



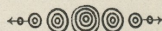
POLK MILLER, (Virginia.)

Polk Miller's Dialect Recital,

An Evening of Story and Song on

"Old Times Down South,"

Delineating the Old Plantation Negro.



Mr. Horace J. Smith, Sole Manager,

Box 217, Richmond, Va. March 11th, 1896.

Mr. A.A. Thompson,

Raleigh, N. C.

My dear Sir:-

Your letter of March 10th received. I note that Rockingham cannot be made to fit. May be Mr. Miller will appreciate a rest on that day at any rate, and the day spent in Laurinburg would doubtless add to his receipts at that point. I will have to go to New York in two or three days; I have put it off as long as I can, but I will leave instructions so that if you close any one of the points that are now open and write for printed matter to be shipped, it will be attended to promptly. I enclose copies of reports which I have furnished all along the route, except for dates which are still open, viz., 18th, 23rd, 26th and 31st. This last date is Henderson, and I believe you intended to change that date in some way. I have the name of Mrs. M. Parham, but have not sent printed matter or report as the date was undecided whether we would take the date or not. Greenville ought to be a good point. I believe I sent you a letter from there a few days ago, so when you write to the towns you get for these open dates, enclose one of the blank reports and ask them to follow the instructions.

Yours very truly,

Diet. by H. F. S.

A MOST UNIQUE ENTERTAINMENT, BRISTLING WITH AMUSING ANECDOTES, QUIANT SKETCHES, PATHETIC ILLUSTRATIONS, AND OLD-TIME PLANTATION MELODIES (ACCOMPANIED BY THE BANJO) THE WHOLE COMBINING TO PRODUCE A MOST CHARMING AND DELIGHTFUL EVENING'S ENJOYMENT. THE ENTERTAINMENT IS IN NO SENSE A LECTURE, BUT IS "AN EVENING OF STORY AND SONG." IF YOU WOULD ENJOY A HEARTY LAUGH, MR. MILLER CAN FURNISH THE INCENTIVE.

A.A.T.#2.

I think that all places not yet having reported should be dropped and new arrangements started in other points even if the new ones are not so large or promising. Sometimes a little town will show considerable appreciation and in the present case I think all dates should be filled if possible.

I have on several occasions sent Col. Old press notices &c., to use in the papers. I have written him to-day.

If it is a possible thing by constant correspondence and regular notice through the North Carolina press to keep the people interested, without sending a man along the line, I am inclined to think that the extra expense better not be incurred and if it is necessary the man should be the very best that can be secured. Let me know about this.

Regarding settlements. It is not material whether or not each town should pay Mr. Miller on the spot, but there are two points upon which the manager of each town should have early and definite instructions. FIRST: That a full statement of gross receipts and expenditures for each town, be rendered the evening of the recital, one copy to the Sec'y. of the Vance Committee at Raleigh, one copy to Mr. Miller and one copy to me at Richmond. The net cash must be sent to the Treasurer of the Vance fund not less than three days after recital in each town and final settlement is to be made with either Mr. Miller or myself at the termination of the tour.

SECOND: In order that above statements may be rendered promptly each person holding tickets for sale should be notified by the respective managers in each town to turn in tickets or cash on the evening of the recital and in event of having to leave town or sickness or any other cause whereby such an duty would be frustrated that they appoint some person to represent them so that the smooth working of the rule may not be interfered with.

I wish you would, as Secretary, have a special letter of in-

A.A.T.#3.

struction written and sent to each lady or gentleman in charge in the several towns embodying the above idea as you may see best suited to accomplish prompt returns.

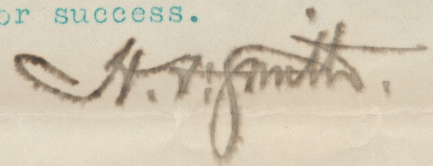
The above is in accordance with the contract which states that all moneys shall be first turned into the Treasury of the Vance Monument Association and a final settlement be made after the tour is over &c., but of course if it will spur the managers up to prompt action by notifying them to settle with Mr. Miller after each recital and at the same time send a report to the Treasurer or Secretary, I think probably this will be a better plan and more productive of prompt settlements. Let me hear at once regarding this matter.

I am now in active correspondence with all the towns where names have been sent and propose to keep it up until Mr. Miller has "been and gone".

I am,

Yours,

looking and hustling for success.



Dict. by H. F. S.

Enclosed is the list as it now stands.

*Recd your letter of Mar 2nd enclosing letters from
Stateville & Winston also resolutions of Com.
I wired you yesterday that Burlington
and Greensboro were all right - but Mr. Miller
will not take Wilson - He will explain at
Raleigh when he comes on the 9th*

Personal Commendations of Mr. Miller's Recital.

- Henry Watterson, Ed. Louisville (Ky.) Courier-Journal, says:
 "Polk Miller, you have the best one-man show in America."
- Chauncey M. Depew, Esq., writes:
 "I take pleasure in certifying to the ability of Mr. Polk Miller and the excellence of his recitals."
- Thomas Nelson Page, "Mars Chan" Etc.
 "Polk Miller is a great success, for he knows the negro, can tell a negro story and give the true negro dialect better than any man living."
- Howard Saxby, Cincinnati, Ohio.
 "What I like in Polk Miller is, that though he is not my wife, I can stand his lectures twice."
- Hon. C. U. McElroy, Bowling Green, Ky.
 "What James Whitcomb Riley is to the Hoosier dialect, Polk Miller is to the Negro dialect; both perfect in their line."
- Rev. J. William Jones, Chaplain Univ. of Va.
 "Polk Miller and his banjo reproduce the negro of the happy days before the war, and his entertainments give the highest pleasure and satisfaction to all who hear him. I do not hesitate to say that it is inimitably done."
- Ex-Governor Fitzhugh Lee.
 "I know Polk Miller well. When he is sketching the 'foe de war' negro, if you did not know he was Polk Miller you would think he was a darkey of olden time, and if you did not know he was an old-time darkey you would think he was Polk Miller."
- Prof. J. U. Lloyd, Cincinnati, Ohio.
 "Polk Miller is a wonder. I have heard him several times and could listen to him every night of the year. He is never tiring, for he is always original and sparkling. He is undoubtedly the platform success of the nineteenth century."
- Mark Twain.
 Mark Twain, in his introduction of Mr. Miller at the Madison Square Garden Concert Hall, in New York City, said: "Mr. Miller is thoroughly competent to entertain you with his sketches of the old-time negro, and I not only commend him to your intelligent notice, but personally endorse him. The stories I have heard him tell are the best I have ever heard."
- Joel Chandler Harris, "Uncle Remus," Etc.
 "Polk Miller is the humorist the country has been looking for. I know of no one who can more aptly depict the real negro character or more faithfully render the true negro dialect. *There is a live 'nigger' hidden somewhere in Polk Miller's Banjo* and you look for him to jump out and go to dancing when Miller strikes a string."
- The Governor of Virginia says:
 Mr. Polk Miller is one of the best delineators of the negro character that I have ever seen. An evening with him is an *absolute pleasure*. First, his quaint imitations of the old-time darkey bring side-splitting laughter, and then, almost in the same breath, he moves his audience to tears. *He is a genius* in his line, and what renders his entertainments more delightful is the fact that his anecdotes are *pure*, and replete with humor."
 CHAS. T. O'FERRALL.
- Bill Nye says:
 "Polk Miller does not advertise goods he cannot deliver. He says he will describe and illustrate the Old Virginia Plantation Negro, and I am free to say that he does it. After hearing the negro dialect given by a Canadian, and the folk song and dialect of the negro given in *Cork and Cockney* at St. James Hall, London, I am glad to hear Mr. Miller correct this misconception with the *real thing*."
- The Governor of Florida says:
 "It affords me pleasure to commend Mr. Miller, of Richmond, Virginia, as a refined and cultured gentleman. His name is a household word in his native State of Virginia, whose people always welcome him, not only as a citizen of the best Southern type, but as the best living delineator of the old-time negro character. His 'recitals' are entertaining in the highest degree, and no one will regret hearing him. Mr. Miller is a successful business man in Richmond, as well as a genius in his line. In all respects he is worthy of the highest esteem and confidence."
 W. D. BLOXHAM.

Prominent Points Visited.

| | |
|---------------|--------|
| NEW YORK, | N. Y. |
| BROOKLYN, | N. Y. |
| PHILADELPHIA, | Pa. |
| PITTSBURG, | Pa. |
| BALTIMORE, | Md. |
| WILMINGTON, | DEL. |
| WASHINGTON, | D. C. |
| RICHMOND, | Va. |
| NORFOLK, | Va. |
| LYNCHBURG, | Va. |
| RALEIGH, | N. C. |
| WILMINGTON, | N. C. |
| COLUMBIA, | S. C. |
| CHARLESTON, | S. C. |
| ATLANTA, | Ga. |
| SAVANNAH, | Ga. |
| MONTGOMERY, | Ala. |
| SELMA, | Ala. |
| NASHVILLE, | Tenn. |
| LOUISVILLE, | Ky. |
| CHARLESTON, | W. Va. |
| ST. LOUIS, | Mo. |
| JACKSON, | Miss. |
| NEW ORLEANS, | La. |
| HOUSTON, | Tex. |
| CINCINNATI, | Ohio. |

SOME OF OUR AUSPICES.

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| UNIVERSITY CLUB, | N. Y. City. |
| SOUTHERN SOCIETY, | N. Y. City. |
| ALDINE CLUB, | N. Y. City. |
| TEACHERS' ASSEMBLIES, | Virginia, North Carolina. |
| ST. NICHOLAS SOCIETY, | N. Y. City. |
| NEW CENTURY CLUB, | Wilmington, Del. |
| HAMILTON CLUB, | Brooklyn, N. Y. |
| UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, | Charlottesville, Va. |
| TRINITY COLLEGE COURSE, | Durham, N. C. |
| CHAUTAQUA ASSEMBLIES, | New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama. |
| AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION, | Asheville, N. C., '94. |
| DAVIDSON COLLEGE, | Davidson, N. C. |

Repoterial Remarks.

- Richmond (Va.) Times.
 "The new genius of the South"
- Charleston (S. C.) Sun.
 "As an artist in his line he has no equal."
- Atlanta (Ga.) Constitution.
 "Mr. Miller *knows* the negro."
- Nashville (Tenn.) American.
 "Mr. Miller is a genius as an entertainer."
- Charleston (W. Va.) Evening Mail.
 "Mr. Miller has no equal as a negro dialect delineator."
- Montgomery (Ala.) Advertiser.
 "His entertainment is entirely out of the usual run."
- Augusta (Ga.) Chronicle.
 "Polk Miller is all that he is said to be."
- Washington (D. C.) Post.
 "Polk Miller kept his audience in a constant exercise of its risibles."
- New York Tribune.
 "Polk Miller kept his audience convulsed with laughter for a full hour."
- Cincinnati (O.) Commercial Gazette.
 "It was a well-pleased audience that left the Auditorium at 10:30 last night."
- Richmond (Va.) Dispatch.
 "A better delineator of the true negro dialect and character than this charming Virginia gentleman never graced the stage."
- Houston (Tex.) Post.
 Mr. Miller doesn't *lecture*, he just talks, plays the banjo to perfection, and sings Negro songs in a way that beats a negro himself."
- Wilmington (N. C.) Star.
 "A Virginia gentleman of the old school, a versatile writer, and last night proved him without a doubt a success in his chosen avocation."

- Bowling Green (Ky.) Park City Times.
 "His entertainment was entirely new here. * * * The audience was convulsed with laughter at the ludicrous situations pictured."
- Louisville (Ky.) Courier Journal.
 "The best commentary that can be made on his novel entertainment is to say that nobody should neglect to attend his recital this afternoon."
- New Orleans (La.) Times-Democrat.
 "The listener found it only necessary to close his eyes and imagine that he was enjoying the peculiar prattle of an old-time darkey."
- Wilmington (Del.) Morning News.
 "Mr. Miller's imitations of the old-time darkey are *inimitable*, and it is useless to undertake to describe it. His work on the banjo and plantation melodies were highly enjoyed"
- Selma (Ala.) Journal.
 "The gentleman had scarcely spoken ten minutes before his audience felt as if they were seated around the hearthstone of their own home, and that the speaker was one of their own home circle."

- New York World.
 "The St. Nicholas Society last evening celebrated the Dutch Eastertide festival, the Paas, with a dinner at the Waldorf. The President, Chauncey M. Depew, presiding, * * * Polk Miller, of Richmond, entertained the Society with a recital on "The Old Virginia Plantation Negro."
- Brooklyn (N. Y.) Life.
 "Mr. Miller appeared on Thursday evening at the Hamilton Club, under the auspices of the Art and Literature Committee, and the members were charmed both by his personality and wit."
- Baltimore (Md.) Sun.
 "Mr. Miller is an excellent mimic, and his dialect stories of negro life in Virginia before the war were enjoyed by a large audience. Besides his stories, Mr. Miller sang a number of plantation melodies to his own accompaniment on a banjo"
- Philadelphia (Pa.) Ledger.
 "Polk Miller, of Virginia, an entertainer who has a happy, colloquial way with him that proves none the less effective because it is so unassuming, put himself thoroughly *en rapport* with the goodly audience at the New Century drawing room last evening. He gave a 'dialect recital,' which proved an agreeable departure from the ordinary run of platform performances."
- New Orleans (La.) Daily Picayune.
 "Mr. Polk Miller, of Virginia, was the show at Odd Fellows' Hall last night. His lecture, or concert, whichever his hearers may choose to call it, is one of the *most unique* of all that have ever been heard in this city. * * * The people seemed unwilling to let Mr. Miller stop."
- St. Louis (Mo.) Republic.
 "The evening of story and song for the benefit of the Methodist Orphans' Home, given at the Germania Theatre last night, was one of the greatest—it might be said with truth—'howling successes' St. Louis has had for a long time, if the shouts of laughter that greeted Mr. Polk Miller's inimitable Negro imitations were any criterion."
- CHAUTAQUA NOTES.
- New York Chautauqua.
 "An immense audience filled the Amphitheatre with shouts of laughter at Polk Miller's pictures of negro life and manners in the old times before the war last night. Mr. Miller's songs and imitations of typical negro characters were evidently true to life. Mr. Miller's stories were entertaining, and seemed to amuse the people greatly."
- Alabama Chautauqua.
 "Mr. Miller is one of the finest men in his line known to the South. He can fairly make a banjo talk, and as for imitating the Negro of olden time, he cannot be surpassed. It is needless to say he will have a packed house to-night."
- Kentucky Chautauqua.
 "Mr. Polk Miller delighted the audience with plantation stories, dialect recitations, and Negro songs. His banjo playing was a rare treat, and the great audience went wild with enthusiasm. Nobody ever saw a more delighted crowd than the smiling one of last evening. It elicited much applause when Dr. Davidson announced that Mr. Miller would appear again to-day."