

HUMBLE IMMIGRANTS Who Have Become AMERICAN KINGS.

With the Greatest of Handicaps, Many Have Risen to Dazzling Success in American Business World



Knute Nelson, Norwegian Who became a Political Power.

Frederick Weyerhaeuser, The Lumber Lord.



Michael J. Popin, One of the Kings of the Telephone Who Came Here as a Stowaway.

BY RICHARD SPILLANE. HERMAN SIELECKEN got married the other day and took his bride to his country home, Marienhalden, at Baden Baden. Kaiser Wilhelm has 32 palaces and vast landed possessions, but no one of his palaces and no one of his estates approaches in beauty or extent that owned by Herman Sielcken, Kaiser Wilhelm is monarch of Germany, but his rule is limited to the German Empire. Herman Sielcken is a monarch of commerce and his rule extends the world over. Kaiser Wilhelm was born a prince, Herman Sielcken was born poor. Perhaps 100,000,000 persons pay tribute to Emperor Wilhelm. Perhaps 500,000,000 persons pay tribute to Herman Sielcken.

Herman Sielcken is but one of hundreds of immigrants who came to America with little more than energy and hope and today are kings of industry, many of them with wealth greater than that of any hereditary King.

Of the tremendously rich and powerful men of the United States, Sielcken is one of the least known. He was born in Hamburg and before he was 21 went to Costa Rica to work for a German firm there. He didn't like the country and within a year left for California, where he got a job as a shipping clerk. So soon as he learned to speak English with reasonable fluency he sought work that would give an opportunity to him to travel and get acquainted with people. A wool concern engaged him as buyer and for five or six years he traversed the territory between the Rockies and the Pacific, wherever sheep were raised and sheared, buying wool. One of these trips he was in a train wreck in Oregon and nearly lost his life. When he recovered from his injuries he came to New York seeking work. He got a clerical position in a concern that imported crockery and glassware. It was in 1868 that Sielcken left Germany. It was in 1876 that he reached New York. In those eight years he made a fair living—nothing more. Then there came a remarkable change.

In Costa Rica he had learned to speak Spanish. Because of that fact he was able late in 1876 to obtain employment with the firm of W. H. Crossman & Son, which handled coffee on a commission basis. Sielcken went to South America to solicit consignments for the Crossmans. His success was surprising. For six or eight months every mail from the southern continent brought business to the house. Then,

as the story goes, his reports ceased suddenly. Weeks and months passed and the firm heard nothing from him. What had become of him the Crossmans had no idea. They feared he had caught a fever and died. To trace him was difficult. He had no regular itinerary. It distressed them a good deal to lose so promising a representative. Giving up all hope of getting any information about him, they looked around for a man to take his place. Then one morning he walked into the office and said "How'd ye do," just as if he had departed only the evening before. The members of the firm questioned him eagerly. He answered some of the questions and some he didn't. Then he laid a package on the table. "Gentlemen," he said, "I have given a large amount of business to you, far more than you expected, as the result



Herman Sielcken, Coffee King of the World.

of my trip. I have a lot more business which I can give you. It's all in black and white in the papers in this package. I think any person who has worked as hard as I have and so well deserves a partnership in this firm. If you want these orders you may have them. They represent a big profit to you. Good work deserves proper reward. Look these papers over and then tell me if you want me to continue with you as a member of the firm." After the Crossmans looked those papers over they had no doubt of the advisability of taking Herman Sielcken into partnership. He was only a junior for some years, but in 1894 the firm became Crossman and Sielcken. It prospered amazingly. For the last 15 years it has been the leading coffee house of the world.

At various times Sielcken was credited with working corners in coffee. Because of this he got to be one of the most feared and hated men in the Coffee Exchange. After a while coffee didn't offer enough play for Sielcken's tremendous energy and ambition. He

embarked in various enterprises, among them the steel industry and railroads. No one was too big for him to cross lances with. He and John W. Gates had a titanic fight in American Steel and Wire. Gates got the worst of it. Then Sielcken got in a row with E. H. Harriman and George J. Gould. This fight was for possession of the Kansas City, Pittsburg & Gulf Railroad, now known as the Kansas City Southern. Harriman, Gould and Gates has taken it away from Arthur E. Stullman. He had no particular regard for the Kansas City, Pittsburg & Gulf. It was a north and south railroad and disturbed the east and west traffic on the trunk lines they controlled through the grain belt. The Kansas City, Pittsburg & Gulf gave a short haul to the Gulf. The old-established trunk lines gave long railroad haul from Kansas, Nebraska and the Middle West generally to the Atlantic seaboard. Harriman permitted the Kansas City, Pittsburg & Gulf to droop. Very little money was spent on maintenance of road or equipment. Wrecks were frequent. Traffic fell off. So did receipts. Then Sielcken, representing

a syndicate of Dutchmen who held a large block of bonds, got control. He had no practical railroad experience, but what he did with that property within six months amazed transportation men. When he took charge there was an average of three wrecks a day. Within a few months the average was reduced to one wreck a day. Within a year he brought the property up to a fair state of efficiency. Today the Kansas City Southern is getting back to what it was designed to be—a real railroad.

While busy with the Kansas City Southern, Sielcken found time to engineer one of the biggest deals in the world. Brazil produces 55 per cent of the world's supply of coffee. Most of the Brazilian coffee is raised in the state of Sao Paulo and territory nearby. Brazil made so much money out of coffee for some years that the planters thought there was no end to the world's demand for the bean. They increased their production so tremendously that they demoralized the market. The price of coffee declined to 5 cents a pound, and still they couldn't get rid of their stock. Each year the surplus was growing larger. The coffee trade was threatened with demoralization. Brazil, so far as its coffee industry was concerned, faced ruin. About this time Herman Sielcken conceived a scheme whereby the world would not get any more coffee than was necessary to maintain prices at what he thought was a proper level. His scheme is known the world over as the valorization plan. By it the Brazilian Government buys all the coffee that is produced in Brazil and regulates the movement in this operation was raised through the issue of \$75,000,000 in bonds which were taken by English, German, French, Dutch and American bankers. Sielcken has the marketing of all the coffee. He will not sell to a coffee broker to deliver on contract. All the coffee he sells goes to the jobber or is shipped abroad. He decides how much coffee the world is to have. He has saved Brazil, or rather the Brazilian coffee raisers, from ruin. But the coffee drinkers of the world pay the bill. As a result of his scheme coffee rose from 5 to 16 cents a pound when the world had the largest amount of coffee in its history. The law of supply and demand cuts no figure with Herman Sielcken. He's above anything like that.

When his partner, Mr. Crossman, died, it was discovered that the two men had made a remarkable contract. Each man had made a will giving \$1,000,000 to the other. It was a sort of a bet on which one would live the longer. Mr. Crossman died last January and Mr. Sielcken got \$1,000,000 to add to his many other millions. How much money

he has no one but Mr. Sielcken knows. In New York Mr. Sielcken lives at the Waldorf-Astoria. He bought the German estate known as Marienhalden some years ago and has made it a wonderful garden there in the world and probably raises more orchids than any other one person on the globe.

The immigrants who have become kings in America came from all parts of Europe. Patrick Cudahy, who is the head of one of the greatest pork packing firms of the world, comes from that part of Ireland famous for its fighting cats. He was born in Callan, County Kilkenny, 34 years ago. They named him Patrick because he was born on St. Patrick's day. He came across the ocean in a sailing vessel with the rest of the Cudahy family. His father had to work for a long time in New York as a common laborer. Then the older Cudahy went to Wauwatosa, near Milwaukee, Wis., and started farming.

One thing the father did was to raise pigs and when little Patsy quit school at 12 years of age and took a job in a Milwaukee grocery store at \$1 a week, the father told him he was a fool and that he wasn't beginning right. "Be a farmer, my boy," he said. "Raise pigs; stick to pigs." Young Cudahy had no intention of being a farmer. He ran errands for the grocer for two years. The second year he got \$2 a week. Then pigs and \$3 a week proved too strong an attraction for him. He took a job with the Roddie Packing Company.

The concern was not a big one and the boy did a little of everything, from slaughtering hogs to keeping books. He remained with the Roddie Company for six years and then went to a larger firm, with which he remained for four years. When he was 24 years old he became superintendent of the slaughter-house of Lyman & Wooley. He did so well for this concern that he attracted the attention of the Armour and was made superintendent of the plant of Plankinton & Armour at Milwaukee. Up to the time he went with Armour he hadn't received more than \$15 a month. Within a few years he was the highest salaried superintendent in his line in America. He saved a fair share of his money and bought a small interest in the firm.

In 1875 the main office was established in Chicago, but Cudahy was left in charge of the Milwaukee plant and when Plankinton died in 1883 Cudahy and his brother Michael bought the Plankinton interest, took over the ownership of the Milwaukee business and started out on their own hook under the name of Cudahy Bros. The growth of this establishment has been prodigious. It has spread out until its product is sold all over the globe. The town which has grown up around the

Cudahy plant near Milwaukee has the name of Cudahy. In that one plant a million hogs a year are slaughtered and the business amounts to nearly \$15,000,000 a year.

Frederick Weyerhaeuser is the lumber king of America. He's past 70. He came from Nidersaulheim, Germany, when he was 18 years old and went to Erie County, Pennsylvania. Four years later he moved to Rock Island, Ill., and went to work in a lumber yard. He rose to be foreman. He saved a little money and, with his brother-in-law, E. C. A. Denkmann, bought a small mill.

They didn't have enough to pay for it, but gave their notes. Weyerhaeuser did the buying for the mill. He was shrewd and prudent. The firm prospered. Its business broadened and gradually the partners acquired pine land. Within 15 years of the organization of the firm it was doing the largest lumber business in the Mississippi Valley. In 1896 it bought out the C. N. Nelson Lumber Company at Cloquet, Minn., and acquired not only a great lumber plant, but 600,000,000 feet of standing timber. Today Weyerhaeuser controls not only a big share of the lumber business of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois, but through his purchases of timber land in the Appalachian country and various other parts of the United States, he owns more standing timber than any other man in the world. He makes his headquarters at St. Paul. He lives very simply. No one would suppose from his quiet, modest manner that he is enormously rich. Ten years ago his wealth was estimated at \$20,000,000.

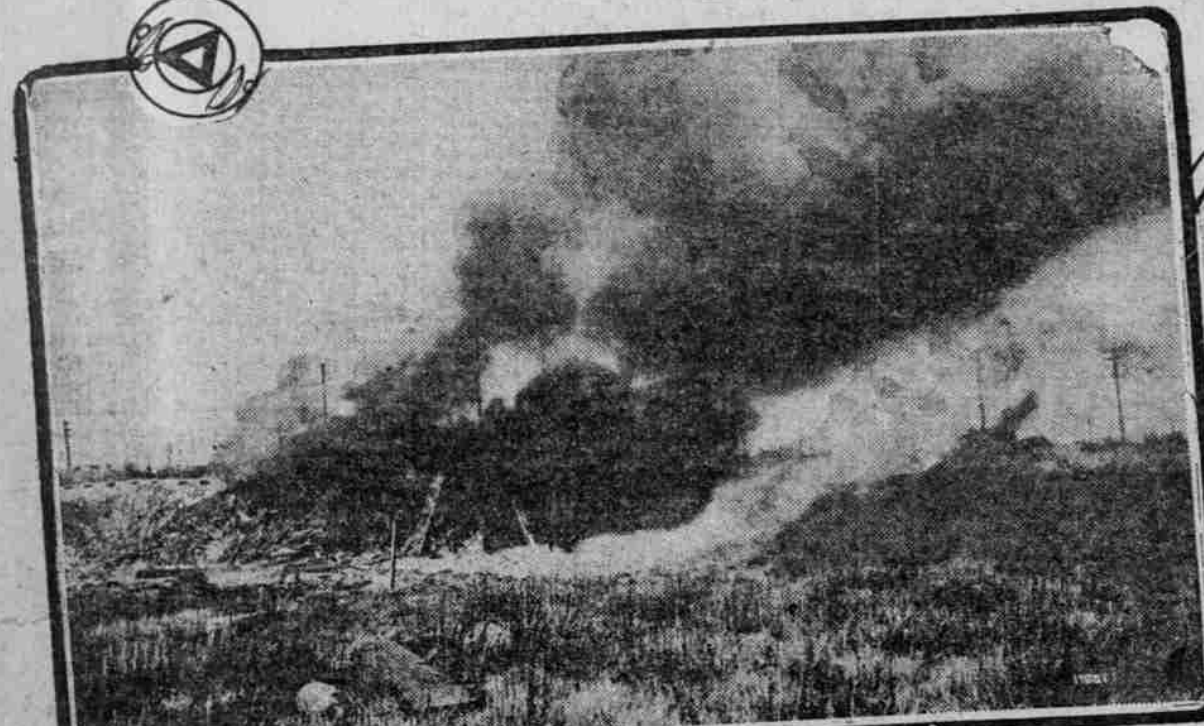
Since then the value of lumber has increased greatly. He may be worth \$40,000,000, \$50,000,000 or \$60,000,000 today. He has no fads. Work is his recreation. One of the queer things about Mr. Weyerhaeuser is that he never lost a dollar in a lumber deal and never made a dollar in any other business in which he invested money. One of the jokes he tells at his own expense has to do with his purchases of bank stock. Before he got to be very rich he was induced to take an interest in various small banking concerns. Not one of them succeeded. Since then he has stuck to lumber.

Comparatively few men know Jules Weber. He is the king of the kitchens. He came to America from France when he was a mere lad. He got work in the old Astor House. He was the egg boy. His duty was to keep track of the stock of eggs. After a while he became assistant cook. He had a rare talent in culinary affairs and won a high reputation before he left the Astor. He saved his money and opened a restaurant in Thirty-fourth street between Broadway and Seventh avenue. Incidentally he imported French delicacies.

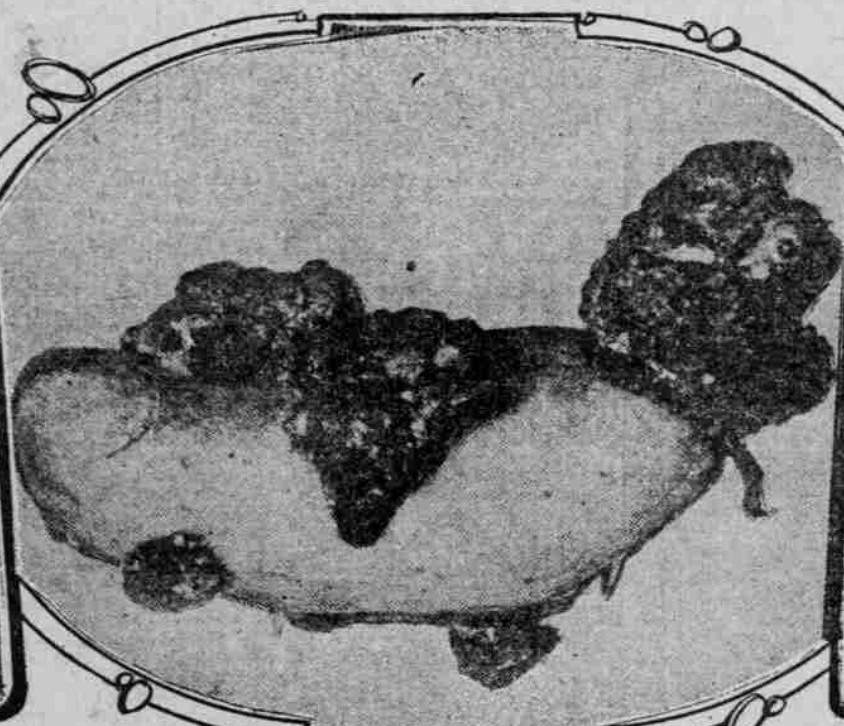
The importing business grew so large that he gave up the restaurant and

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HOW DISEASE LAYS LOW THE LOWLY POTATO



Carload of Diseased Potatoes Prepared for Destruction.



A Potato Affected With Wart.



Two Carloads of Diseased Potatoes Destroyed by Order of State Officials of Washington.

BY GUY E. MITCHELL. IT is an age of pests. Constant warfare is being waged by science against thousands of different kinds of flying and crawling bugs which cause deadly minute spots the no less destructive diseases. No crop is exempt or immune against attack. The great staple potato crop, not content with having to fight a dozen or more kinds of scab, blight and other diseases which reduce the yield by one-third, now faces a possible re-

duction of from four-fifths to an absolute extinction if a new disease is not immediately proclaimed an "undesirable citizen" and rigidly excluded from our potato areas. This disease is the potato wart and it leaves such a trail of death and desolation that on its account some countries have absolutely forbidden the importation of any potatoes, while many others have adopted stringent quarantine inspection regulations. The American potato crop is between 300,000,000 and 400,000,000 bushels, being fourth or fifth in importance of all

farm products, and to many thousands of people the potato is more truly the staff of life than wheat, so that a disease which may blight an entire field as effectually as a fire is a cause for no little concern. Once established there is almost no possibility of stamping out the potato wart, since the miserable little spores will live in the ground for at least eight years, and Chrysothrix pays no attention whatever to baths or spraying of sulphur, lime, formalin, copper solutions, lead poisons, etc. The wart disease covers the potato, turning it black, and except for color, making it resemble a cauliflower head. In fact, it is sometimes called "cauliflower disease." At the same time that every tuber of a plant may be a leathsome, wrinkled mass, the tops of the plant will show a vigorous growth of green foliage. The fight to keep the wart disease from taking the country must be along lines of preventing its spread and guarding against importations of infected seed, its shipment from one point to another in the United States, and the burning of diseased tubers. These must not even be fed to stock, unless boiled, as the spores are not injured in the least by being chewed up and digested by cows, horses or pigs. One

English dairyman got his field very slightly infected, but failing to recognize the "cauliflower" he fed the diseased potatoes to his cattle. The next year half his potato field was infested with the wart disease, and half with commercial fertilizer. The manured potatoes were so badly diseased that he lost 80 per cent of his crop, the other half of the field was practically free. In addition to this the cattle fed on the diseased potatoes were turned out into a clover pasture which one would live the longer. It will be impossible to plant potatoes for many years. Our close neighbor, Canada, has in-

fest areas, and whenever the potato crop of the United States, or New England, is short, millions of bushels of Canadian potatoes are shipped in. Congress recently passed a law prohibiting the importation of potatoes from countries known to have the potato wart, but the difficulties of detecting the disease in its early stages is great. The Department of Agriculture urges potato growers to raise their own seed potatoes as the surest means of keeping free of this deadly wart disease; furthermore, potato experts say that there should be no difficulty in doubling the average potato yield and that the greatest factor to a large and increased yield

is the use of strong healthy potatoes for planting. Recently two entire carloads of potatoes found to be diseased by the authorities of the state of Washington were dumped into a pile, saturated with oil and burned up. In the campaign to keep the fields of Washington free from potato diseases, the Commissioner of Agriculture warned growers not to ship infested potatoes into Washington, and at first contented himself with compelling the railroads to reship to the points of origin. When, however, the commission men persisted in trying to ship shipments past the embargo, he had the potatoes destroyed outright.