

# PHOEBE COUZINS AND JAMES G. FAIR WERE ENGAGED TO MARRY.

The blurred and tear-stained pages of another chapter in the life history of the late James G. Fair are now to be turned to the light of day. The maker of many wills, the creator of a great fortune, lies in his last resting-place, while the great heart of one of the world's most talented women aches with pain.

Miss Phoebe Couzins, the world-famed woman's rights advocate, orator and author, was the affianced bride of James G. Fair at the time of his death. With the erratic ex-senator the attachment for Miss Couzins may have been nothing more than a passing caprice of his active, ever restless mind. It may have been that the law of supremacy of mind over matter forced him to kneel, a worshiper at the shrine of genius and intellect before the lady in question and plead for her love, her heart and her hand in marriage, and that so soon as he was removed from this subtle and ennobling influence the grosser traits of his nature again resumed ascendancy, and he either willfully neglected or strangely forgot the vows he had made to

## The Bereaved Lady Declares Her Firm Belief That Interested Persons Intercepted Their Letters.

papers they should be returned to her. But none came. If the dead millionaire had preserved them, some one quickly put them out of the way after his demise.

Struggling with her sorrow and her sickness, Miss Couzins started westward and arrived in San Francisco shortly after the death of her husband. She came and learned that only a few short hours after Mr. Fair's death a document purporting to be his last will and testament was filed in court for probate. It was the document creating a trust—a document which did not even mention Miss Couzins' name, although the testator had repeatedly stated in the presence of witnesses that Miss Couzins

## She Says That the Ex-Senator Was Actually Controlled by Sinister Influences During the Latter Part of His Life.

than mutual admiration. In the course of a few months we parted, as true friends part, and went our separate ways. He returned to Nevada and California and I resumed my work in different parts of the world. Thus time went on. Several years passed and we did not meet until some time after my mother's death.

"In the meantime I had been elected secretary to the National Board of Lady Managers of the Columbian Exposition, and had made my home in the Grand Pacific Hotel, Chicago. I had served in the capacity of secretary for a long time, but had not received my pay for the work or the time I had devoted to it. It was a tiresome and unpleasant task. There was always trouble brewing and coming up, and I was in the midst of it and oftentimes was severely criticized by one side or the other. The worry and labor had seriously affected my health, and I felt a part of the time as if I would like to lie down and die and be at rest.

Pacific Hotel. Shortly after returning to Chicago I received a letter from Mr. Fair, in which he stated that he would soon see me; that he wanted our friendship to culminate in a relationship closer and dearer than mere friendship, and that he was coming with serious intentions to ask my hand and heart in marriage.

"Well, Mr. Fair, accompanied by his secretaries, Bresse and Angus, and I think Mr. Crothers, arrived in Chicago May 7, 1893, and took apartments at the Grand Pacific. Mr. Fair immediately sent me his card. I met him in one of the parlors and he expressed great happiness at seeing me again. He told me then and there that he had come all the way from California for the purpose of asking me to become his wife. I told him that I would give him a definite answer within a few days and delicately intimated that he need have no fear of my final decision. He seemed very much pleased at this and we spent the evening very pleasantly talking of the present, the future and old times.

"I did write, but I never got an answer after that. I am positively certain that he wrote to me also, but the letters were unquestionably intercepted. His secretaries were constantly on the watch. When I used to call on Mr. Fair in his sick-room at the Grand Pacific he used to come to the other attaches used to keep themselves in the closets in order to listen to our conversation. I called Mr. Fair's attention to these things, but he only smiled and said it didn't matter as he was accustomed to it. Miss Couzins dwelt upon the meeting in Chicago with great tenderness. She said: "Senator Fair wrote to me that he would leave San Francisco for Chicago on the 15th of May, and for me to expect him in Chicago about the 18th or 19th of that month.

ance, called an 'equipoise,' and instructed him how to apply it. The next morning, as I was sitting at breakfast, he walked over to me and thanked me for my kindness, saying that the application had been successful and that he was relieved from pain and had enjoyed a good night's rest. "After he became convalescent it was my custom every morning before starting for the exposition grounds to send a note asking in regard to his health and if he had rested well. He always replied by a verbal message or sent me a little facetious note telling me how he felt and wishing me good fortune in my work.

"I was first attracted to Senator Fair because he had such a beautiful head. In

most nice and to the point, and dishes up the Cleveland matter.

I wish I could write more, but I cannot. Sincerely yours,  
JAMES G. FAIR.

The other was a brief note written at the Grand Pacific Hotel, Chicago, and addressed simply, "Miss Couzins, room 318." Its contents concerned an ear trouble for which Miss Couzins had procured remedies. It ran thus:

THE GRAND PACIFIC HOTEL,  
CHICAGO, May 23, 1893.

Dear Miss Couzins: My ear broke last night. I am much better now and have but little pain. With best and kindest wishes, I am yours truly,  
JAMES G. FAIR.

Continuing her narrative Miss Couzins said: "I had a great affection for Mr. Fair and revere his memory, and I know that at one time at least he sincerely loved me, although everything possible was done to cause our separation. Whenever there was anything mean said about me in the newspapers Mr. Fair's valet used to mark the articles with blue pencil and place them conspicuously on a table. Every-



THE LATE JAMES G. FAIR.  
[From a photograph taken a short time before his death.]

the woman who loved him, trusted in his word and held him sacred in her heart of hearts as her ideal among men.

But the actions of Mr. Fair during the period of his courtship, his letters to the object of his avowed affections, filled as they are with the outpourings of a seemingly honest and sincere love, the circumstances that surrounded him and the outside influences that were brought to bear upon him at all times, indicate that the mature lover was not wholly master of himself. This is the belief of Miss Couzins. She thinks that he was hedged about with men and influences, whose persistence overpowered his individual will, and swayed his moral action.

The facts as viewed by her indicate that in this case Mr. Fair was dragged by a force he could not withstand from the woman he dearly loved and had promised to wed, and was prevented from seeing her again, or in any way communicating with her. To this end, the lady believes, many falsehoods were told, and many letters were intercepted by enemies, whose selfish and sinister motives were threatened by the proposed alliance.

Whatever may or may not have been Mr. Fair's feelings or ultimate intentions in the matter, one thing is certain, and that is that Miss Couzins' affections were won by the ex-senator as completely as ever was the love of any fair lady by her brave knight in the good old days of chivalry. According to her own statements, Miss Couzins had long admired Mr. Fair, and as the acquaintance grew into friendship and she saw him often, her feeling of friendship grew into the deep, earnest, sincere love of a lifetime. And she firmly believed that she was sincerely loved in return. She is still of that belief, and cherishes the memory of her dead hero and mourns as a widow's heart mourns for its departed mate.

But Miss Couzins is altogether different

should be liberally provided for in a financial way and that she was to become his wife at an early date. One of the witnesses who heard these declarations was Dr. Vincent Herbert of Chicago, who attended Mr. Fair during a season of sickness at the Grand Pacific Hotel in the spring of 1893. Other reputable and well-known persons heard Mr. Fair make the same statements, and now they wonder how it was possible that he could have so soon forgotten the woman for whom he professed the most sincere love, and calling her "his good angel" and "the light and joy of his old age," and the like.

When Miss Couzins came to San Francisco she said nothing of her own individual loss or the pain in her heart. She delivered lectures and visited her friends and suffered in silence. At last she became so ill and weary that she could no longer go on as formerly with her public work. She decided to take a season of rest. One of her admiring friends, Mrs. Knox Goodrich of San Jose, had invited her to come and rest with her. Miss Couzins went about two weeks ago and for a time was lost sight of to the busy world. The fact that she had a brother living in the Garden City was another inducement to draw her there. And there, after a long search, a representative of the CALL found Miss Couzins doing the work of a ministering angel for her brother, who is ill at 220 South Ninth street, San Jose.

It was in the cozy little parlor of the house where her brother lives that Miss Couzins reluctantly consented to tell the story that will be read with interest all over the country. But after she had decided to relate the facts connected with her engagement to Mr. Fair, she told her story freely, candidly and without hesitancy. Before speaking about herself she said:

"I will begin by stating that there were many confidences between Mr. Fair and myself which I cannot touch upon at all.

"In 1892 I had a bill before Congress the purpose of which was to secure relief in the way of payment for my services as secretary to the Board of Lady Managers. I needed all the influence that I could bring to bear on the measure. While working among my friends and lobbying for my bill I was at the same time attending by the bedside of my mother, who was very ill. She suggested to me that Senator Fair might be able and willing to help me. I wrote to him and asked if he had any friends in Congress on whom he could bring his influence to bear in my behalf.

"He promptly replied by writing me a very kind letter, but stating that he had no personal nor political friends in that Con-

gress on whom he could bring any influence to bear. He gave me some valuable advice—as he was well competent to do—and closed by urgently requesting me to write to him at once and open a correspondence. He also added in the letter that he was quite ill at the time. As I remembered him kindly and liked him very much I immediately wrote him a friendly letter, incidentally recalling the many pleasant hours we had passed together at the Riggs House.

"And this," Miss Couzins resumed after a pensive pause, "opened the correspondence between us which eventually led to our betrothal.

"For some time after that letters passed between us at regular intervals, and the spirit of the correspondence grew warmer and more confidential with each letter. In February, 1893, Mr. Fair started from San Francisco to come to Washington and see me. He traveled by the southern route and was accompanied by Mr. Bresse or Mr. Angus, I think by both. At Yuma he was taken strangely and suddenly ill.

"He wrote me one letter from there in which he explained his serious condition, stating that he was scarcely able to write at all. From Yuma he took a trip into Mexico. This seemed to have benefited his health very much, for he soon recovered his usual vigor and energy of purpose. In the meantime I had returned to Chicago and took up my residence at the Grand

future if I would only remain near him through life.

"When Mr. Fair had recovered sufficiently to enable him to be up and walk around he called me aside one day. He said that he had decided to shake himself free from certain influences that constantly interfered with his wishes and his peace of mind. He spoke of the many notes and cards which he had sent to my room after he became convalescent and which never reached their destination. They had been intercepted by some one who had an interest in keeping us apart.

"I want to settle up my affairs," he said, "in such a manner that I shall do justice to all my family connections. I love my children and I want to make fair provision for them. I love you and I want to provide for you at all hazards so that financial trouble can never come to you. I want you to be my wife. Will you marry me?"

"I answered 'yes.' He then said: "Thank you, dearest. God bless you. We must be married soon—very soon. I shall arrange my business and property affairs at once."

"But he was still more or less ill, and this prevented our early marriage. One evening, when he was feeling much better, we sat together and talked about the world's fair, and he said we must see all of it together, and that as 'his own dear and gifted little wife' I should explain all



THE GRAND PACIFIC HOTEL,  
DRAKE, PARKER & CO. PROPRIETORS.

Chicago May 23 1893

Dear Miss Couzins  
My Ear booke lost  
night - I am much better  
now & have but little pain  
with best & kindest wishes I  
am yours truly  
James G. Fair

SENATOR FAIR'S NOTE TO MISS COUZINS, WRITTEN IN CHICAGO.  
[Reproduced from the original.]

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Yuma A. T. April 25/93  
Dear Miss Couzins -  
I have your kind favor of March 23rd tonight. I regret I did not write to you after. I have been sick most of the time since I wrote to you. I am here now sick & cannot tell when I will get away. I have aama Phrenitis - that article of yours is most nice & to the point - and takes up the Cleveland matter - I wish I could write more but I cannot  
Sincerely yours  
James G. Fair

SENATOR FAIR'S LETTER TO MISS COUZINS, WRITTEN AT YUMA, ARIZONA.  
[Reproduced from the original.]

from other women who once were passionate around the dead millionaire's heart. She will ask for no compensation, no after consideration; she will offer no petition of any sort for a share of the millions that were once pledged to her use; she does not seek for pecuniary balm for her wounded heart. But she says that she does wish and hope and pray that justice will be done to the children of the man she loved—the children whom she loves for his sake—and that all who would wrongfully enrich themselves may come to grief.

When James G. Fair died, his affianced bride was in Salt Lake City. The news was a terrible shock to her because it was first conveyed to her by flaring headlines in the newspapers. It made her seriously ill, and she has not been a well, a happy or a hopeful woman since. So soon as her dazed senses could fully comprehend the situation she wrote to one of the executors of the will—their names having appeared in the telegraphic reports—and requested that if any of her letters to Mr. Fair were found among his

He told me all about his life—his successes, his failures, his joys and his sorrows. From these confidences I concluded that he had been more stung against than sinning. I refer particularly to his married life and the unpleasant ending of it. Cruel enemies and miserable meddlers had done their villainous work.

"I first met Mr. Fair in the Riggs House, Washington, D. C., in 1883, while he was a United States Senator from Nevada. I took a liking to him at once. He seemed to me to be the very ideal of a strong, vigorous and energetic man, who was created to succeed in life, to be a prince and a leader among men. The evident defects in his education and manners were completely overbalanced by the natural greatness of the man, as I saw him. I soon admired him very much, and I could see that he also liked to be in my company and seemed to take interest in my work and my views of social and political conditions.

"But this, our first friendship, did not grow at once to anything more or warmer

Miss Phoebe W Couzins  
1416 K St NW  
Washington D.C.

Fac-simile of the envelope containing Mr. Fair's letter to Miss Couzins.  
[Reproduced from the original by a "Call" artist.]



MISS PHOEBE COUZINS.  
[Sketched from life by a "Call" artist.]

shape; it was almost perfect, and in that regard he greatly resembled my father, who was one of the noted men of St. Louis. My father was one of the committee of seven appointed by Lincoln to keep Missouri in the Union. For five years he was acting provost-marshal and Chief of Police of St. Louis. My mother was one of the nurses who cared for the wounded during the war. She was wounded on the field of Vicksburg and was the only woman who was pensioned for injuries received during actual service. Senator Fair referred to this when writing to me at the time I asked him for his assistance in securing my rights as a member of the lady board of managers. He said that a daughter of such a father and such a mother was entitled to the best that a grateful nation could offer, and that he would do all he could to see that justice was done to me."

Miss Couzins was the recipient of many endearing as well as friendly letters from the dead ex-senator. After the arrangement of marriage Mr. Fair wrote love letters like an ardent youth of twenty, and these Miss Couzins holds and cherishes as sacred relics. When asked for a copy of one of these she slowly but emphatically shook her head.

"No, not for any consideration whatever," she said. "I hold them too sacred to be exposed to the jeers of an unfeeling world. Here are a couple of friendly missives, however, which you can have if you like."

As she spoke she handed the reporter two letters and envelopes, all written with

that could be done to influence him against me was done by Bresse and Angus and Crothers. Once a very prominent gentleman, who was staying at the same hotel, in speaking of Mr. Fair and his satellites, remarked that the life of a multi-millionaire is not altogether a pleasant one. "Since leaving Chicago I have received a letter from Dr. Herbert, in which he states



Mrs. Adeline Couzins, Mother of Miss Phoebe Couzins.  
[From a photograph.]

that he frequently heard Mr. Fair speak of me as his future wife. And Mr. Fair's wife I should have become had not undue influence and interference come between us. Perhaps he would have been alive and well to-day had we been united in marriage before he was rushed away from Chicago. To me his sudden and unexpected death looked singular, and—but I will not say any more about it. The chapter is closed and I ask for nothing now except to be left in peace with my sorrow."



Fac-simile of the envelope that contained the Grand Hotel note.  
[Reproduced from the original.]

Hon. William P. Black of 108 Dearborn street, advised me to take the matter into my own hands and to see that the Senator was properly cared for, but I hesitated to do so.

"Dr. Herbert reported that Clark, the Senator's valet, was exceedingly diligent and attentive, and seemed to be afraid that he would be deposed by some one else. He said Clark was doing very well, and probably it would be just as well for him to continue as nurse.

"Mr. Bresse and Mr. Angus watched the Senator like a chicken does a hawk, or a hawk does a chicken (which is it?), and allowed no one to see him until Mr. Crothers came, when he seemed to have charge of the matter, and Bresse and Angus were seldom seen again about the hotel.

"There he was, a man worth millions and with no one to care for him and no one to do anything for him, excepting those men, and they seemed to have him absolutely in their control.

"On his arrival he told me that he had started in opposition to the advice of his physician, Dr. Livingston, and said that he could not wait any longer, but had come to see me and wanted me to decide his fate. A day or two afterward he complained that he was suffering very much from pain in his ear, and I asked him what he had been doing; if he had been outdoors in that cold, raw weather. He said that his friends had taken him for a drive on the lake front in an open carriage. I replied that it was criminal for anybody to take a man in his feeble health for such a drive as that in that kind of weather.

"He was suffering so much from the pain in his ear that I sent to my room and procured for him a little electrical appli-

lead pencil. The first was dated at Yuma, and read as follows:

YUMA, A. T., April 2, 1893.

Dear Miss Couzins: I have your kind favor of March 23 to-night. I regret I did not write

"I answered 'yes.' He then said: "Thank you, dearest. God bless you. We must be married soon—very soon. I shall arrange my business and property affairs at once."

"But he was still more or less ill, and this prevented our early marriage. One evening, when he was feeling much better, we sat together and talked about the world's fair, and he said we must see all of it together, and that as 'his own dear and gifted little wife' I should explain all

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## TO GO TO THE GARDEN CITY ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE STATE SUNDAY-SCHOOL ASSOCIATION.

ELABORATE PREPARATIONS BEING MADE FOR THE MEETING OF APRIL NEXT.

The next annual meeting of the State Sunday-school Association will be held in San Jose, beginning Tuesday evening, April 16, and continuing through Wednesday and Thursday, the 17th and 18th.

The members believe this will be one of the most successful conventions ever held in the State, and an excellent programme has been arranged for the three days.

The voting membership of the convention will consist of the pastors and two delegates chosen from each school, and an additional delegate for every fifty members over 100.

This, however, is not expected to be the limit of those who attend, but large numbers of those interested in Sunday-school work will be present.

The Southern Pacific and San Francisco and Northern Pacific Railroad companies have made a two-thirds rate for all who attend the convention.

San Jose, famed as the "Garden City," will be at its loveliest, and has extended a cordial welcome to all to attend.

On Wednesday and Thursday noons the ladies of the different churches of San Jose will serve a luncheon, and the social features of the convention are to be made a special feature.

The French Society's Annual. At the annual meeting of the French Mutual Benevolent Society the election of officers will take place, and a spirited contest that has been going on for some time will be decided, so far as the officers of the society are concerned. The election of a resident physician for the French Hospital and that of visiting physician, which has developed much bitterness, has been postponed.



John E. D. Couzins, Deceased, Father of Miss Phoebe Couzins.  
[From a photograph.]

often. I have been sick most of the time since I wrote to you. I am here now sick and cannot tell when I will get away. I have asthma-pneumonia. That article of yours is