

## CHAPTER III

### HOW OUR PRINCES LIVE

Do not those whom we may call Princes of Privilege live with much of the circumstance of princely wealth? It may be answered that their sumptuous style of living outdoes that of many princes born to the purple, making startlingly apparent to the stranger the wide breach existing between them and great multitudes in the Republic who are beset by want or the fear of it.

Take, for example, the New York residence of the late Mr. William C. Whitney. This noble pile of brownstone stands at the corner of Sixty-eighth Street and Fifth Avenue, opposite Central Park. It was sold after Mr. Whitney's death to Mr. James Henry Smith for \$2,000,000, which was thought to be a very low price, considering the large sums Mr. Whitney had first and last spent upon it. Beginning with its bronze entrance gates, which came from the Doria Palace at Rome, it is declared by connoisseurs to be a better object-lesson for a student of Italian decoration than any museum in America, and in some ways a better specimen of a palace of the days of Alexander VI and Leonardo than can be found in Italy. One of the many masterpieces that graced the walls of this superb residence during Mr. Whitney's lifetime was a Vandyke portrait for which, it was reported, \$120,000 had been paid.

A little north of the Whitney house on Fifth Avenue a still larger palace is being completed. It is the residence of Mr. William A. Clark, the Montana and Arizona cop-

per king, who is also United States Senator from Montana. The ambition of Senator Clark respecting his house may be measured by the corner-stone, which weighs sixteen tons. This stone had to be brought from the quarry in a specially built railroad car. A single mantel-piece is expected to cost \$100,000. Impatient at delay in getting bronze fittings and ornaments, a famous foundry was purchased and enlarged specially to meet the needs of this splendid house, which also is to contain a theater capable of seating five hundred persons.

We might describe palace after palace of our Princes of Privilege that for a couple of miles stud Fifth Avenue as thickly as the sumptuous residences of the nobles graced the undulations of the Palatine Hill in Rome before the imperial régime made it the sole abode of the Emperors. Yet magnificent residences are not confined to Fifth Avenue by any means. We find, for instance, the splendid habitation of Mr. Charles M. Schwab, the steel and shipyard prince, rising in the center of a square block at Seventy-third Street and Riverside Drive. The exterior of this building is of the French château mixed Gothic and Renaissance style preceding 1550. It is modeled after the celebrated châteaux of Chenonceaux, Blois and Azay-le-Ridou. When completely finished, this residence of an American citizen, who twenty-five years ago started with nothing, may cost not far from \$7,000,000.

So might we pass these palaces in review. If different in detail, they bear common testimony to splendor and vast wealth. They represent all that architectural and mechanical genius and decorative art of our time can supply. More than that, the treasures of ancient European palaces have been laid under contribution for marbles, brasses, bronzes, carved woods, tapestries, paintings and an infinite variety of lesser ornaments.

From New York we might turn to many other cities of the country and find palatial abodes of Princes of Privilege. Nor would this include all. It is not in the cities

alone that we may behold a style of living undreamed of by the founders of the Republic, in marked contrast to the homes of the body of the citizens, and outrivaling as a whole the coroneted aristocracy of any country in the world. We have out-of-town houses and country seats more sumptuous than Roman rural villas in the proudest days of the imperial despotism, more splendid than the feudal abodes in the full flower of the old nobility of France.

For a century the eastern end of Long Island lay thinly dotted with sleepy little rustic villages. The last ten or fifteen years have seen a striking change. Long stretches of both the north and south shores have been acquired by rich owners, who have erected magnificent country seats, surrounding them by woods and landscape gardens.

One of these seats is "Harbor Hill," at Roslyn, on the north shore. It is the out-of-town home of Mr. Clarence H. Mackay, son and heir of the late Mr. John W. Mackay. Following the ancient propensity of the very rich to exhibit their affluence in the name of charity, Mrs. Mackay not long since opened her stately house for a benevolent bazaar. A multitude attended. The inquisitive peered at the fine building and its rare and costly fittings much as tourists in Europe visit and inspect the present and past abodes of royalty. In the half-million dollar drawing-room they may have beheld the much talked of Zarn portrait of the young and comely mistress of the mansion, who, because she for a time had a fancy to use violet note-paper in her large social correspondence, was shocked at the contrast of red two-cent postage stamps, and hence used only three-cent stamps, which are of harmonious violet hue.

A home of similar princely order, but of far different architectural style, is that of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Gould on the north shore of Sands Point. It is called "Castlegould." It suggests the twelfth century Kilkenny Castle in Ireland, but will be, when finished, much larger and

furnished beyond all comparison. The two hundred servants of this great establishment have the anomalous American distinction of wearing livery.

From Long Island we might pass to Yonkers, a few miles north of New York, and get a glimpse of Mr. William Rockefeller's house and estate; to North Carolina, to see Mr. George W. Vanderbilt's mountain palace, "Biltmore"; to Newport with its splendid mansions; to Lenox and Tuxedo with their million-dollar "cottages." But perhaps more interesting than any of these is Mr. George J. Gould's "Georgian Court," at Lakewood, N. J.

"Georgian Court" is like a French château of the ancient régime set down in pine woods. Before the building is a high, ornate iron fence and a beautiful lawn, which together set off the imposing façade to perfection. Beyond the château is a huge casino for indoor sports. Grouped picturesquely about are other dependent buildings and open tennis and polo grounds.

This "out-of-town house" contains a private theater, replete with the fittings of the finest public theaters, and an inclosed swimming pool. It also contains more than one hundred and ten sleeping suites. One of the noblest art treasures of the mansion is the MacMonnies fountain, with its great white marble basin and bronze and marble group, the whole let into a beautiful, velvet-like lawn. The interior of the house is the acme of luxury. Bronzes, brasses, marbles, tapestries, mosaics, rugs, glorious natural woods, paint that rivals ivory, ceiling canvases by Italian masters and miniatures studded with precious stones, — these and a thousand other things greet the eye in a profusion of richness. They stun the mind when it realizes that this is not the palace of an Oriental monarch or of a sultan of the Arabian Nights' Tales, but the abode of an American citizen.

Perhaps the most dazzling feature of "Georgian Court" is the Golden Corridor. As much as double or treble the yearly wages of the average anthracite coal miner in

Pennsylvania appears to be laid in gold leaf on a single door.

Another type of the palatial country house is that of Mr. Matheson in the little Pennsylvania town of Ambler, where the great mansion is surrounded by a swarm of smaller buildings. There also arises, in a picturesque position, a beautiful Protestant Episcopal church, with a magnificent array of stained-glass windows. Every stone and beam and nail in this house of worship was paid for by the lord of the manor.

Yet a different example of princely habitation is the hunting lodge of Mr. William Rockefeller, in the Adirondack Mountains, in the northern part of New York State. Mr. Rockefeller has a hunting estate of 53,000 acres in this region. He has, with the aid of a number of game-keepers and after several protracted suits in the courts, twice going to the Appellate division of the Supreme Court, excluded the old-time dwellers in those mountains from the exercise of what they considered their prescriptive rights of hunting and fishing on lands and in streams now constituting parts of his great preserves. There are various other large private game parks in the Adirondacks, the most extensive of which is the 70,000-acre Whitney estate for moose, elk and buffalo, as well as for pheasants, grouse and partridges. This private game preserve, exceeding a hundred square miles in area, is about five times the extent of Manhattan Island.

Or if the desire is to travel, witness the luxury by land and sea! Most of the very rich have their private cars. Mr. W. K. Vanderbilt spent \$50,000 on his. Of the large American yachting fleet there are several boats which have cost, individually, from one half to three quarters of a million to build, and probably cost more than \$5000 a month to run. A yachting expert estimates that there has been an expenditure of \$44,000,000 in yachts in this country, while approximately \$8,000,000 is spent annually in running them.

And as with the splendid habitations of the princes living, so with those of princes dead. Note the simple and impressive Vanderbilt tomb at New Dorp, Staten Island; the Rockefeller tomb at Cleveland, Ohio, overlooking Lake Erie; the Mackay tomb on Ocean Hill, in Greenwood, Brooklyn. A man ever watches the latter, lest graveyard vampires steal away the poor dead bodies to demand ransom from the living relatives, as was done with the body of the dead merchant prince, Mr. A. T. Stewart, from the graveyard of St. Mark's church, New York City. Massed granite and riveted steel, polished porphyry, glistening onyx, chiseled marble, molded bronze, embossed brass and glass stained with a myriad hues combine in durability and art in these habitations of our Princes of Power. Parsimony stays not the hand of expense. One window from the tomb of the railroad prince Lamont — a marvel of richness and beauty — would go far toward meeting the arrears of house rent, for non-payment of which 20,000 evictions occur on the average each year in the Borough of Manhattan, New York City!

Thus our princes are surrounded by monuments of their great wealth even to the grave.

How can this run with the current of common thought and action? Just as privilege is not normal, so the pre-eminence to which it raises its owners is not normal. Indeed, there is something abnormal about the lives of the owners of privilege at every turn, to wit: One multi-millionaire has a telephone at his bedside, and before rising each morning he receives from his office all important telegrams and cable messages, and gives preliminary orders and directions. He is the veriest slave to business. Another lives like an outlawed man. He seldom ventures upon the streets unless closely followed by protecting detectives. Another prefers hotel residence to that of a private house. But he changes his hotel frequently, lest his address become generally known, and

he be beset by beggars and petitioners. This kind of pestering and badgering engenders at times an almost incredible hardness of heart and meanness of spirit. So far have the springs of generosity been dried up in one of our richest and widest-known princes, that he threatened ruinous proceedings against a poor, struggling, lifelong friend in order to compel that friend to make summary payment of \$80 remaining on a personal loan of \$300 from the prince.

Other of our superabundantly rich have opposite propensities for ostentatious public gifts, one having a penchant for erecting innumerable library buildings with his name inscribed thereon. From his reference in speeches and writings to the Roman patron of letters, it is obvious that Mr. Carnegie would like to be regarded as the English-speaking Mæcenas of this age.<sup>1</sup> And how many of our citizen-princes have built churches or contributed largely toward the building or the maintenance of them!

A type suggesting the style of the Florentine prince of the Middle Ages, Cosimo de' Medici, or of his grandson, Lorenzo the Magnificent, who was patron of Greek learning and of the liberal arts, is Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan. He is president of the corporation of the Metropolitan Museum of Arts of New York, and has long loaned to that finest permanent public exhibition on the western hemisphere splendid collections of porcelains and various canvases by the Dutch and Italian masters. The American Museum of Natural History in New York likewise is enriched by a splendid Morgan collection of precious stones, so valuable as to require special inclos-

<sup>1</sup> In an address at the dedication of the new library building of Beloit College, Wisconsin, on January 5, 1905, Mr. Horace White said, using figures supplied by Mr. Bertram, Mr. Carnegie's private secretary, that Mr. Carnegie had up to that time given, or pledged himself to give, 1290 libraries to the English-speaking people. Of these 779 are in the United States. The aggregate cost of these buildings was \$39,325,240, of which \$29,094,080 were spent in this country, about \$6,000,000 in England, about \$2,000,000 in Scotland and \$1,475,500 in Canada.

ure and the presence of an attendant. These are but part of Mr. Morgan's art treasures. Much of his diversion from Wall and Lombard Street affairs is found in collecting paintings, tapestries, porcelains, chinas, first prints and other kinds of antiques. Judges of such matters have expressed the belief that he owns art treasures worth between ten and fifteen millions. He has one set of Dickens's works valued at \$130,000; the manuscript of Book I. of Milton's "Paradise Lost," valued at \$25,000; the Mazarin Tapestry, valued at \$500,000; and in bringing some fine china through the custom-house, he is said to have placed a value of \$10,000 on a single plate. A newspaper cable message not long since announced that Mr. Morgan had vainly offered \$400,000 for the single Rembrandt canvas of "Saul and David," which is part of the Mauritshuis collection at The Hague.

Mr. Morgan is accounted an art lover, and to some extent is esteemed an expert. This cannot be said of all who buy masterpieces, however. The competition among our Princes of Privilege has been one of the main factors in the extraordinary rise in value of masterpieces in recent years. To have a number of masterpieces in one's gallery is the fashion, whether the art in them be appreciated by the owner or not. Hence demand for them at any price. Men raised to great power through privilege pay a king's ransom for the right to hang upon their walls a few square feet, or even inches, of canvas covered with pigments, which may mean nothing to them as art, but will serve as an ensign of their power.

With others the sign of power is to be revealed only through the luxury of the table. And where cannot expense there lead? The cost of mere menu at a single formal dinner may be \$50 or \$100 a plate, with wines and cigars mounting to fanciful figures. The cloth covering the board may be of lace, many of the dishes of solid gold, and the orchids alone used in the floral decorations cost as much as the Republic pays a Congressman



for a year's services. The striving for novelty entails much expense. A hostess may offer her guests peaches and apples artificially sun-marked with her monogram; muskmelons raised in slings; grapes ripened in bags; tomatoes cut from vines, the roots of which have grown potatoes. Though it be the dead of winter, she may have growing strawberry plants, or dwarfed cherry trees, amid flowers and ferns, as the centerpiece of her table, each guest picking the ripe fruit at pleasure.

When he was worth sixty or seventy millions, Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt related with pride to a friend that his household establishment did not cost him \$10,000 a year. Would \$10,000 pay a year's salaries of the chef and kitchen force of the commodore's great-grandson, Mr. Alfred Gwynn Vanderbilt?

There may be ambition among the ultra-rich to shine with particular luster in other ways, as, for instance, through social functions. At one of these — the Leiter ball at Washington — the jewels worn were roundly valued at \$15,000,000. What could be closer to regal pomp than the marriage ceremony of Miss Elsie French to Mr. Alfred G. Vanderbilt, or the more recent Goelet-Whelen nuptials? A peculiar feature at one of the later great weddings, indicating — what shall we say, craving for display? — was the exhibition, among the gifts, of the bride's exquisite lingerie!

If "apparel makes the man," then are our rich very kings and queens and princelings. A young New Yorker, now taking up his permanent residence in Great Britain, spent, by common report, \$40,000 on a wedding outfit. Mr. Cleveland Moffett estimates that there are 6000 women in New York who spend yearly something more than \$6000 each on their bodily garments, making an aggregate of close to \$36,000,000 per annum!

I am not condemning great private riches as riches, nor do I wish for a moment to be thought to censure the in some respects commendable use of them. I refer to

the enormous sums spent by individuals in architecture, literature, the arts and in other ways merely to point to the great distance the nation has traveled since, less than a century and a quarter ago, John Hancock won the deep disfavor of many in New England for his "show and extravagance of living."<sup>1</sup> But what did it all amount to — his French and English furniture, his equipages, his clothes, his wines, his dinners, his gay company, his parties, his dances, his musicals and his other festivities? Great as the expense of all this may have seemed then, it is doubtful if Hancock's average yearly expenses equaled half the sum our contemporary, young Mr. James H. Hyde, spent on the single "Louis XV Revel," and for that matter it is likely that the whole of Hancock's fortune did not equal the sum spent by young Mr. Howard Gould on his stone cow house, and his stone chicken house!

Things have, indeed, changed! The earth must now be ransacked for fabrics with which to clothe some of the daughters of the Republic; whereas Martha Washington, when her husband was President of the nation, wore gowns spun under her own roof.

<sup>1</sup> In "John Hancock, His Book," by A. E. Brown, p. 203, will be seen a letter from Hancock to the lady he was about to marry, Miss Dorothy Quincy. The letter is dated Philadelphia, June 10, 1775, and enumerates some articles he is sending her. Imagine a "showy" rich young man of our time confining himself to this simplicity toward his affianced: —

" 2 pairs white silk	} Stockings, which I think will fit you.
" 4 prs. white thread	
" 1 pr. black satin	} shoes; the other shall be sent when done.
" 1 pr. black Calem Co.	
" 1 very pretty light hat.	
" 1 neat airy summer cloak.	
" 2 caps.	
" 1 fan.	

"I wish these may please you. I shall be gratified if they do. Pray write me. I will attend to all your commands."