

MR. MEEKINS MAKES REPLY

AYDLETT'S CHARGES FALSE

To the Charges of Forgery and Other Things Brought Against Him by E. F. Aydlett, Postmaster of the Meekins Bank of Elizabeth City, N. C., in a Lengthy Communication, Supporting His Contentions by Letters, Affidavits, Receipts, Etc.—Declares Mr. Aydlett Betrayed His Client and Should Be No Longer Allowed to Practice Law—Aydlett's Work Done in Spite of Being Expelled From Church.

"Yes, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." If what herein follows fails to prove the aptness of the foregoing quotation, I shall, so far as possible, refrain from imtemperate language—although I feel that almost any language would be justifiable—but shall be content with a plain statement of the facts and the facts will speak for themselves.

In the first place the charges filed with the United States Senate committee on postoffices and postroads by E. F. Aydlett, of this place, for the purpose of defeating my confirmation as postmaster at this place are untrue and I shall prove my position by Mr. Aydlett himself over his own signature.

The charge that I uttered forged notes at the Citizens' Bank of Elizabeth City, N. C., or at any other place, is untrue. I have the notes in question now in my possession, bearing the bank's identification which can not be gained, and the notes will speak for themselves. The reason I happen to have the notes and other papers in this matter is entirely due to Mr. Aydlett's advice to me at the time in these words, as follows: "Take these papers home and lock them up and keep them." I took him at his word and it now appears that I did well, since it becomes necessary to use these papers to defeat the attack of the very person who gave the advice. But the public may well ask why Mr. Aydlett advised me? The answer comes like a thunderbolt from a clear sky. Mr. E. F. Aydlett was my duly authorized and duly paid attorney. This will appear, also, in his own hand over his own signature.

That my duty as attorney for the Citizens' Bank of this place was dishonorable and that I made false and fraudulent representations to the said bank, as charged by Mr. Aydlett, is untrue. In the first place no officer of the bank, or other person connected therewith, will make such a declaration under oath, and for the very good and sufficient reason, they can not do so, being, as they are, truthful and honorable men. I shall hope to show this by Mr. Aydlett himself before I have finished.

In support of the above positions, to-wit: (a) that the charge is false, (b) that he was my attorney, (c) that he has betrayed himself and his profession and thereby manifested himself before the world as offering the following papers, in words and figures, to-wit:

TELEGRAM

Elizabeth City, N. C., Nov. 29th, 1905.

To Hon. W. E. Daniel, Halifax, N. C.

"We received. Please take no action until after an interview with me together with full explanation from officers of bank. Assure you all is right. Am in court, cannot leave before Saturday. See letter from party. Answer.

(Signed) "E. F. AYDLETT." Following this telegram Mr. Aydlett forwarded to Mr. Daniel the following statement drawn in his own hand and which speaks for itself in words and figures, to-wit:

STATEMENT FROM BANK

To Hon. W. E. Daniel, Solicitor of Second Judicial District.

"Dear Sir:—Mr. I. M. Meekins informs us that you have been consulted to institute criminal proceedings in Halifax county against him on account of some act of his in regard to a lien held by the Citizens' Bank of this place.

"We want to say that we hold no lien on any lands in Halifax county. Mr. Meekins owns the bank nothing secured by any collateral mortgage or deed of trust. There is no trouble or difficulty between Mr. I. M. Meekins or J. C. Meekins and the Citizens' Bank. J. C. Meekins, Jr., owns nothing and never has owned us nothing.

"Respectfully, O. McMullan, president; W. C. Glover, vice president; M. R. Griffin, cashier; F. M. Grice, director, of the Citizens' Bank of Elizabeth City, N. C., Nov. 29th, 1905."

LETTER

Elizabeth City, N. C., Nov. 29th, 1905.

"My dear Walter:—Your wire just received. I want to assure you Mr. Meekins and I appreciate your fairness. I had decided to go to see you to-morrow. It is very important to Mr. Meekins no indictment shall be made unless there is just cause for it. I want to assure you that there is none, if the president and cashier of the bank here are to be believed. Am writing at my office 9:30 p. m. The bank officials came to my office to-night voluntarily and dictated the enclosed statement which I send you and ask you to hold in confidence until I see you. There are very much charged that any such action should be attempted, and will willingly go and testify in behalf of Mr. Meekins. I enclose you Mr. Meekins' letter. You know like and there is no cause for this attempt to do him any personal injury, and if an indictment is made his friends here will go fifty strong to show his good standing in this community.

"I know you would not allow your pocket to be used to gratify any ill will or personal spleen against any one and especially a young man of good standing and character.

"Yours truly, "E. F. AYDLETT."

Mr. Aydlett's letter seem to me amazing. He says in his letter that the bank officials would willingly go and testify in my behalf, and that if the president and cashier of the bank are to be believed, there is no cause for any trouble. It would appear now that he would willingly undertake to use the same witnesses whom he claims declared my innocence to him, to prove my guilt, so him was he to accomplish his desire.

"It seems to me that he is 'paving the bank's heifer to the fullest limit.' Fortunately for me the bank officials are honorable men and are not to be whipped about to gratify the whims of any man, especially the whims of such a man. Following this letter Mr. Aydlett wrote Mr. Daniel another letter which speaks for itself in words and figures, to-wit:

Elizabeth City, N. C., Dec. 12th, 1905.

Hon. W. E. Daniel, Weldon, N. C.

"My dear Walter:—I have heard nothing from you since writing and

sending you statement of the bank officials in the Meekins matter. I suppose that nothing was done as I heard nothing further from you. Please return me the papers which I sent as I want to turn them over to Mr. Meekins so that if at any time any question arises about these matters he has statement from the bank officials showing there is no cause for any action.

"With kindest regards, I am, "Yours truly, "E. F. AYDLETT."

Now, I submit that if I am a forger now I was a forger then and Mr. Aydlett knew it as well then as he does now. If he denies that he was in full possession of all the facts at the time I will prove that he was by the reply of Hon. W. E. Daniel now in my possession, written Dec. 23d, 1905, to E. F. Aydlett, in reply to the letters from Aydlett above set out. This letter is in Mr. Daniel's own hand and in it he recounts the full particulars of the transaction as aforesaid. I offer for what it may be worth Mr. Aydlett's letter enclosing letter of Mr. Daniel aforesaid and the aforesaid statement from the bank, to-wit:

Elizabeth City, N. C., Dec. 26th, 1905.

"Dear Ike:—Enclosed I send you statement which was given by the bank, and returned to me by Mr. W. E. Daniel. He says the whole matter is now at an end and there will be no steps taken in it.

"Yours truly, "E. F. AYDLETT."

So Mr. Aydlett received Mr. Daniel's letter. He has doubtless forgotten its contents as he must have forgotten the contents of the telegrams and the letters he wrote to Mr. Daniel while he was friendly with me and while acting as my attorney.

It occurs to me that if I were guilty of every word of every charge Mr. Aydlett makes against me, even then, in the light of what he has said over his own signature, it does not lie in his mouth to cry, "Stop thief."

As to the second proposition that Aydlett was my duly authorized and duly paid attorney, I offer in support of that position a receipt in Aydlett's own hand which speaks for itself in words and figures, to-wit:

Received, Jan. 22d, 1906, of I. M. Meekins, \$50, he having heretofore paid me \$106 retainer in his matters in Halifax county.

(Signed) "E. F. AYDLETT."

This receipt together with his written corroboration is sufficient proof that he was my attorney, and he who would have doubts about that matter would not be convinced. "Though one rose from the dead," Some people would do well to heed Shakespeare's advice in Henry Eighth: "Heat not a furnace for your foe so hot that it do singe yourself; we may out by violent swiftness, that which we run at and lose by over-running."

This is what my friend (?) appears to have done. That he has flatly contradicted himself goes without argument. The only alternative I can see for him is to point which time it was that he spoke the truth—as there can be no question about the abstract fact that he has contradicted himself—if he spoke truthfully when he wrote Mr. Daniel, then he did it for one hundred and fifty silver dollars, just one hundred and twenty pieces more than Judas received. But, then, it is more expensive to live now than in Judas' day. This may account for the rise in price for such a service if he wrote untruthfully when he prepared his charges (and that is my contention), then there was a cause for it, and I hesitate not to name that cause—Revenge! This calls to my mind one Benedict Arnold who betrayed his country to gratify a dual purpose—money and revenge—money first, revenge next. Aydlett got more money than Judas and less than Arnold but he was alongside in the revenge proposition.

However, it is not worth more cash to betray a whole country full of folks than it is to betray just one plain ordinary friend? As I write I notice that both the names begin with A. After all there is some logic in the eternal fitness of things. But, it may well be asked, where is the proof that Aydlett was seeking to gratify spite, hatred and spleen against me? It is perfectly apparent to all in this community, and I will name it equally apparent to everybody else. Aydlett was enraged because he was expelled from the First Baptist church of this city. His anger was superinduced by the fact that he was expelled for good and sufficient reasons, which appear of record in the minutes of the church. I had the honor to be one of the members of that communion. He imagines that I was instrumental in bringing about that event. In this, however, he is mistaken as he would have been expelled had I been dead and buried since the day he wrote Walter Daniel giving me a certificate of good character. The truth is, Aydlett reaped the reward of the oppressor. He had practically converted the membership of that church into a band of church serfs. They awoke one fine day to their real condition, and asserted their dignity—to what degree of effectiveness Aydlett and the world knows.

Mr. Aydlett also cites Mr. Noah Biggs, of Scotland Neck, N. C., as a witness to my "forgery and fraud." I submit a statement of Mr. Biggs which speaks for itself in words and figures, to-wit:

To All Whom It May Concern:

"I take pleasure in saying that the transactions between the Thomasville Orphanage and I. M. Meekins, to which Mr. E. F. Aydlett refers in charges against Mr. Meekins, were in all respects satisfactory and straight. The full amount due the orphanage was paid by Mr. Meekins two years or more before the same was due, and was paid without any demand, directly or indirectly, for the payment, but said payment was voluntary on the part of Mr. Meekins and at his own request. There was no trouble or difficulty or misunderstanding between Mr. Meekins and the orphanage, never has been and is none now as far as I know. I make this statement because I feel it is just and due Mr. Meekins.

(Signed) "NOAH BIGGS."

This Feb. 18th, 1908.

Aydlett further charges that at the time all this "forgery and fraud" was being pulled off I was insolvent. This is untrue. To say nothing about the farm which my brother sold to L. J. Baker for \$40,000, which said farm was mortgaged to me, I had in real estate and good securities in this county and Newport News, Va., \$52,000. At this time, the time he alleges I was insolvent, I did not owe in excess of \$15,000 on said property. At the present time I owe practically nothing. The records in this county and at Newport News, Va., will corroborate my statement.

Best Healer in the World.

Rev. F. Starbird, of East Raymond, Maine, says: "I have used Buckler's Ayre's Balm for several years, on my old army wounds, and other chronic sores, and find it the best healer in the world. I use it, too, with great success in my veterinary business. Price 50c at all drug stores."

roborate my statement as above set out.

Now, as to the charges that I took a part of a young lady's salary who was a clerk in the postoffice, which I say that this is false also. I offer in support of this position the following papers, which speak for themselves, to-wit:

RECEIPT

No. 153-A.

Received, this 31st day of March, 1903, from I. M. Meekins, postmaster at Elizabeth City, State of North Carolina, thirty-six dollars thirty-seven cents for services as clerk in postoffice from the 17th day of February, 1903, to the 31st day of March, 1903, inclusive.

LILLIAN M. BROTHERS, Clerk in Postoffice.

No. 153-A.

Received, this 3d day of June, 1903, from I. M. Meekins, postmaster at Elizabeth City, State of North Carolina, fifty dollars twenty-seven cents for services as clerk in postoffice from the 1st day of April, 1903, to the 31st day of May, 1903, inclusive.

LILLIAN M. BROTHERS, Clerk in Postoffice.

No. 153-A.

Received, this 31st day of March, 1903, from I. M. Meekins, postmaster at Elizabeth City, State of North Carolina, thirty-six dollars thirty-seven cents for services as clerk in postoffice from the 17th day of February, 1903, to the 31st day of March, 1903, inclusive.

LILLIAN M. BROTHERS, Clerk in Postoffice.

No. 153-A.

Received, this 31st day of March, 1903, from I. M. Meekins, postmaster at Elizabeth City, State of North Carolina, thirty-six dollars thirty-seven cents for services as clerk in postoffice from the 17th day of February, 1903, to the 31st day of March, 1903, inclusive.

LILLIAN M. BROTHERS, Clerk in Postoffice.

No. 153-A.

Received, this 31st day of March, 1903, from I. M. Meekins, postmaster at Elizabeth City, State of North Carolina, thirty-six dollars thirty-seven cents for services as clerk in postoffice from the 17th day of February, 1903, to the 31st day of March, 1903, inclusive.

LILLIAN M. BROTHERS, Clerk in Postoffice.

No. 153-A.

Received, this 31st day of March, 1903, from I. M. Meekins, postmaster at Elizabeth City, State of North Carolina, thirty-six dollars thirty-seven cents for services as clerk in postoffice from the 17th day of February, 1903, to the 31st day of March, 1903, inclusive.

LILLIAN M. BROTHERS, Clerk in Postoffice.

No. 153-A.

Received, this 31st day of March, 1903, from I. M. Meekins, postmaster at Elizabeth City, State of North Carolina, thirty-six dollars thirty-seven cents for services as clerk in postoffice from the 17th day of February, 1903, to the 31st day of March, 1903, inclusive.

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that he has sought to betray a professional confidence, for whatever reason, then, I ask, ought such a man to be longer permitted to practice in the Superior and Supreme Courts of North Carolina? Ought such a man to be longer allowed to retain his membership in the North Carolina Bar Association? Can a client afford to trust an important case to such a man?

At the time of Aydlett's publication of a reporter for The Tar Heel of this city called at my office on Wednesday before the article appeared on Friday, and asked me if I had anything to say in reply to Mr. Aydlett's charges. I told the reporter that I had not seen his charges and didn't know what they were, and asked him if he would be kind enough to let me see what Mr. Aydlett had to say, and he declined. Then I told him of course I couldn't reply, not knowing the nature of the attack. Nevertheless, it appeared in the headlines of the paper that my columns had been extended to me and that I had declined to use them. I shall forward a copy of this paper to "The Tar Heel," with a request that it be published, with what degree of success remains to be seen.

Perhaps this is all that I shall have to say in a newspaper about this matter. It may be pointed out that I should have replied earlier. Cause admitted. The reason I did not was because I could not. Most of the data which I have gathered has been gotten only after a strenuous effort. At the time the paper appeared the charges were as great a surprise to me as to my friends. It struck me "all of a heap." I tried so long to possess myself with patience and quietly and diligently went to work to gather in my defense. I knew I had a defense, a full and ample defense, but whether I could get hold of the proof was another question. The letters in Hon. W. E. Daniel's possession were of vital importance to me, and these I procured only recently. I shall ever be grateful to him for his kindness. The sympathy of the people in this community manifested for me, and their indignation openly expressed against Mr. Aydlett, have been a source of support which nothing else could supply, and have, indeed, made me feel that God is good and life is worth living. This feeling exists on the part of the people regardless of political affiliations and Church communion, save and except a little squad of relatives and business associates of E. F. Aydlett.

I. M. MEEKINS, Elizabeth City, March 14th, 1908.

AMUSEMENTS

The twelfth season of the world-famous Black Patti Troubadours will be commemorated by a big brand new stage show. The offerings this year include the new big fun hit, "Prince Bongaboo," with big scenery, new costumes and a swell line of new songs and dances with "Tut" Whitney, in the leading comedy role. Black Patti will be heard in a condensed version of "The Bohemian Girl," with new and appropriate scenery and costumes. The olio will consist of ten big acts headed by "Tut" Whitney, "The Giant Premier of Colored Comedians," the great English hoop rolling marvel, King & Bailey, eccentric comedians, Whitney & Raynard, Queen Dora, Terpsichorean dancer, Marie LaCals, and other.

The Black Patti Troubadours will appear at the Academy of Music this afternoon and to-night.

"THE BLUE MOON." One of the most striking features of "The Blue Moon" in which James

T. Powers and a big company comes to the Academy of Music Friday night, is the gorgeousness of the two acts is located in British India, and most of the company portray East Indians, although there is a plentiful sprinkling of British soldiers. A fortune has been spent in preparing this feast for the eye and inasmuch as it has been the aim to have every costume perfectly correct in detail, and at the same time the absolute limit in the beautifulness of effects the entire satirical ensemble is one merry and delicious riot of brilliant colorings. The uniforms of the military are in striking contrast to the flowing garb of the natives, and the two allow the customer to run the entire gamut of oriental and occidental splendor in dress.

Seats will go on sale this morning at Hawley's.

"A MESSENGER BOY." Seats will go on sale Friday at Hawley's for the engagement of "A Messenger Boy," a new comedy-drama, which will be offered at the Academy of Music next Monday night, by George M. Sweet and his company of