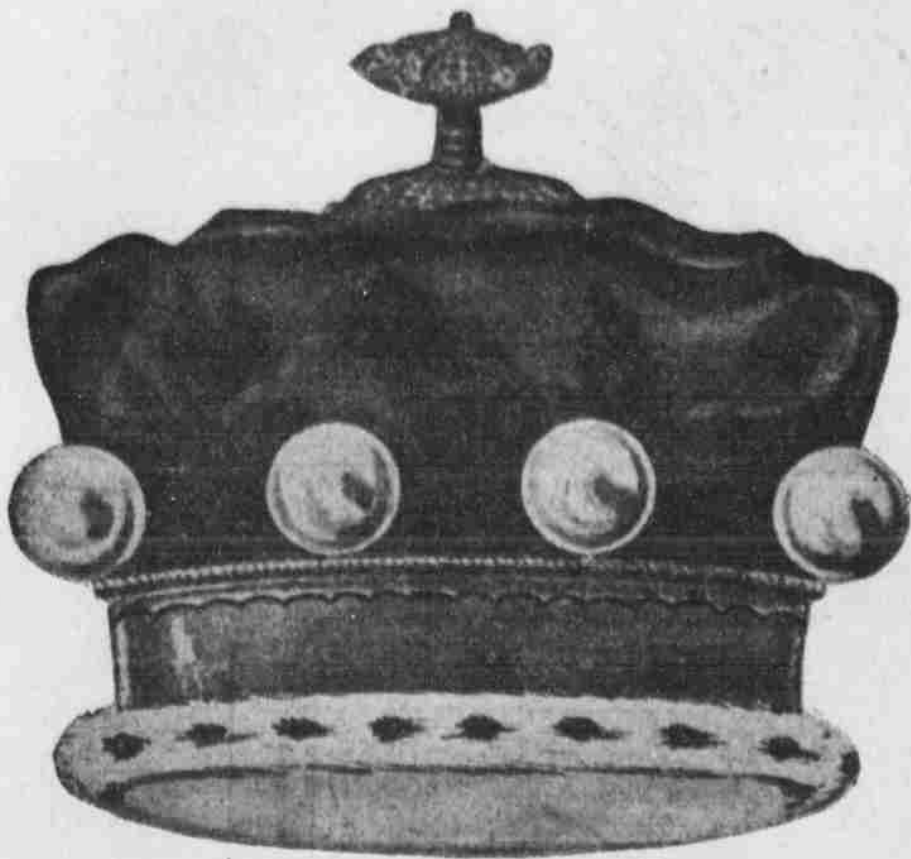


What Baron Astor's Coronet Cost Him

Blunders, Lack of Tact and Enormous Expense of the Expatriated American Millionaire in His 25-Years' Struggle to Win the Lowest Title in the British Peerage



The Coronet of Baron is a Circle of Gold with Six Silver Balls Raised Immediately Above. The Cap is of Crimson Velvet, Turned Up with Ermine with a Tassel of Gold on Top.

Enormous Sums Mr. Astor Has Paid to Obtain His Peerage

Contributions to Tory campaign funds in 25 years (estimated).....	\$3,500,000
Paid for Pall Mall Gazette, Observer and other Tory organs.....	2,500,000
Various contributions to hospitals and charities (estimated).....	1,750,000
Contributions to war relief funds.....	1,250,000
Entertaining King George and Queen Mary.....	750,000
Entertainments to influential politicians.....	750,000
Spent in entertaining the late King Edward.....	550,000
Hiring Countess to chaperon daughter.....	250,000
Retaining Tory politician to "train" oldest son in politics.....	250,000
House party to Tory political leaders.....	150,000
To Queen Alexandra's Working Men's Dinner Fund.....	50,000
GRAND TOTAL.....	\$11,750,000

Very Peculiar Things That Mr. Astor Has Done

He left America, which gives him his income, because it was "not a fit country for a gentleman to live in."
 Offended King Edward by telling him how he would entertain him, instead of asking his pleasure.
 Ordered Admiral Sir Berkeley Milne out of his London house because he came without an invitation.
 Involved himself in a ridiculous quarrel with the Duke of Westminster about the visitors' book of the house the Duke had sold him.
 Presented to England the flag of Captain Lawrence's ship, the Chesapeake, captured by the British ship Shannon in 1813.
 "Fired" his noble newspaper editors for making fun of him.
 Expressed annoyance at a story that Queen Anne Boleyn declined to haunt her old home after Mr. Astor had bought it.
 Brought a libel suit against a London newspaper for saying he was going to entertain twenty-seven friends on a section of California redwood.

WILLIAM WALDORF ASTOR, the largest owner of New York real estate, has finally obtained a peerage from the King of England, after renouncing his native country, performing the most amazing series of antics ever committed by a social climber, and after paying incomparably the largest sum of money ever paid for the honor obtained.

He has chosen for himself the title "Baron Astor of Hever Castle."

For twenty-five years the largest owner of New York real estate has been assiduously cultivating the King, Government and public of Great Britain with a view to obtaining a title, and only in this present period of acute national distress has he been able to satisfy his ambition.

Mr. Astor left the United States with the remark that it was "no country for a gentleman to live in." His disgust with this country was due, first, to his failure in a political campaign, and, secondly, to the freedom with which the American press commented on him. As a very young millionaire, he condescended to be elected to the State Legislature.

Then he ran for Congress. In consideration of his generous contributions to the party he was nominated for a safe Republican district. Politicians enjoyed his liberality and newspaper reporters had a good deal of fun with his social pretensions, all of which annoyed Mr. Astor very much. To his disgust, he was defeated.

The party tried to console him with a term as Minister to Italy, but the ingratitude of the Republic always rankled. He returned to America, and then his dignity was still more seriously affronted. His wife, now deceased, informed the postmaster at Newport that she was "the Mrs. Astor," and that all letters so addressed were to be delivered to her. The late Mrs. William Astor, who had long been the acknowledged queen of New York society, calmly informed the postmaster that she was "the Mrs. Astor."

This peculiar controversy became the subject of much humorous comment. Few people know that this was what finally disgusted Mr. W. W. Astor with America. His dignity was more offended than if he had been Czar of Russia. After putting his financial interests in order he moved permanently to London in 1891.

One of his first acts was to lease the finest house in London, Lansdowne House, whose owner was in need of ready money. Soon after that he purchased Cliveden House, on the Thames, a beautiful house and estate, whose owner, the Duke of Westminster, although the richest peer in England, felt unable to keep it.

Then Mr. Astor plunged into a career

of social conquest. Of course, he planned to win the favor of the then Prince of Wales, afterward King Edward. The Prince was very favorably disposed toward persons with large accumulations of cash, whatever their ancestry might be. Mr. Astor gave balls and entertainments which cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, and the Prince put in an appearance at one of these.

Finally he accepted an invitation to stay over night at Cliveden, a very great honor. Mr. Astor is said to have spent \$200,000 on this affair alone. He did everything with Oriental splendor, but with his customary lack of tact, he made a slip.

When entertaining royalty it is essential to find out just what they wish to do. Now, Mr. Astor planned to take the Prince in the morning for a triumphal procession on the Thames in a glorified steam launch. Sometimes the Prince liked to lie about in the morning rather than take strenuous exercise, like riding on a boat. When he heard what Mr. Astor was going to do for him, his reply—the Prince was noted for his pungent repartee—is said to have been something like this:

"What does the old bouncer mean by telling me what he is going to do with me? Tell him I'm engaged and not to be disturbed."

The Prince went away from this affair seriously ruffled, and it was long before he showed Mr. Astor any favor again.

At this early period Mr. Astor purchased the Pall Mall Gazette, a paper originally intended "to be written by gentlemen for gentlemen." It had become a popular sheet under the late W. T. Stead, and then it had rapidly declined. Mr. Astor paid a great sum for it, said to have been \$1,000,000.

He made it a high Tory organ and appointed an earl's son as editor. He established the Pall Mall Magazine, and used it in the same way to further his social ambitions.

Mr. Astor's sense of dignity and self-esteem was so great, that in spite of his desire to win favor with the nobility and ruling classes, he was constantly setting into hot water with them. He found that the earl's son on the paper had been making fun of his employer, and indignantly discharged him. A duke's son, Lord Frederick Hamilton, on the magazine, went the same way.

Then Mr. Astor simply shocked society by kicking a distinguished British naval officer, Admiral Sir Berkeley Milne, who had been commander of the royal yacht, out of his house. An English society woman, who had received an invitation to a gorgeous musicale given by Mr. Astor, asked Admiral Milne, who had not been invited, to accompany her. When Mr. Astor found that the naval officer had come with-



Exactly How William Waldorf Astor Will Look in His Baron's Robes and Coronet as "Baron Astor of Hever Castle."

out an invitation, he ordered him out of the house.

Then he had a remarkable bickering with the late Duke of Westminster. He purchased Cliveden from the Duke, with all its furniture, but after a while the Duke claimed possession of the visitors' book, with the autographs of all the royal and noble persons who had visited the place. After long and angry correspondence and threats of law suits, Mr. Astor held on to the book, although to Englishmen it seemed a personal possession of the former owner like a batch of letters.

Mr. Astor became a naturalized British subject in 1899, and after that it was notorious that he was campaigning for a peerage. He gave millions of dollars to funds approved by the King or by Tory political and social leaders. An Englishman becomes a lord through the nomination of the Prime Minister and is formally created by the King. The King does not have a free hand in creating peerages, because they affect the legislature, but he is able to give them

to a certain number of his friends. On the other hand, it would be difficult for the Government to give a peerage to a man who was obnoxious to the King. It is well known that a common way of obtaining a peerage is to make a generous contribution to the campaign fund of the party in power.

Successful English stockbrokers and manufacturers of oilcloth obtained peerages in return for contributions of \$50,000 or so, while Mr. Astor, who was spending millions, got nothing. This disappointment almost threatened his reason. The King would not think of giving him a title, and no Government had the hardhood to propose him for one. Whatever the sum paid, there is always a pretense that the title is given for some genuine public service.

Mr. Astor's quest of a title finally became a joke in England. Weekly newspapers made cartoons on the subject. One showed him as an American eagle, loaded down with money bags, in pursuit of a vanishing coronet. Labor Members of Parliament poured scorn on this "American money-bag who was seeking to undermine our free institutions."



Mrs. Waldorf Astor, Jr., the Charming Daughter-in-Law of the Baron, Who Will Some Day Be a Baroness.

Perhaps the most ungraceful, and to Americans the most repulsive, thing Mr. Astor ever did was to present the flag of the American ship Chesapeake to the British United Service Museum. The Chesapeake was captured by the British ship Shannon in 1813, during a famous fight, in which the American captain, James Lawrence, uttered his immortal

suit of a vanishing coronet. Labor Members of Parliament poured scorn on this "American money-bag who was seeking to undermine our free institutions."

To increase his social splendor Mr. Astor purchased Hever Castle, near Sevenoaks, said to be the most perfect specimen of a mediaeval dwelling in England. It was the birthplace of Anne Boleyn, King Henry VIII's beautiful and ill-fated wife No. 2. A funny story about this place began to go the rounds of English society, that annoyed Mr. Astor exceedingly. It was said that Anne Boleyn's ghost had always haunted the castle, but after Mr. Astor went there she declined to appear.

the Life Guards, the premier regiment of the British army, and proved himself a good sportsman. He has been wounded in the present war.

The title which Mr. Astor sought so long to obtain from the Tories he has at last won from a coalition Government that is mainly Liberal.

His greatest contribution of all to British funds is to pay the present income tax, which amounts to one-third of a rich man's total income. In Mr. Astor's case this is estimated to be \$1,250,000 per annum. He could have avoided all this by transferring his residence to New York. He has also given great sums to war relief funds.

The title now conferred on Mr. Astor, that of baron, is the lowest in the peerage, but it gives him a seat in the House of Lords. It entitles him to wear a scarlet velvet robe, with two rows of ermine, and a coronet surmounted with six silver balls.

His oldest son will inherit the title, and the two sons will now be known as the Hon. Waldorf Astor and the Hon. John Jacob Astor.

The Drawbridge and Moat of Hever Castle. Here Baron Astor Can Realize the Ambition of His Life—to Be a Real Baron in This Old Baronial Castle.

words. "Don't give up the ship." The flag fell into private hands in England and Mr. Astor bought it for \$4,250 and gave it to the institution named.

As Mr. Astor's children grew to maturity his social prospects in England improved. His elder son, Waldorf Astor, a presentable young man, educated at Oxford, married Mrs. Nannie Langhorne Shaw, one of the famously beautiful Langhorne sisters of Virginia. She has become very popular in the smartest English society. She helped her husband to win his election to the House of Commons for Plymouth.

The second son, John Jacob Astor, became an officer of