

ALEXANDER T. STEWART.

In the year 1819, a European vessel anchored in the harbor of New York, after a long and weary voyage from the old world. She brought many passengers to the young metropolis, the most of whom came with the intention of seeking their fortunes in this land of promise.

Among them was a young Irishman, who had left his humble home in his native county of Tyrone, in Ireland, to seek in America the means of bettering his condition. He was in his twenty-fourth year, having been born in 1795, and was possessed of a good education, backed by sound health and an indomitable determination to succeed. He was poor, however, and when he landed in New York he was without friends.

He had been educated with a view to entering the ministry, and his first effort after reaching New York was to procure a school. He was successful to a certain extent, and for nearly three years taught a small number of pupils at No. 59 Rose street.

School-teaching, however, did not suit him, though he managed to save some money from the proceeds of his labors. A relative in Europe died about this time and left him a small legacy, with which he determined to enter into business for himself, and in 1822, soon after the terrible epidemic of yellow fever that year, he established himself as a retail dry-goods merchant in a frame building on Broadway, just opposite where his present wholesale house stands. His entire cash capital was between twelve and fifteen hundred dollars, and the prospect before him was not inviting. His store was small, being only twenty-two feet wide by twenty deep, and was situated next door to the then famous Bonafanti, who kept the most popular and best-known variety store of the day.

About this time Mr. Stewart married Miss Cornelia Clinch, an estimable lady of New York, who is still living, and who proved a noble help-mate to him in his early struggles. The young couple lived in one small room over the store, and the wife took care of the domestic arrangements while the husband attended to his business below.

Without mercantile experience, and possessing no advantage but his own unaided determination to succeed, Mr. Stewart started boldly on what proved the road to fortune. No young merchant ever worked harder than he. From fourteen to eighteen hours each day were given to his business.