

THE REMARKABLE CAREER OF WHITAKER WRIGHT, THE MAN WHO BROUGHT RUIN TO MANY.

His Story as Told by Himself When in New York Prison—He Dealt in Millions in the Western United States, Australia and England, Only to Die by His Own Hand When Sentenced to Seven Years' Penal Servitude.

Whitaker Wright, one of the greatest swindlers this world has known since the days of the "Great Mississippi Bubble," owner at times of millions of money, honored and respected in the cities of Great Britain, and spending his wealth like a Monte Cristo, is dead in poverty and disgrace, deserted at the end by his friends of rank and station without a cent of capital in this country, a convicted felon with seven years of penal servitude cancelled.

He was born in 1846 in England of good parents, and received a liberal education, particularly in chemistry and mining. When he was twenty-one years old his father died, leaving nothing but an annuity to his mother, so young Wright came to the country without a cent of capital to try his fortunes as an assayer. He went west and secured employment with difficulty, but finally managed to get a foothold, as mining excitement ran high soon after the war, and assayers were few and far between. Holes in the ground were to be found by the hundred, and as a prospector Wright was in demand. Wright made more money than he cost him to live, and began to save his first thousand dollars. How he got his start is best told in his own words.

"How did I get that start? Why, I went west, and as I made a little money I saved it and bought a few shares in a mine that looked as if it would be profitable. It was only a few dollars at first, but all the time I was adding to my investment. I bought a mining claim outright for \$500 and sold a half interest in it for \$1,000. I paid me back my original investment and provided a working capital. The mine proved profitable, and a little later I sold out my remaining half interest for a profit. Then I did the same thing with other properties, and kept on doing it, until I was dealing in amounts that made a profit worth while.

"Some of the hardships I endured while prospecting were almost as great as at present (when he said this was in Leadville street jail), only then was free and a good many years younger than I am now. In the early days of Leadville I lived one winter in a shanty built of tongued and grooved boards, backed up with a lot of cotton sheathing, while the thermometer went down to thirty degrees below zero and got stuck there.

"I was one of the pioneers in the Leadville boom, and spent the winter of '79 there, but I can't say that I made much money in this speculation. In fact, I lost a lot, and when you think about the money I have made don't forget that I have lost fortune and time again.

"Well, about this luck in Leadville, I had a property in which my friends and I had invested \$100,000 and more. We had sunk shafts 300 feet deep and had drifts and levels in all directions, but we did not come upon any rich enough to pay for the mining of it. Adjoining us was a property of fifteen acres, on which 300 foot shafts had likewise been sunk without satisfactory results. After the owners had spent several hundred thousand dollars. They wanted me to buy it, and offered it to me for almost anything I would pay, but one of our shafts had been sunk close to their boundary, and I thought I knew what they had on their side.

responsible men into the country to prospect. His subsequent operations he describes thus:

"The experts decided it was likely to prove a better gold field than was supposed. Discoveries were rapidly made, and in a few months there was wild excitement. Prospecting parties went in every direction and made what appeared to be rich finds day after day. Becoming satisfied that the colony would develop into a satisfactory gold mining camp, as the ores were of high grade, I instructed my agents to buy up all the richest discoveries that could be had for a reasonable price, and in this way I acquired the very best 'show' on the gold fields—properties some of which might well be described as golden treasure houses, whose gold glittered on the surface of the ground like a jeweler's window. In some of them huge bowlders of pure rich gold were found.

"Subsequently these properties were merged into the West Australia Exploration Company, which promised enormous returns, owning one mine at least that had fair to rival the famous Londonbury mine, in which a ton of gold was taken from a ten-foot hole. There came a setback. After going down a few feet the rich deposit vanished, and though we spent more than half a million dollars in subsequent development we were never able to recover the reef or vein. Of course, if this rich ore on the surface had held out as we went down the mine would have paid us millions. But this was the natural condition in most of West Australia, following an inexorable law, yet I am duly blamed for the failure of the ore to hold out.

"This was the history of several of the richest appearing properties, but in spite of everything, this exploration company brought more money into the colony and did more to develop its resources than all the other companies combined. The fact that these properties, though so rich at the surface, did not go deep, gave me much food for thought, and one night when my wife was ill and the physician had advised me not to retire, I sat in my dressing gown, front of the window, and thought all through the night, ruminating on the conditions in this mine.

"Finally I thought of a little property called the Lake View mine, owned by a few practical miners, who with their modest development and paltry appliances, were still taking out \$1,500 a month. I thought to myself, 'I will buy this property that to keep on acquiring undeveloped mines, and I instructed one of my experts, to whom I was paying the modest salary of \$500 a year under a three years' contract, to examine the property and see if it was likely to live in depth. And it was not at all as were those of other experts I employed. I bought the mine and organized what was known as the Lake View Consols Company, like the others, but with a difference, the purchase money amounted to only a few shillings a share, but it soon advanced to \$3 or \$4 a share. On a steady increasing output from the mine the West Australia Exploration Company made a first profit of \$5,000,000."

"This West Australian transaction is a fair example of the manner in which he worked; for the many other corporations which he promoted and financed were built upon a tangible property of more or less value, generally less. London was, however, full of gullible persons, and the more gigantic schemes of Wright, the faster they stepped into his hands to be shorn. The London and Globe Finance Company was formed in February, 1897, with a capital of \$10,000,000; the British American Corporation with \$2,000,000 capital, in December of the same year; and more companies followed in 1898, the combined capital being \$12,500,000; 1899 saw two more with \$7,500,000 capital, and in 1900 five were formed, their combined capital being \$23,175,000, making a gross total of \$65,000,000 for the eleven companies.

"At the very beginning of his mine prospecting operations, and felt that social station was necessary in order to interest men of rank and title in his schemes, so that he might use their names as bait for the unwary. He purchased an estate in Surrey and began to work at enormous expense. He never seemed satisfied with the appearance of the place, but moved to hills and lakes to suit a whim, and at one time had as many as a thousand men using up his money in the work. He entertained like a country gentleman of immense means, but succeeded in impressing only the workmen he employed. In the financial world, however, he succeeded where he had failed socially. Although comparatively unknown when he began operations, he soon interested Lord Dufferin, Lord Loch, and other men of prominence, and induced them to allow him to use their names as members of his boards of directors. By this means he inspired so much confidence in his undertakings that money flowed into his coffers faster even than he wanted it. So confident were the people of England in his ventures that subscriptions to a new company were sometimes far in excess of the amount of capital. When the public bid hard at one of his new stocks he wanted no time, but in a few weeks organized a new company to take up the money that had been oversubscribed in the previous one. This plan of operation accounts in some measure for the rapid success of new projects in 1900.

"The London and Globe Company was a promoting concern for manufacturing securities, and although many well-known names were on the list of directors, the fact is now known that they were little more than dummies, and that Wright was the only one who had the slightest conception of the ramifications or ventures of the concern. There is no doubt that the Lake View mine in Australia was a marvellously rich one, as it was turning out \$600,000 a month in gold, and the stock was soaring on the Exchange. Wright bought all the stock in sight, and turned it into the Globe Company, thinking that something over \$7,000,000 a year from a mine stocked at \$10,000,000 was a good thing to hold. He had been assured by his engineers that the mine was getting more profitable as it went deeper, but he learned a short time later that it was another 'Big Bonanza,' and soon after his purchase he reached the bottom. In December, 1900, the stock fell from \$150 to \$50, and the panic followed by which the London and Globe Company was ruined. The London and Globe Company was a vast inflated stock, which was thrown overboard, and thirteen firms, involving about thirty members of the British Stock Exchange, were in the financial world, went to the wall.

THIS MAN DIED BY HIS OWN HAND RATHER THAN GO TO PENAL COLONY.



Whitaker Wright, Head of Chain of Swindling Operations, Who Took Poison When Condemned to Felon's Punishment.

THE FISHER FOLKS OF THE EAST OF SCOTLAND.

(Written for The Telegraph.) The tourist who is travelling in Scotland would find a great deal to repay him for the extra outlay of time if he would leave the beaten path of travel to take a journey through the many fishing villages that lie along the eastern coast. These are to be found in every nook and cranny of the rock shore, sometimes perched on the very top where the back winds blow down upon the breaking waves and the glistening pebbles. Sometimes again they seem to maintain a precarious footing half-way up the precipice or yet again they are nestled snugly behind the shoulder of a cliff, and are encountered by most people who find very little inconvenience from this source after a short time, and let it be carefully noted, the fishermen of the east coast of Scotland are a rare and curious way of smoking haddock which is not even approached elsewhere. The process is a secret, but the effect is the faintest tracing which heart of man could desire. But, strange as it may seem it is nevertheless true that these delicate morsels never taste as well when eaten on the bold brow of a precipice overlooking the German ocean, or in the little village inn, full of the kindly gossip of the fisher folk, and redolent of the smoke from their "cutties."

And these same fisher folk are well worthy of studying. A strong race they are both mentally and physically. Accustomed to a life of peril from their 'out' up they are brave to the verge of temerity, and many an ill-fated ship's crew has been rescued from the clutches of death on their grim coast by dint of their muscular arms. Some say they are of different descent from the lowland Scotch, and indeed it seems likely enough. The tradition that they are the descendants of the colonics the venturesous Vikings founded may also be true. Many among them are good models of what there old sea kings may have been like, tall, broad shoulders and well built throughout. Six feet and even over is an ordinary height among them, with bright blue eyes and flaxen hair. They are bluff and hearty in their manners, so, as becomes their stature, and extremely hospitable.

The women are large and well made and do not disdain to do a good share of the work which must be done. The men attend to the boats and see that the fishing gear is kept in order, and the women peddle the produce of the fishing grounds in the nearest town. It is a curious sight to see them coming along the street with their heavy 'creels' of fish on their backs, smoking a short clay pipe (for most of them smoke) and calling out in their clear musical voices to the public to come and inspect their wares. And they can always sell their fish, for they generally have a way with them that is undeniable. These people have got some curious superstitions lingering among them, which their better informed neighbors of the towns discarded over a hundred years ago. The hare-foot hoodoo still holds terrors for them, which are very real, and fishing gear is still liable to have a spell cast over it which will beguile the owner of luck in the season. At ordinary times, however, one sees so little which betokens strong emotion that the unwary might be led to the conclusion that there are no very strong passions in their make up. This, however, would be a grievous error. Living for generations within hearing of the great deep they have unconsciously, perhaps, entered into its moods. When undisturbed they are marked by a great calm, and indeed much is needed to break this semblance of repose. When, however, the storm breaks over them it seems

THE GAYETIES OF THE SABRE.

Shocking Cruelty in the German Army. Two Books, "A Little Garrison" and "Jenna or Sedar," Have Called Public Attention to Barbarities Practiced by German Officers—The Cruelty Record for 1903—A Series of Courts-martial Laying Bare a Condition Which Has Obtained for Years.

Yes, we speak of the gayeties of the sabre. In the French army brutality is the exception—the amazing exception, which calls out immediate protests, and quick and punishments. With us, violence practiced as a matter of principle, insults reduced to a system, and blows struck as lessons have always been—and are not merely the law which prevents, but also the national character. None of our troops would suffer a chief or a petty officer, with the brutal insolence in vogue among our neighbors. If one of our sergeants or corporals so far forgot himself to assault a recruit, or to terrorize his company or squad, a mutiny would forthwith result, and public opinion, getting the facts in advance of the government and the courts, would make a fine uproar. Under our flag a man is never beaten without subsequent complaint and without a court-martial had to pass judgment on such a case, the guilty party would be severely punished. France is not in question, but the sentiment of human dignity dwells in the heart of the most humble of our children, and this the whole world knows.

Certainly there is something rotten in the German army. Of this we find proof everywhere. In the last issue of the "Jenna or Sedar," by Herr Beyerlein—which have had a great popularity among the enlightened German public because they have given literary expression to the abuses in the barracks, and the villainous parade and drill which fearless publicists had denounced before them, and which the imperial government, unable longer to ignore officially, has been obliged to check, though timidly as yet, by numerous penalties meted out against such brutes in uniform. So we have witnessed a succession of trials which could not have been paralleled anywhere else on earth.

In March, 1903, at Potsdam—I shall speak only of the present year—Kisch, a twenty years old, who had committed a slight breach of discipline, was suddenly seized by fiends in galleons, bound to a table and flogged until the blood flowed from his wounds. He was taken to the hospital, and as soon as he came out he hugged himself. In the same month Sergeant Kisch was sentenced to eight months in prison for having tortured young soldiers, whom he had to drill, by a process only to be equaled by a maniac possessed of the devil. Says the Frankfort Gazette: "Every day Kisch struck his recruits on their backs, pumelled their faces, pushed them under their beds day and night, often threw them into the graves and, during gymnastic exercises he made his men lie down on the ground and stuffed their mouths with tan bark. He often forced them to undress and to rub one another with coarse brushes soaked with brine until the blood ran. One of these men, Koehner, against whom he had a special grudge, had an inflamed foot, which he compelled him to run up and down stairs, shouting at him: 'Up! Down! Up! Down!' And when Koehner fell exhausted he threw himself upon him, shouting: 'Jump up or you die,' and struck him in the face with his fist, cutting his upper lip and breaking one of his teeth. He then intentionally tramped on the injured foot so that Koehner had to take to his bed and stay in the hospital six weeks."

Now I ask you what the gaudiest and most subordinate of our troops would have done to the sergeant who treated them like that? In August, 1903, another subaltern, by the name of Dunkel, was sentenced for having struck 160 of his soldiers and for having compelled his entire squad to make a forced march with gravel in their boots. He also amused himself by ordering them to beat their heads against a stove, and when they lacked the courage to do it, Dunkel helped them a little, so that one of them, the simple-minded soldier Kruse, exasperated by this torture, committed suicide. In November, 1903, an officer at the barracks of the Meles Lancers was sentenced to eight months in prison for having tortured thirty of his horsemen with lance thrusts. Several of those thirty had arms or legs broken. In October, 1903, the chief sergeant of the Nassau Regiment, the petty officer, and the hospital nurses flogged and kicked a poor devil by the name of Beyer, who was at last taken to the hospital. The facts were these: The old soldiers of his company had made a butt of him. They had compelled him to lick the pavements of the barracks court, carefully picking out the dirtiest places, and when at last he refused, because he was tired out, they struck him with the name of Beyer, who was at last taken to the hospital. The facts were these: The old soldiers of his company had made a butt of him. They had compelled him to lick the pavements of the barracks court, carefully picking out the dirtiest places, and when at last he refused, because he was tired out, they struck him with the name of Beyer, who was at last taken to the hospital. The facts were these: The old soldiers of his company had made a butt of him. They had compelled him to lick the pavements of the barracks court, carefully picking out the dirtiest places, and when at last he refused, because he was tired out, they struck him with the name of Beyer, who was at last taken to the hospital.

ORCHID WORTH A FORTUNE.

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But Mrs. Wilson's gardener replied: "We buy all we can, but we never sell." Mrs. Wilson lives at 43rd and Walnut streets, Philadelphia, says the New York Tribune. Ten years ago she bought the orchids of Erasmus Corning, of New York—40,000 plants, which Mr. Corning had been forty years in gathering. She engaged for her gardener, Alphonse Paricat, who had been head gardener at the orchid farm of Baron Alphonse de Rothschild, of Paris—and she sent off, with a review commission, Henri Barraud, a skilled orchid hunter. For the last ten years, thanks to the daring and the industry of Barraud, and thanks to the fact that she was growing greatly. It is practically a collection that represents fifty years of work. It numbers 20,000 plants, over 2,000 of which are unique, with duplicates nowhere in the world, and it is worth (as Erasmus Corning spent \$100,000 on it, as Mrs. Wilson has spent \$200,000 on it, and as Paricat has propagated from it over 2,000 hybrids) close upon \$1,000,000. It is said to be the best collection in America, and Sanders says it is in many respects the best collection in the world.

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FOOT ELM FREE FOR CHLAPLINS.

THESE THREE DEAD AND TWO DYING FROM DRINKING WOOD ALCOHOL.

Chicago, Feb. 1.—A number of colored men living in a rooming house in Dearborn street, drank wood alcohol Sunday night and as a result Cyrus Robinson, J. C. McGarthy and Thomas Smith are dead, George Jenkins and Edward Thompson are dying and Richard Fletcher in a hospital with a faint chance for life.

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him failed, and sent several substitutes to prison. In November, 1903, the court-martial of the Thirty-third Division at Metz tried Lieutenant Shilling and sentenced him to prison for 600 cases of terrible violence. Last December, the same court-martial sent Captain Paschke of Schilling to jail for five days for his failure to prevent his subordinates from striking his men, but the sergeant-major, Kaffarnick, who had prevented the beaten soldiers from complaining, was acquitted.

Gay the other day the subaltern Francky appeared before the Remsburg court-martial to answer to 1620 separate accusations of brutality towards his men. Besides, he had robbed some of them. He got five years in prison, and one day the military court of the empire confirmed the sentence formerly pronounced against Sergeant Breidenbach, of the Fourth Infantry Regiment of the Grand Guard, for having struck 107 members of this select troop during the last few years.

I think that after this far from complete list—for we only touch the most important cases—for Frenchmen will hesitate to draw a comparison between what goes on among us and what happens elsewhere. Here every officer and private citizen tends to make the army, in which all must serve, a school of citizenship and of patriotism. In Germany, on the other hand, men are managed by beating and flogging. Human dignity is not respected, and the trooper is treated like a beast until the army becomes a prison.

The "Gayeties of the Sabre" are no longer seen in France; we must look elsewhere to find them.—Charles Laurent, in Le Matin.

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