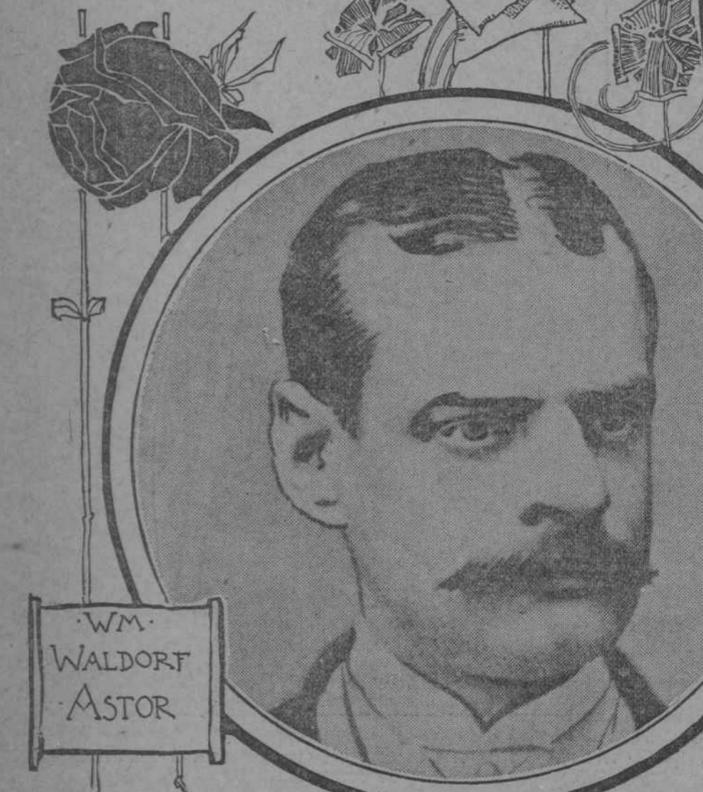


# ASTOR, Immigrant

## Story of the Astor Millions the Only Great Fortune Kept Intact in This Country a Century.



WM. WALDORF ASTOR



THE LATE MRS. WILLIAM WALDORF ASTOR



**W**ILLIAM WALDORF ASTOR obtruded himself last week upon the public notice of two countries by his renunciation of American citizenship after a long continued whine of vulgar and silly abuse of his native country.

The possessor of the greatest fortune in America, the greatest land owner in New York City, has become a British subject and citizen, renouncing all connection with the United States, except that of deriving an enormous income from it. He has performed this act of renunciation, moreover, under circumstances of peculiar atrocity, which arouse the disgust of all decent Americans, and even of many Englishmen. It is but natural that Americans who stop to think of Astor should at the same time indulge in an outburst of wholesome indignation.

This William Waldorf Astor is the great-grandson of John Jacob Astor, who was born in a peasant's cottage in Waidorf, Germany. He emigrated to this country in 1784, and made the greatest fortune of his day, a fortune which has increased at an enormous and constant rate to the present day, and is the only one of great size in

America which has been enjoyed by four successive generations. The descendant of the immigrant has now turned emigrant.

Astor's action in becoming an Englishman was prompted largely by his desire to evade the payment of personal taxes. He came to this country in March in order to protest against the assessment of his personal property at \$2,000,000. He resisted the assessment on the ground that he was a resident of London and not of New York. He also declared that the assessment was excessive. After a long wrangle it was decided that he must pay his taxes. Against this decision he has appealed.

In the meantime he has become a British subject, and in the present state of the law it seems probable that he will be able to avoid paying any personal taxes here, because he can clearly prove that he has no legal residence in this country.

Seeing that Mr. Astor possesses \$200,000,000 of real property in this city, and that for many years he has enjoyed an income of at least \$10,000,000 a year, the assessment of \$2,000,000 seems quite moderate. He is not content, however, with reviling this country and drawing an im-

mense income from it, but he declines to pay its low taxes. For a combination of insult and impudence that can hardly be beaten.

Mr. Astor is now an Englishman, and glories in it. The English do not glory in him. Having a strong business instinct, they will accept him and make him pay taxes of all kinds, but they will despise him. They have plenty of good men of their own, and they do not feel flattered by the acquisition of an American ashamed of his birthplace and forefathers. England, which has applauded the rise of Disraeli and many another man after a life of fierce strife and opposition, can have little sympathy with a cretin whose chief grievance is that newspapers and politicians have been rude to him.

Astor is now devoting his whole life and fortune to securing recognition by the aristocracy of England. It is even said that he hopes to be made a lord, but in order to achieve that distinction it is necessary for a nobody in England to spend enormous sums of money for public purposes, and Astor inherits much of the parsimony of his family. Nevertheless he is spending more and more every year under the spur of social ambition.

The report is again current that he

will marry Lady Randolph Churchill. She is one of the most beautiful American women in England, and undoubtedly the cleverest. With her aid Mr. Astor might achieve the popularity which he can never hope to win by himself. Against Lady Randolph neither Americans nor Englishmen will have any criticisms. She married one of the most brilliant Englishmen of his day, and, of course, a good wife goes where her husband goes, and holds his opinions. She is now a widow, is rather poor, and has great ambitions for her two sons. Mr. Astor's millions would aid her, and applied to her purposes they would probably do more good than they have yet done.

Mr. Astor's social campaign in England has not been a brilliant success. The Prince has declared that he will not have the ex-American at houses where he visits, because "he bores me so." It is true that Mr. Astor secures many titled people at his board, but that is not difficult for one of his wealth. Those whom he secures are the least desirable of their class. They are the most active in abusing him behind his back. Lord Salisbury, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Chamberlain and the other big men of England are not yet

among the chums of Mr. Astor, and probably never will be.

Mr. Astor's action in renouncing American citizenship was fitly preceded by an article in the Pall Mall Magazine, in which he put forward a bogus claim to noble ancestry. His alleged ancestors included the D'Astorg family of France, one of whose members, he said, fled to Germany at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The pedigree has been ripped to pieces by an English heraldic authority. The D'Astorgs were well known in France down to this century, and none of them ever fled to Germany.

It will be well to recite briefly and in due order those events in the career of William Waldorf Astor, which logically lead up to his final development as the great international snob—the man who declares that the country which yields him an income of \$200,000,000 is not fit to live in—the man who bolsters up his claim to social recognition by a false and forged pedigree.

He was born in 1848, the only son of John Jacob Astor, who was a grandson of the original John Jacob. Owing to the family custom of leaving most of the property to the oldest son, his father inherited the bulk of the Astor

fortune. William Waldorf, being an only child, received his father's enormous fortune absolutely intact.

The young heir to millions was educated by private tutors, and graduated from the Columbia College Law School in 1871. He began to take a dilettante interest in politics and literature. When he was thirty he was elected as a Republican to the State Senate. He enjoyed some popularity among the lowest class of politicians by scattering his money freely, but he irritated his associates by airs of social superiority. He proved stupid and useless, and had no standing in the Legislature.

At the end of his term he thought that Congress would be a worthier field for his talents. He ran for what was considered a safe Republican district, but was defeated by Roswell P. Flower. He spent his money freely, but when the people knew him better that was not sufficient to save him.

At this tender age, he was already developing the idea that America was "no place for a gentleman to live in." The criticisms of newspapers and politicians, often more frivolous than serious, filled him with foolish rage. The criticisms have become serious now. His wealth procured him the post of Minister to Italy, which was probably

not considered of great importance, for it had been filled by a politician whose untamed manners contributed much to the gaiety of Europe. While in Italy Mr. Astor wrote two novels, "Valentino" and "Sforza," on which he bases a claim to be "a man of letters." They are not badly written, but they are colorless productions, without life or strength or any real excuse for existing.

When Grover Cleveland was first elected to office Mr. Astor had to resign. After his return to his native land the American habits of criticism, and irreverence toward great landlords ate ever more deeply into his soul.

In 1890 he went to England, and since then has visited this country only twice. In conversation with many persons, English and American, he has expressed the opinion that the attacks made on rich men and on the display of wealth render this country unendurable.

One of the first things Mr. Astor did in England was to purchase the Pall Mall Gazette, an evening newspaper, which he turned into an aggressively Tory organ, advocating the causes of aristocracy and reaction as far as is possible in modern England.

He also founded the Pall Mall Magazine, a publication which, more than anything else, reveals his arrogant snobbery. It is edited by Lord Frederic Hamilton, brother of the Duke of Abercorn, who receives an enormous salary and does little, for which he is not to be blamed. Among its contributors are always many titled persons, whose articles clearly are published wholly on account of the names of the writers.

In order to explain Mr. Astor's career it is necessary to refer somewhat to his domestic affairs. He was married in 1878 to Miss Mary Dahlgren Paul, daughter of James W. Paul, of Philadelphia. She was a very beautiful woman.

At first the Astors lived in London, in Carlton House Terrace. Later the Marquis of Lansdowne wished to let Lansdowne, in Berkeley Square, an immense residence standing in its own grounds in the midst of London, and Mr. Astor took it. No duke has a finer house and its isolation suits Mr. Astor's taste for gloomy grandeur.

In 1893 Mr. Astor secured a splendid country house, Cliveden, on the Thames, formerly the property of the Duke of Westminster. He paid \$1,250,000 for it. Cliveden is situated in the heart of the boating and picknicking region of the upper Thames. After acquiring it Astor had an opportunity to show himself ultra-aristocratic, more

## The Contrast in Millionaire How, who Renounces His Birthright to Live With the Poor.

**J.** EADS HOW, grandson of the famous James B. Eads, builder of the magnificent bridge that spans the Mississippi at St. Louis, renounces his right to a million-dollar estate, leaves a palatial home in Lindell Boulevard, the most fashionable park thoroughfare in St. Louis, and leads a life of voluntary poverty in one of the most wretched quarters of the city.

How is a social reformer, but not of the bombastic, ostentatious kind so frequently encountered nowadays. He is a friend of the poor. Indeed, he is one of them. He believes that inherited wealth is the curse of the country, and he will under no circumstances be tainted by it.

He has travelled in all lands; he has seen all conditions of life; he knows how both halves of the world live; yes, he knows the appalling misery of all the smallest fractions of poverty-stricken people.

For these reasons J. Eads How, in his own humble way, has set about to do his share toward dignifying labor, toward restoring it to its original plane of respect, and to show that poverty is no sin, even though it must be always with us.

How comes of a distinguished family. His grandfather, James B. Eads, was a civil engineer of world-wide fame. The bridge across the "Father of Waters" at St. Louis is a monument to his memory,

to his skill and to his perseverance, as lasting as time itself.

The Eads Jetties, that preserve the deep water passage from the mouth of the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico, are another of his brilliant achievements which ages cannot wipe out. They are universally recognized triumphs of modern engineering.

These works not only brought to Eads undying fame, but also immense wealth, much of which, however, he spent among the people who had already profited by the labor of his hand and brain.

His daughter, J. Eads How's mother, married James Finney How, for many years vice-president of the Wabash Railroad system and a man of great wealth.

J. Eads How, philanthropist, reformer and "one of the masses," was literally born with a silver spoon in his mouth. That was thirty years ago. He was reared in luxury. He was educated at the Eastern colleges and sent abroad to profit by the experience of travel. All his early surroundings were calculated to make of him a man who could know but little of the sufferings of the poor and to feel much less for them.

From his grandfather he inherited directly a small fortune. From his father he inherited another fortune. On the death of his mother he will inherit, together with his brother Louis, the entire Eads estate, one of the most valuable in St. Louis. It is a

very conservative estimate indeed to say that he will come into possession of \$1,000,000 when his mother dies. The correct figure would be more like \$2,000,000.

But figures matter not for him, for he will not touch a dollar of this inherited wealth. He has so notified his mother and his brother. He does not consider that he is entitled to it. It is not in keeping with his stupendous love for the poor to accept the earnings of another's hand and mind.

Despite his repeated refusals to have thrust upon him this splendid fortune, the young man's relatives still insist that he must take it. But he is a man of will power supreme; a man who cannot be swayed from his purpose by all the persuasion in the world; a man who will never relinquish his position of right for all the riches and all the power and all the glory in Christendom.

He has said "No" finally and with determination. He will not have the wealth, and that must end the question.

Strangely enough, however, J. Eads How has accepted, or rather accepted years ago, the money willed to him by his grandfather. He does not, indeed, employ it for his own good. It is a trust fund for the poor. It furnishes him the means of furthering his economic principles. It was this money that paid for his travels abroad in which he first discovered how the "other half" lived. It was this money that bought

him books wherein he learned of social conditions and possible remedies for human ills. He does not regard its acceptance as a compromise of his philanthropic ideas, because the works by which it was earned are of perpetual benefit to the public, and it is still being used for the public good. He never spends a penny of it for his personal gratification. It all goes to the common cause.

Here it might be proper to explain How's philosophy. In order to get an understanding of his action in accepting the money left him by his grandfather, and refusing to take the million dollars now offered to him by other relatives.

"Suppose you settle on a piece of ground," he says, "in an unoccupied country. In time it fills up; your land becomes valuable, and you grow immensely wealthy. Shouldn't that property still belong to the community?"

"It was not through the efforts of your hand and brain that it became valuable, and you have no more right to bequeath it to others than they have to accept it. They have done even less than you have to merit or profit by it. You have done the public no service; at least, the public will not derive lasting benefits from the little you have done. It is yours, and not the public, that is

the gainer by the transaction."

This contains J. Eads How's distinction between inherited wealth solely and wealth honestly earned by hand and brain and the production of something of enduring benefit to the public. In the fine discrimination which J. Eads How thus draws he is thus enabled conscientiously to accept money from his grandfather, a philanthropist, that he may continue its use for the public; but he cannot accept the wealth of others, because it might not, perchance, have been the direct outgrowth of labor, mental and physical, and have produced a lasting public good.

For nine months now this young man has been practising his social theories. He left his magnificent home, at No. 4170 Lindell Boulevard, and took up quarters in the old Mission Home at the southwest corner of Ninth and Wash streets. The mansion was and is still surrounded by the costliest homes in St. Louis. You wouldn't find evidence of poverty in that vicinity if you looked for it with a searchlight. Every direction you turn leads to surface indications, at least, of great wealth.

How different the surroundings of J. Eads How's present abode! It is in the heart of what is called "Little Russia," because the scum of that country, and, too, the riff-raff of other foreign countries are densely settled there. Such squalid quar-

ters could not well be imagined without a visit to them. The moment you set in the neighborhood you are overcome by an awful stench. Perhaps, if you are able to stand it, you can grope your way through dingy little streets, down alleys and into back yards. If you know the way well you struggle up dilapidated stairways and find yourself in low, suffocating rooms, one of which is sometimes occupied by four and five persons.

If J. Eads How had made a study of the quarters of the poor in all the large cities it is doubtful if he could have settled in the midst of more wretched people than those who are now his neighbors—and he loves his neighbors as himself.

How will not talk about himself. He will not sit for a photograph. He dislikes notoriety. When called upon by an artist and a reporter for the Sunday Journal he was courteous, and showed them through the building, but of himself he could not be got to talk.

Only once would he venture near a statement of his economic ideas, and that was when he uttered the sentence quoted in the foregoing. It was a long sentence, too, for a tactful reformer like J. Eads How.

How is an interesting study. His figure is slight. He is of medium size and pos-

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