

own knowledge, you know that of your own knowledge?

A. Yes, sir, he fired twice after he fell.

Q. Could you see well enough to tell what kind of a gun he had in his hand?

A. No, sir.

Q. You didn't see any gun around there when you got up there?

A. I never went there at all.

W. B. Forrest testified: "Friday evening about sundown I was standing in front of my brother's store and I heard a pistol fire and I was looking up the other street. I heard a pistol fire and I turned around and seen Joe Ben Coleman come running towards that corner and just as he went to turn the corner he fell. I didn't know then who was doing the shooting, I didn't see it. About the time he fell he pulled a pistol or something I couldn't tell at the distance what it was, but he threw it down, and that time Blease had run around him. He fell on his left side and Mr. Blease had went over him on the other side and he shot twice."

Q. You say Mr. Blease ran over him and got around to his back?

A. No, sir, he was lying on his left side and he was down on the ground.

Q. Down on the sidewalk leaning back against brick building, his left shoulder against the wall?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What did Mr. Blease do?

A. When he turned the corner he ran over to the other side of him, around him or over him, one, I don't know which.

Q. Anyway, he got on the opposite side, the right of the deceased.

A. Yes, sir, and fired two shots after he got there. That is all I know.

Q. How far were you from the corner of Smith Brothers' store?

A. I suppose about 50 yards, 40 or 50.

Q. How many shots did you say you heard fired before you looked up the street?

A. I thought three shots were fired before I ever seen anybody but Mr. Coleman.

Q. And how many shots were fired after that?

A. Two.

Q. After Mr. Blease came around he fired twice?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Is there anything else you know?

A. No, sir.

Q. Was Joe Ben Coleman lying on the ground when you saw him?

A. No, sir, I seen him fall.

Q. Do you know whether Mr. Blease was on the left side or in front of him?

A. He was on the opposite side. He run over him or around him, I didn't know which.

#### A Wife's Confession.

The most important witness was Mr. H. G. Crouch, who testified that on Friday evening he was driving to Saluda and Mr. Blease overtook him. He saw that there was something the matter with Mr. Blease, his eyes looked red like a man in trouble or like a man who had been crying or drunk or something. He asked Mr. Blease what was the matter and Blease answered loss of sleep. They passed a few words and later Blease asked witness if witness was his friend. He asked witness if witness was best friend to him or Joe Ben Coleman. Blease then said that Joe Ben and his wife had been too thick or too intimate. Blease told witness that he had been to Mr. Herbert's and that she had made a confession in the presence of her father and mother; when he got ready to leave she had called him back and made a confession that they were too thick.

Witness asked Blease when he had discovered it. He told witness that he thought so about a year ago and that on one occasion his wife wanted to go to the carnival in Columbia, witness thought it was August, with Joe Ben, and he objected and she said she was going anyhow and he finally consented to give her the money. Witness asked Blease, "Why haven't you stopped this before now?" Blease said, "I've tried to but you know Luda bosses me and she has actually made me, when I got after her, come and get on my knees and beg her pardon." Blease also told witness that about three weeks before this he had found a letter in her bed room torn up and he carried the let-

ter into a room and put it together and it was a letter from Joe Ben to his wife. Witness asked what it contained and Blease told him the contents. He referred to it about this way said the witness:

"Dear Luda: I would do anything in the world I could for you but I can't get you any more of that stuff. As soon as I can close up the store I will come down and see you. Destroy this letter."

Witness asked Blease what was meant by that stuff. Blease said he did not know, either morphine or ergot. Blease told witness that after getting this letter he went to Joe Ben and told him, "Joe Ben, if you want Luda, take her and get off; and if you don't want her, keep from around her, don't go about her." Blease said, "Since my wife has been up to Mr. Herbert's sick he has been up there to see her." Blease told witness two or three times and told him the days but witness did not recollect the days. Blease also stated that while his wife was over at Newberry that Joe Ben had gone off up to Glenn Springs with Mr. McCarty and that Joe Ben came back by there and stayed two days with his wife.

#### In The Store.

Witness related further incidents which Blease had told him in the course of this conversation, much of which is unpublizable. Witness had offered to try to settle matters but Blease had told him he was not asking for advice. At times, said witness, Blease seemed to be rational but at other times he seemed to be like a wild man or madman. Witness then related what occurred in the store, as follows:

"When I got to the store I saw Mr. Bob Raymey in front and Preacher Carson inside and some other men in there and I thought to myself I will not go in there, they will prevent any disturbance and I drove over to the bank and had some little transaction with the bank and drove my horse over and took out and when I got back to the store Mr. Blease and Mr. Coleman were standing over to the right at the office. I wouldn't have gone in if I had known that Eugene was in there, because I felt like they could settle the matter better by themselves but I had walked in not seeing him. I said 'Joe Ben, I want some soda.' He started to get the soda and he and Eugene continued to talk. I said I will come back and get it directly. I thought I would let them settle it better by themselves, and about the time I got to the door Joe Ben says, 'Hold on, come back, don't you think Eugene exacts too much of me?' I acted like I had not heard anything about it. I says, 'What is the matter?' Joe Ben he started to tell and says 'Eugene tell him.' Eugene says, 'You tell him,' and directly Eugene says 'I meant exactly what I said, you must either get out of this country and never come back or I will kill you.' I pleaded with him not to have a fuss.

"He says, 'I meant exactly what I said, you must do one or the other, and he asked him the question, 'What are you going to do?'

"Joe Ben finally says, 'Rather than to take life or to give life I will leave but I can't promise you I will never come back.' Then Joe Ben you refuse to do it?'

"He says, 'You know I can't just pick up my business and not come back, besides you know I can't go tonight, I have got to have time to straighten out my business and I won't promise you not to come back.' "Then, Joe Ben, you refuse?'

"He says, 'Yes, I can't do it, I can't go and never come back, I can't go tonight.'

"He says, 'Joe Ben, are you armed?' He says 'No.' He says 'Arm yourself.' Joe Ben hesitated. He says, 'I say, Joe Ben, arm yourself.' I began to see a spell like I had noticed down the road coming on him again and began to see trouble. He says, 'I don't want to take any advantages of you, arm yourself.' Joe Ben still hesitated and he ran his hand in his pocket and pulled out a little derringer and said, 'Take this, I don't want to take any advantage of you, defend yourself.' Joe Ben didn't take it. Mr. Blease was on the inside of the counter when this conversation took place and Joe Ben was on the outside and I was standing right at the end of the counter. Mr. Blease then dropped the pistol he had offered to Joe Ben on top of the show case

and told him to pick it up and defend himself and he reached back for his pistol and I said, 'Joe Ben, get out of the way,' and he walked out and Blease and myself had a tussle and I had the advantage of him but I never could get hold of the arm that he had the pistol in but I had him in there I thought plenty long for Coleman to turn the corner.

#### The Shooting.

"Finally he got the advantage of me and gave me a shove. He was the strongest man then I have tackled or I had weakened, but I was nervous and as he got out from me two or three steps I saw him throw up a pistol and pull down but I could not see Joe Ben. It happened that Mr. Blease was between us and as he shot he pulled and shot a second time, and I saw Joe Ben turn the corner. I made sure he was safe and therefore I wasn't in a big hurry to get there, but Mr. Blease advanced pretty pert. Mr. Blease advanced and Dan Smith came out and they had a tussle and I think Mr. Blease went on his knees, and that is when Mr. Blease turned to the other side, but the soon freed himself and that is when he shot down two or three times."

Q. There were two shots fired?

A. Two or three. He shot on the ground and about the time I got to him I run up and put my hand on his shoulder and he threw his pistol down.

Q. Who threw his pistol down?

A. Mr. Blease did.

Q. What kind of a pistol was that?

A. It was a black looking pistol, I suppose what you call blue steel.

Q. Do you know what name it was, what calibre?

A. No, sir, I do not. About the time I got hold of him he throwed his pistol down and hollered out as loud as he could, "I shot him about my wife." Remember Mrs. Mary Alice Smith was standing in the door and he seemed to have spoken to her about it. And then he said, "I surrender to the sheriff." About that time he saw the deputy sheriff and he said, "I surrender to the deputy sheriff." About that time I went up to Mr. Coleman and saw a pistol, a little derringer and that pistol Mr. Blease had thrown down, about a foot to the right of the little derringer and that pistol Mr. right of Joe Ben. I picked up Joe Ben's hat and laid it in his lap and I asked him if he was shot. He says, 'Yes, all to pieces.' I says, 'Where?' He says, 'In the stomach.' I could see he was shot in the right shoulder and he claimed to be shot in the leg and asked me to straighten out his leg for him. I said, 'I don't think you are shot except in the shoulder and leg. I think you will get over it.' He says, 'No, I am shot to pieces.' I says, 'Did he hit you the first shot?' He says, 'No.' I says, 'Why didn't you get out of the way?' I don't remember what reply he made, he was saying, 'Oh, Lord, Oh, Lord.' Dr. Kirksey had come and a crowd had gathered and I went to get the pistol and both pistols were gone, and I saw Mr. Able going off with a pistol in his hand. I said, 'Is that the pistol of Mr. Blease?' He bowed as though it was. I turned and asked who had picked up the little derringer. Dan Smith says, 'I did.' I asked him where it was. He said in the store. He went and got it and brought it to me. He says, 'It is cocked.' I says, 'Why don't you let it down?' He says, 'I don't know how.' I pulled it down and walked up to the store and met Mr. Bob Ramey. I says, 'I want to tie a string around this pistol so as not to get it mixed up with the one at the store. They are a pair of matches, only the one by the side of Joe Ben was a little rustier than that other, but we will tie a string around it, and he held it and I tied a string around it and we put them in the safe over there."

It was developed by other testimony that the derringer picked up near Coleman was loaded and one shell had been snapped on. The one Blease offered Coleman had one empty chamber and one loaded shell.

#### Did Coleman Shoot?

Other witnesses testified as to the shooting. E. W. Forrest, who saw Coleman fall, was questioned by the coroner as follows:

Q. Did you see anybody fire a shot there during this time except Mr. Blease?

A. Well, now, I was satisfied that

(Continued on seventh page.)

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