

The Andrew Carnegie Of Eastern Asia

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MACAO, Dec. 6, 1900.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—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 Kwan Tung 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



LAN WING HONG.

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 celestial lord, who lives here with his servants about him.

The greater part of the inhabitants, outside of the servants, are his relatives. There are about 700 rooms in the better class houses and these are occupied by his nearest of kin. There are servants everywhere and his retinue includes all kinds of mechanics and artisans. He has hundreds of field hands, who cultivate his estates outside the wall, and it takes a large corps of men and women to keep his dwelling in order.

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 jinrikshas, two men to each riksha, 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 tillers. 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-hatted women, with their pantalets rolled up to their thighs, bent double as they waded through the liquid mud and set out the rice crop, plant by plant. Our jinrikshas crowded hollow-eyed burden bearers to the sides of the road. We went by gangs of coolies carrying buckets of slop for manure, by dead-eyed old hags loaded 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 palatial city. It ended as we passed through them, severely scrutinized by the guards at the entrance.

The city is made up of many one-story 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 seat a beautiful piece of white quartz set upon wooden legs. At the ends were walls of mirrors, in which we could see our own reflections as we walked through.

As we entered the millionaire proprietor came forward. He was 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 chatted 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 Twenty-Four Dollars 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



A FEW RELATIVES OF THE MILLIONAIRE HON QUA—IN CHINA A RICH MAN IS EXPECTED TO SUPPORT ALL OF HIS POOR KIN.

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 not bigger than an eggshell. 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 at the start 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.

We chatted awhile 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 gardens 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 grottoes of rockwork interset with mirrors, loafed 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 abler 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 Burmah and you find them doing well in every Asiatic port.

Hong Kong has its Chinese millionaires and Shanghai has scores of almond-eyed celestials with incomes ranging from \$5,000 up to ten of thousands of dollars a year. I was told in Shanghai that there were Chinese in the foreign section who were worth more than 10,000,000 taels, or more than \$7,500,000, and that they had made it all themselves.

The Compadore of our consulate is far richer than any United States consul general who has ever come to Shanghai. His income is now three times the salary of Consul General Goodnow and still he started life as a clerk and made his money in trade. Take for instance Ching Chang, who died in Shanghai the other 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 10 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 Shanghai for sale. Ching Chang invested in such property. 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 storekeeper 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 oil, and in fact everything he touched seemed to turn to gold, so that when he died he was worth millions. Starting at 10 cents a day he left an income of more than \$3,000 a week.

More than \$50,000 will be spent upon Ching Chang before he is buried. His

funeral procession just after his death cost \$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

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 walling from the women of the family and some hired mourning howlers.

The funeral was a grand one. The coffin was carried through the streets of Shanghai to the other 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 nabobs. 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 commanders had sent word that unless the Chinese would pay them \$6,000,000 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 \$100,000. In giving this money he itemized it as follows:

"I give \$800,000 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 son."

When Hou Qua died he was worth about \$50,000,000. He had vast estates, streets of houses 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.

I venture Hou Qua's wealth when he died was about 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 60 years of age, although he looks much younger. He is

(Continued on Seventh Page.)

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