

# RUSSELL SAGE A PENNILESS FARM WORKER 75 YEARS AGO.

When one thinks of colossal wealth the names of individuals suggest themselves. The ancients linked Croesus with gold, and in Biblical days Solomon and David were used in metaphors relating to wealth. A few years ago the Rothschilds typified wealth beyond the grasp of imagination, but the modern American expresses the superlative of wealth by naming John D. Rockefeller, J. P. Morgan, W. K. Vanderbilt, J. Gould or Russell Sage.

The financial career of Russell Sage was not matched in history and is not approached in standard fiction. Born in poverty to absolute poverty, denied the advantages of the early years, the child of a common school education, he yet became wealthy at twenty, a masterful politician at thirty, named a President of the United States when thirty-two, a leader in Congress at thirty-six, a merchant, statesman, financier, railroad magnate and capitalist, is today, at the age of eighty-five, one of the most powerful and active figures in the most stupendous financial and commercial era of the world has ever witnessed. His wealth is estimated at \$100,000,000, and it may be \$200,000,000 or more.

**SAW STARTLING CHANGES.**  
Russell Sage was two years old when the first steam power press was set in motion in this or any other country. The first coal mine had been discovered but ten years before he was born. The first gas was manufactured in the year of his birth. Young Russell was nearly seven years old and a clerk in a bank when the first matches were made. Pins were a novelty and sold at a dear paper.

**BORN AT SHENANDOAH.**  
In the spring of 1816 Elisha Sage decided to abandon Connecticut and move to Michigan. He had served through the War of 1812, and, with the spirit of adventure in his heart, started out with an ox team and an emigrant wagon. He traversed the central part of New York, and finally came to the little settlement of Shenandoah, Verona township, Oneida county, N. Y. Here he stopped to rest, and here, on August 4, 1816, Russell Sage was born. The house where he was born was torn down years ago, but the old barn yet stands and is used as a tinker's shop. Two years later the family moved to Durhamville, and here, on a farm, Russell lived until he was twelve years old. The elder Sage died in 1834, after Russell was a millionaire and had twice been elected to Congress.

Russell was the youngest of a family of six children, and they drifted away from the farm when he was a boy. From the earliest time he can remember he was busy with those tasks which fell to the lot of boys on a farm. He was sturdy and healthy, and work seemed to agree with him. Though not possessed of wealth, his father was able to provide all that was needed by the family, but Mr. Sage has no recollection of the War of 1812, and, with the spirit of adventure in his heart, started out with an ox team and an emigrant wagon. He traversed the central part of New York, and finally came to the little settlement of Shenandoah, Verona township, Oneida county, N. Y. Here he stopped to rest, and here, on August 4, 1816, Russell Sage was born. The house where he was born was torn down years ago, but the old barn yet stands and is used as a tinker's shop. Two years later the family moved to Durhamville, and here, on a farm, Russell lived until he was twelve years old. The elder Sage died in 1834, after Russell was a millionaire and had twice been elected to Congress.

With other boys and men I watched the water creep along the bottom and finally reach its level. "The opening of the canal was signaled by the firing of the cannon across the country. The cannon were placed ten miles apart and the news was carried five hundred and fifty miles in eighty-one minutes. I stood for hours near the cannon in Verona waiting for the boom of the gun to the east of us. At last it came, and the same instant our cannon thundered its signal. This was regarded as a great feat. Today we can send words thousands of miles in a

ment to thousands of men and women, there were a few wooden houses and stores, New York City, now four hours away, could be reached only by a long and oftentimes dangerous journey. Troy was on the edge of a wilderness made romantic by the pens of Washington Irving and J. Fenimore Cooper. It was a trading post and outfitting station for those sturdy farmers who were then pressing west from the New England States.

"Boyhood," mused Mr. Sage, "I don't suppose I had any boyhood after I was twelve years of age. It was nothing but work."

**HIS FIRST VENTURE.**  
The Sage store was an old fashioned grocery; liquor by wholesale and retail formed an important part of the traffic. At the end of the year Russell's salary was raised to \$8 a month, and when fifteen years old he was getting \$4 a week. He saved nearly all of it. Across the street were two vacant lots, and when he had amassed \$200 he bought them. Like David Harum—whose name, by odd chance, appears on a bill board which now adorns the side of the old grocery house, long since converted into a saloon—like David Harum, young Sage had a keen eye for horseflesh.

Horses were in great demand, and the ambitious clerk ever had his eyes open for a promising Vermont colt. Many are the stories told of his shrewdness in horse trading. His knowledge of horses and his ability to buy and sell them more than doubled his income. He bought more land.

With some of the money he entered upon a new venture on his own account. He built a shop, and was one of the first to navigate a trading sail craft from Troy to New York. He handled on commission a lot of Vermont horses and landed them safely in New York city. It was his first visit to the metropolis, then a city of 270,000 people. He roamed around the markets and asked questions of the grain and produce men. He made a study of prices, and at once saw that there was a large profit to be made in shipping stuff from Troy to New York. He sold his horses and produce at a good advance, and made contracts for more.

**A PROFITABLE VOYAGE.**  
At this period Russell Sage was a tall, rather awkward but strongly built boy between nineteen and twenty years old. Those New York dealers who imagined they could impose on his inexperience and ignorance of mercantile methods soon had reason to change their minds.

With the money obtained from the sales he purchased such groceries, dry goods and other articles as would be in demand in Troy, and taking advantage of a favoring wind and tide set out for Troy, which he reached speedily and without accident. This trip netted him nearly \$700 and opened to his eyes a new world.

The young man then terminated his career as a clerk and entered into partnership with another brother, Elisha Montague Sage, and opened a grocery store at No. 400 River street. In two years the profits from his shop, and from other transactions were such that he was able to buy out his brother. Then came the great temperance wave of 1839, and he sold out the grocery store at a profit and abandoned forever any traffic in liquor.

During all the years that he sold intoxicants as a clerk and merchant he never tasted liquor himself. When, about twenty years old he smoked a cigar. It made him sick and he never again attempted the experiment.

At the age of twenty-two the young man found himself the owner of at least \$25,000 in cash, several tracts of land, two sloops and a business experience which he determined to put into profit. Around him was one of the best farming countries on earth. To the north and east were Canada and Vermont, with horses and cattle. To the south was the metropolis with its three hundred thousand mouths.

On himself he spent nothing. Already he was one of the most substantial citizens of Troy, with a reputation which made his word as good as his bond. He entered into a co-partnership with John W. Bates in the wholesale grocery and commission business. This place of business was at No. 139 River street, and it was here that Russell Sage really entered on that business career which has made him more than a hundred times a millionaire. In five years he purchased the interest of Mr. Bates, paying for it the sum of \$150,000 in cash. He was then twenty-eight years old, and already was one of the wealthiest men in the United States.

The Erie canal, the slow construction of which he had watched as a boy, was now one of the prime means of enhancing his fortune. Like all men who have attained great riches, the young man was often favored with the smiles of the goddess of good luck, and he never failed to take advantage of fortuitous circumstances.

Early in his career and when yet but a boy in years, a fleet of barges loaded with grain became frozen in the canal at an unusually early date in the year. It was bitter cold, and all the weather prophets were sure of an unusually severe and protracted season. The grain was destined for New York. It might spoil in the barges, and certainly it was that every week of delay lessened its market value. Wheat was high in New York, and a famine was threatened.

The young merchant thought it over, and made an offer for the wheat as it lay on board the barges, to be delivered in thirty days or to be carried to New York in case the weather moderated so that the boats could get through. The owners jumped at the bargain. It gave them a small profit and insured them against loss. No sooner was the deal made than the weather turned warm. A heavy rain melted the ice. The canal boat made the trip to New York just in time to escape a second cold spell which locked all other boats fast in the ice until the following spring. In this speculation the boy merchant made \$40,000. He admits that he might have suffered a serious loss, and concedes that there is such a thing as luck.

It was more by accident than design that Mr. Sage entered on his career as a railroad builder and owner. He founded the Commercial Bank of Troy, and in the course of business loaned \$25,000 to the Lacrosse Railway company. The road soon became financially embarrassed, and the young banker saw his money fading away in a threatened bankruptcy.

He made an investigation and decided that the property was a good one. He advanced more money, and yet more, taking bonds and stocks as security, and finally came into a large interest in what is now the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad. He became a firm believer in the future of railroads, and is today interested in twenty-four thousand miles of track in all parts of the United States.

The subsequent career of the four dollar a month clerk is a part of the commercial and financial history of the country, with a period of ten years when he rose to a commanding position in the affairs of state and politics. He was at the head of the New York delegation in the Whig convention of 1840, and was elected to the United States House of Representatives by Henry Clay. The convention favored General Zachary Taylor, and as a compromise permitted Mr. Sage to name the candidate for Vice President. He selected Millard Fillmore, who, upon the death of President Taylor, became President. Mr. Sage subsequently served two terms in Congress and declined a third nomination and all other political honors.

It is difficult for the present generation to obtain a proper perspective of the "boyhood" days of Russell Sage. Debarred the benefits which come from years of careful schooling, he was thrown at an early age into what was nothing more than a country saloon, and into associations which proved the ruin of almost nine boys out of a hundred. Such was the academy from which he graduated, with no taint of the tap-room, and with a keen knowledge of men and affairs and seemingly an intuitive ken of events.

He had an advantage which the boy today lacks. The country which spread out before his waking vision was a new and an undeveloped one. Every avenue of business and occupation was open to the lad or man of energy and talent. No pool, combination or monopoly reared its walls or fences against his efforts. It was a fair field and no favors. In closing it is well to record that Russell Sage is the only man in the world known to be worth a hundred million dollars who has sounded a warning against organized encroachment on free competition. He does not agree with those who contend that a young man has as good a chance to rise in an era of trust ownership and control as in the days when no limit was placed on his scope and activities.

It is remarkable that one man should in the span of his life witness the birth of a new civilization, made possible by the development of machinery, and feel compelled in his old age to declare our institutions threatened by an industrial and commercial movement which may never in a civilization as far removed from that of today as today is from the time when Russell Sage began his business career.

And yet who dares to say that the methods of today will not, in 1975, be deemed as crude as we esteem those of 1820?

PRESIDENT SHAFFER, LEADER OF STRIKERS, DICTATING ORDERS TO HIS WIFE AND SECRETARY.



The central figure in the big steel strike, now raging, is President Thomas J. Shaffer, of the Amalgamated association, the active leader of the 55,000 steelworkers now on strike. The success or failure of the big campaign labor is waging against capital is practically in this man's hands. The above authentic halftone shows the busy leader seated at his desk dictating strike orders to his wife, who is also his secretary.

tion of seeding or handling money while on the old homestead.

"The event which made the greatest impression on me as a boy," said Mr. Sage, when asked a question of that import, "was the construction of the Erie canal. The state authorized the construction of the canal the year after I was born, and it was completed when I was nine years old. It ran through our county and at no great distance from our farm, and whenever I had a chance I watched the men at work on it."

"I had great faith in the canal and a clear idea of its route and object. I remember tracing its course on an old school map. It was a great event when the water was turned into the canal."

second, but this was seventy-six years ago, and we thought we were pretty rapid then."

Once in a while young Russell made a trip to Oneida Lake, which was but a few miles from the old farm. In those days the lake was alive with fish, and the surrounding forests were full of game. But these periods of recreation were few and far between, and there was little to relieve the tedium of hard work. There were few boys in the neighborhood, and Russell Sage does not look back with pleasure to those boyhood days.

At the age of twelve, when most boys are at school or at play, Russell Sage left the farm and went with his brother to Troy. In the winter months he

it takes a wise man to keep one. I saved the first dollar I ever earned, and from that hour have never been in debt to a human being for a cent which could not be obtained when due."

Russell went to work in a store in Troy owned by his brother, Henry Risley Sage. For his services he received \$4 a month and board. It was hard work and lots of it. From six in the morning until six and sometimes later at night he worked in the building which yet stands at the corner of River and Hutton streets, Troy, N. Y.

Troy was then a small village, scattered along the east shore of the Hudson river. In place of the huge cotton and cuff factories which now line the banks of the stream and give employ-

ing but work. I knew that I was lacking in education and decided to spend a part of my small earnings in attending a night school.

"I think I paid a dollar and a half a month to a man who conducted it. At those odd moments when I was not busy in the store I pored over the books. I soon learned book-keeping and the more intricate problems in arithmetic. I managed to borrow some books on history and read all the papers which could be secured in Troy. I had no time for games or recreation. I believed I did play ball a little at times, but not to amount to anything. I went in swimming, but had no need for exercise. There was plenty of that

with specific properties. This surgeon, in fact, considers that it suffices to keep the finger in a small glass of water for half an hour, and repeat the bath several times a day to put a stop to the pathological processes on the point of breaking out.

This conclusion led M. Filatoff to have recourse to the application of compresses of alcohol in the case of a boy twenty years of age, suffering from appendicitis, in which he was sent for in consultation. Here is his method of procedure: A compress of gauze folded in four, and wide enough to cover the entire stomach, is thoroughly steeped in alcohol at 93 degrees, slightly squeezed, applied directly on the skin and covered with flannel. Over all is placed an ice bag, and the compress is changed every hour, as soon as the alcohol has evaporated. Opium is administered at the same time.

At the end of two or three days a very marked improvement was recorded, and the child completely recovered a short time afterward.

## HE MAY BE FRANCE'S EMPEROR.



PRINCE LOUIS BONAPARTE.

If the plotting of the friends of Prince Louis Napoleon proves successful, the hopes of French republicanism is at hand and before many days the world will be introduced to a new emperor of France. Several of the most prominent legislators, plan to make September 14th the day of their coup d'etat. On that day Louis Napoleon will become a

## APPENDICITIS, the Malady of the Day, Due to Meat Eating.

Appendicitis is the malady of the day; it is the most prominent malady in the course of the discussions of the learned societies. Its causes must be numerous; in any case, the theories emitted respecting its appearance are manifold.

M. Metchnikoff, in a recent communication to the Paris Academy of Medicine, attributed an important part in the development of appendicitis to intestinal worms, ascariides and trichocephalus, especially the last named, which, by causing erosions of the intestinal mucous membrane, create an entry means of infection by the morbid germs contained in the intestine.

Northern China is, perhaps, of all countries in the world, the one in which helminthiasis is the most widely spread, and in a recent communication presented to the Academy of Medicine in reply to M. Metchnikoff's communication, M. Matignon states that appendicitis is very rare there, even if it is noticed at all.

The extreme rarity of appendicitis—not to say its non-existence—among a people whose digestive tube is infested with worms appeared to M. Matignon to be in conflict with the theory of M. Metchnikoff, which tends to attribute to lombricoids an important part in the appearance of appendicitis.

He considered himself inclined to favor the theory of the influence of an excessive flesh diet, which has been incriminated by Keen, of Philadelphia, in the first place, and since by M. Lucas-Championniere, of Paris. This hypothesis is strongly supported by what he has observed in China.

The diet of the Chinese, in the north, says M. Matignon, is not a flesh diet, but rather vegetarian. At Peking and in the country very little beef is eaten, fowls and ducks, mutton, and especially pork being preferred. Europeans alone eat beef. Meat is a luxury which only the well to do can afford, and its consumption is extremely small. The great majority of the population, who are poor, mostly consume millet, simply boiled in water; a little rice, cabbage, sweet potatoes, turnips preserved "a la saumure," and a quantity of garlic. The Chinaman also eats a great deal of maize flour or wheat flour, of which he makes cakes and buns and unleavened dough, cooked by steam.

It is possible that to this diet is due the admirable "liberte du ventre" of the Chinese—to use M. Matignon's expression—and the consequent absence of appendicitis. It cannot be denied that the preceding observations strongly support the theory which attributes to the stimulating influence of an excessive flesh diet the frequency of cases of appendicitis observed for some years past among civilized nations.

It would appear that compresses of alcohol may be used in the treatment of appendicitis. At any rate, M. Filatoff so asserts. He began to use this treatment from the day when alcohol, used as a foment at the early period of whitlow, appeared to him to be endowed

Tobacco Trust Objects.  
Jefferson City, Mo., Aug. 2.—In the proceedings of the attorney-general in the supreme court for ouster of the Continent Tobacco company for violation of the state anti-trust laws, a motion has been made before Special Commissioner Judge J. P. Butler to vacate an order for the production of the books of the company, and for the appearance of President J. B. Duke and Secy. W. H. McAllister to testify. A motion was filed by the attorneys for the defendant, who allege that the law under which the order was made is unconstitutional. A decision is expected in a few days.

## BRITISH HONOR YANKEE.



D. C. CHURCHILL.

D. C. Churchill, a young American engineer, will shortly sail to India to found a system of trade schools throughout that country. He will be paid a salary by the British government. The young man is delighted at the honor conferred upon him.