

# THE RICHEST MAN IN EAST ASIA

A Visit to Lan Wing Hong, the Multi-Millionaire of Kwantung.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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Mr. Lan Wing Hong is the Andrew Carnegie of eastern Asia. He is the richest millionaire of this part of the empire. He has fortunes in stocks, fortunes in land and a fortune in his country home. It was at his country place at Kwantung that I visited him. It is a walled city, rather than a single dwelling, and he owns it all.

Imagine a farm of a thousand or so acres, surrounded by a blue brick wall as high as a two-story house, and so thick that you could drive two big farm wagons around on the top of it side by side without touching. Let the space within be divided into wide streets, along which are built hundreds of houses, facing gardens and lawns. Let the gates into it be guarded by soldiers, and let there be forty policemen in uniform to keep the home city in order, and you have a bare outline of the dwelling place of this colossal lord, who lives here with his servants about him.

## POVERTY VS RICHES.

My visit to the Asiatic Croesus was in company with Dr. Jayme dos Santos. Dr. Santos is a well-known citizen of Macao and a friend of the millionaire. Our ride to his home was in jirikhas, two men to each ricksha, one pulling in the shafts and the other pushing behind. Leaving Macao, we passed over the narrow neck of land which joins the Portuguese territory to China, and then rode for miles upon the mainland. The whole way was spotted with poverty. The crops were everywhere luxuriant, but the people seemed terribly poor. They were dressed in blue cotton and all were barefooted. There were many beggars, and near the graveyards we met mourners in sackcloth, who had coolies to hold up their arms as they moved along, seemingly prostrated with grief.

The fields were full of tollers. Here a man, bare to the waist, trotted from plant to plant, watering them with liquid manure; there another plowed the field with a water buffalo, and further on big-bellied women, with their pantaloons rolled up to their thighs, bent double as they waded through the liquid mud and set out the rice crop, plant by plant. Our jirikhas crowded hollow-eyed burden bearers to the sides of the road. We went by gangs of coolies carrying buckets of slop for manure, by decayed oxen harnessed with baskets of farm produce, and by little girls borne down by baskets fastened to poles on their shoulders. It seemed as though the poor houses of the empire had been emptied out on this road to the home of the rich, and the contrast of the poverty present and the wealth to come was most striking.

## IN THE MILLIONAIRE'S PALACE.

This poverty continued to the very gates of the millionaire's palace city. It ended as we passed through them, severely scrutinized by the guards at the entrance. The city is made up of many ornate houses, all roofed with heavy black tiles. Some of the buildings cover acres, for a man here may have a home of a hundred rooms and all on the ground floor. The rooms were built around courts which run this way and that. They are connected by long aisles under covered passageways, some of which wind about like the mazes of Rosamond's bower.

The buildings are of Chinese architecture. I despair of giving you conceivable pictures of them. The roofs are curved at the corners, like a ram's horn. The outer walls are of blue brick, the inner of wood wonderfully carved, being in many cases a fretwork of black ebony set with glass of all the colors of the rainbow in oriental splendor. Going through a wide court we were admitted to the private buildings of the millionaire's home. We crossed a court and entered a gallery, upon one side of which was a garden. The gallery was open at the sides. It was roofed with heavy tiles upheld by granite posts, and it was at least 600 feet long. There were seats here and there in it, each set a beautiful piece of white quartz set upon wooden legs. At the ends were seats of marble, which we could see our own reflections as we walked through.

## WE MET THE CROESUS.

As we entered the millionaire's private rooms, we were introduced to me as the Hon. Lan Wing Hong, and as I bowed he shook his own hands at me and bent low in welcome. We chat-

He Owns a Walled City and Drinks Tea Worth \$24 a Pound—His Wonderful Palace—His Opium Sanctum and Tropical Gardens—Queer Millionaires of Shanghai and Hongkong—Ching Chang, Who Began as a Boatman Has Just Died Worth \$3,000,000—His \$50,000 Funeral—All About Hou Qua, the George Peabody of Canton, Who Made \$50,000,000—A Chat With His Son and a Call Upon His Millionaire Widow—How a Poor Girl Married a Scotch Millionaire—Gossip About George McBain, the Croesus of Shanghai.



A CHINESE ARISTOCRAT.

The Rich Wong Soong Dong, comprador of our consulate at Shanghai.

ted together as we walked from room to room, and I was struck with his intelligence and culture. He looked like an aristocrat. His dress, a light blue silk gown, reached from his neck to his feet. His head was bare and close shaven except at the crown, whence a long black queue hung down his back. We first went into the library and smoking room, a beautiful apartment hung with scrolls of fine writings from the Chinese classics. It was furnished with lacquered chairs and tables, and the walls were inlaid with colored marble. Then we entered the parlors and reception room, and then went on into the private temple, where the millionaire worships his ancestors.

He next showed me his opium sanctum, a little room with walls of stained glass and wonderful carvings, just big enough for an opium couch for two. There was a glass lamp with matches beside it, and the pipes looked as though they had been frequently used. Mr. Lan Wing Hong asked me if I would "hit the pipe with him," and upon my refusing he said that I must at least take a cup of his tea.

TEA AT \$24 A POUND. Of course, I consented, especially as Lan Wing Hong intimated that he had tea on hand which was a drink for the gods. He mentioned the name of the tea. It is one which is noted throughout south China. It comes from a district which produces but a few pounds a year, the whole crop being bought by rich Chinese. It is so costly that only the highest of the mandarins and the richest of the merchants can afford it. It is never exported, and even in China the price of it is \$24 a pound. I wish I could give you a taste of that tea. A whiff of its aroma would refresh you like a glass of champagne. It was brought into the library in a little round teapot of silver and was served by the millionaire himself in cups of the finest porcelain, each cup the bigger than an egg-shell. The tea, as it trickled forth from the pot, was of a straw color. I noticed that the millionaire in pouring it went over the cups twice, only half filling them the first cup, and then going back to the first cup and coming around again. As the tea came forth Lan Wing Hong sniffed it with a delighted expression. Its aroma touched him just as that of a fine wine does the professional gastronome. He drank it in the approved Chinese fashion, and we followed suit; we sucked the liquor into our mouths with considerable noise, gurgling, as it were, our delight.

IN THE GARDENS. We chatted a while and took a second cup of this liquid gold, and then Lan Wing Hong strolled with us through his gardens. These are full of conceits which would be striking features in any millionaire estate along the Hudson or in George Vanderbilt's big farm in North Carolina. The gar-

dens are of large extent. They are filled with tropical flowers and trees, the latter cut into all sorts of fantastic shapes. We strolled through walks, shaded with feathery bamboos, wound our way in and out among the roots of enormous banyan trees and stopped long before some pines, each several hundred years old and not more than a foot high. We sat in grooves of rock work interlaced with mirrors, loathed about in Chinese summer houses and admired the great stone tables which had been built up under the trees. During the walk Lan Wing Hong told us how his fortune had been made in trade by himself and his father. He spoke of his troubles, and asked me to tell Li Hung Chang that his district was greatly troubled by pirates, and that he thought soldiers should be sent to capture the robbers.

## RICH MERCHANTS.

Lan Wing Hong's money was made in trade. This is the case with many of the Chinese millionaires. The Chinese are among the best business men of the world. They are far slier than any others of the Asiatics. They can give the Japanese odds and beat them. In nearly every country of the Pacific you find millionaire Chinese. The most of the business of Singapore is done by them. They have stores, plantations and factories in Java. They have gobbled up the retail business of the Philippine Islands. They own half of Siam, they are among the rich men of Burma, and you find them doing well in every Asiatic port.

Hongkong has its Chinese millionaires and Shanghai has scores of almost-eyed celestials with incomes ranging from \$5,000 up to tens of thousands of dollars a year. A whiff of its aroma would refresh you like a glass of champagne. It was brought into the library in a little round teapot of silver and was served by the millionaire himself in cups of the finest porcelain, each cup the bigger than an egg-shell. The tea, as it trickled forth from the pot, was of a straw color. I noticed that the millionaire in pouring it went over the cups twice, only half filling them the first cup, and then going back to the first cup and coming around again. As the tea came forth Lan Wing Hong sniffed it with a delighted expression. Its aroma touched him just as that of a fine wine does the professional gastronome. He drank it in the approved Chinese fashion, and we followed suit; we sucked the liquor into our mouths with considerable noise, gurgling, as it were, our delight.

HOW CHING CHANG MADE MILLIONS. Take for instance Ching Chang, who died in Shanghai the last day, leaving property valued at \$3,000,000 in gold. He began life as a boatman in the city of Ningpo, working at the start for ten cents a day. He saved his money and began speculating. His first success was at the time of the Tai Ping rebellion. The soldiers looted the captured towns then as they are doing now and they brought their loot to Ningpo, and Ching Chang was there to meet them. He bought and sold it, making more and more, until at last he had enough to come to Shanghai, where he opened a shop as a stockbroker and contractor. As he grew richer he established transportation lines and became a general trader. For several years he was the agent of the Standard Oil company. He made money out of it, and in fact everything he touched seemed to turn to gold, so that when he died he was worth millions. Starting at ten cents a day he left an income of more than \$3,000 a week.

## A \$50,000 FUNERAL.

More than \$50,000 will be spent upon Ching Chang before he is buried. His funeral procession will start at his death coach \$5,000, and he has not yet started on his way to the grave. His body still rests in his coffin in one of his Shanghai houses, and it will probably remain there for a year. His funeral procession was from one of his houses to another. The house in which he died was hung with white satin, for white is here the color of mourning. Upon the walls were banners of satin with Ching Chang's name and titles embroidered upon them in gold. The house was lighted with lanterns of white satin and his coffin was a great casket covered with white. The body was left for some time in the house where he died. It was laid in the coffin and rested in state in one of the largest rooms. Beside it his eldest son slept every night and about the family waited in the daytime. All the sons were dressed in sackcloth, the garb of mourning. They spent their days in going to their father's favorite room to wait, and once every hour they came in a body and waited around the coffin.

During the same time there was a great wake in the house. The rooms and hallways were filled with tables and the feasting went on for a week. There were five Chinese bands in different parts of the great structure. These filled the house with mourning music, and behind the curtains near them came an accompaniment of wailing from a host of the family and some hired mourning howlers.

The funeral was a grand one. The coffin was carried through the streets of Shanghai to a casket house, at which time the procession was so great that it took three hours for it to pass a given point. Ching Chang's women, wives and relatives, all dressed in white, rode in chairs behind the coffin. There were fifty men in white on horseback, ten Chinese bands and an army of servants carrying various things. It was, indeed, much like a trades procession in the United States or the Mardi Gras show at New Orleans.

## A CANTON MILLIONAIRE.

Some of the richest men of China live at Canton. The city is full of nobles. It has scores of capitalists and many rich merchants. It has families which have been rich for generations, corresponding somewhat to the Astors and Vanderbilts of New York. One of the most famous of these is the Hou Qua family, founded by a millionaire who was a sort of a George Peabody or W. W. Corcoran in his philanthropy. This Hou Qua was one of the richest men of Canton at the time that city was threatened with bombardment by the English. The English men-of-war were in front of it and their commander had sent word that unless the Chinese would pay them \$5,000,000 within forty-eight hours they would reduce the city to ruins. The money was raised by Hou Qua, who started a subscription with \$1,000,000 out of his own pocket to which he afterward added an extra hundred thousand dollars. In giving this money he itemized it as follows:

"I give \$300,000 as a thank offering for the business prosperity I have had. I give \$200,000 as a monument to the affection which I bear my wife, and \$100,000 as thanks for the fidelity and filial piety of my sons."

When Hou Qua died he was worth about \$500,000. He had vast estates, streets of business and many factories and stores. His gardens are still among the sights of Canton, and his name among the Chinese is synonymous with business honor.

## THE GEORGE GOULD OF CANTON.

I venture Hou Qua's wealth when he died was equal to the amount left by Jay Gould. He was in power the Jay Gould of south China, although his character was of a higher grade than that of the hero of black Friday. His son might be called the George Gould of Canton. I met the son during one of my visits to that city. He is about sixty years of age, although he looks much younger. He is very intelligent, speaks some English and has many modern ways.

At his invitation I went to see him at his palace on the banks of the Pearl river, and spent an afternoon in going through his establishments. There was a wilderness of buildings filled with his servants and relatives, and as we did so I asked him how many children, sisters, cousins, uncles and aunts he had with him. He replied that the number was something like four hundred, a reply which did not surprise me, for I had been told the rich man in China is expected to support all his poor relatives.

## A SHANGHAI CROESUS.

Fortune making at the ports is by no means confined to the Chinese. There are many rich foreigners, and now and then one of them marries a Chinese. This was the case with the richest man in Shanghai, George McBain. He is a Scotchman, who came out here so poor that he handled freight on the wharves. He saved his money and bought one little boat after another. We were able to establish a transportation line and go into general speculation. He made money right along and he is now worth his millions.

But the most curious thing about George McBain is the romance of his marriage. He has always been interested in charitable work and has given lots of money to the different institutions about Shanghai. Among others he patronized the French mission school, giving it both money and advice. Upon going through the school some years ago one of the sisters called his attention to a bright little half-cast girl, saying that she had found her running errands about the streets of Ningpo and had taken her into the charity department of the mission.

The little one was then about ten years of age and was already very pretty. McBain talked with her and found her as bright as she was beautiful. He thought so much of her that he told the sisters to put her in the pay department of the school, and he would Europe to be educated. She was taught English, Italian and French, and when she returned at the age of eighteen she was as well educated as a young American girl of her age. McBain was more delighted with her than ever. He proposed marriage, she accepted and the two were wedded.

This was nine years ago, and today Mrs. McBain, well-faced and almost-eyed though she is, ranks as an accomplished lady in Shanghai. She has the most beautifully furnished house in the city. It is a big three-story mansion, with a beautiful garden about it, so large that it takes twelve gardeners to keep it in order. She has one of the finest collections of china and curios, and she has shown herself a woman of excellent taste. She has had seven children, and says she wants a dozen. The children are sent out to drive every day. They go all together, and it takes a small omnibus to carry them.

## FEDERATED AUSTRALIA.

Grand Start-Off of New Twentieth Century Commonwealth.

With the inauguration of yesterday at Sydney of the earl of Hopetoun as governor general of the Australian federation, the first real republic of any considerable character for the federation is that in all but name—based on Anglo-Saxon models, has been established in the south temperate zone, a population of 3,800,000 persons, of British birth or descent, nominally subjects of the queen and citizens heretofore of the self-governing colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, West Australia, Queensland and Tasmania, comprising an area as large as the United States, have pooled their issues, compromised their differences and jointly taken up the burdens and destinies of the world. It is a stupendous step, and it is realized to be such.

subject to dissolution. Members of the lower house will be elected for three years from constituencies having a population of 50,000. There will be a supreme or high court of at least three judges. Only in that the senate will not be a direct treaty-making power, and that the execution of laws will be undertaken by a council of the governor general responsible to the congress rather than by a chief executive elected by the people, will the Australian federation differ greatly from the American Union.

Among the immediate benefits to be derived by the Australian communities from the federation, aside from their enlarged prestige, will be an annual saving of perhaps \$1,500,000 through a concentration of administration; an annual saving of perhaps \$3,000,000 through the conversion of the public debt, and an annual saving of \$2,500,000 through a possible consolidation of the state railroads. The main burden which they will face will be an abnormal public debt—about \$900,000,000—chiefly amassed through experiments in state ownership, state employment of labor, and state conquest of the wilderness. Political parties have yet to form themselves definitely, but the government will begin with a Liberal-Labor union on a protective tariff policy, following the example of Victoria rather than of the free trade colony of New South Wales. New Zealand is expected eventually to join the federation.

There is a preponderating Irish Catholic element in Australia, and its tendency has been to make the bond with England as tenuous as possible and to give the federation an Irish rather than a British character. This element may influence the future of Australia, but it is a hopeful augury for the maintenance of the present relations that the new government comes in at an era when a vigorous spirit of imperial loyalty has been evolved throughout all the colonies of Great Britain. This spirit the duke of York will definitely appeal to when he visits the Antipodes this year.—New York Mail and Express.

## WHITTIER'S CAT.

Tom's Health Declining Since an Encounter With Souvenir Hunters.

Amesbury, Mass.—The health of Whittier's cat, Tom, who was the poet's constant companion in the last few hours of his life has lately given concern to the Whittier Home association. Tom's decline is attributed in part to his age, which can only be guessed at, but there are also other causes.

Until last summer Tom's life was one of luxurious ease. On the death of the poet the house in Amesbury, which had been his home since 1832, passed into the hands of his niece, Mrs. S. T. Pickard, of Boston, and with the house went Tom. Then when the women of Amesbury formed an association with the object of keeping the house open to those who cherish the poet's memory, Tom came under their care. In these different changes his habits were not disturbed.

Tom's decline in health and spirits began last summer. One day a large party of visitors arrived from Boston. They were mostly school teachers, and every part of the house was visited by them. Several attempts were made by them to get souvenirs, and the caretaker had to watch them vigilantly. When she was thus occupied the cat, who had heard a scolding of anguish from Tom in the garden, looking out she saw that two souvenir hunters had seized Tom from his skin. The housekeeper went to the rescue and learned that the visitors were in the habit of taking cats.

Ever since this episode Tom has been a changed cat. He no longer holds his head up in the way he did once, and he has the appearance of having a fit of the blues. Because of this the cat is looked upon as a bad sign, and the members of the Whittier Home association are very much afraid that before long they will lose the cat.—New York Sun.

## VERY CONSIDERATE.

In Harlem a few weeks ago a man offered a friend who had called upon him the use of his umbrella, as a storm had suddenly come up. The friend instantly accepted, as friends often do, and marched off into the night, promising to return the umbrella the following day. But borrowed umbrellas, like borrowed books, seldom find their owners.

When the friend failed to return with the umbrella the next day or the day after. About a week later he called, but without the umbrella. Nothing, however, was said about the matter. He called several times after that, and still no umbrella. The other evening, in pouring rain, the friend called at the house again. He was in bad humor and wet to the skin.

"What the devil don't you make use of my umbrella, instead of coming without one in this rain?" said the owner of that article.

His friend turned pale for a moment, but, recovering himself in a quick reply, "Oh, you know, I did not want to bring the umbrella to you yet."

It is needless to say that the umbrella has not yet been returned, but the man who owns it has so much for telling the story of the wonderful excuse his friend made to him that he does not miss the umbrella at all.

## A Prominent Chicago Woman Speaks.

Prof. Roxa Tyler, of Chicago, vice president Illinois Woman's Alliance, in speaking of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy, says: "I suffered with a severe cold this winter which threatened to run into pneumonia. I tried different remedies, but I seemed to grow worse, and the medicine upset my stomach. A friend advised me to try Chamberlain's Cough Remedy, and I found it was pleasant to take and it relieved me at once. I am now entirely recovered, saved a doctor's bill, time and suffering, and I will never be without this splendid medicine again."

## TEACHERS.

Dr. Talmage's new book, "The Great Salt Lake: Present and Past," should be in the hands of every educator. The amount of information it contains relating to the great saline sea, makes it an invaluable work for reference or study.

## "TURN OVER A NEW LEAF"

Let down the customary resolutions and let the old world smile. You'll break some and keep some. Suppose you make a resolution to give your eyes better attention during the coming year. Let us assist you with suitable glasses, and we'll guarantee you greater comfort, more ease and better eyes, when another New Year confronts you. With best wishes.

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**B. H. ROBERTS' NEW BOOKS**

Which have been in course of preparation for several months are now ready for delivery.

**"THE RISE AND FALL OF NAUVOO"**  
Is now on sale by the DESERET NEWS.

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The first supply of which was exhausted, is again on sale by the NEWS. Price of each volume \$1.25. Special prices to Classes, Quorums, Sunday Schools and Mutual Improvement Associations.



Benjamin Ide Wheeler a few months ago denied the authenticity of a signed article. Mr. Wheeler's latest sensation is the sending out of wild and weird reports to the effect that Aguilardo had been killed, information which has been proved utterly unfounded.