

# CROESUS AT HOME

BY MORROW MAYO

PASADENA is ten miles from Los Angeles as the Rolls-Royces fly. It is one of the prettiest towns in America, and probably the richest. So long as twenty years ago it had fifty-two millionaires living in one street. Harland Hall, a local reporter, noted the fact and wrote a feature story (which he sold for \$9) entitled, "Orange Grove Avenue: A Millionaire for Every Week." Today the town has at least four hundred millionaires, and perhaps twice that many if you count (as Pasadena does not) those who have homes there but spend most of their time elsewhere. The late William Wrigley, Jr., for example, came in the latter class. Although he had a home in the town he was never considered a Pasadenan because he was actively identified with Chicago, and also because he spent most of his time when he was in the West on Catalina Island, which he owned, and at Phoenix, Ariz.

Many other men of great wealth spend most of their time in Pasadena but continue to maintain their legal residences elsewhere for reasons of their own. One such reason, frankly stated by some of them, is to escape California's oppressive inheritance-tax law. Recently the head of one of the nation's largest banking institutions named to me ten men who had been "prevented", as he put it, from settling in Pasadena legally because of this "outrageous, confiscatory" statute. The ten men he named are probably worth a total of three hundred millions. Nevertheless,

they are familiar figures in the community. And when Winter comes the guests at the Huntington, Maryland, and Vista del Arroyo Hotels swell the number of millionaires residing in Pasadena to close to a thousand.

Nobody knows how much money there is in the town. A few months ago a humorous story was traveling the grapevine route of Colorado street's financial upperworld. It seems that on a certain day President Hoover issued a statement on the evils of hoarding, and that on the same day Mr. Charles M. Schwab declared that "there are no millionaires in this country any more." The point of the story was that on this identical day two gentlemen, both devout Republicans, met in a Pasadena bank and transferred \$2,000,000 in currency from one safety deposit vault to another. I did not see the money, and hence cannot vouch for the story, but knowing something of the really fabulous wealth of Pasadena I do not doubt it. Despite the Depression there is still a tremendous amount of actual cash in the community, much of it in gold.

The population (35,000 in Summer, 100,000 in Winter) falls logically into three main classes: plutocrats, domestic servants, and tradesmen. Only the plutocrats concern us here. They are garnished with perhaps two thousand retired folk of more modest means: people who live in pretty bungalows, drive their own medium-priced cars, and have incomes of

from \$4,000 to \$10,000 a year. There is also a generous sprinkling of chiropractors, osteopaths, fortune tellers, swamis, and purveyors of electronic vibrations.

Last year when a Hindu snake charmer lost his snakes in Los Angeles he folded himself in his flowing robes and hid himself to the most inaccessible part of Pasadena's Arroyo Seco. Within a few days reports were going around the town about a mysterious East Indian prophet, and shortly thereafter limousines were threading the tortuous bed of the canyon loaded with vivacious ladies anxious to know if the seer could glimpse their husbands going on long journeys, or tall dark men appearing on the horizon. Quacks are plentiful in Pasadena, and they are very popular, especially with the wealthy, middle-aged matrons on whose diamond-studded hands time, alas, hangs heavier than a six spade bid doubled and redoubled. The Pasadena Community Playhouse and the Pasadena Art Institute, especially the former, are life-savers for these ladies. The young matrons and débutantes go in mainly for Junior League high-jinks, homes for Mexican orphans, and genteel whoopee.

The name of the Millionaire Town has scared away from Pasadena many respectable middle-class people who have gone to Southern California to make their homes. Once they take a look around the place, see the palatial mansions, note the lack of industry, and hear the fatal words, Millionaire Town, they are on their way to Whittier, Monrovia, Glendale, or some other community of just folks. Pasadena has a Chamber of Commerce, but the organization finds the going difficult because the majority of the millionaires do not want any industry in Pasadena, and join the Chamber only to keep it out. For years a city-planning commission com-

posed of retired plutocrats has prevented the active business men from erecting smoke-stacks, chopping down trees, and otherwise Americanizing the town.

There is a saying in Los Angeles that rich people who move to Southern California do not go to Pasadena to live unless they have had money for at least two decades. That may have been true at one time, but it has not been true for ten years, for during the Prosperity Era a flock of new millionaires built homes in the Oak Knoll district and, more particularly, in the nearby suburbs of Altadena and Flintridge. But it is true that most of the *nouveaux riches*, and especially the traditional types, prefer Beverly Hills, Malibu Beach, and Hollywood. They see nothing in Pasadena, and are somewhat ill at ease there; the town is too conservative, too reserved, and too rich.

These good people do not desire a home in a quiet setting where gold does not glitter. What appeals to their taste is a Chinese-Kansas castle in Beverly Hills, an Arabian-Iowa mansion at Malibu, or a grand apartment house on Hollywood boulevard. In short, they desire to flash, and money does not flash in Pasadena. The community is so modest on the subject of wealth that even the word millionaire is taboo in the local press. In the whole history of the town no movie star has ever lived there.

The conservative Pasadena millionaires frown severely upon gold-green villas, pink-striped automobiles, and candidates for the Social Register. They ask very little for their money. They want good liquor, and the town's millionaire bootlegger supplies it. They insist upon being let alone, and their commercial attachés see to that. They ask that industries be kept out of the town, and the Chamber of Commerce coöperates. They ask for

fifty-one weeks of perfect golfing weather every year, and Nature complies. They demand the most efficient police force in the United States, and they have it. These gentlemen of great wealth are very proud of the Pasadena police. Some time ago when a burglar, who must have been insane, tried to rob a Pasadena castle the millionaires gave the officer who killed him a medal, a public benefit, and a huge cash prize. They also retain what seems to be several army corps of watchmen and private detectives.

These gentlemen spend a good deal of time, like all men of leisure, in the pleasant pastime of gabbing. They loaf around Jim MacDonnell's bank, or Henry Robinson's bank, in the manner of villagers at the corner grocery. They read Will Rogers and the comic strips, grow apoplectic over Prohibition, tell each other what this country needs, and laugh at the alarms of the *Los Angeles Times*, which sights a Russian battleship off San Pedro every morning.

## II

At Henry Robinson's bank one is apt to run across Arthur M. Fleming, lumber baron and chief angel of Pasadena's leading industry, the California Institute of Technology. A native of Canada, Mr. Fleming has been an American citizen since 1886. He practised law in Detroit for ten years, and then went to California and started in the lumber business. Most of his millions were hewn from the sugar pine forests of the High Sierras; he was also interested in mines, in railroads and other public utilities. He has a genuine affection, naturally, for sugar pines, and has spent a great deal to preserve those in Yosemite National Park. Mr. Fleming is well past the Biblical three score and ten,

but he is still quite active. He has given the California Institute of Technology more than \$5,000,000, and is president of the board of directors.

A few years ago he bought the railroad car in which the Armistice was signed, constructed a building for it, placed in it wax figures representing all those present at the Armistice conference, and then presented the whole thing to France. Shortly thereafter he became a chevalier of the Legion of Honor. But last year he brought Professor Einstein from Germany to the California Institute of Technology. He is also interested in the cause of art, and is a generous donor to the Pasadena Art Institute.

Many other Pasadena millionaires go in for Art and Culture; the leader in this respect, of course, was the late Henry E. Huntington. But most of them have hobbies outside the grove of Athene. John H. Eagle, for example, is interested in big game hunting and golf. He is also an amateur photographer of note. Many millions made in the silk manufacturing business in Pennsylvania enable Mr. Eagle to go to the ends of the earth in search of something to shoot. His last trip was to South Africa; he brought back with him a hundred and twenty-five excellent specimens of leopards, hippopotami, lions, etc. These he has mounted and placed around a gigantic swimming pool which occupies the entire first floor of his princely home. Mr. Eagle is a generous and quiet giver to local and other charities. He and Arthur K. Bourne, a sewing machine mogul, usually put up the guarantee for the \$10,000 Pasadena Open Golf Tournament.

One of the most popular men of great wealth in Pasadena is John S. Cravens. His wife, the former Mildred Myers, is the daughter of the founder of the Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company, an organization

in which Mr. Cravens was himself active until it was sold to the American Tobacco Company. He moved to Pasadena in 1900; since then he has been interested in a large way in the Southern California Edison Company, banks, and other enterprises. Socially, Mr. Cravens is probably the Number 1 man of Pasadena. Gold and the local Community Chest are his hobbies. His home on Orange Grove avenue cost more than \$1,000,000, and is one of the most pretentious in the West. But Mr. Cravens is a modest man. He was quite distressed recently when a Los Angeles newspaper woman wrote: "The dinner service in his mansion, even when company is not present, is of solid gold."

Every week or so the newspaper reporters of Pasadena have occasion to call at the home of Henry M. Robinson to get a denial of the rumor that he will succeed the current Secretary of the Treasury. These rumors have persisted ever since Mr. Hoover has been President, and recur whenever Mr. Robinson is a guest at Rapidan or at the White House, which is frequently. He has been an unofficial financial adviser to Mr. Hoover since his service on the Dawes Commission. He is head of a large bank in Los Angeles, and a director in many corporations. Nevertheless, he manages to live in comparative seclusion in his Pasadena home. His benefactions are many; one was a gift of \$300,000 to erect a hospital on the site of the old Robinson home in Ravenna, Ohio, where his parents were pioneers. When he is in Pasadena he likes to stroll down to his branch bank and sit around for a few hours. He is cordial to newspaper men, but reticent.

Mr. Robinson's attitude toward the press is in marked contrast to that of one of his former chief lieutenants, the late Dr. John Willis Baer, of Occidental College and

Presbyterian Church fame. Dr. Baer used to issue regular written statements to the reporters, and then rush to the newspaper offices to read them in proof, to see that they were printed verbatim. The doctor, who was a Litt.D., also endeavored to write the headlines to his statements, but, unfortunately he could never master what is known as a unit count, thereby winning for himself among the gentlemen of the press the nick-name of Rubber Type Baer.

Thomas D. Campbell, who owns an 85,000-acre wheat ranch in Montana, but spends most of his time in Pasadena, has been enjoying the limelight ever since his return from a two-year stay in Russia, where he helped to introduce large-scale wheat growing in the Soviet Union. Mr. Campbell probably holds the 1932 record for honorary degrees from institutions of higher learning: in one week he was made a Doctor of Engineering by the University of Southern California, and a Doctor of Laws by the University of North Dakota. He is an affable millionaire, and somewhat mysterious. His hobbies are airplane-riding and the Republican party. He says that Mr. Hoover is a "sincere friend of the farmer," and I judge that he speaks with some authority, since he is one of the largest farmers in America.

B. O. Kendall, a pioneer realtor and the largest single property-holder in Pasadena, is credited, no doubt incorrectly, with being one of the few millionaires in the country to foresee the crash of the Great Bull Market. Nevertheless, he seems to worry a good deal about the current "business hesitation." On the other hand, his friend, Harvey B. Bissell, a retired carpet sweeper magnate, is apparently not worrying about the Depression, the number of electric vacuum cleaners sold, or anything else. With his family he cruises the South Seas, returning only long enough to ex-

hibit to his friends the movies and other mementoes of his voyages.

No movie magnate in Hollywood has so costly a home as the secluded Oak Knoll palace of Miss Mary McCormick, daughter of the harvester king, and one of the richest women in the world. Her mansion proper cost \$2,000,000, and has sleeping accommodations for fifty guests. There are thirty-five additional bed-room suites in the guest lodge. Miss McCormick's playthings include a private symphony orchestra.

Next to Cal Tech the Pasadena Community Playhouse has been more generously supported by visiting and resident millionaires than any other Pasadena institution. Started ten years ago by Mr. Gilmor Brown, the Playhouse has been a most delightful outlet for the enthusiasm and dollars of wealthy ladies. Originally it was a little theatre in an old store. Then Art with a capital A descended upon the movement, and a new temple of the drama was erected which vies in splendor with Hollywood's movie cathedrals. The Playhouse is partially supported by life members, five-year members, members, and patrons—ranked according to their donations—and the deficit is made up, usually by some one individual, whenever Mr. Brown announces it. At his last announcement, Mrs. Fannie Morrison, whose philanthropies previously had been devoted largely to the local Humane Society, stepped forward and fed the wolf at the door of Art with a check for \$120,000. Mrs. Morrison has a huge estate, nine pedigreed dogs, and is said to have an attendant for each of them.

Two Pasadena millionaires who made their fortunes in the automobile business are C. B. Voorhis, a retired partner in the Nash Company, and F. von Schlegell, one-time executive vice-president of Hup-

mobile. Of the two, Mr. Voorhis is more in the public eye; his benefactions include a school for boys, to which he has given several hundred thousand dollars. Hugh Chalmers, who sold out to Walter P. Chrysler, usually spends the Winter at a Pasadena hotel.

Whenever mention is made of Frederick Bartlett and Archie M. Andrews, former Chicago financiers, newspaper men recall the \$50,000 golf game they once played in Pasadena. They were working out a deal, and the wager represented the difference between the amounts asked and offered. Freeman Ford is one of several millionaire ranchers and dog fanciers who reside in Pasadena. In recent years his particular hobby has been whippet racing. He owns several champions, and maintains elaborate kennels on his hillside estate.

At one time Pasadena had a multi-millionaire mayor, the Hon. William Thum. He is still a sort of uncrowned king in local politics. Small of stature, which gives him his nick-name, Tom Thum, he wanders through the corridors of Pasadena's beautiful City Hall carrying a brief case almost as large as himself. Mr. Thum dabbles in sociology, a hobby which he took up years ago when he and his brother Otto were making their first millions out of Tanglefoot fly-paper.

### III

In 1921, when the wealthy Pasadenans were scouting around for an up-and-coming man to take the place of Dr. James A. B. Scherer as head of the California Institute of Technology, they decided upon Dr. Robert A. Millikan, then head of the physics department of the University of Chicago. Unquestionably it was a wise selection, for Dr. Millikan, who is

now chairman of the executive board, has put Cal Tech on the map, and made Pasadena one of the scientific centers of the world.

He is not only a distinguished scientist, a winner of a Nobel prize in physics; he is also a competent business executive. Thus he is popular with the Pasadena millionaires, and has a way with them. A few years ago, at the home of the late Henry E. Huntington, he organized sixty millionaires (at a minimum of \$1,000 per head *per annum*) into the California Institute Associates. He delivers appropriate addresses to American Legion boys, parenthood conferences, church congregations, and friends of radio-land. No praise of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce is more unstinted than that to be found in one of his baccalaureate addresses. A newspaper advertisement he signed a few years ago, urging the election of his favorite candidate to Congress, carried much weight, but, unfortunately, not enough. Some time ago he wrote a letter to the *Outlook* reprimanding it for criticizing President Hoover.

Dr. Millikan is a devout Congregationalist, the son of a Congregationalist preacher. He believes that there is no conflict between science and religion, and shortly after the Scopes trial at Dayton, Tenn., he entered the public controversy with a series of scientific manifestos and theological proclamations assuring the people that he had looked into the matter, and that there was no conflict. Beginning with addresses to local church congregations, he quickly broadened his field of publicity to the radio, a national lecture tour, the public prints, and finally books.

His assurances, however, did not satisfy the Fundamentalists. They held most emphatically that there *was* an irreconcilable conflict between science and religion, and,

what is more, they proceed to demonstrate it to Dr. Millikan. They summoned three of their pulpit aces to Chicago, and then dispatched them to Pasadena. There, playing to standing room only, almost in the shadow of Cal Tech, the reverend gentlemen made a three-night stand at the Lincoln Avenue Presbyterian Church. Dr. Arthur I. Brown spoke on "Men, Monkeys, and Missing Links," Dr. Harry Rimmer on "Evolution Unmasked," and Dr. Gerald B. Winrod on "The Mark of the Beast." I give you Dr. Winrod's final shout:

A hundred thousand members of the Bryan Bible League in California will arouse the Legislature, and a million members in the nation will stir this country and challenge the world. The issue is clear. Shall infidelity in the form of evolution be taught in tax-supported schools? The Bible is barred from the schools of California. We demand that the Bible be taught in the public schools. We demand that evolution shall be barred! Darwinism is an unproven, unscientific, anti-Biblical and anti-Christian theory, and it must have no place in tax-supported schools. The moral and religious effects of evolution are too disastrous for us to be silent! We must present a united front. We must be organized. With a million members we can say: "In the name of Almighty God, this modern Baal must go from the schools!" An aroused populace demands it! Patriotism demands it! The fight is on!

On election day, which was about three weeks later, the people of Southern California went to the polls and voted three to one to put the King James version of the Bible in the public schools. The bill, however, was defeated by the wicked vote of Central and Northern California.

Pasadena, meanwhile, just keeps gliding along. Nothing disturbs its tranquillity, not even the Red scare. The town is actually friendly to political radicals, some of whom are multi-millionaires themselves,

for example, Mrs. Kate Crane Gartz. Upton Sinclair also lives in Pasadena, and apparently likes the town very much, for he has lived there for years. Roger Baldwin was permitted to speak there over the bitter protests of a dozen patriotic Los Angeles organizations, including the so-called Better American Federation. More than once Pasadena police have removed Los Angeles open-shop bands from the town's annual Tournament of Roses. The town, in fact, is somewhat of a paradox. The richest city in America, it is also one of the friendliest to organized labor, a friendliness which goes back to the violent days of the McNamara case. The files of the Los Angeles *Citizen* during those hectic days disclose that this labor organ was receiving most of its advertising from Pasadena merchants.

Mainly responsible for this strange state of affairs is Charles H. Prisk, the millionaire owner and editor of the Pasadena *Star-News*. In an article in THE AMERICAN MERCURY a few years ago on the California literati, George W. West referred to this journal as "an oasis in the desert." It is. After years of easy but persistent pressure Mr. Prisk has gradually created a spirit of live-and-let-live in the community; consequently, there is less class bitterness in Pasadena than in any other town in California. The *Star-News* has long been the envy and wonder of other newspaper publishers on the Coast. But its policy of giving all sides in a controversy an absolute even break is often termed spineless by persons whose idea of courage is to suppress the opposition.

Mr. Prisk, judged by all American standards, is a superior man; a modest, dignified, mild-mannered gentleman, a Babbitt, a Republican, a former president of the town's Rotary club. Thirty years ago, just out of Stanford, a cantankerous youngster from the wilds of Grass Valley, he went to Pasadena and started a paper. A short time after he arrived the political boss of the town went to his office and tried to dictate to the young editor. The conference ended in a knock-down, drag-out fight between the two. They rolled over the floor. The battle finally ended in the classical manner, after noses were bloodied, glasses broken, and furniture wrecked, with Kid Prisk throwing his opponent bodily through the front door, glass and all.

Many times since then the man has had occasion to show his courage, his generosity, and his intelligence. He had one fight with labor and won, but since he was not vindictive, he was willing to shake hands after the fight. Today his paper, in an open-shop paradise, is not only run mechanically by union labor; the heads of the mechanical departments are officials of national and international unions. Mr. Prisk is the despair of all the Los Angeles Red-baiters and labor-haters; he is full of humor, common sense and common decency, and hence among most of the capitalist of Southern California he stands out like a redwood in a growth of stunted pine.

He has done more than any other man to make Pasadena a pleasant place to live in.

# LITERATURE IN THE OPEN SPACES

BY NELSON ANTRIM CRAWFORD

ONE day recently, as I walked through the Peacock Alley of a Middle Western hotel, I was struck by the absence of the usual voluptuous women and the presence of framed sections of green burlap, on which were mounted printed and typewritten sheets. One of the sections attracted me by the extraordinary combination of colors in its printed matter, and I paused to examine it. At the top was a pink desk blotter, bearing the words:

When you have the stomach-ache  
Chiropractic you should take;  
When you start to cough like—well,  
With chiropractic you'll feel swell.  
Of all good things that God has blest,  
Chiropractic tops the rest.

Beneath this poem was the picture of a young woman whose posture and attire, despite the pious tone of the verse, seemed anything but ecclesiastical, and above her towered a manly youth, strongly resembling a stevedore or a truck driver, in a surgeon's gown. Evidently he was the chiropractor blest of God.

As I paused in contemplation, I felt a hand on my shoulder. I turned just as a middle-aged man in an old-time Prince Albert coat addressed me.

"You look like you were interested in literature, Brother."

"Somewhat," I answered in as dubious a tone as I could muster.

"I just thought you were when I saw you stopping at this exhibit," the man

went on. "Do you know, I wrote all these poems on this section? They're not signed, but that's because I've sold 'em to lots of chiropractic doctors and they want to put their own names down. It helps a professional man, you know, if folks think he's literary. Especially with the women. And I don't mind these doctors putting their names down after my poems. I've got the money for them, you see. Not that money's everything. It ain't, you know. I mean it, isn't. But I just don't seem to feel I have to be so careful about my grammar when I'm with other folks that's interested in literature, like you are.

"But, anyhow, as I was a-saying, money's not everything. I like to do some good with my writing, like Doctor Sheldon and Bruce Barton and Harold Bell Wright. Not that I ever expect to do the good that they've done. I'm just a plain everyday plug, though the editor of our town newspaper says to me the other day, 'Bill, I've heard lots of ladies say they turn to your poems first thing in the paper. I guess they find 'em inspiring.' 'Inspiring'—that's the very word he used. And, I tell you, Brother, it makes a fellow puff out his chest a little when he's told that by a man that knows literature, like an editor."

"Is there a chiropractic convention in the hotel?" I asked, for want of something more sensible to say.

"Oh, no," he replied. "Don't you know? Why, the State Authors' Society is meet-