

LORD ROTHSCHILD, FINANCIER, DEAD

Head of English Branch of Famous Bankers Succumbs After an Operation at 74.

PEER AND JEWISH LEADER

Aided England in Several Crises—
His Wide Philanthropies — The Family Fortune \$2,000,000,000.

LONDON, March 31.—The death of Nathan Mayer Rothschild, first Baron Rothschild, head of the British branch of the great banking firm, occurred at his London residence at 4:30 o'clock this afternoon. Lord Rothschild underwent an operation for the removal of the prostate gland on Saturday. Funeral services will take place Friday at Willesden, a northwest suburb of London.

The news of the death of Lord Rothschild, which circulated throughout the city just as business men were leaving for the day, created a shock, for, besides the great power he wielded, Lord Rothschild was one of the most popular men in the City of London. This popularity spread far beyond financial, social, and sporting circles, as all classes shared his benevolence. Once a year every omnibus in London was decorated with his racing colors, for on this day he sent to each driver and conductor a brace of pheasants.

In Jewish circles the death of Baron Rothschild creates a vacancy which there is none to fill. With his other manifold duties, he devoted a great amount of time and money to his poorer coreligionists. Since the war began he added to all these voluntary duties the Presidency of the British Red Cross Society, which has raised by subscription \$7,500,000 within a few months for the care of the wounded, and it is believed that the consequent work and worry had much to do with his death.

Among the first to send condolences to the family were the King and Queen and the Queen Mother Alexandra.

Lord Rothschild's heir, the Hon. Lionel W. Rothschild, who rejoined his regiment, the Royal Bucks Yeomanry, on the outbreak of the war, is not so well known as other members of the family. He has devoted his attention to the study of zoology, and has been a consistent supporter of racing. Although in the House of Commons for a time, he took little part in the debates.

Nathan Mayer de Rothschild, head of the English branch of the famous Rothschild family, was born in London Nov. 8, 1840. He was the son of Baron Lionel de Rothschild of Gunnersbury Park, Middlesex, and Charlotte, daughter of Baron Charles de Rothschild of Naples. He was educated at King's College School and at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he began his life-long friendship with King Edward VII.

Soon after he was 21 he entered the great financial house founded by his grandfather and namesake, N. M. de Rothschild, third son of the famous founder of the house, Mayer Anselm of Frankfort. As a young man Lord Rothschild took a great interest in politics. At 25 he was elected to represent Aylesbury as a Liberal, and this seat he retained until 1885, when he was raised to the peerage. He was the first professing Jew to enter the House of Lords.

His Philanthropies.

In the history of the Rothschild family, Baron Nathan was one of the foremost figures. He was widely known for his philanthropies as well as his enormous wealth, and it was a by-word that "no State with which Nathan did business ever failed." He had a house in Piccadilly and a country seat in Tring Park, Herts. He was noted also for his collection of art works.

How much of the Rothschild fortune was in the possession of the English head of the family would be impossible to tell. The total Rothschild wealth has been estimated at \$2,000,000,000—a figure all the more remarkable since the family was practically unknown a century ago.

The founder of the family, Mayer Anselm, was born in Frankfort in 1743. His father wished him to become a rabbi, but he preferred business and set up as a money lender at the sign of the Red Shield, (Rothschild.) Before he died he had built up an extensive banking business, and negotiated several important Government loans. He left five sons and five daughters. The sons established branches at Vienna, London, Paris, and Naples, Nathan going to London. The head of the house still continued at Frankfort in accordance with their father's dying wish, and important consultations are still held there.

It was in 1805 that the English branch was founded. A private system of communication and trans-Channel service enabled the house to succeed rapidly. In the struggle to overthrow Napoleon it negotiated loans enabling the allies to carry on the war and the Rothschild fortunes were practically staked on the outcome.

Founder a Waterloo Spectator.

Probably the most famous tradition of the Rothschilds has to do with the Battle of Waterloo, at which the founder of the London house was present as a spectator. He watched the varying fortunes of the armies all day, and, seeing the turn of the tide, spurred his horse to Brussels, took carriage to Ostend, crossed the Channel in a row-boat, and hastened to London. He arrived in advance of the news of Napoleon's defeat, and had bought heavily in the low market before the tidings sent securities up.

Baron Rothschild, however, always denied this story, and when it appeared a few years ago in a book, "The Romance of the Rothschilds," he went into court in an effort to have the book suppressed. He declared the story untrue and libelous to his grandfather's memory. His suit, however, was lost.

This sensitiveness of the family cropped out on another occasion, when the Baron and his brothers sought to stop the production of the "Five Frankfurters." The play, which dealt with the Rothschild family history, was given first in Germany, and then in England, where it enjoyed great success, but was discontinued after a brief run. Later it was produced in New York. It was more than broadly hinted that the piece had been withdrawn in Europe by means of financial inducements from the Rothschilds.

Since the death of his father, in 1879, Baron Rothschild had been the commanding figure in British finance. He built up the power and prestige of the great house, and it has been estimated that loans issued from the house under his direction have exceeded \$3,000,000,000. He was of enormous service to England in the early days of British occupation of Egypt, and also came to the rescue by pouring in millions to aid Lord Beaconsfield in the purchase of the Khédive's Suez Canal shares for England.

Financially Aided England.

At the time of the Baring crisis Baron Rothschild took a leading part in organizing a guarantee fund of \$85,000,000 when British credit was in danger and devoted his energy to obtaining gold from France with such success that he was publicly praised by the Governor of the Bank of England. It was his financial aid also which enabled Cecil Rhodes in 1887 to acquire the competing interest in the Kimberley diamond mines, thereby opening the way for the extension of British power in South Africa.

During the Boer war he did much to contribute to the success of British loans by taking large blocks for his own firm as evidence of his confidence in the ultimate outcome.

The peerage conferred upon him by Gladstone was regarded as a just reward for these and other public services. He was also appointed Privy Councillor and made a Knight of the Grand Cross of the Victorian Order. In

the Jewish community of England he was the unquestioned leader. His benefactions and charitable interests were so extensive that a complete department of the banking house office was set aside for the administration of philanthropies. No one ever knew how great his contributions were. Most of them were given on the distinct understanding that the source from which they came should not be revealed.

He was a liberal giver to the Jewish Free School, of which he was President, and also to the Jewish Board of Guardians, the United Synagogue, and the Russo-Jewish Committee. Lord Rothschild was inclined toward the views of the more liberal adherents of the Jewish faith, and in religious disputes often took the liberal side against leaders of the ultra-orthodox type.

In the distribution of his wealth, however, he recognized neither race nor creed. He was Treasurer of King Edward's Hospital Fund and devoted large sums to almost every important philanthropy.

Baron Rothschild married Emma, daughter of Baron Mayer Karl de Rothschild of Frankfort, on April 17, 1867. They had two sons and a daughter.