

## FRANCIS THOMAS.

### The Vile and Villainous Negro, Who, for Twenty-seven Years, Has Passed Himself off as a Woman--His Ar- rest.

### Examination of the Scoundrel by Four Physicians—Upon Their Testimony He is Committed to the Chain-Gang.

### A Good Joke on the Republican Par- ty—Thomas, the Supposed Woman Who Testified to Being Raped Eighteen Times During the Memphis Riots.

[From the Memphis Appeal.]

Great excitement was caused yesterday in police circles by the arrest, examination and trial of a negro who has lived in this city twenty-seven years, but was supposed to be a woman. "Francis Thomas" was the name by which the negro was called. Among the negroes that of "Old Crutchy" was often used, because of an injured leg. Night before last "Francis Thomas" was arrested on the charge of wearing female clothing, for it had already been told to the police that the creature was a man. Few believed this, for many had always considered Thomas an hermaphrodite. The chief of police, however, was not at all doubtful as to the result of an investigation, for Dr. J. H. Nuttall, a well-known physician of this city, had informed the police that he would establish the fact that Thomas was a man and not a woman.

#### THE ARREST

was therefore made at Dr. Nuttall's instance, he being induced to this step in order to prevent Thomas practicing nefarious designs upon the different households to which, by reason of female attire and dress he had access. All along Thomas had served as a cook, houseworn or domestic servant, employes thinking that he was a woman. Thomas has cooked and washed for more than one good family in this city, and has had opportunities for doing a great deal of mischief. "He," "she," or "it," as the negro may be termed, formerly kept

#### A VILE DEN

on Madison street, near the Bayou Gayoso, and since then an infamous house near the county jail. He has been more than once arrested upon the charge of lewdness and immorality, and it is said that the negro has proved the ruin of many persons both white and black. He managed to escape punishment, but never abandoned his vile habits and corruptions. To prevent this was the cause of his arrest. Thomas was put in the station house night before last to await trial before Recorder Duff yesterday morning. As the question of sex could only be determined by

#### EXAMINATION,

Dr. J. H. Nuttall, with Drs. W. V. Taylor, R. H. Taylor and Julius Wise (the latter recently of Cincinnati, Ohio), were called in to do this. These physicians, who are well known here, visited Thomas in his cell, and told him the object of their visit. Thomas said he would not submit to an examination, but on being told that force would be used, consented. The physicians then proceeded with the examination, and, as Dr. Nuttall predicted, found "Francis Thomas" to be a fully developed man, and in no respect a woman; in fact, Thomas is not even an hermaphrodite, as he claimed to be. The physicians made a thorough examination of Francis Thom-

#### THEIR EVIDENCE,

given on the trial before Recorder Duff, was to the effect that upon the examination of Francis Thomas they found that he had none of the developments of a woman whatever, nor anything that could possibly be mistaken as any part of the identities of the female sex. The evidence shows that there is no part of a woman about him, the organs being entirely those of a male in every respect. Francis Thomas, moreover, would have a heavy beard did he not shave every day. He is a strong and well-developed negro man, and Recorder Duff imposed upon him a fine of \$50, as he was only charged with and convicted of a misdemeanor. In default of the money with which to pay this fine, Francis Thomas was put

#### UPON THE CHAIN-GANG.

Station keeper Tom Hope, having purchased him a suit of male clothing. The chain-gang were working on an alley near Market square, but when Francis Thomas was added to it, the fact soon became known and attracted a large crowd of men, women and boys—mostly negroes. The crowd continued to increase, and soon numbered hundreds of spectators who were anxious to get a glimpse of the negro man that had been regarded as a woman. The crowd became very much excited, confusing the chain-gang and preventing work. Francis Thomas was an object of the greatest wonder, small boys, old men, women and children pressing around and asking a thousand questions. Owing to the big crowd, Tim Hope conducted Thomas back to the Adams street station-house, but during the afternoon hundreds of persons visited his cell to get a look at and talk to the negro. When an Appeal reporter asked Thomas why he had adopted female clothing, he replied, "It is none of your d—d business." Thomas seemed to be quite angry, especially when made to take a lot of false hair and braids from the top of his head. Like most females, he wore false hair, but did not use chalk or rouge. He declared that he had not had a fair trial; that Tim Hope was a bad man, and that he would dispatch direct to Washington for justice. Francis Thomas was doubtless recalling the fact that in 1867, he testified before the Congressional Committee which came here to investigate

#### THE MEMPHIS RIOTS;

that he was a respectable lady of color, and had been ravished eighteen times by as many different Irishmen in this city. This evidence the Republican congressional committee received, and upon based a "rawhead and bloody bones" report. This story of rape went the rounds of the Radical press, calling forth the most vindictive articles and a demand for troops. How sad to think of Francis Thomas' ruin. Perhaps the Republican committee in the

Mississippi investigation may find similar subjects for the accomplishment of its purposes. And thus ends the story of Francis Thomas.

#### A SAMPLE OF THE EVIDENCE IN WHICH MEMPHIS WAS "FOUND GUILTY" OF RIGIOTUS CONDUCT BY THE CONGRESSIONAL COM- MITTEE.

It would be impossible to estimate the amount of damage done by the black brute now doing duty on the chaingang. There is no knowing what amount of corruption he has aided and abetted, nor how many women, both white and black, he has ruined. He has played the part of a go-between and procuress, and plied a nefarious trade as a wholesale debaucher. Of his utter depravity there is no room to doubt, and as little that he is capable of using his vile tongue to the injury of any one whom he may regard his enemy. Of his capacity in this regard, we have a sample in the testimony he gave before the Congressional committee to investigate the Memphis riots in 1866, which we copy in the Appeal to-day, as follows, from pages 196-97 of the report of the committee:

Question—State your name and residence? Answer—My name is Frances Thompson; I live in Gayoso street, here in Memphis.

Q.—What is your occupation? A.—I sew, and take in washing and ironing.

Q.—Have you been a slave? A.—Yes, sir.

Q.—Where were you raised? A.—I was raised in Maryland. All our people but mistress got killed in the rebel army.

Q.—Have you been injured? A.—I am a cripple. [The witness used crutches.] I have a cancer in my foot.

Q.—Were you here during the late riots? A.—Yes, sir.

Q.—State what you know or saw of the rioting? A.—Between one and two o'clock, Tuesday night, seven men, two of whom were policemen, came to my house; I knew they were policemen by their stars; they were all Irishmen; they said they must have their supper, and asked me what I had, and said they must have some eggs and ham and biscuit; I made them some biscuit and some strong coffee, and they all sat down and eat; a girl lives with me; her name is Lucy Smith; she is about sixteen years old; when they had eaten supper they said they wanted some woman to sleep with; I said we were not that sort of women, and they must go; they said "that didn't make a damned bit of difference;" one of them laid hold of me, and hit me on the side of my face, and, holding my throat, choked me; Lucy tried to get out of the window, when one of them knocked her down and choked her; they drew their pistols, and said they would shoot us and fire the house if we did not let them have their way with us; all seven of the men violated us two; four of them had to do with me, and the rest with Lucy.

Q.—Were you injured? A.—I was sick for two weeks; I lay for three days with a hot burning fever.

Q.—Did any one attend you? A.—I had a cold before, and Dr. Rambert attended me after this.

Q.—Were you robbed? A.—After they got through with us they just robbed the house; they took the clothes out of my trunk, and took one hundred dollars that I had in greenbacks belonging to me, and two hundred that belonged to a colored woman that was left with me to keep safe for her.

Q.—Did they take anything else? A.—They took three silk dresses of mine and a right nice one of Lucy's; they put the things into two pillow slips and took them away.

Q.—How long did the men stay? A.—They were there perhaps for nearly four hours; it was getting near day when they left.

Q.—Did they say anything? A.—They said they intended to "burn up the last G—d d—d nigger."

Q.—Did you know any of them? A.—They were all Irishmen; there was not an American among them.

Q.—Did anything else take place? A.—There were some quilts about that we had been making. They asked us what they were made for. When we told them for the soldiers, they swore at us, and said the soldiers would never have them on their beds, and took them away with the rest of the things. They said they would drive all the Yankees out of the town, and then there would be only some rebel niggers and butternuts left. I thought all the time they would burn the house, but they didn't.

And this statement of the brute Thompson, so utterly at variance with the truth, was in part corroborated by the girl Lucy Smith, who, however, stated that she was violated but once. "Violated" just after she had been forced from occupying the same bed with Thompson. Upon such testimony as this Memphis was stigmatized by a Radical congressional committee, from whose report, based upon this testimony, we copy the following:

"The crowning acts of atrocity and diabolism committed during these terrible nights were the ravishing of five terrible colored women by these fiends in human shape, independent of other attempts at rape. The details of these outrages are of too shocking and disgusting a character to be given at length in this report, and reference must be had to the testimony of the parties. It is a singular fact that while the mob was breathing vengeance against the negroes and shooting them down like dogs, yet when they found unprotected colored women they at once 'conquered their prejudices,' and proceeded to violate them under circumstances of the most licentious brutality. The rape of Frances Thompson, who had been a slave and was a cripple, using crutches, having a cancer on her foot, is one to which reference is here made. On Tuesday night seven men, two of whom were policemen, came to her house. She knew the two to be policemen by their stars. They were all Irishmen. They first demanded that she should get supper for them, which she did. After supper the wretches threw all the provisions that were in the house which had not been consumed into the bayou. They then laid hold of Frances, hitting her on the side of the face and kicking her. A girl by the name of Lucy Smith, about sixteen years old, living with her, attempted to go out at the window. One of the brutes knocked her down and choked her. They then drew their pistols, and said they would shoot them and fire the house if they did not let them have their way. The woman, Frances Thompson, was

then violated by four of the men, and so beaten and bruised that she lay in bed for three days. They then took all the clothes out of the trunk, one hundred dollars in greenbacks belonging to herself, and two hundred dollars belonging to another colored woman, which had been left to take care of her child, besides silk dresses, bed-clothing, etc. They were in the house nearly four hours and when they left they said they intended to burn up the last God damned nigger, and drive all the Yankees out of town, and then there would be only some rebel niggers and butternuts left. The colored girl, Lucy Smith, who was before the committee, said to be sixteen or seventeen years old, but who seemed, from her appearance, to be two or three years younger, was a girl of modest demeanor and highly respectable in appearance. She corroborated the testimony of Frances Thompson as to the number of men who broke into the house and as to the policemen who were with them. They seized her (Lucy) by the neck and choked her to such an extent that she could not talk for two weeks to any one. She was then violated by one of the men, and the reason given by another for not repeating the act of nameless atrocity was, that she was so near dead that he would not have anything to do with her. He thereupon struck her a severe blow upon the side of the head. The violence of these wretches seemed to be aggravated by the fact that the women had in their room some bed-covering or quilt with red, white and blue, and also some pictures of Union officers. They said, 'You niggers have a mighty liking for the damned Yankees, but we will kill you, and you will have no liking for any one then.' This young girl was so badly injured that she was unable to leave her bed for two weeks."