I

Golden Dynasties and Their Treasures

The United States is owned and dominated today by a hierarchy of its sixty richest families, buttressed by no more than ninety families of lesser wealth. Outside this plutocratic circle there are perhaps three hundred and fifty other families, less defined in development and in wealth, but accounting for most of the incomes of $100,000 or more that do not accrue to members of the inner circle.

These families are the living center of the modern industrial oligarchy which dominates the United States, functioning discreetly under a de jure democratic form of government behind which a de facto government, absolutist and plutocratic in its lineaments, has gradually taken form since the Civil War. This de facto government is actually the government of the United States—informal, invisible, shadowy. It is the government of money in a dollar democracy.

Our concern is mainly with the sixty families, although from time to time members of the surrounding ninety odd will enter the narrative. Under their acquisitive fingers, and in their possession, the sixty families hold the richest nation ever fashioned in the workshop of history. The whole long procession of states, nations, and empires that strained and sweated up to the threshold of the Industrial Revolution amassed much less material wealth than the United States alone possesses. The vaunted Roman Empire, for example, could be placed in the land area west of the Mississippi, with room to spare; all Europe is, indeed, only slightly larger than is the United States.

Bigness alone, however, means little; China, too, is very big. But in the economically decisive requisites of accumulated capital and equipment, technical knowledge and facilities, natural resources and man power, the United States is unique. Yet most of its people are,
paradoxically, very poor; most of them own nothing beyond a few sticks of furniture and the clothes on their backs.

The outstanding American proprietors of today tower historically over the proud aristocracy that surrounded Louis XIV, Czar Nicholas, Kaiser Wilhelm, and the Emperor Franz Joseph, and wield vastly greater power. The might of Cardinal Richelieu, Metternich, Bismarck, or Disraeli was no greater than that of private citizens, undistinguished by titles, like J. P. Morgan, Andrew W. Mellon, John D. Rockefeller, Henry Ford, and the Du Ponts. It was essentially the decision of these latter and their political deputies (so far as a single decision carried weight after the initial lines were drawn) that dictated the outcome of the World War, the greatest armed conflict in all history. Napoleon could have done no more.

The war, which raised wealthy Americans to the pinnacle of world power, obliterated huge sections of Europe's master class, and set other sections adrift. In Germany and Austria-Hungary the dominant élite of wealth—landowners, bankers, and industrialists—were virtually pauperized overnight. In France and England, seriously weakened, increasingly timorous, they staggered under tax burdens, and even yet are bedeviled by grave problems upon whose tranquil solution depends their future well-being. In Russia they were simply annihilated.

Of the world's wealthy ruling classes, those of America and England alone retain the full substance, as well as the insignia and panoply, of wealth and power. Alone do they still speak confidently and act decisively for themselves, not driven to utilize bizarre intermediaries like a Hitler, a Mussolini, or a Mikado to hypnotize the multitude; they are not challenged, as in France, by powerful domestic political coalitions of the economically disfranchised. This fortunate situation is, perhaps, purely temporary; it may be undermined by the next general war.

Instead of decreasing in wealth and power during the crisis of 1929–1933 America's sixty richest families were actually strengthened in relation to the hordes of citizens reduced to beggary. And even though many people have since been lifted from extreme low economic levels by some restoration of employment, the grotesque, basic inequalities, issuing from no fundamental differences in skill or
merit, remain as great as ever. Paralleling re-employment, which has reduced the aggregate of joblessness from about twenty million in 1932 to about ten million in 1937, fantastic dividend and interest payments have been automatically returned to the top income group, which at its maximum comprises no more than six thousand adults.

The United States, it is apparent even to the blind, is a nightmare of contradictions. It has not only nurtured the wealthiest class history has ever known, but it has also spawned an immense, possibly permanent, army of paupers—the unemployed. One naturally expects to find millions of impoverished in backward economies such as India, China, Japan, or czarist Russia. In the advanced economic and cultural environment of North America, with all its natural resources, the phenomenon is little short of incredible. In the light of the nation's professed ideals it is tragically absurd.

The situation, for which the people themselves are in great measure to blame, is skilfully glossed over and colored by cunning apologists in press and pulpit, school and legislative hall. These briefly triumphant marionettes are able to show, to their own and to their patrons' satisfaction, that great wealth was garnered while society was being served in oblique and mysterious fashions; that it has been so administered, by ostensibly high-minded heirs of the early economic freebooters, as to constitute a great stimulus to social progress. The outstanding example of such a social servitor is presented in John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

Although editorial writers nourish such illusions with carefree abandon, the more realistic of the magnates have seldom seen themselves in other than a predatory role, even though they have admitted this only privately. The elder J. P. Morgan delighted, it is said, jestingly to trace his ancestry back to Henry Morgan, the seventeenth-century Caribbean pirate; in token of this he named his yacht the Corsair and painted it an anarchistic black. This gave rise to the whispered legend in Wall Street that on the high seas J. P. Morgan flew the skull and crossbones and placed the American flag in a secondary position. The present J. P. Morgan has retained the name of the Corsair for his black-painted private transatlantic steam yacht, but the Wall Street myth spinners aver, with a nice feeling for dis-
tinctions, that he flies the Union Jack followed, respectively, by the Jolly Roger and the Stars and Stripes.

The name of Rockefeller has come to be associated in the public mind, thanks to the magic of sedulously controlled publicity, with the giving of money. What merit there is in this reputation we shall explore later, but at the moment we may recall that the present John D. Rockefeller, by accident of birth, is the richest man in the world. His family, too, is the richest, closely approached in wealth only by the Mitsui family of Japan and the Ford family of America.

Rockefeller's Federal tax for the normal * year of 1924 was $6,279,669, indicating a taxable income of $15,000,000. This last represented five per cent on capital of $300,000,000, or less than one-third of the fortune conceded by Wall Street authorities to be under his control. The Rockefellers, however, have vast sums concentrated in tax-exempt securities, notably in New York State and City bonds, and systematically obtain tax reductions by a policy of non-commercial investment, i.e., "philanthropy." On the basis of capital of about $1,000,000,000 under his ownership (exclusive of "philanthropic" funds under his control, which retain for him a large measure of influence in corporate, philanthropic, and educational affairs), the personal income of Mr. Rockefeller in 1924 may have been $30,000,000 to $50,000,000.

The annual revenue of the late Czar of Russia varied from only $10,000,000 to $12,000,000, little of which he could utilize at his discretion owing to the convention that he support his many relatives and maintain in traditional splendor his collection of palaces.¹ And, like Mr. Rockefeller, he was a conspicuous and publicly heralded "philanthropist."

The estate of Queen Victoria of England, much of it London slum real estate, was valued at £9,000,000 (about $45,000,000), and some or most of this now belongs to the King, producing an income of about $2,225,000 provided the original capital has not been increased by compounding of earnings.² From the Duchy of Lancaster the King annually receives £85,000 ($425,000) and from the Civil List, authorized by Parliament from the public revenues, about £370,000 ($1,850,000).³ At most the income of the King is $4,500,000, and a

* See note 7, chapter II.
portion of what he receives from the Civil List is earmarked in advance for royal charities. The public treasury, in brief, supplies him with the means with which to bestow alms. But his is no more peculiar than the position of Mr. Rockefeller, who is able to pose as an altruist and benefactor of mankind because the law permits him to exploit for personal profit the nation’s petroleum resources and forces of production.

Europe’s wealthiest aristocrat until the World War was the Archduke Frederick of Austria, whose estate before 1914 was valued as high as $750,000,000. But no Europeans or Asiatics have ever been so wealthy as the Rockefeller, Ford, Harkness, Vanderbilt, Mellon, and Du Pont families of America.

Whenever a figure like the elder Rockefeller dies newspaper writers compare his wealth with that of certain Indian princes, said to be fabulously rich. In contrast with the American millionaires the Indian princes, however, are mere paupers. Their wealth is frozen in jewels and land, and cannot be readily liquidated or transferred into other vehicles; moreover, their society does not utilize on a large scale the wealth-producing technology of the West. But the securities of the American millionaires can be exchanged in a flash for any currency in the world, for land, for other stocks and bonds. The wealth of the Indian princes is immobile, static; the wealth of their American counterparts is mobile, dynamic. In the money markets of the world the feudal wealth of the Indian princes is of no consequence.

The uprush of the American fortunes, led by the monolithic Rockefeller accumulation, emphasizes that although the United States was once a great political democracy it has not remained one. Citizens may still be equals at the polls, where little is decided; but they are not equals at the bank tellers’ wickets, where much is decided. The United States has produced, in the Standard Oil Company, the Aluminum Company of America, E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company, the Ford Motor Company, and other industrial enterprises, what are essentially feudal, dictatorially ruled, dynastic fiefs that make the old crown properties of Romanovs, Hohenzollerns, Hapsburgs, and Hanovers seem, by comparison, like will-o’-the-wisps, insecure and insubstantial.
II

Concentration of industrial and financial control in the capacious hands of the wealthy—by means of majority ownership, legal device, and diffusion of fractional and disfranchised ownership among thousands of impotent stockholders, bondholders, insurance policyholders, and bank depositors—has been given close, authoritative study from various approaches. But concentration of control has also come about by more simple and obvious processes that have been largely ignored, perhaps because of the absence of technical intricacies to challenge the research specialist, perhaps because the very lack of historical novelty in the processes has allowed them to pass by virtually unnoticed.

Without minimizing the significance of control by the dominant owning clique through corporate devices, it is nevertheless true that corporations are merely the instruments or tools of control behind which the living masters hide in discreet anonymity. The corporations do not represent the locus of control, nor do they, even when viewed synoptically as in the valuable Rochester and Laidler studies, reveal the full extent of control and concentration by a small group working through partnerships.

The control points of private wealth in industrial capitalistic society, as in feudal society, remain the partnership, the family, and the family alliance. It is the family that, in almost all cases, guides the banks and the banking partnerships which, as Anna Rochester shows, control the corporations.

The family today, in no slighter degree than two or three centuries ago or in imperial Rome, is supreme in the governance of wealth—amassing it, standing watch over it, and keeping it intact from generation to generation. Because it is (unlike that relatively new device, the corporation) a private entity which in the strictest legality may resist public scrutiny, the family lends itself admirably to alliances of a formal character and serves as an instrument for confidential financial transactions. By definition the family is a sacrosanct institution, and no agency of government may pry into it without offending inculcated prejudice. The partnership, it is true, offers some refuge, and is certainly more of a private affair than is the
corporation; but it, too, is now quite open to political inquiry. The
family alone provides a safe retreat from democratic processes, not
outside the law, but, for practical financial purposes, above the law.

III

For many decades American families of great wealth have been
immeasurably and steadily reinforced by scores of marriages among
their members. The joint fortunes have been passed on to children
who themselves paired off with the progeny of other wealthy unions.
There has also been much marriage between European and Ameri-
can ruling class families, but this has been less meaningful socially,
politically, and economically than the unions of American millionaires with each other, for the Europeans, mostly impoverished
noblemen, have only in a few cases brought an increase in fortune
to their American partners. The chief assets of the Europeans have
been hereditary titles, leisure-class manners, perhaps a shabby estate
or two, and passports into the world of snobbery. American dollars
have served very concretely, however, to re-establish, via marriage,
hundreds of decadent European estates, an ironic contribution of
American democracy to the peoples of Europe; Gustavus Myers
estimated in 1909 that five hundred such marriages had taken place.
By now the aggregate is easily six or eight times as great.

Marriages between wealthy Americans have, by all odds, been
the more significant. Any tendency toward dispersal of great wealth
that might be expected from its supposed distribution among numerous offspring of unions between rich and poor has been more than
offset by the actual marriage of wealth with wealth. The wealthiest
Americans, with few exceptions, are already joined by a multiplicity
of family ties, just as they are joined by interlocking directorates and
mutual participations in economic and social undertakings. The
“community of interest” of the rich to which the elder J. P. Morgan
made profound public obeisance has become, to a startling degree,
a joint family interest.

The continuation of intermarriage among millionaire families
will, other factors remaining unchanged, in a generation or two give
rise to a situation wherein all the big American proprietors will be
blood relatives—first, second, or third cousins. Already there are
many persons with the blood of the Rockefellers, Stillmans, and Vanderbilts, and of the Harknesses, Whitneys, Paynes, and Stillmans. There are others with the blue blood of Europe blended in their veins with the blood of John D. Rockefeller, Sr., of John Jacob Astor I, of Cornelius Vanderbilt I, of Marshall Field, of E. H. Mannville, and of many more of their class.

The Rockefellers have contracted numerous marriages of financial import. Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., is the daughter of the late Senator Nelson W. Aldrich, wealthy Rhode Island merchant and public utilities lord. Winthrop W. Aldrich, her brother, is thus the brother-in-law of Rockefeller. That such an alliance has economic and financial signification is attested by the strategic presence of Aldrich as chairman of the Rockefeller-controlled Chase National Bank, largest banking institution in the country. The grandparents of the junior Rockefeller's children are the deceased senior Rockefeller and the late Senator Aldrich, who in his day was successively the legislative "whip" of first the Morgan and then the Rockefeller factions in the United States Senate.

Isabel G. Stillman, daughter of James Stillman, became Mrs. Percy A. Rockefeller and S. Elsie Stillman became Mrs. William G. Rockefeller. Thus was biologically cemented the financial alliance that existed between William Rockefeller, brother of John D., and the ruler of the National City Bank of New York. Geraldine Stillman Rockefeller became Mrs. Marcellus Hartley Dodge, linking the Rockefellers and Stillmans by marriage to the $50,000,000 fortune garnered by the Remington Arms Company in the Civil War and by the Phelps Dodge Corporation in later years. J. Stillman Rockefeller, son of William G. Rockefeller and grandnephew of John D. Rockefeller, married Nancy C. S. Carnegie, grandniece of Andrew Carnegie; in 1930 a son born of this union was named Andrew Carnegie Rockefeller.

Edith Rockefeller, sister of Rockefeller, Jr., married Harold F. McCormick, heir to an International Harvester Company fortune. Their son, Fowler, a grandson of Rockefeller, Sr., and Cyrus H. McCormick, inventor of the reaper, more recently married Fifi Stillman, divorced wife of James A. Stillman and mother of Mrs. Henry P. Davison, Jr., the wife of a current Morgan partner. Nelson
A. Rockefeller, son of Rockefeller, Jr., married a daughter of G. B. Roberts, former president of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Emma, daughter of William G. Rockefeller and Elsie Stillman Rockefeller, married David Hunter McAlpin. Their son, William Rockefeller McAlpin, more recently married Marion Angell, daughter of the president emeritus of Yale University.

These are only a few examples of the interlocking of the Rockefellers with families of wealth; some Rockefeller marriages, to be sure, have taken place outside of the pecuniary circle. The rich families with which the Rockefellers have interlocked in turn have been interlocked by marriages with other wealthy families, so that one can trace an almost unbroken line of biological relationships from the Rockefellers through one-half of the wealthiest sixty families of the nation. Mary E. Stillman, for example, became Mrs. Edward S. Harkness (Standard Oil). Anne Stillman is, as we have observed, Mrs. Henry P. Davison, Jr. The Stillmans also married into the Pratt (Standard Oil) family.

The powerful Whitneys, partners with the Rockefellers, the Harknesses, and the Pratts in the original Standard Oil Trust, likewise fused their wealth with wealth by marriage. William C. Whitney, lieutenant of the elder Rockefeller, married Flora Payne, heiress to the fortune of another Rockefeller partner. The Harknesses and Flaglers (Standard Oil) were likewise joined by marriage, and the reigning head of this Standard Oil line is Harry Harkness Flagler.

An examination of Vanderbilt marriages discloses the same drift. A Vanderbilt married Virginia Fair, daughter of Senator James Fair of California, thus bringing the Fair accumulation, based upon the fabulous Ophir silver mine, into the Vanderbilt orbit. James Watson Webb, descendant of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, married Electra Havemeyer (American Sugar Refining Company), who is now Electra H. Webb and reputed one of the wealthiest women in America. A daughter of Cornelius Vanderbilt II became Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, wife of a Standard Oil princeling, and a daughter of William Henry Vanderbilt married Hamilton McKay Twombly; upon her husband's death she, too, became one of America's wealthiest women.

These dynastic alliances are so numerous, and intertwine at so
many points with one another, that to survey them all would turn this into a genealogical study. Among various of the many dynastic marriages that have consolidated the winnings of the original robber barons of America we may briefly note, however, those that brought Mary L. Duke, heiress to the tobacco fortune, into the Biddle family, as Mrs. Anthony Drexel Biddle, while her brother married Biddle's sister; Lillie Harriman into the Havemeyer family and Cornelia Harriman into the Gerry family; Marjorie G. Gould into the Drexel family; a granddaughter of George F. Baker into the Schiff family; a Deering (International Harvester Company) into the McCormick family (International Harvester); Ruth Hanna (coal, iron, and steel) into the McCormick family; Doris Duke into the Stotesbury circle by marriage to James H. R. Cromwell, former husband of Delphine Dodge (automobiles) and son of Mrs. E. T. Stotesbury, wife of the senior Morgan partner in Philadelphia; Margaret Mellon into the Laughlin (steel) family; Marjorie Post (Postum) and Edna Woolworth (5-and-10 cent stores) into the Hutton family, and so on.

The marriage of wealth with wealth has gone a good deal farther even than these citations indicate. Selecting at random from the past fifteen years we find that Gilbert W. Kahn, son of Otto H. Kahn, married a daughter of George Whelan, head of the United Cigar Stores; Mrs. Edith Stuyvesant Vanderbilt, widow of George W. Vanderbilt, married the wealthy Peter Goelet Gerry, of Rhode Island, himself the offspring of two big fortunes; Mrs. Rachel Littleton Vanderbilt, half sister of Martin W. Littleton, corporation attorney, and divorced wife of Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr., married Jasper Morgan, nephew of J. P. Morgan; Margaret D. Kahn, daughter of Otto Kahn, married John Barry Ryan, Jr., grandson of Thomas Fortune Ryan; Margaret Carnegie Perkins, grandniece of Andrew Carnegie, married John Speer Laughlin, of the Jones and Laughlin steel dynasty; Esther du Pont, daughter of Lammot du Pont, married Campbell Weir (steel); W. A. Harriman, son of E. H. Harriman, married Marie Norton Whitney, divorced wife of Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney, who is the son of Harry Payne Whitney.

In only a few cases do great fortunes appear to have been reared initially upon a dynastic basis. One such general accumulation is centered about the banking house of Kuhn, Loeb and Company,
founded in the middle of the nineteenth century as a mercantile organization by Abraham Kuhn and Solomon Loeb. Jacob H. Schiff came from Germany, married Teresa, Loeb's daughter, and induced the partners to set up in Wall Street as a private bank. Paul M. Warburg, of a Hamburg German-Jewish banking house, also came to this country, became a partner, and married Nina J. Loeb. Felix M. Warburg, his brother, married Frieda Schiff, and the dissimilar strains of the original partners were mingled through the Warburgs, whose spokesman today is the politically aggressive James P. Warburg, son of Paul M. Warburg and Nina J. Loeb, and cousin of the surviving Schiffs. Otto H. Kahn, a partner, married Addie Wolff, daughter of another early partner.

In later years the Warburg-Kuhn-Loeb-Schiff-Kahn dynasty has been linked in marriage, as we have noted, to the huge George F. Baker and Thomas Fortune Ryan accumulations, which are in turn linked by marriage to other notable fortunes.

Except for the early Standard Oil intermarriages, there has thus far been little intermarriage among the principal heirs of the largest fortunes, and in only a few cases do marriages of convenience appear to have taken place. A sound psychological reason for the marriage of wealth with wealth is simply that the rich are suspicious, when it comes to contracting marriage, of the motives of those who are not rich. They are afraid of fortune-hunters, and properly so, for there have been many cases in which outsiders have obtained legal claims to the family funds through marriage and have grossly abused their rights.

Propinquity has also led to the marriage of wealthy couples, for few persons of wealth maintain social relationships with the non-wealthy. But, whatever the reason, the great fortunes are interlinked by marriage, no less than by common property holdings, so that it is quite arbitrary in many cases to speak of a person as representing a single fortune.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, stung by the diatribes of newspapers owned or controlled by men of wealth, irately referred in 1936 to these men, in a figurative sense, as "economic royalists." But it is in a strictly literal sense that hundreds of the offspring of the wealthy families are members of nobility or royalty. Few are the
very wealthy families of America that have not at least one representative in the *Almanach de Gotha* or *Burke's Peerage*. Thus Anita Stewart, sister of William Rhinelander Stewart, is the Princess de Braganza, consort of the late pretender to the throne of Portugal. The daughter of Bessie Rockefeller married the Marqués George de Cuevas; the Cuevas children, great-grandchildren of the elder Rockefeller, are Spanish grandees in their own right.

William Waldorf Astor voluntarily expatriated himself (although retaining his American property holdings) and was transmuted by the sorcery of money into an English Lord. He was succeeded by the present William Waldorf, Viscount Astor of Hever Castle, who has four sons and one daughter who, although born British nobles, are descendants of the miserly John Jacob Astor I, flute importer, real estate speculator, and fur dealer. The Astors have climbed high socially in England; they have even entered the fringes of the royal family, for Rachel Spender-Clay, granddaughter of the first Lord Astor, in 1929 married the Hon. David Bowes-Lyon, brother of Elizabeth, the present Queen of England.


Vivien Gould married Lord Decies. Gladys Vanderbilt married Count László Széchényi. The Széchényi union brought forth five children, of Vanderbilt and noble Magyar lineage. Consuelo Vanderbilt became the Duchess of Marlborough; although this union was dissolved, it produced two children, the present Duke of Marlborough and Lord Ivor Spencer Churchill. Estelle Manville, daughter of Hiram E. Manville (asbestos), married Count Folke Bernadotte,
nephew of the King of Sweden; their child is the Count of Visborg. The Honorable Dorothy Paget, whose mother was a daughter of William C. Whitney (Standard Oil), is a first cousin of “Jock” and “Sonny” Whitney. Her father, Almeric Hugh Paget, is Lord Queensborough.

European nobles of American lineage probably enjoy more opulent incomes than their peers who lack American forebears and dowries. It is one of the many ironies of the situation that the United States should be pumping forth dividends and rents to support persons in stations so alien to the American concept of social status. It is no less ironical that the children of these transatlantic unions, permanently in residence abroad, draw from American enterprises immense revenues the like of which the average American of this and succeeding generations—no matter how intelligent, crafty, dishonest, or creative—may never reasonably expect to attain. Not only does American labor produce revenue for the support of the ornate estates of America, but it also supports many remote castles in Europe.

The Fords, the Mellons, and the Du Ponts have been less conspicuous than these others in their marriages although Andrew Mellon, like many another American magnate, married and had his children by a wealthy English woman. Perhaps the most meaningful of transatlantic marriages, after all, have been these between wealthy British commoners and Americans, which join the purely moneyed classes of the two nations by sentimental ties as the House of Morgan and international trade join them by financial and economic ties. The McCormicks, Astors, Fields, and others have contracted such unions with British commoners; they are too numerous to detail here.

The Du Ponts have married among themselves when they have not entered wedlock with obscure persons; the Ford family has not yet been sufficiently long established in the possession of wealth to contract marriages of economic coloring. Marriages of first cousins among the Du Ponts became so frequent, indeed, according to a recent biographer, that the head of this essentially feudal dynasty forbade further inbreeding. The marriage in 1937 of Ethel du Pont, daughter of Eugene du Pont, to Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., son of
the President, himself heir to an old colonial land fortune now of
modest size, constituted the first Du Pont union with one of the
foremost old-line aristocratic families of America.

The designation Du Ponts refers to a single family of several hun-
dred contemporaries, about a dozen of whom receive extraordinarily
large revenues from the General Motors Corporation, the United
States Rubber Company, and from E. I. du Pont de Nemours and
Company. As a family the Du Ponts rank seventh in size of taxable
income in the United States, according to the 1924 norm, although
few individual Du Ponts of the main line of descent appear to draw
much more than $1,000,000 taxable income annually. What they may
draw from tax-exempt sources is, of course, unknown. The Du Ponts
have been infinitely resourceful in keeping down their tax bills by
legalistic legerdemain.

The Social Register (1934), for example, lists 73 adult Du Ponts, in
contrast with only 53 Goulds, 31 Mellons, 29 Hannas, 28 Harrimans,
27 Rockefellers, 22 Winthrops, 21 Vanderbilts, 18 Drexels, 16 Hark-
nesses, 7 Archbolds, and so on.

In the Du Pont clan are Mr. and Mrs. Eugene du Pont II, Mr.
and Mrs. Eugene du Pont III, Mr. and Mrs. Lammot du Pont, Mr.
and Mrs. Irénée du Pont, Mr. and Mrs. A. Felix du Pont, Mr. and
Mrs. Richard du Pont, Mr. and Mrs. Victor du Pont, Mr. and Mrs.
Victor du Pont, Jr.; there are also Mr. and Mrs. Henry Belin du Pont,
Mr. and Mrs. E. Paul du Pont, Mr. and Mrs. Archibald du Pont, Mrs.
William Laird, sister of Pierre, and her two daughters, Mrs. Ellason
Downs and Mrs. Robert N. Downs, Mr. and Mrs. Philip Francis du
Pont, Mrs. Porter Schutt (the former Phyllis du Pont), Mr. and Mrs.
Lammot Copeland, Mr. and Mrs. Eugene E. du Pont, Mr. and Mrs.
William du Pont, Irénée du Pont, Jr., Mrs. Ellen du Pont Meeds,
Mrs. Henderson Weir, etc.; and there are the Misses Lydia, Ruth
Ellen, Pauline Louise, Octavia, Alexandrine, Lucile Evelina, Murton,
and Nancy du Pont. This is only a very partial list.

All these dynasties, to be sure, include many members that do not
bear the family name. Selecting one at random, neither the largest
nor the smallest, we find that it comprises 140 members in all its
branches. This is the Pratt (Standard Oil) family of Brooklyn.
Among the many Pratts are Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Bayley Pratt,
Mrs. Charles M. Pratt, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Irving Pratt, Jr., former Congresswoman Ruth Baker Pratt, Mr. and Mrs. John T. Pratt, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Croft Register II, Mr. and Mrs. Richardson Pratt, Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Pratt, Mrs. George Dupont Pratt, Mr. and Mrs. George D. Pratt, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. James Ramsey Hunt, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Stockton Emmett, Mrs. Pratt McLane, Mr. and Mrs. David R. Wilmerding, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Pratt, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Charles Pratt, Sherman Pratt, Mr. and Mrs. Elliott Pratt, Mr. and Mrs. James Jackson, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Thayer, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin H. B. Pratt, and about thirty children.

In the J. P. Morgan family are Mrs. Paul Pennoyer, *née* Frances Morgan; Miss Virginia Morgan Pennoyer; Mrs. George Nichols, *née* Jane Morgan; Miss Jane N. Nichols, and eleven young grandchildren. The father of the present J. P. Morgan, who died in 1913, has sixteen living grandchildren.

IV

Marriage has in some cases, naturally, shielded family wealth behind commonplace names.

Thus we find, in addition to Electra H. Webb, a woman who, under the undistinguished name of H. S. Wilks, paid a 1924 tax on income of more than $500,000. She is Mrs. Matthew Astor Wilks, daughter of the fabulous Hetty Green, and married into a subsidiary branch of the Astor family. Ella Wendel, who died in 1931 possessed of $75,000,000 worth of New York real estate, was also related to the Astors, for the stepmother of the original John Jacob Astor bore six children by his father, and one child, Elizabeth Astor, in 1799 married John Wendel, founder of a line that made its fortune quietly sitting on real estate and allowing the tenants and community growth to enhance its value in accord with the traditional Astor policy.

Ailsa Mellon married David K. E. Bruce, son of former Senator William Cabell Bruce of Maryland. The former Caroline S. Astor became Mrs. M. Orme Wilson. Jessie Woolworth became Mrs. James P. Donahue, and Helena Woolworth acquired the name McCann through marriage to a nephew of Richard Croker, Tammany boss. Certain Woolworth heirs of the youngest generation are, therefore, named Donahue and McCann; others bear the names of Betts and...
Guest. Josephine Hartford, granddaughter of the founder of the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company, was first Mrs. Oliver O'Donnell and then Mrs. Vadim Markaroff. Some women of the Rockefeller, Morgan, Vanderbilt, Harkness, and other clans have also assumed unpublicized names by marriage.

To be sure, not all members of the wealthy families contract marriages within the pecuniary circle, but when any member steps outside the bounds to select a mate the uproar the newspapers create suffices to indicate the unusualness of the event. James A. ("Bud") Stillman, Jr., married a daughter of his mother's cook; Leonard Kip Rhinelander married the daughter of a Negro taxicab driver; Ellin Mackay married Irving Berlin, the Broadway song writer; Mathilde McCormick married a Swiss riding master. In every such case so extraordinary did newspaper editors consider it that a sentimental attachment could transcend monetary considerations, that they behaved like maniacs in exploiting the "stories."

Very many men of diverse names who hold leading positions in American industry are, unknown to the multitude, connected by marriage with the large fortunes. Thus James A. Farrell, for many years president of the United States Steel Corporation, was married to a daughter of the late Anthony N. Brady, public utilities magnate. Another Brady daughter married Francis P. Garvan, a Tammany Assistant District Attorney who soon after his marriage became President Wilson's Assistant Attorney General and Alien Property Custodian. In the latter position he supervised the transfer of German chemical patents from confiscated companies to the Chemical Foundation for less than $300,000; Garvan is still head of the Chemical Foundation as well as dean of the law school at Fordham University. Walter C. Teagle, president of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, is a grandson of John D. Rockefeller's first business partner, Morris B. Clark.

Most of the desirable jobs throughout the biggest corporations and banks, indeed, are filled to an astonishing extent by men who are either collateral descendants of the wealthy families, married to direct or collateral descendants, or connected by blood relationship with persons directly or indirectly related. This situation, very often resembling flagrant nepotism, notoriously in the insurance companies,
appears likely to assume increasing social significance as it becomes more and more impossible for aggressive persons without family connections to achieve promotion and enlarge their functional capacities. The Rockefeller sons, nephews, and cousins, for example, are strewn throughout the Rockefeller enterprises in positions which they could never have hoped to attain so easily, whatever their abilities, without family sponsorship.

The families themselves see nothing extraordinary in this trend. Henry Ford, in talking to newspaper reporters upon the elevation of his only son, Edsel, to the presidency of the Ford Motor Company, naively exclaimed that he thought the "real story" lay in the fact that a youngster just out of his teens should show such ability that he was placed in charge of a billion-dollar enterprise! Morgan partnerships, once open to any man of the requisite abilities, are now often reserved for the sons of partners. Two sons of J. P. Morgan are partners; one son of Thomas W. Lamont is a partner; a son of Henry P. Davison, a former partner, has been made a partner, and F. Trubee Davison, another son, has been placed in charge of the American Museum of Natural History after having been Assistant Secretary of War under President Hoover.

Rarely are the families rebuffed as was Mrs. Moses Taylor, a large hereditary stockholder of the National City Bank, by Charles E. Mitchell, president of the bank, in 1929. Riding high on the crest of the boom, Mitchell grandly refused to place a Taylor nephew in the bank and thundered that the bank was carrying its full quota of Taylors and Pynes. Mrs. Taylor left in a rage and dumped her bank stock on the market—just before the crash. The incident is reported to have saved her millions of dollars and to have embarrassed the bank in the market manipulation of its own stock preliminary to the proposed acquisition of the Corn Exchange Bank.

Scratch any big corporation executive and the chances are even that one will find an in-law of the wealthiest families. There is, of course, an immediate, practical reason for placing members of the family, and distant relatives, too, upon the pay rolls of enterprises in which other people have invested. The reason is that the jobs keep these individuals from making claims upon their wealthier relatives.
and from engaging in activities that bring contumely or censure
down upon the vested repute of the family.

Although a few of the present owners of big fortunes are the
architects of these fortunes, in most cases the present generation in
possession of immense resources has simply inherited. This fact is
emphasized and underscored, so that the most unperceptive may
see it, by the number of women regnant over stupendous incomes,
although they have never engaged in finance, industry, or commerce,
have never invented anything, have never played any role what-
ever in production. They are social pensioners who by no stretch
of imagination could be said to have given society any commensurate
return for the preposterous incomes which they find it impossible
to expend rationally.

In 1936 the following nineteen American women, some of tender
years, were all in absolute possession of fortunes of $25,000,000 or
more that gave a return of more than $1,000,000 annually: Mary
Katherine Reynolds (tobacco), Doris Duke Cromwell (tobacco),
Mary Duke Biddle (tobacco and banking), Mrs. Joseph E. Davies
(Postum), Helena Woolworth McCann and Jessie Woolworth
Donahue (5-and-10 cent stores), Countess Barbara Hutton Mdivani
Haugwitz-Reventlow (5-and-10 cent stores), Mrs. H. S. Wilks
(stocks and realty), Mrs. Payne Whitney (petroleum), Mrs. Charles
Shipman Payson, née Joan Whitney (petroleum), Gertrude Vander-
bilt Whitney (petroleum and railroads), Mrs. Moses Taylor (Na-
tional City Bank), Mrs. Andrew Carnegie (steel), Mrs. Margaret
C. Miller, née Louise Carnegie (steel), Mrs. Alexander Hamilton
Rice,* née Eleanor Elkins and later married to a Widener (tobacco,
utilities), Mrs. Horace E. Dodge (automobiles), Mrs. Matilda Wil-
son (automobiles), Isabel Dodge Sloan (automobiles), and Mrs. John
T. Dorrance (Campbell Soup).* The gigantic fortune of Mrs. H. S.
Wilks, consisting originally of half the holdings of Hetty Green and
all those of the late Matthew Astor Wilks, was increased by $28,000,-
000 to nearly $75,000,000 in 1936, when she was named the sole bene-
ficiary in the will of her brother, E. H. R. Green, who left his wife a
relatively small income.

* Died, 1937.
The income-tax returns for 1924* portray scores of other women, and even infants, in receipt of Gargantuan revenues, although in some cases possession of fortunes was not absolute; family income was distributed in many instances so as to reduce the whole tax liability. But the cases where possession was absolute, numbering in all several hundred, prove beyond question (what was always known to the sophisticated) that accumulated wealth is not a reward for any tangible contribution to society made by the possessor. Many of these women inherited from husbands and fathers who also had never, even by casuistic interpretation, made any more than a dubiously ornamental contribution to society.

A valuable study showing that American fortunes have arrived at a period of stability and that their owners are largely born to the purple like so many lords, dukes, and earls, was completed in 1925 by Professor Pitrim Sorokin of Harvard University.6 Most American millionaires now living were sired by merchants, manufacturers, bankers, financiers, businessmen, or inactive capitalists, Sorokin found. These latecomers did not, in other words, buffet their way out of a fairly matched individualistic rough-and-tumble bearing their newly gained riches.

Sorokin discovered that “the percentage of living millionaires whose fathers followed ‘money-making’ occupations is much higher than that of the deceased group. This fact, taken together with some further data, gives a basis to state that the wealthy class of the United States is becoming less and less open, more and more closed, and is tending to be transformed into a castelike group.”

Among millionaires of the last generation Sorokin discovered that 38.8 per cent had started poor whereas among living millionaires only 19.6 per cent started life in humble circumstances. Of the older generation 29.7 per cent began life as millionaires whereas of the present generation no less than 52.7 per cent were independently wealthy upon attaining their majorities and 31.5 per cent sprouted from comfortably prosperous surroundings.

The present marked tendency toward intrafamily transmission of occupation and status among the rich means, according to this conservative authority, that class differentation is becoming more and

* See note 7, chapter II.
more hereditary in the United States. "American society is being transformed—at least in its upper stratum—into a society with rigid classes and well-outlined class divisions," he says.

If this is true of the upper class it can be no less true of the lower classes, who may not hope to attain, through individual effort, what others now possess and retain with a deathlike grip. Modern capitalism has become, like feudalism before it, a family affair.