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SENATOR TILLMAN WRITES OPEN LETTER TO GOVERNOR BLEASE

Hon Cole L. Blease,
Columbia, S. C.,

My dear sir: while the returns from the primary election are not complete enough is known to make it certain that you and I are both re-elected to the high offices we now hold. In every way possible you have tried to make my old friends among the people believe that you are the representative of Tillmanism, and therefore entitled to be my political heir.

Permit me to explain briefly the difference between Tillmanism and Bleasism as I understand it. Tillmanism means genuine democracy, the rule of the people—of all the white people privilege and favors to none, with equality of opportunity and equality of burden to all. It was so understood by the Tillmanites in 1890 and 1892 and it is so understood by them still.

Bleasism on the contrary means personal ambition and greed for office—the office to be used not for the welfare of all the people and the State, but office for "Bleas and his friends. None others need apply."

While Tillman as Governor did not hesitate to pardon a constable by telegraph who had been unrighteously punished for rading Chico's house, Tillman always tried and did administer the law equally and justly as he understood it. He had no favorites and tried to obey the will of the majority of the people even in those counties which had voted against him. He refused appointments as trial justice to some of his bitter political opponents, but they had not been elected at the primary, but were nominated by his political enemies in the Legislature.

Tillman in Washington has never asked whether a man from South Carolina who has applied to him for a favor, for promotion or for protection was a Tillmanite or an "anti," his only purpose being to try to discover whether the man was a trustworthy, honorable and clean and would make good if he got Tillman's endorsement.

I believe in sticking by my friends, Governor, but I want to stick by them in the right way and not in the wrong way as you have done. Again Tillman said many harsh and bitter things on the stump because he was tantalized and howled at worse than you have ever been, but he always tried to tell the truth, and never under the greatest provocation did he threaten to make anybody "sweat blood" or indulge in indecent speech, blackguardism or vulgarity on the stump. It is not the business of a governor nor ought it to be permitted to him to threaten his constituents. The law is for the protection of every man and not for a Governor's friends only.

The one thing which gave Tillman the most concern was dealing with petitions for pardon, the life, death and liberty of the poor wretches for whom the petitions were filed. Blease is charged with selling pardons through his lawyer friends and sharing the money. Governor you know whether there is any shadow or reason or foundation for this? I do not, but for your own fame and good name as well as for the good name of the State you ought to clear this charge up. You cannot afford to treat it with silent contempt for it will not down that way. Tillman was accused of grafting in the dispensary, but no proofs were ever adduced or could have ever been produced. His most effective defence was that those who charged him with stealing would have stolen if they had had the same opportunities as he had.

Bleas is charged with having voted in the Legislature as a lawyer for a fee rather than as the Legislative representative of the people I have not examined the records and cannot say whether this is true. Others can determine for themselves and convict or acquit you according to the evidence.

When the question was asked by the infuriated Tillmanites who felt that they had been betrayed by their old leader, "what induced him to do this?" Some of them in their rage shouted "he has been bought." Who in South Carolina knows what the price of Tillman is? In Washington where he has worked for the last 18 years for the State and nation he had opportunities almost innumerable to get money for official action. When he was in charge of the railroad rate bill where there were hundreds of millions and even billions of dollars worth of property involved and slight change in the law which Tillman could have added to obtain, meant untold money for the railroad interests, no one ever hinted nor did anyone ever believe that he was approachable as a bribe-taker. It has remained for some crazy South Carolinian, drunk with Bleasism, to hurl this suspicion at an old man hovering to the brink of the grave, a man whose purity in private and whose purity as a servant of the people has made him above suspicion.

On the night of the election I had a dream in which something told me "Bleas is elected." Becoming fully awake I thought over all the consequences as the people dreaded them and considered what was best to be done in the event the dream should prove true. I thought of your threat to make the people "sweat blood" and of what it really meant or could possibly mean. Thy one interpretation that occurred to me was that the Governor would make a general jail delivery, by emptying the penitentiary and turning the convicts loose upon society. You have that power, sir. It was given you for purpose of mercy and not for the punishment of your fellow-citizens. The Governor takes an oath to see that the "laws are executed in mercy." There is in the constitution nothing which permits him to trample the law under foot on the pretense of mercy, and nothing but

venality and greed of money can make him place the pardoning power in the hands of a lawyer who charges big fees to obtain pardons. As for pardoning the criminals by wholesale nobody but a lunatic would do such a thing and nobody but a lunatic would threaten it. Let me beg you to beware what you do and say hereafter. Put a bridle on that unlicensed tongue, you owe it to yourself, and you owe it to the State.

I have been trusted by the people as well as you. They have shown their love and confidence in no uncertain way and I therefore claim the right to warn and to offer to help you in all matter of pardons if you will deign to ask my advice. Nobody in South Carolina will doubt that justice of any pardon I recommend. This is a thankless burden I am willing to assume for the public welfare, and do not expect to do any of the drudgery of it, but I know men I can trust, whose honor and patriotism are not only above suspicion but who have the respect and confidence of their fellow-citizens. I will enlist the help, if I can, of these to examine the petitions in order to help you, but you shall not, if I can prevent it, carry out your threat to make the people of South Carolina "sweat blood" because so many of them are "debauched" by your demagogic appeals.

I consider, Governor, what it means to turn loose criminals, murderers and cutthroats, and then consider the infamy of boldly and openly offering to pardon any man who would kill certain people. Don't you see what a criminal folly you have been led to give people the right to think that you will pardon men who assassinate your enemies? Such an infamous idea never entered any but a crazy man's brain.

In your desperation attempting to reply to my indication of you in the Ferguson letter you were unscrupulous enough to say:

"I fear no evil from Senator Tillman's letter, except that possibly his mind has become more decreased of late than it was when I had my last talk with his confidential physician." Every one knows that you alluded to Dr. Babcock, and a more knightly gentleman or a more loyal friend to me never breathed, and I know you had no authority for it. He is not the type that discuss their patients and their ailments with Tom, Dick and Harry.

I want to say to you that I know since my last stroke of paralysis in February, 1910, my memory has been much impaired, but the other parts of my brain have gradually and very perceptibly increased in efficiency and vigor and I am now fully capable of doing as good work as I ever did. The only reason why I have felt unwilling to make speeches in the Senate and on the hustings this summer is because I know I cannot speak with any force or vigor without turning on the full voltage of the dynamo. Under excitement the blood rushes to the brain for that is the way the mind works. Dr. Babcock had warned me that to attempt to make a speech would mean grave danger and the probable bursting of a blood vessel followed by paralysis or death. Therefore I have refrained and restrained myself, though at times the temptation has been very, very great. But, Governor, while my memory is poor the moral fiber in me is as sound as it ever was, and my patriotism burns with an even brighter flame than when my health was vigorous. And my conscience is in fine working order too I can assure you.

When I told my wife that I intended to write an open letter to you and outlined some of the things I intended to say, she pleaded with me thus: "Bleas is not a wholly bad man. He is passionate and has been tantalized, abused and misrepresented until he has lost all sense of responsibility and self-control." Recollect, Governor, this same noble woman has been your advocate with me until your recent statement came out about what occurred last spring in Washington. She knows you told an untruth and has never forgiven you. It is in this spirit I now speak. You have been lied on, slandered and abused almost beyond endurance, but so was I. I had charge and self-control enough to rise above it. You have been weak enough to surrender to the impulse to strike back and to strike below the belt.

I want those who consider Bleasism as Tillmanism to take this contrast in consideration when they make up their final judgment. Tillmanism as Till man preaches it and has always preached it, is noble, high and elevating. Bleasism is selfish, low, dirty and revengable.

I have been very greatly blessed in my life and every day I return thanks to the Creator for His many blessings. The greatest among these has been a good woman whom God gave me in her youth and purity 45 years ago. I have had one grief and that was the knowledge that so many good men in South Carolina seemed implacable and irreconcilable in their hatred of me. These men truly and honestly hated me as boldly as many South Carolinians hate you now, but there are more of them in your case than there ever were in mine, thank God. Honesty compels me to say that you deserve the hate and distrust in which they hold you. I never did. You had an opportunity when you went into the Governor's office such as comes to few men in this life. Your inaugural was a great disappointment to your friends and provoked your enemies to renewed and relentless activity. You had shown yourself too little and narrow to be Governor of any state for, my dear sir, the governorship is a very high honor indeed, but it also carries the very heaviest responsibilities. You will recall when you were elected two years ago I wired you congratulations and added: "Let the heathen rage." The heathen have raved, but the righteous also have mourned and their cries are now rising to Heaven in accusation of

(Continued on Page Three.)

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N. B. The following schedule figures are published only as information and not guaranteed.

*54	53	Station	52	*55
8:20 a m	2:05 p m	Lv Laurens Ar	2:52 p m	7:55 p m
8:44	2:30	Clinton	2:30	7:35
9:32	3:20	Newberry	1:29	6:44
9:50	3:34	Prosperity	1:12	6:26
11:15	4:55	Ar Columbia Lv	11:35	5:00
	6:40	Ar Sumter Lv	9:40	
	10:30 p m	Ar Charleston Lv	6:00 a m	

*—Trains 54 and 55 run solid between Greenville and Columbia daily except Sunday. These trains stop at Gervais St. Station, while trains 52 and 53 go to Union Station.
Solid through trains between Greenville and Charleston via Laurens and Columbia.

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