

ROMANCE AND COLLAPSE OF DAMASCUS STEEL.

AN echo to the crash of the Des Moines (Iowa) \$2,000,000 Damascus Steel company, which has just met its Waterloo, comes the story of the lost art of making steel, its attraction for men of wealth who staked their fortunes upon it and its use as a key to open the penitentiary door for a convicted murderer, says the New York Herald.

When the stockholders of the collapsed company assembled in East Orange, N. J., to make arrangements for disposition of the sadly depleted stock there must have fitted before their minds contending opinions as to whether Dawson worked in good faith or made a bold attempt, and when he found he had gained the confidence of his fellow men, used his supposed secret as a means of gaining his liberty from the cell where he was confined for the murder of his son-in-law of only two hours.

The career of S. R. Dawson, eccentric, inventor and dreamer, is made interesting because of the prominent characters he assembled about him in his race for fame and for a fortune and because of the untold wealth he as a poor man called to his assistance. When he first commenced to command the confidence of people in his alleged secret for hardening steel, claimed to have been discovered in a moment of inspiration, there came that tragic crisis in his life which brought him face to face with the gallows.

Then it was in this moment of peril that there arose to defend him S. F. Prouty, a prominent lawyer at that time and a millionaire soap maker. It was when Mr. Prouty was elected to the bench that he heard a petition of the stockholders in the little company the inventor had formed before being sent to the penitentiary to compel him to turn over to them the key to the safety deposit vault which hid them his formula. This the judge refused to do.

Then moneyed men who believed Dawson possessed a commercial Aladdin's lamp and hoped to profit by his secret in forming a stock company, brought all the influence they could

summon to bear on state officials. Leslie M. Shaw, secretary of the United States treasury and then governor of Iowa, was induced, through the belief that the commercial world was being deprived of a valuable secret, to sign the pardon of Dawson.

It was just two years ago that he left the penitentiary a broken down man, pale and gray and weak, but with assumed confidence and determination that his wonderful secret would restore him to special position and bring to him great wealth.

Buoyed up with a hope of doubling their fortunes, men of wealth dipped into the new company organized, and now, when thousands have been sunk in fruitless experimenting, some have stopped to consider if there was really merit in Dawson's formula or whether he merely used it to pry open his prison door, and then, to make good his pretences, led them blindly into an extravagant investment.

Dawson about eight years ago was a mechanic, living in Des Moines. He was one of those characters ever indulging in experiments. He was not a man who bore the confidence of any great number of people and moved along in his humble way, making a living for himself and wife and beautiful daughter as best he could. He first attracted some attention locally by announcing he had discovered a process for hardening steel, and later he started the community by claiming he could make the best steel from common scrap iron.

He exhibited tools he claimed to have made after his formula, which had very good merit. His secret was most zealously guarded. He succeeded in interesting several persons and forming a small company. A little factory was established on the river bank, and here the experiment was being furthered when a crisis came in his life.

Alvin Dawson, a handsome girl just out of her teens, had fallen in love with a youth named Walter Scott. The match was opposed by her parents, but the two managed to see each other. Dawson tried first to induce the girl to break with Scott, explaining that soon his secret would bring him wealth and she would be lifted to a higher social level, from which she should

seek marriage. This did not avail, and the father hit upon a plan which was destined to separate the two for a period until Scott should tire of waiting.

Dawson managed to have his daughter declared insane and sent to the state hospital. Determined not to be thus thwarted, Scott undertook the liberation of his sweetheart. After spending nearly a thousand dollars he secured her freedom through habeas corpus proceedings.

Again the father took his daughter away and placed her under the watchful eye of nuns in a Chicago convent. From there Scott effected her release, and the father then sent her to a school in Ohio. The girl, however, managed to communicate with Scott, and an elopement was planned. It was arranged that she should leave the school and go to Ottumwa, Iowa. Scott was to meet her there and be married. But the wary father had detective tracking Scott, and when the plot was discovered she was captured and taken to her home. On Christmas eve, 1895, Minnie Dawson, under pretence of going to the store, escaped for a moment from her father's custody and ran to meet Scott, who conducted a small store a block away.

"Walter," she cried, "I fear my father will kill you and me both. He says I must renounce you, and I cannot." Wrapping a cloak about the girl, he beckoned a hack and was driven immediately to the office of a justice of the peace, where they were married. She had brought no clothes with her other than what she wore and urged him to go for her trunk, which was at

her home.

The Dawsons lived in an upstairs flat. The bridegroom went to the police station and secured an officer to get the girl's trunk, that trouble might be averted. Scott accompanied him to the foot of the stairs, and, saying, "It is the third door to the left," saw the man in blue disappear up the hallway. Presently the policeman called, "I cannot find the door; come and show me where it is." Scott went to the head of the stairs and pointed to the door. The policeman entered and Scott waited. It was several minutes before the policeman reappeared and announced that Dawson would not give up the trunk.

"There is another way to get it," then, replied Scott, who turned to go down the stairs. As he did so a hand bearing a revolver shot past the policeman and was discharged. The bullet lodged back of Scott's left ear and he pitched headlong down the stairs dead.

It was charged at the trial that the policeman rushed out of the building for help, and that when he did so Dawson went to the prostrate form of his son-in-law and stood above the body and fired directly into his heart.

Dawson was then a man with long hair and a flowing beard. Thus he appeared in criminal court before Judge Holmes and was tried. James Howe, who is now a member of the Polk county bench, was prosecuting attorney, and S. F. Prouty appeared for the defence. When the case was submitted to the jury eleven men were in favor of hanging and one was for acquittal. They compromised on murder in the second degree.

Dawson was sentenced to ten years

in the penitentiary, and in sentencing him the judge expressed the belief that Dawson would not live through his term. By a strange coincidence the odd juror, the judge and most of the witnesses in the case have since died. Dawson served five years. After his incarceration some of the stockholders in the company believed that because they had invested money in his plant they were entitled to have possession of the formula during his imprisonment and make what progress they could.

This formula, however, was locked up in a safety deposit vault of the Security Savings bank and Dawson held the key, which he tenaciously refused to surrender. Accordingly an action was commenced in the district court for the purpose of compelling him to surrender it. This came on for hearing before Judge Prouty. After a long legal battle the court held there was no law that could compel Dawson to surrender his personal property.

Then it was that the moneyed forces bent their efforts toward getting a pardon. Two years ago Governor Shaw yielded to the persistent demands from every quarter and granted the pardon. He at once interested some Des Moines business men in rejuvenating the company. Dean A. M. Haggard, of Drake university; C. F. McCarty, formerly a state official; C. C. Taft, a wholesale grocer; J. B. Burton, of the University Place bank, and others became interested and proceeded to boom the organization.

The company was incorporated in New Jersey with a capital stock of \$2,000,000. Operations became very active, much of the stock was sold, and for a

year the company prospered. A milling plant at New Brighton, Pa., was purchased and things were soon set in motion. Several New Brighton folks purchased stock, and while the tests preliminary to the wholesale manufacture of the crucible steel were being made the promoters and stockholders were sanguine over the success of the enterprise.

Then came the obstacle. At first it was thought that it was only a little thing that prevented the making of the steel uniform, and that another process might do away with it. Undaunted, Mr. Dawson kept at his work. This was his first experience in making steel to sell in large quantities. With confidence he attacked the new problem. He delved into the problem, always coming out at the same place, being stopped by the cold fact that the steel could not be made uniform. Week after week, month after month passed, and down in New Brighton Dawson fought against the impossible.

C. C. Taft, in his confidence, turned his business over to other hands and went to New Brighton to take up the active management of the mill. All forces were united. Finally despair got the best of the fight and all interested threw up their hands. A committee of directors visited the plant, and it will now be sold. The attempt to manufacture crucible steel has been abandoned.

Hundreds of people in Des Moines who knew Dawson think today and always thought his claims were without merit, that he was a smooth talker and a brilliant dreamer. Once in prison, his refusal to help the world until it helped him from his difficulty proved to many that he wished the secret only to save his life. Once free some have even expressed the belief that he, knowing his own weakness, was willing to take a chance at success and involve the millions of others, in order to carry out the dream of his long, weary hours of experiment.

In the call for the meeting which has just been issued to the stockholders the story of the struggle is thus depicted: To the Stockholders—"We are sorry to announce that we are compelled to close down our steel plant and to take steps to dispose of it at the earliest op-

portunity, in order to save as much as possible for the stockholders. For two years we have been testing the process in every way, and at times won in the world and made it all alike, but we have now found that it cannot be made uniform—herein lies our Waterloo. "Mr. Dawson has been so hopeful that he could correct this trouble about suits and have kept on trying until we have finally despaired. At the last meeting of the executive committee, Mr. Weis and Mr. McCarty to New Brighton to make whatever disposition of the plant seemed best in their judgment. The New Brighton stockholders had written up that we were not making success, and seemed willing to dispose of the business and save whatever we could for the stockholders."

"The company has now sold the steel on hand, the process, and has rented the plant and machinery for \$100 per month for one year, with the privilege of buying if wished. We ask the stockholders to ratify the action of the committee, so that we may proceed to close the matter up."

"Mr. Dawson has made and does make some of the best steel in the world, but, not being able to make it uniform renders it impracticable to come to the business. We have no one to blame. Everything has been done in good faith. The promoters have been from time to time placed in the treasury fourths of all the holdings. Not one of them has received a cent either in salary or in any other way, with the exception of Mr. Taft, who left his business and took charge of the plant for a short time. We shall proceed to close up the business in a businesslike manner, and will make a final report to each stockholder when it is completed. "Please do not fail to sign the enclosed proxy in case you cannot be present at the stockholders' meeting referred to in the enclosed notice. Very truly yours,

"A. M. HAGGARD,"
"C. C. TAFT,"
"C. F. MCCARTY,"
"J. B. BURTON."

THE PARIS MILLINERY CO. A CLEAN SWEEP CLEARANCE SALE



Greater Bargains THAN EVER For Next Week!

THIS Great Sale enters upon its second week. Now comes the final windup. We have determined to effect a decisive clearance, and our determination is strikingly apparent in the prices which prevail throughout the entire store. The sale has been a great success so far, but it has accomplished only part of its purpose. Next week new lots of goods from reserve stock, and further reductions on other goods, will put new life into the sale.

THIS IS A CLEARING SALE THAT CLEARS.
A SALE THAT MEANS MUCH TO THE FAMILY POCKET-BOOK.

Millinery!

Clean Sweep Prices on Millinery.
Every Hat in the House Must Go Without Regard to Loss.

Ladies' Trimmed Hats, values up to \$2.50, for **98 cts**
Ladies' Trimmed Hats, values up to \$5.00, for **\$1.98**
Ladies' Trimmed Hats, values up to \$7.50, for **\$2.98**
Children's Hats, value \$1.00, for **43 cts**
Children's Trimmed Hats, value \$1.50, for **73 cts**
Children's Trimmed Hats, values up to \$5.00, for **\$1.93**
Ladies' Ready-to-Wear Hats, values up to \$1.50, for **59 cts**
Ladies' Ready-to-Wear Hats, values up to \$2.50, for **98 cts**
Ladies' Ready-to-Wear Hats, values up to \$3.50, for **\$1.23**

All Handkerchiefs, Gloves, Underwear, Hosiery, Lace Remnants, Belts, Pillow Shams, Bureau Scarfs, Linen Doilies, Tray Cloths, Side Board Scarfs, are being cleared out AT BIG REDUCTIONS.

Waists.

A big assortment of beautiful Lawn and Linen Waists, values up to \$3.50, for **1.23**
A number of finer Waists that were marked to sell for from \$3.50 to \$5.00 go for **\$1.73**
A large number of Japanese Silk Waists, all sizes, value, \$3.00, for **\$1.53**
A good assortment Japanese Silk Waists, value \$4.00, for **\$2.23**
One lot of Silk Waists, values up to \$5.00, for **\$2.28**
Another lot of Silk Waists, values up to \$5.00, for **\$3.98**

Sun Bonnets.

Children's sun bonnets, value 20c, for **10c**
Misses' and Ladies' sun bonnets, in all colors, trimmed with ruffe, value 25c, special **10c**

White Waists.

All Ladies', Misses' and Children's White Dresses are to be sold next week regardless of cost. Sizes are rather broken, but we may happen to have your size.

Ladies' Suits.

ALL SUMMER WEIGHT SUITS MOST GO.

If you see the Suits you will wonder how it is possible to sell them so cheap.

Suits worth \$17.50 **\$5.98**
for **10.98**
Suits worth \$20.00 **\$7.98**
for **13.98**
Suits worth \$25.00 **\$9.98**
for **\$4.48**
Misses' Suits worth \$10.00 for **\$4.48**

WRAPPERS.

Wrappers worth 85c for **47c**
Wrappers worth \$1.00 for **57c**
Wrappers worth \$1.25 for **67c**
Wrappers worth \$2.50 for **\$1.27**
All higher priced wrappers in the house go for **\$1.57**

Dressing Sacques.

75c Dressing Sacques, for **39c**
\$1.25 Dressing Sacques, for **69c**
\$1.75 Dressing Sacques, for **89c**
\$2.50 Dressing Sacques, for **\$1.19**
All higher priced Sacques in the house go for **\$1.99**

Skirts!

PLEATED BRILLIANTINE WALKING SKIRTS, in blue and black, value \$5.00, for **\$3.88**
DRESS SKIRTS made of granite cloth, trimmed with taffeta bands, blue and black, value \$5.00, for **\$3.88**
BLACK DRESS SKIRTS, made of all wool voile, trimmed with taffeta bands, value \$6.00, for **\$3.98**
REGULAR 7.50 SKIRTS, in Panama cloth, etamine, and voile. NEWEST PLEATED EFFECTS, silk and braid trimmed, in blue and black, special **\$4.98**
BLACK VOILE SKIRTS, latest styles, taffeta band trimmings, value \$9.50. Special **\$5.98**
WALKING SKIRTS, in blue and black brilliantine, value \$9.50. Special **\$5.38**
DRESS AND WALKING SKIRTS, in twine cloth, voile and etamine, pleated effects, silk trimmed, blue, black and brown; regular \$11.00. Special **\$6.98**
BLACK VOILE DRESS SKIRTS, latest effects, taffeta and silk lace trimmings, regular \$12.50, for **\$7.98**

Canyon or Outing Suits.

We have a limited number of these suits, which on account of their durability and style are just the thing for canyon or outing wear. One style is made of good quality denim, eton tailored jacket, value \$4.00. Clearance price **\$1.88**
Another style is made of good quality denim, blouse tailored jacket, braid trimmed, value \$6.50 for **\$3.23**
Another style is made of NOVELTY CRASH, blouse tailored jacket, braid trimmed, value \$7.50 for **\$3.83**