

# FROM FARMER BOY TO COMPANION OF KINGS



Herbert C. Hoover, Head of the Belgian Relief Commission

BY ASHEMAN BROWN.  
"HERBERT C. Hoover is the American who played the most important part in the great tragedy being enacted in Europe."

It was a member of President Wilson's Cabinet, speaking at a dinner table in Washington, who made the above remark. Yet the majority of the people, about the board did not know who Herbert C. Hoover was.

To put it briefly, Herbert C. Hoover is the man who, as the head of the Belgian relief work, has directed the expenditure of \$50,000,000 in recent months.

Among the few men who really run things in the civilized nations—and a few of the uncivilized—he is regarded as America's foremost citizen of the world. Princes and potentates—financial and political—know him on terms of intimacy.

To many of them he stands for America. In that shifting "who's who" of the gossip of court and Cabinet and financial circles, Hoover's name is writ large. He is one of those who are making civilization move forward.

Only a few years ago he was a barefoot farmer boy at West Branch, Iowa, wherever that is, a name not even mentioned in the principal gazetteers.

This vigorous young man, who has just turned 40, has never had occasion to force himself on public attention. He climbed from the obscurity of the masses to the obscurity of those who, out of the general public eye, direct the movement of great world affairs. He climbed all the way by his own efforts.

Twenty years ago he was an unimportant employe in the United States geological survey in the mountains of Nevada. Today kings are anxious to be helpful to him.

He lives at Red House, Horton street, Kehalington highroad, London, a great, ancient, rambling old house, not beauties and extensiveness of which are not revealed until one gets inside. The house is typical of the man. His offices are at 1 London Wall building. From there, in addition to directing the huge relief work in Belgium, he also directs his mining operations in all parts of the world.

"He handles," said a friend of his recently, "his great Russian iron mining with his 750 employes, with the little finger of his left hand." Expressive, if exaggerated.

When the European war broke out, Great Britain and the continent swarmed with Americans who had a sudden and eager desire to get home. A great many of them did not have the money with which to go. All, moneyless or affluent, were intent on going home in comfort and ease, and in the best cabins aboard ship. And all, whatever their condition, were insistent on "somebody doing something" for them at once, the particular somebody they had in mind being the American Ambassador in London.

The resident American colony in London wanted to help. In fact, it had to help. The resident host of that colony was Herbert C. Hoover. At least he was the member of the colony having the highest standing and the most influence in England. Englishmen had testified to that by intrusting millions of their money to investment by him. Moreover, he is a man of organizing ability. So it was that naturally he became chairman of the American relief committee, Ambassador Page testifies to the excellence of the work he did.

Then, when the surplus touring Americans were out of the way, came the need for relief of Belgians, in and out of Belgium. The international character of this work required a man such as Hoover. Accordingly he took over its direction. He is still on the job. The fact that he has directed the spending of \$50,000,000 so far is merely an index of what he has been doing.

It was this that the Secretary had in mind when he said that Hoover "is the American who, of all Americans, has played the most important part" in the war.

Here is a story, never told before, that illustrates the quality of the man and his standing abroad. Hoover is a former Californian, a graduate and a trustee of Stanford University—he runs across the Atlantic and the continent to attend trustee meetings as casually as some men go from New York to Jersey City—in the months before the war was intensely interested in the Panama-Pacific Exposition at San Francisco.

He conceived the idea that it would be a splendid thing for the King of England to visit that exposition. Anybody could conceive such an idea, but to get the King of England to agree to such a proposition is something everybody cannot do. Hoover did. If the war had not spoiled the plan King George would have made the visit.

The difficulties Hoover had to overcome in carrying out his plan were gigantic. Two trips from London to San Francisco were merely a minor part of his campaign.

In the first place, all thought of having the United States invite King George had to be dismissed at once. If such an invitation had been extended, this Nation would have had to invite all other crowned heads. If only King George had accepted, an appropriation of at least half a million dollars would have been required from Congress to provide for the expenses of his entertainment by the Nation and his journey across the continent. To get such an appropriation through Congress would be an impossible task.

But if King George elected to visit the exposition on his own account the thing might be done. Would the ministers consent, however? And would he?

Fortunately for Mr. Hoover, he is on intimate terms with the court circles and also with various members of the British Cabinet, Lloyd George and Winston Churchill being close friends. Both court and Cabinet circles—quite separated circles, by the way—had to be brought into agreement. This task was accomplished by Mr. Hoover, with the aid of some notable figures in British social life, and also with the aid of his highly intelligent wife.

The plan is finally arranged just 12

months ago was this: The King and his entourage were to proceed on a British battleship, properly equipped, to the Panama Canal, thence through to the Pacific and on to San Francisco. At San Francisco the King would remain aboard the ship and thus in British territory, save for certain scheduled visits he would make ashore, and the period of these visits would be the only times when he would be the guest of this Nation.

Then the squadron would proceed north to Victoria and Vancouver, and the King would journey eastward through Canada to take ship for home. All of this had been arranged quietly down to the last detail and Hoover was responsible for it all—when the war broke out and caused its abandonment.

Hoover is handling the gigantic Belgian relief work just exactly as he always has handled business matters—thoroughly, exactly, efficiently. He has put the resources and the machinery of his own business organization—and that is an organization world-wide in its scope—at the disposal of the relief work. For example, his agent in New York is his New York business partner, Lindon W. Bates, who, by the way, is a very close and intimate friend of ex-President Taft.

Hoover, acting by cable through Bates, will charter a ship at New York, load her with supplies as have been donated for relief, complete the cargo by purchase and send her to Rotterdam. There the highly trained organization of distribution which he has created takes charge of the cargo and disposes of it where it will do the most good.

There is no loss of time. He can work 26 hours a day and never turn a hair. He can do a marvelous number of things at once, and leave the impression on the observer's mind that he is not doing anything at all.

Several years ago, when plans for the Panama-Pacific Exposition at San Francisco were forming, a Californian living in Washington, who was interested in the project, was asked by the exposition management to call on Mr. Hoover at a Washington hotel to discuss some phases of the coming fair. This gentleman knew of Hoover, but had never met him.

He found Hoover not at all a distinguished-looking person; just an ordinary-looking American, like thousands of others who come daily to the office of the United States. But Hoover's talk bristled with splendid suggestions for the work. He had a grasp of detail that was remarkable. It is only fair to say that many of his suggestions were successfully carried out.

The Washingtonian, who is a member of the Gridiron Club, at the con-

clusion of the conversation, invited Mr. Hoover to be his guest at the next club dinner, then two weeks off. Mr. Hoover accepted. He asked, in his characteristic casual manner, where the dinner was to be and where and at what hour he was to present himself. "I'll be there," he said, and then remarked that he was leaving the next morning for San Francisco.

"That's the end of that invitation," thought the Washingtonian. During the two weeks he heard not a word from his prospective guest, but sharp at 7:30—the hour appointed—on the evening of the dinner, Mr. Hoover, faultlessly attired, cool and casual, appeared in the reception-room.

"When did you get back from San Francisco?" asked the Washingtonian. "Oh, about 20 minutes ago," said Hoover. At the close of the evening, in bidding adieu to his host, Hoover, still casual in his manner, mentioned by the way that he was sailing the next day for London.

Some months later the Washingtonian journeyed to London. He hoped to see Hoover there, but had arranged no meeting. Fifteen minutes after his arrival in his hotel Mr. Hoover's card came up, followed speedily by Mr. Hoover. Presently the two were in Mr. Hoover's limousine—"as long as a locomotive," the Washingtonian de-

scribes it—and on their way to the Red House. There followed a wonderful evening. The host found his guest interested in rare books and led him to a library filled with a collection over which any bibliophile would rave. Priceless works were there.

It came out in the course of the conversation—everything that one gets from Mr. Hoover about himself just "comes out." For there never is a trace of boastfulness in the conversation of this close-lipped man—that he and Mrs. Hoover for their amusement and in their leisure had translated Sgricola's De Re Metallica from the early 15th century copy they possessed and had the tremendous tome of their translation made into a book. Subsequently an autographed copy of this, wonderfully done, a veritable triumph of the bookmaker's art, came to the Washington home of the visitor.

But all of these things go merely to show the many-sidedness of the man, the easy manner in which he does things and his punctilio in social intercourse.

His genesis, his career, his adventures make up a story full of romance and color. All the world has been his playground. His adventures contain the material for a dozen novels of blood and action in the wild places of the world. Also the material for a dozen novels of high finance—high finance in its best phase, untainted with details of stock-jobbing and gentlemanly robbery, for the world of finance knows Hoover as a man of absolute integrity.

All of this adventuring by this master American mining engineer led surely to fortune and high place. "How much is Hoover worth?" asked an American of a London banker not long ago.

"I don't know exactly," was the reply. "His interests are so diverse and so widespread that I doubt that he knows himself. However, I do know that he is more than a 'pounds millionaire,'" which means that he is worth more than \$5,000,000.

Hoover's childhood was passed in West Branch, Ia., where he was born August 10, 1874. In youth he migrated with his family to California. There, in 1891, when Stanford University was but an infant among American colleges, he entered that institution, and supported himself through the four-

year course in the manner known to all poor college students. He specialized in mining engineering and was graduated in 1895. One of his classmates was Will Irwin, the writer, and the two collaborated in writing a learned treatise, now a textbook, on mining.

While still a student Hoover passed his summer vacations working in the field. For example, he was a minor employe of the Arkansas geological survey in 1893, and the Summer of 1893 he spent in like capacity with the United States Geological Survey in Nevada.

Also, in college he found time to court and win the promise of a fair co-ed, Miss Lou Henry, of Monterey, who, like him, was a distinguished student. Not until 1899 did the Hoover finances permit them to marry. Now the once co-ed from tiny, picturesque, old Spanish Monterey is a notable figure in the most exclusive English society, famed alike for her intellectual attainments and for her beauty.

For two years following graduation Hoover laid the foundation for his fame as a mining engineer by hard work as assistant manager of various mines in New Mexico and California, and then the great British mining firm of Bewick, Mooring & Co., of which he later became a partner, bearing of his capabilities, sent him to West Australia in charge of its mining staff.

In 1899 he returned to the United States to marry, and then, a bridegroom, the imperial government of China reached out for him and made him chief engineer of its bureau of mines. Read his official biography and you will find the simple record that during that period he was "doing extensive exploration work in the interior of China."

Extensive, indeed! The story of his march across the great Gobi desert at the head of his caravan, 29 days of battle with hostile natives who sought to destroy him and his party; of battles with heat and hunger and thirst, is an epic. Literally he had to fight his way and there were losses of life on both sides.

But he won his goal, opened up the country he wanted to open up, established mining operations and returned to his chief engineer of his bureau of mines. He entered that institution, and supported himself through the four-

the building of the Ching Wang Tow harbor improvements. Incidental to this work was the management of a railroad.

The nearest Mr. Hoover ever came to heading west once when a friend, in conversation, mentioned the immense load he was then carrying; handling mines, harbor construction works and a railroad all at one time. "I was only a kid then," murmured Mr. Hoover, reflectively.

Right in the midst of all this work came the Boxer uprising. Mr. Hoover was in Tientsin. Just as in England the American colony turned to him for leadership last year, so in Tientsin the European and American colony turned to him for leadership in organizing for their defense and for the defense of the city against the Boxers.

Those were strenuous, bloody weeks, but always through them all, so those who were there relate, Hoover was the cheerful, optimistic leader and director, daring in combat, effective in leadership, sparing himself neither danger nor labor and infusing all with his dauntless spirit.

Still he was "only a kid." His notable achievements in opening rich and highly productive mines in the hinterland of China sent him swiftly to the top in his profession of mining engineering. It was in 1902 that he became a partner in the firm of Bewick, Mooring & Co., which partnership he gave up in 1908.

The Hoover reputation was established as an honest mining engineer. His opinion of a prospect came to be held as the last word. The great investors of the world began to seek his advice. Patriotic American as he is, Hoover found out that London was the world's financial center, the home of operations for great mining undertakings. Thus it was that he moved to London and established himself in Red House.

France, Belgium and England have decorated him for his achievements in mining engineering. He is a member of many scientific and learned societies. The mere list of the huge corporations of which he is a director and a controlling factor is a long catalogue.

He is the chief influence in the Russia-Atlantic Company, with his great

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## Three Generations of Successful Artists in One Family

Miss Gladys Wiles Promises to Rival Distinguished Father and Grandfather



Portrait of Mrs. Wiles and Miss Gladys Wiles by Irving Wiles.

BY GUSTAV KOBBE.  
NEW YORK, July 3.—Three generations of artists in one family! That is the distinction of the Wiles clan. The late Lemuel Maynard Wiles, painter of "Snowbound," was the first member of the line to become a painter. His son, Mr. Irving R. Wiles, National Academician, is the present head of the house. Mr. and Mrs. Irving R. Wiles' young daughter Miss Gladys represents the third generation of this family in art.

Match it? Only by the anecdote come down from the time of Mendelssohn, the composer. His grandfather was a noted philosopher. Between them came Mendelssohn pore, who was wont to say, after the composer had given world-wide vogue to the name, "Once I was known as the son of the famous Mendelssohn; now I am known as the father."



Irving R. Wiles painting his portrait in black (Miss Wiles)

composed and highly picturesque painting of her standing beside a bust of Richelieu. There is a photograph of Mr. Wiles in his studio with this painting on his easel and his daughter posing for it. On the wall hangs his double portrait of his father and mother. The one photograph shows the three generations of artists in the Wiles family. If there were somewhere in the picture Mr. Wiles' delightful portrait of his gracious and attractive wife the family group would be complete.

Mr. Wiles is always importantly represented in the leading exhibitions and is constantly at work on important portrait commissions. He obtains likeness, character and pertinent accessories. One of his best known portraits is that of Professor John William Burgess in this portrait there is shown as an accessory a copy of an old master on the wall. Mrs. Burgess is an artist who devotes much of her time to copying old masters. The appropriateness of introducing one of these copies as an accessory in her husband's portrait immediately is evident. It is a touch of sentiment as well as of decoration.

Plenty is known about Mr. Wiles (he is in all the "Who's Whos"), and plenty doubtless will be known in time about Miss Gladys. But what about Lemuel Wiles, the founder of this line of artists, who died before the day of "Who's Who" yet was a most active painter and instructor, a friend of Morse, artist and inventor of the telegraph, and of many other artists? It will be interesting to learn something about him.

In Terry, a village in the western part of New York, where Lemuel Wiles' "folks" were almost pioneers, Lemuel as a boy was considered of small account because his "great" grandfather, but from the time he could hold a pencil in his fingers liked to draw. Graduating from the Albany Academy he became a school teacher and afterwards a principal and city librarian in Utica.

All this time, however, his leisure was devoted to drawing and painting, until realizing that to be a success as an artist he must break away from the schools, he, with much misgivings, sent a picture to the exhibition of the National Academy in New York. Fate hung upon the acceptance or rejection of that picture. If it got in he would go to New York and "hang up his shingle" as an artist. If not, there he was in Utica and there he stayed.

Not only was this picture—a landscape—hung; it was sold. To New York he came with his family and many misgivings as to the future. The Wileses lived in the old building, in Washington square. The building has been replaced by another. But in the very room occupied by Mr. Wiles Winthrop laid the scene of that famous early American novel, "Ceceyl Dreams," and there the elder Wiles met Samuel F. B. Morse, who, a silvery-haired old man, worked in a studio full of wires. Winslow Homer occupied one of the towers of the picturesque old building.

Here was an artist's hive—the studios of Wyant, Kensett, Elliott, Lovell Carr, William Farr, Nyas Eaton, J. O. Eaton, Wall, Blakelock, William M. Chase was there for a while as a pupil of J. O. Eaton. The elder Wiles' work in landscape painting is well known. It was typically American, although after he visited Europe he varied it somewhat, while a California trip resulted in a series of pictures of the old Spanish missions. In Europe he painted Venetian and Genoese subjects. But his best-known work is "Snowbound"—an old farmhouse in the grip of a blizzard. Like the rest of his productions, this was noticeable for poetic feeling.

During the latter part of his life the elder Wiles painted in New York during the Winter and in Summer taught painting at his country place, Silver Lake, Wyoming County, New York. He had an extraordinary number of pupils who came from all over the Eastern and Southern States. He never forgot any of them, often corresponding with and advising them for years after they left his immediate care. A wise, kindly man was Lemuel Maynard Wiles. His wife, who was a Miss Ramsay, of Albany, also was an artist, and one of the very few women who in those days exhibited at the National Academy.

It will have been seen by this time that Miss Gladys Wiles has come naturally by her talent. Yet at first she leaned toward music as a career. For a young girl she was an excellent pianist. But at the school days she was having shown talent, her father thought, for painting, and being really greatly interested in the study of music. Since then painting has absorbed her interest.

She commenced at the Art Students' League. After that she was with Mr. William M. Chase, who at one time was her father's instructor. While she is at the present time with Mr. Chase's students in California, she has a studio at No. 139 West Fifty-seventh street, where she is working with the aim of eventually devoting herself to portraiture. She has also done some dog pictures, several of which have been in MacDowell Club exhibitions. Without any knowledge of the artist's identity I was at once attracted to "Profile" in the Academy show, looked in the catalogue and discovered that it was by Miss Gladys Wiles, whom I judged to be the granddaughter of Lemuel and the daughter of Irving Wiles. The supposition proved to be correct. Hence this history.