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RIDDLE'S REJOINDER.

MORE OF THE BLAINE SCANDAL

A. G. REPLIES TO J. G.

A REVIEW OF THE CASE

INGENIOUS COMBINATION OF THINGS

ABOUT THE CONSTRUCTION BONDS

DETAILS OF THE KNOWLTON STORY

The following is Mr. Riddle's answer to Mr. Blaine's last personal explanation. It consists of two points: First, Mr. Knowlton's real statement of the connection of Mr. Blaine and J. B. Stewart; second, Mr. Blaine and the Kansas Pacific bonds as they appear in the records of the Supreme Court in which much new matter is given:

On the first day of the present May Mr. Blaine, from his place in the House of Representatives, sent a New York *Herald* to the Clerk's desk, and caused to be read an article from the Washington correspondent which gave, as Mr. Blaine said, a summary of current slanders upon him. The first one referred to was the exploded story of the New York *Tribune* of 1872. The first paragraph of the article sets forth that, some years ago, Mr. Blaine received from J. B. Stewart certain bonds of the Kansas and Pacific railroad, in the office of Stewart & Riddle; that it was alleged that Mr. Riddle knew a good deal of this matter, and that *another principal witness, was the late J. W. Knowlton, who, it was said, subpœnaed to deliver a bundle of bonds* received in the name of John E. Blaine, a brother of James G., was mixed up also in this transaction. "This story is an old one," said Mr. Blaine, and he made it the burden of his reply. He called witnesses to his authorship and its falsity, he produced a note written by Mr. Riddle, dated February 1, 1873, directly saying that he had no knowledge of the transaction which he (Riddle) had ascribed to J. B. Stewart, April 2, 1872, repeating a former letter of 1873, who says that he never saw Mr. Blaine in his office in his life, and believed that he never was there; that he never delivered him any bonds of the Kansas Pacific railroad, and never had a business transaction with him in his life; *that Mr. Knowlton was the author of the story; that he was swift to retract it; that Knowlton said to him that he told the story as a jest*, which was published without his knowledge or approbation, &c. Also, a letter written by Gen. and Thomas Ewing, dated May 10, 1873, which filed his card of October, 1872, so fatal to the *Tribune* story above, and he also suggested that the similarity in the sound of the two names, J. G. Blaine, and J. Blaine, had led to the basis of the charge against J. G. Blaine as to the bonds. The next witness was A. M. Gibson, of the New York *Sun*, who said that in February, (let, I pray, the reader note this,) there appeared in the *Sun*, alleging that Mr. Blaine had received from J. B. Stewart, in some secret manner, some bonds of the Union Pacific railroad, at Stewart's office, and that it was understood, Knowlton, of the Chicago *Tribune*, was responsible for it; that on the evening of the appearance of the *Sun's* article Knowlton called upon him, and said he was sorry for the article, but thought there was no ground for it; that he may have been mistaken in saying he had seen Blaine at Stewart & Riddle's office. The last witness produced was Mr. J. MacFarland, of the Philadelphia *Press*, who said that on the day after the appearance of the *Sun* article Mr. Knowlton, as its presumed authority, asked him to stand in the House in support of Mr. Blaine, which he did. Mr. Knowlton said to Mr. Blaine that the report had been made on his apparent responsibility, and he repudiated it and expressed his regret for the annoyance it occasioned Mr. Blaine. He unequivocally withdrew the charge, and he always since regretted that he should be quoted for his rumor. That it may be seen what it was that Knowlton refused to be responsible for I quote from that *Sun* article: "A clerk in Stewart's office tells a circumstantial story about a visit a certain gentleman paid to Stewart's office late one night, and how $24,000 in guaranteed bonds of the Kansas Pacific road passed from Stewart's hands to the certain gentleman aforesaid."

When this dispatch returned, Mr. Knowlton was exceedingly surprised and annoyed, and consulted me at length in regard to the matter. I advised him to print the very exact statement he had previously given me. He replied, that under no circumstances could he do this, and that he must at all hazards avoid being called before the committee in regard to it, for in the first place he had a friendly regard for Mr. Blaine, and admired him greatly as a politician, and he would not appear against him.

In the second place, his associations in Washington and those of his family, aside from his newspaper friends, were chiefly with the bar of the District, and that his approaching marriage into your own family would largely extend his associations in the same direction. As what he had done and seen in the office of Stewart & Riddle took place under the privileges and confidences which attach to a lawyer's office, he was unwilling to subject his friends or himself to the criticisms which would follow in the circles where they moved, if he were held up to them as one who had attacked a public man by violating the confidences of a law office. Our own conversation had been in the confidence of intimate friendship, with no intention on his part that it should lead to further circulation or printing, and strict injunctions that it should not. After examining the dispatch in the *Sun*, it was found that, strictly speaking, it contained several errors, and Mr. Knowlton desired to correct the article in Mr. Gibson and assure him of the incorrectness of his dispatch, and say that, if called upon, he should be obliged to testify to that effect.

Subsequently he informed me that Mr. Blaine had sent for him, and that he called and made the same statement to him, and that Mr. Blaine had further sought to convince him that it was his cousin, Gen. Thomas Ewing, jr., who was legally related to Stewart, and who was in the office with Stewart on the night in question. Mr. Knowlton said to me in relation to this, that, while he was absolutely certain that there was not a case of mistaken identity, and that there was a tacit understanding between himself and Mr. Blaine that it was not, yet in view of the great embarrassment that would certainly come both to himself and Mr. Blaine, if he should testify before the committee without qualification, he would be glad, if possible, to let the matter pass for him, if he was summoned, upon any declaration which Mr. Blaine should make that it was a mistake in identity.

Mr. Knowlton further took active means to stop the circulation of the story by assuring several other correspondents that Mr. Gibson's special was not correct, and that he should be obliged to so testify if called before the committee. As a result of his efforts the story received no circulation in the press. Mr. Knowlton, however, continued greatly disturbed over the matter, fearing that if summoned he might be too strictly questioned in regard to his real conviction regarding the matter of identity, and so long as there was any probability that the committee would take up the matter he was desirous of avoiding all intentions that they would do so, and had his baggage packed for quite a time in order that he might leave the city, and, if necessary, go to Canada to avoid testifying. Subsequently he declared that, if put under oath and questioned closely he would be obliged to swear with positiveness that it was Mr. Blaine who visited Stewart's office under the circumstances originally related.

In several subsequent conversations Mr. Knowlton went over this ground, always affirming the correctness of his statement regarding the night visit to Stewart, and never, under any circumstances, alluding to the conversation which was charged and afterwards retracted in the New York *Tribune* of September or October, 1872. The *Tribune's* charge was quite a different thing, being to the effect, that Mr. Blaine had at one time in his own right $.97,000, and for distribution $1,625,000 in the stocks and lands of the Leavenworth, Lawrence and Western railroad. *Fac simile* from the records of that road was printed in the *Tribune* of October 2, 1872, to prove this, which *fac simile* was afterwards admitted to be erroneous, and the charge founded upon it to be false.

In regard to the nature of Mr. Knowlton's acquaintance with Mr. Blaine at the time the *Sun* dispatch was printed, it can only be said, although matter of very great surprise to me to read that Mr. Knowlton had asked any one to introduce him to Mr. Blaine. As a matter of fact, Mr. Blaine himself informed me, some weeks ago, that it was quite another gentleman from the one whose letters he now quotes who introduced Mr. Knowlton on the occasion referred to, and it is a fact within my knowledge that no introduction was needed at that time. Mr. Knowlton may have sought for company, but could not have been correctly understood as seeking for some one to present him.

The case here stands: Mr. Blaine for explanation by some of his friends a number of weeks since, and by yourself first of all, was not based upon Mr. Knowlton's statement, but upon certain sworn records in the courts.

I have thus answered your inquiries as briefly as a statement of the main features of the case would allow, and I shall be very glad if it proves of any value to you in the matter expressed in your letter to me to vindicate the thoroughly honorable course pursued by Mr. Knowlton in all this matter.

Very truly, your friend,

H. V. BOYNTON.

Hon. A. G. Riddle, Washington, D. C.

GEN. R. D. MUSEY'S STATEMENT.

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 5, 1876.

Hon. A. G. Riddle, Present:

DEAR SIR: In reply to yours of the 3d inst., I have to say—

1. The late J. W. Knowlton and myself were students in your law office in this city in 1856-57, my desk was in the same room in which you also yours. Mr. Stewart had a private office, where he received his visitors. Subsequent to my admission to the bar, I retained my desk in your office for convenience. It was Mr. Knowlton's habit and mine to spend many of our evenings at the office during such part of the summer of 1856 as I was here, and also during the winter and spring of 1857. My acquaintance with Mr. Knowlton, formed when we were students together, continued after he became a journalist resident here, and I had been admitted to practice before the United States Court, and frequently dropped into his office on Fourteenth street.

Once on calling on him at his office he asked me if I remembered seeing, while I was a student or had a desk in the office of Stewart & Riddle, to have seen Mr. Blaine (the then Speaker) in that office. I said I recollected seeing him there, but could not name the year on occasion, and asked him why he made the inquiry. He then spoke of the interview between Mr. Blaine and Mr. Stewart, and said that Mr. Blaine had denied ever being in that office. Since that night I have talked with Boynton, Mussey, and others, about it, who took it for granted, I presume, that I knew what it was. I purposely avoided information on the subject.

On the night referred to a gentleman called at my house, from Mr. Blaine, who, as he said, wished to see me at a later hour. At 11:30 o'clock Mr. Blaine came in, with something unusual in his manner, and inquired if Mr. Knowlton was in the house, saying he was told that he might find him there. I answered that he was not. He expressed a wish to see him, and asked me to communicate this wish to Mr. Knowlton. He then produced the *Sun* of that date and read me Gibson's special, which had apparently moved him, and it astonished me. He said the "clerk in Stewart's office" mentioned in this question, as I remember it, was put while I was on the Avenue on the way to the Capitol.

4. What I have stated above is the total of my knowledge on the subject.

Mr. Knowlton was, when we were students together, regarded as entirely veracious. Such, so far as I had any opportunity to observe, was his reputation when he was a journalist. He carried into the discharge of his duties of that profession the habits of exact, accurate and critical statement, acquired in his legal studies. It does not comport at all with my personal knowledge of him or his general reputation that he should have done a dishonorable act or uttered an untruthful word.

Very truly, your friend,

R. D. MUSSEY.

H. L. BRIDGMAN'S STATEMENT.

NEW YORK, May 4, 1876.

DEAR SIR: In answer to your favor of the 3d inst. I would say that Knowlton's statement to me of his knowledge of the bond transaction between Mr. Blaine and Mr. Stewart was, as I recently thoroughly proved, precisely identical with his account of the same matter to General Ewing. V. Boynton, and I presume to yourself, also. Indeed, I understood from Knowlton that to one other person only did he ever narrate the occurrence, though, of course, he may have done so since I left Washington. This being the case I suppose it unnecessary for me to write in detail Mr. Knowlton's statement to me.

That it was as just he never intimated, and the frequent and earnest discussions we held on the matter are all against that theory.

Of Knowlton's character for honor and truthfulness, the testimony in connection with his had so well filled, is the best demonstration. If my tribute could add to that it is given cordially and completely.

Very truly, H. L. BRIDGMAN.

Hon. A. G. Riddle, Washington, D. C.

Mr. Bridgman was then Washington correspondent of the Boston *Advertiser*.

To these I subjoin my own statement. The firm of Stewart & Riddle was formed, I think, in July, 1864. I was in Washington in the June preceding. Stewart was then engaged as attorney for the Union Pacific Railroad Company, Eastern division.

The late J. W. Knowlton entered the office, as I think, the following winter, and remained in Washington until the spring of 1867. In the autumn of 1870 he became the correspondent for the Chicago *Tribune*. As I believe, I first heard of the statement of J. W. Knowlton in reference to Mr. Blaine, on the evening of February 1, 1873. In this connection, I may say that neither before nor since that time did I have any conversation with Mr. Knowlton on the subject of Mr. Blaine, nor until I saw it in the letter of General Boynton, given above, did I know, except in a general way, what the statement was. Since that night I have talked with Boynton, Mussey, and others, about it, who took it for granted, I presume, that I knew what it was. I purposely avoided information on the subject.

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