediately if he wished to see him alive. Mr. McPhaul made arrangements to take the first train; arriving at his brothers, what was his surprise at finding him in excellent health; he at once understood the ruse that had been employed at his expense; with a mind filled with dread forebodings and distracting fear, not knowing to

what indignity his family had been subjected, hastened back home. He was however much relieved to find them unhurt, although the robbers had been there in his absence. After he was fairly on his way to his brother's, a party of three men went to his house and demanded the keys of the smoke-house of his wife, which she refused to give them, but offered to unlock the door for them to which they consented. They took bacon and other articles of food, then left without further molestation.

THE MURDER OF EX-SHERIFF REUBEN KING.

On the night of the 23d of January, 1869, the quiet little village of Lumberton, in Robeson county, was thrown into consternation by the startling intelligence that Sheriff Reuben King had been shot in his own house (one and a half miles from Lumberton) by the Lowrie gang, afterwards known as the outlaws. The gang at this time was composed of Stephen, Thomas and Henry Berry Lowrie, Andrew and Boss Strong, George Applewhite, Shoemaker John, William Chavis, Henderson and Calvin Oxendine, Zack McLaughlin and John Dial.

They had been concealed near the house all day, watching for Sheriff King. Late in the afternoon King returned from the village, and while seated at his fireside, part of the band entered his house with the intention (it is supposed) of robbing the Sheriff. Henry Berry, who led the van, approached him with his gun presented, and demanded of the Sheriff his money. Had he complied with the bandit's demand, his life would probably have been spared; but King instantly sprang up and seized the gun of the robber chief and refused to give up his money. It has been admitted that the intention of the gang was merely to get

money, and not to kill the Sheriff. The impression was that he had a large amount of money on his person or in his house, but they were sadly disappointed, as will be shown hereafter.

In the scuffle that ensued between the robber chieftain and the Sheriff, the gun was discharged, the contents passing through the floor. George Applewhite, who was at the time standing on the piazza, near the door, rushed to the rescue of his comrade by firing a navy revolver at King, the ball taking effect in his back, under the right shoulder blade, lodging in the lung. Mr. S. E. Ward, a neighbor, was on a visit to the family for the night, and at the time the shooting occurred, was sitting by the fire near a table. He arose from his seat and raised his arm, when John Dial fired at him, the load of shot taking effect in his arm and side, inflicting a very painful, though not dangerous wound. They then proceeded to search the house, breaking open trunks, drawers, &c., carrying off a large quantity of wearing apparel, bed-clothing and other articles, many of which were afterwards found in George Applewhite's house and identified as those taken the night of the wounding of the Sheriff. Some of the bed-clothing was produced as evidence in the subsequent trial of the parties for the murder of Sheriff King, and indeed was one of the strongest links in the evidence against them. The robbers had disguised themselves by blacking their faces, &c., and consequently escaped detection by the family or Mr. W. Taking advantage of the confusion and fright their appearance and outrages had occasioned, they made well their escape.

Physicians were immediately summoned, who carefully examined the wounded men, and pronounced Mr. Ward's case not at all serious, but not so Sheriff King's. The deadly weapon in the hands of the fell assassin had made sure its aim and entered a vital part. The wounds of the Sheriff were found to be mortal. With blanched cheeks and agonized

hearts, relatives and friends received this decision of the physicians. The fiat had gone forth—Sheriff King must die; he would live a month, perhaps six weeks. He lingered seven weeks and died, such a death!—by the hands of a band of desperadoes, in the midst of his family, and at his own hearth. Ah! methinks if there is punishment greater meted out to one than to another, it will certainly be inflicted on those midnight assassins who committed crimes of the blackest dye.

Every effort was made to capture the murderers, but without success. The dense swamps of Robeson county (impenetrable to all save the outlaws) afforded them protection from justice for some time. After awhile, however, Henry Berry Lowrie was prevailed upon to surrender to Sheriff Howell and Dr. Thomas, Agent of the Freedmen's Bureau. John Dial was arrested by Deputy Sheriff McDonald. George Applewhite was arrested at Red Banks; Shoemaker John was also arrested, and Dial became State's evidence in the murder of ex-Sheriff King. Steven Lowrie, Calvin and Henderson Oxendine were also arrested and confined in Wilmington jail, tried, convicted and sentenced to be hanged; but an appeal was taken to the Supreme Court. As is often the case, before the decision of said appeal, Henry Berry and Steve Lowrie, George Applewhite, Henderson and Calvin Oxendine effected an escape from jail and took up their abode in the swamps of Robeson county—thence arose the band of outlaws. Their escape from the Wilmington jail is, and ever will remain, enveloped in mystery to those outside of the parties who aided and abetted them. The jail, it must be remembered, was a very strong one, closely guarded, and the jailor residing within its walls, though this is only one of the many mysteries connected with the proceedings of the "Lowrie Band."

After Sheriff King was wounded he removed his money from his pocket, placing it under the collar of his coat, to

prevent the robbers from getting it. He was detected in the act by one of the robbers, and they succeeded in getting about \$155 in currency and \$20 in gold. At the time they were searching the house, the Sheriff was lying in the door, beseeching some one to give him water. The family had left the premises through fright, and not one of that merciless band would gratify his request, but heaped curses and abuses on him, telling him he ought to have died long ago, &c.

MR. DAVID McKELLAR.

In May, 1869, the robber clan visited the house of Mr. McKellar, in his absence, and took three hundred and fifty (\$350) dollars and some clothing.

HENRY BULLOCK, SEN.

In May, 1869, early in the evening, Mr. Bullock was surprised by several men disguised as negroes coming into his field where he was superintending his farm hands. He was an aged veteran of the war of 1812, and though he was ninety-five years of age at the time of their visit, was able to attend to his farm. One of the clan walked up to the old man, and notwithstanding his age and feebleness, jerked him around, ordering him to go to the house and give them his money. He told them he had no money, but could go to the house with them. On their way they had to cross a fence; they did not allow the decrepid old man time to get over the fence, but pushed him over. When they got to the house they ordered the old gentlemen and his wife to go in

and left his laborers under guard in the yard. They arrested all who chanced to pass the house while they were there, and kept them under guard until they left. In their search they found thirty dollars (\$30) in specie belonging to Mrs. Bullock, which they appropriated. They carried off all of his valuable papers, clothing, bed-clothing and provision to a large amount. They found a jug of brandy in the house, and before they would drink any themselves, compelled the old lady to drink a glass of it pure. They no doubt thought it was drugged, and used this precaution to ascertain. They cursed the old people in a shocking manner. You, reader, can picture in your own imagination, after reading this one short sketch, the character of the gang with whom the people of Robeson had to contend. Age and decrepitude could claim no mercy at their hands, but regardless of all—reckless of all save their own inordinate love of plunder, they rose up, sometimes in one place to-day, ten miles hence to-morrow, casting a shadow, throwing a gloom around many a hearthstone in a large portion of Robeson.

MR. M. K. GRIFFIN.

This was the next house they visited in that neighborhood; they were also in disguise, and armed with double barreled guns. They rushed into the yard with guns presented, and took Mr. Griffin prisoner, at once demanding his money, cursing and using very abusive language towards him. There were only three at his house; they searched his person, placed one of their number to guard him, while the other two proceeded to search the house. They took all of his and his wife's most valuable clothing and his gun; they afterwards threw the gun into the garden and left it. They inquired of Mr. G. about his neigh-

bors; the number of men about the different houses, their strength of arms, &c. When they started off, they turned to Mr. G. with an oath, and told him to stay at home that night, or they would see him again if he did not. The wife of Mr. Griffin was so badly frightened that she has never recovered from the effects of it.

MR. GEORGE WILLIAMS.

In the year A. D. 1869, the robber gang went to Mr. Geo. Williams' and broke a door down that was on the front side of the house, and fired at one of his sons, but did not hit him. The family fled, and left the house and its contents in their possession; they however took nothing off. The firing at young Mr. Williams seemed to have been merely venting their *ire* on account of some old grudge.

MR. WILLIAM C. McNEILL.

Among the many families harassed by the "Lowrie Band," there were few that suffered to the same extent as Mr. W. C. McNeill, one of Robeson's most quiet, inoffensive and law-abiding citizens. Living as he did on the very borders of their settlement, he was more frequently subjected to their insults and depredations than those more distant, and being also a well-to-do farmer, his larder and farm-yard possessed for them great attractions. Mr. McNeill had also incurred their marked displeasure by freely expressing his opinion and treating with the utmost contempt this band and all that he knew to be its friends.

Their first visit to his house was in 1869, at which time

they entered his pantry and dining-room, relieving them of all available articles and eatables, which was to Mr. McNeill and family a considerable loss; this act of lawlessness supplied their homes with many useful articles, and themselves with many necessities and luxuries.

In the early part of 1870, they again entered his dining-room, (which had been refurnished) stripped it as before of every available article. On this visit they attempted an entrance to his smoke-house by digging underneath it and trying to open it with false keys, (having a goodly number of them) but failing to effect an entrance here they quietly left, no doubt to attempt it somewhere else.

One night in 1872, Mr. McNeill was out walking in his lane, hearing foot-steps in the direction of his barn, and suspecting who they were, he hastily concealed himself in order to learn their intentions; he had not long to wait; immediately one man walked to the barn and endeavored to open it; Mr. McNeill called out twice to know who they were; receiving no answer, he told them if they did not leave he would force them to; one answered, "do you know to whom you are talking?" Recognizing the voice, he made no reply, but returned to the house, took his gun and again went out; they in the meantime had left the barn and repaired to a corner of the fence nearer the house; as Mr. McNeill walked out, they halted him; he again asked "who are you?" one with an oath cried out, "it is Lowrie."

Mr. McNeill at once commenced retracing his steps into the house when they fired at him; the contents of the gun passed him, lodging in the breast of his beautiful daughter and accomplished wife, inflicting painful though not dangerous wounds. Mrs. McNeill and her daughter were standing on the piazza anxiously watching the husband and father when the shot was fired. On the following day, Henry Berry Lowrie visited Moss Neck, a depot on the Carolina Central Railway, and within a few hundred yards of

Mr. McNeill's residence; he denied all knowledge of the shooting, and expressed great indignation at the guilty parties for having shot two ladies; he sent for Mr. McNeill to go to the depot, he wanted to tell him that he did not do it, but he (Mr. McNeill) refused to see or to have anything whatever to say to him.

On the next day he again visited Moss Neck, and was under the influence of liquor; he seemed to be excited, and several times asserted that he did shoot at Mr. McNeill and tried his best to kill him.

Their visits to this family did not yet cease; frequently they made raids on their fowl-house, helping themselves lavishly to all it contained. On their return from one of those raids, they called at Mr. Dugald McCormics, passing themselves for a squad of men in search of the outlaws, and requested him to accompany them; he not being satisfied as to their identity made some excuse to remain at home; they then gave him a bucket demanding some flour; he gave them some and they went off making no other demands.

THE MURDER OF MR. O. C. NORMENT.

On the night of the 19th of March, A. D. 1870, a quarter to 9 o'clock, Mr. Norment was shot in his yard, only a few feet from the door. The party who committed this deed had stationed themselves at each corner of the house, and had entered the yard by taking down the palings of the enclosure, just large enough for one man to crawl through at a time. I suppose the family would have heard the noise of the drawing out of the palings, had it not been for the noise of the children frolicking with their father at the time. Circumstances seemed to favor them on this occasion. With the laughter of innocence ringing in their ears, they took

their positions to commit the deed so horrible to relate. Mr. Normrnt was in the habit of putting his children to sleep by telling them little nursery stories, and took them to the bed nearest the murderer for this purpose, little thinking so soon his home would be made desolate, and the place desecrated, yet made memorable to his stricken family by the life-blood of the husband and the father. The fiend who stood there and listened to the merry laughter and innocent prattle of his little ones, with the dark purpose in his heart of taking from them their kind and loving father in so cruel a manner, must have had a heart of adamant, or he would have yielded to the gentle influence, and turned from so bad a design. But no; he stood there nursing the resolve that would blacken his soul with crime, and doom him to a punishment as only such criminals merit at the hands of an avenging God. After the children were quietly slumbering, he arose and took a seat by the fire, conversing for a short time, when he remarked to his wife, in a low tone, that he heard a noise. She replied that she had dropped a hair-pin on the hearth, and supposed that was the noise he heard. He said no, it was not that, but expressed no uneasiness. In a short time he opened the door and stepped out, leaving it open. His wife was looking out at the door and saw the flash of the gun pass. Simultaneously he groaned, and she sprang to the door screaming; she has no recollection of hearing the report of the gun. When she saw the flash of the gun, she comprehended in an instant the situation of her husband, but thought he had been shot down in the yard, and her intention was to get to him; but he had not fallen. After going into the yard he thought he heard a footstep, and turned to go in the house, when they fired; he leaped to the door, where he was met by his wife just in the act of falling, when she caught and pulled him into the house. He whispered to her to close and fasten the door, and hand him his rifle, as they might attempt to enter and complete

their bloody work. She did as he desired, and kneeling by him, supported him in order that he might have both hands in the use of his gun, and in case they entered, he might at least kill one. She continued screaming until her father (Mr. J. D. Bridgers), with several members of his family got there. On getting to the door and finding it fastened, they called to her to open it. Knowing her support was necessary to the comfort of her husband, she replied she could not; whereupon, they burst it open and rushed in, finding them in the situation described. They at once inquired of Mr. Norment how he did it, thinking he had accidentally wounded himself. He soon explained. Mr. J. D. Bridgers and his son, John Bridgers, started in pursuit of the perpetrators; they had only gone a short distance when Mr. Norment requested some one present to go and tell them to return, as they were risking their lives without a probability of coming up with them. They returned, and after placing Mr. N. in a more comfortable position and binding up the wound, one of his brothers-in-law (J. T. Bridgers) started for Dr. John Dick, who lived about four miles distant, at the same time despatching a negro boy for Dr. R. M. Norment, a brother of Mr. Norment, who was also a physician, living in Lumberton, a distance of fourteen miles. When they were momentarily expecting the arrival of Dr. Dick, they were again startled by the loud report of a gun, in less than a mile on the road which the doctor would come. The family were fearful that they had fired on the doctor to prevent his coming to the sufferer's relief. After a lapse of about an hour and a half, the doctor came, accompanied by J. F. and T. C. Bridgers, reporting that three fourths of a mile above the house, a man stepped from behind a tree and shot the mule; that they jumped out, in their haste and excitement leaving the medicine in the buggy. As they crossed the road to the opposite side from where the man was standing who did the shooting, they

passed in arm's length of two others. A negro, who was at the house of Norment when the doctor came, volunteered to go for the medicine if Mr. Bridgers would lend him a gun. The gun was furnished, and he, with three others, started after the medicines. A short distance from the house of Mr. Norment, one of the negroes stated that he saw a woman, or man dressed in woman's clothes, run from the road into the bushes. The supposition was that it was either the wife or mother of some one of the number who did the shooting at Mr. Norment's. The negroes returned just before daylight with the medicines, reporting the mule dead, and the parties near the place, as they had distinctly heard voices close by. They no doubt expected John Bridgers to go for the medicine, and in case that he did they would murder him also, as they openly declared that it was their intention to shoot both Mr. Norment and John Bridgers on that night. They had both been very active in attempting the capture of the murderers of ex-Sheriff King, and for thus transgressing the assumed rights of the murderous gang, their lives was to be the forfeit. Drs. R. F. Lewis and R. M. Norment reached Mr. Norment's about 4 o'clock in the morning. They, with the assistance of Drs. Dick and Barnes, proceeded to examine the wound, and pronounced amputation necessary, as the bones of the right leg were completely shattered. About 5 o'clock in the afternoon the operation was completed, and Mr. N. was found to be in almost dying condition, from which he revived for a few hours. From the shock, loss of blood, and the use of chloroform, all combined, reaction never took place, and he expired a quarter to 7 o'clock the morning of the 21st, living about thirty-six hours after he was wounded.

This diabolical deed spread gloom and terror throughout the community, and may well be said to have been the beginning of the war in Robeson county with the Lowrie Banditti. For weeks and months the citizens of this county

slept with their guns by their sides; the young men, armed and equipped, went forth in search of the vile desperadoes; with steady tramp and hushed voices, they traversed the country for miles, but with little or no success.

The "History of the Swamp Outlaws," written by Henderson, the correspondent of the New York *Herald*, is incorrect in a good many instances. He received the most of his information from the outlaws, their families and friends, and it is not reasonable to suppose that he could, or leastways would, gain anything from such a source correctly, or that any one without the circle of their band and its immediate friends, it matters not how worthy, or how standing, would be properly represented by them. He represents Mr. Norment as an "overbearing ex-slave-holder;" that his offence was raising the people against the Lowries, charging robberies to them and threatening them. This is altogether incorrect. I will here state the true causes which led to the shooting of Mr. Norment. After the surrender he was commissioned Captain of the militia. The robber clan had then been operating in the county about two years, robbing and plundering at their pleasure—unmolested. After the murder of Sheriff King, Mr. Norment received orders to take out a portion of the militia and endeavor to capture his murderers, which he did, but was unsuccessful. He also had orders to arrest Zach McLaughlin on charge of stealing. On taking him to trial, sufficient evidence not being elicited against him, he was released. Although he knew Mr. Norment acted under orders, it did not tend to quell the revengeful ire of his nature, and he determined to kill him. Sometime prior to this, Andrew Strong had been arrested by Mr. N. for robbing the gin-house of Mr. John Purcell; he was also released on the same grounds. These two were the principal actors in this deed of blood, urged on by others of their friends.

Mr Norment was a mechanic by trade. Those in the

vicinity where he lived can testify to his usefulness. In politics he was a conservative, and every man robbed or murdered by the gang belonged to that party, with two exceptions only.

MR. JAMES D. BRIDGERS.

A few weeks after the murder of Mr. Norment, four of the robber clan were discovered making an entrance into the enclosure of Mr. Bridgers; two of his sons, John and A. C. Bridgers, fired on them from the windows, and they hastily retired without doing any damage. They were often around his premises for the purpose, as they afterwards declared, of shooting his sons above named, as they had been active in attempting their capture. For this purpose they visited his house on the 17th of August, 1870, after dark: they made various noises around the yard, hoping to draw them out, but in this they did not succeed. The Messrs. Bridgers knowing the superiority of the number of the gang (about fifteen) with whom they had to contend, and hearing them at different points around the yard, kept within doors, impatiently waiting for them to come in closer quarters. The robber gang having been informed that their opponents here were well prepared to meet them, and that they would have bloody work should they ever enter the yard, concluded on this occasion to satiate their thirst for blood, and also to vent their spite in another quarter. Zach McLaughlin remarked to the gang, "well boys, we've come to-night for blood and must not be disappointed, we'll shoot the old man's cattle." Accordingly they passed on to the cow-lot, and commenced shooting in a shocking manner the harmless brutes. The Messrs. Bridgers fired on them from the house, but the night being extremely dark, could only

tell of their whereabouts by the flash of their guns ; they fired only a few times after the boys opened on them ; they then retired, leaving two cows shot down and several others badly wounded. This cruel, inhuman act shows in a proper light the character of the fiends with whom the people of Robeson had to contend.

Just after the robbers commenced firing on the cattle, the family learned from the simultaneous flashing of their guns that their number was more than they at first anticipated. They concluded to blow the trumpet, hoping that some of their neighbors might hear and come to their aid ; as soon as the first sound of the trumpet rent the air, the robbers fired more rapidly, fiercely yelling, at the same time the dogs barking, and the firing going on from the house, making quite a collection of discordant sounds ; the excitement for a short time is past description. Their next visit to Mr. Bridgers' was on the 14th of July, 1871, the same day on which they sent Mr. McNair with the letter to Col. Sinclair and Sheriff McMillan, ordering the release of their wives, which were kept in confinement in Lumberton, for the purpose as it was said of "starving out the outlaws." Such a thing though was preposterous, for they certainly had many friends, white, black and colored, that aided them at any time in any way desired. They came to Mr. Bridgers about 12 o'clock ; they ate dinner and conducted themselves very quietly. Steve Lowrie did not come until after the others had eaten ; he came up picking his "banjo" and singing, seemed in excellent spirits. The five desperadoes, heavily armed with repeaters, bowie knives, double barreled guns and Spencer rifles, until they were burdensome to carry, formed really a formidable looking party. They all started to meet Mr. McNair about 4 o'clock in the afternoon ; they did not go far before they met him ; he delivered them Col. Sinclair's reply, which seemed in no wise to suit their wishes. With an angry scowl they perused

each line, and the deep, dark anger which settled on their faces, reminded one of the heavy mutterings that precedes the thunder-storm, and no doubt would have fallen in all its fury on many an innocent head, but for the timely interposition of some of our grey-headed citizens, who succeeded in getting those in authority to release the wives of the desperadoes. The last visit of the entire band to Mr. Bridgers' was in August, 1871. Several of the neighbors were there working on his gins; among them was Mr. Thomas Bullard, whom H. B. Lowrie had determined to kill; he went there on this occasion, as he openly avowed to a gentleman on his way, for this purpose. The cause of his animosity to Mr. B. was this: He, in company with Boss Strong, had met Messrs. Bullard and Holcomb a few days before, and gave them positive commands not to mention seeing them to any one; they mentioned it to some one, and it finally reached the ears of Henry Berry, and for this reason only, he determined to kill him. He told Mr. Bullard to walk with him a short distance, as he wanted to talk with him privately; they walked off about a hundred yards and sat down; in a few minutes some of the young men followed, and learned that H. B. Lowrie was very much enraged with Mr. B., and that his anger must in some way be appeased, or another victim would also be added to the list already on record against him. The gentlemen were all unarmed, and therefore helpless to give any aid by force of arms; two of the gentlemen present affirmed that they had been with Mr. B. the day after he had seen H. B. L., and he did not mention seeing him at all, and that he had been misinformed, &c. This quieted him somewhat, and he concluded to release him for the present, provided he would be more careful in future.

MR. ZACH. FULMORE.

On the third Sabbath in May, 1870, they went to the house of Mr. Fulmore during the absence of the family at church. There was a negro left in charge of the house, and he had fallen asleep; he was aroused from his nap by four armed men in disguise. They went into the dwelling, broke open trunks, drawers, &c., ransacked the house, and carried off a large amount in valuable articles and money. Mr. Robert Chaffin and wife were on a visit to Mr. Fulmore at the time, but had also gone to church, leaving their trunk there; this they entered, taking a suit of Mr. Chaffin's, a watch-case, key and some valuable papers that were in the trunk. They did not trouble Mrs. Chaffin's clothing beyond robbing the pocket of a dress of a small pen-knife.

ALEXANDER McMILLAN, ESQ.

On Sunday morning, 12th of September, 1870, five of these desperadoes made their appearance at the house of Mr. McMillan. The Messrs. McMillan were at the gin-house near their dwelling, engaged in making a coffin for a child of one of their neighbors, when they approached them in their usual disguise as negroes. They at once took them prisoners and marched them into the kitchen, placed them under guard of one of their number, while the others searched the house. Breakfast for the family was on the table, to which their guard quietly helped himself. They robbed the house of a large quantity of bed-clothing, wearing apparel, guns, pistols and five dollars in money. They presented a gun at the breast of Mr. Alexander McMillan and cursed both him and his sister in a shameful manner. The Messrs. McMillan had been expecting a visit from the

robbers for sometime, and were in the constant habit of keeping their guns with them, but it being the Sabbath day, omitted their usual precaution. The robbers no doubt had been watching their opportunity, and took advantage of their separation from their arms that morning to put their plans into execution. They rushed first into the house and got possession of their guns and pistols, and then there was no difficulty in deterring them from anything like resistance. They came after this and robbed his smoke-house of four or five hundred pounds of bacon. The Messrs. McMillan discovered them at another time inside their enclosure, and fired upon them; the robbers returned the fire without any damage. Scarcely a week passed up to this time without some citizen of Robeson being robbed; no matter how cautious, watchful and circumspect the people were, at an unwary hour the fiends would suddenly fall upon them, and before they could realize their situation or prepare for defense, have them unarmed and helpless; unable to raise a hand in defense of their homes.

ROBBERY OF MR. E. H. PAUL.

Thursday, the 4th day of August, 1870, dawned bright and beautiful. The sun shot up from beyond the eastern horizon, and shone as it were with increased brilliancy, and "nature in her glory smiled." That day was to decide the great political contest between the two dominant parties of North Carolina. The last month had been one of great excitement, and was said to have witnessed the liveliest campaign that had ever taken place in the State, but it was over, the speakers had retired from the field, and all was quiet. Every effort had been made by the good people of Robeson county to throw off the yoke of Radical tyranny

that had been for the past five years galling them so bitterly. Here the true citizens were fully aroused to their duty as well as interest, and resolving to discharge that duty, they went to the polls determined to elect good men—men that would adhere strictly to a just administration of the law, and aid them in bringing to justice the band of murderers that had cut off so many of her best men, and restore the peace and quiet of former years.

These dastardly thieves, taking advantage of the necessary absence of the voters from their homes, planned and perpetrated one of the coolest and most daring robberies that ever shocked a community. While Mr. E. H. Paul, a young man who then resided in Alfordsville Township, and who owned a store and turpentine distillery, was absent at the polls, they went to his house and demanded of his sister the key that opened the store; she having thrown it away when she saw them coming replied, that she did not have it; whereupon they arrested her and her cousin, Mr. Richard Paul, and all the domestics, put them in the kitchen, placed a guard at the door, and proceeded to the store. One of the party (whom was afterwards ascertained to have been Saunders, the detective,) took a key from his pocket and opened the door. They then seized such things as they wanted, which consisted of dry goods and groceries, to a large amount. Taking the mule and cart of Davis Bullard (who had arrived while they were plundering, and been put with the others under guard) they conveyed their booty to some place where it was received by their allies and conveyed away; returning the mule and cart, they coolly took their departure. Steve Lowrie was recognized as one of the plundering party, by one of those placed under guard.

THE ROBBERY OF MRS. WILLIAM McKAY NEAR
FLORAL COLLEGE.

On the 3rd day of October, A. D. 1870, the whole band of outlaws, together with four other men, all blacked and disguised, made their appearance at the residence of Mrs. William McKay near Floral College, in the hope of finding Mr. John Taylor there, as he had spoken of going to Mrs. McKay's to live, being his sister; and as he had been recently burnt out at Moss Neck by the outlaws, they supposed that he had already moved, but in this they were disappointed, Mr. John Taylor was not there. Six of the number were stationed outside of the yard, whilst the other five rushed in at the gate, shooting a large Newfoundland dog as they went along. Entering the main residence and going through where the family of Mrs. McKay were at the time—on seeing them, Mrs. McKay ran to see where her children were—the outlaws ordered her to stop, bringing their guns to bear upon her; she told them that she only wanted to gather her children up, as any good mother would have done—they then put the family under arrest, the negroes fleeing in every direction; leaving one of their number to guard Mrs. McKay and family, the rest commenced ransacking the house, first taking the jewelry, then every other thing of value, including bed-clothes and wearing apparel; after getting through, they told Miss Pattie McKay (a step-daughter of Mrs. McKay) that she must play some on the Piano-Forte for them, which she did, in order to keep them in good humor; after she finished playing for them, one of them told her that she had a gold ring on her finger which he wanted, and that she must give it up; she readily pulled the ring off and tossed it to him, remarking that he was cruel. Considering that the outlaws were just from the Brandy Still of Mr. Angus Leach, a near neighbor of Mrs. McKay's, and had taken a considerable quantity of

brandy from *the Still*, and considering too that they all loved brandy, and that a goodly number of them were drunk, it is surprising that they behaved as well as they did at Mrs. McKay's; they offered no insult to either her or family, except arresting and holding them under arrest, until they had plundered her house; they remarked to her on leaving that they needed everything that they had taken, that they had to live as well as other people, &c.

Reader, imagine a highly cultivated widow lady, with her two little boys and an accomplished step-daughter, under the arrest of drunken outlaws, and you have the situation! Some time elapsed after the outlaws left Mrs. McKay's, ere she could get a negro to carry a note to one of her neighbors, informing them of her situation. How true it is, that no one knows what a day may bring forth.

THE OLD FIELD FIGHT—THE KILLING OF STEPHEN DAVIS, AND WOUNDING OF ANGUS McLEAN.

On the morning of Oct. 4th, 1874, the entire band of outlaws visited the premises of Mr. Angus Leach, near Floral College. He had a brandy still, and distilled for the neighborhood. From this fact it was afterwards known as the "Brandy Raid." After placing a guard over Mr. Leach, they proceeded to help themselves to anything they could find, and the brandy especially; of this they carried off a large quantity. On the same day the news of this affair reached Shoe Heel depot. Capt. Murdoch McLean gathered together seven or eight men and went in pursuit of the robbers, by way of the Lumberton road on the opposite side of Lumber River, from Mr. Leach's. This movement took the outlaws by surprise, as they did not expect any one to be

after them on that side of the river. It was on this side of the river that George Applewhite lived, and the robbers called up at his house to have a "good time" over the captured brandy. About this time Capt McLean, with his squad, arrived. The outlaws ran into an old pine field near by, and endeavored to conceal and protect themselves by getting the stumps and bushes between them and the militia. The firing now began in real earnest. During the fire Stephen Davis rushed into the midst of the robbers, and Henry Berry shot him in the head, wounding him mortally. Mr. Davis did not fall, but reeled and staggered off into the river swamp near by, and was reported among the wounded and missing. Angus McLean swam the river and got to Mr. Gilbert's house, he being slightly wounded in the foot. This was, as I before stated, October 4th, 1870—not Sept. 20th, as reported by "Felix." Next morning, the 5th, search was made for Mr. Davis, but he could not be found; all who were engaged in the fight were sure that Davis was wounded, as they saw him turn his head to one side when fired upon by H. B. Lowrie. A messenger was dispatched to Shoe Heel, his place of business, to ascertain if he had arrived, but found he had not.

Sheriff McMillan having received intelligence of this affair, came to the Red Banks with five or six men, who joined him on his way; he reached the Banks at 3 o'clock the morning after the fight. Nothing could be done towards searching for the wounded—perhaps dying—man before daylight. All were satisfied that he was killed, mortally wounded or captured by the outlaws. He was found at 10 o'clock the day after the fight, in the river swamp, lying on his face in the mud, unconscious and nearly famished, not having drank any water since the evening before. He was taken to the house of Mr. Roberts, where medical attention was given him, but all to no purpose; the fatal shot had penetrated the brain of the brave and gallant Davis—he

who had stood the storm of shot and shell on many a battle field, to be slain by the hands of a robber and midnight assassin. Mr. Davis was placed on the cars and conveyed to Shoe Heel, where all that kind friends and physicians could do was done, but it was of no avail; he could not be aroused from the lethargy into which he had fallen, and he passed quietly away to the spirit land. A brave, daring man, in his death Robeson county lost one of her best and most noble citizens.

THE MURDER OF MR. J. TAYLOR.

On the morning of the 8th of October, 1870, the dead body of one Malcom Sanderson, a mulatto, was found near the saw mill of Mr. William C. McNeil, of the county of Robeson. An inquest was held over his body by Coroner Robert Chaffin, and the verdict was, "Deceased came to his death by gun shot wounds from parties unknown."

Mr. McNeil's son-in-law, Mr. John Taylor, was living with him at the time, and had been persecuted by Andrew Strong and others of the Lowrie band for the reason that he would not aid them in their atrocious crimes. He was the victim upon whom they determined to fix this murder. They therefore set about arranging their plans, and by some means succeeded in fixing the crime upon Mr. Taylor. A warrant was forthwith issued for his arrest, and he was brought before a Justice of the Peace, arraigned and tried for the murder of said Anderson, and found guilty by said Justice of the Peace. Mr. Taylor's friends (and he had many) were indignant at the idea of such an outrage, and immediately determined to have him released on a writ of *habeas corpus*. The Sheriff, Roderick McMillan, carried him to Rockingham, in Richmond county (Court being in session

at that place) before his Honor Judge Russell, who, upon investigating the case, released him upon Mr. Taylor's giving a bond for his personal appearance at the next term of court held for Robeson county in the sum of five hundred dollars, and Mr. Taylor returned to his distressed family. His enemies not being satisfied in their efforts to deprive him of his liberty, set about the second time to annoy him. One Martin Ransom sued out a peace warrant against him, and he was re-arrested and arraigned before a Magistrate again, who bound him in a heavy bond to keep the peace. One of Mr. Taylor's friends endeavored to compromise the affair, but did not succeed in effecting anything, and Mr. Taylor must await his trial at the next term of the court. After refusing to comply with Mr. Taylor's terms of compromise, Martin Ransom returned home, and it is supposed, held a conference with the outlaws, who must have given him an inkling of their intentions, for he retraced his steps to Lumberton and withdrew the warrant. Not exceeding three days thereafter, in going from his home to the depot at Moss Neck, Mr. Taylor received his death wounds from the hands of Henry Berry Lowrie, Stephen Lowrie and Boss Strong, who, from the side of the mill-dam, fired on him, the entire load from one of their weapons passing through his head, scattering his brains and sending them floating on the waters of the pond. Thus fell at the hands of these fiends incarnate, another of Robeson county's high-toned, noble sons, leaving a young wife and one son to mourn for him. My pen almost fails to be guided to record the atrocious deed. At the time Mr. Taylor was killed, there was a detachment of Battery A, 4th U. S. Artillery, stationed within two hundred yards of the spot where Mr. Taylor fell. Right here a very natural question arises, viz: Why this detachment allowed such a crime to be perpetrated in broad open daylight, and so near them?

Perhaps those soldiers can best answer, but we will take

the liberty, notwithstanding, of saying they were well pleased, if not aiders and abettors in all the deep, dark wrongs committed against the people of Robeson county, by that band of desperadoes that so long infested our country, making the hearts of her sons and daughters to throb with anguish, and weep tears that naught can ever dry.

JOHN SANDERS, THE DETECTIVE.

In the year A. D. 1869, in the month of November, John Sanders, a police officer from Boston, and a native of Nova Scotia, at the instance of some leading Conservatives in Robeson county, settled in Scuffletown, and commenced teaching the mulatto children how to spell and read. To cover up and conceal his design, he was accredited by the Sheriff of New Hanover county to some of the leading Republicans of the county. John Sanders' scheme of capturing the outlaws was a shrewd one. Aware that they were anxious to leave their old haunts and the swamps of Robeson and get safely out of the States to Mexico or to the frontier, he proposed to show them the way, assume to be their protector and friend, and had prepared a wagon, and on the 19th of November, 1870, had the wagon packed with their mulattoes, the outlaws having fully agreed to slip off with their families under the cover of darkness, Sanders having arranged beforehand to have them intercepted at some designated point in Georgia. To bind the Scuffletonians to his confidence by extraordinary means, he pretended to organize Masonic lodges throughout Scuffletown whilst teaching school. He spent over twelve months in persevering cunning to win the skeptical hearts of the bandits, and in order to appease the white population, told the UNINITIATED that he was a veritable Klu Klux. He got into

several fistcuff fights about his manner and mode of living, with white men, on account of his living among the Scuffletonians and teaching school among them.

Sanders was a large, portly man, of great muscular power, possessing a kind, benignant look, a high, broad forehead, winning manners, with much keenness of apprehension and undoubted boldness. But he was betrayed, and there is reason to believe that his fate is to be attributed to the want of due caution on the part of some one who had learned his purposes. He died as he had lived—in mystery and out of the reach or sight of pitying man. He was taken captive by H. B. Lowrie and the other bandits on the morning of November 21st, A. D. 1870, in a bay near the residence of W. C. McNeil, and was never seen again by mortal eyes except by the outlaws. On the night previous to his capture, H. B. Lowrie and his associates had fifty-six of the mulattoes of Scuffletown as accomplices, guarding the roads to give the signal when Sanders would enter their lines, and when poor Sanders entered their lines he heard the rough word, "Halt!" Almost immediately the voice of Sanders was heard by some other white prisoners saying, "I surrender." The outlaws then marched Sanders off to a secret camp on the Back Swamp, called the "Devil's Deer," (den) between Innman's bridge and the Back Swamp, not far from the residence of Zach T. McLaughlin, and proceeded forthwith with devilish malignity to torture him by firing volleys over his head, bruising him with gun-stocks and clubs and finally by administering doses of arsenic to him and opening his veins with a pen-knife. For three days, or until Thursday, these horrible wretches surrounded their white victim, their dull blue eyes calmly enjoying his agonies, and he reminded every hour that escape or mercy were hopeless, or at least out of the question.

The fortitude and philosophy of Sanders gained the respect of his murderers, and before carrying his sentence

into execution they permitted him to write a farewell letter to his wife and family, which they posted by mail with a sort of grim and military observance of justice. Human or savage nature seldom presents a picture so atrocious as this of Sanders, guarded in the wild swamps of Carolina, but almost within the sound of christian firesides, looking into inevitable and violent death after days of pain. The object of keeping Sanders alive so long has never been explained. Whether due to divided counsels, or love of persecuting him while still alive, or the desire to wrest information from him, has been and ever will remain in doubt and shrouded in mystery. To die thus miserably in the swamps of Scuffletown, among the *human moccasins* that infested it, was indeed a miserable death. On Thursday night the outlaws told Sanders that his time had come, and they blind-folded his eyes and tied him to a tree. He made a few words of prayer and gave a signal, and Steve Lowrie, the meanest of the outlaws, emptied both barrels of his shot gun into the body of the poor, helpless John Sanders.

The end of the unfortunate Sanders was related by Henderson Oxendine, one of the outlaws, prior to his execution, and was fully confirmed afterwards by Henry Berry Lowrie, who told several white men in the county that "they were compelled to kill Sanders, in order to save themselves; that they all pitied him," &c. After the hanging of Henderson Oxendine, a party of twenty-five soldiers and citizens, led by Major Thomas and Lieutenants Howe and Simpson, followed the directions given by Oxendine in his confession and without difficulty found the camp where Sanders had been confined. It was in the thickest part of Back Swamp, on an oak island, and scattered around were the spade and some cooking utensils. They proceeded to search for the remains, and found them decently wrapped in a blanket, with the hands folded in a dignified manner, and the *daguerreotype* of the murdered man's wife reverently placed upon his breast.

The cool particularities and deliberation make the tragedy even more heinous by the awe which they inspire; it was murder with the appearance of sovereignty and martial right. No crime known to modern society presents such dark features as the killing of Sanders, and to this day the people of Robeson turn pale at the bloody reminiscence. This occurrence will frighten the rising generation of Carolina for the century to come. The remains of the unfortunate John Sanders were decently re-interred in a neat coffin, by the Sheriff of the county.

Peace to his ashes!

KILLING OF ZACH McLAUGHLIN.

It being positively ascertained that McLaughlin belonged to the robber clan, and accompanied them in all their predatory visits in the neighborhood, the Sheriff, Roderick McMillan, summoned his posse and went to his house to arrest and carry him before a Justice of the Peace for trial. Zach not being aware that his complicity with the "gang" was known, generally remained at the house of his mother in the day, and at night-fall sallied forth to join his chosen comrades. The Sheriff had no difficulty in finding and arresting him. The premises were searched, but there was nothing found that could be identified; he, however, was carried to Red Banks, tried and proven guilty of robbing the house of a Mr. Register in the neighborhood; although blacked at the time, he was recognized by a young lady visitor, who appeared as witness against him at the time of trial. He was then taken to Lumberton and lodged in jail; he soon made his escape and entered the band in good earnest. He was recognized as one of the party who robbed the house of Mr. Zach. Fulmore. It becoming a certain

fact that he really belonged to the band, he was outlawed by the proper authorities, and killed by Henry Biggs, under the following circumstances: On the night of the 21st of December, 1870, Biggs met McLaughlin, at the house of Mr. Noah Duncan. After supper, he asked Biggs to walk out with him, which he did; after going some distance from the house, McLaughlin drew a pistol on Biggs and commenced cursing him, telling him that he had tried to persuade him long enough to join their band, and he should compel him to go that night and aid him in robbing some cabins belonging to turpentine hands in the neighborhood. Biggs being unarmed, had no choice but to accompany him. The negroes were all sleeping soundly, and Zach. had no difficulty in appropriating to himself such articles as he thought proper. He left their cabins minus clothing, a watch, carpet-sack, boots, shoes, provisions, &c. He was drunk and did not go far before he complained of being sleepy and very much fatigued; he ordered Biggs to kindle a fire, which he proceeded to do, followed up by Zach. with a drawn revolver in his hand. As soon as the fire was made, Zach. lay down (making Biggs lie down with him) with his gun under his head, and a belt around his waist with three large sized pistols in it. Soon he was snoring loudly. Biggs concluded that the time was at hand to put an end to the life of one of the villains of Robeson. Reaching over he gently withdrew a pistol from his belt, and putting the muzzle to the back of the outlaw's head, fired, the ball passing through and coming out near the eye. Biggs leaped over the body and fired again, the ball coming through near the ear. Biggs took his arms and concealed them in the woods, then reported to a Justice of the Peace. A party going out and identifying the body, the reward of two (\$200) hundred dollars offered by the county was paid over to Biggs.

The reader will recollect that McLaughlin was the mur-

derer of Owen C. Norment in March preceding his death. He was considered by all who knew him as more brutal than any of the gang. He was the first to meet his merited fate. Generations to come will hate the name of a white man so degraded as to unite with a mullatto band of robbers, murderers and midnight assassins.

THE FATE OF HENDERSON OXENDINE.

On Saturday night, February 26th, 1871, the following young men, John S. McNeill, Angus Archie McNeill, William McNeill, John K. McNeill, Alexander McNeill, Daniel E. McNeill, Hector McNeil, David McNeil, Archie D. McCallum, W. Frierson Buie, Frank McKay, George W. McKay and Archibald Brown, captured Henderson Oxendine, in the house of his brother-in-law, George Applewhite, and formally committed him to jail in Lumberton on Monday morning following, showing their magnanimity in the act of committing him to jail, for he was then an outlaw by the laws of his country. A price had been set on his head by the civil authorities on account of his many crimes, but these young men were as generous as they were brave, and instead of killing him outright, delivered him up to the civil authorities, and *insisted* that he should be regularly tried by court and jury; consequently, on Wednesday week following, he was put upon his trial in open court in Lumberton, before his honor Daniel L. Russell, Jr., and after a fair and impartial trial, found guilty of the crimes charged to him. The Judge then sentenced him to be hanged on the 15th of April, which sentence was carried into execution on the day appointed inside the jail yard at Lumberton.

Thus passed away another of the Robeson county outlaws, in the 28th year of his age. He was a thick set, but trim,

light mulatto, with straight black hair, and rather an indifferent face. He made a full confession of his crimes before his execution, and died almost stoically, without a sigh. Henderson Oxendine was the only outlaw that was hanged for being implicated in the murder of ex-Sheriff King. Steve Lowrie and George Applewhite were also found guilty of being implicated in that tragedy, but escaped out of jail before sentence was passed on them. John Dial, also another mulatto, outlawed for the same offence, turned State's evidence, and thus saved his neck, although equally as guilty as the others.

BILLY McKOY

Was an old colored man, living on the plantation of Mr. Sandy McKenzie. He had incurred the wrath of the robber clan and their friends, not only by standing aloof from them, but also by casting his vote in every election with the whites and avowing his principles to be Conservative. They commenced annoying the old man by stealing his chickens, vegetables, &c. They came to his house early in the spring of 1871, and told him that they heard his house was the headquarters of the colored soldiers. He told them it was not so; they had spent one night there only; that he was from home when they came, and on returning at night found them snugly quartered beneath his roof; that he had no authority to order them out, and therefore submitted quietly to their company. The robbers then said, "You vote with the white man." He replied, "Yes; I have the right to vote as I please, and that is my choice." They accused him of telling falsehoods to Mr. J. McNair about them. This he denied. Old Billy was badly frightened, and to set him somewhat at ease, they told him they would

not kill him, but intended giving him a good whipping. A voice in the dark said, "No, do not whip the old man." Boss Strong said, "Yes, and we will take his clothes off to do it." H. B. Lowrie ordered him whipped with his clothes on, which Boss did, whipping him severely. He knew four of the crowd to be Steve and H. B. Lowrie, and the two Strong's; the three others he did not recognize. He had a near neighbor, a negro, working on the same plantation, by the name of Ben Bethea, who was an avowed enemy of old Billy, and who also belonged to the robber clan. He was instrumental in having the old fellow whipped. Sometime during the following winter, this Bethea was taken from his house by a company of armed men, carried about three miles off and shot. He justly deserved the punishment meted out to him by unknown hands. Not only a co-worker with the clan, but if any one gave him the slightest cause for offence, sought revenge either on their persons or property, by carrying malicious tales to his confederates in crime, thus setting them on to do harm to the offender. He was a native of South Carolina, and was an accomplice in the robbing and burning of the house of a widow lady in that State soon after the surrender. The authorities attempted to capture him, and he sought refuge in Robeson county, joined the robber band, where he was finally overtaken, and a just punishment for his crimes awarded him.

AN AGREEMENT OR COMPACT OF ELEVEN YOUNG MEN IN ROBESON COUNTY.

In March 1871, a plan formed for ridding and freeing entirely Robeson county of the Lowrie outlaws was entered into by F. M. Wishart, Murdoch A. McLean, George L. McKay, Franklin McKay, John A. McKay, W. H. Mc-

Callum, J. Douglas McCallum, Archie D. McCallum, Archie J. McFadyen, Malcolm McNeill, (Greeley) and Faulk Floyd, and persistently carried out—arming themselves with navy revolvers, Spencer Henry and Winchester guns, they immediately entered on the campaign, and went forth to hunt the outlaws in their swampy retreats and fastenesses in Scuffletown, determined to kill or be killed—determined to vindicate the name and fame of their native county. These brave spirits under all the discouraging circumstances which surrounded them, stood the *stalwart braves* of our county, like Warsaw's last champion.

“Oh Heaven! they said, Our bleeding Country save,
Is there no hand on high to shield the brave?
What though destruction sweeps these lovely plains,
Rise fellow men! Our country yet remains
By that dread name, we wave the sword on high,
And swear for her to live, for her to die.”

This was a “dark and doleful period” in the history of Robeson county. Some of our best citizens had been forced to leave the county simply because they had taken a part in ferreting out these outlaws. Our young men and old men have been branded abroad as a set of cowards; we had become a by-word and a reproach among our sister counties; we had been considered by the outer world as colleagues with them in their murders, arsons, treason and rebellion. No people in any country have been so abused and villified as the citizens of Robeson county, simply because they did not rise up and extirpate the Lowrie gang. Few men would have essayed to do what these noble heroic men attempted; few men would have gone forth voluntarily as they did and encountered the perils to which they were exposed by day and by night; often were they wearied, often did they suffer from hunger, from thirst, from weary limbs, aching heads, wet clothes, cold, frost, heat; yet on they went tramp, tramp, through mid-night darkness, through rain, sunshine, through

the almost impenetrable bays and swamps of Scuffletown, encountering the frowns of the mulatto race, the hisses of the negro race, and sometimes the scowls of a few of the white race who had black hearts; often were they ridiculed, slurred and censured, yet, they braved all with courage and fortitude without being moved. On the 8th of April they saw at a distance, the whole of the outlaw gang, who, on perceiving them, made off precipitately into the low-grounds of Lumber River. On the following Saturday night these brave and intrepid men met again at the store of Messrs, A. & W. McQueen. Owing to sickness and other causes only five of them reported, viz: George L. McKay, Franklin McKay, W. H. McCallum, Archie D. McCallum and J. Douglas McCallum; after consultation they determined however, to go to the house of the notorious outlaw, George Applewhite, *dark as it was*, and wait the dawn of day, which was to be the Sabbath. Stationing themselves near his residence, on a path leading across the Juniper in the direction of the Carolina Central Railway, they remained there until 4 o'clock P. M., when to their surprise they saw George Applewhite proceeding directly towards them, (all was confusion for a few moments), when W. H. McCallum fired upon him from a distance not more than twenty paces, the load taking effect in the neck of the outlaw; he returned the fire simultaneously, turning his back however. Frank McKay fired on him, his load taking effect in his back. George L. McKay and J. Douglas McCallum, hearing the clash of arms, rose up and also fired on him when near the edge of the swamp. Here he reeled and fell. Fearing that the entire outlaw gang was near at hand, these young men left the blood-stained spot, not however, before they picked up a sack containing a hat and a pair of shoes, dropped by the outlaw, also the hat he had on when shot. Sending a messenger to Lumberton after the Sheriff in order to deliver the body of the outlaw to him,

they separated for the night. Returning in the morning with the Sheriff and some other gentlemen, the body of George Applewhite could no where be found, the other outlaws having removed him during the night to C. E. Barton's, Esq., where he lingered a short time in great agony and died. His remains were interred on the Juniper, and C. E. Barton, Esq., can point out his grave. Thus passed away the notorious outlaw, George Applewhite, who was an ex-slave brought to Robeson county from Goldsboro by Albert Peacock, as a turpentine laborer. He married a daughter of John Oxendine, a cousin of the Lowries; he was at his death aged 42; a regular negro—heavy, stout built, about 5 feet 10 inches in height, and would weigh 180 pounds. He it was that fired the *fatal shot* at ex-Sheriff Reuben King on the night of January 23rd, 1869; for this he was outlawed, apprehended, twice convicted and condemned to be hanged, but his counsel, taking an appeal to the Supreme Court, he, with Steve Lowrie, who was also found guilty, dug their way out of the jail at Whiteville, Columbus county, and made their escape to their old haunts in Scuffletown. The killing of the outlaw, George Applewhite, by these young men took the Lowrie bandits by surprise; they became more wary and were for some time “wild,” to use a common expression of the times. The hunt, however, for them was still kept up by George L. McKay, Franklin McKay, J. Douglas McCallum, Archie D. McCallum, F. M. Wishart, Malcom McNeill, Archie McFadyen, Faulk Floyd, assisted occasionally by Murdoch McLean, the Sheriff of the county, Rod. McMillan, and a few others. They however becoming exhausted from sheer fatigue, came out of Scuffletown on the last day of June, whereupon the County Commissioners called out ten men from the militia in each Township in the county to serve one week by turns, and placed the same men under the command of F. M. Wishart, with headquarters at Buie's store, in the heart of Scuffle-

town. F. M. Wishart entered on the duty assigned him on the 8th of July following, and kept up the pursuit of the outlaws unremittedly. On the 10th of July, several persons suspected of harboring and sympathizing with the outlaws, were arrested by order of the Sheriff, including the wives of H. B. Lowrie, George Applewhite and Andrew Strong. The party who arrested the wives of the outlaws were fired on from an ambuscade by the outlaws when near Buie's store, immediately on the railway, and Archibald A. McMillan was instantly killed, and Archibald Brown and Hector McNeill were mortally wounded, from the effects of which they died next morning. Berry Barnes and Alex. Brown were also slightly wounded. Notwithstanding these casualties, the other four men returned the fire and caused the outlaws to retreat to the woods. They carried the prisoners in triumph and delivered them to Col. F. M. Wishart. On the same evening the outlaws engaged a company of men under Capt. Charles McRae, at a point on Lumber river known as "Wire-Grass Landing," about 5 o'clock P. M.

THE FIGHT AT WIRE-GRASS LANDING.

On the morning of the 10th of July, 1871, a company of the militia called out by the Sheriff, consisting of fourteen men from Alfordsville and Thompson townships, reported to Capt. Wishart for duty at Buie's Store. They were ordered to go to the house of Andrew Strong and arrest his wife and carry her to a point on the road leading from Harper's Ferry to Red Banks Bridge, where they were to meet a party that had been sent to arrest the wives of Henry B. Lowrie and others of the outlaws. They arrested Andrew Strong's wife and proceeded with her to the point designated, where they waited several hours for the party that was to convey her

to headquarters, which through a misunderstanding, had gone another way. During the afternoon, as the party did not arrive, the Captain detailed four men from the company to escort her to said destination. The ten men that were left then proceeded to Wire-Grass Landing, on Lumber River, below Harper's Ferry Bridge. A short time after they reached this place, they heard talking near by, and soon discovered that it was a party in a boat on the river, and they were coming towards them. When they reached a point about seventy-five yards above the landing, they stopped. They heard them wading in the water, and knew that some of the party had left the boat. After remaining very quiet for some time, the canoe again started down the river, which, on making a short bend was clearly in view. H. B. Lowrie was the only occupant of the boat, and as he was greeted by a volley from the guns of the militia, he sprang into the water, keeping the canoe between him and the enemy as a kind of portable breast-work. His firing was harmless, as was much from the random shooting of those in the bushes. [Those of the party that had gotten out of the boat were concealed in the bushes.] There were four mulattoes with the militia; on opening fire they ran, but when ordered back obeyed and behaved very quietly throughout the fight. The post was held by the militia until their ammunition was exhausted, and the command given to retire. In this fight Mr. Duncan McCormick and Charles Smith were wounded, though not seriously. The damage done to the outlaws could not be ascertained.

On the 14th of July following, the Lowrie bandits went to the residence of Mr. John McNair and behaved very insultingly, although Mr. McNair, previous to this feud had often treated them very kindly, frequently selling them corn and meat on a credit and waiting patiently for his pay. On this day, however, they ordered Mr. McNair to write the following note:

Mr. James Sinclair: If our wives are not released and sent home by next Monday morning, there will be worse times in Robeson county then there ever has been yet. We will commence and drench the county in blood and ashes.

H. B. ^{his}X LOWRIE,
mark.

STEVE ^{his}X LOWRIE,
mark.

ANDREW ^{his}X STRONG.
mark.

They then ordered Mr. McNair to hitch his horse to his buggy and proceed with it to Lumberton and deliver it to James Sinclair, which Mr. McNair did, leaving no white person on the place except his wife (Mrs. McNair). Arriving at Lumberton about ten o'clock A. M., Mr. McNair delivered the note to James Sinclair, who, after reading it, directed him to hand it to the Sheriff, which he did, and after the Sheriff read it, he told Mr. McNair to inform the outlaws that the people of Robeson county were not to be tampered with in this way, and driven by mere threats into measures by these outlaws, and the white men of Robeson in all to come branded as cowards. Mr. McNair returned and met the outlaws about three miles below his residence, on the road to Lumberton, and delivered the message of the Sheriff to them, which they received with a dark, ominous scowl, but offered no violence to Mr. McNair.

On Monday following, quite a number of the old grey-headed citizens of Robeson county went to Lumberton and held a consultation with the Sheriff and County Commissioners, and the conclusion arrived at was, that taking all things into consideration, it was probably best to release the wives of the outlaws and send them home, inasmuch as they (the wives) were not responsible for the acts of their husbands, and also because it was believed at the time that their release would have a good effect on the rest of the mu-

latto race. They were therefore released and sent home next day.

The next week following, Adjutant-General Gorman appeared on the scene of action with part of a company of Federal soldiers, asking the county of Robeson for an equal number of volunteers to co-operate with him in capturing the outlaws, when the following named gentlemen responded to the call, viz:

F. M. WISHART, *Colonel.*

JAMES NICHOLSON McLEAN, *Captain.*

J. C. McKELLAR, *First Lieutenant.*

JAMES MCBRYDE, *Second Lieutenant.*

JOHN S. McNEILL, *Third Lieutenant.*

Privates.

Henry McCallum,

J. T. McCormic,

A. A. McGirt,

C. McRae,

E. C. McNeill,

Gilchrist McGirt,

Daniel McKenzie,

James McQueen,

Archie McDonald,

James McGoogan,

Alexander McGirt,

Privates.

Malcom McNeill, (Greeley)

Samuel Barnes,

John Cobb,

Henry Biggs,

Frank Currie,

Joseph Philips,

Archie Johnson,

Duncan Campbell,

Daniel Campbell,

Thomas Purcell,

W. C. Smith.

These men remained with Adjutant-General Gorman in Scuffletown two months, and were disbanded without capturing a single outlaw, simply because the outlaws *evaded* them on all occasions. The volunteers generally, and the true men of Robeson county *believed* at the time, and *believe* to this day that the Adjutant-General of the State was in collusion with the outlaws, as were every negro and mulatto in the county. Thus terminated this campaign of Adjutant-General Gorman without accomplishing anything; in the meantime, however, the predatory warfare on the

part of the outlaws went on without any cessation, robbing whom they pleased and when they pleased, depleting the whole country around Scuffletown of guns and pistols, and whatever else they saw fit to take; turning the heads of the mulatto race and prompting negro imitators, and training up the very children of Scuffletown to be barbarians with the lust for plunder and rapine. Indeed, after the failure of Gen. Gorman to capture them, the outlaws showed more desperation than ever; they seemed to fear nothing, whilst they showed a ferocity, premeditation and insolence frightful to behold; spreading terror and dismay wherever they saw fit to go; no one, not an inhabitant of the county at the time, can realize the situation; nearly all of our citizens, with here and there an honorable exception, seemed *terror-stricken* and were dumb with dismay, for they did not know at what hour the Lowrie bandits would pounce down on them like an eagle on his prey, and murder some male member of the family for some imaginary wrong, or take away from them their hard earnings. Here we will relate an incident that occurred "not a hundred miles" from Ashpole Presbyterian Church, to J. C. McKellar and the squad of men under him, (some twelve in number): Lieutenant J. C. McKellar and his men met on the road a well-to-do farmer and informed him that he and his squad were going to his house for their dinner; this *well-to-do* farmer told Mr. McKellar and his men that when they arrived at his house, for him and his men to go directly to his kitchen and order his cook, a negress, to prepare dinner for them, so that it might be told to the outlaws that he was forced to feed the men that were hunting them. J. C. McKellar and his men were incensed at the conduct of this well-to-do farmer, but concluded in order to retaliate on him, to do as he had directed. So they went and ordered this man's cook to fix up dinner for them, which after being fixed up, they *ate* with a gusto, and even to this day when

this circumstance is referred to, the men who partook of that dinner will laugh about the cowardice of this well-to-do farmer and say, "*well, he won't do to tie to in a storm.*"

THE KILLING OF GILES INNMAN BY THE OUTLAWS.

On the 21st of April, 1871, the Sheriff of the county, viz : Rod. McMillan, in connection with F. M. Wishart, Archie D. McCallum, J. Douglas McCallum, Franklin McKay, George L. McKay, Archie McFadyen and Malcom McNeill, surrounded H. B. Lowrie's house, when to their surprise it was ascertained that the whole outlaw band were within. After consultation, it was deemed prudent and wise that the Sheriff and Franklin McKay should go and hunt up recruits to capture the whole outlaw gang. The Sheriff and Mr. McKay immediately set out on their errand, and coming to the house of Mr. Hugh Innman, on Lumber River, about three miles from H. B. Lowrie's, his two sons, Robert and Giles Innman, went back with Mr. McKay to the assistance of the men left at H. B. Lowrie's house. In the meantime, H. B. Lowrie and the other outlaws made their escape through a "trap-door and a tunnel," dug some distance from the house of H. B. Lowrie, as was afterwards ascertained; and they (the outlaws) throwing themselves back on the road which they supposed would be traveled by the Sheriff on his return, ambuscaded the recruits as they were crossing the Back Swamp and fired on them, killing instantly Mr. Giles Innman, a youth aged eighteen years, and wounding M. Frank McKay. Mr. McKay returned the fire. Thus fell another victim of their relentless fury and vindictiveness. Mr. Innman was a resolute youth, and was anxious to apprehend these lawless marauders. His father, Mr.

Hugh Innman, was a Republican in politics. Some time after this occurrence, H. B. Lowrie informed Mr. Innman that he was sorry that he had killed his son Giles (and well he might be); but this was only adding insult to injury. It was the sorrow which the lion has for the lamb when in his power.

THE MURDER OF MURDOCH A. McLEAN AND HIS BROTHER HUGH McLEAN—ALSO THE WOUNDING OF ARCHIE D. McCALLUM.

The murder of the two brothers, Murdoch A. McLean and Hugh McLean, was committed on the morning of July 17th, 1871, on the public road one mile south of Shoe Heel depot, on the Carolina Central Railway, near a mill on Black Branch, in full view of the residence of Mrs. Margaret McLean. This feat was achieved after long and cool deliberation on the part of the outlaws. They had often essayed to kill Murdoch A. McLean, and as often failed in their purpose. Several times they had waylaid him; several times they had lurked about the premises of his mother in the darkness of the night, but all to no purpose. Early on the morning of the 17th, Hugh McLean carried his sister Mary to the residence of Mr. M. C. McNair, in an open buggy. On his return home, Murdoch A. McLean and Archie D. McCallum jumped up into the buggy with Hugh, and started off for Shoe Heel depot to hunt the robber band. As the trio rode along about three hundred yards from the residence of Mrs. Margaret McLean, they heard the rough word, "halt!" Almost instantly a gun was snapped at close quarters, from behind a "blind" by Benry Berry Lowrie. Murdoch A. McLean reached for his arms, but before he could bring his gun to bear he was riddled with buckshot, and

his brother Hugh mortally wounded, the horse in the buggy galloping off with the lifeless remains of the two brothers. In the killing of Murdoch A McLean, Henry Berry Lowrie shed the blood of one of the noblest youthful spirits in our county; indeed he was a superb specimen of the "bonnie Scotch."

"None knew him but to love him,
None named him but to praise."

He was in his thirty-first year of age when he fell, honored, esteemed and loved by all who knew him for the many noble traits of character. Peace to his ashes!

But what shall we pen in regard to innocent Hugh McLean, who was also killed at the same time? Alas! my pen falters—my hand trembles, when I recall this double murder! Innocent Hugh was in the twentieth year of his age, and bid fair to become as noble and generous a man as his brother Murdoch had been.

Archie D. McCallum, who was riding in the buggy with the two brothers, sprung out on the ground, and in doing so, his pistol fell out of its case; he, however, had the coolness to stoop down and pick it up, and then to run, for he saw the whole outlaw gang were at hand, and knew if he remained that they would murder him also. He had not proceeded far when he was fired on and wounded in his leg, but he made good his escape to Shoe Heel Depot, although pursued by two of the gang to within a few hundred yards of the depot. When the news of this occurrence spread abroad, the wildest consternation seemed to seize many of the good citizens of Robeson county. All was confusion. What to do next was the main question.

COL. FRANK M. WISHART.

High on "the roll of honor" in the county of Robeson

stands the name of Col. Frank M. Wishart—a man that would be noticed in any crowd on account of his showy appearance. He was an old Confederate officer, and served throughout the war between the States with credit to himself and honor to his native county. A Republican in politics, and the only Republican in the county of Robeson of any distinction who could or did rise superior to party politics and take the side of bleeding, suffering humanity. He possessed true nobleness of mind and a lofty magnanimity of character, and through “evil report as well as good,” he bore himself with dignity and disinterestedness, fearless of danger to his person or reputation. All honor to Frank M. Wishart for his noble example—all honor to his name for his exalted patriotism. True to his natural instincts, he joined the compact of those eleven self-sacrificing men who determined to rid Robeson county of the Lowrie outlaws or die in the attempt. He entered this compact early in February, in the year 1871, and worked assiduously for the capture of the outlaws until he fell a victim to their treachery on the 16th day of May, A. D. 1872, in the ——— year of his age. He met his sad and melancholy fate on the main road leading from Lumberton to Rockingham, in Richmond county, about one and a half miles from Lebanon Presbyterian Church, on the south side of Lumber River, and about two miles from Red Banks bridge, whither he had gone alone to have an interview with the outlaws, in accordance with an agreement made with them at Moss Neck on the previous Friday, as the following particulars will delineate, taken from the *Robesonian* (newspaper) of May 23rd:

THE OUTLAWS—INTERESTING PARTICULARS OF THEIR INTERVIEW WITH COL. F. M. WISHART, AT MOSS NECK—HOW THEY ENTRAPPED HIM—THEIR PERFIDIOUS TREACHERY AND FIENDISH BRUTALITY—COPIED FROM THE "ROBESONIAN" OF MAY 23RD, 1872.

We are enabled to present some interesting particulars of the interview of Col. F. M. Wishart with the outlaws at Moss Neck, a few days before his assassination by them. On Friday before his death, Col. Wishart was aboard the regular through freight train, which arrived at Moss Neck at 3 o'clock P. M., and was at that time occupying a seat in the conductor's cab in rear of the train. Soon after the train halted, the two outlaws, Andrew Strong and Steven Lowrie, approached the car and recognized Col. Wishart, and accosted him in a civil and friendly way. Stephen Lowrie inquired whether he had any arms, and went aboard the cab to satisfy himself on that point, Andrew Strong remaining on the piazza of the store within a few feet of the train. Andrew was in his shirt sleeves, and wore only one pistol in his belt, but Steven carried in his hand a Spencer rifle and in his belt five elegant pistols—two Derringers, one Smith & Wesson and two Colt's. On entering the car, Stephen demanded to see his arms, when Col. Wishart drew aside the skirt of his coat and displayed the handle of a repeater, which he assured the outlaw was the only weapon he carried. Steven at once made a grab at the pistol as if to snatch it from its place, but Col. Wishart foiled this attempt by dextrously leaping from the car to the piazza of the store, where the other outlaw was standing, and confronting Stephen, who was standing in the door of the car from which he had just escaped, stood with his hand upon his pistol. Stephen and Andrew both now assured him that they meant him no harm and only wished a friendly conference, and at Andrew's request he walked with him behind the store,

where they remained for sometime in conversation, while Stephen remained on board the car, and seemed to take no interest in what was passing between his comrade and Col. Wishart. As the train was about to move off, Col. Wishart returned to the car, and meeting Stephen on the platform, the latter was heard to say: "When I send for you, you come. I'll send a friend for you in a few days, and you come and meet us," and Col. Wishart promised to do so.

The rest of this strange, sad story, with its melancholy, tragic end, is but too well known. On Thursday morning next, after this interview, a messenger—who it was nobody knows, or perhaps ever will know—bore to Col. Wishart at Shoe Heel, the summons which was to lead him away to death. True to his word, he prepared to obey, and saddling his mule, he rode directly, unarmed and alone, to the spot named by the messenger. What occurred there was witnessed by no human eye beside those of the actors in the fearful tragedy; but in the afternoon of the same day, a citizen of the neighborhood was horrified by the discovery of the body of the gallant Wishart, all stark and stiff, and covered with gore, lying by the roadside. Two hideous, gaping wounds, one through the body, the other through the head, showed how foully he had been murdered. The mule on which he rode stood fastened to a limb near by, and appearances showed that when shot he was reclining on the earth whittling the end of a small stick and unsuspecting of danger. It is probable that these treacherous and cowardly fiends had concealed themselves in ambush near the spot, and that the first intimation he had of their presence were the two shots that hurled his brave, unsuspecting soul into eternity. A more cowardly, brutal and cold-blooded murder does not stain the annals of crime among the most barbarous people that ever inhabited the earth.

JAMES McQUEEN, *Alias* DONAHOE.

Of all the men that have essayed to exterminate the Robeson outlaws, none have been more persevering than James McQueen, or Donahoe as he is sometimes called. Slim and slender in form, peculiar and eccentric in manners, so much so that persons unacquainted with him look upon him at times as somewhat wild and romantic, quick in movement, showing agility and determination in every motion, about six feet high, with a small piercing gray eye without much expression of countenance, he is the very personification of a *gawky Scotchman*, in his twenty-fifth year of age, a native of Richmond county, N. C. After reaching maturity, or becoming twenty-one years old, he left Mr. Donahoe in Richmond county, the gentleman who raised him, and after working awhile in South Carolina for wages, he purchased first a good double-barreled shot gun and ammunition, and wended his way to Robeson county, going from house to house and telling the people that he wished to buy a tract of land, and would sometimes examine tracts that were offered for sale, and then decline purchasing on the ground that the price was too high; sometimes too he would offer to lease from some farmer a one-horse farm, &c. In this way he became acquainted with the people of Robeson and found out all about the Lowrie outlaws, and who were their friends and who their enemies—in this way too he found out who were the true men of the county, who would do to trust or confide in and not betray him—he found out also the roads and bye-paths of Scuffletown—he sometimes would go with one company that were hunting the outlaws in Scuffletown, and sometimes with another—his comrades however invariably found him reliable, always at his post, never sleepy or drowsy, *very particular where he went, and when and how*. At last he took to going into Scuffletown solitary and alone in the dead hours of night along bye-paths and

on roads that were not much traveled, and when he arrived at the place where he wished to watch for *the passing* of the outlaws, he would ensconce himself in some thick undergrowth and remain as quiet as a cat, waiting for his prey to come along. In this way he became acquainted with the personal appearance of the outlaws, their arms and accoutrements. After pursuing the above course for some months, he furnished himself with a Henry rifle, and had provisions cooked up to last him three days, and wended his way to the dreary Swamps of Scuffletown on the 6th day of March, A. D. 1872, and on the night following he arrived at the house of Andrew Strong, on the south side of Lumber river, about one mile from Harper's Ferry, and about ten miles from Shoe Heel depot, on the Carolina Central Railway, and now we will permit him to tell his own statement of the facts in the case of killing Boss Strong:

JAMES MCQUEEN'S, OR DONAHOE'S VERSION OF THE KILLING
OF BOSS STRONG.

Last Thursday night, March 7th, I reached the house of Andrew Strong, on the edge of Scuffletown, about ten miles from Shoe Heel, at 12 o'clock; I fixed a good blind about one hundred and fifty yards from the house, and lying down, I watched the rest of the night and all of the next day, eating some provisions I had brought along. About half-past seven P. M., Friday, Andrew Strong came out of the woods, and after stopping and looking around him in all directions, he went into the house and directly came out and gave a low call, when Boss Strong came out of the woods to the house; they were each armed with two rifles and two or three revolvers. A little after 8 o'clock, when I thought they would be at supper, I slipped up to the house and looked in through the cat-hole in the door, as I supposed they were eating their supper by the light on the

hearth. A Miss Cummings was there, besides Flora, Andrew's wife. I kept watching, until Boss laid down on the floor with his feet to the fire and his head towards me and commenced playing on a mouth organ; then I saw my chance, and I pushed my rifle (a Henry) through the cat-hole until it was not over three feet from his head, and took a steady aim by the light and shot; when I fired the women screamed and said, "he's shot!" "no he isn't!" "yes he is!" and I looked in as quick as I could get my gun away. Boss' arms and legs had fallen straight from his body, and there was a little movement of the shoulders as if he was trying to get up. Andrew Strong was then standing in the shadow of the chimney-corner, and he stayed there until I left. He said to his wife, "honey, you go out and see what it was," and opened the door opposite the one I was at and pushed her out, but she did not come around to the side where I was, but went in directly and said there was nobody about. He sent her out again, telling her to look in the corners and jams; but before she got well out he said, "come back honey, he was blowing on that thing and it busted and blowed his head off," and directly after he said, "my God, he's shot in the head, and it must have come from the cat-hole," and sent his wife out again; then I slipped off. When I returned the cat-hole was shut up and the house was all dark; then I came back to Shoe Heel and made up a party and went back to the house of Andrew Strong; arriving there about 10 o'clock A. M. on Saturday, we found Rhoda Lowrie, the wife of Henry B. Lowrie and sister to Boss and Andrew Strong, wiping up the blood on the floor that had issued from the wound inflicted on Boss Strong; there were some other mulatto women present, but the body of Boss Strong was no where to be found; upon inquiry, we ascertained from the women present that Steve Lowrie and Andrew Strong had just removed the remains of Boss Strong to some secluded spot, and had threatened the women present

that if they watched them in order to see which way they went, that they would come back and kill them. So I and the party that accompanied me, returned to Shoe Heel the same evening without finding the body of Boss Strong.

The above closes James McQueen's statement in regard to the killing of the outlaw Boss Strong. Subsequently it leaked out through the women present that Boss Strong was shot through the head and died almost instantly, and on the oath of these same mulatto women, the Legislature of North Carolina, at its session of 1873-'74, passed a bill authorizing the State Treasurer to pay to James McQueen \$5,000 for killing Boss Strong.

Boss Strong was the youngest of the gang of the outlaws, and was the most trusted and inseparable companion of Henry Berry Lowrie, his brother-in-law; he was only in his twentieth year when killed; he was nearly white, his dark short cut hair had somewhat a reddish tinge, and was slightly curling; a thick down appeared on his lips, but otherwise he was beardless; he had that dull, blueish eye belonging to all the Scuffietonians generally, and was generally silent and taciturn, but he had the demon in him, and when aroused he had a dogged, determined look. He had the courage of a bull-pup, and next to Henry Berry Lowrie, the leader, was regarded as the worst of the party; his hands were dyed deep in the blood of old and young; he was about five feet ten inches high, thick set, with a full face, and would weigh one hundred and sixty-five pounds; like his leader, he generally killed at close quarters, seldom at more than five to ten yards; he met up with his match though when James McQueen fired at him through the cat-hole with his Henry rifle. After James McQueen killed Boss Strong, the other outlaws became very shy and were seldom seen or heard of for several months. James McQueen, however, still kept up the hunt for them, and never desisted entirely until the last outlaw was killed. The out-

laws *dreaded* James McQueen more than any man that ever took the field against them, and well they might fear him, for he moved about almost as noiselessly as a cat.

THE WISHART COMPANY IN 1872.

After the Lowrie outlaws had decoyed and slain in cold blood the noble and patriotic Col. F. M. Wishart, they sent a message to his two brothers, viz: A. Strong Wishart and Robert E. Wishart on the 15th of July, 1872, to leave the county, or they might expect to be killed. Instead of obeying the orders of the outlaws, they armed themselves with Spencer rifles, and getting Mr. James McKay and James Campbell to join them, they set out on the 17th of July for the dreary swamps of Scuffletown, to hunt the outlaws. On the 18th of July they were reliably informed that Tom Lowrie, one of the outlaws, was in the habit of visiting regularly the house of one Furney Prevatt. They immediately wended their way thither, and arriving there after nightfall, secreted themselves in the woods as near as possible without discovery. Remaining there that night and the whole of the next day until after dark, they ventured up nearer to the house in order to watch the movements inside. They soon discovered Tom Lowrie come out of the house accompanied by a woman and go into a crib near by. They also perceived that they could not kill the outlaw without endangering the life of the woman; so while waiting outside they heard Tom Lowrie say that he intended to go next day to Union Chapel, to a public speaking that was to come off there. They then withdrew to the woods and concluded that they would endeavor to intercept the outlaw on his way to Union Chapel. Taking with them a guide, they halted at a point on the east side of Lumber

River, where the main road crosses the Holly Swamp. Here they stationed themselves, awaiting the dawn of the morning of July 20th. Lying in great suspense and anxiety until about 8 o'clock A. M., they heard voices approaching them in the direction of the Prevatt house. Sure enough, Tom Lowrie and Furney Prevatt soon made their appearance. Coming to the place on the road where the Wishart company crossed, the outlaw stopped to examine the footprints and Furney Prevatt walked on. After looking at the footprints of A. S. Wishart and associates, the outlaw was heard to say that he "would go to Union Chapel that day or die in the attempt." These were the last words ever uttered by Tom Lowrie, the outlaw, for just then Mr. James McKay fired on him. Turning to run, Mr. A. S. Wishart fired on him also, with a Spencer rifle, the ball passing clear through his body. The outlaw, however, ran some fifty yards and fell with a heavy groan. Mr. A. S. Wishart, procuring the assistance of Mr. David Davis, and pressing a wagon that was passing at the time, removed the body of the dead outlaw out of the swamp, taking off of his person three pistols, a Spencer rifle, a gold watch, which belonged to Mr. John McNair, one hundred and thirty dollars in currency and a Spanish dollar. The company placed the body in a wagon and proceeded with it to Lumberton, and formally delivered it to the Sheriff of the county, who paid them two hundred dollars, the amount of reward offered for his body, dead or alive, by the County Commissioners, placing also in their hands the necessary papers to draw six thousand dollars out of the State Treasury, the amount offered for his apprehension by the State authorities, which was promptly paid by the Treasurer of the State, and equally divided between A. S. Wishart, R. E. Wishart, James McKay, James Campbell and David Davis.

Thus passed away another of the Lowrie bandits, whose back had been peppered once before by Frank McKay,

Archie D. McCallum, J. Douglass McCallum and others, but got off with a bloody shirt sticking to his back. Tom Lowrie was thirty-seven years of age when killed; possessed broad shoulders; a strong and active body; straight black hair; would weigh about 180 lbs., and was five feet ten inches high. A thieving sneak he was, capable of murder or anything else mean. He had a bluish gray eye, and when observed closely, a furtive look that seemed to take in the whole situation at a glance. He had been twice captured and placed in jail, each time making his escape; but this time he went to "that bourne from whence no traveler returns."

After Tom Lowrie was killed, the "Wishart" company did not cease in their exertions to kill the remaining outlaws. They remained in Scuffletown all the time, watching the movements of the outlaws. The only member that left the company was Mr. James Campbell, and he left it on account of his health. Mr. Frank Floyd took his place and remained one month. Mr. Alf. Prevatt took Mr. Floyd's place and remained eight months. Mr. James McQueen staid also with the company three weeks; the remainder of his time in Scuffletown he was alone. Mr. A. C. Bridgers was also a member of the company for several months in 1872. On the 10th of August A. McE McCallum joined the Wishart company, word having been sent him to leave the county by the outlaws, because he had given the Wishart company something to eat; instead of leaving, he joined the company that was hunting them. Mr. McCallum remained with the company until the 10th of December, and on the 17th went to the State of Georgia to please his father and friends. Staying there seven months, he returned to Robeson and rejoined the same company. He found the company then composed of A. S. Wishart, R. E. Wishart, James McKay, Ernest Lemon, Buck Hilliard and a negro by the name of Solomon Morrison (the only negro, be it said to his credit,

that ever voluntarily hunted the outlaws). The hunt for the remaining outlaw, viz: Steve Lowrie, was still kept up by this company. Two members of the outlaw band had been previously killed, viz: Boss Strong, by James McQueen, and Andrew Strong, by William Wilson, so that Steve Lowrie was the only outlaw that roamed at large, and he became *so shy* that it was a difficult matter to see or hear of his whereabouts. However, James McKay, Ernest Lennon and the negro Solomon Morrison shot at him a short time before he was killed while conversing with Nat Clark, near Clark's residence, but they were too far off to hurt the outlaw. These same men, together with A. McE. McCallum, were stationed on the main road not more than half of a mile distant from the place where Steve Lowrie was killed, on the night preceding his killing, waiting for Steve Lowrie to pass. As he did not come along, they dispersed to meet again on Monday night following, *but to their joy* they learned on Monday that a different party of men had sent Steve Lowrie to his "long home." Although they did not kill him, they were rejoiced to know that he was out of the way, and that the last one of the outlaws had gone to the "spirit land" never to return, and that the good people of Robeson county could once more breathe free and easy. And here the writer would say that Robeson county owes a debt of gratitude to the noble, heroic and self-sacrificing men who composed the Wishart company. When they went into Scuffle-town to hunt the outlaws it might almost be said that the county had been given up to the outlaws; there were few men that could be induced in the county to take up arms against them. The county, State and United States troops had been so far distanced and "*out generalled*" by these villains, that it really seemed hopeless to attempt their capture; but the brave men who composed the Wishart company never faltered in their efforts to kill or capture them. Often were they sneered at by those who should have been

their friends; often were they turned off from the houses of those who feared the Lowrie bandits, hungry, cold, wet and fatigued, to seek food and shelter as best they could; but there were five well-to-do farmers in striking distance of Scuffletown who never failed to give them the "best cheer" possible. These farmers were Mr. John McNair, Capt. Willis P. Moore, James D. Bridgers, John McCallum and David Townsend. These five were ready at any hour, day or night, to relieve their physical wants and aid them in every possible way. And, now, as the last outlaw has run his race and finished his course, let the good people of Robeson hold in great remembrance "the good" done Robeson county by the men who composed the Wishart company: let their names be handed down to posterity, along with those of Mr. John McNair, Capt. Willis P. Moore, James D. Bridgers, John McCallum and David Townsend, so that the rising generation may know who were the true men of Robeson county during the "dark period" in her history, and during the time in which the Lowrie bandits held a bloody carnival within her borders.

STORE AND COURTHOUSE ROBBERY.

On the morning of the 19th of February, 1872, the usual quiet of the town of Lumberton was greatly disturbed by the announcement that the robber clan had been there the night before and committed robberies, but to what extent remained to be ascertained. Two of the young gentlemen of the place were out early on their way to their places of business, and discovered the iron safe from the Sheriff's office in the street, about fifty yards from the Courthouse. The alarm was given, the citizens aroused, and could be seen hurrying in every direction to learn who were the suf-

ferers, and to what extent. The next thing found to be missing was a horse and dray, from the stable of Mr. A. W. Fuller. The back door of the store of Messrs. Pope & McLeod was found open, which had been left locked and barred on the inside; on further examination they learned their safe was missing, containing a large amount of money belonging to the firm, as well as that of others which had been deposited with them for safe keeping; all their valuable papers and books were also in the safe; in addition to this, they took dry goods, ready-made clothing, boots, shoes, guns, &c. They entered a black-smith shop and took tools with which to open the safe. Messrs. Pope & McLeod immediately started out in the direction which the dray had gone, while squads of the citizens were left standing about the streets consulting on what course best to pursue. After some little time, a party was raised and started in pursuit of the robber clan. About a half mile from town the party pursuing came up with Messrs. Pope & McLeod, who had found the safe emptied of its valuable contents. The whole party then concluded to return to Lumberton, as further pursuit would be of no avail. Several months afterwards one of the books from the store was found in a field near Mr. McLeod's residence. A key was found in the pocket of Tom Lowrie when killed, which fitted the lock of the front door of the store robbed, and it was supposed they entered the store with the false key, locked it and passed out through the back door. It was the next day after their visit to Lumberton, and over the division of that night's spoils, that Henry Berry Lowrie lost his life by the accidental discharge of his own gun.

THE DEATH OF THE ROBBER CHIEF, HENRY
BERRY LOWRIE.

Early on the morning of February 20th, 1872, between daylight and sunrise, the whole band of outlaws returned to the house of Tom Lowrie after their raid on Lumberton, having on the previous night entered the store of Messrs. Pope & McLeod, and abstracted therefrom an iron safe, and proceeding thence to the Court House and entering the Sheriff's office and taking along his iron safe, proceeded forthwith to leave Lumberton by way of the turnpike road leading across the country by Morrissey's mill. Finding their load too heavy, they dropped the Sheriff's safe on the streets of Lumberton and went on with the safe of Messrs. Pope & McLeod to a distance of about three miles and rifled it of the whole of its contents, getting in all about twenty-two thousand dollars. The band then wended their way to the house of Tom Lowrie, in Scuffletown, and being fearful of pursuit, built up a fire near the crib of Tom Lowrie and commenced fixing their fire-arms, in case they would be attacked by any party in pursuit of them; and here the outlaw chief, Henry Berry Lowrie, terminated his own earthly career. Whilst attempting to draw a load out of his double barrel gun, the gun slipping in his hand, the hammer of one of the barrels struck against a sill of the crib and the gun went off, the load taking effect in Henry Berry Lowrie's face and forehead, tearing away his nose and the greater portion of his forehead. He died almost instantly. Thus perished the great robber chief of Robeson county. Preparations were set on foot immediately for his burial. A party of mulattoes went to the saw mill of Mr. Archibald Buie for lumber, which had to be sawed. When the lumber was obtained, Jesse Oxendine (being a carpenter) was called in and made the coffin, the other outlaws standing guard all the time. When all the necessary preparations were

completed, the remains of the dead robber chief were temporarily placed in a shallow grave under Tom Lowrie's crib. On the following night, near midnight, the remaining outlaws took up the body of the dead robber chief and carried it off and buried it, where, in all human probability, no white man will ever find out.

Thus passed away this remarkable bandit, in his twenty-sixth year—the greatest scourge ever inflicted on the good people of Robeson county. He was said to have a good deal of money in his possession at this time, as his comrades in arms reported often to outsiders that he was in the habit of appropriating “the lion's share” to his own use of all the money taken, giving to the other outlaws the other booty. No member of the band, not even his “fides Achates,” Boss Strong, nor his wife, Rhoda Lowrie, knew where he kept his money. Diligent search has been made by the remaining members of the gang to find his treasure chest, but as yet “it is love's labor lost.” For some time after the death of Henry Berry Lowrie, his comrades denied all knowledge of his fate; even his relations professed to be ignorant of it, but the facts one by one leaked out through different individuals of the mulatto race, who saw the dead robber chief whilst “lying in state” before his interment. The main object in keeping his fate concealed from the public seems to have been to keep the timid whites *in awe* of the “outlaw gang,” and to prevent those who were endeavoring to capture him from getting his body. This course of conduct on the part of the “outlaw gang” and the mulattoes generally, was in accordance with their previous course. When George Applewhite was shot and killed, and Boss Strong, too, they endeavored to divert public attention by telling various tales in regard to the fate of each, in which there was not one particle of truth; but now, at this writing, inasmuch as Steve Lowrie, the last outlaw, has also gone to the “spirit land,” and the reign of the gang termi-

nated, and there being no need of mystery in regard to the fate of the robber chief. Several mulattoes in Scuffletown are outspoken in regard to the manner in which Henry Berry Lowrie met his fate, and they all verify the facts as above recited. This noted mulatto bandit is certainly gone to the *criminal's bourne*; he is most certainly done making raids on the law-abiding citizens of Robeson county; he is assuredly done frightening the women and children of the white race by his martial appearance; his sceptre has been laid aside and his spirit summoned to appear before "the Judge of all the earth," to answer for the long catalogue of crimes, as long, probably, as the list of Homer's ships. Some have compared him to Osceola, or Powel, the noted leader of the Seminole Indians in Florida, others to "the bold archer, Robin Hood," whilst still others say that he was more like Rob Roy McGregor. Be this as it may, he certainly played an extended *role* in his own way, being the leader of the most formidable band of outlaws, considering the smallness of its numbers, that has ever appeared in this country. He developed a cunning, bloodthirstiness, and courage unmatched in the history of his race.

THE KILLING OF ANDREW STRONG.

Mr. William Wilson, a native of Guilford county, aged thirty-eight, being in the employ of A. & W. McQueen, incurred by some means or other the displeasure of Steve Lowrie and Andrew Strong, the only two remaining outlaws. Some time in the month of December, 1872, therefore, Steve Lowrie and Andrew Strong, on the morning of December 25th, 1872, went to the store of Mr. John Humphrey at Eureka, a station on the Carolina Central Railway, in the heart of Scuffletown, where Mr. William Wilson was

a clerk, and informed him that he had been talking about them. Mr. Wilson did not say much one way or the other, whereupon Andrew Strong told Mr. Wilson "that he would give him until train time the next day to leave the county, and that if he did not leave, that he (Andrew Strong) would kill him;" they then left Eureka heavily armed on a *Christmas frolic*. Mr. Wilson, after their departure, deliberately loaded up a double-barreled shot gun with buck-shot, and concealed it under a coverlet in an adjoining room for use whenever the outlaws would make their appearance. So about 4 o'clock P. M. on the same day, Andrew Strong *alone* made his appearance again at the store of Mr. John Humphrey, and after purchasing a few articles of merchandise, turned and walked out on the piazza in front of the store, and leaning up against a post with his back toward the door of the store, Mr. Wilson deliberately fired on him, the shot taking effect in the neck of the outlaw, and killing him almost instantly. Several mulattoes being present, Mr. Wilson informed them that whoever touched or laid his hand on the body of Andrew Strong, he would kill him instantly with the other barrel of his shot-gun, which was then cocked; he then pressed a wagon and a pair of mules and compelled John Humphrey, Floyd Oxendine and two other mulattoes (names not recollected) to place the body of Andrew Strong in the wagon and accompany him with the remains of the dead outlaw to Lumberton, where the whole party arrived sometime after nightfall, and formally delivered the body of Andrew Strong to the Sheriff of the county, who identified it as the body of Andrew Strong, and paid forthwith the reward which had been offered for the body of Andrew Strong dead or alive, and fixed up the papers for Mr. Wilson to draw from the State Treasury the amount offered by the State, which amount the State Treasurer paid Mr. Wilson as soon as he presented the papers. Thus perished Andrew Strong, another of the Robe-

son county outlaws. He was the elder brother of Boss Strong, and was in his twenty-fourth year. He was a little over six feet high, tall and slim, and nearly white; he possessed beard somewhat of reddish color, and had dark straight hair on his head. He was the *Oily Gammon* of the "outlaw gang," and could wear a look of great meekness, whilst at the same time, his tongue was soft and treacherous, so much so that it would seem difficult for sugar or butter to melt in his mouth. The civil authorities had him up once in Court, and when the Solicitor in behalf of the State read out the indictment, *his great soft eyes* seemed as if ready to shed tears at such unjust imputations. He married the daughter of Henry Sampson, another mulatto of Scuffletown. Andrew Strong was a *cowardly sneak*; when he would kill a person the honey would almost seem to drop from his tongue into the wound he had inflicted; indeed he might be called a professor of deceit, perfidious, plausible, uncertain, deadly—he was certainly the meanest of the gang.

A NIGHT AMONG THE ROBBERS—STATEMENT OF
MALCOM McNEILL—COPIED FROM THE "ROBE-
SONIAN" OF JANUARY 6TH, 1871.

About the middle of November last, a detective who had been employed to watch the movements of the Lowrie gang of this county, established a camp in a bay near Moss Neck for the purpose of prosecuting his mission with as much secrecy as possible. The camp was near the house of Mr. W. C. McNeill, one of the best citizens of our county; and his son Malcom was in the habit of visiting the camp occasionally, and giving Mr. Sanders such assistance as he could. On Sunday, the 20th of November, he met with three young

men whom he knew to be reliable, and made an engagement to meet them after night at the camp of Mr. Sanders. The young men accordingly repaired to the camp about 4 o'clock in the afternoon to await the arrival of Mr. McNeill, who did not reach the camp until about 7 o'clock P. M. The following is Mr. McNeill's statement of what occurred on his approach to the camp:

"When I approached within a short distance of the camp, I saw the young men I was to meet there. They immediately informed me that the camp was surrounded by the robbers, and that if I attempted to escape I would be shot. I halted, and made a movement to draw my pistol, when four men arose among the bushes and presenting their cocked guns, warned me that I was a prisoner, and that I would be fired upon if I did not immediately surrender. These men I recognized as Henry B. Lowrie, Stephen Lowrie, George Applewhite and Boss Strong. H. B. Lowrie took my repeater from me, saying that I might make myself at home, as they would take care of me that night. I then took my position with the other prisoners around the camp-fire; but after a short time H. B. Lowrie summoned me to go with him a short distance from the camp; he then turned and addressed me in the following language: "G—d d—n your soul, I want to know where Sanders is. You know all about him; a respectable white man, and one you do not suspect, has told me that you are harboring him, and doing all you can to assist him in hunting us down. I'm straight on your track now, G—d d—n you, and if you don't tell all about Sanders I'll kill you right here; I intend to kill you anyhow, as soon as we get Sanders." He asked me when I saw Sanders. I replied, last Saturday week. He then escorted me back into the camp, and very soon Stephen Lowrie took me out for a chat; he asked about the same questions as Henry B. had done, and received the same answers—he also made the same threats, and charged

me with harboring Sanders. We passed the whole night in the camp—the prisoners occupying Sanders' quarters, (Mr. Sanders was absent at the time) and the robbers stationed around us. During the night, Stephen Lowrie exhibited to me a pack of cards, which he said he bought at the Scotch Fair, and boasted of his boldness in visiting that place. Messengers were sent at intervals throughout the night in two different directions from the camp, apparently to confer with parties stationed a short distance off. About daylight, the robbers became impatient, and began to look out as for the arrival of some one whom they expected to come in at that hour. Soon after daylight Stephen Lowrie went out alone in the direction of Moss Neck; after he had been gone about ten minutes, I heard several voices a short distance from the camp cry halt! one of them I recognized as the voice of Stephen Lowrie, the others of the men whom I had not seen in the camp; I also heard a voice which I recognized to be that of Sanders' say, "I surrender." Henry B. Lowrie, George Applewhite and Henderson Oxendine now left us and ran out in the direction of the voices, leaving us in charge of Boss Strong. H. B. and Stephen Lowrie returned to the camp singing and rejoicing, saying they had got the buck they wanted. H. B. Lowrie then approached me and said, "G—d d—n you, will you tell a straight tale now? You said you hadn't seen Sanders since Saturday week—d—n you, you saw him last Saturday." Stephen Lowrie then took me aside and said, "Henry Berry is mad with you—he is mad enough to kill you, and I am afraid he will kill you, but I'll try to prevent it." Henry Berry then called me aside and said, "now G—d d—n you, you've been doing all you could against me—you've been harboring this man Sanders, and trying to have us captured—I've got a notion to kill you right here, but if you'll promise me to leave the country I believe I'll let you off this time, but if I ever get hold of you again, you may look out." He

then returned the pistols that had been taken from the other prisoners, but he kept mine, saying he would take care of it. He then told me he would give me a little advice: "I might go to Moss Neck and run my shebang—I might have a guard there if I wished, but he would advise me to leave the country, and leave immediately." Said he, "you are young, stout, healthy and able to do good business; I hate to interfere with you, but you have done so much against us, I've got a notion to kill you. Tell your father if he will stay at home and let us alone he needn't be afraid, but he must walk a chalk line." They then sent me and the other young men they had captured off in one direction, and they moved off in an opposite direction. I did not see Sanders, as he was not brought into the camp, but I recognized his voice in pronouncing the words "I surrender," when halted near the camp.

STEPHEN LOWRIE.

We now come to the closing scene of outlawry in Robeson county — when the last desperado of that formidable "Lowrie Band" played his own death march on the eve of joining his faithful comrades in crime and bloodshed who had gone on before to judgment and justice. No tongue can picture or pen portray the great sense of relief that swelled in many bosoms at the announcement that "the last outlaw is dead." No more will suffering mothers and wives, on seeing their loved ones depart for their places of business, offer up the heartfelt prayer, "God protect our dear son or husband from the rage of Steve Lowrie;" never again shall his swarthy face peer into our dwellings, sending a thrill of horror through our veins, and causing our hearts to stand still with fear and apprehension; no more shall the

echo of his rifle reverberate through field and forest:—his old haunts are desolate; the well beaten paths through swamp and woodland are overgrown with brier and bramble; his cabin now deserted, stands crumbling in decay, reminding the passer-by that the reign of terror is over in Robeson—the glory of the robber chief and his clan is ended, and naturally a prayer of thanksgiving arises for the long hoped for deliverance.

Steve Lowrie was about six feet high, well proportioned, carrying his head a little forward, giving him the appearance of being slightly stoop-shouldered. He was always well armed with navy repeaters, a Henry rifle and occasionally a double barrel gun. After the killing of the other members of the band, and he was left the field to himself, he remained for several months very quiet. He finally began to grow weary of the hum-drum inactive life he was leading, and he was gradually becoming troublesome. He drank a good deal, and in his drinking hours was really dangerous. He made many threats, particularly while drinking, as to what he intended doing were he not pardoned, and asserted positively that he had boys drilling, and as soon as they equalled him in marksmanship, they would start out, and the past was not a circumstance to that which was in store for those whom he believed to be his enemies. Several times within a few days before he was killed, he mentioned the names of three young men in the neighborhood that he had decided to kill in a few days. One of them was Mr. Patterson, who aided in ridding the county of his vile presence on the memorable night of the 23rd of February, 1874. Some of his own color stood in much fear of him, as he had whipped some of their wives and daughters severely, and threatened to kill them if he heard of their talking about him again.

Although he strode from place to place, apparently at ease and without fear, his paths were watched. It was no

easy matter, though it may appear so to those unacquainted with the real facts in the case, to come up with him. Those who were eagerly in pursuit of him, found it difficult to locate him. To-day he might be at the house of one of his many friends for a few hours; it might be weeks before he would visit the same place again. A few weeks before he was killed, a party of three who had been lying in wait for hours near the house of a colored man, where he was known to call very often in passing, had the pleasure of seeing him emerge from the house and take his place for a chat in such a position as to give them an opportunity of giving him a taste of powder, but they, so eager for the game, fired too hasty—and missed. He ran and made good his escape unhurt, amid a shower of shot. This warning made him more cautious, and led him to avoid such places in future. He left that portion of the neighborhood and went higher up, where in a few weeks he met his just doom at the hands of the young men whose names will appear in the following particulars :

The families of Messrs. D. Holcomb and Davis Bullard were frequently annoyed by the visits of Steve Lowrie. It was at the house of the father of Davis (Mr. E. Bullard) that the two young men above named met Steve in December, 1873, and jointly resolved to take his life or rid their families of his company. They accordingly left the house and proceeded to station themselves on the road which they supposed he would go on his way home. Steve remained until about 9 o'clock and left, taking the direction in which the boys had gone, but before getting to them took a by-path, thus escaping them. Several weeks after this, Mr. Holcomb was on his way to Red Banks, a depot on the Carolina Central Railway, when he was met and accosted by Steve. He inquired of Mr. H. where he was going. He told him, and in turn made the same inquiry of Steve. He replied that he was going over to a whiskey wagon that had

camped a short distance off. Each then went on his way. In the afternoon of the same day, as Mr. H. was returning from the Banks he again met Steve in company with the wagon that he had spoken of in the morning. He told Mr. Holcomb that he must go back with him a mile or so to McLaughlin's (the mother of the notorious Zach. McLaughlin lived at that place) to borrow a jug to put some whiskey in, which he had bought from the wagoner. When they reached McLaughlin's, Steve asked Mr. Holcomb if he brought any letters from the office. He told him that he had one for Mr. Purcell. He desired Mr. H. to open and read the letter to him. This he refused, telling him if he would go to Mr. Purcell's he would read it for him. He readily consented to do this, requesting Mr. H. to accompany him. He mounted Mr. Holcomb's horse, compelling him to take a seat behind him. Mr. Holcomb objected to this style of riding, and proposed to go to Mr. Bullard's and borrow another animal, to which he assented. Mr. H. had another object in view in going to this place, which Steve did not suspect. While he was getting another animal he was also laying a plan with Mr. Thomas Bullard to go and get his brother Robert Holcomb to waylay the road and on their return to pick Lowrie off; but he again frustrated them by taking a by-way. When they reached Mr. Purcell's and the letter was handed him, Steve remarked that his business there was to know the contents of that letter. It was read to him, but it was not concerning the petition for his pardon, as he thought, and which was the cause of his showing so much interest in it. After leaving Mr. Purcell's, Steve went to the house of Mr. Holcomb and remained about one hour. Davis Bullard was also there, and Steve told him and Mr. H. that they must go the house of a Mr. Jones that lived near, and get him some chickens. They started, but instead of going to Mr. Jones' they went to Mr. Patterson's, called him out, told him the situation and requested him to

to go with him. Before starting they went to the fowl-house and took a chicken, in order to disarm Steve of any suspicion which might arise in his mind from their prolonged stay. They had parted with Steve at a negro house, and on their return were to go with him to the house of Purnell Locklear, where there was a whisky wagon camped. Mr. Patterson left them to conceal himself on the road until they would pass, and he was then to go on to the wagon. Steve being ever on the alert, would have at once suspected some scheme if Mr. P. had gone in company with them. Their object in getting Mr. P. to go with them was to assist in ridding the county then and there of the last outlaw, should opportunity offer. The boys were all unarmed, but Mr. H. picked up an axe, intending to kill him with it, but Steve turned suddenly, and again they were thwarted. Seeing no prospect of a chance that night, they left.

About two weeks after this, Steve was again at Mr. E. Bullard's, and stayed until after supper. As soon as Davis learned that he was at the house of his father, he went after Mr. Holcomb to go with him to waylay the road, hoping to be more successful. They stationed themselves on the road, taking their stand behind the posts of a gate to await his coming. This time they were doomed to disappointment, for in passing the gate he walked so near the post as to render it impossible to bring their guns to bear upon him. A short time after this, Mr. Holcomb heard of him in the neighborhood, and got Mr. Sutton to go with him to endeavor to learn his whereabouts; they concluded to get Mr. Patterson also, and went to his house for that purpose. Davis Bullard had also heard of him and had been before them, and he, in company with Mr. Patterson, had gone to try and intercept him. As they were not sufficiently supplied with ammunition, they went to the house of Mr. H. to supply themselves. When they came near the house they heard some one picking the banjo; on waiting a short time they

learned it was Steve. They were confident that the other boys were somewhere in the vicinity, and walked around to see if they could all get together. They soon found them, and together took their places near a hay-loft, where Steve had slept sometime before. They sat there until near 11 o'clock, when they concluded he would not remain all night, and changed their position over near the road that he would take should he go home. In a few minutes he came out and went into the loft, passing in a few feet of their first stand. They gave up the chase for this time, but with the determination to try again whenever opportunity offered.

Friday night before he was killed the following Monday—there was a social gathering at the house of Mr. Neill Patterson. Two of the boys present walked out; a short distance from the house some one hailed them, which proved to be Steve Lowrie. He conversed with them a short time, and during the conversation laughed so loudly as to be heard at the house. Messrs. McPatterson and Davis Bullard were sitting at the time out in the yard laying a plan to kill him. They heard and recognized his voice. Davis walked out and took him to one side to have a private chat with him, and to learn if possible where he might be for a day or two. He proposed to Steve to make up a party somewhere in the neighborhood and they would have some fun. Steve readily agreed, and appointed one to be at Hugh McLean's the following Tuesday night. He told Davis he must be sure and attend, told him who to invite, and to speak of it to no one else, and particularly to keep it a secret from McPatterson and John Bridgers. He then left. The next day Mr. T. Bullaad and McPatterson were at the Banks. There was also two whisky wagons. The above gentlemen heard the wagoners say they intended camping at Martin McNair's (colored) that night and until the following Monday. They came home, reported the same to Messrs. Holcomb and Davis Bullard, and they laid their

plans accordingly; they knew that Steve was in the habit of visiting all the wagons that camped at this place. The day following (being Sunday) they were to meet at church and mature their plans. Messrs. Holcomb and Bullard did not return to their own homes, but went to the house of a neighbor in order to slip up to the wagon after dark without any one's becoming aware of their plans except their own party. After dark they crept up in about fifty yards of the wagoners' camp to learn if Steve was there. A loud laugh rang out on the stillness of the night, which they at once recognized as Steve Lowrie's. They were sure of the game now; they fully intended this night to end the drama; the following day should herald to an outraged people the end of outlawry in Robeson. The brave fellows who had dogged his footsteps and wisely kept their own counsel, proceeded to the house of Mr. E. Bullard to procure their arms. Here they found Messrs. Patterson and Sutton. They did not have guns sufficient to arm a party of four, and Mr. Holcomb proposed to Davis to lend his gun to Mr. Sutton and he (Davis) to go to the wagon, keep a bright fire and also to arrange so as to give them a chance of a fair trial of their skill at the outlaw. Davis, only a boy of eighteen, being so eager for the fray, at first refused; the others insisted, as Steve had more confidence in Davis than any of their party, and had never been known to evince any anger or to express a doubt with regard to him. It being necessary that some one cognizant of their plan should be in company with Steve in order to succeed. Davis finally consented and at once proceeded to the wagon before the other boys should take their places. Messrs. Holcomb and Sutton selected their position inside of a fence on the opposite side of the road from the wagon, and about twenty five yards distant. They learned at once that they had an excellent opportunity of singling Steve out from the balance of the mulattoes and negroes, about a dozen of whom were also at the wagon. Mr. Hol-

comb raised his gun to take aim, when Mr. Sutton remarked that he had lost the cap from his gun. Mr. H. then took a cap from his own gun, split it so as to fit a musket and handed it to him, but he (Mr. S.) was so excited that he dropped it. Being now without any caps, they had to go to Mr. Bullard's (one fourth of a mile) to get some, after which they returned to their position. Here they waited some time without an opportunity of a shot, and being tired, crawled off some little distance and lay down to rest. On going back they overheard Steve making a plan to take some of the crowd and go to Mr. John McNair's to get chickens; they decided then to go and waylay the road to M. McMair's and shoot him as he passed. There they waited some time, and as they did not go on, concluded that the party had gone another way. They started back to ascertain, and met Messrs. Tom Bullard and Charlie Holcomb. They informed them that Steve was still at the wagon, and it was their impression that he intended remaining. The boys all went on to Mr. E. Bullard's and requested Mr. Patterson to go home and get his gun and go with them back to their old stand. He at once, in company with Mr. Sutton, went after his gun, and Mr. Holcomb returned to his former position alone, to await their return. Mr. Tom Bullard went to the wagon to try and learn what was to be the order of the night. In the meantime, Messrs. Patterson and Sutton had joined Mr. Holcomb, and together they were awaiting Mr. Bullard's report; he came in a few moments, reporting that Steve had sent for his "banjo," and without doubt would remain at the wagon all night, and he also learned that Steve had, with a party of several, been to Mr. McNair's, entered his fowl-house by breaking three locks, and brought six chickens and a large turkey to the wagon; the chickens had been cooked and eaten—the turkey was on cooking for breakfast. He compelled Davis Bullard to accompany him to Mr. McNair's. Steve was a

firm believer in conjuration, and always kept on hand a supply of roots, bones, &c.; before he started after the chickens, he took something from his pocket, put it in a bottle of whiskey, and after shaking it well together, anointed his person with it, remarking at the time with an oath, that there was not a man in the State that could hit him with a shot. The party, after hearing this report, proceeded to their old stand near the fence; they discovered Steve sitting with his head down, putting his banjo in tune; they determined as soon as he would raise his head they would fire. In a moment he threw his head back and commenced his tune, when simultaneously the guns fired which ended his career on earth, and sent him, a blood-stained, crime-hardened wretch, to answer before a great tribunal for the deeds committed while in the flesh. With a deep groan, he fell forward lifeless, without warning. As he measured to others, even so was it meted out to him. They at once made arrangements to carry his body to Lumberton; there it was delivered to the Sheriff, amid the shouts and exclamations of a large crowd. It being court week in Lumberton, the Judge was there, and in his charge highly commended the young men for their praiseworthy act.

Their papers to obtain the reward placed upon his head being duly made out, signed and delivered to them, Messrs. Patterson and Sutton took the cars for Raleigh, where they received the sum offered for the body of Stephen Lowrie—the last outlaw in Robeson.

FROM THE FAYETTEVILLE EAGLE, 26TH FEBRUARY, 1874.

Perhaps no people have been so scourged as the people of Robeson, nevertheless they have been abused and villi-

fied. The dandified clerk in the city counting-room would say, "why don't those people rise up and extirpate the Lowrie gang? If I was there I could very easily stop this thing." The stroller along the sidewalks made similar remarks. Even dignified and cautious people sometimes made censorious remarks of Robeson county. A multitude of talkers afar off from the terrible scenes enacted by this Lowrie band had this and that to say about the good people of Robeson county. Curt, petulant and sarcastic sayings passed from the mouths of bomb-proof assailants; but through it all the killing went on. Not one of the captious critics of Robeson suffered one iota in purse or person. They were afar off, although sometimes trembling. We take this opportunity, the killing of the last outlaw, to say to the country at large, what we know to be strictly true, that there is no more courageous, industrious, whole-souled people in the world than the citizens of Robeson, and that all through the Lowrie war, whether under the command of a United States officer or the Sheriff, they conducted themselves with courage and a high sense of public duty. The obstacles these people had to encounter in suppressing the Lowrie gang is not the property of the bomb-proof critic or sidewalk loafer, but it is the province of truth and history to delineate these facts.

IMPORTANT TRIAL BEFORE A MAGISTRATE'S
COURT—JOHN TAYLOR ARRESTED OCTOBER
12TH, 1870.

Among the many trials pertaining to the outlaws of Robeson county, none takes precedence of that instituted by James Sinclair, a Magistrate, against John Taylor, who lived at Moss Neck, on the Carolina Central Railway. This

trial was brought about by Andrew Strong, a bright mulatto, who was subsequently outlawed by the civil authorities of the county, and killed by William Wilson on the 25th of December, 1872, at Eureka, in Robeson county. The immediate cause of John Taylor's arrest on the 12th of October, 1870, proceeded from the oath of Andrew Strong before James Sinclair, an acting Magistrate for the county. It seems that on the 8th of October preceding, that the dead body of one Malcom Sanderson was found in or near the mill-race of William C. McNeill's, who also resided at Moss Neck, and who was the father-in-law of John Taylor. This Malcom Sanderson was a very bright mulatto, and would when he was not known, pass for a white man; how or by whom killed, has never been definitely ascertained. He married a sister of Henderson Oxendine, who was afterwards hanged at Lumberton; his wife was a daughter of John Oxendine, who married a half-sister of old Allen Lowrie, the father of the Lowrie gang. The body of Malcom Sanderson was buried by his friends, but James Sinclair had it disinterred and an inquest held over it. The verdict was, "shot by parties unknown to the jury." He then issued a warrant at the instance of Andrew Strong, and had John Taylor arrested and brought before him, charging John Taylor in the warrant as being accessory to the murder of Malcom Sanderson. For ten long days did this Magistrate's Court last—for ten long days did James Sinclair act as Attorney, Judge and Jury against John Taylor—for ten long days did this vile slanderer, Andrew Strong, appear as the principal witness on the stand against John Taylor, than whom there was no better citizen in the county. At the conclusion of the trial, James Sinclair, the Magistrate, ordered John Taylor to jail, without bail. His attorneys then sued out a writ of *habeas corpus*, and had him carried before his honor D. L. Russell, Jr., at Chambers, in Rockingham, Richmond county, who after reviewing the

evidence in the trial, released John Taylor on a bond of \$500 to appear at the next term of the Superior Court to be held at Lumberton for the county of Robeson. *Thus terminated this farce*—this mockery at justice—this mean attempt to implicate John Taylor as an accessory in the murder of Malcom Sanderson. Long will the law-abiding citizens of Robeson county remember the suppliant tool of the perjured witness kept on the witness' stand to defame the good name and traduce the fair character of John Taylor. Long will those present at the trial recollect the *animus* manifested throughout the whole scene by the acting Magistrate towards the prisoner at the bar. Methinks that justice will yet be meted at the day of judgment against those who instigated this attempted stigma on John Taylor's fair name.

CONSERVATIVE RULE.

No people or nation on the face of the earth will or can prosper where lawlessness and crime are permitted to stalk abroad in the land and go unchecked; like the deadly upas, they blight everything they come in contact with, demoralize society, and even fill the political atmosphere itself with deleterious exhalation and with noxious and poisonous effluvia.

To discuss the legitimate influence they wield on the body politic, would require the pen of a De Tocqueville, the legal lore of a Story and the eloquence of a Webster. In the inscrutable wisdom of the great Governor of the world, the people of Robeson county, N. C. were left at the termination of the late war between the States in 1865 under the rule and guidance of men in power, who, if they did not *wink* at crime, made at least but *feeble* efforts to suppress it. This state of things, with all its attendant evils, continued

until the election held in August, in the year 1870, when the people by their votes placed in power good and true men—men who had consciences and the welfare of their country at heart. At the election held in 1870, Col. Murdoch McRae, D. S. Morrison, A. D. Brown, Eli Wishart and Bright Williams were elected County Commissioners, and sworn into office on the 7th of September following. Roderick McMillan was elected Sheriff and entered on the duties of his office at the same time. These men, each and all, were men of sterling worth, possessing sound, discriminating minds, and imbued with high-toned, gentlemanly principles. The difficulties that surrounded them were great, and at first view seemed almost insurmountable. On entering the various offices of the county, they found everything pertaining to them in a confused condition—everything in a harum-scarum style, and in a hurly-burly mass—chaos seemed to surround everything and to hold undisputed sway. On examining the financial affairs of the county, they found the county burdened and loaded down with debt, her credit gone, and not a dollar in the Treasury to meet even urgent necessities; and in addition to all these painful realities and evils, the Lowrie bandits holding high carnival all over the county. Of course these things, followed by regular or natural sequence, the corrupt and incompetent rule of previous years, and were the legitimate fruits of ill management of the affairs of the county by those in authority. To bring order out of confusion was a Herculean undertaking on the part of the newly elected County Commissioners and Sheriff, but Cincinnatus-like, animated by patriotism, they went to work, determined to redeem Robeson county from the thralldom of bankruptcy and liberate her from the bondage of the Lowrie robbers, and to-day the tax-payers and law-abiding citizens of Robeson county have the proud satisfaction of knowing that the county is *just about out of debt*, having liquidated her in-

debtedness to the amount of Forty Thousand Dollars, and paid out in addition Fifty-Two or Three Thousand Dollars for the suppression of the Lowrie outlaws, making in all Ninety-Three Thousand Dollars, a pretty large sum indeed for the people of our impoverished county to have to pay out, and that too for incompetent rule. What a comment on corruption! How true to the letter the proverb of the wise man, "when the wicked rule, the righteous mourn," and "when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice." The people of Robeson county have great cause for rejoicing at the suppression of the outlaws and the liquidation of the indebtedness of the county, and they are under lasting obligations, in many respects, for these blessings, to the members of the Board of County Commissioners for the years 1870 and 1872, and to the present Sheriff of the county, Rod. McMillan, who was instant "in season and out of season," who, though unseen except by his official acts, yet was *secretly* working to bring the "Lowrie outlaws" to condign punishment and *rid* the county of their baneful presence. All honor then to Rod. McMillan for his noble, heroic conduct, for his self-sacrificing devotion to the vital interests of his native county. Long may the people of Robeson hold in grateful remembrance the names of the men who composed the Board of County Commissioners for the years 1870 and 1872, and long may Rod. McMillan live to enjoy the approbation of the good citizens of his native county, and the blessings of a bountiful Providence. There are other men, too, whom the people of Robeson county *should never forget*, who stood by her in her days of adversity, who aided her by their counsel and *opened* their purses with a free will, and came to her rescue at a time when she most needed assistance and help; the names of Berry Godwin, A. and W. McQueen, R. and J. C. McCaskell, Edward Peschau, (none of whom are natives of the county) Henry C. McQueen and Edmund McQueen, of the firm of Godwin

& McQueen, are men whom the people of Robeson county *should never forget*, for had it not been for the liberal aid *tendered* the county by these men, the people of Robeson might still be "hewers of wood and drawers of water," might still have "to make brick without straw," might still be under the bondage of the Lowrie outlaws. The good people of Robeson county likewise should cherish and reward Col. Neill A. McLean, Attorney-at-Law, for the zeal, the "vim" and the eloquence with which he prosecuted the outlaws and their associates in crime. They should also cherish the memory of the Rev. W. S. McDiarmid, editor of the *Robesonian*, now deceased, for the noble efforts of his pen as published in the columns of the *Robesonian* in regard to the outrages committed in Robeson by the Lowrie robbers, and his pithy editorials against the perpetrators of them. These editorials fell like bomb-shells into their ranks and spread consternation and dismay among them. And last, though not least, the Senator from the counties of Robeson and Columbus, Dr. R. M. Norment, and the Commoners from Robeson, viz: T. A. McNeill, Esq. and B. H. Regan, to the Legislature of North Carolina, *deserve* and *should receive* the thanks, the gratitude and favor of every law-abiding citizen of Robeson county for *inducing* the Legislature of North Carolina to offer heavy rewards for the extermination of the Lowrie outlaws. The passage of this bill had a good bearing, in many respects, in hastening the termination of the Lowrie war, and in ridding the county of these implacable and malicious foes. And now in conclusion, as the injury inflicted on Robeson county by the wrong deeds perpetrated by Henry Berry Lowrie and his associates in crime, will be seen and felt for years to come, let the lovers of good order everywhere hold in *sweet remembrance* the names of all those men "who knew their duty and dared maintain it" during the *bloody ordeal* through which Robeson county was called upon to pass in the past

ten years. Let the word *Conservatism* be inscribed on her escutcheon, and her banners marked in letters of gold with the names of all her true sons, both native and adopted.

APPENDIX² WRITTEN BY A GENTLEMAN MORE
CONVERSANT WITH CURRENT EVENTS THAN
THE AUTHORESS, AND INSERTED HERE AS A
SEQUEL—REASONS WHY THE LOWRIE ROB-
BERS WERE NOT CAPTURED SOONER.

That "truth is sometimes stranger than fiction" has been verified in the history of Robeson county, in more ways than one. Who would have imagined that six or seven men inheriting the blood of the Indian, English cavalier and the African race, along with ignorance, could have been capable of carrying on a predatory warfare in this enlightened age for the space of ten years amidst a population so distinguished for all the noble traits of character as the citizens of Robeson county are? Yet the Lowrie bandits did rob, steal, murder³ and commit arsons for ten consecutive years within the borders of Robeson county, before the last one forfeited his life as a penalty for his evil deeds. It is strange to think that this petty gang of mulattoes, not more than half a⁴ dozen in number, were open and notorious desperadoes so long, killing whom they listed without the fear of punishment;⁵ going at the dead hours of the night into Lumberton, the county seat, capturing iron safes and robbing their contents—riding rough-shod, as it were, over county, State and Federal authorities, with a nonchalance and bravado that would do credit to the daring and subtle bedouin of the desert. Osceola, or Powel, the leader of the Seminoles in Florida, in whose veins coursed the blood of the negro and Indian, and who had the whole of Southern

Florida as fighting ground, gave up resistance in a much shorter space of time. Why did this state of things exist, near the close of the nineteenth century, and in the "good old North State," and especially in the county of Robeson, where there is much real worth and refinement in the higher circles of society? In answer to the above question, we say that *politics*, in the beginning, had nothing to do with this outbreak. It began during the war between the States in the year 1863, when nearly every white man capable of bearing arms was in the Confederate service. By the amended Constitution of the State of North Carolina, after the year 1835, mulattoes and all persons of color to the fourth generation were debarred of the privilege of voting, *and of carrying fire-arms except by permission* of the county courts. This law, therefore, prohibited the mulattoes of Scuffletown from volunteering and enlisting in the Confederate army; they were therefore only mustered in as teamsters and cooks, or conscripted to work on the forts below Wilmington. It is true that some of Allen Lowrie's sons were willing to volunteer and enter the regular Confederate army, but they were unwilling to work on fortifications among negroes, because negroes were slaves, and as their ancestors had formerly owned slaves, they looked on negroes as an inferior race of beings, by no means their equals. As the war progressed, a requisition was made on the Scuffletonians for their quota of hands or laborers to work on the forts. The impressing officers had to force the requisition thus made, and among the number thus forced off, was Henry Berry Lowrie, the outlaw chief, as he was afterwards called; he, however, soon ran away and lay out in the woods and swamps, and in order to live, he commenced first stealing, then robbing and at last murdering. In process of time, Steve Lowrie and Tom Lowrie joined Henry Berry Lowrie, and all three lay out in the swamps of Robeson to avoid being caught, and as the war further progressed (1863) the

Lowries sympathized with the North, and entertained at their houses some Federal soldiers, who had escaped from Florence, S. C., and made their way into Scuffletown, in Robeson, and who, to avoid capture, hid out in the swamps of Scuffletown also, along with the Lowries, Stronges and Oxendines. The Lowries thus formed idle and vagabond habits, and being tutored by these escaped Federal soldiers, is it to be wondered at that Henry Berry Lowrie and brothers became dissatisfied with peaceful pursuits? And right here and in this way commenced the difficulties that entailed on Robeson county the loss of so much innocent blood—the loss of so many valuable lives, along with so much sorrow and grief within her borders. Thus it will be seen that this Lowrie feud began in 1863, before the Confederacy was suppressed, and proceeded entirely from causes inseparable from the war. Henry Berry Lowrie, Stephen Lowrie and William Lowrie, wishing to entertain their new friends (the escaped Federal soldiers) in an agreeable way, went to the farm of James P. Barnes, an old friend of their father, Allen Lowrie, who lived about two miles off, and stole two of the best hogs Mr. Barnes owned, and after killing the two hogs, threw them into a cart and drove direct to Allen Lowrie's residence, where they dressed them and salted them away, to be eaten by their new friends. Mr. Barnes missing his hogs, pursued the trail of the cart to Allen Lowrie's residence; he then got out a search warrant, and placing it in the hands of an officer, searched and found the heads of his hogs among the rejected offal and swore to his mark. The sons of Allen Lowrie were no where to be seen, but Mr. Barnes requested him and his boys to keep off of his premises, or he would look up his boys and put them to work on the forts. Threats were then made against James P. Barnes, and here the feud commenced that lasted ten years, and cost Robeson county so much blood and treasure; and to cap the climax of wrongs on the part of

the Lowries, when General Sherman's army passed through Robeson county, the "bummers" that hung on the outskirts of his army, found the Lowries and the Scuffletonians generally, ready and willing guides, and were accompanied by them to the residence of every well-to-do farmer in the upper end of Robeson. Another potent reason for the existence of such a state of things as has occurred in Robeson county and for its duration, is found in the fact that the Republicans in the county and State generally sympathized with the Lowries and their mulatto friends, and often counselled them what course to pursue in order to avoid detection and escape out of the clutches of the law. In proof of this statement it was known among the true men of the county—men who had the welfare of the county at heart, that a certain ex-parson, an unfrocked minister of the gospel and an ex-Colonel in the Confederate army, often counselled the Lowries and their friends, and the public may judge what kind of advice he gave them, when it is known that he has the distinguishing title of being "the meanest man in Robeson county." This ex-parson has been at the head of the Republican party in Robeson county since its formation; in fact, may be said to be its father. Could good advice be given, or come from such a man? An "evil tree will not produce good fruit." Again we ask, could good advice be given by such a man to the Lowrie bandits? hardly, under the circumstances.

In proof of the above statement and one which corroborates it, that the Republicans generally in the county fomented, fanned and intensified this Lowrie feud, we will relate an incident that occurred at the house of Henry Berry Lowrie, the outlaw chief, in November, 1869, when John Sanders, the detective was dining with Henry Berry Lowrie. It seems that Rhoda Lowrie, the wife of the outlaw chief, had prepared quite a feast for the occasion, and John Sanders remarked, "what a pretty pickle they would be in if

the Sheriff of the county would happen to drop in on them, whilst feasting on such a good dinner." Rhoda Lowrie quickly replied, "Oh! you need have no fears; Mr. Howel always sends us word when he is coming." Ominous words, coming from Rhoda Lowrie—words that need no comment. Other incidents connected with these scenes of turmoil and bloodshed, that had been inaugurated in the county of Robeson go to prove that the Republicans generally in the county, State and United States *wished well* to these outlaws, and did much to encourage them. View the course pursued by Dr. Alfred Thomas, agent of the Freedman's Bureau in Robeson county, prior to the 1st of September, in 1870. He is the man who induced H. B. Lowrie to surrender himself up to the Sheriff of the county and be committed to jail, promising him that he would sue out a writ of *habeas corpus* before Judge Russell and have him removed to Wilmington, where better opportunities would be afforded him of getting out of the State and seeking a home in some other part of the world where he could live in safety with his family, to which promise Henry Berry Lowrie assented, and on the last Saturday in the month of October, 1868, Henry Berry Lowrie was formally committed to jail in Lumberton, and Dr. Thomas ordered the jailor to feed him three times a day, with the best the market would afford, and notwithstanding the jail was notoriously insecure at the time, not even a stockade around it, *this vile demon* was placed in there with his weapons, a bowie-knife and repeater, and the said Thomas and Sheriff Howel refused to allow him to be bound; but they permitted H. B. Lowrie's friends at all times and under all circumstances, to visit him. During his confinement in jail, his wife stayed with him several nights. Boss Strong, his partner in crime, was permitted also to stay with him 24 hours at a time. Even when the jailor made complaint to Dr. Thomas and the Sheriff that his prisoner was armed, that the jail was insecure and that it would be im-

possible to keep the outlaw there, Dr. Thomas replied and said that H. B. Lowrie was a *perfect gentleman* and would not try to escape. This demon, who was then guilty of shedding the blood of several of our best citizens, was pronounced a *perfect gentleman*, guaranteed the most sumptuous fare, and almost enjoying perfect liberty, and that too, through the instrumentality of a Republican Bureau Agent and a Sheriff elected by Republican votes. Shame! shame! Dr. Thomas and Sheriff Howel, hide your faces!—let it not be told outside of Robeson county.

What was the *finale* to this course of procedure on the part of those in authority at the time? Why, one evening, as the jailor appeared with his food, Henry Berry Lowrie presented a knife and a cocked pistol, (a six-shooter) and said: "Look here, I'm tired of this. Open that door and stand aside; if you leave this place for fifteen minutes, you will be shot as you come out." He then walked out of jail, turned down the river bank, avoiding the town, crossed the bridge, and was never again seen in Lumberton.

Another incident that goes to show the animus of the Republican party toward these outlaws, and that too, even two years later than the above occurrence, is found in the fact that the officer in command of the Federal soldiers, stationed in Lumberton to protect the citizens of Robeson county against these outlaws, was forbidden by orders from Washington City to guard the jail of Robeson county, when Tom Lowrie and Pop Oxendine were prisoners awaiting their trial. What was the result of these orders from Washington City in regard to affairs in Robeson county? Why, simply this: Henry Berry Lowrie and four other men suddenly appeared at the jail in Lumberton where Tom Lowrie and Pop Oxendine were heavily ironed, and bored with augers around the staples of three doors, and also bored around the irons fastened in the floor, when all the party went forth nonchalantly, and that, too, when these Federal soldiers lay

encamped not three hundred yards off in the suburbs of Lumberton, being there for the protection APPARENTLY of the good citizens of the county against these very scoundrels, and to add insult to injury, these troops were sent off to Cleaveland county, amidst the danger and excitement consequent on the liberation of these outlaws. *Farther comment is unnecessary.*

Scan also the conduct of a Republican Judge on the Bench, when a Republican Solicitor sent into the Grand Jury a bill of indictment against twelve young men of the county and the bill being returned "not a true bill;" see him with extra judicial severity putting his written protest on records of the court; hear him denounce the action of the Grand Jury as outrageous; view him issuing his bench warrant and *outlawing* nine white young men of Robeson county, and say who sympathized with the Robeson outlaws.

That the civil authorities both in the county and State had been lax, lukewarm and careless in this matter of putting down these villains up to September 7th, 1870, when the Conservatives came into power in Robeson county, is beyond a doubt, for why was Henry Berry Lowrie and his band of robbers and cut-throats permitted so long to set law and civilization at defiance?—why permitted so long to pillage, outrage and murder with such unparalleled impunity? It was a melancholy truth, that forced itself at last upon the good citizens of Robeson county, that the government of their native State was inadequate to protect them from the ravages of the highway robber and the bullet of the midnight assassin; that they must live daily in jeopardy of life and property. Often had Tod. R. Caldwell, the then Governor of the State, been appealed to for protection; often had the innocent blood of good men, murdered in the swamps and on the plains of Robeson, appealed to him and invoked high Heaven for vengeance to arrest the course of

these fiends. He was dumb to piteous entreaty—he heeded not the cries of consternation that went up to him from a suffering, outraged and imperilled people—he was appealed to persistently, and after taking much time for deliberation, he sent down to the scene of action Adjutant-General Gorman, and lo! what was the result? Why, of course, an ignominious failure. When General Gorman arrived at Lumberton, the county seat of Robeson, he quietly put himself under John Holloway, a mulatto and a Deputy Sheriff under B. A. Howel, the high Sheriff of the county. This John Holloway, being in sympathy with the Lowrie outlaws, doubtless posted Gen. Gorman and gave him reasons why the Republicans generally did not wish the capture of the Lowrie bandits, notwithstanding Gen. Gorman made loud professions to the leading men in Lumberton of what he intended doing—and what did he do? When he got everything ready and went up to Scuffletown, the seat of war, the very first thing he did was to have an interview with the Lowrie robbers. Interview after interview followed, until six or seven weeks elapsed, and Gen. Gorman left the scene of action and went back to Raleigh, where the next thing that turned up in regard to affairs in Robeson was a long article published in one of the Raleigh newspapers, over the *signature* of Gen. Gorman, giving the reasons of his failure, the *gist* of which was that the Robeson volunteers, under Col. F. M. Wishart and Capt. James Nicholson McLean, were wanting in bravery, &c., &c. Now when it is known here in Robeson that the twenty-eight volunteers that were co-operating with Gen. Gorman in Scuffletown, belonged to the *first families* in regard to respectability in Robeson county, some of whom had been in the battles of Sharpsburg, Gettysburg, Chancellorsville, “the seven days fight around Richmond,” Bentonville, &c., and had been wounded and came out of these fights “with honor bright,” the stigma attempted to be cast on their soldierly conduct by Gen. Gorman can be

considered in no other light than a gratuitous insult. But Gen. Gorman, although he endeavored to exculpate himself for his failure by stigmatizing the Robeson volunteers, failed to inform the public of his near relationship to two of the outlaws, viz: Boss Strong and Andrew Strong. He failed to inform the public that John Gorman, the father of Boss and Andrew Strong, killed a man in Alamance county and fled to Robeson county and assumed the name of John Strong; he failed also to inform the public that when he sent out the Federal soldiers and the volunteers that were co-operating with them from his headquarters to hunt the outlaws, that he himself also left headquarters in another direction, and would go to a designated place to hold a conference with the outlaws, and after the conference was over would quietly slip back to headquarters to await the return of those sent out. These things can be proven, and more than these in regard to Gen. Gorman's campaign in Robeson, during the latter part of the summer and autumn of 1871.

Another reason why the Lowrie robbers held out so long was that every mulatto in Scuffletown and every negro in the county, with one honorable exception, viz: Solomon Morrison, wished well to them, or at least would not under any circumstances do them any harm. It became a proverb in Robeson county that the mulattoes and negroes were as true to the Lowrie bandits as the needle is to the pole. If soldiers, regular or irregular, pursued these assassins into their retreats in Scuffletown, a peculiar howl or bark, similar to that of a dog, would precede them, and die away in the distance. This was the mulatto's note of alarm, and it passed from cabin to cabin to put the Lowrie robbers on the lookout. If armed men were passed over the Carolina Central Railway from Lumberton to Shoe Heel, a peculiar movement was observable among the negro train hands as the locomotives approached the station in Scuffle-

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own. The Lowrie robbers seemed to know every thing and were kept well posted in regard to every movement made for their capture. What was done in Raleigh or Wilmington affecting them in the least, was known by them in fifteen hours. It was this unaccountable intelligence of the Lowrie bandits that struck the citizens of Robeson with dumb terror and forced them into silence. The negroes, too, generally over the whole State, were friendly to these outlaws. In proof of this, the Legislature of North Carolina passed a bill ratified February 8th, 1871, offering a reward to any party that would deliver to the Sheriff of Robeson county, dead or alive, any one of the following named outlaws, viz: for the delivery of Henry Berry Lowrie, \$10,000, and \$5,000 each for Stephen Lowrie, Thomas Lowrie, George Applewhite, Boss Strong and Andrew Strong. How do some of the Republicans and the negro legislators stand on the record in regard to this bill? The following named legislators, among others, about half of whom were negroes, voted against offering any reward, viz: Bryan, Burns, Carson, Hargrove, Heaton, Johnston, Marler, Page, Smith, Reaves and York.

This vote shows that the popularity of the Lowrie bandits was not confined to the negroes and mulattoes of Robeson, but even invaded the halls of legislation. This vote also shows that the Republicans generally in the Legislature cared not a farthing for the whites of poor, suffering Robeson—cared not how many of them were plundered and killed—in short, this vote proved plainly to the outside world that the Lowrie robbers were encouraged to go on with their predatory warfare—that they could do so with impunity, so far as their party generally were concerned. With the negro population in Robeson county on their side—with all the mulatto race in Scuffletown in collusion with them—with a Republican Magistrate at Lumberton in their interest, ready at all times to advise and counsel them what course to pursue, ready at a moment's warning to obey their

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behests and do their bidding—with a Republican on the bench and a Republican Solicitor inside—with informers in every crowd—with spies in every hold where there were negroes—with the whole negro mulatto population, together with the Republican party generally in both county and State to back them, is it surprising that the Lowrie bandits held out ten years? *Ten long years too, they were to the good citizens of Robeson county.* Another reason, and it is the last that we will adduce: Why this savage, predatory warfare was permitted to go on so long, *was and is* that the citizens of Robeson county *have ever been, and still are, a law-abiding people*; they desired above all things that the law should take its due course in regard to these highway robbers and murderers; they did not wish to take the law into their own hands and administer it to the detriment of a "living soul." "*Forbearance*" was their motto. In this they have shown a praise-worthy motive and example—in this way they "have magnified the law and made it honorable," and now as the curse of these outlaws has been removed and the scourge taken from off the county, we hope and pray that the good citizens of Robeson county may never have to pass through such another fiery ordeal.

THE END.

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