

現代之勝利者

STORIES OF PEOPLE WHO
ACHIEVE SUCCESS

FIRST VOLUME

SIR ROBERT HO TUNG

WHEN we read the stories of wonderful achievements of people in Western lands, we are apt to think that such successes are possible only in foreign countries. This is not the case, as the story of Robert Ho Tung will show. Starting his business life at an early age in a minor position on the indoor staff of the Chinese Customs service, he rose step by step to great business and social heights until King George V made him a knight and the Chinese Government decorated him. This, in brief, is the outline of his career. Because of his knighthood, he is called Sir Robert.

Born in Hongkong sixty-one years ago, Sir Robert was the eldest son of a large family. He had four brothers and three sisters. His parents were poor people, and, under the strict discipline of his mother, the lad, in common with his brothers and sisters, was often called upon to do such menial duties as taking and fetching the washing, carrying firewood, sweeping and scrubbing floors, etc. There was, however, sufficient means to give the children a little education.

At the age of seven according to Chinese reckoning, Robert was sent to a Chinese school, where the fees varied from \$6 to \$15 per annum. Here he showed that he had a natural gift for learning, and his teacher was so impressed by and attached to him that when he left this school at the age of twelve to receive an English education, he was requested to remain on and receive free tuition. Robert, however, was ambitious even at this early age and he felt compelled to decline the kind offer, as he was anxious to pick up English knowledge.

From the age of twelve to seventeen, Robert attended the Hongkong Central School (now Queen's College) learning English. Here he gave promise of the success which was

to come to him in after life, for, by diligent application to his studies, he became a monitor in the highest class — a high honor much coveted by the boys. Then began his career in the world. He entered a competitive examination in Canton for a post on the indoor staff of the Maritime Customs there, and was the only candidate selected out of about twenty, all the others being older than he. Here he remained from 1878 to 1880, earning a salary of Haikwan Taels 20 (about \$30 per month).

The post in the Customs did not offer young Ho Tung sufficient scope for his ambitions, so he resigned this position and entered commerce, which he eventually showed was his true forte, by accepting the post of junior assistant to the comprador of Messrs. Jardine, Matheson and Company, Limited. Here he only received \$15 per month, plus an annual bonus. He worked very hard and at the end of the first year his services were so much appreciated that he was given a bonus of \$400, which was increased to \$600 at the end of the second year. During this time he dealt largely in sugar, importing raw sugar from Java and the Philippines to Hongkong and exporting refined sugar to all the treaty ports in China. In the third year, opportunity came his way and he eagerly snatched it. He was offered the Chinese agency of the Hongkong Fire and Canton Insurance Companies, both of which were managed by his employers. He consulted the elder members of Messrs. Jardine, Matheson's Chinese staff, but they all advised him not to accept it, on the ground that the venture would never be a success. However, Sir Robert disagreed with them and decided to take on the work. By the display of energy, perseverance, and steady application to duty, he managed to make far more of a success of the undertaking than he expected, but it was a very strenuous struggle and involved much uphill work. His high intelligence, natural business aptitude, and energy later found much scope

for development, and he was so successful that before his association with the firm came to an end in 1900 he had risen from a junior position to the important and responsible office of chief comprador, which he held for more than six years. Reasons of health compelled him to relinquish this position in favor of his brother, Ho Fook, but during the period which he held it he used his influence and powers to great advantage, both to the firm that was fortunate to command his services as well as to himself.

Since that time, Sir Robert has won his way to the highest pinnacles of financial and business success in the Colony which gave him birth, and to-day he is a very rich man — so wealthy, indeed, that he can with truth be described as one of the great pillars of Hongkong's financial strength. His advice is frequently sought by the leading interests of the Colony, and he has come to be recognized as one of the shrewdest business men Hongkong has ever known. He is a very large shareholder in the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, the Hongkong and Whampoa Dock Company, and many other big concerns, while evidence of the value attached to his commercial insight is to be found in the fact that he is a director of several prominent companies, including the Hongkong and Whampoa Dock Company, the Hongkong Electric Company, the Hongkong Tramway Company, the Hongkong Land Investment Company, the Hongkong Reclamation Company, the Hongkong, Canton and Macao Steamboat Company, the Indo-China Steam Navigation Company, the Hongkong Fire Insurance Company, the Canton Insurance Office, and the Kam Hing Knitting Company. Although in recent years his health has not permitted him to take as prominent a part as he would wish in public life and business activity, he is still to be found every day at his private office in the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank Building, where he is always being consulted on matters of business policy and high

finance. His own interests, too, as a very large property owner, naturally occupy a deal of time. Besides this, Sir Robert is often consulted regarding financial and industrial affairs in China by Chinese high officials and statesmen, many of whom have come to regard his advice as being of the utmost value to the country. He also has large personal interests of an industrial character in North China and Manchuria, this fact demonstrating the wide influence which he wields.

Sir Robert's interest in public affairs have been many and varied. He has served in an official capacity on almost every organization for the promotion of the interests and well-being of the Chinese of Hongkong, and also on committees of welcome to royal visitors to the Colony, and on war fund and famine relief committees. As a public benefactor, he has spent with almost prodigal liberality from the wealth which he has won by his own tenacity of purpose and marked business ability. Education especially has found him a most generous supporter. He is one of the biggest benefactors to the Hongkong University's Endowment Fund, his gifts to this institution totaling no less a sum than \$260,000. He presented to the Colony the Kowloon British School, the first civil school for European children in Hongkong, founded a scholarship which bears his name at Queen's College, and in many other directions has aided the cause of learning.

In the Great War, especially did his generosity become manifest. He contributed no less a sum than \$10,000 to the Prince of Wales' Fund, gave \$50,000 for two aëroplanes and motor ambulances used by the British Army, and contributed another \$6,000 toward the cost of yet a further aëroplane. Always a kind and generous benefactor to the poor, he displayed his kindness of heart in a striking way, when the Hongkong Government decided to increase the rates by seven per cent for war purposes. Feeling that this might

fall as a heavy burden on the poorer class, he himself paid this extra impost on behalf of all his tenants for the whole period during which it was in force, this costing him no less a sum than \$25,000. To help those brought into distress by flood, famine, and typhoon, both in Hongkong and in North and South China, Sir Robert has very freely given to funds initiated on their behalf; while during one period of high rice costs he gave a sum of \$10,000 to the fund raised by the Tung Wah Hospital Committee, for the purpose of supplying free rice congee to the poor people. During the rice famine in Hongkong he offered, to the Hongkong Government, to import an unlimited quantity of rice from Bangkok and Saigon, selling it to the community at cost and bearing all losses in case the market went against him. Another demonstration of his liberality and of his anxiety to aid those less favored than himself was forthcoming at the recent celebrations of his sixty-first birthday, when he broke with old Chinese custom by giving one instead of two dinner parties, and devoted the sum thus saved to charitable purposes. Yet a further indication of his thought for others was forthcoming on this occasion, when he notified his intention to give a sum of \$100,000 for the building of an Industrial School for poor Chinese.

Sir Robert performed a work of the utmost utility to Hongkong and South China generally when, in 1920, he accepted the chairmanship of the most important of the subcommittees functioning under the committee appointed by the Government to investigate the economic resources of the Colony. This subcommittee conducted the most extensive inquiries into every branch of industry, laboring with infinite care and exactitude, and its report was contained in a big bound volume, the data contained in which must be of the utmost value as a permanent record of all aspects of industry, including labor and other conditions. In this connection the

pioneer work which Sir Robert and Lady Ho Tung have done in the New Territories in sericulture, tobacco, tea, rice, wheat, cotton, and onion cultivation was of the greatest assistance. The record of what they have accomplished was fully set forth in the report, accompanied by beautiful illustrations, and it is one of the features of this printed record.

Here it may be explained that in the first year of British occupation of the New Territories, Sir Robert acquired some eighteen acres of land on the outskirts of Kam Tsin village, which had been left uncultivated for many years. His wife, Lady Ho Tung, has always been noted for her hobby of flower, fruit, and vegetable growing, and here on this land the opportunity was presented for practical work in this connection. As the result of years of toil and perseverance and the expenditure of much money, there has grown up at this village a model farm called the Tung Ying Hok Po, this name being derived from a combination of Sir Robert's first and Lady Ho Tung's maiden names. It covers now close on seventy acres and is in every way a modern place, replete with substantial buildings and modern equipment. In sericulture, especially, it has resulted in the carrying out of highly successful experiments, demonstrating the possibility of the New Territories being the chief silk-producing center of South China. In his labors on this farm, Sir Robert has shown a characteristic regard for the well-being of those less favored than himself. He endeavored to induce the farmers in the locality to take up leases of land, rent free, and also offered them free seeds and assistance to share in the results of the crops laid down. They could not, however, be induced to develop the land, and thus it was left to Sir Robert, who has engaged day labor. Here again he showed his regard for the workers by making every arrangement possible to house them comfortably. It is, from every standpoint, real pioneer work which

Sir Robert and Lady Ho Tung have carried out at this model farm of theirs

“The Man Who Settled the Great Strike”—that is a title which Sir Robert Ho Tung richly deserves. In the early part of 1922, the Colony of Hongkong was brought to a point of almost total paralysis as a consequence of a general stoppage of labor in connection with the Seamen’s Strike. It looked as if no one could settle the dispute. Delegates from both sides met and grappled with the problem day after day, even sitting late into the night. But they could not adjust their viewpoints in regard to the period of half pay for the seamen who could not be immediately absorbed into employment following any settlement reached. The shipowners offered one month’s half pay and the seamen stood out for five and a half months’. Sir Robert, who was greatly distressed at seeing the plight into which the Colony had been placed, then got quietly to work. He let it be known, through diplomatic channels, that he was prepared to guarantee to make up the difference in the two periods—that is, to be responsible for four and a half months’ half pay—cost whatever it might. The result was that the parties came to an agreement, and the Great Strike, which threatened to imperil the whole Colony, was finally settled. The part which Sir Robert played in bringing about that result is undoubted, and is unanimously recognized. It is no stretching of the truth to say that he was the man who made the settlement possible. What he saved the Colony from, will never be fully known. He did what he did because he wanted to serve the place which gave him birth, and because he was sore at heart over the sufferings of others. He has the satisfaction of knowing that he has done a duty nobly and well.

At a time when the use of the Boxer Indemnity is being so freely discussed, it is worth recalling that more than twenty years ago Sir Robert outlined a scheme which eventually

secured the commendation of the Right Honorable Sir John Jordan, former British Minister to China, and which, if adopted, would not only have aided China, but would have meant the solution of a problem which has long caused a deal of international friction. His idea was that, as one of China's greatest needs was railways, the Powers to whom indemnities were due should contract with the Chinese Government, so that the whole sum be used for the building of railroads under the joint control of the Powers, to be operated by them until the full amount of the Indemnity was returned and until China was in a position to become by purchase the sole owner of the lines. Here was a piece of sound statesmanship, which shows, incidentally, that Sir Robert Ho Tung has ability in yet another field.

Sir Robert is a Justice of the Peace for Hongkong. The honor of knighthood was conferred upon him by King George in 1915. He is also the proud possessor of several Chinese decorations. By the late President Yuan Shih-kai he was honored by the conferring of the Order of the Chia Ho (Excellent Crop), Third Class; the Second Class of the same Order was given him by President Li Yuan-hung; while the Second Class of the Order with brilliancy came to him from President Hsu Shih-chang. Again, in December of last year, on the occasion of his sixty-first birthday, President Li Yuan-hung conferred upon Sir Robert the First Class Chia Ho with Grand Sash. The insignia of this Order was brought down to Hongkong by a special delegate from President Li, being accompanied by a letter of congratulation and a commendatory tablet from the President. The celebrations which marked Sir Robert's birthday were attended by a notable gathering of high officials of the Hongkong Government, including the Governor of Hongkong, the heads of the leading British firms, and prominent members of the Chinese community. It was a unique gathering and testified to the

popularity, esteem, and high regard in which Sir Robert is held in Hongkong. It is also interesting to record that Sir Robert has also been appointed Honorary Adviser to both President Hsu Shih-chang and President Li Yuan-hung. He holds, as well, the honor of Doctor of Laws of the Hongkong University, for which institution he has done so much.

A man of wide knowledge, Sir Robert has traveled extensively throughout Europe and the United States, besides making frequent business and pleasure trips to North China and Japan. His travels have given him a broad outlook of men and things, and a good knowledge of Western methods and thoughts. These characteristics have served him well in attaining the success he has achieved in life.

As to Sir Robert's philosophy of life, his policy in business consists of straightforwardness and cautiousness. He attributes his success in life to honesty, foresight, carefulness, courtesy, and perseverance. He is a strong opponent of extravagance in any form, and in this connection it may be mentioned that he is a keen believer in the reform and abandonment of bad customs in China, as shown by his public announcement at his recent birthday celebrations that he intended giving only one dinner instead of two, devoting the money thus saved to charitable purposes. The habit of thrift came to him at quite an early age, for in his young days, when he was only allowed three cash for his tiffin, he tried to save one every day. When he had, in this way, saved some forty cents or so, he made it a custom to help old beggars by giving them five or ten cents at a time. This trait in his character has shown itself greatly in later years, for Sir Robert is always mindful of those who need help, and he makes it a point always to be grateful. He never fails to return kindness, and throughout all his life he has never forgotten his old friends, no matter how poor they might be.

The successful career of Robert Ho Tung should be an encouragement and an inspiration to every young Chinese who is striving to make his mark in life. To-day thousands of young men who are unable to go to college are working as clerks and in junior positions in the Customs, post office, telegraph office, railways or business firms. Some of them are occasionally heard complaining that they see no prospects for promotion. They say they have to work hard and get little in return, while others who, they think, are more lucky and fortunate than they, work very little and yet are far richer. To such, the example of Robert Ho Tung is a lesson. When he found that the Customs service did not provide sufficient scope for his energy and ability, he found a sphere where his talents had fuller play. He did not even go to America or England; he found the opportunity at his very door. There are opportunities for all young men, waiting to be used. And nowhere more so than here in China.

The life work of Robert Ho Tung should also bring home to the Chinese people the lesson of the joy of giving. Sir Robert is a rich man, but, as this sketch of his career has shown, he ever responds to worthy calls for help with a generous hand. Many Chinese have learned the art of making money and have handed it down to their children; but all too few have learned the joy of giving as Sir Robert Ho Tung has. There is nothing wrong in accumulating wealth, provided it is honestly come by. It is a privilege to share with others, as Sir Robert does, the fruits of honest toil and labor.

CAPTAIN ROBERT DOLLAR

ROBERT DOLLAR is the foremost producer and exporter of lumber in the United States, and is the owner of two fleets of steamers, one for trade on the Pacific coast and the other for over-sea trade. No other person has done so much as he to build up commerce between the Pacific coast and the Orient. He is a still greater creator and cementer of friendship between the Orient and



the Occident. He is also noted for his work in building up a powerful American merchant marine and for his generous gifts for education and for charity. The last Emperor of China and Yuan Shih-kai decorated him, and when Li Yuan-hung was chosen President of China, one of the first things he did was to send him a cable expressing a desire for his friendship. He has been honored by election to the presidency of both the Chamber of Commerce and the Merchants' Exchange of San Francisco, by selection as a director of the Foreign Trade Council, by appointment as a director of the thirty-million-dollar (gold) American International Corporation.

Yet among the great business men of America no one began life more humbly than he. He was born in a little home above a lumber firm's office at Falkirk, Scotland, seventy-seven years ago. When only twelve years old he was taken from school to earn a few shillings as office boy with a shipping company. The family moved to Canada to live a year later, and little Robert, who was then under fourteen years of age, was sent two hundred miles from civilization to a lumber camp to be cook's boy. Even to-day lumber camps are noted for their hard life and the rough men who work in them ; sixty years ago they were much worse. The lowest job in a lumber camp was that of cook's boy. They swore at him when he brought the food to the hungry lumbermen if it was not as good as they expected. However, Robert was doing his best, and most of the men came to like him, especially as he could read and write love letters for those who could not read and write.

The camp manager one day caught the boy doing some figures and learning to write.

"What are you up to?" demanded the boss.

The boy was startled, and he tore up the sheet of paper he had spread on top of a flour barrel.

"I've finished my work," he said.

"What were you doing?" asked the boss.

"When I have any spare time I like to learn," he explained timidly.

"Learn what?"

"To figure and write."

The camp manager picked up the paper. It was covered with figures and writing. He said no more. He did not dismiss the boy for using the company's time for such a

purpose, but quietly provided the little fellow with books, and also saw to it that he had time for study.

The boy did not confine his studies to books or to cooking. He learned how to fell trees, how to tell good lumber from bad, and how to get along with the rough workmen. Before he became a man he was able to hold his own when trouble broke out. He had shown such remarkable ability for managing men and things that he was made foreman over a big gang when he was twenty-one years old.

All Scotch children are taught to read the Bible and to be thrifty. Robert Dollar had saved most of his hard-won wages, though the pay was only \$10 a month at the start. Another Scotch trait is independence. He had enough money when twenty-seven to buy a bit of timberland and started business for himself in high hopes. He was caught by hard times and became a bankrupt, as many stronger business men were obliged to do at that time. He had learned, however, not to lose heart when things went wrong. Without difficulty he found a good job as manager of an important lumber firm. He saved every cent that he made and paid off all his debts in full within four years. He was and is a great believer in the Golden Rule and the teachings of Jesus. His employer took him into partnership, and their business was to ship lumber to England.

Robert Dollar is intensely practical and wants to see things for himself, even if he has to travel thousands of miles to see them. He keeps his eyes open all the time for new opportunities. Perhaps this explains why he moved, next, to Michigan, in the Middle West of the United States, and later to the Pacific coast. He began lumbering redwood in northern

California, but he did not like to pay the amount he was charged for transporting his output. He investigated and found that if he could get a ship of his own he could cut the cost to half. He bought the Newsboy, a boat of about three hundred tons. It paid for itself in less than a year. This set him to thinking. If one little boat could earn so much, why not get more boats? He did, and that was the beginning of the now famous Robert Dollar Steamship Company, with one fleet of steamers doing business on the west coast of America running all the way from Alaska to the Panama Canal, and another fleet plying between the Pacific coast and the Far East, with branches in Shanghai, Hongkong, Tientsin, Hankow, Kobe, Petrograd, Manila, Vancouver, Seattle, and New York. Robert Dollar built up this big enterprise through foresight, energy, patience, and fair dealing.

When Captain Dollar first began to ship lumber to China, the demand was solely for the very largest pieces. This left a by-product of small boards that could not be shipped. He knew that the Chinese did not use these great sizes, but that nearly all of them had to be cut into small pieces by hand-saws. He persuaded his Chinese customers to take some of the smaller sizes. He took a trip to China, and created a market for his by-product. Return cargoes were not to be had at that time. As there was no profit in running empty steamers, trade must be developed. He found lumber in the Philippines and Japan and pig iron in China for his steamers on their return trips to America. The Dollar steamships were thus kept loaded, both going and coming.

While the Dollar Steamship Company trades with India, Japan, and the Philippines, its largest business is with China, where the captain is held in high esteem. Our people respect

him for his business integrity and honest dealing. In addressing a meeting of the United States Chamber of Commerce he once said: "In all our years of trading with the Chinese, involving millions of dollars, we have never lost a cent, never had one bad debt. I wish we could say the same of other countries, including our own." Time and again Captain Dollar, on going aboard one of his ships on the Pacific coast to inspect the outgoing cargo, has ordered thousands and thousands of boards to be taken back, because they were not in every particular exactly what the Chinese buyers had ordered.

Captain Dollar has done great service in extending American commerce in the Orient and in creating a fleet of high-class steamers, and in striving very hard to have America adopt sensible shipping legislation. He has also done more to prevent war and promote peace between America and the Orient than any living statesman. When war was threatened between the United States and Japan over the San Francisco school question, Captain Dollar succeeded in getting up a party of commercial men from different chambers of commerce to visit Japan. The Emperor of Japan received the delegation, and friendly relations were maintained. Two years later Captain Dollar organized a commission to visit China. Their reception by the Manchu Emperor, by government officials, by cities, and by commercial bodies was more elaborate and cordial than anything before or since extended to foreign visitors. In 1915 a Chinese delegation, headed by the late Chang Hsun-chang, returned the visit of the American delegation and created world-wide interest. This exchange of courtesies developed new business between the two countries and proved very

valuable in bringing the two nations into closer understanding.

Captain Dollar is a hard worker, and each day he gets much done before most people are out of bed. He spends much of his time and money in helping church and charitable work, being especially interested in the Young Men's Christian movement throughout the world. On his last visit to China a few months ago he took part in the formal opening of the Wuchang Y. M. C. A. building, which was erected with money given by him.

Captain Dollar's vast experience has taught him that the following qualities are helpful to the attainment of success :

"1—Fear God and be just and honest to your fellow man.

"2—Incessant hard work.

"3—Frugality and saving your money.

"4—Drink no intoxicating liquors; in these days of keen competition, whisky and business won't mix—you *can't do both.*"