

## LUCKY BALDWIN.

LOS ANGELES, CAL., May 26, 1893. His farm is worth \$10,000,000.

It contains more than 50,000 acres.

Every foot of it is almost as rich as the valley of the Nile, and some of it produces a fair interest on \$4,000 per acre.

I refer to the magnificent estate of "Lucky" Baldwin, which lies about seventeen miles from Los Angeles, and which takes in the cream of the San Gabriel valley. There is no land in the world so rich as this country about Los Angeles. Lying right under the shadow of the Sierra Madre mountains, it is so located that it can be well irrigated, and from five to twenty acres make a farm. Land about here sells for \$200 and upward per acre, and improved property planted with oranges often brings as much as \$1,000 and upward. I can give you no idea of the productiveness of the soil. I have seen trees 150 feet high which were less than a dozen years old, and you can grow a forest here in a decade. I drove yesterday through mile after mile of orange groves, lemon trees and orchards of English walnuts, and I saw oranges on trees which were only two years old and great crops being raised on trees between four and five years.

One tract of six acres of oranges produced last year six hundred boxes, which sold for \$1,200, making a net profit to their owner of over \$1,000. The trees of this orchard were only four years old, and the owner cleared this amount off of six acres in a single year. Another man cleared \$1,500 off of three acres of oranges last year, and I was told of another case in which six acres produced \$2,000 worth of oranges. In one of Baldwin's orchards I was shown trees which netted him \$1,800 per acre, and there are thousands of new trees being set out in all parts of this region.

A great many of the orchards are planted by eastern men, and a great many of the rich men of the east have their homes here. Joseph Medill of the Chicago Tribune has a winter home at Pasadena. Studebaker, the famous wagon man, owns an estate which he bought from "Lucky" Baldwin, and this whole valley is spotted with cottages built after the fashion of the seaside. The country is a land of flowers. Roses grow everywhere. Geraniums become trees, and are growing in hedges. Calla lilies are as common as daisies, and I saw a single rose bush yesterday which I was told contained a hundred thousand blossoms.

## LUCKY BALDWIN'S FARM.

This will give you some idea of this vast estate of Lucky Baldwin. The soil is as rich as guano and as black as your hat. It will produce anything under the sun and 50,000 acres of it belong to this one man. Five acres of land in this region will support a family well, and this estate ought to support 10,000 families. Still it belongs to but one man. What kind of a man is he? I met him yesterday. He was seated surrounded by fountains and flowers under the trees which shade the beautiful ground surrounding his cottage. A lean, straight, thin faced old man with silky white hair, standing out from under a white straw hat, and the keenest of hazel eyes looking out from under eyebrows of gray. His florid face was smooth shaven with the exception of the

upper lip, upon which a silvery mustache grew. He looked more like a seedy unsuccessful business man whose best days have gone by rather than a prosperous millionaire, and I have seen this type here and there over the world in club rooms and at the head of charitable associations, holding places which have been given them for what they have done in the past.

Lucky Baldwin, in short, looked entirely different from the man I expected to see. He is not extraordinary in any of his features, but behind his plain face, I am told, exists one of the brightest business brains in the country. And his little beadlike eyes can see further into a big speculation for a profitable investment than those of any other man in California. He came to California comparatively poor and began life in San Francisco as the keeper of a livery stable. From the keeping of horses he went to the selling of groceries, and I understand that he got a lot of stock in different mines in the settlement of his bills. He carefully filed the certificates of this stock away and awaited developments. He has always been fond of the theater, and he got the idea that he might make a fortune by going over to Japan and bringing a Japanese troop back to the United States. He did so, but before he left he gathered up his mining stocks and put them away in one of the banks. He was gone several months. When he returned he found that the Comstock lode had been discovered and that the mining stock that he had in this was worth considerable over a million. His other stocks had become valuable and he landed in America, so the story goes, a millionaire.

I don't know how his Japanese show turned out, but I am told that he took them about over the country, and I doubt not he made money out of them. He made more money by reinvesting this fortune, and he is now said to be worth from fifteen to twenty million dollars. He owns these vast ranches in Southern California, a hotel at Lake Tahoe, the Baldwin theater and hotel in San Francisco and two or three valuable gold mines. One of his gold mines that he has held for years has just been reopened. Lucky Baldwin was paying no attention to it until he found the other day that some outsiders had gotten in and were opening it up on their own account. They had taken out \$15,000 worth of ore before he discovered them. And he now proposes to work this with the most improved machinery for all it is worth.

## LUCKY BALDWIN AS A LANDLORD.

Lucky Baldwin is said to know how to run a hotel. I cannot speak from personal experience, as I have never stopped at any of his houses. While at San Francisco I lived at the Palace, which is the biggest hotel, the finest hotel and by all odds the worst managed hotel in the United States. Lucky Baldwin's friends say that "The Baldwin" is better managed. I don't know. But I do know something about his methods. He runs the thing as a monopoly, and he don't propose to be fleeced by anybody. Not long ago he found he was paying \$2,000 per month for gas. He put in his own gas works and now sells enough gas to give him his own light free and to bring him in \$500 per month in addition. It was the same with electricity and about the

same with his water. He was getting his water from the water company and one month a bill was brought in for a thousand dollars water rent. He paid the bill but at once again put down artesian wells. These cost him only \$1,500, and he saved just a thousand dollars per month in that way. At his ranch here he makes all the butter used at his hotel, and his dairies turn out 2,000 pounds a week of what they call "Gilted butter." All the vegetables used at his hotel come from his farms, and he manages everything on business principles.

## HOW BALDWIN BOUGHT A RANCH.

I heard today the story of Baldwin's purchase of one of his ranches. It belonged to a wholesale grocer in Los Angeles, and Baldwin was anxious to get hold of it. He came to the grocer and asked him his price. The grocer replied that he could have it for \$175,000. Baldwin said that this was too much and that he could not give more than \$150,000. "Well, you can't have it," said the grocer, and Baldwin went away. He waited a few days and hearing nothing further, he then became anxious and sent around word that he would give \$175,000 for it. "The price is now \$200,000," was the reply. "The land is growing more valuable and is bound to rise right along." Baldwin hemmed and hawed at this. He said he would not pay \$200,000 and he went away. A few days later he came around and said he would take it at \$200,000. Whereupon the man said the price had again risen, and that the price was now \$225,000. Baldwin, however, had decided to take it at any price this time and he brought with him a check for \$50,000. He laid this down on the table and accepted the man's offer. It cost him just \$50,000 a week for waiting. At the rate he bought the land cost him just about \$30 per acre. It is now worth from \$200 to \$1,000 per acre, and he has made millions out of it.

## HOW BALDWIN DOES BUSINESS.

Baldwin has, I am told, a great deal of nerve in business matters. He hangs on like a bull-dog and if he has a piece of property which he thinks will eventually pay you can't get it from him till you give him his price. He has just been offered, I am told, a million eight hundred thousand dollars for one of his ranches. This is the La Puente ranch and the price is an average of about \$100 per acre. A Colorado syndicate is talking of buying it. If it is not sold Baldwin will spend \$25,000 in piping water over it, and will thus make it worth about \$400 per acre. When he built the Hotel Baldwin in San Francisco he could not purchase the ground he wanted. The result was that he leased it for twenty years and put buildings worth two millions and a half on it. He has, I am told, recently bought the ground, paying three-quarters of a million for it. He makes here on his vineyard a great part of the wines used at his hotel. He has 300,000 gallons of wine and 50,000 gallons of brandy in his vaults here on his ranch. This brandy is from three to twenty years old, and some of it is certainly very fine. It takes one hundred tenants to manage the different parts of his farm, and he has more than four thousand head of cattle on it.

His stock is largely made up of Devons and Durhams, and his dairy is said