

thought—a long time—and at last he said: 'Yes. You might send a copy to Mrs. —' another name, in Kansas. I did so, and asked him if those were all he could think of. He said they were. I'd never heard those names, and I asked him if these ladies knew mother well. 'I think so,' he said. 'Who are they, father?' I asked him; and he said: 'They are my sisters.' Several years afterward, when a cousin in Canandaigua was getting up a history of the Flagler family, I learned for the first time that my father was one of twelve children. So I suppose I inherited from him my dislike of speaking about myself."

I asked him what the "M" in his name stood for, and he replied: "Morrison. My mother was Scotch. The first time I ever used my middle name was ten years ago, when the Governor of Bahama wished to know, on account of a contract between myself and the British Government. He cabled me: 'How do you spell it?' and I didn't know. I wasn't sure whether there was one 'r' or two." He was only seventy years old and had never thought about his middle name!

In "Whitehall," during one of my visits, I remarked on the charming color scheme of, I think, the drawing-room, and I learned it was his own suggestion to his decorators.

"How did the idea come to you?"

"I don't know. I just thought it would look well."

"You have the æsthetic sense well developed?"

"I don't know." And then he told me that he had differed with his architects only once. It was about the height of the ceiling of the great hall. They wanted it higher, to secure the right proportions.

"But I wanted to feel at home, and so I made them put it eight feet lower. I can come here and sit down and feel that it is my home. The Italian ambassador told me that I had something the Old World had not; and that was a palace to be lived in. That was what I wanted—a home." And, characteristically, it was built in eight months. He himself decided everything.

I remember, after he had shown me through "Whitehall," and I had congratulated him on its beauty, that he led me to a panel of Honduras mahogany that hung, picture-like, from the wall; a beautiful slab of wood, exquisite in color and marvelously grained. He turned to me and said: "I

often look at this house that I built and had decorated by artists. Then I look at this panel. I am going to put on it: 'What God hath wrought.'"

But all this did not give me the insight into the man that I desired. The clues came later.

"Mr. Flagler, which do you enjoy more, planning work or doing it?"

"There isn't much fun in work if you don't accomplish something."

The second was: "Which do you consider the hardest thing you have done in Florida?"

"Building the Ponce de Leon. Here was St. Augustine, the oldest city in the United States. How to build a hotel to meet the requirements of nineteenth-century America and have it in keeping with the character of the place—that was my hardest problem. The Alcazar I built because it was suggested to me that there were many nice people who might not be able to afford to pay the rates the Ponce de Leon would have to ask, and yet wished to enjoy St. Augustine. To provide accommodations for them, we built the Alcazar as a two-dollar-a-day house. It is every bit as good as the Ponce de Leon."

A MAN WITH TWO YOUTHS

On the night of the Ponce de Leon celebration in St. Augustine last spring, I met him in the courtyard of the hotel. He was standing by the fountain. The sky was like the inside of a huge, hollow turquoise—blue, luminous, thinly washed with silver. The moon was very bright; so near the earth that it seemed more neighborly than in the North. A mist as of vaporized moon-metal enveloped the buildings and made them unforgettably beautiful. The grounds were illuminated; you could have sworn the lights were captive fireflies. The palms resembled ghosts of women with disheveled hair. The fountain splashed droningly. You heard no other sound.

For perhaps five minutes he stood there; at length he turned to me and murmured:

"This is beautiful! Beautiful!"

That was the time and place from which, beginning at his eightieth year, I walked back twenty years, to the beginning of the second youth of Henry M. Flagler.

Little is known of Flagler's early youth. He is temperamentally averse to reminiscences. But Flagler himself told me that he