

# ALEXANDER MITCHELL'S HOME.

## A VISIT TO THE RESIDENCE OF THE WISCONSIN RAILROAD KING.

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MILWAUKEE, Wis., Nov. 8.—In the centre of three acres of ornamented ground, which occupies one block in the interior of the city of Milwaukee, stands the palatial residence of the Hon. Alexander Mitchell, the millionaire railroad king of the West. The house is constructed of Milwaukee brick, embellished with gray stone, while a square dome towers above the marble-pillared portico. Massive doors, skillfully carved, lead into the broad vestibule which opens into the main hall, parlors, and conservatory. A life-size figure of the Circassian slave is chained to a granite pedestal which stands in a niche of the entrance. The parlors on the right are finished and furnished in Persian style and wainscoted in red mahogany carved in pansy design. The walls are painted in colors of blue and gilt, while the ceiling is formed in patterns of the same wood and inlaid with pansies painted in the varied colors of the beautiful flower, which is the emblematic flower of Persia. Alcoves, whose outer sides are of glass, filled with exquisite cabinets, are separated by rich tapestry from these parlors and make the cosiest of nooks. The chairs and couches are of carved mahogany and covered with blue velvet embroidered with pansy blossoms. The carved mahogany mantel, reaching to the ceiling and inlaid with porcelain paintings of Oriental figures, is lined with plate glass, while a Persian lamp of gold flagee and Bohemian glass is pendent by a gold chain from the canopied top.

Antique vases and costly bric-à-brac stand in the niches of this mantel, and are multiplied by their crystal background. The cabinet piano, which is constructed after the same style, reflects its colored lamp in the mirror, while porcelain paintings decorate this musical instrument. Many of these exquisite lamps are chained to the ceiling, and might be called magic lanterns, for a wire is touched in the wall, and as quick as thought light appears. Paintings of figures and scenes of Oriental life adorn the walls, while flower girls in Parian marble are the work of Padoline. Gorgeous Persian rugs cover the inlaid floor, and tapestry from the Eastern lands hangs from the wide arched openings. These parlors lead into the eastern hall, which is lined with mirrors, and where on high pedestals stand hammered brass vases. Doors of colored glass in mosaic patterns open into the superb Alhambra room, with its grand paintings, its velvet tufted walls, its circular divans, its soft Turkish carpets, and Saracenic architecture. It is a charming illusion to fancy that you are in the Moorish palace of the King.

The immense library, furnished in green and bronze, with its several thousand volumes, is an attractive place. On these walls hangs a crayon picture of the mistress of this mansion, also a crayon likeness of Mrs. Dr. Mackie, daughter of Mr. George Mitchell, of Scotland. Egyptian vases ornament the mantel, and the bronze figures of Night and Morning lean against the antique clock. Expensive engravings deck the walls of the stately halls, and the portrait of the lamented Longfellow occupies a prominent position. The massive balustrade either side of the broad stairs, leading to the hall above, is carved in lions' heads and Scottish designs.

A tall Dutch clock, seven centuries old, whose musical notes sound each hour, stands at the head of the stairs. From this hall open richly furnished rooms in exquisite and varied fashion, the most enchanting of which is the Marie Antoinette apartment, whose architecture and furnishing is in the fashion of the time of Louis XVI. Porcelain pictures of court balls are painted on the alabaster mantel. Cabinets of beautiful shape occupy the corners of the room, while medallion figures on porcelain are inserted in the wood of cabinets and dresser. Rare vases and foreign curios fill every available space. The retiring couch is patterned from a photograph of the one on which used to rest the beautiful but unfortunate Queen. It is covered with embossed velvet, and hangings of embroidered velvet droop from the bell-shaped canopy. The gray and gilt frescoed walls form a groundwork for the handsome French water colors in white holly and gilt frames. The finest of lace curtains are draped at the windows, over which gracefully fall embroidered velvet corresponding in color to the other draperies. Two immense mirrors fill either end of the room, and hanging from the centre of the ceiling is a chandelier with innumerable crystal pendants, reflecting iridescent hues on the opposite mirrors.

The art gallery on the loftiest floor admits a flood of light from above on the rare paintings of both American and foreign masters. The walls on which the paintings hang are of dark wood. The breast of the west wall is covered with crimson plush, against which is placed in curious designs many pieces of ancient armor. Innumerable engravings lie assorted on the immense table, and cabinets filled with bric-à-brac brought from all countries are attractive to lovers of curious devices. With all of the combination of elegance and grandeur in this beautiful mansion there is nothing oppressive or restrained. It is simply the luxury of comfort enjoyed by the occupants and their guests.

The conservatory, opening from the hall, and grand dining room, with its oaken walls, is 100 feet in length by 27 in width, covered with a semicircular roof, and filled with the choicest of tropical and semi-tropical plants, some of which are valued at \$1,000. There are 65 varieties of palms, among them a date palm 17 years old. Also an india-rubber tree, the largest in America. The walls are ornamented, at a height of 10 feet, with representations of Melrose Abbey, the place of the Duke of Devonshire, and Dumbarton-on-the-Clyde. The centre fountain, 20 feet high, is marvelous in design and fantastic in shape, and, like the castles, is composed of petrified wood gathered in Wisconsin and Dakota by Mr. Joseph Pollard, the cultivator and keeper of these beautiful plants, who originated and manufactured these palaces, grottoes, and fountains. From the conservatory opens the greenhouse, which is 500 feet in length, and divided into apartments where plants are classified. Hanging rocks covered with sparkling goods, with miniature fishermen leaning over the waters, are curiosities. In the fern house there is a cave covered with tiny plants, on the edge of which hangs a petrified bird's nest.

A few years ago a Minnesota scientist visited this place and chipped a piece from the nest, over which Mr. Pollard is still aggrieved. Under these glass roofs there are plants from all countries under the sun. One hundred and fifty varieties of azalias that bloom at Easter time and japonicas that will blossom for the Easter bridal. When this crystal palace is lighted it reminds one of a fairy tale or a chapter of the "Arabian Nights." While showing us through these blooming gardens Mr. Pollard remarked: "All this you may attribute to Mrs. Mitchell's energy. She is," he continued, "a wonderful woman." In the chapel of the new Passavant Hospital Mrs. Mitchell has placed a stained glass window, 25 feet in length, which is illustrative of the Scriptural definition of charity, with the figures of Faith and Hope above. In this hospital is a room which she furnishes and supports, and which is intended for clergymen and their families who need surgical care. This room is called the "Martha room" after this excellent woman, and she is rightly named, being anxious about many things.