

AN OPEN LETTER.

BY REV. W. R. HODGES.

In justice to my friends, I deem it proper to make a statement; first, because many are the thoughts and questions that have arisen in the minds and hearts of the people during the past seven years. Some have said that I did not fight back enough. I told a number my reason was that I would rather bear the burden than to have it fall where it belonged. One M. E. preacher, a Presiding Elder, D. W. Crane, said that I was not a very good lawyer, etc. Well, my friends, I am not a lawyer, but a minister of Christ's gospel, but they did have in the trial at Haven Chapel, Buffalo county, August 13, 1895, a lawyer to direct them. And now the conspiracy, formed over seven years ago, for the purpose of injuring me, has so far succeeded in its efforts, to a certain extent at least. My hopes as an M. E. preacher and usefulness blighted, my family broken up at a cost or loss of not less than \$9,000 and I was forced by cruel circumstances to leave my home and family which was as dear to me as any parents' family ever was to them.

I do not expect to vindicate myself before my persecutors, nor yet do I hope to prevent the public from lending an attentive ear to the slander which is heaped upon me. I have been arraigned and summoned before an ecclesiastical court to answer charges brought against me. The charges have not been introduced by any of the Laity within the fields in which I have served, namely: Brewster, Arcadia, Pleasant Hill or Sweetwater.

Presiding Elder Hate, of West Nebraska Conference made full investigation of the matter in question, and placed in writing which I now hold, and he says it is begotten of the devil, and born of the evil desire of some wicked one and ought not to militate, either against me or the good family, who done so much for me and the work, and I now hold certificates from these fields exonerating me from the charges alleged. The trial was held before a colative of clergymen, August 13, 1895, at Haven Chapel, Buffalo county, Nebraska. The principal witnesses were not members of any of the churches over which I had been pastor. Neither were they residents living within the bounds of my charge. This self constituted court, holding legislative, judicial and executive power, after great labor, brought fourth their ipsidixit pronouncing me guilty. I took the evidence and findings of that court to Judge W. L. Greene and his partner Mr. Hosteter, of Kearney, Nebraska, and they said in the presence of five men, chosen by the people, not by myself, whose names I can give, that there was no cause for action, and asked me to put it in their hands for a test in district court, and that I had grounds upon which I could bring a charge of blackmail and slander.

One of their principal witnesses has since died, and just before death a confession was made before witnesses which now depose and say that a great wrong was done me through themselves, which worked great injury to me and the other party concerned. These parties were the father, step-mother and sister. After the death bed confession, the other witnesses came parents of deceased and confesses as the other and asked forgiveness. I secured sworn affidavits and depositions from reliable parties, also certificates from about two hundred people, among whom are class leaders, stewards, doctors, business men and laymen of the church, certifying that my conduct had been that of a christian minister while serving on their respective charges.

Armed with these rebutals to every charge brought against me, and with a pledge from ex-Presiding Elder Mastin, and present Presiding Elder Crane, that if I would meet in conference with them at Ord, Nebraska, October 1st, 1902, they would go with me to the bishop and call a hearing before the conference. I proceeded to that conference on the first day and gave my papers into the hands of Elder Crane on the evening of the first day, and remained through every days session until the benediction, and the matter was never mentioned.

My desire was to clear myself in an official way, of the reproach which has been cast upon me. But it brought to light, however, that in case I was exonerated, deep reflection would be cast upon those who were associated in efforts to injure or ruin me. There being several of them against me, without anything to back myself but the naked truths, the prudent thing for them to do, no matter how questionable, was to smother the entire matter, which was effectually done.

I ask for bread and they gave me a stone, I asked for an egg and they gave me serpent, but I have nothing to say in the way of passing judgment. I am now willing to submit my controversy to the public, and if any reader of this article doubts the truth of these statements I will refer them not to myself, neither my friends which have so faithfully stood by me in this bitter persecution, but to sworn affidavits, depositions, certificates, from bankers, which I am willing to offer for inspection to any honorable committee of ladies or gentlemen, or place them in the hands of any responsible person in your town or community. I will also back them with written instruments, as to their genuineness and integrity, with a forfeit which I will place in the Arcadia Bank to be drawn by the person discovering any deception whatever in the documents submitted. It is with reluctance I appeal to the press, but when a conference of ministers cannot be reached, I assume the right to defend the honor which crowns my statute, regardless of any fine spun etiquette, which may mar the any religious association. Too much sin is covered up in such. I have been asked many times during the years I have been enduring this, if it did not discourage me in christianity. No, is my reply, but it strengthens me. All things work together for good to them that love God, and I know I love God. Too many accusations have been brought against me the general public know to be false. How much of a story or charge proves itself false to raise a doubt in the remainder of the story.

I have lived among you people, not in a closet, but openly and publicly. I dare my persecutors, and publicly, to bring a reliable person with evidence of one of these charges. I have already said that I did not expect to vindicate myself in the eyes of those bitter haters. Elder C. and Mastin told me in the presence of a called witness, they (these haters) would stoop to anything to down me, and I am done asking, or expecting any favor or justice at the hands of West Nebraska Conference of the M. E. church, but ask kind friends to please investigate and allow me the right to sustain my honor and reputation. It is enough to loose my honor and family, but please do not rob me of my reputation, but pray for me and I assure you, you will find me true and faithful to the end, God helping me in Jesus name.

Respectfully submitted, W. R. Hodges.

The above letter from Rev. Hodges, of Lincoln, who is well known to almost this entire community, in answer to the charges which were preferred against him some seven years ago, makes a positive and clear statement as to his position in the matter, and the disposition of the leaders in the West Nebraska Conference to deal lightly with it; yet, as he states, lent him encouragement, that he might expect to be exonerated. Mr. Hodges may not have been guilty of the offense charged, but there is one thing, as he states, and as we have

often understood, that there were those, who would stoop to most anything to down him. Mr. Hodges has all these years withstood the tempest of acquisition and has held steadfast to the religious faith, and we believe that it will revert to no good for church or community to cast a stone where bread is asked.

CLEAR CREEK NEWS.

Mrs. Henry Heck and sister will go west in a few days to visit parents. The corn shellers are in full blast and corn is selling for 23 cents per bushel. Albert Mead and Henry Beck are feeding a car load of fine steers for the market. Julia Rowe, who is teaching school at the Draper school, is arranging to give a first class entertainment on Christmas eve. Miss Rowe has given good satisfaction as a school teacher and the entertainment is looked to as a very pleasant occasion.

Joseph Simmons is reported quite sick and the doctor was called in consultation. Jas. Gray and Wes Heapy, Albert Mead and others are buying corn to feed.

RECORDED.

SWERTWATER.

Threshing and corn husking have again been delayed by a heavy fall of snow. Mr and Mrs. Chas. Highland are contemplating a visit at St. Louis during the holidays. Mary Capellen has gone to attend school at the Orleans Seminary. The Sweetwater Milling Co. received a steel flume which will be put in place this week. A box social was given at the Fairview school house, for the purpose of buying lamps. \$10.50 was realized.

Walter Newburg is picking corn for J. A. Swanson, and averaged 90 bushel per day for 3 days last week.

Mr. Herman Wilke of this place, and Mrs. Kretchmayer of Saratoria, were married at Kearney Wednesday, Dec. 10. A Wedding dinner was given at the home of the bride, Sunday Dec. 14. They will visit relatives at Omaha during holidays.

The groom has been in our midst for several years and is highly respected by all. The bride is unknown by us, but it is said by those who know her to be a woman of rare business ability, and is well thought of in the community in which she lives. Your reporter, with their many friends, wish them a happy and prosperous voyage on the sea of matrimony.

MY UNCLE FROM NEW YORK.

The following statements are from well known opera house managers throughout Kansas where the company has been appearing.

Burlington, Kansas, Oct. 31, 1902.—"My Uncle From New York" played our house last night; good house, good company, pleasing specialties and gave entire satisfaction.—Finger & Murray, Managers "Midland".

Mcune, Kansas, Oct. 28, 1902.—Edwin Paterson's "My Uncle From New York" Co., played my house tonight to capacity business. Comely and specialties first class.—W. T. Highland, Manager Opera House.

Augusta, Kansas, Oct. 22, 1902.—This is to certify that Edwin Paterson's "My Uncle From New York" Co., played my house to-night to a large audience who were thoroughly pleased. The comedy is very laughable and the ten specialties introduced between acts and in the play were excellent. You can safely guarantee your patrons satisfaction in every respect.—M. Saunders, Managers.

This company will play at the Loup City Opera house, Thursday evening, December 25, under the auspices of the K. P. Lodge.

ROCKVILLE ITEMS.

Mr. C. H. Whitman of Arcadia drove down and spent Thursday and Friday visiting his daughter here last week.

Editor J. M. Erickson of the Dannebrog News was in our burg Friday.

Robert Watka of Farwell drove through town Thursday on his way to Revena.

Adam Shaupp of Lincoln called on us between trains Friday afternoon.

A Boone of Loup City came down Thursday and rented Mr. Saecher's photo studio, and he informs us that he will make this his headquarters on Tuesday and Wednesday of each week.

The masquerade ball given here by Messrs. Brauner and Thompson last Saturday evening drew a large crowd and from all reports there surely was a "Hot time in the old town".

For sale:—A six holed Sandwich corn sheller with a twelve horse J. I. Case horse power \$150. cash takes the entire rig. Call or write W. M. Smelser, Rockville, Nebr.

The sad news reached us Friday that Mr. Elias Ogle died at his home in Austin Thursday morning. Mr. Ogle is an old resident of this county and is respected and liked by all who knew him. All join us in extending to the bereaved family our heart felt sympathy.

Sleighing is strictly in vogue now since the fall of the beautiful last Sunday. This makes our farmers smile for it is of value to the crop of fall grain.

ROCKVILLE MARKETS.

Wheat 46 to 49; Oats 15 to 20; Rye 28 to 30; Ear corn 26; Shelled corn 28; Eggs 22; Butter 17; Butter fat 20.

HALF RATES TO LINCOLN.

December 30 and 31 the Burlington Route will sell tickets from any point in Nebraska or South Dakota to Lincoln, Neb., and return at one fare for the round trip. Tickets good returning until January 3, 1903. Ask the Burlington agent.

HALF RATES TO LINCOLN.

January 18 to 24, 1903. On the above dates the Burlington will sell ticket from any point in Nebraska to Lincoln and return, at one fare for the round trip. Tickets good returning until February 3. Ask the Burlington agents.



Special Holiday Notice.

What we can do and what we can't do.

We can't give you 20 lbs. of sugar for a dollar nor a shave for 10 cts. But we can give you a

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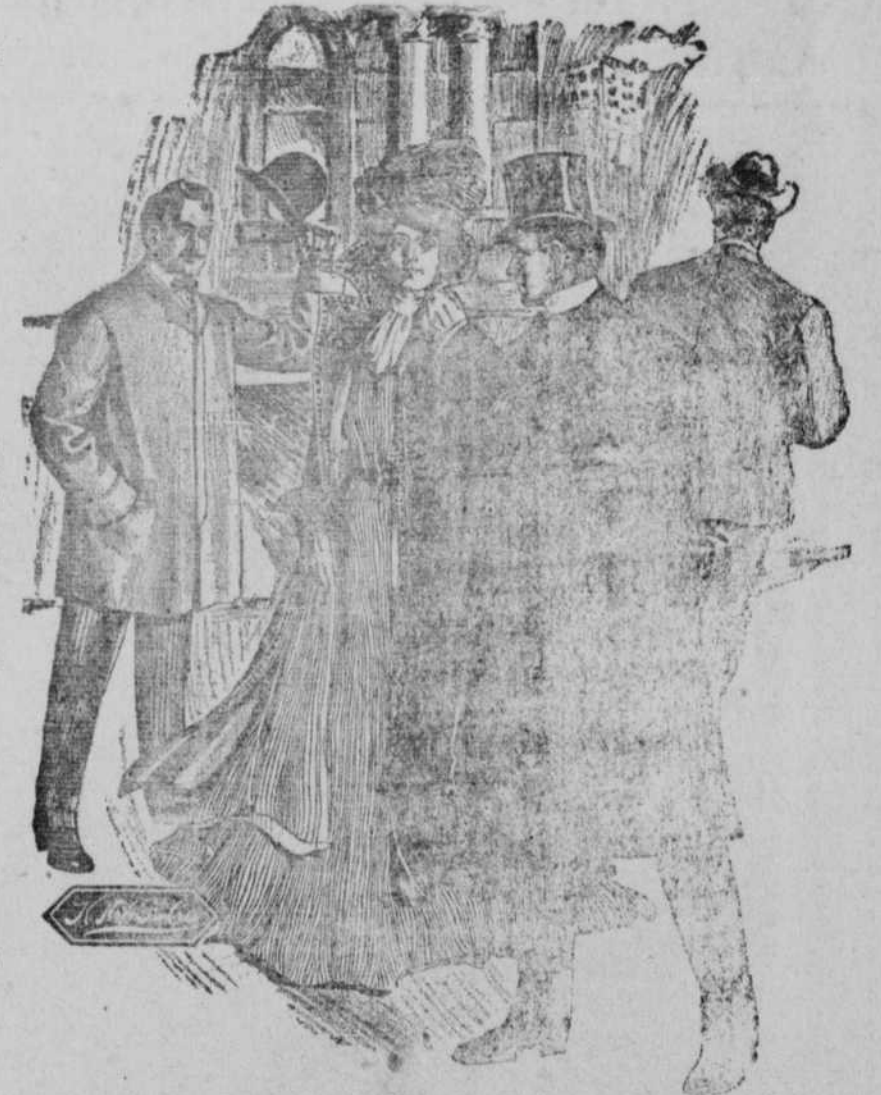
and up. We also carry Boy's clothing in all sizes. Our Longly Hats is equal to a \$5.00 Slatson, which we will sell you for \$3.00.

We handle the best line of foot wear ever brought to America.

We also carry the best line of SHIRTS, COLLARS, AND CUFFS

on the market to-day.

We have now received our holiday neckwear, and latest patterns and up-to-date styles.



We have also received a large stock of men's

SWEATERS FOR HOLIDAYS

OUR LINE OF LADIES' SWEATERS IS ALSO complete. They are very stylish and appropriate. Call in and see them.

We have something very neat which is called a smoking jacket, all sizes styles and prices.

Come in and look over all these things and compare them with goods sold in your surrounding towns, and then come back and patronize home industry.

We wish you a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year.

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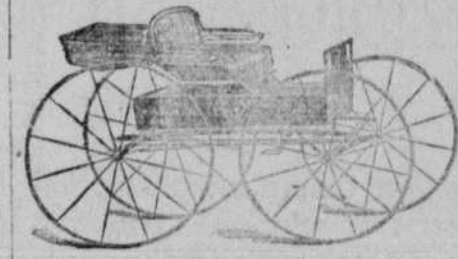
Views on Ambition and Dyspepsia.

"Dyspepsia," wrote Eugene Field, "often incapacitates a man for endeavor and sometimes extinguishes the fire of ambition." Though great despite his complaint Field suffered from indigestion all his life. A weak, tired stomach can't digest your food. It needs rest. You can only rest it by the use of a preparation like Kodol, which relieves it of work by digesting your food. Rest soon restores it to its normal tone. Strengthening, Satisfying, Invigorating.

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