

PENN'A LYCEUM BUREAU,

Box 204, CLEARFIELD, PA.; Established 1883.

M. L. MCQUOWN, MANAGER.

TALENT FOR 1886-7.

Col. RUSSELL H. CONWELL,
Dr. A. A. WILLITS,
Gen. GEORGE W. BAIN,
Hon. S. P. LELAND,
Hon. T. H. MURRAY,
ELIZABETH S. CHADBOURNE, (Elo.)
Hon. B. G. NORTHROP,
WALLACE BRUCE,
Rev. WALDO MESSAROS,
JAHU DEWITT MILLER,
Col. J. P. SANFORD,
Rev. MADISON PETERS,
Hon. E. A. APGAR, (Illustrated)
WM. M. MARSHALL, (Illustrated.)
Ex-Lieut. Gov. WILL CUMBACK.

In reply to yours of _____

"Locals," in all correspondence, means Cab Fare and Hotel Bills.

Clearfield, Pa., April 23rd. 1887 -

Hon. A. W. Tourgee,

Mayville, N.Y.

My Dear Sir: - Your frank and very positive letter of 19th, ult. is before me. I am glad that you raised the questions you did relative to our method of doing business. To give you a complete idea of our business and methods I will say that in the year 1882, and while serving as County of Superintendent of Public Schools in this County, I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Col. G. W. Bain and liked him so much that I asked the privilege of introducing him to the Superintendents of this State, as he had just then commenced to deliver his popular lecture, "Boys and Girls Nice and Naughty or the Pendulum of Life" and was not known as any other than a Temperance Lecturer. I met with great success in this small enterprise and in 1883 added some other prominent names and began business on a somewhat larger scale. I had good success although my business was rather local, being confined principally to Pennsylvania, but I aimed to announce none who had not good reputations and succeeded in gaining the confidence of my patrons. From the first I have not had any "special" interest in any one or more men under my management although I have been solicited to give a particular person a "boom" and receive a larger rate of

Commission for so doing, but have always declined. My arrangement has been to adhere to the rates fixed by the Lecturer and collect from him 10, per cent of the proceeds for doing the business. Of course my men have not the same rates. Col. Bain charges from \$50- to \$60- according to the paying ability of place and committee and often allowed me to use my discretion in making a convenient date for "filling up purposes" while Conwell charged from \$75. to \$100-, therefore when a committee asked for Conwell I urged him with all my might for the reason that he was the choice and an engagement for him was worth more to me than for a cheaper man, but if the Committee peremptorily declined because of his high rates I then would mention others on my list whose rates were not so high. This was not done in prejudice to any one but to favor the committee and also protect myself. When a letter of inquiry comes to me as to prices, etc I first place in line my \$100- ^(only me) dollar men and recommend them as a body, and then I mention my next grade and so on and always allow the Committee to make their choice from the information thus given. Of course if such inquiry should come from some who have had Conwell and Willits, I would be glad to say that Mr. Toursee is a new man on our list and I can recommend him as one worthy to follow those whom I have furnished you in this class of talent, that kind of discrimination, it seems to me would be perfectly proper, and justifiable. I will say on this point that we do not discriminate between our men but allow the Committees to do that, hence it follows that one man may get more engagements on our list, than others but it cannot be charged to us. For example our Mr. Bain has more invitations than has Mr. Bruce or Mr. Miller but I could not refuse him and by some artifice secure dates for these others in his stead, that would

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(2)

would not be honorable. So on our plan of work it is necessary for the Lecturer to have the necessary "Magnetism" and then he will be all right. We would not dishonor the Platform by pushing a poor man for the sake of a "double" Commission or "side cut". Now one word as to prices. I find that the lecturer that has an "Arbitrary" rate from which he will not deviate is not a profitable man to have in a Lecture Agency. Mr. Conwell is that way, it must be so much or nothing and this in itself forces these long runs that you complain about. For example I arrange for you at Altoona Dec. 21st. and at Reading, Pa. Dec. 23rd. I find that between these two places there is not an Institute nor a Committee that can pay you your highest rates but I can place you at Hifflintown, small county, for \$15 or \$20- less and that will break the run and give you that night, otherwise I must needs drag you to Philadelphia or Lancaster out of the road or allow you to have that night for quiet reflection, upon "The Fool's Errand". So I would say that all committees, especially in our Institute Courses cannot pay the highest prices and I find that it is hard work where a man has an "arbitrary" rate from which he will not deviate under any circumstances. Lastly I will say that if you give us your name we will be pleased to

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to ^{what} do what we can for you in this State and in adjoining ones if convenient, just how much that will be we are unable to tell as I find in our Institute Courses you are comparatively a stranger, but as we have been around with Conwell and Miller & Bain we want to offer some other one equally as attractive, and therefore flatter ourselves that we can get you a respectable number of dates. You will, therefore, inform me as to your prices and the rule you adhere to whether arbitrary or not, or whether at any time we are allowed to ask a price above that fixed by yourself. I prefer not to do this because Committees believe that Lecturing is like travelling and that some one who has announced your name is a "Scalper" and they can get a lower rate, hence they write to all who have your name announced. In our County Institute Courses I have the most of my men arrange a Schedule of rates proportioned according to the size of the County and the number of schools and I find it works admirably. For example Lancaster County with her thousands of people and over 400 teachers can pay the highest rate without the slightest embarrassment while, Cameron with but 67 teachers and a population not one thirtieth ^{of that of Lancaster} cannot pay so much and hence must look out for cheap talent. I placed a Schedule of rates in the hands of the lecturer showing the number of schools in the County and then making the large Counties pay the maximum while the small ones paid the minimum, these two grades to be fixed of course by the lecturer. If you come with us I should be pleased to have all your advertising material, including circulars issued in the past, Lithographs, if you have them and "Photo Electro" if such you have. I think I have gone over the ground pretty well and hope to hear from you, pro. or con, soon. You might intimate how much you will expect of us the first year.

Wm. S. McQueen