

CHAPTER VI

The Annual Pilgrimage of the Sun Worshipers to the Promised Land—"Rich Man, Poor Man, Beggarman, Thief"—A Study for Psychologists—Mr. Winter Visitor and His Entertainment.

Miami entertains more tourists than any other Florida city. The annual pilgrimage of the sun worshipers to the Promised Land increases each succeeding year—according to the increase of the advertising appropriation. They come by boat, by train, by automobile and airplane. Some come in palatial yachts or private cars. Others come in the lowly and familiar flivver. The pioneer of ante-bellum days who went West in a "prairie schooner" now has a son who goes to Florida in a flivver—an im-

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provised bungalow on wheels, fashioned like a two-room house and fitted out with "all the comforts of home."

It is a long and continuous procession that enters the state of Florida at the first shrill blasts of the Northern winter and continues in increasing hordes until robin red breast sounds his signal for the approach of the Northern spring. The tourist pilgrims represent every species of humanity, from the ultra-rich world traveler to the genus hobo. They overflow hotels and apartment houses. Some take up their abode in a free tent colony and become "tin can" tourists, though Miami does not draw many of this class. Many of them build homes, modest cottages or splendid estates, become citizens of the community, and settle down to a place in the sun, reversing the original plan by going North for a short time in the summer, instead of going South for a short time in the winter.

It is estimated that the American tourists spend

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in Florida approximately thirty million dollars annually—a large part of which undoubtedly goes for real estate. The tourists come from every state in the Union and from many foreign countries, but Florida draws its principal quota from those states lying east of the Mississippi river. It is the regular winter quarters of the people of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New York and the New England states, as well as those states lying below the Mason and Dixon line. Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri, as well as Minnesota, Wisconsin, Colorado, and even California, are also well represented. The tourists from many of the states mentioned have organized state societies—or blocs—in Miami and these societies have their regular meetings and outings—neighborly gatherings where the friendly discussions may range from state politics to a prospective deal in local real estate—or the proper way to eat a mango.

The migratory tourist might present to the stu-

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dent of psychology an interesting field for study and observation. They form a motley crowd. "Rich man, poor man, beggarman, thief" make up the curious picture. If one is moved to wonder why some people leave home, when their lack of pecuniary resources is plainly obvious, one is likewise inclined, when viewing some of the newly-rich, to wonder how they got that way.

Broadly speaking, the tourist pilgrims may be grouped or sub-divided into general classifications as follows: Pleasure seekers, health seekers, homeseekers, fortune seekers—and golf players. Every train into Miami brings a few more golf players. Golfitis is rapidly becoming to be recognized as the great American disease. The plague in a violent or epidemic form has gripped all America. It attacks all ages, but is particularly prevalent among men past fifty. It is recognized by eminent authorities as incurable, which augurs well for Miami's future.

To a golf player a town is good or bad accord-

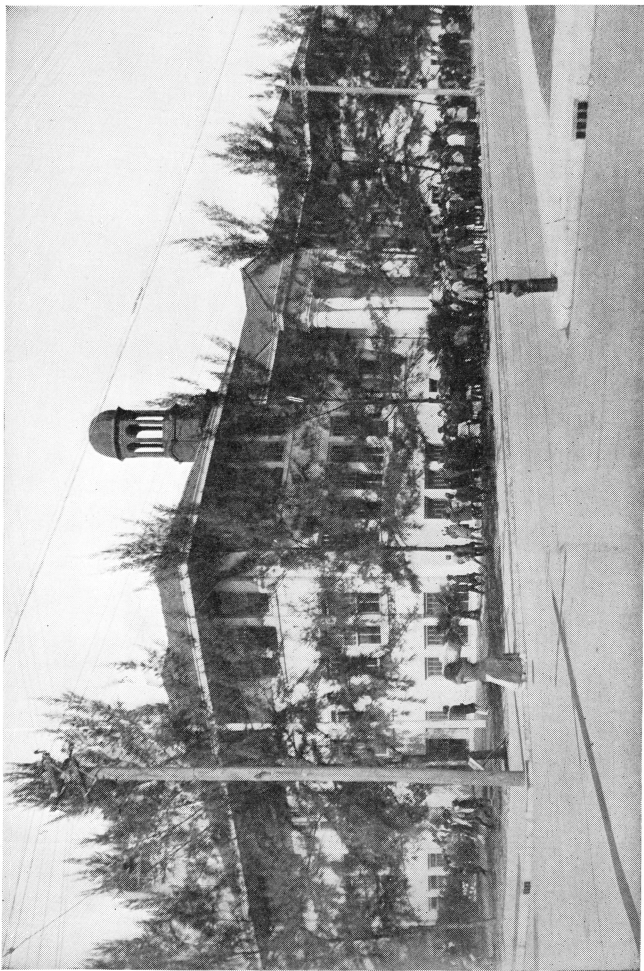
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ing to its golf links. Climatic advantages naturally enter into this equation, and Florida, therefore, appeals strongly to the knee-pants delegation. It is a golfer's paradise. No sub-division in Miami is up-to-date without its golf links. Miami "greens" attract the golf "fan" by the thousands. Many come for no other purpose, and leave for the same reason.

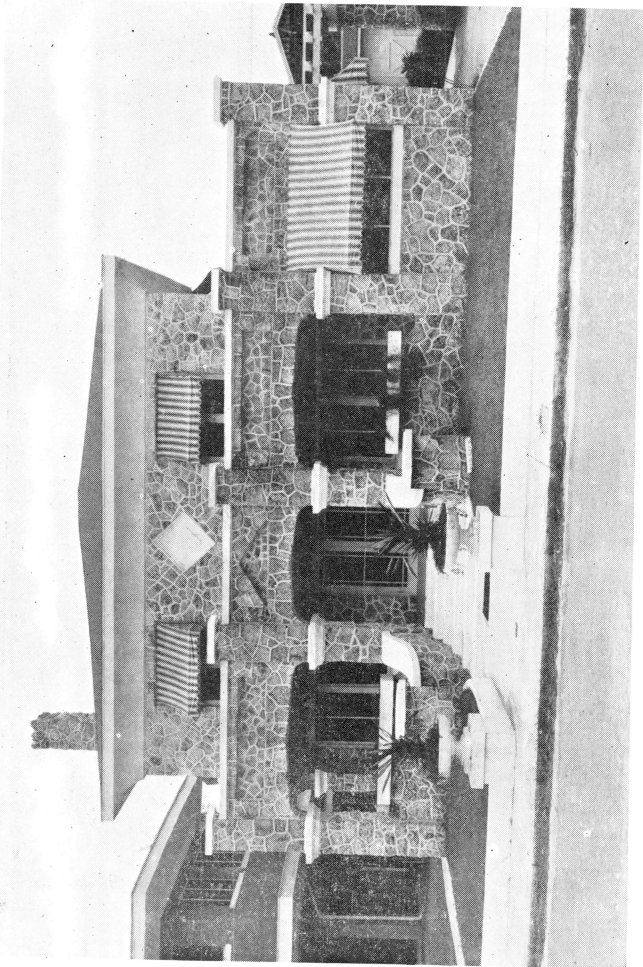
The pleasure seekers include the idle rich—the time killers—people who have nothing to do and a hard time doing it. They are, as a rule, a fickle, restless crowd. They are here today and Palm Beach tomorrow—travelers that pass in the night. Many of them are world travelers who have lost the zest of routine living—drifting lotus-eaters hunting for a new thrill. They suffer from an enlarged ennui. Life, as well as food, must be spiced. They couldn't possibly eat a menu through without music or dancing. It is a mystery how they manage breakfast. All rich people, of course, do not fall in this category, but among the ultra-rich—especially the

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new or war-rich—are usually found many vulgar pretenders to gentility. Among this class there exists a certain snobbishness or class distinction that must be not only recognized but cultivated and catered to by those who would seek the favor of their patronage. But those who pay twenty to forty dollars a day for a hotel room may justly feel that they are entitled to a bit of cultivating. And the way they coddle the rich and the famous in Miami is enough to make a socialist weep! All notables are photographed, interviewed and Who's Who-ed in the most approved press-agent style. One day the President of the United States or other high government dignitary receives the homage of a generous people—and the next day Ring Lardner features the front page. Many of the wealthy men come in their private yachts or palatial house-boats. The private water craft anchored in Biscayne Bay during January and February is a glittering display of wealth and aristocracy, rivaling in splendor Cleopatra's entourage up the Nile.



SCHOOL BUILDING, MIAMI



HOME BUILT OF NATIVE CORAL ROCK

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But there are other pleasure seekers beside the rich. The great middle class of America find their playground in Florida. They are mostly doctors, lawyers, farmers and business men. Some find their pleasures in the plain and homely virtues of the simple life, others fish or motor, or just loaf—take the sun cure—and breathe deep of the salty tonic of the seas.

All tourists are welcome in Florida—if they bring their check-books along—but the homeseeker is especially welcome. He is considered an asset worth cultivating. His desire goes deeper than admiration for the splendors that abound; he is seeking substantial elements and carefully studies the possibilities of the country and the opportunities offered. South Florida, with its small population and its millions of untilled acres, needs the homeseeker and should make the opportunity attractive enough to get him.

The great tropical outdoors makes a strong and

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natural appeal to the health seeker. Many men low in health, who have fought a losing fight in other less hospitable climes, seek in the South an opportunity to come back into their own, to rejuvenate and recharge the batteries of energy. For many of these South Florida is a refuge of tranquil beauty—a gem cut from the regions of the gods. It is essentially an old man's country. There are those who say that the span of human life is longer in Florida—others insist that it just seems longer. There is no doubt but that the mild climate offers an immunity from pneumonia and other diseases incidental to the rigors of a Northern winter.

There is a class of people who will do anything for money—even to living in Pittsburgh. They are fortune hunters who go wherever they think the money is—chance takers and speculators who follow up boom towns and hope to ride to fortune on a rising tide. Climate and other pleasing attractions mean nothing to this class. They would probably go to Terre Haute if the pecuniary prospects were as

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inviting. Rapidly-growing Miami, with its great real estate boom and general business awakening, draws its full quota of fortune hunters. All manner of aspiring Wallingfords, visionary promoters and stock floaters invade the town. Some of these attempt to do business on a shoe-string, but they usually find the water in Miami too deep for them and often go back North minus the shoe-string. The loyal Miamian has been trained to invest his surplus in Miami real estate, and no paltry ten per cent. stock dividend will interest him.

In addition to the tourist *per se*, there is a swarming of beggars and cripples and vendors of cheap wares. The lame and the blind haunt one at every street. They, too, it seems, need the sun. There are also many itinerant evangelists who receive the call to pitch their tents in the town that climate built during the mild winter months, but, oddly enough, these message bearers usually give the town a wide berth during the good old summertime.

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Mr. Winter Visitor generally wants to get his money's worth, and goes in for sight-seeing. Usually one of the first sights the Northerner wants to see is the orange and grapefruit groves. If he is interested in land he will probably want to make a trip to the Everglades and see for himself these much-talked-about lands.

Leaving the beaten path of the city, the visitor may find some novel and interesting sights. A ride in a "rubber-neck" bus will take the visitor to Coconut Grove (they spell it without the "a"), the oldest settlement of the locality and noted for its cultural environment. Here may be seen the Spanish castle of Mr. James Deering and the villa of Mr. William J. Bryan, two of the show places of Miami. The route is along "millionaire's row" and the heart of the exclusive winter settlement. Famous artists, writers and all manner of distinguished people live in the secluded places along the bay and hidden behind the tropical foliage along the narrow winding roads.

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The visitor may be attracted to Hialeah ("the Indians named it"), the new town in the Everglades, where may be seen the motion picture studio force at work and a fourteen-hundred-acre turkey ranch and dairy farm. Here, also, may be seen the greyhound races, where trained dogs chase a mechanical rabbit around an oval speedway. At the paddock a sportsman may back his choice of a winner at the usual race track odds without fear of a "fixed" race, as no one has yet devised a method to "fix" a dog while he is chasing a rabbit. However, the sport is young and they will probably get around to that part of it if given time. This sport is soon to give way to horse racing on a large scale. The playing of Jai Alai, a Spanish ball game, is another attraction at Hialeah, where a large fronton has recently been erected in an effort to popularize in America this one-time royal sport. At the Hialeah golf course Seminole Indians, garbed in native costume, serve as caddies.

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The lure of the Ocean always attracts the visitor to Miami Beach, where in mid-winter he may take a dip in the Atlantic or try the Roman pools. Here one may also visit the Miami Beach Aquarium and learn the scientific names of fish never heard of outside of the dictionary. A boat journey to old Cape Florida and a river trip to the alligator farm and Indian Village may provide other interesting sights, as will also a motor trip to Royal Palm State Park, where the luxuriant tropical growth of South Florida may be seen in its virgin state—unmarred by the hand of the real estate exploiter. If the visitor wants a real thrill he may fly by aeromarine or hydroaeroplane to Bimini, Nassau or Havana or drop in on Miami's aristocratic neighbor, Palm Beach.

While joy riding in and around Miami Mr. Winter Visitor is offered a bewildering array of souvenirs and tropical merchandise. These cover a wide variety, ranging from baby alligators to cocoanuts in the hull. A good customer, too, is Mr. Winter

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Visitor. He despatches boxes of oranges and grapefruit and "paper shell" pecans to the shivering loved ones back home; he buys picture post cards by the armful and has his picture snapped in the attitude of landing a six-foot fish, and before he departs on his homeward journey it is an even bet that he has tucked away somewhere in his inside pocket a deed to a piece of Miami real estate. If he hasn't it is his own fault.

Early Spring witnesses the beginning of the great exodus of the tourists from Florida. They used to go like they came—in hurried hordes, but their departure is now usually dependent upon the advent of the Northern Spring. Effective efforts have been made to prolong the tourist season in Miami, and each successive season there is a noticeable increase in the number of visitors who stay late and play safe against the frequent cold Springs of the Northern states. The Miami Chamber of Commerce—always on the job—broadcast a compilation of vital statistics showing that the death rate from

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pneumonia in the Northern states was greater in March than any other month. This convinced many of the folly of spending a few weeks in the sunshine and hurrying back North only to be nipped by Jack Frost in the end. Many of the big hotels formerly closed April 1. A few of them still do so, but other high-class hotels now remain open until May 1, and many hotels are open all year.

If the coming of the tourists is a thing devoutly wished for by the home guards, their going is equally a matter for lamentation and regret. With their going, business resumes the status quo. But the status quo in Miami is not what it was in the early days of the city's development. The summer months then was merely a period of watchful waiting for the next tourist season to come. Now the summer months is a season of great activity. Most of the building in Miami is done during the summer season, and there is also much road construction and public utility work during these months. But

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idle or busy, Miami abides the summer time with the confident assurance that her departing guests will come trooping back at the first approach of old Winter—and they usually do come.