Recollections of Colonel Andrews California's Oldest Mason

By Arthur H. Dutton

"IT was on September 15, 1844, that I was made a Mason, in Mount Moriah lodge, Louisville, Ky.—just 67 years ago. I am the oldest Mason in California."

With this statement, Colonel A. Andrews, one of this state's earliest pioneers, opened a tale of deepest interest, told with clearness and attention to detail that would have been surprising in a man of 40. Yet Colonel Andrews is 88 years of age, having been born in Louisville, Ky., in 1823. He looks not a day over 60 or 65, so clear is his complexion, so active is his mind. His memory is nothing short of marvelous. He remembers dates, names and places of three generations ago as if they were of yesterday.

San Francisco has been noted for its interesting characters, but none can surpass Colonel Andrews. He is a part of the city. He has watched it grow from a cluster of small huts to a metropolis. He has passed through all its vicissitudes, from "the days of old, the days of gold, the days of '49," to this year of grace, 1911. He was a participant in the lusty growth of both city and state and, best of all, remembers its incidents, little and big. His conversation is a verbal history of California.

Colonel Andrews went as a youth from Kentucky to New Orleans and there, at the outbreak of the Mexican war, entered the army of Major General Winfield Scott and went with it on its victorious march, through skirmish, assault and pitched battle with Santa Ana's troops, to the City of Mexico. One of his most treasured possessions is a gold ring, upon which is engraved: "Lieutenant A. B. Moses to Captain A. Andrews, Puebla, Mexico, 1847." It was given to him by the first lieutenant of his company in the Second Ohio regiment.

The old veteran views with sadness the passing of his comrades of the Mexican war.

"Eighteen years ago," he said, "when I was president of the Mexican War Veterans' association, there were between 500 and 600 of us. Now there are but three left in this vicinity—Major Edwin A. Sherman of Oakland, George Thistleton and myself."

The marvelous memory of the colonel is shown by two incidents, occurring more than half a century apart. Here is the way the colonel himself tells the story:

"While on the march one day, during the Mexican war, I noticed a young soldier, profusely covered with gold lace. He fairly shone with gold. I asked a brother officer who he was. 'Why,' said the officer, 'that is Sergeant Wickes, a fine soldier—one of our best sergeants. We let him dress that way. It pleases him.' The sergeant was smooth faced, quite young and had a scar on the left side of his upper lip.

"I did not see him again during the war. A few years ago, in my store in this city, an old man with long, flowing white beard came in and asked for Captain Andrews. 'I am Captain Andrews,' I told him. 'Oh, no; you're not,' he said; 'for Captain Andrews is older than I am and I'm a pretty old man, 75.' I proved to him, though, that I was myself and he asked me if I remembered him. I told him I did. He could not believe me. 'Tell me the first letter of your last name,' said I, 'and I'll tell your name.' 'W,' he replied, 'Your name is Wickes.' I told him, 'and you have a scar on your upper lip, haven't you?' He brushed his long moustache aside and there was the scar. Then I related the incident of our first meeting in 1848, and he remembered it.

"Wickes had come to me from his home in Colusa, in his effort to obtain identification to get his pension as a Mexican war veteran. He got it and also about $1,000 back penson due him."

COLONEL A. ANDREWS AT 88

To Colonel Andrews is due largely the raising of the pensions of Mexican war veterans from $12 to $20, and lately to $53 a month. Right after the fire of 1906, when some of the few remaining veterans were driven to want, the colonel wrote to President Roosevelt and others in behalf of the impoverished veterans, and a bill was presented in congress which was passed by both houses within 24 hours.

"For my own part, I never used a cent of my pension for myself," says Colonel Andrews. "When I got it, I gave it each payday to an infirm old lady, 95 years of age."

After the Mexican war Andrews returned to New Orleans, and soon after, in 1849, came to California, where he has made his home ever since. He went early to Sacramento, and was present at the time of the great fire of November 2, 1852, which destroyed the town, leaving only one house standing. He remembers that fire vividly, he says.

"But not so vividly," he continued, "as the terrible fire in the Jesuit church in Santiago, Chile, December 8, 1864, when I saw 3,000 people burned to death before my eyes. I was standing in the street, close to the church. The fire spread so rapidly that the poor people were blinded, the doors were choked up and but a handful escaped. It was on the feast of the conception of the Virgin Mary, a great festival there. That awful sight is as plain before me now as I speak as it was then."

Colonel Andrews went to South America in 1864 and traveled through nearly every country in that continent. Then he went on a world tour lasting eight years.

"I went to many, many lands," he said. "I remember the cities, the countries, my experiences, as well now as I did right after my trip. I can recall people and things I saw as if it were but a year ago."

Truly the memory and the clearness of mind of Colonel Andrews are wonderful. He has a faculty for recalling dates and names that few possess, even young men. He is full of anecdote of the early San Francisco days and knew practically all of the noted pioneers.

"I used to have a mania for joining orders and societies," he said. "At one time I belonged to more than 30 organizations. I am a thirty-third degree Mason, belonged for many years to the Odd Fellows, was great sachem of California and great Minewa of the United States in the Improved Order of Red Men in 1884, in which year the president appointed me United States commissioner to the world's fair in New Orleans.

"I am a democrat in politics, and during the Tilden-Hayes campaign I gathered and marched 10,000 uniformed men for Tilden, with 400 mounted aids. It was the greatest political parade ever seen in San Francisco. I was the last president of San Francisco's old Tammany society and the first president of the Manhattan club in this city."

Colonel Andrews is a student and has profited by his travels around the world and his long and varied experiences with men and conditions. He speaks French, Spanish and German and is an authority on many subjects.

He is loud in his praises of the early California pioneers. He never tires of extolling them.

"They were a splendid lot," said he. "There were few old men among them. They were strong, venturesome young fellows, mostly from the south. They were the men who would fear nothing and could accomplish anything."

Loyalty to friends and comrades is one of Colonel Andrews' main tenets.

"I have in my store," said he, "three clerks, one of whom—my nephew—has been with me 38 years, another 33 years and the third 25 years. They have grown up with me and my business. I took them in as boys. I have a Chinese employe who has been with me 37 years."

Andrews has been on the staff of nearly every California governor. He was the first colonel on the staff of General John A. Sutter, who had 68 on his staff altogether. He was 10 years with Sutter.

Colonel Andrews comes from a long lived race. One sister lived to be 88 years old, another 80 years. His grandfather died at 109 years of age. He has but one son, to whom he recently deeded all of his property, with whom he now lives, his wife having died three years ago. He has 16 nephews and nieces in San Francisco and a legion of grand and great grand nephews and nieces.

Looking at Colonel Andrews as he sits in his big armchair in his Leavenworth street home, it is hard to realize that he is well nigh a nonogenarian. His eye is bright, despite his oft repeated complaint that his sight is failing—and this gives him much anxiety.

"My physician tells me," said he, "that my lungs and heart are sound and strong, but my eyes worry me. I should hate to lose my sight. I should really not care to live if I could not read. My general health, though, is excellent."

The colonel walks about with the agility of a man of 50 or 60, well preserved. His mind is the most youthful part of him. It has never dimmed, and it is in conversation with him that one finds it most difficult to appreciate his advanced age. His voice is clear and strong, his descriptions clear and graphic and his manner at times emphatic and at times humorous, for he preserves his early sense of humor unabated. His eyes twinkle and his face wreathes with smiles at a joke that appeals to him.

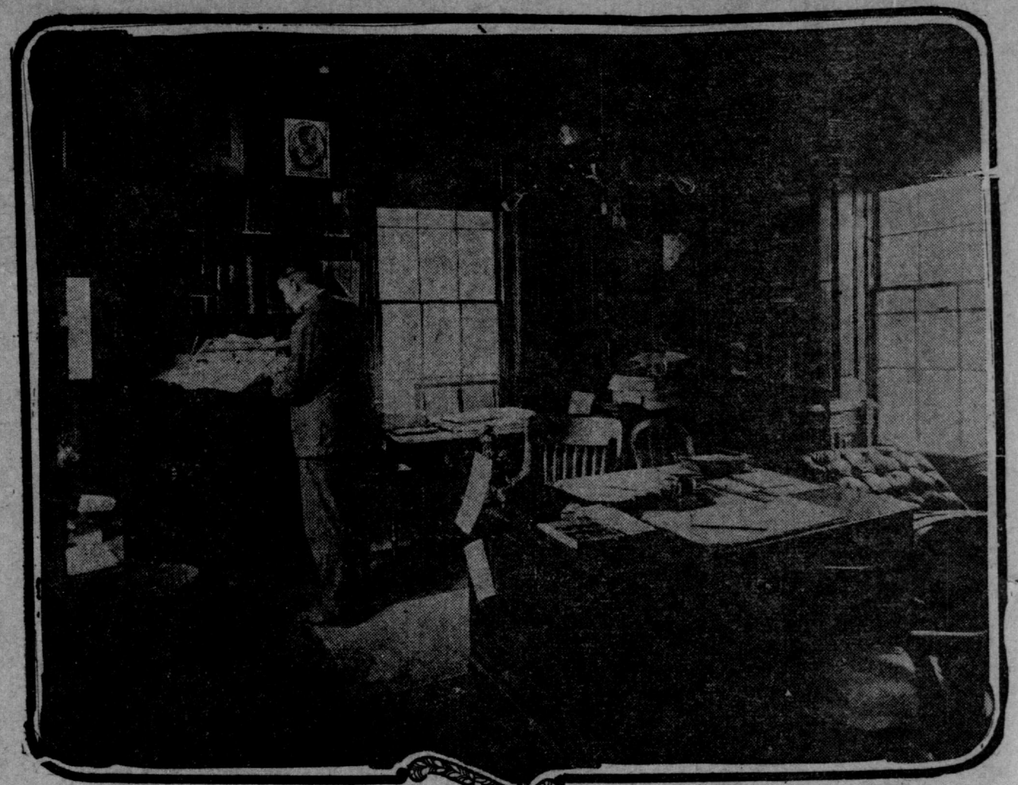
The development of San Francisco during the decades he has watched the city grow is something that animates Colonel Andrews whenever he refers to it. He looks back reminiscently upon the days when the present great city was a struggling town, beset with a restless throng of fortune seekers and adventurers, most of whom, immediately upon their arrival, proceeded hurriedly to the interior in search of the gold fields, leaving the town to business men and amusement purveyors. The winds in those days swept the sand dunes of which the present Western Addition then consisted. Where his present home stands, in Leavenworth street near Pine, was then a barren waste, far from the town's center. From those beginnings has Colonel Andrews watched the city grow.

His spirits are good, save when he worries about his failing eyes, and when he recalls old friends now departed.

"How few of them are left," he sighs. "I recall them all so well, but all—all are gone—dead. I am almost the only one left now."

Colonel Andrews is verily a pioneer of the pioneers, and a most exceptionally interesting one at that. San Francisco has no more striking figure than he.

Where Time Is Determined for the Pacific Coast



INTERIOR OF NAVAL OBSERVATORY SHOWING PROF. T. J. SEE, AT HIS DESK.

By Marguerite Hunt

FROM just two places in the whole United States is the standard time sent out at noon each day. One of these is the naval observatory at Georgetown heights, Washington, D. C., the other the little observatory at the Mare Island navy yard. To the people of the Pacific coast the latter is of special interest, since the observations taken there regulate the standard time for all the cities and towns as far south as El Paso, Tex., and as far north as Helena, Mont., while in the easterly direction the time sent out from Mare Island is used for 100 miles from San Francisco, since it is by the meridian passing through that point, eight hours west of Greenwich, that our time is determined.

Five minutes before noon each day the ordinary business of the Western Union Telegraph company is suspended and its lines thrown into communication with Mare Island. From the observatory there goes out the tick, tick, tick, which automatically regulates the Western Union clocks in thousands of cities and governs the dropping of the time balls, by which hundreds of people daily set their watches. It is said that the standard time, thus sent out from Mare Island for the people of the extreme west of the United States and from Georgetown heights for the country east of the Rockies, nets the telegraph companies handling it over $1,000,000 per year.

Although a small observatory, the one at Mare Island is admirably adapted for the work required of it. In 1884 it was established for the purpose of regulating the chronometers used on Uncle Sam's ships in the Pacific and for furnishing, through the telegraph companies, the correct time for the Pacific coast. Rear Admiral Uriel Harris was the first naval officer to send out the time signals from the Mare Island observatory, and since then the work has been carried on by the eight naval officers who have succeeded him. The late W. E. Sewell, the first naval governor of Guam; Charles F. Pond, now commanding the U. S. S. Pennsylvania; John B. Milton, commanding the Yerba Buena naval training station; E. E. Hayden, commandant at Key West; T. D. Griffin, Guy W. Brown, Frank H. Holmes and Prof. T. J. J. See, the latter the first professor of mathematics of the navy ever assigned to Mare Island for duty and who has caused the naval observatory at the station to spring into much prominence through the noted scientific work which he has done there during the last seven years.

The building and equipment, irrespective of its instruments, are valued at approximately $5,000, but it is in the instruments kept there that the value of the place lies. The five inch telescope, a Clark refractor, cost the government $1,000, while the five standard clocks, the errors of which are corrected each day in order to secure the exact time, are valued at $600 a piece, as are also the transit instruments. The seismograph, which registered some valuable data at the time of the earthquake of 1906, is valued at $500, while $300 a piece is the valuation placed on the 60 ship chronometers, which are kept there, wound at 11 o'clock each morning and kept in perfect time, ready for issuance to any ships which may require them. Probably the most interesting instruments, from the layman's point of view at any rate, are the two chronographs, costing $100 a piece, for by these time can be measured to the one-hundredth part of a second. Electrically connected with the standard clocks, or with the instruments by which the transit of the stars is being observed, the needle of the chronograph registers this infinitesimal portion of time, its calculations being of inestimable value.

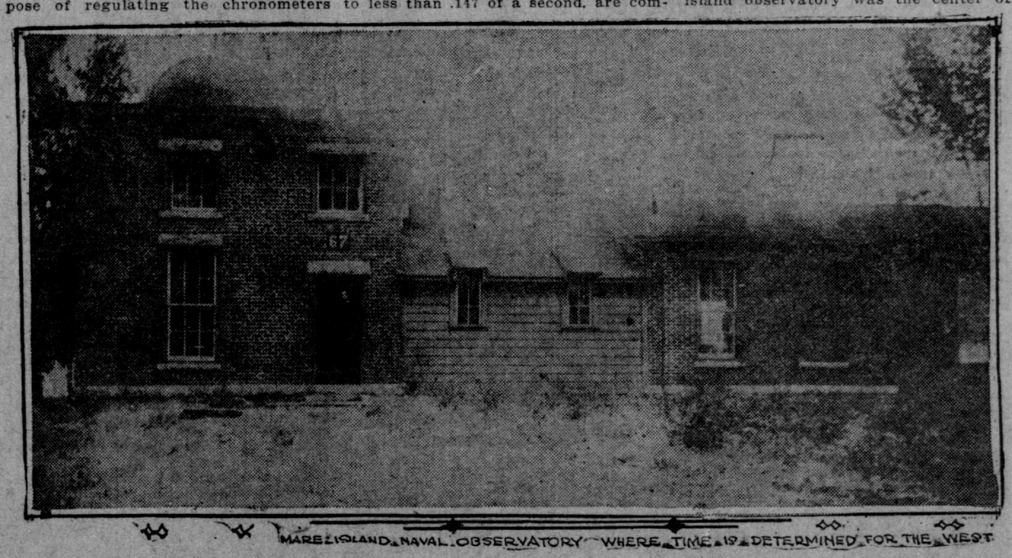
Each night, for an hour or more, the transit of the stars across the meridian is observed at Mare Island, the sidereal time being thus secured. Many visitors to the naval observatory ask the natural question: "Why is the time not computed from the sun?" forgetting that it is not only more difficult to secure the exact transit of the sun's center than to secure the time of the transit of a star, but that the transit of the sun occurs but once in every 24 hours, while the transit of many stars may be observed in a night. The observations take only about an hour, but twice that time is required to compute the mean and solar time from the mathematical theory of the earth's rotation. From the observations thus secured the errors of the standard clocks at the observatory, amounting to less than .147 of a second, are computed, the corrections applied to them and the mean of the three clocks taken as giving the true standard time for the succeeding 24 hours. While it is the object of those in charge of the observatory to make observations each night climatic conditions often render this impossible, in which event it is necessary to know the exact error of each clock, in order that this may be allowed for in computing the daily time. A week and even, on occasions, 10 days have elapsed at Mare Island between the periods of observation, owing to unusually bad weather, but such instances are rare.

PROF. T. J. J. SEE

With the exact standard time ascertained by means of applying the known error, everything is ready for sending out the time from Mare island at 11:53 a. m., and the operation is one which arouses much interest among the privileged visitors admitted to the observatory. Connections are made with one of the standard clocks, so that when the Western Union Telegraph company suspends its ordinary business and throws its lines open for receiving the time three minutes later, every second will be ticked off accurately. During the five minutes preceding noon the connections are so arranged that the sounding key skips the twenty-ninth second of every minute, as well as the last five seconds of each of the first four minutes and the last 10 seconds of the fifth minute. Until one has heard the sounding key tick off monotonously the 300 seconds necessary to make up the five minutes, during which the time is passing over the lines, one does not realize how absolutely necessary these breaks are in order to keep account of the minutes. While the signals are leaving the observatory the transmitter and mean time clocks are recording their beats upon the chronograph in order that the record may be preserved for future reference in the event of its being desired to measure any error of the signal. During these five minutes the various clocks are carefully watched by the officer in charge, and at two seconds before noon the local ball switch, by which the time ball is dropped at Mare Island as well as in hundreds of other places on the Pacific coast, is turned on. At exactly 12 o'clock the button connected with the switch is pressed, the time balls drop and the business of the morning is completed. Fifteen seconds later all switches and chronographs are turned off and the regular routine work of the observatory is again resumed.

Over 1,200 automatically regulated clocks are installed in the cities of California, Washington, Oregon, Nevada and Idaho alone, covering a distance of 470 miles, each one dependent upon the time sent out from Mare island every day of the year except Sundays and holidays. While this fact alone would make the naval observatory a subject of considerable interest, it has gained its greatest prominence during the last couple of years through the fact that Professor See has there completely revolutionized the scientific world, resulting in the general acceptance of his capture theory. This shows that the moon is a captured planet and not a part of the earth, thrown off by rotation, as has been claimed by the astronomers of all past ages. A man of wonderful brain and with an almost unparalled capacity for work, the regulating of the chronometers for the ships of Uncle Sam's navy, the observation of the stars for the purpose of determining the time and the hundred other matters required of him in his capacity as head of the observatory, comprise but a small part of the actual work he does there.

Five o'clock in the morning frequently finds him at his desk in order that he may complete, before the official office hours, the research work which has resulted in his recently published book being accepted as an authority among the most eminent astronomers of both this and the old world. And long after the day's work, as laid down in the navy regulations, is completed, observations and mathematical computations are continued by him. During the passing of Halley's comet the Mare island observatory was the center of much interest and during many nights representatives of leading papers and magazines were on hand, hoping that this man, who has brought the observatory into such prominence, might have some new theory to give the waiting astronomical world.



MARE ISLAND NAVAL OBSERVATORY WHERE TIME IS DETERMINED FOR THE WEST

A Tree Hospital for Victims of the Gay Night Life

By Thomas Grant Springer

"And its trees of a formal cut
That seldom nod to the winds that pass,
But stand in a social rut."
—Rhymes of Town.

I WAS sitting in a popular cafe sipping a glass of something and listening to a sad voiced vaudeville singer warbling that time honored song, "In the Shade of the Sheltering Palm," when it occurred to me that it was decidedly appropos, as I had ensconced myself there so as to be out of sight of the vigilant waiter, who would insist upon refilling my glass, and in that way collect the singer's hire. Above my head a dejected palm drooped its stunted branches. Glancing beyond my eye noted several of its companions and a couple of dwarfed bay trees. It set me to wondering how these lost denizens of Arcady stood the pace of city life. They did not seem to stand it very well, for the appearance of some of them was far from healthy, while others, whom I took to be new arrivals, were still fresh in their sylvan gowns.

I made friends with a smartly tailored little bay tree, a new arrival, fresh and green, exhaling the breath of her native canyon in spite of her formal city cut. She was much more fascinating and interesting than the usual feminine cafe habitue, and I spent many a pleasant hour in her company, but alas, the gay night life was too much for her. Gradually her freshness passed, her beauty faded, and she took on a blase air. At last she seemed to go into a decline and one day I found another one in her place, fresh and green and virginal, but I missed my little friend and speculated upon her fate. I pictured her cast away, a wreck of the city, to find a dismal resting place upon the city dumps.

My curiosity overcame me and I asked the waiter, whom I had asked about many other habitues of the place, what finally became of the plants, if they, too, like the human flora of the cafes, were utterly lost. Andre laughed. "Oh, no, they go to the hospital to take the rest cure."

"The hospital?" I queried.

"Why, yes," he replied; "there is a regular hospital for plants. When these old sports here go down and out we send them there to recuperate."

I had taken such an interest in my little friend that one sunny afternoon something more than idle curiosity led my vagrant footsteps to a nursery, the modest exterior of which gave no idea of the interior. I found a most delightful man in the office and stated my errand. I told him I was looking for a friend of mine whose given name I did not know, but she belonged to the Bay family. As soon as I told him when and where I met her he smiled with a wealth of sympathy and said she was there and doing well, and would I like to see her. As he led the way to the outdoor ward in the rear I learned that he was the house physician.

We passed along an alleyway between hothouses where orchids and foreign ferns were being stimulated to artificial health and bloom, to the rear where the receiving ward for nervous prostration cafe patients was located in the open air. There the house physician pointed out my little friend. She stood dry and faded in her little green tub, with, it seemed to me, little chance for recovery.

"A bad case," said the house physician; "a sad case of too much of the great white lights. It will take a long time and very tender care to bring her back to herself again."

AT THE TREE HOSPITAL

"Then she will recover?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," he said, "just as soon as she gets back a little of her strength in the pure outer air she will be taken into the hothouse, where her complexion will be restored. You see, plants are exactly like people, and if they were only treated as such by their owners there would be practically as little use for this hospital as there would be for a human hospital in a community of scientific hygenics. The same basic principle applies to all life—fresh air and proper care. Why, do you know that we almost have to keep a booze institutte here because the cafe plants are continually given drinks they do not need; in fact, they are simply watered to death until the earth in the pots grows stale and the roots rot away, robbing the top of any chance to expand. You can see that your little friend here is the victim of the deadly drink habit. Now, the very first thing we will do is to loosen up the earth in her tub, give her a tonic of the proper sort of soil and only let her have a drink when she really needs it."

"Why," said I, "isn't that practically the same as the booze treatment?"

"Certainly," agreed the house physician, "for the disease is practically the same. Now, for instance, you take this old rounder here," and he tapped a barrel in which stood a dry, withered and battered old bay tree, "this one was not only the victim of the drink habit but his nervous system was completely undermined by tobacco."

I laughed. "Oh, come," I said incredulously, "that's going a bit too far, isn't it?" Then an after thought struck me. "Oh, you mean that he stood around in the tobacco laden atmosphere too long?"

"Well, that in itself would have been bad enough, but see here," and he dug into the earth at the roots of the tired looking bay. In the soggy, unhealthy soil were countless cigar and cigarette butts, deposited there by the careless hands of cafe patrons.

"Do you wonder now that plants can not stand the pace of the gay night life any more than humans can? Well, we will fill this tub with fine rich new earth and give the old boy a chance to drink the pure clean air, and when all the unhealthy taint of the city has been blown out his entire system will be toned up in the hothouse."

"Really," I mused aloud. "I did not know how far reaching some of the city's evil effects are."

"Nor do you yet," replied my guide. "Now, here is one recovering from moral as well as physical degeneration, for when it came here I found a number of hairpins and a lady's satin slipper when I loosened the soil in its tub. It is sad to think of such depravity."

"And where had this one been?" I asked innocently.

"Of course you have heard of the French restaurants."

I nodded, not caring to commit myself further. It saddened me to think of the temptations the city held out to even these transplanted rustic dwellers. I gazed at the assorted coiffure securers and the small high heeled satin slipper the house physician drew from a hothouse rafter. I thought of the many ways the latter might have trod before it found a resting place in the soil of the tiny bay tree tub, and shook my head sadly as I moralized over the weary and weazened, dried and dejected little old sport who had gone the pace.

As I turned away a couple of small yellow ragged palms claimed my attention.

"They look as if they had had a hard time," I remarked.

"Yes, indeed," and the house physician ran his hand tenderly over their distorted foliage. "They are a couple of street mashers who have ornamented the front of a saloon watching the shopping parade, and they have about worn themselves out flirting with and ogling the passers by. The city wind has buffeted them and soiled their nice green suits. The skirts of the passing throng have worn away their new spiked leaves. Now here they are. We will cut this soiled foliage away, coax up new shoots from the roots, but, alas, as soon as they are spick and span again back they will go to their street stand, all too soon to wear themselevs out at the old game. It seems to get into their blood as it does, shall I say, in ours?"

Ignoring the question, I passed on without replying, and we came upon a tall foreign looking palm whose slim stalk and straight plain leaves looked not unlike a gigantic half worn feather duster. As I stopped in curiosity before it my guide continued his explanation.

"This is a blase old loiterer from one of the hotel lobbies. He is merely here for the rest cure. You see the soil has been well cared for and he is not a victim of the drink habit. He is merely suffering from ennui. Simply tired of his aimless existence, weary of the idle chatter he is forced to listen to; sick of the kaleidescopic movement of the traveling public that go and come. A drummer's latest story would not ruffle him; the self conscious bride and the nervous bridegroom cause him no flutter as they pass by; he can listen to two captains of industry plotting financial campaigns under his shade without a stir; two gossipy dowagers swapping scandal would only cause him to droop. Too much of life has come to his notice, and now he must be stimulated with fresh air and clean wind before his jaded appetite will revive. He is merely in a decline out of which right living alone will bring him."

Looking over a few of the hotel lobbies with which I was familiar, it occurred to me that possibly his malady was contagious and that he himself had acquired it from one of the many chair plants that rose to my mind. There is certainly a lot of us who are unconscious Burbanks grafting our own mistake of civilization on these enforced sojourners in our crowded midst.

"What is this lot that seem to have such an exclusive air about them?" I inquired when my curiosity had exhausted itself in vain speculation.

"Oh, these," said my guide, "are the sad victims of the social whirl. They are regular patients that spend the summer with us and the winters in the ballroom. See, every one is labeled with a little wooden tag. As soon as the season in town is over and society begins to flit to this resort or that these wall flowers of the ballroom come here for their rest and recuperation so as to be fresh to stand the strain of another winter's festivity. They seem to enjoy it best of all and are only just tired enough to make this a delightful outing. They sit about here for several months drinking in the fresh air and gossiping with each other. It is too bad some of you writers can't understand their language. I'll warrant you could get enough material to last you for a lifetime."

"Yes, and a whole lot we would not dare to use," I replied.

"Well, I always like to think their gossip is harmless," responded my guide, seriously. "You see, I know them so well and I'm so fond of them I can only think of them as foolish little plants who are the victims only of their surroundings."

"Perhaps you are right," I agreed, and I was sure he was, for their whispers were too low and soft, and there seemed to be too much of the gurgle of sweet laughter in it to be ladened with malice.

"There doesn't seem to be anthying particularly the matter with them," I continued, as I took a closer look at their fresh, glossy leaves.

"No," said the house physician, "because they are steady boarders and get here often enough not to let their systems run down. This is a sort of an ounce of prevention ward, as they are the pampered pets of rich patrons. Many other house plants come to us regularly that way when their owners are out of town and do not care to trust them to the carelessness of servants or the generosity of friends. But we have to be careful when we take in such patients, for just like other physicians, many expect us to perform miracles upon those they bring to us."

"And do they all get well?" I asked.

"No," he replied sadly, "we can not bring the life back that has wholly fled. When they linger too long, as many do, they must go the way of all else that perishes. This is the end," and he led me behind the hothouse where a pile of dry and twisted rubbish lay. "Here is our morgue," he said, pointing to the unsightly heap. 'In the midst of life we are in death,' here as elsewhere. In a few days we will have a big bonfire and then it will be 'ashes to ashes and dust to dust.' Then the gay night life of the city will have claimed its due from many of the beautiful exiles of Arcady."

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