

# ROSWELL P. FLOWER DIES SUDDENLY

## Ex-Governor Succumbs to Heart Disease at Eastport, L. I.

### HAD GONE ON A FISHING TRIP.

#### Taken Ill Yesterday Afternoon and Died at 10:30 o'Clock P. M.

#### The Second Attack Proved Fatal— Doctors Arrived on a Special Train—The Widow Prostrated.

EASTPORT, L. I., May 12.—Ex-Gov. Roswell P. Flower died here suddenly at 10:30 o'clock to-night of heart disease. He was at the Country Clubhouse, where he usually spent Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of every week during the Spring and Summer, resting and enjoying the fishing.

Mr. Flower and a party of friends came here last night for the fishing. He retired early, in apparently good health and in high spirits. This morning he and his friends were up early, preparing to fish. Mr. Flower remarked that he was not feeling quite well. He was suffering from indigestion, and said he would not go fishing.

About 2 o'clock in the afternoon it was said at the club that Mr. Flower had had an attack of heart disease, but was resting quietly, and would probably be able to take a drive in the morning. It was also said that he would return as soon as possible to his home in New York.

The final attack came early in the evening. Mr. Flower, already exhausted by the first attack, sunk rapidly. There was no longer any hope, although the physicians exerted every effort to prolong his life.

When he was taken ill, in the early afternoon, Dr. Rogers of this place was called in and attended him until his family physicians, who had been summoned from New York, arrived. Drs. Timothy F. Allen and Paul Allen, who have treated the ex-Governor for years, soon came by special train.

Mrs. Flower and Frederic S. and Nathan M. Flower, nephews of Mr. Flower, arrived by the same train.

An effort was made to keep the matter as quiet as possible, and few knew that Mr. Flower was ill until shortly before his death. Mrs. Flower was prostrated.

Frederic Flower took charge of the details after the death. Nothing definite has been arranged as to the funeral, except that the body would be transferred to New York City sometime to-morrow. The special train which brought Dr. Allen and his son will probably be used to take back the body.

## THE CAREER OF MR. FLOWER.

Roswell Pettibone Flower was born on Aug. 7, 1835, in the village of Theresa, Jefferson County, N. Y. He was the sixth of the nine children of Nathan Monroe and Mary Ann Flower. His father, who was a wool carder and cloth manufacturer, died when Roswell was eight years old. The son, who was afterward to fill so prominent a place, spent his youth in the ordinary pursuits of a country boy.

He worked in the mill and on the farm at such times as he was not in school. His desire to get an education was strong enough to overcome the obstacles offered by the slender means of his widowed mother. He attended a country school until he was fourteen years old. At that age he secured a place in a store in Theresa at \$5 a month and board, using the money he received to pay his tuition at the village High School, from which he was graduated two years later.

During the Summer he frequently got leave of absence from the store where he was employed to go into the country and help some farmer who was particularly in need of hands to harvest his crops, in that way earning a few extra dollars. At one time he worked for two weeks in a brick-yard. At another he sawed wood for the lawyers' offices in town.

Leaving the high school, young Flower took a place as teacher of a country school near his home "boarding around" among the families of his pupils. In later years Mr. Flower delighted to tell of his experiences as a pedagogue, which included a wrestling match with all the larger boys of the school on the first day, in which he was uniformly victorious, establishing thereby his control of the theretofore turbulent and unruly youths.

## HIS FIRST BUSINESS VENTURES.

Mr. Flower began his business experience when he was eighteen years old. His first employment was as salesman in the dry goods store of E. D. Woodward, in Philadelphia. That lasted for two months, when his employer failed. Young Flower returned then to his mother's home, in Theresa, where he spent the Spring and Summer at work on the farm. In August, 1853, he began clerking in a hardware store in Watertown, the county seat, leaving that position in a month to become Deputy Postmaster of the place. For six years he held that office, receiving a salary of \$50 a month and board. It was one of his favorite reminiscences of more prosperous times that the first \$50 he received was invested in a gold watch, which, yielding to his trading instincts, he sold to a man who afterward went West, giving his note for \$53, which Mr. Flower never collected.

Out of the slender salary of \$600 a year Mr. Flower saved \$1,000 in the course of his six years' service. With his savings he purchased a half interest in a jewelry store, the firm being Hitchcock & Flower. His financial genius soon told, and two years later he bought out his partner and enlarged the business, in which he continued until 1869.

In 1869 Henry Keep, who had married Miss Emma Woodruff, a sister of Mrs. Flower, was on his deathbed. Three weeks before he died Mr. Keep asked Mr. Flower to come to New York. Mr. Keep had been President of the New York Central and Treasurer of the Michigan Southern and Lake Shore Railroads, and was then President of the Chicago and Northwestern Railway.

## MR. FLOWER IN POLITICS.

It was not until 1881 that Mr. Flower became prominent in politics. In the interval between 1869 and that year he was busy accumulating the fortune that led later to his prominence in the financial world. He had always been an active Democrat, and had served as Chairman of the County Committee of Jefferson County. He was a friend of Samuel J. Tilden of his first meeting with whom this story is told by the historians of his political career.

Mr. Tilden was making a trip through the State when Mr. Flower met him one day on the train. Mr. Tilden expressed admiration for the Jefferson County organization. Mr. Flower explained that its efficiency was due to the preponderating influence of young men in the organization, and said to Mr. Tilden that if he hoped to succeed to the Chairmanship of the State Committee in the following year he must affiliate with the younger element of the party.

"You do not seem to recognize the fact, Mr. Tilden, that a man under fifty years of age has any influence in politics," said Mr. Flower, to the amazement of the listeners who were not accustomed to hearing the true situation bluntly put to Mr. Tilden. "The young men control the party," continued the young Watertown man, "and you must extend your acquaintance among

them or be prepared to give up the leadership."

The veteran politician, contrary to the expectations of those who knew him, was impressed with Mr. Flower's remarks, and replied that he was anxious to make the acquaintance of young men. At Mr. Flower's suggestion, Mr. Allen C. Beach of Watertown was sent for by Mr. Tilden. Mr. Beach went to Mr. Tilden's house and spent two or three weeks in extending the reorganization throughout the State. Hence rose the famous "Tilden organization." In 1877, as Chairman of the Democratic State Committee, Mr. Flower managed the campaign with signal success.

## ELECTED TO CONGRESS.

In 1881 a vacancy occurred in the Eleventh Congressional District, which includes the richest and most influential portion of New York City, by reason of Levi P. Morton being appointed United States Minister to France. William W. Astor, who had been elected a State Senator in a Democratic district by nearly 3,000 majority, ran for the vacant seat. A Republican in a Republican stronghold, Mr. Astor's only concern for a time was to be elected by a vast majority, and it seemed hopeless to oppose him. Mr. Flower, however, ventured to do it, and, though at the beginning of the canvass but slightly acquainted with the constituency, came out of the contest successful, 3,000 votes ahead of his competitor.

At the close of his term in Congress Mr. Flower refused to accept the sum of \$458.80, the amount due him on account of salary and mileage as a member of the Forty-seventh Congress, thus refusing to receive public money for time necessarily expended in attention to his private business.

Mr. Flower in the Fall of 1882 was prominently named for the nomination to the Governorship of New York. Newspapers opposing his nomination thereupon assailed him as a representative of the railway and bondholding interests, and the phrase "Jay Gould's candidate" was applied to him.

Mr. Flower took no notice of these attacks, which were left unanswered until months after the convention which nominated Grover Cleveland as candidate for the executive office of the Empire State.

It was then asserted by Mr. Flower that he had taken care, previously to taking his seat in Congress, to free himself from all such private business interests as could interfere with the impartial discharge of the duties he was about to assume. He resigned the Presidency of one railroad and the Vice Presidency of another, and sold the railroad stock in his possession of lines respecting which any Congressional action might be taken, as, for instance, the Union Pacific, of which he sold stock to an amount involving the immediate loss of \$10,000. Moreover, during his term in Congress he is said to have refused the Presidency of a railroad, for the same reason.

## PROMINENT IN WASHINGTON.

In the Syracuse Democratic Convention Mr. Flower received 123 votes against the same number for Gen. Slocum and 61 for Grover Cleveland. Mr. Cleveland was eventually declared the choice of the convention and his remarkable career began.

Mr. Flower declined a renomination for Congress in 1882, having stated in his former canvass that he would not accept a renomination, and that he would leave the district in such a condition after one term that any man, regardless of his pecuniary status, might be nominated in it. He was at this time offered the unanimous renomination by both factions of his party, and was assured that the Republicans would not put up any candidate if he consented to run. But he preferred to carry out his pledge to the people when he ran against Mr. Astor. Orlando B. Potter was nominated and elected in his place, Mr. Flower stumping the district for him.

In 1885 Mr. Flower was unanimously nominated as Lieutenant Governor on the ticket with David B. Hill, in the face of a declared determination to decline, and it was only after he had sent his refusal to accept that the State Committee was convened and Edward F. Jones of Binghamton was named in his place.

Mr. Flower was a delegate at large to the Democratic National Convention in 1888. In the same year, when it seemed probable that the two factions in the Twelfth District might each run a candidate for Congress, they waited on Mr. Flower and asked him to accept the nomination. He did so and was elected.

During both his terms in the National House Mr. Flower was one of its most industrious members. He was Chairman of the Board of Control of the Democratic Congressional Committee of the Forty-seventh Congress, and ran the campaign for the election of Democratic members to the Forty-eighth Congress. During his second term he served as Chairman of the Congressional Campaign Committee. He served as a member of the Ways and Means Committee and was recognized as one of the leaders of the Democratic side.

## BEQUESTS TO CHARITY.

Mr. Flower was the Democratic candidate for Governor of New York in 1891, and was elected by a plurality of 47,937 over J. Sloat Fassett, the Republican candidate, taking office Jan. 1, 1892. The campaign was a notable one, the Republicans appearing up to the last moment to have every chance for success.

Several times after his first election to Congress Mr. Flower was talked about as a Presidential candidate, and in 1892 an active canvass for the Democratic nomination was made in his behalf.

Mr. Flower was married Dec. 26, 1859, to Sarah M. Woodruff, daughter of Morris M. Woodruff of Watertown. Three children were born to them, one of whom, Mrs. John B. Taylor of Watertown, is living. Mr. and Mrs. Flower had their home at 597 Fifth Avenue.

Many charitable benefactions are recorded to the credit of Roswell P. Flower. On the death of his son, in 1881, Mr. Flower and his wife gave to St. Thomas's Church, of which he was a Vestryman, \$50,000 to erect on Fifty-ninth and Sixtieth Streets and Second Avenue a four-story building, to be known as St. Thomas's House. The structure has rooms occupied by an American Sunday school of 500 children, a German Sunday school, and a Chinese Sunday school. On the lower floor is a diet kitchen, and on the second story an institution to teach young girls how to sew and mend. The upper floor is a library for a club of young men.

Mr. Flower's brother Anson is a Vestryman in Trinity Church in Watertown, and Mr. Flower joined him in building a one-hundred-thousand-dollar church for that parish.

The Homeopathic School of Physicians in New York City were erecting a college and had no hospital in which to teach the young students the use of the knife in practical surgery. Mr. Flower erected for them at the corner of Avenue A and Sixty-third Street "The Flower Hospital," in which this want was supplied.

## MR. FLOWER IN WALL STREET.

Ex-Gov. Flower's consequence in Wall Street had advanced rapidly during the last two years. Following the Maine (battleship) explosion panic, Gov. Flower identified himself with the strongest financial interests in New York. He came into the market with a vigor and showed such confidence that he became apparently the master of the situation. Under his leadership the markets started upward, and gains in market value were tremendous. The stocks with which he personally had relations advanced much beyond the average advances enjoyed by the general list. Close to \$100,000,000 were added to the current values of the Flower stocks. These stocks have since been continually strong, have been more popular than any other group in the Street, and on no side has there been question of Mr. Flower's leadership.

When a year ago he pronounced himself a "bull" on American stocks it was in the face of violent opposition on the part of some of the most powerful speculators in Wall Street. Mr. Sage was against him, Mr. Keene was against him, and most of the lesser traders of the Stock Exchange were sure that the Flower optimism could have but brief staying power. And this opposition continued throughout the campaign which quickly developed such brilliant results. Gov. Flower whipped the enemy entire.

## BELIEVED IN AMERICAN STOCKS.

"I am a believer in American stocks and a buyer of American stocks," he said, "because I am a believer in our country." This motto evidently had the thorough-going appreciation and approval of men like John D. and William Rockefeller, William K. Vanderbilt, D. O. Mills, and J. Pierpont Morgan. Such men were his colleagues throughout these last campaigns.

The Flower stocks made a list that is not short. Of the railroad shares in that list

are Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific, Chicago and Eastern Illinois, and, though not quite so directly, Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé. Within the last six months Mr. Flower had become very thoroughly persuaded that the industrial security market was not only here to stay, but that American investors must soon become favorably disposed toward all such properties that could show worth and intelligent management. He was opposed to the blind-pool policy which prevailed in the conduct of most of the trusts introduced into Wall Street, however, and it is understood that within the last couple of months he declined an invitation to enter the Board of Directors of the Sugar Trust—his only objection being that the policy of that corporation was toward secrecy.

People's Gas—representing the control of the gas situation in Chicago—is one of the Flower stocks. Mr. Flower went into it two or three years ago, when the stock was discredited and selling under \$50 a share. It has practically returned a profit of 200 per cent. upon the investment capital made at that time. Under his direction the old Chicago Gas Trust was disposed of and the People's Gas Company established as the business successor. He and his associates put the property on a dividend basis.

In his list of extraordinary accomplishments, one especially notable, appears in what is regarded in Wall Street as practically a financial miracle—the lifting of a property so situated that its shares about a year ago were selling at public auction at \$4 or \$5 each, to a point where the market value of that same stock passed \$200. This is what Mr. Flower did during the past twelve months for New York Air Brake.

## RAPID TRANSIT'S RISE.

Of the industrial properties with which Mr. Flower was most conspicuously identified Federal Steel was most important. He and the Standard Oil crowd and J. Pierpont Morgan organized this company and gave it Wall Street status.

But the stock with which Mr. Flower's name lately has been most familiarly connected is Brooklyn Rapid Transit. Associated with D. O. Mills, Anthony N. Brady, and representatives of Standard Oil capital, Mr. Flower gave Brooklyn Rapid Transit phenomenal records. It was down close to \$20 a share when he took hold of it. Without any setbacks, he marched the quotations up close to 140.

One Friday lately, when he went fishing—and ever since Spring weather approached he had been using the last two business days of the week for vacations in the country—the "bears" jumped on Brooklyn Rapid Transit and knocked it down about a dozen points. But he came back smiling and lifted it to its highest point.

Lately, though, reactions have taken the quotation down, till its highest price yesterday was only a point or so above 120. Then, just at the close of the day's business on the Stock Exchange, the price fell 5 or 6 points, rallying, however, somewhat from the bottom.

Nobody in Wall Street outside of Mr. Flower's own intimates seemed to have heard, however, that he was in anything but his usual health, and the heavy sales of the stock and the recessions in prices were popularly attributed to "bear" raids. And up to a late hour last night nobody at the up-town haunts of Wall Street men had any news of the ex-Governor's death.

Mr. Flower was the founder and at the time of his death a special partner in and controller of the firm of Flower & Co., composed of Roswell P. Flower, his two brothers, Anson R. and John D. Flower, and his nephew, Frederic S. Flower. The corporation expires by limitation in 1900. Its place of business is at 45 Broadway.

## Fears Slump in Flower Stocks.

William A. Nash, the President of the Corn Exchange Bank, and an intimate business associate of Mr. Flower, expressed himself as being greatly shocked when told of the ex-Governor's death, at his home, 19 West Seventy-third Street, last night. Mr. Nash said that it would be hard to tell just what effect the death of Mr. Flower would have on the stock market. He thought it very likely, however, that the stocks in which the ex-Governor was particularly interested would experience a slump.

## STATEMENT OF A. R. FLOWER.

Anson R. Flower, brother of Mr. Flower, when seen at his residence, 500 Madison Avenue, last night, said:

"Gov. Flower was in the habit of going to the Long Island Country Club, at Eastport, Fridays and Saturdays for trout fishing. He went down yesterday evening, apparently as well as ever. Shortly after luncheon at noon today he was taken with an attack of indigestion, and about 3 o'clock we heard of it in town, and a special train was sent, with Dr. T. F. Allen, Dr. Paul Allen, Mrs. R. P. Flower, and Gov. Flower's two nephews, Frederick S. Flower and Nathan M. Flower.

"The attack of indigestion developed a weak action of the heart. A telephone message was received at 7:30 o'clock to-night stating that the Governor's condition was critical. At 9:30 o'clock a second message reported the symptoms more favorable, but at 10:30 P. M. the Governor was seized with a sinking spell, and died within a few minutes.

"The Governor had a similar attack during his term as Governor. He recovered completely from its effects, and had not been troubled in that way since."

Mr. Flower declined to say anything in regard to the business interests of his brother, beyond that he saw no reason why the death of the Governor should in any way affect his great property investments.