

ship. Witness' complaint to Wilkinson was that Beecher had been unjust, not that he had not helped him. Witness' relations and feelings toward Beecher since January first, '71, when he made the apology, down to the time when the church began to put out its right hand and take witness by the throat, were friendly; they were friendly in the sense that they were not in collision with each other, but they were not those of friendship. Witness had taken Beecher's apology and given his word that he would not have him exposed.

Q. "Is it your sentiment that that is an offense for which one man can apologize to another?"

A. "I know there is a code of honor among gentlemen that a man cannot condone such an offense, but I cannot see what offense a man cannot forgive, when an apology is made by the person committing it to the person against whom it was committed; if a man believes in the Christian religion, he ought to forgive. Sometimes I forgive, and sometimes do not."

Q. "Is that your handwriting? (Showing a slip of paper, on which was written, 'H. W. B. grace, mercy and peace, Sunday morning, T. T.')

A. "I remember that, one morning, Mr. Beecher met me on the street, and told me how much pleasure it gave him; I have sent kinder things than that to him."

Q. "Did you feel as you spoke?"

A. "I did. Mr. Moulton said, two or three times, 'Mr. Beecher is in great depression, can't you do something to cheer him?' One morning I walked to church with him, and in many circumstances I manifested feelings of kindness towards him, but it would be a lie to say that I felt warm friendship for Mr. Beecher, and that I felt as kindly to him as if the offense had not been committed. If I had been a man morally great, I would have battled it out and trodden it under foot. I was competent to forgive in a large degree; I forgave him in my best moods, but at other times I did not. I am not a very large man."

In reply to the inquiry whether Mrs. Woodhull came frequently to his house, and whether his wife did not protest against her presence there, witness said that Mrs. Woodhull was three times at his house, once to meet Mr. Beecher. Mr. Moulton made that interview, it must have been in '71 or '72.

Mrs. Woodhull and her husband came. Witness' wife expressed indignation against the woman, but he told his wife that the way to get along with her and to prevent this coming out was to keep friendly with her. It was a fatal policy, but then it seemed as if it was the only thing that could be done. The mistake was in not being friendly with Blood instead of Mrs. Woodhull, that was the blunder. His wife always felt that the policy was a mistaken one of trying to do anything with Mrs. Woodhull, and she objected violently to his written sketch of Mrs. Woodhull. He read part of it to her. Mrs. Woodhull's husband wrote the biography, and wanted witness to re-write it because his style was more vivid. Witness' wife said she thought he would rue the day, and she was far wiser than he was.

Q. "When you said that in December, 1870, differences arose between Theodore Tilton and Henry C. Bowen, which were augmented by the Rev. H. W. Beecher and Mrs. Beecher, in consequence whereof and at the wish of Mrs. E. R. Tilton, expressed in writing in a paper put into the hands of Mrs. F. D. Moulton, why do you say that it was in consequence of that difficulty being augmented by Mr. and Mrs. Beecher that this letter was written, and this writing was made?"

A. "Elizabeth said that Mr. Bowen and I were in collision; she was afraid the collision would extend to Mr. Beecher and me, and she wished me, if possible, to make my peace with him; that peace could be brought about only by his knowing what I knew in regard to his relations with Mrs. Tilton, therefore she wrote a womanly, kindly letter to him. I do not remember the phraseology, I remember only one phrase, which was peculiarly hers. She said she loved her husband with her maiden flame. Moulton will probably recall the whole phraseology."

Q. "What was the substance of the letter?"

A. "I do not recall it. The letter was returned to her, but whether

she has it or not I do not know. The object of the letter was to make peace. She felt that if Mr. Beecher and I could be reconciled that she, herself, and I would be more reconciled; there was a sort of mountain of clouds overcoming us."

Q. "Who had reported to her the fact that your difficulty was being augmented by Mr. and Mrs. Beecher?"

A. "I do not know, she reported it to me; it was through her I learned that Mrs. Beecher was interfering with my affairs; it was through Mrs. Tilton that I learned of Mrs. Beecher's antagonism to me. I do not think Mr. Beecher was so largely involved as his wife was."

Q. "Had you known of Mr. Beecher's interference with your affairs prior to that?"

A. "I cannot say with my affairs, not with business affairs or with my domestic affairs; No, as I recollect Elizabeth went sometimes to the Health-lift, and Mrs. Beecher came there and saw her one day."

Q. "What date was that?"

A. "I do not know. Mrs. Beecher, through Mrs. Morse, got the idea that I was Mr. Beecher's enemy, therefore Mrs. Beecher was very violently my enemy. Mrs. Beecher being my enemy, and feeling that I was bent on battle against her husband, sought to make an alliance with Elizabeth, and, as I understood, wanted Elizabeth to go away from me and part company, and she said she would not do it. Trouble having hinged on the fact that Elizabeth had made me and Mrs. Morse a confession, but had not told Mr. Beecher that she had done so, I said there was only one way out of the difficulty, that was that Mr. Beecher must know it."

Witness was asked if he had his wife's letters with him. He said no, he was perfectly willing to carry them before any judge or in the presence of some outside parties, but he would refuse to hand them to the committee alone. They were six gentlemen, determined, if possible, not to find facts, but to vindicate Mr. Beecher, and if he should hand over Mr. Beecher's orthodoxy perhaps they would not return it to him, though he did not want to make that an implication, he did not mean to give them the chance.

The committee and counsel protested against the implication.

In answer to a question as to his wife's devotion and purity of life, witness said she was pure unless a technical meaning was applied to the word "purity;" she was made a victim, she was not to blame. She sought consolation from her pastor, and he took advantage of her orthodox views to make them a net and mesh, in which he entangled her, and for which witness held him in contempt, which no English words could describe.

Q. "Was not she (Mrs. Tilton) distressed at any suggestion of impropriety?"

A. "She was particularly so, and she is more so now than ever, because, in her early days, such a thought was never in her mind; but when it had passed through her experience it came out with this contrition, that is the truth. She never ought to have been taken away from her home. You gentlemen did it, you did it, Mr. Tracy, thou art the man."

Q. "When did you first bring your wife's attention to the fact that you found that there was something wrong in Beecher's career?"

A. "It must have been during the early years we lived in our present house, about '62? I never spoke of it afterwards, because Elizabeth blotted out the idea of wrong at the time. I was very young and utterly unsuspicious. When I spoke to her about it she was a little confused and denied it, afterwards she said it was so, but that she said, 'You must not do that.' My reverence for Beecher prevented me from speaking to him about it, or to any one else. Mr. Beecher and Mrs. Tilton were sitting on the floor with pictures. I don't remember whether I was sitting with them or not, it is so long ago. The improper caress I saw with my own eyes. Beecher did not look at me, at first he did not know that I noticed it. She may have been sitting on a stool and he on the floor."

Q. "Were you where he could see you?"

A. "He was looking at the pictures."

Q. "If he had looked up would he have seen you?"

A. "Yes."

Q. "What part of her person did he touch?"

A. "Her ankles and lower limbs."

Q. "Not above the knee?"

A. "No."

Q. "Was it done slyly?"

A. "Yes, very slyly, with his right or left arm under her dress. My impression is that it was by an accidental brush up of her dress that I saw his hand on her ankle."

Q. "You were in doubt whether the gesture was intentional or accidental."

A. "It was merely suspicion."

The committee then proceeded to examine Tilton about the bed room scene. He did not know the year. It was a good while ago, before the ankle scene, and while they were living on Livingstone Street. He remembered the room, and identified it by a picture. It was the left hand room on the second story. He said, "I knocked at the door, Elizabeth came; I was surprised that the door was locked, she was surprised at finding me. Beecher was sitting in a red plush rocking chair, with his vest unbuttoned. His face colored like a rose when I saw him."

Q. "The explanation was satisfactory to you on that occasion?"

A. "Entirely so. I should have thought nothing of it had I not wondered at the door being locked; the room was a bed room connected with the sitting room by sliding doors; both rooms opened into the hall."

Q. "May they not have gone into the sitting room from the hall, and thence into the bed room?"

A. "I will give them the benefit of the doubt."

Q. "What was the explanation given which you found satisfactory?"

A. "The annoyance of the children, my wife said; ours and the neighbors' children were making a noise, she wanted a quiet talk with Mr. Beecher, and so locked herself in."

Q. "That satisfied you?"

A. "Yes, it was entirely satisfactory."

Q. "Were the sliding doors open?"

A. "They were shut."

Q. "Was the hall door opened immediately?"

A. "Yes."

In reply to further questions Tilton said that he never regarded the circumstance as an evidence of wrong, the explanation blotted it from his remembrance, but he had since mentioned it because circumstances were such as made him feel that her explanation of both scenes was untrue. When he first mentioned it he thought there was not any wrong in it, until in the light of subsequent events; he would not say there was any wrong in it now. Elizabeth always denied, stoutly, any wrong.

Q. "You say that for a year, after what you state as Mrs. Tilton's confession, she insisted to you that she had not violated her marriage vow?"

A. "Yes, Elizabeth was in a sort of vaporous-like cloud; she was between light and dark, she could not see that it was wrong. She maintained to her mother, in my presence, that she could not bear to do wrong, a sense of having done wrong was enough to crush her. She naturally seeks, for her own peace, a conscientious verdict. She never would have had these relations if she had supposed at the time that they were wrong. Elizabeth never did anything that at the time seemed wrong, for she has such a large moral nature, but there is a lack of balance and equipoise. She has not the will that guides and restrains, but Elizabeth never does, at any time, that which does not have the stamp of her conscience at the time upon it."

Q. "Do you say that she did or did not insist that she had violated her marriage vow?"

A. "She always was saying that it never seemed to her wrong, and, 'Theodore, I do not now see that I have wronged you.'"

Q. "What do you understand her, as meaning when she said—'To love is praiseworthy, but the abuse of love is sin?'"

A. "I rather think she means carrying love to too great an extent."

Q. "Would not that include criminal relations?"

A. "Yes."

Q. "Then you understand her, as early as '68, as saying that the abuse of the gift of love by adultery would be sin?"

A. "Yes."

Tilton continued—"Mrs. Tilton was a lady of large reading, and he said that Mr. Beecher carried to her sheets of his *Life of Christ* and *Norwood* for criticism. She was

one of the best of critics when her judgment was not warped by her affections, and he (Tilton) was always certain that if Elizabeth liked what he wrote it was not on his account, though she was always glad when he wrote a good thing, but it was honest criticism. If he had been a minister none of this trouble would have come. She was always sorry he was not a minister, which is the only virtue he possessed, thank God," said Tilton, "I do not belong to the priesthood or church. I am a man of religious sympathies, who thoroughly hates and despises religious creeds. I do not believe in one of the 39 articles, in either of the catechisms, or in the divinity or injunction of Scripture, or in the divinity of Christ in the sense in which it is held." Witness continued, "My wife grieved over this with tears, and found what was wanting in Beecher, who took advantage of it, and he ought to spend the rest of his life in penitence and anguish. She regarded Beecher as almost Jesus Christ himself. Tilton did not think that a thought of passion and criminality was ever in her breast; they were altogether in Mr. Beecher's. She thought only of love and reverence."

Q. "Such a character would not excite a thought of jealousy as to her?"

A. "Not the slightest. I never had the slightest feeling of jealousy in regard to Elizabeth; there was a time when I felt that Beecher was using his influence greatly upon her."

Q. "To control her in her domestic relations with you?"

A. "No, but to win her; he was always trying to get her to say that she loved him better than me."

Q. "She never would say it?"

A. "I don't think she ever did. She loved his religious views, she loved him as an evangelical minister, but I don't think that, on the whole, he was as much to her as I was."

Tilton next testified to the letter in reference to the retraction, and said that what struck him in that business as so damnable in Mr. Beecher was, that after coming and confessing, to himself and Moulton, his criminal relations with Mrs. Tilton, and then going round the corner to see her, that he should come back in half an hour, expressing his absolute heart-brokenness, whereas he had in his pocket this retraction from her. It was damnable and nefarious. When he saw Beecher at Moulton's house, he (Tilton) locked the door and narrated Elizabeth's confession. It was a long one, and it would have been indelicate to touch it with any more elaboration than he did here. He did not want to be questioned about it, it was a long story. The retraction was returned to him through Mr. Moulton. It is now in Moulton's safe, but he (Tilton) had a copy of it. The letter of apology is in Moulton's writing, except the last line and signature. If he (Tilton) had been present at the time it would never have been written.

The money dispute with Bowen was next alluded to, and during the testimony he said—"The more I quarreled with Mr. Beecher the better Mr. Bowen liked it, and if, as the result of the controversy, Mr. Beecher should be dead, Bowen would not be the one to mourn, but the one who would uplift the horn of gladness. He never wanted peace with Beecher, he always wanted war with Beecher, he is the enemy of Beecher and would rejoice in his downfall. The letter beginning, 'My Dear Frank, I am determined to make no more resistance, Theodore's temperament is such, etc., etc.' is in Moulton's possession. Tilton's letter to complaining friends was written to nobody, but as a public card; it was one member of a series of ingenious subterfuges, but it did not amount to anything. He wrote it thinking it would please Elizabeth. Its effect was to perpetuate a scandal."

A. "The scandal would have died out long ago, would it not? It has only been kept alive by your writings?"

A. "I have acted like a fool I admit."

Tracy. "We all concede that, and do not need to call any witness to prove it. You have quoted the letters of your wife to prove what your home was in '68."

A. "I quoted, to show what it was previous to her surrender to him."

Q. "You have stated that there were acts of criminality at Beech-

er's house, and secondly at your own house, do you pretend to have personal knowledge of these acts?"

A. "Only the knowledge gained by Mrs. Tilton's confession. I was absent at the time."

The remainder of the testimony, related to an attempt, which failed to prevail upon Beecher to reside at a Woodhull meeting at Steinway Hall, and to Mr. Tilton's association with various women, the names of all being omitted except those known as reformers and women of public reputation, the purpose of the committee being to show that the peace of Tilton's house was destroyed by his own acts. The letters which Tilton quotes from were, he said, in the hands of Moulton.

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