

"Oh, the little more, and how much it is!
And the little less, and what worlds away."

It's The Last Push That Breaks The Back Of Failure

"Most men who fail at their work, fail by only a little," says E. D. Stair, one of the country's biggest newspaper publishers—"They give almost, but not quite, enough—Another ounce of steam and they would have turned the trick!"

By William S. Dutton

A BACK-ALLEY fist fight between a pair of husky, tousled American youngsters may or may not be inspiring, according to your viewpoint. But it was in watching such a rough and tumble set-to, fifty-odd years ago, that Edward D. Stair got an inspiration that had much to do with shaping his career.

It happened in the little town of Morenci, Michigan, which in that day was a puritanical village of some eighteen hundred all-American souls. Fighting was sternly frowned upon by parents. It wasn't indulged in openly—if it could be helped. Yet boys will fight.

I don't know what this particular fight was about. That doesn't matter, anyway. What does matter is that one boy was a head taller than the other, heavier and stronger and more formidable; but it was the little fellow who won. A dozen times he was knocked sprawling into the dirt; a dozen times he was up again, peppery as a bantam game rooster. He wouldn't stay down, and every time he came up for more it was with arms and fists flailing like a miniature whirlwind.

FINALLY, the big boy was gasping for wind. He was tuckered out, wobbling, from knocking the little fellow down. Then the bantam stepped up, measured his opponent from between battered eyes, swung—and the battle of that day was over!

"Good boy, Dan!" cried an admirer. "I knew you could flatten him!"

The victor accepted his proffered cap, wiped a wad of alley mud from an ear, and cast a scornful eye upon the vanquished.

"Shucks!" he declared. "*He can't fight. He's got a boiler big as a freight engine's, but he don't get up enough steam!*"

We were seated, E. D. Stair and I, in his comfortable office in Detroit when he revived for me that story in which he had played the rôle of a hero-worshipping spectator. A mite of a youngster then, he is sixty-seven years old now, and owner and publisher of the Detroit "Free Press," which is one of the largest and most influential of this country's daily

newspapers. And as he went on to explain to me how he had become owner of the "Free Press," I began to understand why he had told me of that half-century-old alley scrap between boys. It was the key to his own story.

Morenci was his home town. He printed his first newspaper, a tiny affair, in the attic of his father's house. Later on, after several experiments with other papers, he went out and deliberately bought a little weekly newspaper that was a failure—bought it because it was a failure and to be had cheap—and made it successful. Then he sold that, and with his profit bought another failing newspaper, and another, each a bigger paper and consequently a bigger failure than the last. Each in its turn he made into a paying publication and sold it at a profit. The Detroit "Free Press," a great prosperous daily to-day, occupying one of the finest newspaper buildings in the world, was a failure in so far as earnings were concerned.

And here is the point:

Stair didn't introduce any spectacularly new and brilliant methods into newspaper publishing. He kept to the established, well-beaten path over which his predecessors had gone, and failed. In many instances he even adopted his predecessors' policies. He tore nothing down. But to those policies and methods he gave just a little more force. He put on just a little more pressure. He watched results just a little bit closer, and went after things a little bit harder. In a line, he got up all the steam his boilers would hold!

"The boy who won that fight was older than I," he explained, coming back to the drama in the alley. "Some folks in the town called him a bully, because he picked quarrels and always won. But I noticed something about him which convinced me *why* he won. He never gave up, no matter how big the chap he tackled. He put his last ounce into what he did, and that ounce always pulled him through. In fact, I concluded that it was the extra ounce that *did* pull him through, for often he was exactly that close to a thrashing. But he always produced that ounce!"

"Since then, in the light of years, I've

learned an odd thing: There is usually precious little difference between achievement and failure. Most men who fail do so by just a little. They give almost, but not quite, enough. Another ounce of steam and they'd have turned the trick.

"Here is an editorial. It is fairly well written. It presents a novel viewpoint. Structurally it is all it should be. But the effect it leaves is flat. It has no kick. Therefore, as it stands, it is a failure. But cut a word out of its title. Replace a long word here and there with a vigorous, more pointed short one. Cut that long, tiresome sentence in half—and what happens? You have a strong, telling presentation of the case. The failure is a success. Yet all you have done is add a little ginger, put on an ounce more steam!"

Mr. Stair's eyes twinkled. "That day, after Dan had polished off the big fellow there in the alley, I looked up another big fellow who some time before had polished me. We had another go at it, and I kept in mind Dan's prescription about steam. It worked! Well, it's been working ever since, in business. It's a rattling good prescription."

MORENCI to all effects was a New England town transplanted in Michigan. Stair's father, who had moved in from Ohio, conducted the town's stove and tinware store, did its tinsmithing and installed its stoves.

"There wasn't a foreigner in town," Mr. Stair related, "and not even a negro. It was a big sensation when a negro barber came in and opened a shop. We kids crowded in front of that shop as if it were the main entrance of a circus. None of us had seen a negro before.

"We were strait-laced in our town. Folks hated a liar and despised a corner-cutter. More faith was put in a man's word than in a written contract. They were slow to go into debt and didn't boast of it when they did. If the home was mortgaged, they skimped and saved to clear it, for a mortgage was a family skeleton to keep hidden. We worked, all of us, rich and poor alike. And while few in our town were rich, likewise few were poor.

"This training (Continued on page 76)

painting for you myself."

At first Ben couldn't believe it; but it doesn't take long for a twelve-year-old boy to take in anything like that. With a look at me as though he didn't dare tarry for fear he'd wake up, he was off.

So I had to get out of my new dress and white kid shoes and into an old gingham I kept for rough work. I felt it really was up to me to do the painting, because I had a feeling that, while Will might think it was a darn shame for a kid not to get to go swimming all summer, he'd feel it wasn't very businesslike to pay him seventy-five cents a day for going.

SO I didn't get to that meeting of the Mothers' Club.

I didn't get there the next week, either. America couldn't come to wash till Thursday, and I couldn't find anybody to stay with the babies. I put in the afternoon painting the window boxes and the backs of the front porch steps—painting the garage had got me started, and you know how it is once you get started painting.

The painting got me to thinking about Ben Brace, and I couldn't put him out of my head—a twelve-year-old boy who looked like my baby and never got a chance to go swimming. I couldn't keep from thinking—suppose it were Jack, all alone in the world with nobody but a man who would farm him out every minute, and never let him have any fun.

Dulcie stopped by on her way home from Mothers' Club meeting to tell me the news: Mrs. Kirstead had brought Frankie. It was so hot Mrs. Vanter had taken off her hat, and while the meeting was going on nobody remembered Frankie, and he had taken off all the trimming and was filling the hat with dirt—to plant the trimming in, he said. Also, the Emporium had given the club a wicker divan.

"We're going to see if the electrical fixture store won't give us some plain fixtures," Dulcie went on with the news. "And Mrs. Long is simply furious. Some boys broke into the warehouse one day last week and broke a lot of windows and pulled some of the electric wiring loose, and did some other damage. She found out who they were, some of the Hunkies down by the tracks, and she's had them arrested. She's simply wild; she's going over to Verblen Friday to appear against them."

Also, Miss Prescott was coming back

the end of the week, and Betty Bartell wanted to join the club, though her baby wasn't due till fall. And so on. Dulcie certainly had a lot of news.

THURSDAY afternoon I took the twins up to Mother's and used her electric sewing machine all the afternoon. When I got back, America, who had been at my house washing, said a woman had been to see me. "Mrs. Rzwqtrvs," it sounded like when America tried to say the name, and I couldn't imagine who it was. America said she said something about the Mothers' Club, but I couldn't place any

member with a name that sounded like that, and I finally gave it up.

Will wasn't going to be home that night; he and Father Horton had gone out to Berrytown to appraise some farms, and were going to stay overnight, and go on the next day to look at some property on beyond. Dulcie's house being so close, I wasn't a bit afraid to stay alone with the babies. But when I heard a knock at the back door after dark, it did give me a bit of a start. However, to my relief, I saw that it was just Ben Brace. He'd come to get his sweater, a poor, ratty little old thing that he'd (Continued on page 153)



I kind of hated to go off and leave him. . . . It struck me that something was wrong. . . . And finally, without his really telling me, I found out what was the trouble



Edward Douglas Stair

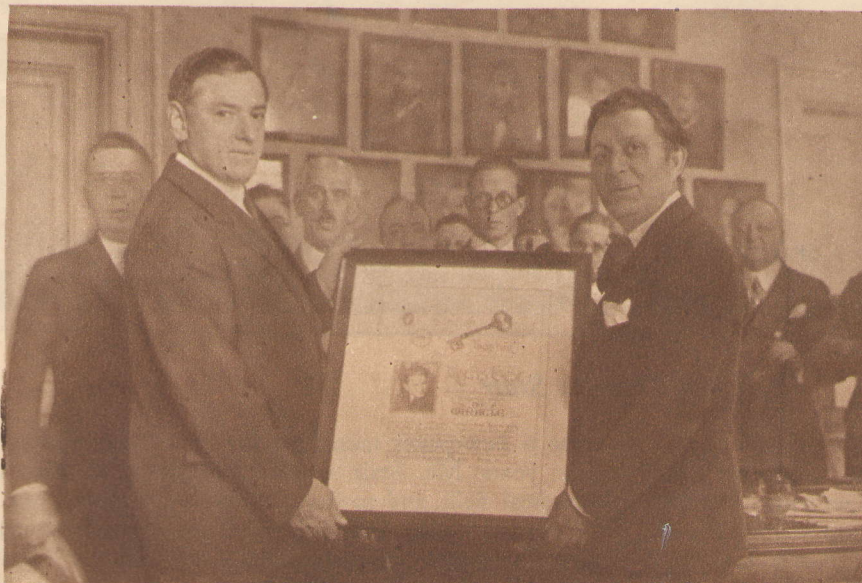
BEFORE he bought the Detroit "Free Press," one of the leading dailies of the United States, Mr. Stair had acquired a thorough knowledge of newspaper work through his connection with small papers in Morenci, Midland, and Howell, Michigan; Cooperstown, North Dakota, and from his experience as owner of the Detroit "Journal." He was born in Morenci sixty-seven years ago, and be-

came a newspaper man long before he was grown. In later years Mr. Stair extended his activities into the theatrical field, and to-day, in addition to being one of the country's important publishers, he is president of the U. S. Amusement Company, and of the Majestic Theatre Company, of Brooklyn. He is also a director in varied enterprises. Mr. Stair's home is in Detroit, Michigan.



Photograph by
Apeda, N. Y.

BORN in Russia, forty-five years ago, Morris Gest came to America when he was a young boy. Beginning as a homeless newsboy in Boston, he has become a world-famous theatrical producer. The hungry lad who was glad to get fifteen cents a night as a stage hand is now honored as the man who made possible "The Miracle," and other stupendous productions. The picture below shows the Mayor of Boston presenting Mr. Gest with the key of that city, when the former newsboy returned with "The Miracle."



(Above) Morris Gest, wearing an old suit given him by a Boston lawyer, when the boy was working for a peddler of second-hand laundry.

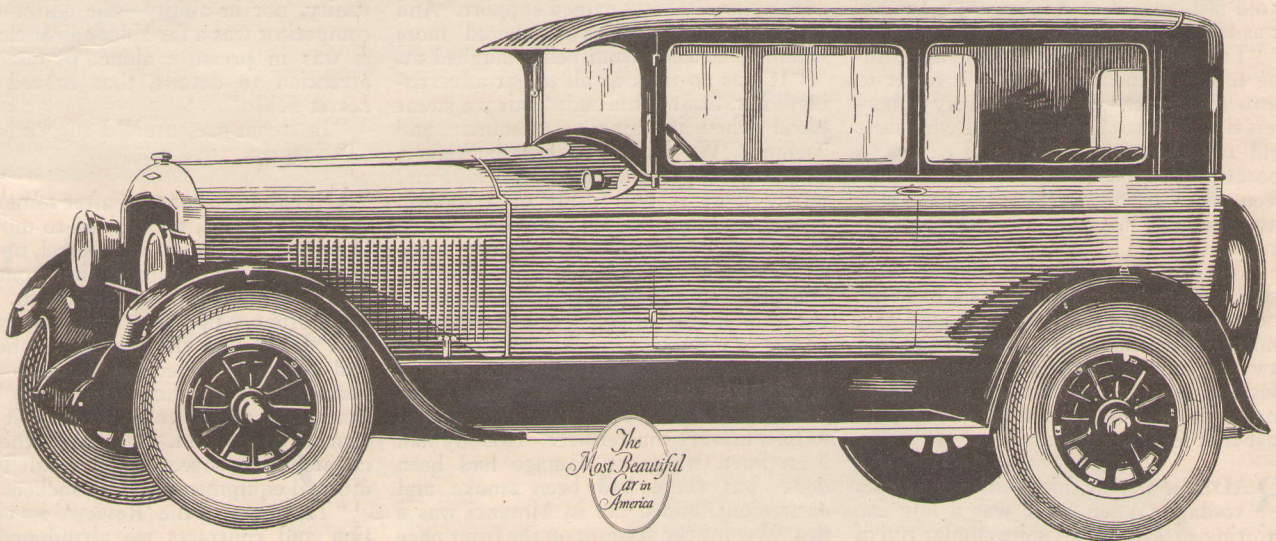
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Features of this New Paige:

Improved Paige-built Motor, none more modern nor better lubricated—Full High-Pressure Oil Feed to all Rotating Parts, including wrist pins, cam shaft, auxiliary shaft and tappets—Counterbalanced Crankshaft—Silent Chain Timing, with automatic takeup—Air Cleaner—Metal Oil-Lubricated Universal Joints—Springs 54 inches long—Shock Absorbers—Balloon Tires—Paige-Hydraulic 4-Wheel Brakes—Easy Steering through Ball Bearings—Saw blade Steel, Light Acting Clutch—Short Throw, Easy Gear Shift—Co-incident Lock—Automatic Windshield Cleaner—Dash Gas and Heat Indicator—Stop Light—Dome Light.



AFTER you've seen and driven this Brougham—you'll agree with the many thousands who already own it that the same money simply cannot buy more real automobile value anywhere else. There is a growing and deepening conviction among those who know motor car values that this Brougham is the outstanding dollar-for-dollar value on the motor car market to-day.

The Brougham has the same powerful and capable motor that powers the most expensive Paige models. It is a beautiful car. It is one of the easiest cars to handle. Its acceleration is instantaneous. Its Paige-Hydraulic

4-wheel brakes insure safe and positive braking always. Its roadability and comfort would do credit to the costliest car built.

The Brougham is larger and roomier than most sedans—it is finished in two tones of gray polished lacquer; upholstered in soft, lustrous and long wearing materials. We want you to see it—and to drive it. Your nearest Paige-Jewett dealer will gladly arrange a demonstration, entirely without obligation. He will tell you, too, how easily you can spread the exceptionally low price of this splendid car over a very convenient period under the liberal Paige-Jewett time payment plan.

It's the Last Push That Breaks the Back of Failure

(Continued from page 34)

of the old town did a lot for me. I've never had a note overdue, nor asked for an extension on a personal note, nor continued business with a man I couldn't trust and whose word wasn't good. And, barring some losses through investments, I've never had a failure, nor tackled a failure that didn't turn about and head the other way. I've worked like blazes, but that, too, I learned as a youngster. And I've never had a lawsuit."

"How come?" I asked.

"Because," Mr. Stair answered, "the folks back home didn't believe in 'lawing' a matter out. They figured that, by the time you'd got out of the courts, and thrown all the dirt you could, and been smeared by all the dirt thrown at you, and paid all the fees entailed, the lawyers would be the only ones who had profited.

"Better take your loss an' forget it," Father was wont to advise when anybody came to him on going to law. 'If you can't do business with a man without suing him, let him alone, for he isn't worth doing business with.'

"That represented the sentiment of most of the folks I knew, and I've never lost anything by adopting it. The policy is old-fashioned, but that's nothing against it as long as it's good.

"The modern business policy, according to my friends of the law, is never to draw a contract without a battery of lawyers sitting by to check up on the whereases and the therefores. So far, I've drawn most of my own contracts, and I've always been tolerably safe, because I put the *man* involved, and his word, before the contract.

"It amounts to this: An honest man will keep a contract even if it's a bad one; a crooked man won't keep any kind of a contract if he can help it, and he can hire lawyers just as smart as your lawyers. Besides, the real satisfaction in business comes in dealing with men and not in cast-iron legal documents."

RADIO is a great thing with youngsters to-day. When Stair was a boy the printing press was having a similar run of popularity. So he and his brother Orin, who was two years older, rigged up an amateur printing outfit in the attic. Then they proceeded to get out a four-page monthly paper, which they called "Boys and Girls" and sold for twenty-five cents a year to school pupils.

"The paper paid its way, well enough," Mr. Stair explained; "but it had one big fault: it didn't produce any surplus for spending money. We had a school baseball team which in the summer made excursions into rival nearby towns for games. The players' expenses were paid, but we had to dig up our own pin money.

"Before one such trip with the team Father handed me fifty cents. To retain my social standing, I felt I should have at least a dollar.

"It's all the money I can spare," said Father grimly. 'If you want more you'll have to earn it.'

"Whereupon my tongue ran away with

my judgment. I informed him that henceforth I'd earn *all* my money.

"I hope you mean that," he laughed.

"It *was* the last time I asked him for money, but that promise made me scratch, more than once. I found one job at sawing wood for fifty cents a cord. When that played out, a local storekeeper hired me as errand and sweep-up boy. There were odd jobs to be had at the shop of the town weekly newspaper, where I picked up more knowledge of printing. But the trouble was I had to put in so much of my spare time earning that I didn't find any time in which to spend."

THIS led to another conference between the brothers. Ed was now fourteen and Orin nearly sixteen. Both were pretty fair printers. They quit school, rented a down-town room, bought a second-hand job press and some used fonts of type, and founded the Morenci "Weekly Review." The cost of the venture was about eight hundred dollars, secured by notes.

Orin was the mechanical force and Ed the business manager, advertising solicitor, reporter, and editor. Published by a pair of boys, the "Review" proved a novelty and readily gained support. And no two youngsters ever labored more valiantly to keep from being laughed at.

"It was no trick at all to get advertising," Mr. Stair confessed; "but we sweat blood when it came to grammar and spelling. We bought a big dictionary, propped it up where it was handy, and nearly wore it out inside of a month. Every fifth word we'd have to consult the dictionary. Offhand we'd decide some national political policy for an editorial, and then argue ten minutes as to whether the verb in the opening sentence should be *was* or *were*.

"There was a fire in town one day. I labored and sweat over the report of it, and turned out what I secretly considered to be a literary masterpiece. Nobody had been hurt, no great damage had been done, but there had been smoke and excitement, and a fire in Morenci was a fire. We put the account on the front page with no little pride, and sat back to await comments.

"They came, and in a rush. In my effort to write a masterpiece I had overlooked entirely the hour at which the fire had occurred. A dozen told me of the omission, but not one thought about mentioning my fine writing.

"That taught me something that is true of people the world over. They don't want general statements; they want details.

"I'm often asked what is the most important thing to impress upon a newspaper reporter. The reply expected is 'accuracy.' That is the answer, but let's state it in another way: The reporter—and we are all reporters in a sense—should be impressed most with the necessity of getting correct answers to every question that will be asked about the matter he is reporting. Mind you, I don't say 'might be asked,' for there isn't a doubt but that every question conceivable will be asked mentally, if not orally.

"If a man is a fair reporter, he will get answers to a half or possible three fourths of the questions. If he is a good reporter he will get answers to almost all of them. If he is an excellent reporter, a real star, he will get answers to all.

"The point is this: There isn't a wide margin of difference between a fair reporter and a good reporter and a star reporter. The margin is only a question or two. In fact, often it's so slight that one is mistaken for the other, for a time. Well, it's the same between a business that is paying big and one that's just getting along; between a business that is breaking even and one that is losing money. It's the same between folks generally.

"That first paper of ours was small, a sort of half-pint concern. Profits were small. We didn't dare overlook a detail, or the profits fell to the vanishing point. We had to 'answer every question,' not only in the news columns but in the columns of the balance sheet as well, to keep above water.

"There was another paper in town that was older, had a better plant, a bigger circulation; but the proprietor didn't expand. The difference was not in opportunity, nor in ability—the editor of our competitor was a far abler editor than I—it was in pressure alone, in our closer attention to details, that moved us to better fields."

"In steam pressure?" I suggested.

"Exactly.

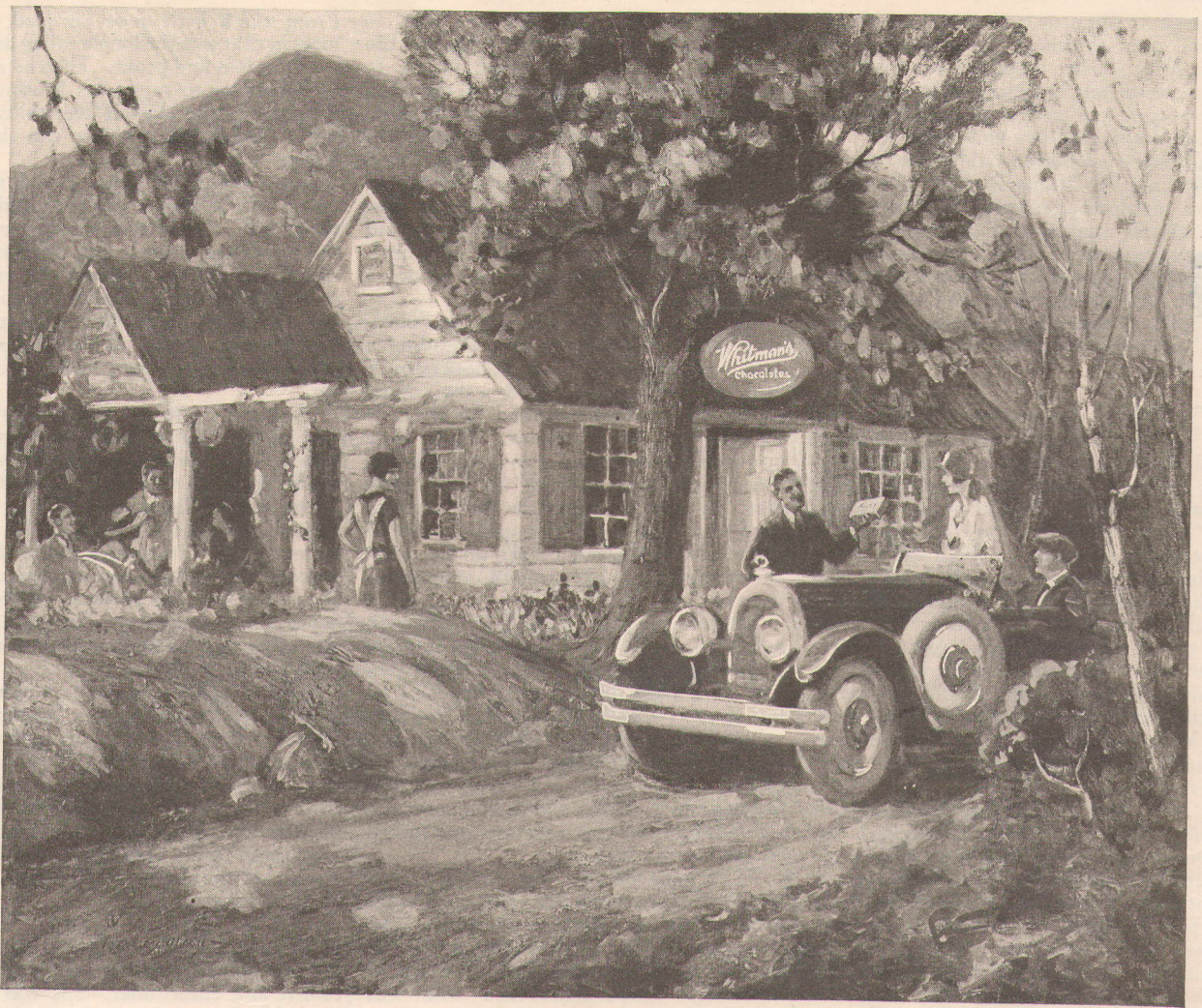
AFTER a year or two, after some scouting around, we decided to move the 'Review,' lock, stock, and barrel, up to the village of Maple Rapids, about one hundred and twenty-five miles north. They had no paper up there, and they wanted one. I had seen the merchants and they had pledged a specified amount of advertising for the first year if we would come. We agreed to go, because it was a chance to expand. You see, the merchants' pledges secured us credit for additional equipment that we lacked.

"The name of the 'Review,' its circulation and contracts we abandoned, and loaded the old job press, type, dictionary, and other incidentals onto the lumber wagon of a farmer we had hired for the trip. My brother and I trekked along with the lumber wagon. The trip took us four days.

"We called the new paper the 'Dispatch,' and while we called it ours, it really belonged to our creditors. There was scarcely a bit of equipment for which we weren't in debt. Every month we had a list of payments to meet. And never did it occur to us that a note due might be extended.

"After a month or two, the paper began to slip. We were working twelve hours daily, running every minute of daylight, and hunting up job work and advertising when we weren't in the shop. One helper was all we could afford.

"We analyzed our trouble. In twelve hours, with our equipment, we could turn out so much job work. That work was worth so much—which wasn't quite



At the end of summer trails!

Whitman's are fresh! When you pause in your summer journeys to buy a box of Whitman's Chocolates at a luxurious resort hotel, at the leading drug store in a large city, or at the quaint tea-room beside the road at the end of the long trail through the mountains—the candy is fresh. Every possible precaution has been taken to keep it so.

During vacation days many hundreds of summer stores supply Whitman's to tourists and dwellers in resorts. But every store, however humble, is selected and approved as a Whitman agency and gets every package it sells *direct from Whitman's*.

We eliminate middlemen solely for the purpose of ensuring careful handling of our candies and satisfying service to the critical candy lover. Wherever sold, Whitman's carry a guarantee of perfection.



Whitman's Chocolates

The Sampler satisfies at all seasons. Gives every one in a group of travelers a candy to his taste.

enough to keep us and meet our obligations. We were short just a pound or two in steam. So we increased our work day to thirteen hours, then to fourteen. That extra time put in was the difference between making money and losing it!

"Frequently there would be dull periods of business in Maple Rapids. We might have sat down, groaned, and waited for the sheriff, arguing that there simply was no business to be done. But there were other villages within a radius of twenty miles. Merchants there had printing to be done. I went after it, while my brother and his helper kept the wheels turning at the shop.

"ON ONE of these excursions I happened in the town of Midland, which had two papers of its own. One wasn't making money. The editor complained that it was a poor newspaper town, anyway.

"What struck me was the fact that I, a stranger in town, had been able to get orders for job printing. My brother and I discussed this. I felt I could make the Midland paper go. The editor was ready to sell cheap, and we had met all notes with such promptness that we had established a credit which would provide us with funds. The upshot of it was, I went to Midland and my brother remained in Maple Rapids, to continue the paper there.

"Now, here is what happened in Midland: Under the previous owner, I discovered, the paper had been absolutely neutral in everything. It avoided every controversial subject, straddled the fence in politics, offended nobody, never took sides. The editor had a reason for this attitude: He figured that the community was so small that he couldn't afford to offend anybody. But by this policy he took all the life and go out of the paper." Mr. Stair smiled. "He drew off all his steam.

"I fired up the boilers and put on steam. First of all, I gave the paper a definite political policy. Our editorial column left nobody in doubt as to where we stood.

"Within two months I had a lively crop of enemies—not personal enemies, but opponents to the paper's policies. But they were enjoying the fight! They read the paper. Furthermore, they advertised in it because they knew other folks were reading it too. Between the friends the paper made, and the enemies it made, losses made an about-face, and became profits! The town was glad to have a newspaper that 'spoke right up in meeting!'

"Every town is. I've yet to see a strictly neutral newspaper that was a success, or a strictly neutral man who was a success.

"I've always tried to have something to fight for in my newspapers. You don't like a milk-and-water type of person who is afraid to speak his own mind. Neither do folks like milk-and-water in their reading matter. Americans admire definite beliefs. They like to take sides for their beliefs. And, after all, if a thing is worth believing in, isn't it worth fighting for?"

Mr. Stair was once mixed up in a lively scrap out in North Dakota. After selling the Midland paper he spent several months in Kansas, working from shop to shop, on the lookout for a new venture.

None presented itself, so he went to Chicago and became a reporter on the "Times." He was assigned to go to Seattle on the special train of the then ex-President Grant, and cover the ceremony of the President's driving the last golden spike in the newly completed transcontinental Northern Pacific railroad. As the train passed through Fargo he was attracted by the great bonanza farms and North Dakota's waving fields of wheat. He resolved to return there and launch a newspaper.

Opportunity to do this came in February, 1881. A syndicate was founding a new settlement, called Cooperstown. Stair got some equipment for a shop, hired a sled, and started overland for the new village, forty miles distant. There were no roads. The ground was deep in snow, the temperature was 10° to 20° below zero. When he arrived in Cooperstown he found less than fifty people settled there. Nevertheless, he set up his shop and started his weekly, the "Cooperstown Courier."

"But the row," he laughed, "really began before that. In Fargo, while waiting for something to turn up, I got a job as a railway mail clerk on a train that had its terminus at a little place called Hope, in an extreme corner of Steele County. The territorial governor had named Hope the county seat. Backers of the proposed new Cooperstown, which was to be centrally located, opposed this selection, and forced an election on the issue.

"The fight became hot and intensely bitter. I discovered that Hope, in order to win, was colonizing voters, and began an exposé of this in a series of articles in the Fargo 'Argus,' for which I was also reporting. Hope discovered who was writing the articles, whereupon a committee warned me to stay out of town under penalty of my life.

"As mail clerk I had a regular 'layover' of several hours in Hope. My fellow mail clerk, a big six-foot Southern newspaper man recently from New Orleans, concluded I needed a bodyguard. So, instead of taking his day off, which were my days on, he made the Hope run with me. Each of us wore a big six-shooter strapped to his belt, and so we walked through the streets of Hope unmolested. But the one hotel in town refused to sell us anything to eat.

"COOPERSTOWN won the election by five hundred votes. But Hope backers refused to concede the victory. They held the county-seat records and refused to give them up. To remedy this, we in Cooperstown organized a posse, invaded Hope and seized the records. We had no courthouse in which to keep them, so we deposited them in a grain shack under guard. A few nights later a masked band from Hope retaliated by battering down the grain-shack door, covering the guards with revolvers and taking the records back to Hope. A second time a Cooperstown posse visited Hope, again seized the records, and this time kept possession."

After Cooperstown, Stair operated several other small papers in North Dakota and Iowa, all of which he made successful. He was able to do this by consistently seeking out small printing contracts which previous solicitors hadn't deemed it worth while to bother with.

From these little jobs he eked out the margin that was the hairbreadth difference between loss and profit. Then he returned to Michigan to rejoin his brother in the purchase of the Howell 'Republican' and, by an odd freak, got into the theatrical business.

The local opera house failed, and left, owing the Stairs a printing and advertising bill. A Detroit woman who held the mortgage against the property foreclosed and became its new owner. Stair went to Detroit to see about his bill—and came back with a contract to manage the opera house. It was his idea to make sure of the theatre's future business in printing.

He knew nothing of the theatre business, but he felt that the same principle which had revived failing newspapers would work as well with another failure. So he booked lectures and plays for the theatre that were just a little better. He bought more advertising space. He gave patrons just a little more attention. Again the ounce of extra pressure worked wonders. The theatre began to make money, and what pleased Stair most was that the profits were in actual cash.

"They weren't in cash in newspaper publishing," he explained. "Country subscribers have a habit of letting their subscriptions run until they're ready to pay. Somehow, they have a notion that editors are the last folks in the world who need money. But these same people, when they came to the theatre, paid down their money at the door. I liked that feature of the business."

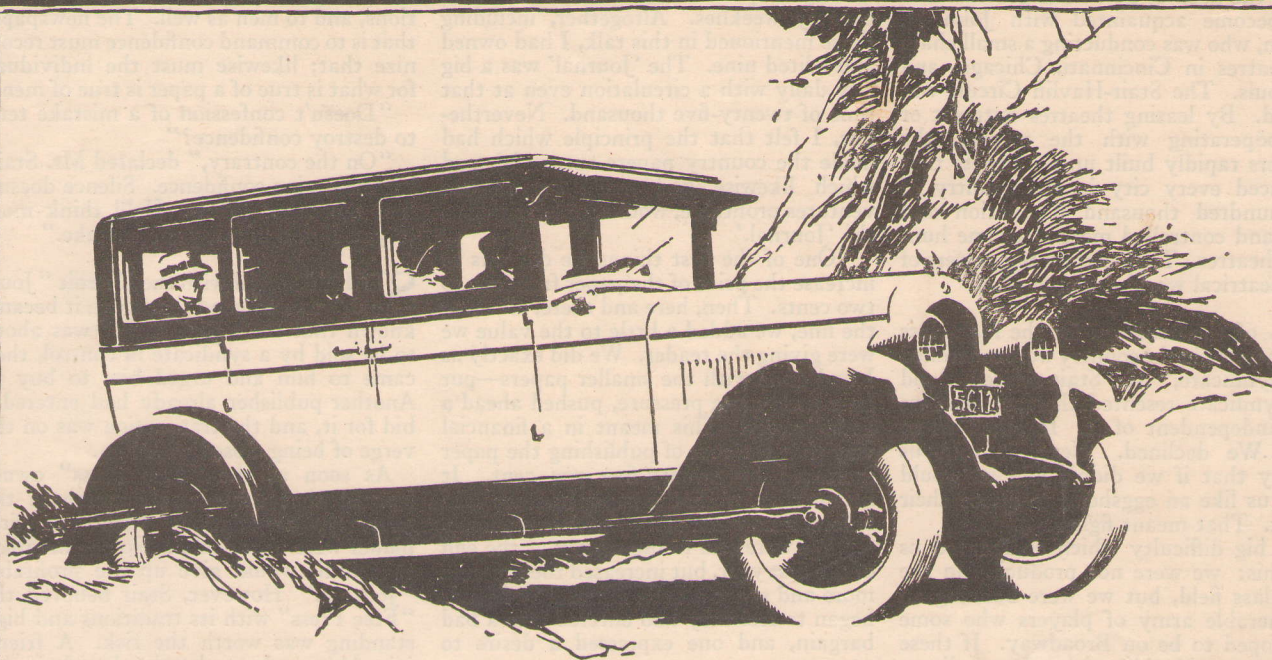
ONE of the players who came to the Howell opera house was a young elocutionist and entertainer. She was accompanied by her mother and a musician, and proved a hit. The mother felt that her daughter was talented enough to be doing bigger things, and she spoke to Stair of her ambitions.

"All the girl needs is a chance," she said.

Stair, with sudden inspiration, declared he would give her that chance. The girl was only fifteen, but she did have talent; what was more, she had ideas. Stair had a talk with her, and then sat down and wrote for her a comedy, "Little Trixie," based on her imitations and versatility, in which she was to play six different rôles. Leaving his brother to manage the newspaper, he picked up and went to Rochester, New York, the home town of the mother and daughter. There, among their friends, he organized a company of players. Most of them were amateurs, and any experienced producer would have laughed his head off at the venture.

But the new juvenile proved a "find." She had the knack of teaching others to act. The company opened in Leroy, New York, and the protean comedy was an immediate success. Stair moved into larger towns, repeating the success. Before the first year was up "Little Trixie" played fair engagements in cities as large as Detroit and Chicago; thus Stair was embarked in a theatrical career that was to make him the owner of some of the finest theatres in the country.

He conceived the idea of forming a national circuit of popular-priced theatres specializing in melodrama, and here and there began to lease theatres that mani-



The New Lighter Six, Chrysler "60"

*At Last Affording Chrysler Supreme Quality in
The Field of The Lower-Priced Six*

It is enough to know that the new lighter six, Chrysler "60" is a Chrysler. That fact alone bespeaks leadership in its field—the field of the lower-priced six.

The motoring public expects leadership of Chrysler—and every Chrysler leads its field. The famous Chrysler "70", the super-fine Chrysler Imperial "80", have demonstrated this. In fact, Chrysler leadership is conclusively proved daily by the experience of scores of thousands of satisfied Chrysler owners the world over.

In the new lighter six, Chrysler "60" you have, unit for unit, the same standards of quality comprehended in the Chrysler "70" and Imperial "80"—in features, in materials, in craftsmanship, in rigid inspection and test, in characteristics of dependability and long life.

Sixty miles, and more, per hour; unprece-

dentented get-away; gas economy of 22 miles and more per gallon; the striking beauty of Chrysler dynamic symmetry; astonishing riding ease and roadability; the safety of Chrysler four-wheel hydraulic brakes; oil-filter and air-cleaner; full pressure lubrication; seven-bearing crankshaft; impulse neutralizer; road levelers front and rear; roomy, luxurious bodies.

Never before has the motoring public been offered such supreme quality and value—in the field of the lower-priced Six—as is combined in the new lighter six, Chrysler "60".

Your nearest Chrysler dealer is eager to demonstrate this to you.

See the new lighter six, Chrysler "60". Drive it, convince yourself that nowhere will you find a Six in the lower price field that can begin to compare with this newest Chrysler achievement.

CHRYSLER SALES CORPORATION, DETROIT, MICH.
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CHRYSLER "60"—Touring Car, \$1075; Roadster, \$1145; Club Coupe, \$1165; Coach, \$1195; Sedan, \$1295.
CHRYSLER "70"—Phaeton, \$1395; Coach, \$1395; Roadster, \$1525; Royal Coupe, \$1605; Brougham, \$1745; Sedan, \$1545; Royal Sedan, \$1795; Crown Sedan, \$1895.
CHRYSLER IMPERIAL "80"—Phaeton, \$2495; Roadster (wire wheels standard equipment, wood wheels optional), \$2595; Coupe, two-passenger, \$2895; Coupe, four-passenger, \$2895; Sedan, five-passenger, \$3095; Sedan, seven-passenger, \$3195; Cabriolet, \$3495; Sedan-limousine, \$3595.
All prices f. o. b. Detroit, subject to current Federal excise tax.

CHRYSLER "60"



fested the need of new management. He had become acquainted with John H. Havlin, who was conducting a small chain of theatres in Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis. The Stair-Havlin Circuit was formed. By leasing theatres outright or by coöperating with the owners, the partners rapidly built up a business that embraced every city in the country of one hundred thousand population and over, and controlled more than one hundred theatres. Then certain big powers of the theatrical world declared war!

"ALL of the bookings for the high-class theatres in the country were controlled by a syndicate," Mr. Stair related, "and this syndicate resented the fact that we were independent of it. It asked us to join. We declined. Next, it told us bluntly that if we didn't join it 'would crush us like an eggshell,' to quote their threat. That meant fight.

"A big difficulty which confronted us was this: we were not producing in the high-class field, but we were booking an innumerable army of players who some day hoped to be on Broadway. If these players were blacklisted by the syndicate their future was in jeopardy. It was a question if we could hold them. Among them were such as George M. Cohan, Ward Vokes, Kellar, Sitt and Dingwalls attractions, and those of Sam Harris and Al Woods, as well as others who are famous in the theatre of to-day.

"So I organized the United States Amusement Company, and myself got into the high-class field. We needed theatres of our own in that field. We built them in New York, Brooklyn, and Boston, and were able to enlist the support of owners in New York and other cities. Some of the best stage stars joined us. In New York, we opened with the 'Wizard of Oz,' a title which you may recall. It ran for a year and a half with phenomenal success. Elsewhere, our offerings also went over big. The syndicate decided it had caught a tartar, and the war was over.

"That was in 1901. I was getting a little tired of the theatre and just a little homesick for the old newspaper life. Sex plays were becoming popular. I was against introducing such plays to the public. My theatre experience had been mostly with the great middle class of people. I had become convinced that this class, which is predominant in this country, likes clean amusements. Many of the managers seemed to think my ideas a trifle old-fashioned. Incidentally, they were not, and are not to-day. The public still gives preference to the clean play.

"However, the managers in many instances had ideas of their own. Many of them were getting out of hand and, as I said, I was homesick for the newspaper atmosphere. Some friends of mine in Detroit informed me that the Detroit 'Journal' might be bought at a fair price. It was a very high-grade daily. I was proposed that we go together and buy it, with the intention that I should take over its management.

"My experience had all been with country weeklies. Altogether, including those mentioned in this talk, I had owned and edited nine. The 'Journal' was a big city daily with a circulation even at that time of twenty-five thousand. Nevertheless, I felt that the principle which had made the country papers successful, and which likewise had made my theatre ventures profitable, would apply as well to the 'Journal.'

"One of the first things we did was to increase the price of the paper from one to two cents. Then, here and there, all along the line, we added a little to the value we were giving the reader. We did exactly as I had done with the smaller papers—put on a little more pressure, pushed ahead a little harder. This meant in a financial way that the cost of publishing the paper increased by twenty-five per cent. It meant that, while the paper had not paid before, it now lost money with every issue.

"We were still losing money at the end of the first year, but increased the pressure more and spent a little more. My friends began to feel they had entered into a bad bargain, and one expressed a desire to get out.

"'We'll make money by and by,' I told him. 'You'd better stay in; but if you want to get out I'll take your interest.'

"He got out. During the second year all of the others followed him on similar terms, except one whose interest was small. Some of this stock I bought myself, and some of it I bought for the managing editor and the business manager of the paper. That latter act, too, was an investment in additional pressure.

"In the third year, income and expenditures came to a balance. Then the paper began to pay. By the fourth year it was a profitable undertaking. It continued as such until I sold it, sixteen years after we had first taken over its publication. Its circulation was then one hundred and twenty thousand."

"Didn't you put fight into it?" I inquired.

Mr. Stair smiled.

"Yes. We didn't forget the fight. We believed that principle came before policy and expediency, and that in no case should it be sacrificed for the sake of policy and expediency. And I earnestly believe that. I have tried to make principle the governing factor in my newspapers. It is so to-day, and it pays. On the 'Free Press,' my present paper, we may not always be right, but we are never wrong when we know it.

"THERE have been times when we opposed public men, and later it developed that they were good men. If so, we have come out publicly and confessed our mistake. We have tried to be fair, both in the sides that we chose and in our criticisms. There have been times when both sides have been on our backs, each charging that we favored the other. To me, that is the proof of fairness. I have made it a standing rule to watch carefully, after criticizing a man, to see if he does not do something good for which we may give

him credit. There are two sides to questions, and to men as well. The newspaper that is to command confidence must recognize that; likewise must the individual, for what is true of a paper is true of men."

"Doesn't confession of a mistake tend to destroy confidence?"

"On the contrary," declared Mr. Stair, "it maintains confidence. Silence doesn't fool the other fellow. He'll think more of you if you admit your mistake."

STAIR'S record with the Detroit "Journal," was so good that when it became known that the "Free Press" was about to be sold by a syndicate in control, they came to him and urged him to buy it. Another publisher already had entered a bid for it, and the transaction was on the verge of being closed with him.

As soon as the "Free Press" owner learned that Stair would purchase the property, negotiations with the first bidder were abandoned. No one dreamed that Stair would give up the profitable "Journal." However, Stair believed the "Free Press" with its traditions and high standing was worth the risk. A friend joined him and together they bought it, this in 1906. The friend's help enabled Stair to retain his interests in the "Journal," which he did not dispose of until 1917.

Again followed the old formula of "adding a little," of giving a little more. The "Free Press" was costing \$45,000 a month. Stair increased the amount of reading matter, and expenses jumped to \$60,000 a month.

The city was growing. The "Free Press" came up apace with it. Stair continued to add, to give still more: more reading matter in proportion to advertising, more features, more wire service, and to retain the best men available on his staff. The growth of the "Free Press" became more rapid than the phenomenal growth of Detroit itself in the boom of its rising automobile industry. Figures indicate what that "little extra steam pressure" did. When Stair bought it, the "Free Press" sold 40,000 copies daily at one cent and 45,000 Sundays at five cents; to-day it approximates 200,000 daily at three cents and 275,000 Sundays at ten cents. Its monthly expenses now amount to a half-million dollars. The building into which it recently moved, and which it owns, is one of the finest newspaper plants in the world.

It is necessary to have close coöperation to carry out newspaper or any other policies. I was curious as to how Mr. Stair had gained this.

"By giving everybody full rein," said Mr. Stair. "By that, I simply mean this: We've let it be known here that every man's ideas are as good as every other's, that we want those ideas expressed, regardless of whether they agree with mine or not, and that in all matters the paper itself is to be the first consideration.

"To give and to require full confidence has been almost a religion with me. I've tried to give trust, and in return have been fortunate enough to have trust given me by those with whom I come in contact."

"IT'S Your Emergency Behavior That Proves Your Mettle," says Arthur L. Humphrey, president of the Westinghouse Air Brake Company. Mr. Humphrey has had to meet more "big moments" than fall to the lot of most people. How he met and profited by them form the substance of the very dramatic business article which is coming next month.

Stair, Early N.D. Newsmen, Dies In Detroit

Edward Douglas Stair, 92, retired publisher of the Detroit (Mich.) Free Press, and one time North Dakota newspaper man, died Wednesday in Detroit.

Mr. Stair, who was born March 29, 1859, in Michigan, began his newspaper career at the age of 14 in Morenci, Mich. After working on various weekly newspapers, he went to Chicago in 1880 and became a reporter for the Chicago Times.

In that capacity he accompanied former president U. S. Grant to Seattle to drive a golden spike marking the completion of the Northern Pacific railway.

In 1881, while a railway mail clerk, he served as correspondent for the Fargo Argus, forerunner of The Fargo Forum. A story he wrote about a "plot" to keep the Steele county seat at Hope brought threats against his life. At the first opportunity he showed up in Hope.

Cooperstown was being founded at the time and he loaded printing equipment on a sleigh and made a 25-mile trip in typical mid-winter weather to be first on the ground with a newspaper. His paper helped Cooperstown wrest the county seat from Hope. The county later was divided.

Stair also operated a paper for a time at Davenport before leaving North Dakota. He went into the daily newspaper business in Detroit in 1901 and published the Free Press from 1906 to 1940.

E. D. STAIR--Founded the first newspaper in Griggs County, "The Griggs Courier", in 1883, when Cooperstown consisted of a few straggling business buildings. Mr. Stair was given financial backing in his venture by R. C. Cooper, for whom the city was named, and who played an important part in state and local affairs in pioneer days. Selling out the Courier, Mr. Stair left Cooperstown to engage in various theatrical ventures, which eventually led him into "big time". Later he re-entered the newspaper business and today is publisher of the Detroit (Mich.) Free Press, one of the world's outstanding newspapers.

Bibliography: Harry Thompson, Editor of Griggs County Sentinel-Courier
Cooperstown, North Dakota

Stair Talks*

The following from the Detroit Journal would indicate that Stair has been interviewed:

In connection with the newly awakened desire of Detroit to make the most of her exceptional opportunities it is interesting to note how towns far less favored have been developed through tact and enterprise. Mr + Mrs. E. D. Stair have just returned from a trip that extended to San Francisco and covered the great northwest in detail.

Mr. Stair is an old newspaper man. He was an editor and proprietor at 14. He kept right on editing and owning till he had some valuable newspaper holdings in Michigan and then decided to take a whirl at the palpitating west. His first connection there was with the Fargo Argus, then piloted by the redoubtable "Fatty" Edwards, and the hey-day of its success. Mr. Stair's affinity on the paper was a big southerner, a genuine representative of the chivalry of which that section of the union was formerly wont to boast.

Just as a side issue, and because such things came easy in those times, Stair and the southerner looked after a mail agency which required one of them to make a daily run to Hope, a town in what is now North Dakota.

X Courier, June 11, 1899, quoting the Detroit Journal.

The position was a sinecure and did not interfere with newspaper work. There was an eastern syndicate booming a would-be town a little to the south of Fargo and paying 40 cents a line to the Argus as a boom organ.

The Cooper brothers, rich ranch owners a little to the northward, were seized with an ambition to build up a city and began laying pipe to that end. Without seeing or corresponding with them, Mr. Stair looked the ground over and soon had the Argus yelling for Cooperstown. Edwards encouraged this volunteer championship because the more Stair wrote the more the syndicate wrote, and the paper had to be enlarged in order to produce more lines at "40 per".

The prairie bloomed and Cooperstown became a reality. For a bud it was a "beaut" - as produced on paper by a scenic artist. It rejoiced in parks, driveways, miniature lakes and imposing buildings, all prospective. When Stair moved in there to start a newspaper and continue the boom, his pinehut office and the hotel, which looked too small to carry the flag that floated ~~at~~ proudly above it, constituted about all there was to the city. You couldn't buy a box of matches in the place. Everything had to be "toted" in, and the steadiest job in town was to keep the roof on the newspaper office, for it was a favorite freak with the festive blizzard to come up through

the floor of the sanctum and blow the top off. During a cold snap the devil and the proprietor took turns doing guard duty, for in sleeping before the fire it was absolutely necessary to turn over within a time limit of 15 minutes to prevent freezing.

But all this time the sale of town sites went ~~more~~ merrily on by mail. Enterprising people who reached the prospective metropolis had to stay there as a concession to pecuniary strictures, and the place grew. Finally the Northern Pacific agreed to run a spur into Cooperstown, provided it were made the county seat. Then began one of those wars for which this country is somewhat notorious.

Hope had been made the county seat by the governor, but a vote of the people could change it. Stair and his paper went into the thick of the fray. When it was learned that Hope was importing voters, Cooperstown began running them in the back way overland, lodging them in straw stacks and other storm shelters. By virtue of the larger importation, the Coopers won the day. When it became known that Hope intended to monkey with the returns, it was Editor Stair as mail agent who mailed the returns in his own pocket, and saw that they were counted.

Stair

4

Then it was ~~the~~ an edict went forth from a disgruntled gang in Hope that Stair must be wiped out. But he had business there, for Cooperstown wanted the records and Hope swore that that they should never be moved. Whenever he went over there the big southerner was with him like a shadow, holding a life-sized revolver in either coat pocket. This discouraged the gang. By an argument not unfamiliar in such cases, one of the county officials was won over and the records were so placed that they could be removed without unnecessary delay. One day an armed force from Cooperstown dashed into Hope, overpowered the three guards with Winchesters and departed with such ^{complete} plunder as they could get. Some of the records were found, but the courthouse went to Cooperstown, and so did the promised railroad.

When on his trip Mr. Stair visited this town to which he holds the conceded relationship of father. The first man met shook his fist under the ex-editor's nose while reminding him of a terrible roast given the man for a rash decision while he was justice of the peace. Then a long-faced committee waited on the former boomer with a notice that they had him now and proposed

to hang him. But these were jokers, and the only risk of life he ran was in being wined, dined, and feted without being allowed the recuperative benefit of regular sleep.

Cooperstown is still the county seat of Griggs County. It is the prettiest, most prosperous and most progressive place in all of North Dakota. Its people are largely from the east and there is no place of its size where the average of intelligence is higher. Detroit needs just a little of the ginger that built up Cooperstown.

About Ed. Stair (b. 1859)

by Wm. S. Dutton

in Sept. American 1926

Page 78

Mr. Stair was once mixed up in a lively scrap out in North Dakota. After selling the Midland paper he spent several months in Kansas, working from shop to shop, on the lookout for a new venture. None presented itself, so he went to Chicago and became a reporter on the "Times". He was assigned to go to Seattle on the special train of the then ex-President Grant, and cover the ceremony of the President's driving the last golden spike in the newly completed transcontinental Northern Pacific railroad. As the train passed through Fargo he was attracted by the great bonanza farms and North Dakota's waving fields of wheat. He resolved to return there, and launch a newspaper.

Opportunity to do this came in February, 1881. A syndicate was founding a new settlement, called Cooperstown. Stair got some equipment for a shop, hired a sled, and started overland for the new village, forty miles distant. There were no roads. The ground was deep in snow, the temperature was 10° to 20° below zero. When he arrived in Cooperstown he found less than fifty people settled there. Nevertheless, he set

up his shop and started his weekly, the "Cooperstown Courier".
"But the row," he laughed, "~~was~~ really began before that.
In Fargo, while waiting for something to turn up,
I got a job as a railway mail clerk on a train
that had its terminus at a little place called
Hope, in an extreme corner of Steele County. The
territorial governor had named Hope the
county seat. Backers of the proposed new
Cooperstown, which was to be centrally located,
opposed this selection, and forced an election
on the issue.

"The fight became hot and intensely bitter. I
discovered that Hope, in order to win, was colonizing
voters, and began an exposé of this in a series of
articles in the Fargo "Argus", for which I was
also reporting. Hope discovered who was
writing the articles, whereupon a committee
warned me to stay out of town under penalty
of my life.

"As a mail clerk I had a regular "layover"
of several hours in Hope. My fellow mail
clerk, a big six-foot Southern newspaper man
recently from New Orleans, concluded I
needed a body guard. So, instead of taking
his day off, which were my days on, he made
the Hope run with me. Each of us wore a

big six-shooter strapped to his belt, and so we walked through the streets of Hope unmolested. But the one hotel in town refused to sell us anything to eat.

"Cooperstown won the election by 500 votes. But Hope backers refused to concede the victory. They held the county-seat records and refused to give them up. To remedy this, we in Cooperstown organized a posse, invaded Hope and seized the records. We had no courthouse in which to keep them, so we deposited them in a grain shack under guard. A few nights later a masked band from Hope retaliated by battering down the ~~door~~^{grain} grain shack door, covering the guards with revolvers, and taking the records back to Hope. A second time a Cooperstown posse visited Hope, again seized the records, and this time kept possession.

After Cooperstown, Stair operated several other small papers in North Dakota and Iowa, all of which he made successful

Biography of Edward D. Stair

E. D. Stair was born in Morenci, Michigan in 1860. When a youngster he and his brother Orin, who was two years older, rigged up an amateur printing outfit in the attic. They proceeded to get out a four-page monthly paper which they called "Boys and Girls" and sold for twenty-five cents a year to school pupils. Later on when Ed Stair was fourteen and his brother, Orin, nearly sixteen, they quit school. They founded the "Morenci Weekly Review." Later Mr. Stair edited a paper in Midland, Michigan. After selling the Midland paper, he spent several months in Kansas working from shop to shop on the lookout for a new venture. None presented itself so he went to Chicago and became a reporter on "The Times." He was assigned to go to Seattle on the special train of the then ex-president Grant, and cover the ceremony of the presidents driving the last golden spike in the newly completed trans-continental Northern Pacific Railroad. As the train passed through Fargo he was attracted by the great bonanza farms and North Dakota waving fields of wheat. He resolved to return there and start a newspaper.

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again, seized the records and this time kept possession."

After Cooperstown, Stair operated several other small papers in North Dakota and Iowa, all of which he made successful. He was able to do this by consistently seeking out small printing contracts which previous solicitors hadn't deemed it worth while to bother with. Then he returned to Michigan to rejoin his brother in the purchase of the Howell "Republican" and later became interested in the theatrical business. Later he credited the "Detroit Free Press" which is one of the leading papers in the United States today.

Bibliography: The American Magazine September, 1926.

(COPY)

THE DETROIT FREE PRESS
DETROIT MICH.

March 26, 1937

Inez G. Cowen
Enderlin, North Dakota

My dear Lady:

I have your favor of March 16th and while as a general rule I do not like to give out any data that would seem to place any importance upon my modest work in life, I am very proud to have been a pioneer in North Dakota and would suggest that for any data as to my history you look in Who's Who.

Was born at Morenci, Michigan, March 29, 1859 .

After publishing several local weeklies, in company with my brother, Orin, throughout Michigan, I sold out and went to Fargo, N. D. in the early spring of 1879 or 1880, as I now remember.

Worked as a reporter and a part-time compositor in the job office of the Fargo Argus, then conducted by the picturesque "Fatty" Edwards and Colonel Donan.

Soon after I started a small paper at the then hopeful townsite of Davenport in the interests of a syndicate in Washington D. C.

After the county seat fight between Hope and the proposed incorporation of Cooperstown in the center of Griggs County, I went to Cooperstown in midwinter and started a paper called the Courier. Later Mr. R. C. Cooper helped to build a branch railroad from Sanborn to Cooperstown, which was later extended further north.

My little paper prospered and I made money, but in 1884 I returned to Michigan to be near my Father and Mother who were growing old and, with my brother, purchased the Livingston County Republican at Howell, Michigan.

In 1887 I wrote a play and went into the theatrical business, becoming the guiding spirit of the Stair-Havlin circuit comprising upwards of one hundred theaters located in every city of the U. S. of one hundred thousand population or more.

We sold our paper in Howell and came to Detroit to live in 1892, where I have since resided.

In 1900 I was able to purchase, with friends, the Detroit Journal; and in 1906 purchased the controlling interest in the Detroit Free Press.

While I started from scratch, hard work was always a pleasure and the privations in the early days of Cooperstown, before we got a railroad, and when the blizzards were fierce and the sloughs filled with water in the spring were always tempered with the finest kind of associations. It was always noticeable that the early pioneers had the right kind of stuff in them and there were many cultured minds available for communion.

Starting on my 79th year after next Monday, I am still happy to be putting in full work days and taking my share of responsibility, for I believe we all have an important part to play.

Sincerely,

(SIGNED)

E. D. Stair