

# SUMNER TELLS HIS OWN STORY

### Former Gardiner Pastor Writes From Texas Giving Details of Perfidy.

HALSEY, Ore., April 8.—A long letter from Rev. George C. Summers alias Rev. George Clark, formerly pastor of the Halsey M. E. Church, who was taken to Throckmorton, Tex., to stand trial for obtaining money under false pretenses and who has just been acquitted there, has been received by a member of Summers' former church here. Summers, it will be remembered, was recognized at Gardiner, Ore., by a one-time resident of Throckmorton, who told the sheriff of Douglas county of the charge against him and that he had eloped with Miss Bessie Massey, organist of his church at Throckmorton, with whom he was living in Gardiner and by whom he had two children. The letter follows:

"Dear Brother—Your letter at hand and contents noted. I was real glad to get a letter from you and to know you were willing to hear the truth. I was married when I was a boy to a woman eight years older than I. Our married life was a terrible nightmare. In the first place I did not love her but respected her, and it was not long until I lost the respect for her and it was no fault of mine. She told me plainly that the reason she married me was she did not want to be an old maid.

"Children came to our home and I felt it my duty to help raise them. I educated my boy and oldest girl at Methodist schools. They are fine young folks. The girl is married and has one child. There is one other little girl, she is 14 years old.

"I was appointed to the Throckmorton charge in 1902. Miss Bessie Massey was my organist and was 26 years old in the Summer of 1904. I was sick with bowel trouble—not so bad but what I could do ministerial work, but in a serious condition. My doctor advised me to go somewhere and have an operation performed. There was a man that lived in the bounds of my work that I tried to sell a horse to that I owned. He said that he would not buy, but let me have \$100. So I accepted the money and that is all there is to the swindling. As I was going to Kansas City, Bessie and her sister were going to Fort Worth. On the way I spoke about a preacher in Kansas wanting me to hold a meeting for him and Bessie said she would like to go with me and play the organ. I told her I would see she got \$40 and her expenses if she would. She accepted.

"While we were in Kansas I received a letter from my wife saying Bessie's folks were raising Cain about us being up there together. We took fright, and after considering for a while we decided to go to Portland, Ore. and I would get a divorce and we would marry. When we reached Portland we were both sick, and after we got through with the doctor, etc., we had but very little money and were strangers in a strange land.

"Of course, something had to be done. The first thing that opened was the ministry I accepted, intending so soon as I could to get a divorce and we would marry. Baby George came around, and of course that would take money, and we had received but little that year, and did not have money enough to pay for divorce proceedings.

"The next year I went to Portland to see about what I would have to do to get one, and while there I went into police quarters, and saw my picture in a paper, and that I was advertised for swindling, so I could not bring suit. I wanted to go over in Coos county, for I thought maybe I could go to Curry county and get a divorce, and if not I was going to another state and try. I was recognized the first Sunday night, and you know the result.

"So far as my taking money from the church is concerned, that is as false as Satan himself. The facts are that the church owed me \$150 on salary for that year. If it had paid up I would not have had to borrow, and it owed about \$150 on the year before, so in reality the church owed me \$300 or over, and owes it still, the truth of which can be vouched for by the church records. After I left here they got the man from whom I borrowed the money to come to this county and

live, and indicted me for swindling, and then several of the members who had paid on quarterage said, 'Yes, he got \$5 from me, and \$2 from me,' never telling they owed it to me and had paid quarterage. So that is how I swindled the church.

"I have not seen Bessie or the children since I came here. She is at her father's and they live about a quarter of a mile from the jail. They won't let her come, and they won't let me send her a letter. I have written, perhaps, 20 and have given a good many to the sheriff. He either gives them to her father or destroys them. I have sent out several by private persons, but, of course, I do not know how many she got. I love Bessie and my children as well as any man loves his wife and children, and as soon as I get rid of this enthrallment I am going to get a divorce and marry her. Her intentions and purposes in the matter were pure.

"She is one of the best women on earth. I speak advisedly, because I know. Her people are bringing everything possible to bear on her to get her to throw me down, but I don't believe they will ever succeed.

"So far as the indictment is concerned I can prove every allegation false by from one to four witnesses. It was just used as a subterfuge to get me back and to get me in jail. Now, you may know sentiment is all against me here, and while the people here don't believe me guilty of the charge, they would like to see me punished. They don't understand my married relation and I won't enlighten them. Bessie knows, and that's all I care for. While in Oregon we were true to the church and her every interest, and by referring to the conference journal you can see that the work under our care prospered as it had not for years. Take Halsey, for instance—Before we went there Halsey and Harrisburg paid pastor \$540 and for missions \$35. They paid me \$600, and for missions \$75. Halsey paid \$600 itself the past year and for missions \$75. I am sure that you know that we did not fail to declare the whole counsel of God. The only thing in which we did that which was wrong, was living together and not being married, and so far as that is concerned, our intentions were good.

"There are women that are condemning Bessie who are not fit to lace her shoes, and so far as I am concerned I don't care what the common herd thinks of me. God is the judge before whom I will stand or fall. Now if you want to give this to the correspondent to publish, I don't care. Please send me a copy of the paper. I don't have much to read, not even bible. Sincerely, 'G. C. SUMMERS.'

Summers wrote some time ago that his wife had sued for a divorce, but before doing so had sent their son and son-in-law to tell him that she would forgive him and the boys offered to bail him out if he would return home. He flatly refused to go home, preferring to remain in jail, he said.

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