

THE FIGHT FOR STRATTON'S MILLIONS.

Jeffersonville, Ind.—Less than 20 years ago Winfield Scott Stratton, for whose millions a half hundred people are now fighting bitterly in Denver and Colorado, was literally kicked from the door of his home in this city.

The story of his early life, its poverty and vicissitudes, has never been told. Twenty years ago Win Stratton was a blue-eyed son in this city, and his haunts were the barrel-houses and his friends were the seedy-garbed wrecks on the whiskey reefs.

When he was nearly 40 years old he was penniless, friendless, seedy, poorly educated, cashed off by his family, and apparently on the road to a pauper's grave. No one had the slightest idea that this miserable creature would ever amass a fortune. It was one of the most impalpable and impossible things to be thought of. He was sent to Jeffersonville and lived the greater part of his life there. His father, Myron Stratton, was once a prosperous shipbuilder, but finally he had drifted away, and finally he had nothing left but a small carpenter shop. The writer attended school within a stone's throw of the shop and remembers it well.

The shop was not worth more than \$10 or \$15 and one might have thrown a brick through it at almost any place. It was here Win Stratton learned to use a hammer and saw. He was never much of a carpenter. He would not give it the necessary attention. He preferred to loiter about a little bar-room in the upper part of the city. It was kept by an old German woman named Kramer. Stratton's favorite place was on a barrel near the door. There he would sit by the hour and wait for acquaintances to come in and buy him a drink.

He had few friends. There were few people who cared anything for him. He was of a sour and surly disposition. The school children hated him and he hated them. At home he was simply tolerated. All the money he could get from his father was spent in the bar-room. The opinion of Win Stratton was that of the neighbors and people of the town—that he was a disgrace to his family. His parents attended the fashionable Presbyterian church and were thought well of, but Win Stratton probably never saw the inside of the church.

LAST DAY IN JEFFERSONVILLE.

I remember well the last time I ever saw him. It was the last day he spent in Jeffersonville, before starting west to seek his fortune. The Sunday morning was bright and sunny, and the very air was filled with balmy gladness. It was at his old resort, the saloon where the little old woman stood behind the bar and handed out large glasses of beer. The same was one of the old-fashioned kind known as "bug pool." There were holes in it and the ball-spined around it and a bell, designating the number of points made by the player.

Stratton sat on one end of a barrel watching in a sleepy manner the progress of the game. He said nothing to anyone and no one said anything to him. In fact, we were afraid to make any remarks because he was known as a mean man and we were young fellows unable to cope with him. I even remember how he was dressed. He had on a slouch hat, with greasy spots on it. The front was flopped down over his eyes. His face was red from drink, and his red moustache drooped down with a wet, dirty look about his mouth. He wore no collar, his shirt was of the old hickory variety. He had on a frock coat, faded and frayed about the sleeves. His legs were crossed and his trousers were brown jeans, turned up a little.

There was a mean, faraway look on his face, as if he were pondering over where he could go and get a drink. The man was in the way of the players, and one of them asked him if he would move if a drink were bought for him. He said calmly he would do so. The woman was told that

the player would pay for the drink, and Stratton took it. Then he went out into the yard, where there was a bowling alley. He remained there for some time, and then went home. It is said he often picked up the pins in the bowling alley in order to get drinks.

The next morning Stratton went to his father's, a little, old, bent, gray-haired man, and asked him for \$2. The father told him he did not have the money to spare. The man was angry, and during the quarrel that ensued he knocked his father down and blacked his eye.

Stratton stood out at the corner after the fight for a while, wondering what he would do. He knew his sisters would refuse to let him remain longer at home, and that he could get no employment at either the shipyard or car works, because he was not much of a carpenter. He decided to go to the far west.

That night he boarded an Ohio & Mississippi (now the Baltimore & Ohio Southwestern) and started for St. Louis. Finally he landed in Denver. Years passed, Winfield Scott Stratton was not missed from home. In fact, everybody was glad he was gone. In eight years his name was never mentioned, and his sisters forgot almost they had ever had such a brother. His old father died and was laid to rest beside his wife at the Walnut Ridge cemetery. Then one day there came a letter from the wanderer. He said he was sick near unto death and needed a little money to pay for actual necessities. His sister, who received the letter, sent him a reply that she had disowned him and that she hoped she would never hear from him again.

IDENTIFIED AS A MILLIONAIRE.

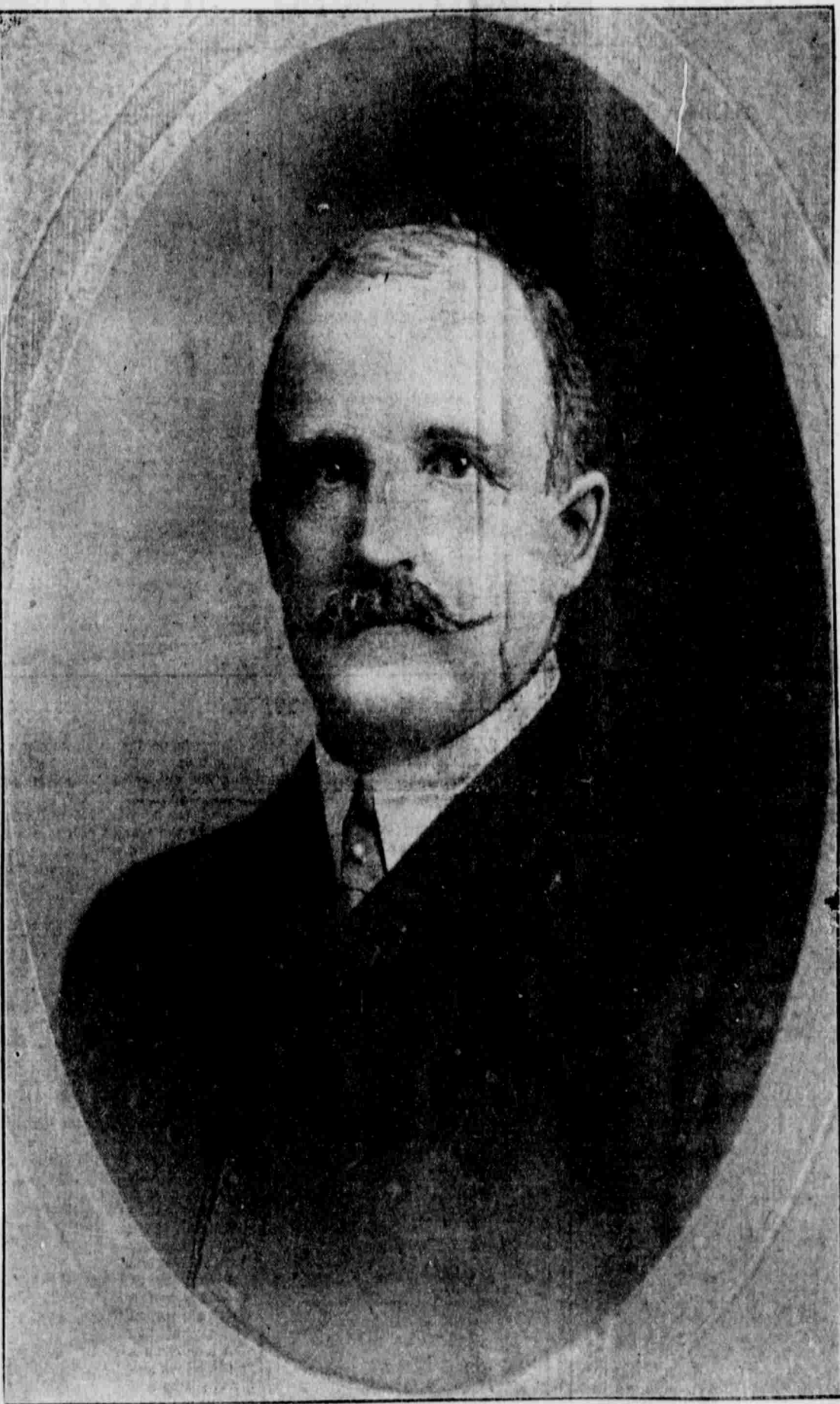
But in a day or two more there came the startling information that "Winfield Scott Stratton, formerly a poor carpenter of Jeffersonville, Ind., had found enough gold to make Monte Christo look like a very small potatoes." The news flew about the little city like wildfire. It was astonishing how many people remembered what a splendid fellow Stratton was. There were few who did not claim to have been his most intimate friends. Every man who ever bought him a drink remembered it. His loving sister, who suddenly awoke to the fact that she had always just doted on him, boarded the train and went at once to Denver.

At the time Stratton was boarding at a big hotel. The visitor's card was sent up to his room, and in a short time the negro valet came back saying: "Mistah Stratton says ter tell you he is aiseed, an' fob me ter et your ticket back ter Jeffersonville." So we went back and there we found in the heart of her brother for everything and everybody connected with his native city. But the people did not know this. They thought Win would be ready to fall on the neck of a Jeffersonville man and weep with gladness.

James Lewis, a prominent young attorney, had never known Stratton particularly. He only knew him as one knows the town drunkard. Mr. Lewis laughingly admitted as much when he returned. He went out to see Stratton, figuring that the man might need

A Phase of His Life That Has Escaped the Notice of His Biographers—What True Grit Will and Did Accomplish in the Case of the Dead Man Who Became Famous Through the Marvelous Streams of Golden Wealth That Poured From the Treasure Vaults of the Great Independence Mine—Wonderful Rise From an Aimless and Slum Career to Fortune and Fame.

OUR BUSIEST MEN.



EDGAR E. CALVIN, GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT OF THE OREGON SHORT LINE.

For 30 years, save one, Edgar E. Calvin has been a very busy man. To this day there is possibly not a busier man in the railroad service of the west than he, and especially does this hold good when he comes back from an inspection "trip down the line" and, taking off his coat, faces the huge pile of correspondence that awaits him stacked up on his desk. In railroad circles Mr. Calvin is credited with the record for "cleaning up his desk" with dispatch. As a boy he was always active from the time he entered the employ of the Indianapolis, Cincinnati & La Fayette road in the capacity of telegraph operator at 15 years of age. For two years he successfully held this position and then he left the keyboard to attend school. In April, 1877, he entered the employ of the Union Pacific as station agent and operator, to be appointed later consecutively train dispatcher, conductor and trainmaster. From June 1, 1887, and for four years after he was division superintendent on the Missouri Pacific. In 1891, on Washington's birthday, he entered the employ of the Union Pacific once more, this time as superintendent of the Idaho division, with headquarters at Pocatello, where he made many friends and demonstrated that he was a capable as well as a busy railroad man. In June, 1895, he left Pocatello, having accepted the appointment as superintendent of the International & Great Northern road. After two years in this capacity he came to Salt Lake, and on March 16, 1897, was appointed general superintendent of the Oregon Short Line system. During Mr. Calvin's administration the physical condition of the Oregon Short Line has been essentially bettered. The Hoosier state has turned out a number of first class railroad men, and conspicuous among them is Mr. Calvin, who, as the years roll on, will undoubtedly climb higher and higher in transportation circles.

an attorney to look after his vast interests. He sent up his card, and the negro, who by this time had learned his lesson, returned with the message: "Mistah Stratton says he never heard tell er sich er place as Jeffersonville. He thinks yous air mistook. Maybe hit war oval in Idaho whar de gentleman lile what you knows."

This was as close as Lewis ever got to seeing him. But Charles Heyns, a carpenter who had formerly been a valet of Stratton, concluded he would go out and see how "Win" was getting along. He applied for admission at the hotel, saying he was from Jeffersonville. The negro smiled, and said: "Boss, hit ain't no use fob yous ter wait. Mistah Stratton don't keer 'bout seerin' nobuddy from that air town."

"Tell him Charley Heyns is here," persisted the caller.

"I tell yous hit ain't no use," said the negro.

ONE EXCEPTION.

Then Heyns went down to the mine office and told one of the clerks he wanted to see Mr. Stratton. Here he was also told that Mr. Stratton did not have time to waste on Jeffersonville people. Heyns was being shown out of the place when he happened to notice Stratton approaching.

"Here, Win," he shouted, "is this the way you treat your friends?" A smile of pleasure overspread the face of Stratton. He rushed forward and wrung the hand of the visitor. He took him into his office and kept him there for several hours. He insisted that Heyns stop at his own hotel while he remained there. The visitor said he preferred to remain at the modest place where he had put up when the negro valet fired him out.

"How are you fixed for money?" asked Stratton.

"Pretty short," was the reply.

"Here's \$100," said Stratton. "Make that last you until tomorrow afternoon and then come over and see me. We'll see what we can get for you to do then."

So Mr. Heyns went out from the presence of the mighty gold king, half afraid he was in a dream and it was not his old friend of the barroom who was such a grandee in the west. He mingled with the gay and festive throng about the third parlor and took a chance now and then at the games, with the result that when he met Stratton in the afternoon he was about broke. He got another staff, had another long talk, and went forth once again. As before, he fell into the hands of the Philistines and was

despoiled of his wealth. For a week his state of affairs prevailed. Then Heyns went to Stratton and asked him for a ticket back home. The gold king endeavored to persuade his former friend to remain and take a good place in the mine, but Heyns was homesick. So Stratton shook his hand, pressed a roll of bills into it, and a ticket to Jeffersonville purchase, or him and sent him on his way rejoicing.

Afterward Stratton got to thinking more about his old home place, and he decided to visit it. He came in the night. He made known his identity to no one. He walked about the city, saw the places where he had played when a boy, saw the old carpenter shop where he had labored with the hammer and saw, saw the barroom where he had spent the most of his time, saw the same old bums with whom he had associated wait in the same old way for drinks, and then he went away. He remained just one hour in Jeffersonville. He spoke to no one, and it was not until months afterward that it became known that he had been home.

THE REAL CHARACTER.

But this visit had warmed his cold heart to a considerable extent, and he

sent his sister \$25,000 and gave each of his nephews \$10,000. To his cousins and aunts and every other kinsman in the city of Louisville, Ky., he gave from \$25,000 to \$50,000, and then he forgot about Jeffersonville again.

The sister was fatally ill and not long ago she breathed her last. Now the brother is dead, and the old Jeffersonville bums, who had not a friend in the world, is also dead, and thousands

and in the west mourn his death. The people here are just beginning to realize that they never knew Win Stratton when they hear stories of his generosity. They had an idea he was selfish and all that was mean and despicable.

This is the true story of the early career of Winfield Scott Stratton, and one that has never been published before.—Richard Work, in Denver Post.

Young Stratton Tells Story Of His Mother's Sorrows.

The following interesting interview with young Stratton was had by Polly Pry of the Denver Post and published in that paper one day during the present week:

"Is that Harry Stratton?"

I read, as I took the card from the tray and asked:

"Where is the gentleman?"

"He is waiting in the office," said the boy, and we went out into the lobby of the Antlers hotel where a great crowd of delegates to the irrigation congress were making a perfect babel of sound, and there in the midst of them I saw a tall, slender young man, who came, hat in hand, to meet me.

"Mr. Stratton?"

"Yes," he said, and we shook hands perfectly, as strangers do, and directly we had found some seats in a corner, and I was wondering how I was going to induce the serious looking young man before me to talk.

"And it was not easy. He has a good deal of pride, has young Mr. Stratton, and he is likewise very sensitive, but when I thanked him for coming to see me, he said:

"I would not have come, because, after all, I have nothing to say to the public, only, I read what you wrote about my mother the other day, and I wanted to thank you for it."

"I am glad you were pleased. I have always felt very sorry for your mother."

"Thank you," he said, slowly, then, simply, "she was very unhappy."

"I know."

"Then he shifted his position, so that his back was to the crowd, and stared out the window. After a while he looked at me and went on as if he had never paused.

HIS MOTHER'S SORROWS.

"I do not know who told you her story, but whoever it was, knew. Except for a few particulars it was quite correct."

"Will you not give me those particulars?"

He shook his head slowly. "No. I would rather not. I cannot see what possible interest the public can have in my affairs."

"But it is of interest. Everything connected with you is of interest just now, and surely," as he still looked doubtful, "you would rather have the truth published than all of the lying rumors that are going the rounds?"

But he was not easily persuaded, however, eventually, he consented to talk, and this is the gist of what he said:

"My mother's name was Zeruah V. Stewart. She was born at Stewart's Mound, near Kiwanee, Ill., in the year 1858. Her father died when she was a child, and her mother married again, a Mr. Stewart, but not related to her first husband. My mother's step-father had asthma; and in 1875, on the advice of his doctor, the family came to Colorado Springs.

"There in the fall of 1875 my mother met Mr. Stratton. The next March my grandmother died suddenly of heart trouble, and Mr. Stewart wanted to return at once to Illinois on this account—my mother—and Mr. Stratton were married immediately, a few days after her mother's death.

DOWER WAS SOON SPENT.

"My mother had a small property from her father's estate—about \$2,000—and this was turned over to my father, who got rid of it in various schemes. From the beginnings of their married life he made my mother unhappy by his violent temper and unreasonable jealousy, and finally, after they were married about nine months, he one day ordered her to pack up her clothes, and without further explanation except that they were going east, he took her next day to the train and they went to Danville, Ill. There they went to a hotel, and then he left her, alone, without means and without friends.

"Three weeks later at Cabery, Ill., in the house of her step-father, I was born.

"She never saw my father again."

"He had not told it all at once, nor connectedly, but at any time. She worked any sort of work to support herself and me."

"But your father sent you money?"

"No. When I was 18, in 1886, he sent her anything, at any time. She worked any sort of work to support herself and me."

"Yes," and his face flushed darkly. "Yes, but I would rather not talk of that. She married for a home for me—

and—and—"

"She was not happy?"

"No. She was very wretched, and I—have known what it is to be hated by my step-father and to see my mother die of a broken heart."

VINDICATION HIS DUTY.

The young face turned toward the dazzling sky, was very pale, and the voice trembled—but by and by, when he looked at me, he asked, quite calmly:

"Do you wonder that I insist upon my right to a just inheritance?"

And remembering the young girl of 19, deserted in the very hour of her trial, humiliated and scorned, repudiated and cast off—and the unhappy birth of the mother who suffered for you, I have a sincere sympathy for you—but, it does not prevent my thinking of the great army of people that that vast fortune would benefit if you should lose your suit."

"Do you, then, think that they would get nothing if I won?"

And looking at his old young face, where sorrow has already laid her withering finger, and pain, and humiliation and shame have written their ineradicable lines—I felt some way that "the sick and the helpless" would not fare badly at the hands of this boy, who has known the sting of poverty and drank of the cup of grief—and as I said:

"No, I believe that you will do what is right."

And the eyes that looked into mine were full of gratitude as he said: "Thank you—I hope some day I may show you that I am worth trusting."

GRAY HAIR IN YOUTH.

And then he talked a little while about himself and his future, and he denied that he had any thought of marriage or had made any plans for the future. Spoke of the coming struggle, and of his lack of friends—as well as his lack of confidence in some of the people by whom he is surrounded.

And then he rose to go, and as he held out his hand to say good-by, he stood in the full light of the sun, and looking at him, the ridiculousness of the malicious stories of his excesses and dissipation was apparent to any one. His eyes are as blue and clear as a child's, his complexion smooth and fine, and his whole expression one of melancholy and sadness. His hair is already thickly sprinkled with white, and about his eyes and lips linger the ineradicable lines of an unhappy youth.

And when he went away I sat long thinking of him and so far as I am concerned, I believe that there is no more doubt that he is the son of Winfield Scott Stratton than there is that he is the son of his mother.

And while I would like to see that great fortune used for the benefit of the suffering thousands to whom it was left, I cannot help but believe that the claim of I. Harry Stratton is a just and right one.

Mayhap on the theory that to "the who suffers much, much shall be given."

A NOVELTY IN TIMEPIECES.

A Birmingham inventor has just placed on the market a remarkable clock which he claims can "make tea." It is a very ingenious arrangement by which at any specified hour the sleeper can be awakened, and five minutes later there is a cup of tea and hot water for shaving ready for him. The machine does all automatically, and without any human aid whatever. Lights spirit lamp, boils water, and ups the same up gently into the required vessel. It also puts out the lamp and rings a second gong to notify that the tea is ready.—London Leader.

BIRD S. COLER.



Hon. Bird S. Coler is the "association" nominee for governor of New York State. Mr. Coler enjoys great personal popularity, and he will make a hard fight to defeat Gov. Odell, who is a candidate for re-election on the Republican ticket.



Cut to the quick by the irreverence and lack of sympathy displayed by the British to his claims to be the "Son of God," Rev. J. H. Smyth Pigott, self-styled the "New Messiah," who has created a great disturbance in London, contemplates lifting his tent and flying to these shores. The "New Messiah" thinks that in the United States his claims will at least be received without physical opposition.