

A WIDOW'S MITE.

How Major Calkins Assessed a Widow Postmistress.

"The Money Should be Sent Immediately."

A HISTORY OF THE CASE.

To the Voters of Indiana, and all Others interested:

I wish to make this statement to the honest christian men and women of Indiana for their consideration before the election that is now pending:

I am a widow, now 63 years old. In 1882 I was postmistress at Westville, LaPorte county, Indiana. I received the appointment through Gen. Packard, who was then our congressman, and in the effort to get it was actively assisted by my many christian friends. During the campaign of 1882 I received the following letter from Major Wm. H. Calkins:

THE ASSESSMENT LETTER.

LA PORTE, Ind., Sept. 26, 1882.
M. M. Duncan, Esq.,
Dear Sir:—Inasmuch as the expenses of the congressional campaign will be very great, and my opponent will spend a great deal of money, I shall be glad if you will contribute to Mr. Aaron Jones, Chairman of the Congressional Committee, at South Bend, the sum of \$12.00, to be used for legitimate campaign expenses only. In order to be of any use, the money should be sent immediately.
Yours Respectfully,
W. H. Calkins.

When this letter came to me I was very much surprised, for I had never been assessed by a congressman before. I was especially surprised because Major Calkins knew my circumstances. He knew that I had no male relative living, and that I had an aged mother then past eighty years old to support and also had to support a grown daughter, who was an invalid, and two small grand-children. This was no easy task for a woman of my age, with no property in the world but a little home, and that under a mortgage. Under these well-known circumstances I think I had cause to be very much astonished when I received such a letter from a man who was getting five thousand dollars a year from a generous government. To ask me to divide my little salary of three hundred dollars a year with him for use in politics was more than I could understand to be right. It was impossible for me to pay the amount asked at that time, and as he said "it must be paid immediately" to do any good, I did not send the \$12.00. In March, 1883, I heard that I was likely to lose the post office because I had not paid my assessment. This news came through two or three of Major Calkins' especial friends, and I feared it might be true. As soon as this was known, my friends circulated a paper remonstrating against any change in the post office. The paper was signed by 206 patrons of the office, although only one day was given to the work of circulating it. It was sent to Washington by the first mail, but it seemed to avail nothing, and a new postmaster was appointed without the knowledge of the general public. Myself and unfortunate family were turned out almost on the charity of the world. I then had no way to save our little home, and to save further cost and trouble I decided the property back to the man who held the mortgage. I paid in principal and interest about \$1,400 on our home, and lost every cent of it. I am now living in Chicago, working very hard, and keeping boarders to support my family, my aged mother and invalid daughter still being with me. I write this letter to let the people of Indiana know the kind of a man the Republicans have nominated for Governor. I have always been a Republican and am still in sympathy with that party, but I do not feel that the people of Indiana will vote for Major Calkins if they understand how he has acted. I have always been aided in various ways by my many Methodist friends, and I especially ask all christian people to read and believe my statement in regard to this whole matter. If anybody doubts the truthfulness of what I have said, I refer them to Dr. T. Fravel, David Herald and James Sanders, all residents of Westville, LaPorte county, Indiana.

I have sent the original letter that I received from Major Calkins to H. E. Wadsworth, editor of THE ARGUS, at LaPorte, Indiana, and requested him to keep it where anybody who wants to can see it. I hope if there is anybody who doubts that Major Calkins assesses office-holders, even if they are poor widows with large families to support, they will go and see the letter over his plain signature and written on government paper.

Mrs. M. M. DUNCAN.

CHICAGO, August 1, 1884.

CALKINS' REPLY.

A Statement Adroitly Made, and Well Calculated to Deceive.

In an interview with a correspondent of the Chicago Inter-Ocean, (Rep.) Mr. Calkins said: "The facts are, that in August, 1870, Mrs. M. M. Duncan was appointed Postmistress, coming from

The Widow's Assessment--A Fac-Simile of the Letter sent by Major Calkins to Mrs. Duncan.

COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS.

House of Representatives,

Sept 26, 1882.

M. M. Duncan, Esq.,
Im. Westville, Ind.

Dear Sir:

Inasmuch as the expenses of the Congressional Campaign will be very great, and my opponent will spend a great deal of money, I shall be glad if you will contribute to Mr. Aaron Jones, Chairman of the Congressional Committee, at South Bend, the sum of \$12.00 to be used for legitimate Campaign expenses only. In order to be of any use the money should be sent immediately.

Yours Respectfully,

W. H. Calkins

another State, and the appointment was made without the knowledge or consent of but a few of the patrons of the office, she buying out the former occupant. As far as she personally was concerned she discharged the duties fairly well, but she had in addition to the office a small millinery and dressmaking shop, a stationery store, and was a skilled taxidermist, which occupied a large portion of her time, leaving the office to unskilled and inefficient help, causing more or less complaint, and in some cases complaints were sent to headquarters. She had two able-bodied son-in-laws who were able to take care of her had she not been healthy and strong and perfectly able to take care of herself, and after her having the office thirteen years it was thought advisable to make a change. Her successor was a widow with three children of tender years, one a nursing babe and the other two in the neighborhood of three to five years of age. Her husband was a wounded soldier and died from the effects of his wounds. The Postmistress herself is very frail, in poor health, with three children and no means except a small house and lot for which her husband paid \$400 and on which was a mortgage of \$150. As far as the assessment is concerned she probably did receive a circular letter, as all the other officers did, and, as a matter of fact, I understand she did pay \$10 of the \$12, and when the removal was asked for I refused to act till it had been returned to her, which was done by Aaron Jones, Chairman of the Congressional Committee. Her money cut no figure in the removal whatever. Mrs. Miller makes a competent officer and those who at the time favored Mrs. Duncan now say they would not have Mrs. Miller removed.

THE WIDOW'S REJOINDER.

Mrs. Duncan's Answer to Major Calkins.

A Vigorous Defense against False Statements.

To the Editor of the Inter-Ocean:

CHICAGO, Aug. 22.—Please do me the favor to publish my statement of the facts concerning my removal from the Westville (Ind.) postoffice. In your Sunday issue of the 17th inst., there appeared a statement of the matter, purporting to come from the Hon. Wm. H. Calkins, that does me great injustice. He says that I was removed from the Westville postoffice for "irregularities in conducting the office and in answer to a petition from the leading citizens," etc. In regard to the irregularities charged, it should be understood that a personal enemy of mine made complaint against me. The Washington authorities sent Special Inspector Turner to investigate the matter, and after making a full examination he stated publicly that my office was unusually well conducted, and that his report to the department would be such as to preclude the possibility of my removal from office, he being convinced that there was no other reason. They did not again attempt to secure my removal until Mr. Turner was transferred to another district.

As to "a petition from leading citizens," there was none. The patrons of the office will testify that there was no petition circulated among the citizens for my removal. A few enemies, inspired chiefly by motives of revenge, secretly plotted for my removal and wrote letters to Washington. When this became known it created great surprise. Three of my friends, all professional men in high standing, immediately wrote to headquarters a statement of my circumstances and the general wish of the people to have me retained in the office. A reply soon came from Congressman Calkins that "the matter had gone beyond his control," and that "the petition for my removal was from persons whose desires in the matter he could not disregard."

My friends then forwarded a remonstrance signed by 206 patrons of the office, who were amply competent to judge of their "desires," and the work was all done in one day, and without removing the remonstrance from the counter in the office. Many more desired to sign it, but time could not be given them to come in, and it was hastily mailed to First Assistant Postmaster General, the Hon. Frank Hatton, accompanied by two more urgent private letters in my favor. Major Calkins further states that my successor "is the widow of a soldier who died of his wound." The war wife and daughter of this soldier were living at the time of his marriage with the present Postmistress, and Mr. Miller did not die of "wounds received in the army." The statement that he did will be a surprise to his physicians as well as to the people who knew him as an usually strong and vigorous man.

The further statement that I was in good health and had two able-bodied sons-in-law to help me, is not true. I was neither "strong" nor "healthy." My husband's son, the hope of our old age, was killed at the battle of Atlanta, and his death so shocked his father, who was in feeble health, that he never rallied, and both were sacrificed to our country's cause. With the aid of my family I faithfully performed the duties of the office, although we were afflicted with much illness.

As to the statement that I had an income outside of my salary, I would say that my earnings never amounted to over \$50 per year, and that during only the last three years.

Mr. Calkins says that my appointment was made without the "knowledge or consent of but a few of the patrons of the office," and charges that I came from "another State." In 1870 I moved to Westville, where I had formerly taught school and had many friends and relatives, and had often joined in their church services. Mr. Allen Warnock, then the Postmaster, wanted me to buy his home and take the office. He resigned in my favor and sent a petition signed by a dozen prominent citizens to Congressman Jasper Packard, saying that "Mr. Packard's acquaintance with them would be sufficient." I disapproved of his plan and was greatly relieved when the honorable member of Congress refused to take action without a general voice of the community interested. Mr. John Warnock then took a petition and visited every business house in the village and returned it in three hours' time signed by 104

patrons of the office asking for my appointment. General Packard will remember that he accepted the petition and recommended me with pleasure. The fact that I retained the position thirteen years, and leaving it after but ten days' notice without indebtedness to the department or trouble to my bondsmen, is all the comment necessary.

In his interview, Major Calkins says, "as far as the assessment is concerned, Mrs. Duncan probably did receive a circular letter, as all the others did, and I understand she did pay \$10 of the \$12." Mr. Calkins knew that I was poor and had an aged mother, an invalid daughter and two grand-children to support; he knew that I ought not and did not pay one penny of the assessment; he knows that his letter to me was not a circular, but that it was a written letter on government writing paper. He says my "money cut no figure in my removal," but states that "before he would remove me he had his committee send me \$10." About four months after I received the assessment letter, a letter came to me from LaPorte, containing \$10, with a statement that "it was sent to me as a part of the surplus of the campaign fund." I was surprised, but as it was said to be "a surplus campaign fund," I retained it and replied that I would hold it in trust for use in the next campaign. It seems that the supposition that I had been assessed created conscientious difficulties, and for this reason the \$10 was sent to me, and really did "cut some figure." In conclusion, I may say that about the only part of Mr. Calkins' statement that is true is where he commends Mrs. M., the present P. M. She is a worthy lady, and has three children. If Major Calkins has anything more to say about this postoffice matter I hope he will be careful to tell the truth. If he had done this in his interview I would not have felt obliged to defend myself from his false statements.

Mrs. M. M. DUNCAN.

The Widow Duncan's husband was a Methodist preacher for eighteen years before his death, and it will go without saying that he left his wife in poor circumstances. As a rule, Methodist preachers are the hardest worked and the poorest paid men in the United States. It has been reported by some of the over zealous and unscrupulous friends of Major Calkins that Mrs. Duncan's father left her a large amount of property. This is not true. He left her only a small property at Clear Lake, in Porter county, which was sold to Jas. Boodgood for seventy-five dollars, and this was the best price that could be obtained for it. She put the most of the money in the Savings bank in LaPorte, for use in case of her mother's sickness or death, and it stands there yet as a fund to guard against possible contingencies of the nature suggested. This is the "large bank account" some of Calkins' friends talk about Mrs. Duncan having.

It will be seen that Major Calkins does not scruple to use paper furnished him by the government, for official use, to write his campaign assessment circulars on.

To Workingmen.

(From the Albany A. G. 14.)

Has not the Republican party controlled the national administration for almost twenty-four years?

Has it not enacted all the laws during that time?

Has it not executed the laws by men of its choice?

Has the party brought prosperity to you and your families?

Are you working for good wages all the time?

Are there no mills closed?

Are wages not cut down?

Do you find living cheap, rents low, provisions abundant and low-priced, clothing and other supplies down to the cut in pay?

How many days have you been idle since last New Year's? Can you tell when work will be abundant and wages good?

Are business affairs satisfactory to you?

Did not the Republican party make business affairs what they are and as bad they are?

How much more are your wages today than they were four years ago when this same Republican party promised you more pay and more work if you would support its ticket?

Who has grown richer in the last four years of Republican policy, you or the men who were rich then and who seek to allure you with the same sort of arguments now?

The "Esq." and the "Dear Sir" in Calkins' assessment letter to Mrs. Duncan indicates that the body of the letter was written after a general form that was dictated by Calkins and sent to all the postmasters of the district. The signature is supposed to be genuine, but in any event, Calkins does not deny his full responsibility for the letter. Under the civil service law, enacted since this letter was sent out and for which Calkins voted, he could be fined heavily and imprisoned for making such an assessment on an office-holder.

Calkins is a lawyer and he knows that the County Auditor cannot sue him on the school fund loan until the land is sold, and he knows the land cannot be sold for the appraised value of \$200, which is at the rate of \$1.25 an acre. Being a lawyer, he knows that the taxpayers have to furnish the money to pay the interest annually, and the situation has enabled him to feel serene for eight years, although he has all that time owed this honest debt.

Unless Major Calkins fairly and squarely explains away his treatment of the Widow Duncan, he should be defeated one hundred thousand votes in Indiana. Honest and decent Republicans by the thousand will demand a satisfactory explanation, and the Major should be much more prompt in this than he has been in the school fund transaction, beside which this last disclosure is like a mountain to a mole-hill.—Huntington Democrat.

For eight years the Auditor of LaPorte county has been trying to find a purchaser for Calkins' \$700 land for the price of \$200, but no one can be found to buy the swamp at that price.

How The Newspapers Stand.

Out of the twenty-four great newspapers of New York City, eighteen are cordially supporting Cleveland; only three favor the election of Blaine; two support Butler and one is for St. John.

The following is an incomplete list of the Republican and Independent papers that support Cleveland:

- 1—New York Times, Rep.
- 2—New York Herald, Ind.
- 3—New York Evening Post, Rep.
- 4—New York Truth, Ind. Rep.
- 5—New York Telegram, Ind.
- 6—New York Harpers' Weekly, Rep.
- 7—New York Morning Journal, Rep.
- 8—New York Globe (negro organ.) Rep.
- 9—New York Graphic, Rep.
- 10—New York Journal of Commerce, Ind.
- 11—New York Nation, Rep.
- 12—Brooklyn Union, Rep.
- 13—Rochester, N. Y., Herald, Rep.
- 14—Rochester, N. Y., Post-Express, Rep.
- 15—Albany, N. Y., Express, Rep.
- 16—Buffalo, N. Y., News, Rep.
- 17—Syracuse, N. Y., Herald, Rep.
- 18—Cohoes, N. Y., Regulator, Rep. (labor organ.)
- 19—Cohoes, N. Y., Gazette, Rep.
- 20—Boston, Mass., Herald, Ind. Rep.
- 21—Boston, Mass., Advertiser, Rep.
- 22—Boston, Mass., Transcript, Rep.
- 23—Boston, Mass., Gazette, Rep.
- 24—Worcester, Mass., Spy, Rep.
- 25—Worcester, Mass., Gazette, Rep.
- 26—Springfield, Mass., Republican, Ind. Rep.
- 27—New London, Conn., Telegram, Rep.
- 28—New Haven, Conn., Register, Rep.
- 29—New Haven, Conn., News, Ind. Rep.
- 30—Waterbury, Conn., American, Ind. Rep.
- 31—Bangor, Me., Commercial, Rep.
- 32—Flushing, L. I., Times, Rep.
- 33—Newport, R. I., News, Rep.
- 34—Wilmington, Del., Morning News, Rep.
- 35—Philadelphia Record, Ind. Rep.
- 36—Philadelphia Telegraph, Rep.
- 37—Philadelphia Times, Ind.
- 38—Reading, Pa., Eagle, Rep.
- 39—Allegheny City, Pa., Evening Mail, Rep.
- 40—Monongahela City, Pa., Record, Rep. (labor organ.)
- 41—East Liverpool, O., Pottery's Gazette, Rep. (labor organ.)
- 42—Detroit, Mich., Times, Rep.
- 43—Chicago Times, Ind.
- 44—Chicago News, Ind., Rep.
- 45—Chicago Herald, Ind.
- 46—Kansas City Star, Rep.
- 47—Minneapolis Review, Rep.

GERMAN PRESS.

- 48—New York Staats Zeitung, Rep.
- 49—New York Puck, Ind. Rep.
- 50—Rochester, N. Y., Aleud Post, Rep.
- 51—Brooklyn, N. Y., Freie Presse, Rep.
- 52—Buffalo Freie Presse, Rep.
- 53—Cincinnati Volksfreund, Ind.
- 54—Chicago Staats Zeitung, Rep.
- 55—Chicago Freie Presse, Rep.
- 56—Milwaukee Der Herald, Rep.
- 57—Milwaukee Freie Presse, Rep.
- 58—St. Louis Anzeiger, Rep.
- 59—St. Joseph, Mo., Volksblatt, Rep.
- 60—Topeka, Kas., Telegraph, Rep.

Cleveland has the solid support of the German press, without a single exception, in Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois and Kansas, and the same in Ohio and Michigan, with few exceptions.

The German population of the several States mentioned is as follows: Ohio, 192,597; Illinois, 235,786; Wisconsin, 184,223; Michigan, 89,085; Iowa, 88,268; Minnesota, 66,592.

CHRISTIAN PRESS SUPPORTING CLEVELAND.

- 61—Congregationalist.
- 62—Christian Register.
- 63—Christian Union.
- 64—Christian at Work.
- 65—Weekly Witness.
- 66—Baptist Weekly.
- 67—Baptist Record.

Here is a list of 67 of the most important papers of the United States, and with one exception they supported Garfield four years ago. They are now all heartily supporting Cleveland and Hendricks. By adding the smaller papers that have come out in opposition to Blaine and Logan the list might be greatly enlarged, but this is enough to show the drift of public feeling. The estimated daily circulation of the above papers reaches about 1,500,000 copies, while the weekly German publications are estimated at nearly 500,000 copies. It will be strange indeed if these papers exert no influence on the public mind, and we point to them as one of the many significant signs of Democratic success.

The Democratic watch word, Tell the Truth, should be painted on every dead wall and written across every path this campaign, so that he who runs may read. It should stand as a constant reminder to everybody that the difference between Cleveland and Blaine is the difference between truth and falsehood—the difference between honesty and dishonesty.

There is not one Methodist in Indiana that is truly and honestly a christian, that will vote for Calkins, after reading widow Duncan's letter. Mrs. Duncan is a devout christian and an earnest worker in the M. E. Church, and each minister should read her letter from his pulpit.—[Albion Democrat,