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There is a romance connected with the early acquaintance of William Jennings Bryan with Miss Mary Baird, now Mrs. Bryan, which has never been published. Only a few persons know the story. One of this number is a Topeka man, who relates it. At the same time that Miss Baird was a student in the Jacksonville Female College, at Jacksonville, Ill., young Bryan was attending the Illinois College at the same place. After a certain hour in the afternoon the young ladies of the college were free to promenade about the college grounds, and while enjoying this recreation took the opportunity to "flirt" with the boys from the Illinois College, who were invariably on hand. It was during the promenades that Miss Baird attracted the attention of young Bryan and a flirtation was begun. This led to an acquaintance, and a meeting was arranged at the home of a relative of the young lady's in the suburbs of Jacksonville. The first meeting was but a forerunner of a series of weekly visits by both parties to the same place. But the enjoyment of the young couple was not allowed to proceed without interruption. The matter came to the president of the female college and he at once called Miss Baird to him and questioned her concerning it. She acknowledged that she had been in the habit of meeting young Bryan and as such conduct was distinctly against the rules of the college, her sentence was expulsion. She was ordered to be in readiness to leave college at a certain date. The news of Miss Baird's expulsion reached Bryan the same day, and without waiting to map out any line of procedure, he hastened to the president's office. Young Bryan was given then the prize orator of the Illinois College, and he started in to convince the president that he had taken the wrong course and that the expulsion was unmerited. A few days prior to this event Bryan had written the parents of Miss Baird, asking their consent to visit the young lady. Although he had not received a reply, he presumed on an authority, and told the young lady that she had the consent of her parents, and that she was entirely honorably presumed upon the part of the young lady, and their formal engagement was only a matter of a few weeks. At the end of an hour young Bryan had the president of the college looking at the matter in an entirely different light. Not only was the sentence of expulsion repealed, but Bryan obtained consent to visit Miss Baird at the college weekly. Although it was not until after the young couple had left their respective colleges that their engagement was announced, it was while at school that they became fast friends. Both graduated at the same time, and a few years later they were married.

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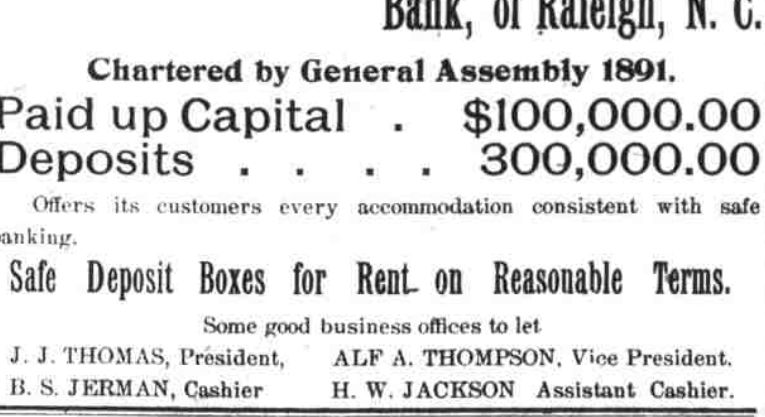
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