

ELMER S. DUNDY IS DEAD; WON A FORTUNE IN SHOWS

The Financial Genius Who Made the Hippodrome Possible.

A MAN OF VARIED CAREER

Started Life as Clerk of His Father's Court—Lost Thousands in Shows

—Won All Back and More.

Elmer Scipio Dundy of the theatrical firm of Thompson & Dundy, known to hosts of friends between here and Nebraska as "Skip" Dundy, died at 5:30 o'clock yesterday afternoon in his mother's apartments at the Amidon, Eighty-third Street and Broadway. Death was due to acute dilation of the heart.

Though his death is a great blow to the firm of Thompson & Dundy, it was announced last night that the firm will be continued under the same name, and all the business projects of the partnership will be carried out as announced.

Mr. Dundy was taken ill a week ago last Sunday, on the first anniversary of the death of his sister, Mrs. Luna Dundy Newman of Bayonne, N. J., for whom Luna Park was named. He had been to Coney Island, and was seized with a severe chill while returning home in his automobile with his mother. Though his sickness, in itself, was only a slight attack of pneumonia, his friends had feared the worst for several days, owing to the weakness of his heart. He was attended by his brother-in-law, Dr. Edward Wallace Lee, who also lives in the Amidon. Dr. W. E. Young was called in as consulting physician. Dr. William Gilman Thompson, an expert on affections of the heart, was also summoned at the last.

Mr. Dundy was reported much better yesterday afternoon. Though cheerful and businesslike as ever, he had a premonition that his end might not be far distant. He did not sit up when his partner went to see him yesterday, but, lying in bed, discussed financial and personal matters with his usual calm judgment. Mr. Thompson said good-bye about 3 o'clock and went downtown. The last words his friend and partner said to him were:

"Well, if the worst comes to the worst, take care of the old mammy and look out for her."

Mr. Dundy was born in Omaha, Neb., in 1862. He was a son of Elmer S. Dundy, first Judge of the United States court in Nebraska, who was appointed by President Lincoln. Judge Dundy was a great hunter and a warm personal friend of Col. Cody. Elmer Dundy, Jr., was educated in the State University of Nebraska and was appointed Clerk of the United States court, a place he occupied for twenty years. In the latter part of this period he became Master in Chancery of the State of Nebraska, and in that capacity sold for \$90,000,000 the Union Pacific Railroad, which had been in the hands of a receiver.

Mr. Dundy made his first venture as a showman while still Clerk of the United States Court at the time of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition in 1898. He backed the Midway enterprise of A. Roltair, who last season managed the "Creation" spectacle at Dreamland, Coney Island. His first enterprise was an illusionary spectacle known as "Havana and the Maine," and made considerable profit. It was then that he met as a competitor Frederic Thompson, who had another attraction known as "Darkness and Dawn."

A number of business men determined to continue the exposition for a second year, a determination which resulted in what was known as the Hang Over.

In this second year Dundy plunged heavily in Midway attractions and lost \$46,000. With characteristic grit he vowed that as he had lost this money in the show business, he was going to get it back in the same way.

In the following year, 1900, he appeared at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo and outbid Thompson for the concession of running "Darkness and Dawn." This led to the formation of a partnership, based on Thompson's outline for his illusion, "A Trip to the Moon." This venture was an unqualified success for both of the investors.

"A Trip to the Moon" furnishes one explanation of Dundy's famous nickname of "Skip." His old friends say that he got it because his middle name was Scipio, and that by no other name than "Skip" was he known to the inhabitants of the West. Others say it was all because he acted at first as skipper of the airship in "A Trip to the Moon."

At the end of the season Dundy decided to go to St. Louis and Thompson started for New York. Thompson immediately telegraphed his partner to come to the metropolis, where a million was to be made for the taking. Dundy came and in 1901 "A Trip to the Moon" opened in Steeplechase Park, Coney Island. Luna Park, under the direction of Thompson & Dundy, was opened the following season.

Mr. Thompson supplied the inventive faculty for the concern, and Mr. Dundy attended to the no less complicated matter of obtaining the three-quarters of a million required to start the enterprise. When the gates were finally thrown open to the public the partners had just \$11 between them.

The Hippodrome, the biggest venture of its kind in America, under the direction of Thompson & Dundy, was opened in April, 1905. They surrendered control at the close of the season last Spring. In the Autumn they put forward their first distinctly theatrical venture, "Brewster's Millions," at the New Amsterdam Theatre.

Frederic Thompson announced last night that the firm name of Thompson & Dundy would be continued, as he would have wished Mr. Dundy to continue it under similar conditions. The partnership has always been an equal arrangement between the two men, dollar for dollar. Their holdings include a 90 per cent. interest in Luna Park.

Mr. Dundy's place as financial manager of all the Thompson & Dundy enterprises is to be taken by John Kilborn, who has been manager of Luna Park for several seasons, and was trained under the able direction of Mr. Dundy. Mr. Kilborn is a brother of H. M. Kilborn of the National City Bank. One of the new ventures already announced is "Polly of the Circus," a play in which Mabel Tallafarro, Mr. Thompson's wife, is to star next season. Another production, as yet unnamed, is also in preparation.

Mr. Dundy was married twenty years ago. His widow is now visiting her parents in Newark, Ohio. A telegram was sent to her last night. The burial is to take place on Thursday morning at 10 o'clock at the Moravian Cemetery, Staten Island, where Mr. Dundy's father and sister are both buried.