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THE REPUBLICAN. WEDNESDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 27, 1869. FROM THE N. Y. HERALD. WILLIAM B. ASTOR.

The richest man in America—Early Career in His Father's Fur Store—School at Trinity, Education and Culture in His Father's Household—How He Learned to Make Money and Made Millions in Twenty Years—His Gifts to the Astor Library and Other Charities—His Business and Personal Life.

Among the representative men of this metropolis there is no one more conspicuous than William B. Astor. Inheriting a fortune of princely magnitude, he has shown himself, in the power to acquire wealth, possessed of all the extraordinary ability of his illustrious father. With the noble and unexampled inheritance of his father's buildings and bonds, and lands and leases, and stocks and securities, he inherited also his genius for money-making—his promptness, prudence, shrewdness and honesty—those allied gifts and the rightful employment of which, from the humble trader in furs, made John Jacob Astor the richest man in America. Had William B. Astor been born poor he would have become a rich man. It could not have been otherwise. His mind was constituted for the acquisition of wealth.

His powers and energy of his strong nature, centered on this point. The inclusive force of his will alone would have compassed this result. Under his skillful management his possessions have rapidly increased. It is his marvellous executive ability in controlling this vast wealth and adding so greatly to its magnitude that makes him a representative man. He has not squandered his splendid estate by dissipation, by extravagance or by speculation, as many differently constituted would have done. He has made secure investments. He has kept out of the vortex of speculative speculation. Though all his life inflexible honesty of dealing has been his guiding maxim. It is in this strongly marked element of his character, combined with the large but unobtrusive benevolence of his nature, that has given his moral grandeur its name and fame, that has evoked in his mind the respect, and that will cause his memory to be held in perpetual grateful remembrance. Of such a life there is little to be written. His grand life mission has been performed in quiet, in silence, in the almost cloistered seclusion of his little one-story office in Prince street.

So fleeting is time it hardly seems twenty-one years ago since John Jacob Astor died. Many remember the chilly March day and the sombre, leaden clouds that overhung the city the day of his funeral. The pall-bearers were chosen from among the most illustrious of our citizens. Six clerics, men of the highest rank, officiated at the vault of St. Thomas' church he was buried. His estate was estimated at \$20,000,000. Two days after the funeral the Herald, with that spirit of enterprise characterizing its conduct, then as now, published his entire will, covering five closely printed columns. This will indicates the disposition of his vast wealth—indicated William B. Astor as his principal legatee. William B. Astor was the richest man on this Continent. There is power in millions of money—a power surpassing the sway of sceptred sovereignty, a power exceeding fame, a power exceeding everything in the world beside. It is true, as already stated, that for many years previous to the death of his father he had almost exclusive control of the estate. But he was not a miser. He was a philanthropist. He was a benefactor. He was a man of noble and generous impulses. He was a man of noble and generous impulses. He was a man of noble and generous impulses.

At No. 149 Broadway, in March, 1794, William B. Astor was born. Appended to the name of John Jacob Astor in the City Directory were these words, "Farrier, 149 Broadway." The house was a plain two-story and attic brick structure. His father carried on his business in the first story and, with his family, occupied the rest of the house. It was not, indeed, until six years later, when he had been in business fifteen years and was worth some \$200,000, that he indulged in the luxury of living in a house separate from his business. His first separate residence was No. 223 Broadway, on the present site of the Astor House—a very respectable house in those early days of the city's embryonic growth. In size and exterior finish and interior appointments bearing every slight resemblance to the palatial abodes of our present leading men of wealth, William B. Astor's earliest remembrances are connected with his father's store. He early learned to assort the furs, and helped to load them and free them from moths. He little dreamed the wealth of future gold to be evolved from those small, dingy, dusty furs in that small, dingy, dirty store. But while his father was smoking his pipe and drinking beer and playing checkers and occasionally going to the theatre, his fortune was rapidly accumulating. No special pains were taken with young William's earliest education. With other boys of his age he went to the public school. His father, at length, seeing the growing expansion of his business and wealth, and particularly after he had begun sending his furs to China, and bringing back cargoes of teas, on single cargoes of which he often realized a handsome fortune, determined to give him a thorough education, such as would fit him for his future position and to carry on the gigantic business so rapidly swelling into colossal proportions.

Went to HEDDLEBACH UNIVERSITY. A few years preliminary training in the most select schools in this city was the starting point for a university education abroad. "The education here is not good enough," his father said to him one day. "The German universities give the only education worth having. I am going to send you to one. How do you like the idea?" "I like it," answered William. "Will you study hard if I send you there?" "Yes, sir." "Will you promise to stay till I send for you and not get homesick?" "Yes, sir." "Well, then, get ready for Heidelberg." And for Heidelberg he prepared himself, and to Heidelberg he went. He remained there several years, acquiring himself in his studies with marked honor and becoming an adept in beer drinking, song singing and the small sword exercise. His university studies finished, he paid a visit home and then took the tour to Europe. He visited all the places of historical and classical interest in the Old World.

He had shown the good effects of your university education," said the old gentleman to him on his return from his European tour. "In what particular regard?" asked young William, knowing well that there was some joke at the bottom of the remark, for no one was fonder of indulging in pleasantry than his father. "I expected you would spend \$50,000, and you have only drawn on me for \$10,000."

"I am glad you are pleased," said William, but to this day he confesses himself in doubt as to whether the old gentleman meant the remark in commendation or in reproof of his traveling expenses. "My father has done you great injustice," he said to Fitz-Greene Halleck, the former friend and secretary of his father. "I have given you \$200,000, and you have only drawn on me for \$10,000."

"I think you have claims on the estate," pursued Mr. Astor, "and as a mark of appreciation of your past fidelity I have raised your annuity to \$1,500." "Thank you, thank you," spoke up this noble and gifted son of song, and he bowed his head and turned away, the years of his beautiful, but sad life were by this act of timely liberality lifted above care and his pathway to the grave strewn with pleasant flowers.

"You saved a large amount of property in China for my father," he said to a sea captain who had been in his employ, for whom he sent his son after the purchase of books. "Yes, your father's death," answered the sea captain, "the property was impounded on this account and I saved it and turned over to your father \$700,000."

"And he never paid you anything," "I'll pay you," he filled out a check for \$25,000, and gave it to the sea captain. The minor bequests of John Jacob Astor and additional sums given away by William B. Astor amounted to \$2,000,000 of the estate. The rest fell to William B. Astor.

The original fund for funding the Astor Library, as is well known, was \$400,000, of which \$100,000 was to be expended in the site and building, \$150,000 in the purchase of books, and \$150,000, the remaining sum, permanently invested as a fund to maintain and increase the library. These stipulations of the will of John Jacob Astor were fully completed with. On Lafayette place a massive building of 65 feet front and 120 feet depth, of chaste but beautiful design, whose huge arched doorways and windows were in tasteful keeping with the grand purpose to which it was to be dedicated, was speedily erected. It is unnecessary to dwell on the ceremonies of its opening—to call to mind the pleasing presence and graceful smiles of that happy man and genial scholar and writer, Washington Irving—to call up from the shadowy past the faces of others revered for the duty of their personal character and lives, who were present on this memorable occasion. It was a noble bequest, and the public appreciated it as such. It might thus have stood an enduring monument of the wise and liberal beneficence of its founder.

Mr. William B. Astor was not satisfied with his resting here. He saw the vast good it was accomplishing. He foresaw its keeping beneficent results in the future. Discerning the rapid growth of our city and the splendid destiny in store for our great commercial metropolis. He had the means to perfect the unfinished work, and was amply endowed with the requisite public spirit and benevolence to do it. The public know the result. He put upon an adjoining building of the same magnitude and on the same plan as a core of nearly \$100,000. He expended \$200,000 more for books. He added \$200,000 to the fund for maintenance and the gradual increase of the library. He expended nearly \$10,000 in a steam heating apparatus for the buildings. The grand total of expenditure and money invested has now reached the magnificent sum of \$7,500,000, making the moneyed contributions thus far of William B. Astor to the Astor Library \$10,000,000. The probability is that Mr. Astor will not stop here. The library now numbers 129,000 volumes, and the alcoves will not admit of many more additions. It is said that Mr. Astor has expressed a purpose of adding still another building of the same size as those already built, and thus providing still further for the increasing wants of our rapidly increasing population—for the millions of people that at the commencement of the next century will inhabit Manhattan Island. We must be pardoned the above familiar details in regard to this library, but it is the one great work of public beneficence in which the subject of our sketch has been popularly identified, and for promoting the interest of which the most reliable library of reference in this country. It is his wish and aim to make it as valuable as any in the world.

His office, business habits and wealth. A one-story building in Prince street, just out of Broadway, and first floor of the house adjoining constitute the office of Mr. Astor. Here, aided by only two or three clerks, he transacts all his immense business. Mr. Astor is here regularly at ten a. m., and remains till five p. m. He walks from and to his office. He occupies the rear room. It is plainly furnished. Business is attended to promptly. He knows every inch of real estate that stands in his name, every bond, contract and lease. By attention to his business and judicious investments he has largely increased his fortune. Some estimate it at \$60,000,000. The subject is one upon which he is said to be very reticent, even to his most intimate friends.

Mr. Astor married a daughter of General Armstrong, Secretary of War under President Madison. She is a highly accomplished lady and a well-known liberal contributor to public and private charities. They have had six children—three sons and three daughters—all of whom, excepting one daughter, are still living. Since 1841 they have lived in Lexington avenue. Their summers they spend at the country seat at Barrytown, Mr. Astor shows very little the marks of his age. He stands erect as ever, walks firmly and enjoys excellent health. He inherits the massive nose and compact heavy under jaw. His face is full and ruddy, with slight side whiskers. He is a plain man, dresses plainly and puts on no airs. He attends St. Bartholomew's church. He keeps five horses, but rarely rides. One of his sons will be remembered as having served with distinction on Gen. McClellan's staff during the war. The brothers have an office in Wall street and live on Fifth avenue in princely style.

PALACE OF A RUINED BANKER. The Most Magnificent Country Seat in America—Location—Size—\$1,200,000 for a Residence. (From the New York Sun.) Passengers over the New Haven railroad have all noticed a magnificent structure of cream-colored stone on the outskirts of Norwalk. It commands a charming view of Norwalk river and bay, and is a picture in itself which eclipses its surroundings. It might be two country seats of English noblemen rolled into one, or it might be a palace of Ismail Pasha. It is the country seat of LeGrand Lockwood, chief partner of the firm of Lockwood & Co., bankers and brokers, who went under during the Wall street hurricane.

A wide avenue, embowered with trees and skirted with sumptuous dwellings stretches for two miles from the railroad station to the heart of the town. It is called Main street. Half way between each terminus are the gates of iron rails, which opens into the grounds of the edifice alluded to. A villa of which any one might be proud serves as a porter's lodge. It is of the same material as the main edifice. A superb perfume greets the visitor as he enters a coach house, floored with striped walnut and oak, of which seven luxurious vehicles occupy but one side. A shining maple door opens upon graceful steps with glistening coats, and a bay foal, with polished rafter, reveals the dining hall of a mediæval castle. The second stable, of similar build, harbors fat cattle and sturdy wagon horses. Two conservatories, draped with vines from the tropics, and a wealth of rare foliage, on every side, remain of grace and enduring beauty.

But the house! It is a wonder of architecture in its way. Its bright walls sparkle in the sun, towers and spires blend gracefully with its slated roof, and fairy rails of gilt kindle its eyes with glory. It has been five years in building, and the interior is yet incomplete. The grand entrance is yet uncreated. The doors are still unborn, and are foreshadowed simply by boards. The great hall, tessellated with varied woods, would hold an ordinary house within its compass, and is a model of rich simplicity. The ceiling are of a light drab and lavender, mingled with gold and delicate rose, and the same may be said of the spacious billiard room which contains two tables, and is richly carpeted and upholstered. The doors, shutters and wainscoting are all of polished, inlaid woods, and the same feature is observable in every apartment of the house. The great range of the drawing rooms is not yet furnished, but an exquisite, Parisian-styled Moorish room gladdens visiting eyes. Its carpet is of aky blue, bordered with drab, white and rose; the furniture, walls and ceiling are traced with Moorish fancies, and a colossal desk of many woods is a miracle of workmanship.

The owner's chamber is in keeping with the rooms alluded to. The bedstead is of rosewood, and a work of art. Like the other furniture, it is all French. Fancy exhausts itself in its inlaid variegations. It is canopied at the upper end with satin of the richest green, pending from a framework of gold and jet. Adjoining this apartment is Mr. Lockwood's dressing room. Again inlaid woods and frescoed walls; again rich easy chairs, and again a carpet in which the foot sinks at its tread. The washing apparatus is of a dark red marble, lightly variegated with white and yellow. The basins are of the finest china, traced with delicate flowers, and the faucets are gilded with burnished gold. Large mirrors are inserted in the many wooded doors of the closets, one of which opens on a bath room.

Further on is an oratory. The walls are frescoed in imitation of fluted white satin, the windows are hung with Persian fabrics, the ceiling is of blended rose, drab and gold, and the little dome is sky blue, studded with stars. The prie-dieu, or little praying desk, is a beauty in its way, but here an unmentioned, though carpeted stool attracts the eye. The owner is an orthodox Protestant, but a complete chamber suite must have an oratory as well as a dressing room, and an oratory must have a cross. The view from the windows would distract a saint.

The dressing room of the mansion is large as an ordinary parlor. It is carpeted with blue, white and rose, with frescoes and furniture to match. The great guests' room is spacious and carpeted with sober red. It is rich, but more subdued in tone than others. There are many other rooms of smaller size. The children's chambers are in keeping with the rest. Through the whole suite, as elsewhere, run inlaid wood and frescoes, but nowhere can be found gold. All is costly, all is rich, but the tints are delicate, and none obtrude upon the eye. The servants' rooms are more modest than the rest, and they equal the chambers of a first class hotel. The floors have Brussels carpets, and the bureaus, bedsteads and chairs are of black walnut. The latter are well cushioned and the female servants' dream of their swains upon crisp French mattresses. The wainscot standards are topped with white marble, as are likewise the baronets. The latter are furnished with plate glasses. The servants are thus tempted to wash up stairs, instead of taking a dry polish in the kitchen. There are six of these, and also a fat waiter of middle age.

The rooms have been draped and furnished in accordance with Mrs. Lockwood's tastes and wishes. The costliness everywhere evident may be equaled in other dwellings, but similar designs are rare. No pictures are yet hung, though many have been purchased. The grounds around the house cover thirty acres. And in the locality is a vast tract of 1,000 acres. The tract was bought six years ago by LeGrand Lockwood, and then was a combination of rugged hill and marsh. A large portion has been subdued into beauty by a constant force of eighty men, who will now be thrown out of employment.

Mr. Lockwood is a native of Norwalk, and, as fortune favored him, he sought to embellish his native town. The homestead of his parents still stands, and is tenanted by Mr. Edwin Lockwood, his uncle, who is president of both the horse railroad and the Danbury and Norwalk railroad. Mr. LeGrand Lockwood is the chief stockholder of both these enterprises. Through his able oversight, the latter has become enabled to pay ten percent dividends, and the former was initiated by him through the violent opposition of the usual mass of idiots. Mr. Lockwood also owns a large amount of surrounding lots and houses. He has not been there for several days. Himself and lady and two grown sons are in New York. The eldest son of Mr. Lockwood, bearing the same name, is married, and is now traveling in Europe. The house is in charge of a steward, and Mr. E. P. Clark, Mr. Lockwood's Attorney, is temporarily passing his nights there.

But one feeling exists in the neighborhood regarding Mr. Lockwood's habits. It is called Main street. Half way between each terminus are the gates of iron rails, which opens into the grounds of the edifice alluded to. A villa of which any one might be proud serves as a porter's lodge. It is of the same material as the main edifice. A superb perfume greets the visitor as he enters a coach house, floored with striped walnut and oak, of which seven luxurious vehicles occupy but one side. A shining maple door opens upon graceful steps with glistening coats, and a bay foal, with polished rafter, reveals the dining hall of a mediæval castle. The second stable, of similar build, harbors fat cattle and sturdy wagon horses. Two conservatories, draped with vines from the tropics, and a wealth of rare foliage, on every side, remain of grace and enduring beauty.

MARK TWAIN ON MR. BEECHER. The Rev. Henry Ward Beecher's private habits are the subject of Mark Twain's latest contribution to the Buffalo Express. The whole article is extremely funny, but that portion which relates to Mr. Beecher's farming experience is the humorist's most extravagant vein, and quite equal to his best efforts. It is as follows: "Mr. Beecher's farm consists of thirty-six acres, and is carried on strict scientific principles. He never puts in any part of a crop without consulting his book. He ploughs and reaps and digs and sows according to the best authorities—and the authorities cost more than the other farming implements do. As soon as the library is complete the farm will begin to be a profitable investment. But book farming has its drawbacks. Upon one occasion, when it seemed morally certain that the hay ought to be cut, the hay book could not be found—and before it was found it was too late and the hay was all spoiled.

"Mr. Beecher raises some of the finest crops of wheat in the country, but the unfavorable difference between the quality of his wheat and the market value of it is produced by his interfered considerably with its success as a commercial enterprise. His special weakness is hops however. He considers hops the best game the farm produces. He buys the original pig for a dollar and a half, and feeds him forty dollars' worth of corn, and then sells him for about nine dollars. This is the only crop he ever makes any money on. He loses on the corn, but he makes seven dollars and a half on the hog. He does not mind this, because he never expects to make anything on corn, anyway. And anyway it turns out, he has the excitement of raising the hog anyhow, whether he gets the worth of him or not. His strawberries would be a comfortable success if the rovin' would eat turkeys, as they would, and hence the difficulty.

"One of Mr. Beecher's most harassing difficulties in his farming operations consists of the close resemblance of different sorts of seeds and plants to each other. Two years ago his farm sightlessness warned him that there was going to be a great scarcity of water melons, and therefore he put in a crop of twenty seven acres of that fruit. But when they came up they turned out to be pumpkins, and a dead loss was the consequence. Sometimes a portion of his crop goes into the ground the most promising sweet potatoes, and comes up the infernal carrots—though I never heard him express it in just that way. When he bought his farm he found one egg in every hundred of the place. He said that here was just the reason why so many farmers failed—they scattered their forces too much—concentrated those eggs together and put them all under one experienced old hen. That hen roosted over that contract night and day for eleven weeks under the anxious supervision of Mr. Beecher's mother, and she hatched out those eggs. Why I believe they were those infernal porcelain things which are used by ingenious and fraudulent farmers as 'nest eggs.' But perhaps Mr. Beecher's most disastrous experience was the time he tried to raise an immense crop of dried apples. He planted fifteen hundred dollars' worth, but never a one of them sprouted. He has never been able to understand to this day what was the matter with those apples.

Little matters of daily occurrence are of greater importance in social life than great matters of rare occurrence; and personal behavior in trivial things is, perhaps, more anything else, productive of the greatest amount of social and domestic pleasure and pain.

An infant in Westport, Ct., died recently from poison taken. Into its stomach by sucking a green cell which the nurse had thrown over its face to keep the flies off.