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MAYOR GRACE TAPS GOVERNOR BLEASE

A Breezy Interview on the Charleston Campaign Meeting, Where Blease Threatened Metropolitan Police.

Charleston, July 8.—"Of course it was anticipated by me that Governor Blease would be compelled at the Charleston meeting to take notice of and, if he could, answer the charges which I have so publicly made against him," said Mayor Grace Saturday night, in a statement replying to the attack made upon him by the Governor in his speech at the State campaign meeting held Friday evening at the Hibernian Hall. It will be remembered that Governor Blease, when he had finished his attack on Judge Ira B. Jones spoke of the breach between Mayor Grace and himself, which grew out of his appointment over Mr. Grace's protest, of whiskey constables in Charleston. This led up to charges by the Mayor that graft could be traced practically up to the Governor, which accusation was followed by the dispensary investigating committee of the Legislature coming to Charleston and holding an investigation.

The Governor denounced any man accusing him of having received graft through the whiskey constables as a malicious character-thief and cowardly liar. He read a letter from Mayor Grace asking him not to dismiss a local notary who was a negro. The feature of this address which made the deepest impression, was that if Charleston voted for Jones, he would do all in his power to place the metropolitan police here and govern Charleston by injunction. He referred lightly to the results of the recent investigation held by the legislative investigation committee, and said that if any one would say to Chief Constable Stothart's face that he had received graft, furnishing the proof, he would discharge him.

Mayor Grace was in the audience at the Hibernian Hall when Governor Blease attacked him so severely, but he held his peace and made no reply. Saturday night he gave out the following statement:

The Mayors Statement.

"Of course it was anticipated by me that Governor Blease would be compelled at the Charleston meeting to take notice of, and if he could, answer the charges which I have so publicly made against him. There was no escape from this necessity. The only matter over which I had any doubts was whether or not I should attend the meeting, and with my own ears hear what he had to say. My friends practically unanimously advised me against it. As it happened, I was on the Isle of Palms at the State Bankers' Convention, and had I cared to lend plausibility to my absence I could have readily evaded it. But I determined that come what might, it was my duty to go to the meeting. As a democrat, I have never missed any of these meetings, and the only thing that could have kept me away would have been, whether others might have thought of it, cowardice on my part.

"Having made up my mind, therefore, to go the next thing which bothered me was what attitude I should assume toward Governor Blease, however personal and bitter he might become. As I had deliberately gone to the meeting I was equally as deliberate about what my course should be. I remembered that I was Mayor of Charleston; that the hall was packed with men who at the slightest threat of personal injury, would spring to my side through devotion that is unequalled anywhere. The police force, while composed largely of men loyal to me, I would have myself required to do its duty, and under the orders of the chairman, I and even my most devoted friends, might have been summarily removed from the hall, to which extremity I would have bowed in obedience to law. With these mere outlines of a riotous situation flooding my mind there was but one view for me to take—to swallow anything. I did it with complacency, and I think the public, from what I hear, approves of my course.

The Beer Incident.

"Moreover, what did it matter, what Blease said? Did he not in the very speech in which he so violently by indirection, denounced men, also give utterance to the rankest indecencies and anarchy? Think of a governor replying as to how he stood on the beer question by shouting that if his questioner (in violation of the law) would bring him up to the stage a drink of beer he would be better able to answer the question. Of course, it was grilling for me to have to sit and listen to Blease's lies. The idea of his making in it appear that the beginning of our troubles was when he refused to appoint a negro notary public, whose appointment, by the way, I had asked only as a favor to gentlemen in Charleston who were not

then nor have ever been, my political friends. Are Messrs. Nathans and Sinkler also negro lovers? And do they believe in social equality? Certainly not. It is almost sickening to have to answer such tommy-rot.

The Dispensary Constables.

"There was but one cause, and that was (as I said in a published article recently.) Blease had broken his public promise and his private word. I expected him to be governor of South Carolina, and when he was elected I was happy. Any intimation by him that I wished to usurp those functions is more than absurd. In the presence of many others he asked me if I would name a man for chief constable, and in their presence, I denounced the whole proposition, and said that I would hold him to his word not to appoint any, as I knew and had told him in writing that they would be grafters. They have since demonstrated it. What more proof does he need?

"Talk about facing Stothart! Witness after witness under oath faced Stothart, and then finally Stothart faced himself, and looking himself and his own guilt, (and, I believe, Blease mountainous guilt) in the eye, he refused to answer on the grounds that it might incriminate himself. Why didn't Blease read the constable letter—the letter of prophetic warning which I wrote him, and in which I told him that he had broken his word, rather than switch off on the irrelative tangent of alleged social equality?

Blease's Threat.

"Of course, his nasty threat about the metropolitan police is in keeping with the rest of his character but it is in no way disquieting. If it means anything it means simply this: Up to August 27th, no matter what the people of Charleston do, the constables will stay here as graft agents. On August 28th, if by their votes, the people of Charleston have resented his dirty administration, he will take it as a sufficient crisis in the history of the state to justify his resort to whatever extraordinary power he can stretch the laws to mean. The metropolitan police bill has been repealed, but he refers to some vague, obsolete power whereunder a sort of martial law might be foisted upon us—a power, of course, under our constitution necessarily lodging in our executive, if upon any rare occasion a city held itself in open rebellion against State authority.

"That such conditions in Charleston could suddenly spring up overnight upon his defeat could only appeal to his diseased and lawless mind, and were he even so disposed, he would find that the Courts of South Carolina, for which he professes such utter contempt, would stay his vengeful hand.

"We know that Charleston also too long has bent under the fear of usurpation, but I believe that there is still pride, and resentment left, and from now until election day I expect to call upon her people by their unanimous vote to spurn the price of peace at the price of independence, and I ask them now in the language of Patrick Henry, 'Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?'"



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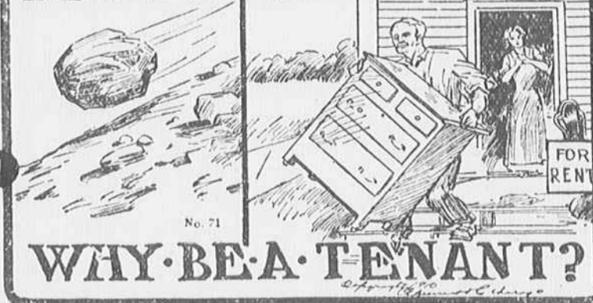
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