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JOHN CALDWELL KIRKPATRICK AND THE PALACE HOTEL

by Richard L. Kirkpatrick

John Caldwell Kirkpatrick (1856–1914) was a charismatic and colorful figure prominent in San Francisco during the years he was manager of the Palace Hotel (1894–1914). He was popular with the general public and esteemed in the business community. The Palace was just one of his overall responsibilities for managing the William Sharon estate, which was among the greatest fortunes of the Gilded Age in the West. After the earthquake and fire of 1906, Kirkpatrick restored the Palace to even greater splendor, and also actively promoted renewed tourism and optimistically encouraged the city in its general recovery.

First-generation American of Scots-Irish descent, he was born in Pittsburgh in 1856 and grew up on a farm near Weirton, West Virginia.¹ His father shipped foodstuffs to Pittsburgh for sale by the family's wholesale grocery businesses there. In his youth, John Kirkpatrick attended the public school just across the Ohio River in Steubenville, the seat of Jefferson County, Ohio. After graduating in 1875, he earned a law degree at the University of Michigan² and then returned to Steubenville in 1878 to practice law.³

His residence and work in Jefferson County brought him into contact with the Sharon family of Smithfield, Ohio, about 10 miles from Steubenville.⁴ In 1880, John Kirkpatrick married Elizabeth "Lillie" Davis (1856–1930), daughter of Isaac and Susanna Sharon Davis.⁵ That connection, fueled by his abilities, soon skyrocketed Kirkpatrick's fortunes.

Lillie was a niece of William Sharon (1821–85), Susanna's brother, who also was born in Smithfield. Among various undertakings, he became a lawyer, and he went West for the 1849 Gold Rush.⁶ He made his fortune not in gold but in silver, not in mining but in banking. Called "King of the Comstock Lode," he was reputed to be one of the wealthiest men in California. He came to reside in San Francisco and held large tracts of real estate in the Bay Area. The best known of his properties was the Palace Hotel, which he acquired in 1875.⁷ He also owned the Grand Hotel.

Sharon's family moved from Ohio to join him and settled comfortably in various places around the Bay Area. Isaac and Susanna Davis, parents of Lillie Davis Kirkpatrick, occupied a mansion in Santa Clara.⁸ Another of their daughters, Ida, lived on an estate named "Hawthorns" in Portola Valley near Palo Alto.⁹ She married James Monroe Allen (1844–1913), who was a judge, prominent corporate lawyer in San Francisco, and a director of the Sharon Estate Co. and Bank of California, which William Sharon had resuscitated.¹⁰ Allen was a law partner of Francis Newlands, a son-in-law of William Sharon.

Before his own move to the Bay Area, Kirkpatrick continued his legal practice in Steubenville. Among his first jobs for the Sharon family involved the farm that his mother-in-law, Susanna Sharon Davis, left behind in Smithfield. He gave her practical business and legal advice about the sale or lease of the property.¹¹



*The Palace Hotel, with Lotta's Fountain in the foreground, before the 1906 earthquake.
Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.*

In 1885, when Kirkpatrick was 29 years old, he and Lillie moved with their son, William (born 1882), to California, under the auspices of the Sharon family.¹² Their starting place was a ranch in the San Joaquin Valley near Fresno. His upbringing on the farm in West Virginia had served him well.

His unremitting attention to the work at hand proved so successful that the next season he increased his leasehold. His unusual success

... attracted the attention of the Sharon interests. His returns on the second year made such a favorable impression on the Sharon interests that they offered him the management of their outside land interests. Young Kirkpatrick took hold of the management with his usual vigor and success, and began to lay the foundation of what became a strong place in the esteem of his employers.¹³



William Sharon (1821-1885) Courtesy of Wikipedia.

The patriarch, William Sharon, died in 1885. By the late 1880s, Kirkpatrick was frequenting San Francisco to confer with the Sharon executives headquartered there,¹⁴ having won the confidence and liking of his wife's cousins, William Sharon's three children (heirs of his estate). They inherited their father's estate in thirds:

Florence Sharon (1858-1924) married Thomas Henry Fermor-Hesketh, seventh Baronet Hesketh, of Lancashire, England, where she resided.¹⁵ According to the *New York Times* wedding notice, she secured for herself a title "and property enough to support her in all the luxury which her station as Lady Hesketh will demand."¹⁶ She still drew on the Sharon fortune, however, and her London solicitor was in frequent contact with Kirkpatrick about the necessary liquidation of assets.¹⁷

Frederick Sharon (1862-1915), son of the patriarch, quit his role as an executor of the estate and cultivated the arts in Paris. In 1910 he returned to the Bay Area and lived in Sharon Heights (Menlo Park).¹⁸ Kirkpatrick sent him regular reports about the finances and condition of the Palace Hotel, but Frederick was little involved in the management.

Clara Sharon (1854-82) married Francis Newlands (1846-1917). After her death, he was an executor and trustee of her inheritance, which passed to him and their minor children.¹⁹ Newlands, a lawyer, kept a close eye on the family fortune, and was a shrewd businessman in his own right. While United States Representative, then Senator, from Nevada, and residing in Washington, D.C., he acquired and developed large tracts north of downtown, an area now the exclusive capital suburb called Chevy Chase.²⁰

It is noteworthy that William Sharon, Francis Newlands, and John Kirkpatrick all were of Scots extraction. They and James Allen all were lawyers and related by marriage. Newlands was Sharon's son-in-law through his daughter, Clara; Clara and her siblings, Florence and Frederick Sharon, were first cousins of both Lillie Davis (wife of John Kirkpatrick) and her sister, Ida Davis (wife of James Allen). The Sharons had a clear predilection to keep the business in the family, and to use rapidly modernizing corporate and financial laws to protect and enlarge the Sharon fortune.



Francis Griffith Newlands (1846-1917). Courtesy of Wikipedia.



*This photo, circa 1880s, shows the Palace Hotel (right) connected to the Grand Hotel (left) by a covered bridge.
Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.*

In San Francisco, the family first tasked Kirkpatrick “to straighten out a number of apparent snarls in the details of the management of the Palace Hotel. Within three weeks’ time, young Kirkpatrick made such drastic and beneficial changes that he was offered and accepted the management of the big hotel.”²¹

Kirkpatrick made the Palace a “great success” and “very profitable.” “Nothing ... evidenced his

strong natural ability as a business man quite so forcibly as the exceptional skill with which he ... conducted the affairs of this greatest of American hotels.”²² He was regarded in the trade as “one of the most competent ... and one of the most successful, hotel managers of the world.”²³ He also managed the Grand Hotel, which was across the street from the Palace and connected by a covered bridge.²⁴

"Kirkpatrick's advance proved only a stepping stone, for gradually other duties relating to the Sharon estate were given him till finally he was carrying the burden of the management of the entire estate, and was made its vice president and general manager."²⁵ While Francis Newlands presided generally, and was involved in the bigger transactions, he was mostly occupied with his own political career and other business ventures in the East.

Kirkpatrick's expanded responsibilities included almost 30,000 acres of tillage and pasture and 2,700 head of cattle in the Bay Area and Central Valley. He kept a "country home" in Pleasanton.²⁶ He deployed all his gifts: for husbandry, learned on the farm in West Virginia; for business, learned from his father and uncles in Pittsburgh; and ultimately for high finance, where the law he learned at the University of Michigan profitably intersected with the Sharon millions.

In his voluminous correspondence with Francis Newlands, Frederick Sharon, and Lady Hesketh's solicitor, Kirkpatrick moved effortlessly among such diverse subjects as alfalfa and barley agriculture and cattle breeding; the endless assorted minutiae essential to upscale hostelry (cuisine, furnishings, lavatories, etc.); and the Sharons' deals, stocks, bonds, trusts, subsidiaries, escrows, and many other sophisticated financial and legal instrumentalities.

That he served and retained the confidence of the Sharon heirs (especially the sharp Francis Newlands) for two decades until his death is the clearest demonstration of Kirkpatrick's capacity and finesse.²⁷ "His temperament [was] that of a well-poised character which denotes quick and determined decision, free from impulse or vacillation."²⁸ He successfully combined qualities not often found in the same person: he had wide scope, but paid close attention to detail; he was highly astute in matters of business, but amiable; he had iron discipline for himself, and gentleness for others. All his undertakings were driven by inexhaustible energy.

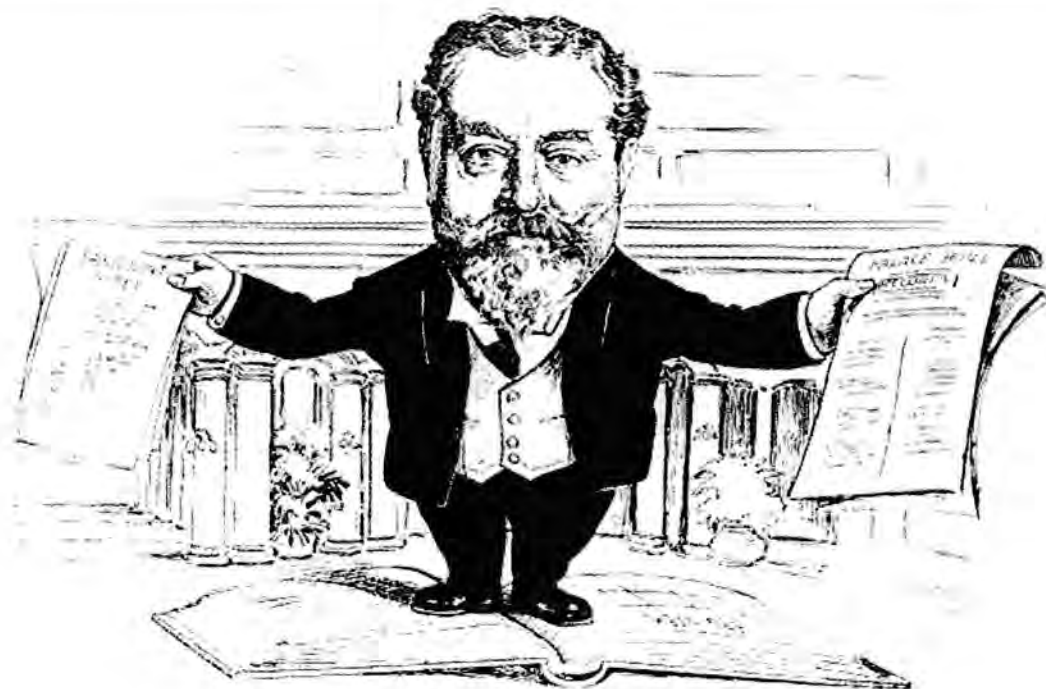
In addition to his success as manager of the hotels, he built a "high reputation as a businessman."²⁹ On behalf of the Sharons, Kirkpatrick handled numerous real estate transactions and other deals involving tens of millions in adjusted dollars. In compensation, he received a large salary and, more

important to growing his own personal fortune, a share of the gross revenues of the hotels, which he put to great advantage. He "was widely known not only in [California] but throughout the country, and was one of the most prominent business men on the coast."³⁰

He knew "the secret of getting the best possible work" from the many people he supervised.³¹ He understood the cardinal rule that, properly managed, money in quantity begets more money, and business begets more business. As he observed to Frederick Sharon concerning one of the hotel restaurants, "people will come day after day to a place that is too full, where they would not go at all to one that was half empty."³² He also took his business acumen to "the ranch," explaining, "The operations are extensive but perfectly systematized. Every pound of barley or other food fed to each horse is accounted for and recorded, so that the exact cost, gain or loss, on every transaction can be traced to its source. But for this discipline we would be swamped."³³

Recognizing Kirkpatrick's abilities, businessmen in various trades gave him numerous leadership roles, including chairman of the Central California Counties Association,³⁴ chairman of the California Agricultural District Fairs,³⁵ president of the Hotel Men's Association,³⁶ and a leader of the San Francisco Hotel Association.³⁷ In addition to the Palace Hotel Co. and the Sharon Estate Co., he was an officer or director (on the Sharons' behalf, his own, or both), of Alhambra Addition Water Company, Amalgamated Oil Co., Associated Oil Company, Bakersfield Iron Works, Central Pacific Railroad Company, Columbia Channel Mining Co., Dangregg Land Co., Occidental Land and Improvement Company, Pioneer-Midway Oil Company, Pleasanton Draying Co., Sacramento Southern Railroad, San Gabriel Wine Company, Wells Fargo Nevada National Bank (predecessor of today's Wells Fargo), and Sterling Oil & Development Company, with fields in the Central Valley, where Kirkpatrick had gotten his California start.³⁸ In a letter to Frederick Sharon, he wrote one day, "There are a dozen people waiting to see me."³⁹

At the time, service in the California National Guard was compulsory for men of age. Kirkpatrick was commissioned lieutenant colonel, aide-de-camp on the staff of the commander-in-chief, a general



COL. J. C. KIRKPATRICK

*"Boniface" John C. Kirkpatrick holding menus for the Palace and Fairmont Hotels.
From Men Who Make San Francisco, page 244.*

rank assigned by law to the governor of the State of California.⁴⁰ Kirkpatrick's position as a staff officer was an invaluable opportunity for him to mix with men, subject to the same duty, whose wealth also afforded high rank.⁴¹ Kirkpatrick's "Commissary" command served the officers' mess handsomely from the kitchens of the Palace Hotel; he had California state governors at his table ever after.⁴² "His fame as an epicure was worldwide."⁴³ He "was noted for his taste in food. People longed to be invited to dine at his table."⁴⁴ Culinary scholars still debate whether the dish "Oysters Kirkpatrick" was created by him or named in honor of him.⁴⁵

Following his tour in the guard, he continued to be generally known as "Colonel Kirkpatrick." Besides "Colonel," some called him "Kirk."⁴⁶ His general air of authority grew with his beard, which he neatly trimmed to a point, contributing to "his well-known resemblance of Edward VII," a near contemporary.⁴⁷

He moved comfortably in the highest political circles of the city and state. His public service had

"the same marked success that attended his private ventures."⁴⁸ Mayor Eugene Schmitz appointed him a San Francisco park commissioner, chiefly responsible for Golden Gate Park, which featured a horse racetrack.⁴⁹ Governor James Budd appointed him an overseer of the Yosemite Valley, then a state park.⁵⁰ These tourist attractions were thought to be within the scope of the master hotelier.

His appointment to another public office, however, stirred envy and some initial doubt: Governor Henry Gage made him a member of the Board of State Harbor Commissioners for the harbor and port of San Francisco.⁵¹ This position was especially coveted.⁵² After he was unanimously confirmed by the California State Senate,⁵³ "it was surmised that his duties as manager of the hotels, ranches and other vast properties of the Sharon estate would take so much of his time that he could not give personal attention to harbor affairs, but the surmises were not well founded, as the Commissioner gave the State the benefit of his excellent business judgment on all building operations under the direction of

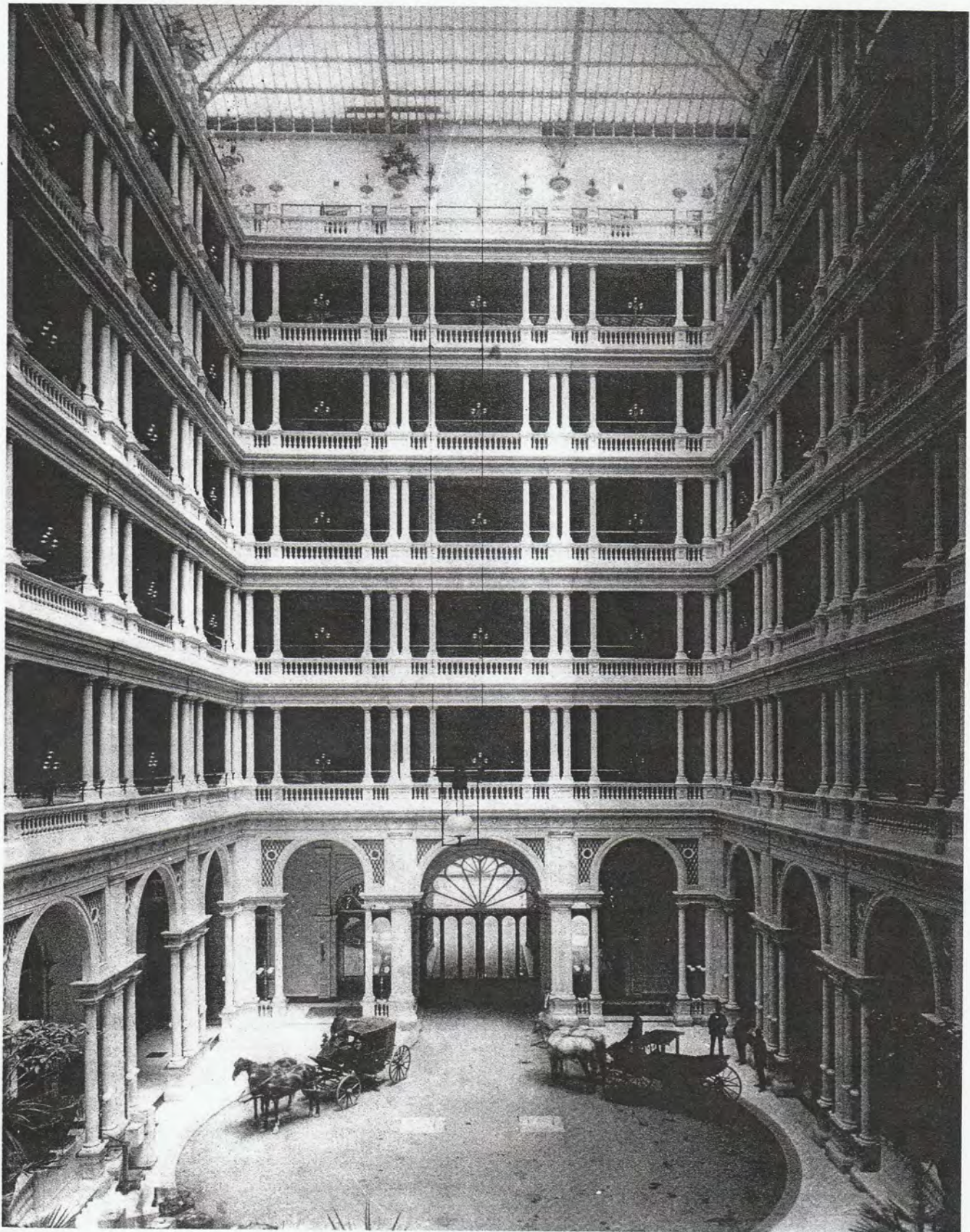


Downtown San Francisco in 1900. The Palace Hotel is the large structure at the upper left. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

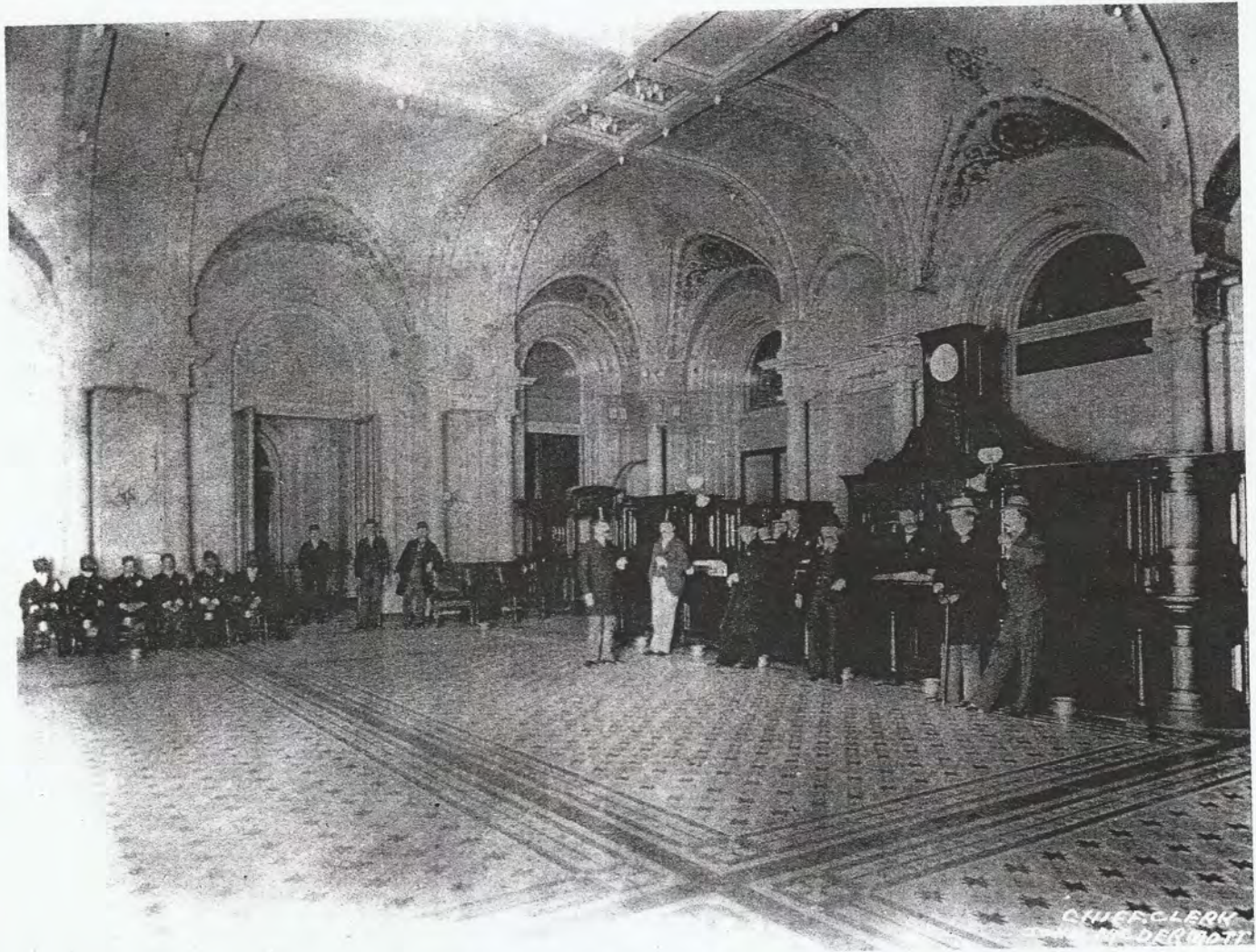
the Commission.”⁵⁴ He took the job of Harbor Commissioner seriously and with his usual exacting attention to detail; he spoke knowledgeably about port infrastructure, shipping traffic, costs and tariffs, etc.⁵⁵ Although such commissions were opportunities for graft and cronyism, he was regarded, even by muckrakers, as “financially incorruptible.”⁵⁶ He was bruited repeatedly as a possible candidate for mayor of San Francisco.⁵⁷

He found time to travel widely, especially to observe other luxury hotel operations while tending to Sharon interests. He went East for periods of six to

eight weeks a year, and one year spent three months in Europe.⁵⁸ While “a man of wide reading,”⁵⁹ he also spoke enthusiastically about the pleasures and benefits of outdoor life and sports.⁶⁰ Horses were his greatest pastime and pleasure. “He was an extraordinarily ardent lover of horseflesh. ... he spent many hours daily driving speedy [horse-drawn] roadsters on the special track in Golden Gate Park. His favorite outdoor recreation, by long odds, was his famous stock farm at Pleasanton, near the Livermore Valley. He dearly loved to take his ease drifting from one paddock to another, sizing up and



Palace Hotel Grand Court in 1897. "A picture fails to give an adequate idea of the size and grandeur of this unusual feature, covering twelve thousand square feet of the ground service and extending to the immense glass roof, nearly 150 feet above."
From *The Palace Hotel*, (John C. Kirkpatrick and Geo. B. Warren, eds., 1897).



*The Palace Hotel Office, circa 1893, showing the workers eager to help guests.
Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.*

commenting on the developing points of the many fine thoroughbreds he raised there."⁶¹

Especially devoted to harness racing, he was chairman of pacific board of appeals of the National Trotting Association; chairman of the Associated Horse Breeders of California; vice president and director of the Pacific Coast Trotting Horse Breeders Association;⁶² steward of the Western Turf Association;⁶³ president of the San Francisco Driving Club (for harness racing);⁶⁴ and member of the executive committee of the horse races at the Panama Pacific International Exposition.⁶⁵ His winning pacer, named Clipper, toured racetracks around the country and was pictured on the sports

page with trophy cup.⁶⁶ Another of his prizewinners was named after his master, John Caldwell.⁶⁷

Kirkpatrick was extremely sociable and universally well regarded. "In San Francisco there is no citizen more liked, more popular, nor more respected. ... Colonel Kirkpatrick is charitable to the extreme. He is generous and tolerant by nature. ... Whether in a gathering of friends or at a great public meeting, he is always the same, a kindly, generous and entertaining companion."⁶⁸ Such qualities also made him eminently clubbable. In the San Francisco Bay Area, he was member of the Burlingame Country Club, the Commonwealth Club, The Family (a men's club on Post Street), the Ingleside Golf Club, the



*The seventh floor of the original Palace Hotel, circa 1886. "The seventh floor . . . is artistically arranged with a display of tropical plants and graceful statuary." Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library. Text from *The Palace Hotel* (John C. Kirkpatrick and Geo. B. Warren, eds., 1897).*

Pacific Union Club, the Presidio Golf Club, and the University Club. He also "belonged to several clubs in eastern cities."⁶⁹

"He was a good mixer . . . a good story teller, a man about town, who drank a little . . . [and] had a lot of magnetism."⁷⁰ "He was . . . the best and widest known toastmaster in the country. As a raconteur, he was unexcelled."⁷¹ His toasts and public words—whether urbane or homespun with tales of West Virginia country life—were "remarkably well chosen,"⁷² "received with hearty welcome,"⁷³ and "greeted with loud and long continued cheering."⁷⁴ He was "cheerful of mind and ready with a winning smile and jesting word, . . . his lively and buoyant

spirits found play for the enjoyment of others. . . . his charming and entertaining personality made fast friends of all."⁷⁵ He was "genial and kindly, uniformly courteous and absolutely unassuming in any and all company. . . . [Becoming an acquaintance] in almost every instance meant friendship with him. . . . Physically, mentally and at heart John C. Kirkpatrick was a 'big' man. . . . his presence was accorded a royal welcome, and his opinions and utterances the deepest respect."⁷⁶

One New Year's Eve, he said: "As we begin this new year let us, instead of new resolutions, seek for force, energy, and strength to succeed in what we have already tried to do. Let us try to learn what is



*The Palace Hotel in ruins after the 1906 earthquake and fire.
Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.*

best for our friends, ourselves and all mankind, and search for wisdom that we may not only know what is best to do, but when and how to do it."⁷⁷ When toasting hotel men who convened on a February 14, he "extended a hearty welcome ... and referred to the good feeling that was bound to accrue from such a gathering. The time had come, he said, when all who dined together on the eve of St. Valentine, should, during the ensuing year, stand together as true, loyal, and sincere friends."⁷⁸

He kept a prominent public profile, partly for the fun of it, but also to promote the hotels with the warm smile of a genial innkeeper, or, "Boniface" (a happy expression still used in his day but now archaic).⁷⁹ Being so closely identified with the Palace Hotel especially distinguished him, since it was "a focus of city pride and the embodiment of San

Francisco's love of living well."⁸⁰ He was "a leader in San Francisco's highest society circles"⁸¹ and ranked among the city's "social notables"⁸² together with his wife, Lillie, and their daughter, Suzanne (born in 1891), after her debut. *The Argonaut* and other periodicals noted the family's travels and entertainment.⁸³ Portraits of him were published among *Californians of Consequence*⁸⁴ and *Men Who Made San Francisco*.⁸⁵ "The newspapers have been very kind to me,"⁸⁶ he commented to Frederick Sharon.

Reporters' genuine liking of the source of such good copy was doubtless encouraged by the complimentary meals he afforded them at the Palace Hotel restaurants.⁸⁷ After a spa trip, his loss of 20 pounds and "much improved physical condition" made the news.⁸⁸ When his chauffeur was fined



*Another view of the Palace Hotel in ruins after the 1906 earthquake and fire. The Grand Hotel (at left) was never rebuilt.
Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.*

\$10 for speeding (by horse & buggy), John Caldwell Kirkpatrick, attorney-at-law, appeared in court on his behalf. "The speech progressed to such an extent that its lengthiness finally threatened to overshadow its eloquence," delighting reporters and other spectators all the more by provoking the state's attorney.⁸⁹

AFTER THE 1906 CATASTROPHE

After the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, the Palace Hotel was among the ruins. At this time in particular, the city needed leaders of Colonel Kirkpatrick's stamp. With his customary optimism, he encouraged businessmen with his motto: "San Francisco—undismayed by disaster, united in prosperity."⁹⁰ He told a reporter a good-natured story, not omitting a promotional angle. During the fire, he

related, it "was natural that our guests should hurry away" without paying their bills. However, "Pretty soon, ... checks started coming in from all quarters of the globe and from all sorts and conditions of men. I never realized so thoroughly before from what an immense territory the hotel trade of San Francisco draws its patronage. Europe, Asia and Australia all were represented by these voluntary contributions."⁹¹

Being sure to consult with Frederick Sharon, Kirkpatrick designed and rebuilt the Palace Hotel to an unprecedented scale of opulence that reflected not merely great wealth, but also sterling confidence in the renewal of San Francisco.⁹² "The success of this great venture was due to Colonel Kirkpatrick. His spirit, forethought, generosity, and management animated and vitalized the enterprise."⁹³



Although the hotel survived the initial damage from the early morning April 18, 1906, San Francisco earthquake, by late that afternoon it had been consumed by the subsequent fires. Courtesy of Wikipedia.



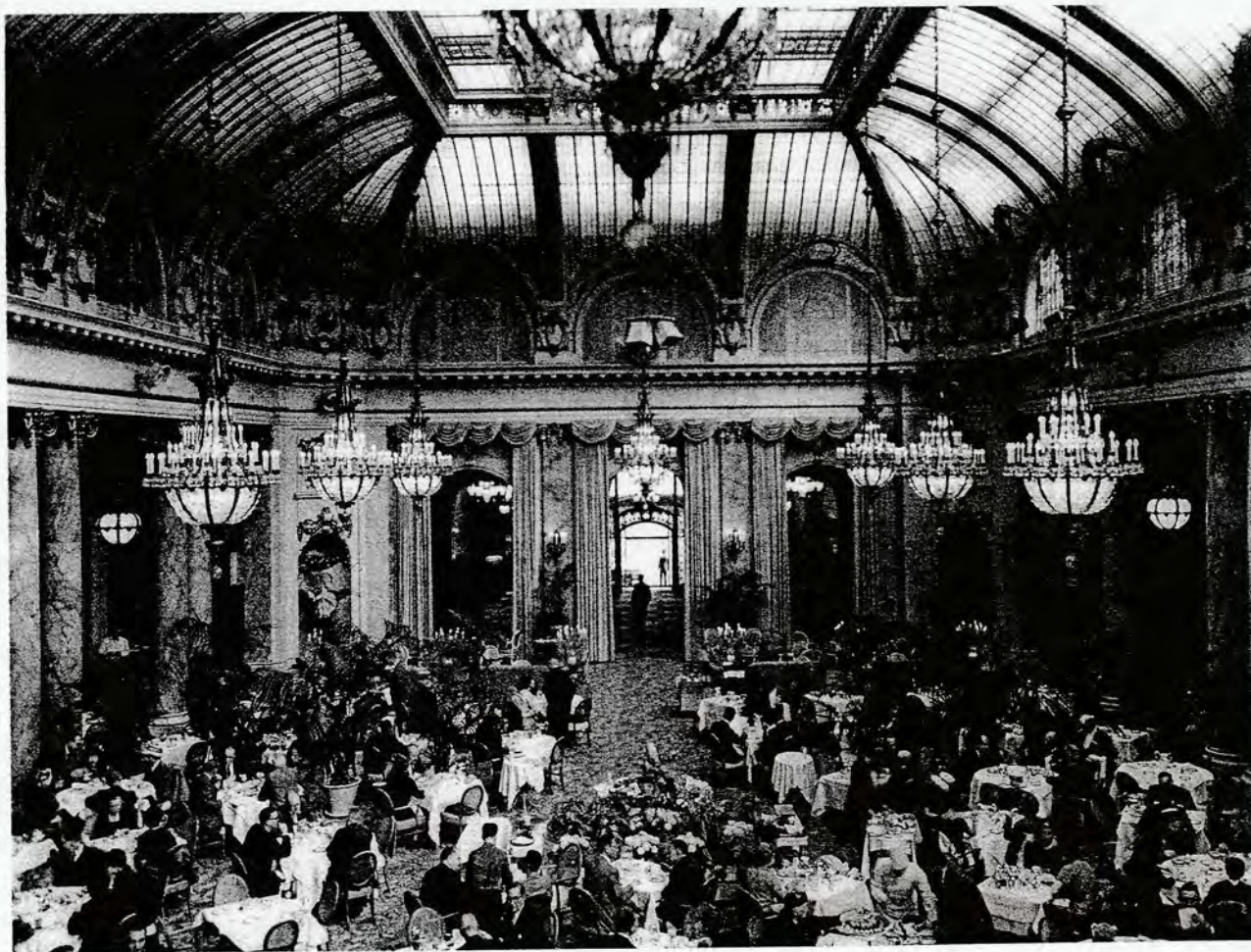
THE PALACE HOTEL. Northwest Corner of Market and New Montgomery Streets. The exterior walls are of brick, well tied by steel rods and bands. The interior dividing walls or partitions are also of brick. The floors and interior finish were of wood. The excellent design and workmanship of the walls prevented any material damage by the earthquake. Fire consumed the wood floors and all the combustible contents, leaving only the walls, which remain in good condition. It is the best preserved building of the non-fire-proof type in the burned district.

The *San Francisco Call* reported, "the magnificent executive skill of Colonel John C. Kirkpatrick, the managing director, [was] everywhere apparent ... it was the Kirkpatrick idea that predominated throughout."⁹⁴ It was believed that he spent months "ransacking Europe for bric-a-brac and art gems for the new Palace. ... At Grand Rapids, Mich., Colonel Kirkpatrick saw two solid train loads of forty cars, each containing furniture for the new Palace. It is said that these will be the largest individual shipments ever made to any part of this country."⁹⁵ He made everything about the Palace (including news reports) superlative.

As the new hotel neared completion in 1909, Kirkpatrick wrote detailed reports to Frederick Sharon. As marble was laid on the floor and 70,000 pieces of colored glass affixed in the dome of the main dining room (the Garden Court), he said, "The effect, I sincerely believe, will be very good."⁹⁶ A month later, he reported without qualification, "It is going to be one of the finest rooms in the world."⁹⁷ Of the Gold Ballroom, he wrote in a report postscript,⁹⁸ "They are now gilding and ornamenting the ball room. The effect is going to be very rich." Such was the calculated effect of the entire edifice. Both the Palace Hotel and its Garden Court are considered classics of *Beaux-Arts* architecture, officially designated San Francisco Landmarks.⁹⁹ The former West Virginia farm boy proved to have an ambitious vision of gargantuan scale. His Palace offices, paneled in mahogany, were on the first floor and provided with private elevator service to his family residence upstairs.¹⁰⁰

On December 15, 1909, Kirkpatrick welcomed more than 750 luminaries to a gala banquet at the Palace Hotel to mark its reopening. He was seated at the head table next to Governor Gillette, San Francisco Mayor Edward Taylor, and Mayor-elect Patrick "P. H." McCarthy. Kirkpatrick said that henceforth, the Palace "doors will never be closed." A golden key made for the occasion was attached to a balloon and released from the roof of the hotel. Kirkpatrick said that he did not care where it went: "There will be no further need of it."¹⁰¹

After the celebration, he resumed his work as managing director of the Palace. The Fairmont Hotel, which had suffered less damage in the great fire, had reopened in 1907, and the Palace leased it, so Kirkpatrick was now managing director of both hotels.¹⁰² In addition to these responsibilities, the heirs of the Sharon estate continued to command his attention. The cumulative responsibilities were a "heavy burden."¹⁰³



Garden Court in the "new" Palace Hotel. Courtesy of the Palace Hotel.

PALACE HOTEL

MARKET AND NEW MONTGOMERY STREETS

SAN FRANCISCO



THE NEW PALACE HOTEL is entirely rebuilt on the original site of the old Palace Hotel—Market Street. Covers an entire city block. Present height, eight stories. Built of steel, granite and concrete. Absolutely fireproof in every way. Represents an outlay of over \$8,000,000. Situated in the heart of San Francisco's banking and Business centers; reached by every car line in the city; convenient to all ferries and steamer docks, railroad stations and ticket offices.

A Hotel Without a Counterpart in the World

It unites all the original features of the old Hotel, with the very latest ideas known to modern hotel buildings. It offers to the traveler the same perfect service—superb cuisine—of the old days.

Will Accommodate Over 1,000 Guests

TELEPHONE SUTTER 700

Under the management of the PALACE HOTEL COMPANY

*Advertisement for the "new" Palace Hotel from the
1911 San Francisco Blue Book. Courtesy of Wikipedia.*

In July of 1914, Kirkpatrick informed Frederick Sharon that: "the last week I was very ill, having a doctor and nurse and all the other equipment of a genuine illness. ... I am entirely over it now, however, and am apparently in first-class shape."¹⁰⁴ His recovery of health was brief, or its appearance deceptive; he relapsed about three months later.

In that trying period he was, as usual, cheerful of mind and ready with a winning smile and jesting word to greet such friends as gained admission to his bedside. Up to the last, his lively and buoyant spirits found play for the enjoyment of others, and he was

designing a number of surprises on the friends and business associates who had planned to celebrate his birthday anniversary. ... Tears suffused the eyes of those gathered about his bedside to hear him dilate upon the surprises he had in store for the banqueters.¹⁰⁵

On Wednesday, November 4, 1914, he was reported in the news to be critically ill.¹⁰⁶ Just before dawn on November 5, John Caldwell Kirkpatrick, his family at his bedside, died, in the 58th year of his life. His Presbyterian funeral service was supposed to be "strictly private" but was overwhelmed by mourners. A spontaneous funeral cortège of friends and admirers coming from all walks of life, "formed a large crowd in the foyers and around the entrances to the Fairmont Hotel, and stood with heads uncovered as the body was borne to the funeral car."¹⁰⁷

Amid the crowd was John Caldwell Kirkpatrick's stable boy—a symbol, it seems, of where he had started, and how far he had come.¹⁰⁸

Twelve of his closest friends escorted his remains to Mount Olivet Cemetery, south of San Francisco, in Colma, an area of rolling green hills not unlike the Appalachian foothills of West Virginia where he was raised.¹⁰⁹ All who knew him felt "a vacancy in the world left by his passing."¹¹⁰

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Richard L. Kirkpatrick is a partner in the San Francisco office of the Pillsbury Winthrop law firm. He has practiced intellectual property law for 36 years. Pillsbury is the legacy firm of Pillsbury Madison & Sutro, one of the oldest law firms in California. The firm was formed in 1874, when the original Palace Hotel was under construction. Richard L. Kirkpatrick is a cousin of John Caldwell Kirkpatrick.

NOTES

1. Kirkpatrick called West Virginia his home state. "Colonel John Caldwell Kirkpatrick," *Overland Monthly* (Google Book, July–December 1914), xii.
2. D. Filson, *Steubenville Public School: Being a History of the Progress of the Public Schools of Independent District, No. 5, the City of Steubenville, Ohio, from 1838 to 1889* (Google Books, 1892), 130; *Proceedings of the Board of Regents of the University of Michigan* (Google Books, 1881), 204–06. As a lawyering credential in the United States, the longer course J.D. (Juris Doctor) has superseded Kirkpatrick's LL.B. (Bachelor of Laws). Never one to leave a place without new friends, he remained active in the Michigan Law School alumni association.
3. *Michigan Alumnus*, 21, (Google Books, January 1915), 210.
4. "The Sharon Family," <http://www.billputman.com/THE%20SHARON%20FAMILY%20HISTORY.htm>.
5. Marriage ID 187249, 5/13/1880, Western Marriage Record Index. <abish.byui.edu>
6. M. Makley, *The Infamous King of the Comstock: William Sharon and the Gilded Age in the West* (University of Nevada Press, 2006).
7. *Daily Alta California* May 16, 1875.
8. "The Sharon Family" <billputman.com> H. Bancroft, *Chronicles of the Builders of the Commonwealth* (Archive.org 1892) Vol. 4, chapter 2; C. Shortridge, *Santa Clara County* (Google Books, 1896), 312. Isaac and Sanna Davis rest at Oak Hill Memorial Park in San Jose.
9. "Hawthorns Historic Structures Assessment," http://www.openspace.org/sites/default/files/2013.10.31.Hawthorns_HistoricResourceStudy.pdf.
10. Gray Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006), 335; B Millard, *History of the San Francisco Bay Region* (Archive.org 1924) Vol. 3, 104–07; *Obituary Record of Graduates of Yale University Deceased from June 1910 to July 1915* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1915), 420; "James Monroe Allen" 4, 1 *The Liberty Bell* 90 (Google Books, April 1918); *Walker's Manual of California Securities and Directory of Directors* (Hathitrust.org 1912), 323. <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nmpelton/sfball.htm>
11. John Caldwell Kirkpatrick to Mrs. Davis, September 18, 1884 & October 31, 1884, Part I, Box 8, Folder: J. C. Kirkpatrick Letters to Frederick W. Sharon 1884–1900, Sharon Family Papers, BANC MSS C-B 777 Pt 1–3, Bancroft Library Archives, University of California Berkeley ("Sharon Papers").
12. "Colonel John Caldwell Kirkpatrick," *Overland Monthly* July–December 1914 (Google Books), xii.
13. *Ibid.*
14. On each trip he stayed at the Palace Hotel. *Daily Alta California* July 21, 1889, 4; *Los Angeles Herald* 11/3/89:12; *San Francisco Call* August 19, 1891, 2.
15. The Peerage, "Florence Emily Sharon," #152842. <http://www.thepeerage.com/p15285.h,tm#i152842>; S Fornoff, "An Old San Francisco Dowry," *SFGate.com*, May 11, 1905. <http://www.sfgate.com/homeandgarden/article/An-old-San-Francisco-dowry-gives-on-Auction-in-2672243.php>.
16. *New York Times*, January 2, 1881, "Thomas George Fermor-Hesketh" https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_George_Fermor-Hesketh.
17. The solicitor was Ernest Bird. Kirkpatrick's correspondence with him is in the Newlands Papers, *infra*. When Bird visited San Francisco, Kirkpatrick hosted a reception for him, joined by Frederick Sharon, James Allen, and others. *San Francisco Call*, November 5, 1908, 5.
18. Frederick Sharon "preferred the quiet and repose of a private life, and the pleasures of literature, art [etc]." W. Rowley, *Reclaiming the West: The Career of Francis G. Newlands* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996), 37; Makley, 208.
19. Makley, 195.
20. Francis Griffiths Newlands Papers, MS 317, Box 9, Folders 1–12, Correspondence, J. C. Kirkpatrick, Accession 2009 M-028, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University ("Newlands Papers"); "Francis G Newlands" https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_G._Newlands. "Newland's considerable wealth ... came to him by way of marriage into the estate of the Comstock robber baron, William Sharon." W. Rowley, "Reno and the Desert of



The crest, logotype, and a rare surviving individual service silver teapot from the original Palace Hotel. Courtesy of Wikipedia.