

EDWIN T. EARL.

NO HISTORY of Southern California would be complete without a sketch of Edwin T. Earl. The first development of the resources of the State was in horticulture. The growth of population and wealth in all parts of California, excepting the purely mining counties, was in the orchards of the State. Los Angeles county vineyards in 1880 were paying \$100 per acre and upward, and the orange groves netted as high as \$1000 per acre a year. These returns naturally led to extensive planting. In consequence, it was not long before there was more fruit of many kinds than local markets would take at profitable prices. The same conditions applied to the deciduous fruit interests north. The task of finding a market for the surplus fruit crops of California was beset with many complications. They grew 1000 to 3000 miles from the eastern markets. California fruit was considered a luxury which only the rich could use. It was of a perishable nature, and required great care in handling. It would not endure extremes of heat or cold. The problem of successful transportation proved the most difficult. California fruit had great merit as regards appearance and flavor. Experimental shipments to eastern markets demonstrated that the fruit would sell if delivered in good order, at a reasonable cost. In 1880 the fruit shipments to eastern markets were handled by passenger train, at a cost of about \$900.00 per car to Chicago, and from there it was necessary to distribute the fruit by express, at additional cost, to markets further East. The policy of the only transcontinental road existing at that time was to charge all the " traffic would bear," instead of fostering the industry and encouraging its development. The fruit industry not only had high freight rates to contend with, but was also greatly handicapped by not having suitable cars for the proper preservation of the fruit in transit. The only cars available were ventilated box cars. When the temperature was just right, oranges could be shipped East in such cars with fairly good results: but when the temperature was cold, the fruit would freeze en route, and when the weather was hot the oranges would heat and



decay. In 1885 the fruit growers of the State looked the situation in the face with absolute despair. Production had outgrown the local and Coast demand, and the only outlet was the eastern market. High freight rates, unsuitable cars and slow time made eastern shipments unprofitable. The orange crop of Southern California during the winter and spring of 1885 did not average the growers much over 50 cents per box on the trees. Many growers realized less than this price.

At this juncture there came to Southern California the "one man in ten thousand," who saw the way out of the difficulty.

It is an interesting fact that the solution of the problem which confronted the orange growers was worked out by a Native Son. Edwin T. Earl grew up on a farm, and, as a boy, took part in the cultivation and marketing of deciduous fruits in Central California. After his school days were over, he entered into the business of fruit shipping. His first experience in this line was with the ordinary ventilated cars furnished by the railroads. This experience demonstrated to him the impossibility of the successful marketing of California fruits East in its ordinary ventilated box cars. The fruit was still mostly handled by passenger train, at a transportation cost of \$900.00 per car from California to Chicago. The failure of successfully marketing California fruits in ventilated fruit cars caused Mr. Earl to turn his

attention to refrigerator cars, and in the later '70's he brought out refrigerator cars from the East, and used them in the transportation of deciduous fruits from Central California, by freight train, at a much lower cost, compared with the passenger-train rate. These shipments in refrigerator cars, by freight train, however, did not meet with the approval of the railroads. They preferred to handle the business by passenger train. Difficulties were put in the way of the use of refrigerator cars. Ice could not be obtained at reasonable prices in California and along the line. Ice alone cost \$50 to \$60 per ton at loading points, and as high as \$30 per ton at points in the mountains of California. Mr. Earl contended with these transportation difficulties for a number of years. His experience demonstrated that California fruits were destined to receive a welcome reception East as soon as transportation difficulties were overcome. He persevered, and, after meeting with fair success in the marketing of deciduous fruits from Central California, came to Southern California in 1886 to engage in the shipping of citrus fruits. Up to that time the eastern dealers knew practically nothing about California oranges. The eastern markets were supplied with oranges from the Mediterranean and Florida sections. The dealers could not realize that California was destined to supply the American markets with oranges, and that the day would soon come when Mediterranean oranges would be practically unknown in our markets. The idea of marketing California oranges successfully at such points as New York and Boston was laughed

the only other cars available were ordinary refrigerator cars, which, to a certain extent, would protect the fruit from freezing, but at the western end of the journey oranges required ventilation, and ordinary refrigerator cars would not provide it. The methods of packing California oranges in 1886 were crude. It was necessary to introduce new methods of picking, hauling, grading and packing. These new methods growers were eager to adopt, thus insuring the fruit being in proper condition for eastern shipment; but difficulties of transportation were apparently insurmountable, and orange shipments to eastern markets continued to meet with indifferent and uncertain results until about 1890. Mr. Earl introduced many new methods in connection with the picking, packing, loading and selling of California oranges, but he had the transportation to contend with. It was proved conclusively that California



RESIDENCE OF EDWIN T. EARL, LOS ANGELES, CAL.

at by eastern dealers, and was not seriously considered by many Californians, either. Mr. Earl's study of eastern fruit markets demonstrated to him that California oranges had merit and could be successfully marketed as far East as the Atlantic Coast.

Early in 1886 the Santa Fe completed a line into Southern California and began handling orange shipments. California oranges begin to ripen about January each season, and the shipments continue during the winter, spring and summer months. The difficulties in 1886 of shipping California oranges to the eastern markets during the winter months were very great. The ventilated fruit car furnished by the railroads would not protect the fruit from freezing en route, and oranges had great merit, and eastern markets, as far East as New York, were ready to accept them at good prices, if the transportation difficulties were overcome. These difficulties occupied a large portion of Mr. Earl's attention for several years, and in 1890 he invented the first successful combination ventilator-refrigerator car used in the transportation of California fruits.

Mr. Earl had founded the Earl Fruit Company, a corporation, under the laws of California, with a paid-up capital and surplus of \$250,000. It was the largest fruit-packing and shipping concern in the State. His combined ventilator refrigerator car was first made use of by the Earl Fruit Company, and Mr. Earl's original intention was simply to provide cars for the Earl Fruit Company's shipments. The demand, however, for the Earl ventilator-refrigerator car proved so great that Mr. Earl was compelled to establish a car line, and from the first, his C. F. X. car, operated by the Continental Fruit Express, was eagerly sought for by all shippers. These combined ventilator-refrigerator cars were not only eagerly sought for by California shippers, but by fruit shippers and dealers all over America. The car was extensively used in the transportation of Florida oranges, Southern strawberries, as well as California citrus and deciduous fruits. The Earl combination ventilator-refrigerator car filled a long-existing void. The car line grew until it was operating about 2000 ventilator-refrigerator cars, representing an investment of \$2,000,000. The car line's business far exceeded that of the Earl Fruit Company, and in 1900 it handled over 12,000 carloads of fruit and vegetables.

In 1900 Mr. Earl received a very handsome offer for his interests in the fruit-shipping and refrigerator-car business, and concluded to retire from a strenuous life covering a period of over twenty-five years, and did so, with a fortune. Since 1900 Mr. Earl has devoted his attention to large real estate investments in Los Angeles, and to the growth and expansion of the Los Angeles Express, the leading afternoon paper, and the only one published in Southern California at present with full Associated Press news. Mr. Earl's home, which embellishes page 79, is located in Los Angeles; it is in the old English style of architecture, constructed in a most substantial manner. The large grounds are profusely ornamented with rare and beautiful plants, trees and flowers. It is a notably handsome place, and is presided over by Mr. Earl's charming wife, who was formerly Miss Emily Jarvis, of Louisville, Ky.