

Double-dyed mysteries, one after another, one mystery dovetailing into the other like a Chinese puzzle until the reader is tempted to skip whole pages, knowing that by doing so he may get a clue, even though he is sure to miss a few extra mysteries, for there is one on every page—that is the sort of impression *The Bandbox*, by Mr. Louis Joseph Vance, may leave upon the conscientious reader. For those who love mystery Mr. Vance's book will be a delight from first to last. A bandbox may seem a commonplace thing, but when there are two of them and one contains a diamond necklace, and when the box with the

necklace is always getting mixed up with the box without one, when they are shipped over seas with detectives and thieves by the dozen trailing after them, and when murder and sudden death occur wherever one or both those bandboxes turn up, it will be seen that they are more interesting than the most wonderful Paris bonnet could make them. Naturally there is a love theme involved, and the beautiful Alison Landis, who owned one of the bandboxes, had some sentiment in her. But what the reader gets is not romance, it is mystery. There is no time for much else.

MILLIONS AND MILLIONAIRES IN FICTION

BY EDNA KENTON

IN TWO PARTS. PART II



WITH the advent of Silas Lapham into American fiction came a new method of treating wealth and rich men as themes for the novelist. The great modern fortunes were just in process of building, and the early '70's were filled with foreshadowings of mightier fortunes under single management than the world had known. Dickens had caught the coming spirit, and in *Little Dorrit* had dealt extravagantly with the great Merdle fortune after a manner that is still followed by novelists of the *Get-Rich-Quick-Waltingford*, and the *Brewster's Millions*, and the *Money Changers* stripe. That is, money miraculously accumulates under one man's manipulations, and the difference of an odd cipher or two, or a discrepancy of three in the numeral that heads the total is of no consequence. There is simply money and then more money, all of it dazzling and thrilling, but as unreal as any poor man's mental concept of the purchasing power of three trillion dollars. Within the past ten or fifteen years the reading public has been deluged with these lurid tales of big busi-

ness—The *Saturday Evening Post* story—did old Gorgon Graham lead them all?—has come to stand as the typical example upon which all tales of this character are industriously modelled. Dishonesty and graft rampant, disregard of the little fellow, worship of the two or three American gods of high finance, a rolling of amounts of money that range through millions to three-quarter billions, a beautiful stenographer or a beautiful heiress—these are the materials with which more or less impecunious authors juggle to the end of unreality and the modest increment of their bank accounts.

No need to call the roll of these successful delineators of great wealth, as it is not for the sake of the story that must be. That there is demand for it from the weekly primary vote of the people is shown by the fact that the flood of golden fiction sweeps endlessly on. The American bourgeoisie feast greedily on detailed descriptions of recklessly acquired and recklessly spent wealth. How else came Edith Wharton ever to rank as a "best seller"! And side by side with *The House of Mirth* stands on many a mental bookshelf Upton Sinclair's *The Metropolis*, with its Sunday supplement

chapters of the millionaire's wardrobe, the detailed costs of his Romanesque feasts, its disbursement of moneys by people moved by sheer mania for spending. Modern fortunes have been dealt with no less luridly than that old guard in the *Ledger* days, Emma Southworth, dealt with love and hate and intrigue and murder.

But Howells saw in the early days of fortune making a motive not new, but one capable of a new interpretation, and in *The Rise of Silas Lapham* he gave us not the fortune, but the man who made it, and, like a haunting note, the figure of the cheated Rogers; the man who made through the man who lost. Howells does not juggle with figures that mean nothing and have but a tinkling sound in shallow ears; almost the only gauge he gives for the proper estimation of Lapham's fortune is the bare fact of the price he was prepared to pay for his "palatial mansion," one hundred thousand dollars. But here lies, on every page, a sense of the inherent injustice in a huge fortune built up on technical legalities and moral wrongs. Lapham had piled it up stubbornly and harshly, and, because he was not as hard as the real men of affairs who came after him, was unhappy in his harshness. Perhaps Silas Lapham loved his women folks too well, and perhaps they had not learned the art of spending to an extent that made them, too, harsh and stubborn dispensers of the Lapham wealth.

More than thirty years later, in *A Certain Rich Man*, William Allen White tried to do it over again, handling the fortunes of the early '70's as they were making, with the conclusion of the whole matter so far as we have reached conclusions. And, besides covering a quarter of a century more in time than Howells did or could with his theme, White undertook the delineation of a whole community, and, through it, the groanings of a nation under John Barclay's iron-heeled oppressions. Silas Lapham's fortune, in so far as his creator shows us, affects only his home, Rogers, and himself.

John Barclay is playing the concertina at country dances for two dollars a night when we first see him; even then he was a cold, hard youth. And from the time

that he organised the Golden Belt Wheat Company, seeing, in the need of his neighbours for money, his chance to get control of them and all their possessions, his feet, until the end, never strayed from the narrow, chill road he had marked out to travel. Owning or holding mortgages on practically every acre of land in his region: "That year of the panic John capitalised the hardship of his people and made terms for them which they could not refuse. He literally sold them their own want." A year later, owing one hundred and fifty thousand dollars to Eastern stockholders with no means in sight of paying the interest, he compelled his old friend, and the father of his New York clerk, to whom he would pay no more than fifty dollars a month, to break the law in half a dozen different and hazardous ways, to risk all his bank's assets and all its cash, to lend to no man, stranger or old friend, a dollar except as the borrower consented to comply with the demands of the Golden Belt Wheat Company, and to mortgage his own farm to Barclay. Finally, after a series of juggling with railroads and rebates, of stretching out a thousand hands in search of profitable by-product patents, and of factories that should supply at cost all its needs, the National Provision Company is capitalised at seventy-five million dollars, and John Barclay is on the way to becoming the richest man in the world. His æsthetic life is dead of inanition; his emotional life is starved all but to death's door; he is hated by most of those who know him as few men are hated, and finally, when he gives up his life for another, though his end should be a dramatic one, it is not. Somehow, though one feels it should supersede in melodrama the death of—McTeague, say, handcuffed to a corpse in the middle of the Great Desert, it does not approach it; probably because no one can feel that John Barclay, who had deliberately killed all humanitarian impulse for so many years, could have felt the impulse that would make him surrender life to save another. He had slain too many thousands, soul and body. And, despite the detail and figures that *A Certain Rich Man* holds, it remains, with all its detail

and verbiage, a less powerful study somehow of a rich man than the old, first study in millionaireshood's realism.

Another American realist, in two of an uncompleted trilogy of novels, dealt with Big Business, more graphically in *The Octopus* than in *The Pit*. In the first book Frank Norris took the impersonal corporate body of the thieving railway rather than a single rich man, and those rich men who do figure in these pages are, however cruel and relentless, less their own self-distorted spirits than the puppets in the graspings of the mighty Octopus. Once again Norris cannot hold back from a melodramatic death, and buries his arch villain in the wheat as it pours into the hold of the ship that is to distribute it through the world to people all defrauded of their right to the fruits of the earth. The epic of the wheat pit at Chicago is less vital by a good many degrees, owing to the deliberate and therefore unspontaneous injecting into it of a "love interest" that failed to interest. It is the Chicago local colour, and the cat that sat, washing her face, on the edge of the pit after its greatest battle, that one remembers more definitely than this relentless millionaire, Jadwin.

Robert Herrick, too, has tried his hand at rich men—the fortunes in *Together* are large and in most cases unscrupulously got. Old Colonel Price died richer than his family suspected, being worth more than eight millions. But his will, modelled undoubtedly after the Field will, was, like that, "a document in the trust field." The old Colonel, having but little faith in the generation that would immediately succeed him, left his daughter only a pittance, a few hundred thousands—"Isabel had thought that she would be a rich woman in her own right;"—and by creating a trust, the name of his beloved firm was insured to stand for another generation at least. "The Colonel did not trust the present generation; he preferred that his money should wait until possibly the passing of years had brought wisdom." "A selfish will," his public said. That, undoubtedly.

Isabel's husband did not need the Colonel's wealth—he was making his own,

mounting steadily in the service of the great railroad corporation, not his own master, not the controlling mind behind the business intrigues, but a trusted servant of his masters until the Railroad Graft case was tried, and Lane personally was fined over thirteen thousand dollars. He was made the scapegoat of the Company, and that they might give a public demonstration of the cleansing of garments, was invited to resign. It was in this time of humiliation that Isabel learned the fine distinctions—some of them—that exist between the mere officials of the corporations and the control behind them—the money power; it is this distinction that Herrick has tried to trace out and make clear. "There emerged into her view something of a panorama of industry, organised on modern lines,—the millions of workers in the industrial armies, the infinite gradation of leadership in these armies, and finally in the far off distance, among the cañons of the skyscrapers in the great cities, the Mind of it all, the Control, the massed Capital. There were the Marshals' quarters! Even the chiefs of great corporations were little people compared with their real employers, the men who controlled capital. Men did not reach the Marshals' quarters with a few hundreds of thousands of dollars, nor with a few millions, with savings and inheritances and prudent thrift. They must have tens of millions at their command. And these millions came through alliances, manipulations, deals, by all sorts of devices whereby money could be made to spawn miraculously."

It is in *A Life for a Life*, that curious jumble of theories and half-baked conclusions, the mixture of realism and parable, of socialism and egoism, vanity and the Anarch, that Herrick has attempted to set forth the taint of ever-spawning wealth in its worst aspect: its hideous fight for life in socialistic age.

Pigs in Clover is a book that delineates with deliberate intent an almost isolated case, from the standpoint of fiction, in the portraiture of millionaires. *Pigs in Clover*, from its sneering title to its "Finis," is intended to paint only one type of the world's rich men, and that type the rich Jew, self-made, and his relation,

financially and personally, to the England whose industries he manipulates, and whose statecraft he attempts to control for his own purposes. His millions are already made; he is disclosed to us first, in his attempt to establish at home an influence in the Cabinet and with the English Houses, an influence that, from the southernmost tip of Africa he can control and use as matters develop in the Transvaal. The story of Joan de Groot almost buried the story of Karl, but he stands there, painted, so all literary gossip said, true to type and to one individual. This is a study of wealth used to decide the votes of Houses, the decisions of Ministers, the futures of new countries and undeveloped lands and peoples.

As a study of the methods whereby money may be drawn from a people and its banks to breed more money for one shrewd mind who sees a chance to build a huge fortune on nothing at all, *Tono-Bungay* has not been displaced by any later study. Mixed with it, after the Wells manner, are the observations of its effect upon the minds and lives and manners of a people. Not for one hundred and fifty pages have we an idea of what *Tono-Bungay* is—nor then do we know more of it than that it—"bottles and mitigated water"—is the basis of Ponderevo's thefts from the people. For if taking something and giving nothing is not thieving, what is! Wells does not pretend to tell you. Says he: "We sold our stuff and got the money and spent the money honestly in lies and clamour to sell more stuff." A big boom of patent, bottle dope, with side issues added from time to time, in quick succession—*Tono-Bungay* Hair Stimulant, Concentrated *Tono-Bungay* for the eyes, *Tono-Bungay* lozenges and ditto chocolates! Finally the two, uncle and

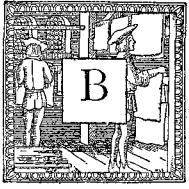
nephew, took over for exploitation after their manner, Moggs Domestic Soap. In the beginning Ponderevo bought the compounds for "the stuff" on credit, and in small quantities. It was no time at all before he went to the public "to ask with honest confidence for one hundred and fifty thousand pounds for the good will in a string of lies and a trade in bottles and mitigated water." Then came the final play—the expedition for the voyage to Mordet Island and the acquisition of its "quap," that deposit of radio-activity that Wells pauses to define as "a real disease of matter—exactly what the decay of our old culture is in society." And, with the failure of the human mind to control the contagious disease that quap spread about it, came bankruptcy, the softly falling collapse of a pasteboard fortune. No modern writer has shown, quite so vividly, the utter rottenness of the quap-like modern fortunes, as Wells in *Tono-Bungay*.

The book of the modern financier has yet to be written, his psychology, the man behind the bitter mask. But the book of the modern fortunes may be put together, like the old books of "Selections," only a far more pregnant volume, this, by taking from every modern minded novelist of to-day, bits that, dealing not obviously at all with great fortunes or their makers, point the shocking results of the modern mess we call the highest civilisation the world has known! Galsworthy's *Fraternity*, his *The Man of Property*, *The Country House*, Wells's *George Meek* and his *Kipps*, books that, none of them, deal with great wealth nor mighty financiers, are filled with the results of the system that puts the control of the earth's wealth into the hands of a few of the least fitted of her sons to sustain the burden. Not an unhelpful sign of these parlous times!



IN MEMORIAM

THE OBITUARIES OF THE AUTHORS CLUB OF NEW YORK FOR 1911



BY the death of HENRY ABBEY The Authors Club lost one of its oldest and most interested members, — a familiar figure in the poets' corner since 1884. Like many whose literary star led toward Parnassus, Mr. Abbey during the greater part of his life was an efficient and highly trusted man of affairs, at first in a banking-house and subsequently as a merchant. After about 1905, however, he gradually withdrew from commercial responsibilities, and, building himself a home in which he might entertain his friends, he settled quietly down among the genial neighbours by whom he had so long been esteemed and loved.

It would seem that no life, in the world of to-day, could be more simple—even narrow—than Mr. Abbey's. He never crossed the ocean, was never even west of the Alleghanies. He seemed rather to dread than to court any experience of travel. This was partly due to, and partly the cause of, the distinguishing peculiarities of his temperament, in which were manifested a most generous friendliness coupled with a shy modesty and an excessive fear of intrusion or of accidentally giving offence, which often obscured his real sweetness and worth. The distressing death of his childless wife in 1889, and of other dear ones later, were saddening blows, yet Abbey was always sunny company, drolly humorous, and especially the friend of children.

From boyhood, when his ambition for a collegiate education was frustrated, Abbey delighted in writing verses, and some of his earliest efforts have proved the best of his life's whole product, which numbered no less than seven volumes. No critique is called for here—least of all from me; but it is fact that the more elaborate structures of his leisure age won no such heartfelt response as the loving, truthful little poems of his active youth. Those were simple lyrics such as fitted the ideas of the plain

people whom he knew, and yet were instinct with his own uplifting goodness and sense of beauty. A generation ago they illuminated the corners of fireside journals, and were engraven upon the memories of school children, from end to end of the country. This was not the academic fame he hoped for in his later and more ambitious efforts, but it was a spontaneous, sincere, and lasting appreciation, and that, perhaps, is better.

Henry Abbey was born in Rondout, now Kingston, New York, on July 11, 1842, and died of heart disease in Tena-fly, New Jersey, on June 7, 1911. He was buried with affectionate respect in the cemetery at Kingston, where already there stands a monument to him in the stone which long ago he erected upon the almost obliterated grave of the artist Vanderlyn—an example of that constant desire to do something for others which was this kindly poet's foremost characteristic.

E. I.

CLARENCE CARY was a remarkable illustration of that remarkable thing—a self-made man well made, which was again an illustration of the old, old truth that "blood will tell." He was of the Virginia Carys, brother of Constance Cary—later Mrs. Burton Harrison, the well-known author (to whom we owe a portion of this sketch); and cousin of Hetty Cary, the two girls being among the inspirations and joys of Richmond in the hopeful days of the Confederacy, and among its consolations in the dark days.

Clarence Cary was admirably schooled at the Episcopal High School in Fairfax, which was, and has been since, a Rugby in the South. At fifteen he went into the Confederate Army, was in several battles after Manassas, and received his appointment to the navy as a reward for gallantry in service among the volunteers near his old home. After these stirring experiences, he was sent back to Richmond to the school-ship *Patrick Henry* on the James, where he eagerly resumed his studies. Coming as he did of a