

A Haven of Rest.

Old Age Pensioners Spending the Evening of their Days at the Costley Home.

On this page we give some portraits of a few of the oldest recipients of the old age pensions in the colony, who are ending their long and in many cases eventful lives in the home set apart for the aged by the benevolence of the late Mr Costley. With one exception all are in the best of spirits and are as cheery and chatty a set as you might meet in the proverbial day's march. They are happy and contented in their surroundings as well they may be, for the supervisor and matron, Mr and Mrs Moss, are most kindly and sympathetic in looking after the comfort, and what is as important in the case of the very aged, the whims of the inmates of the Home. All are delightful to talk to, and are willing to entertain you with stories of past days. One old lady is a victim of the ultra-Calvinistic belief that she is eternally damned, and this naturally gravely affects her spirits. She nevertheless consented to have her photo taken, but opined that both she, the photographer, and the writer would be better occupied in preparing for the coming fate awaiting them in the next world.



Margaret Thompson. Aged 77. She has been in the colony for from 36 to 37 years. This old lady is, and has been, much respected, and was compelled about three years ago to seek the care and shelter which the Costley Home affords as a refuge from the storms of life which her advanced age ill-fitted her to bear.



Alice Kay, supposed to be nearly, if not over, one hundred years of age. She came to the colony in the very early days, and met with the customary hardships of pioneering. She resided for a number of years in the Costley Home, and passed "beyond the veil" on the 14th December, 1899. She stated with much pride that she had never taken a dose of medicine of any kind in her whole life. Though somewhat coarse and uncouth exteriory, she was nevertheless kind and tender to a degree.



Anna Albrechter, German, aged 82 years. Is an old and much respected colonist. The old lady was compelled during the year '97 to seek and gain admission to the Costley Home, because of the weakness and incapacity incidental to her extreme old age.



Mary Ann Grant, age 75. Has resided in the colony about 37 years. She came with her husband who was a volunteer in the militia, in which he saw active service in the Maori war. Her husband died ten years ago, since which time she was sorely pressed by adverse circumstances until her admission to the Costley Home nearly two years ago, which means for her, she thinks, a new and extended lease of life.



John Graham, aged 80, Scotch. This old man came to the colony about 35 years ago in the brig "Moa," Captain Robertson. He is a master mariner, having been in command of various coastal vessels for many years subsequent to his arrival, until failing eyesight caused him to relinquish his profession and seek admission to the Costley Home.



Joseph Webb, aged 90. This old man came out to the colony in the man-of-war "Emma" with Governor Hobson, in the capacity of valet, in the year 1840. He believes himself to be the oldest living colonist. He kept the Devonshire Hotel in Wyndham-street during the year 1845 and three succeeding years. During 1845 he owned the racehorse "Tampsin," with which he won the first race ever won on Potter's Paddock. The old fellow feels proud of this achievement. He is still vigorous physically and bright mentally.



Margaret Graham, aged 76, is believed to have been in the colony a great many years, and has been a resident of the Costley Home since it was opened, nearly ten years. She is a Scotch woman, and labours under the delusion that she is "lost, lost, eternally lost"—a victim to the very benevolent teachings of orthodoxy. A physiognomical study, depicting the hopelessness of morbid despair as opposed to the philosophy of healthy hope, eh?



Susan Duneen. Aged 89. Came out to New Zealand with her husband, an Imperial pensioner, she thinks from 40 to 50 years ago. She has witnessed many stirring events in the colony's history. Her husband has been dead 20 years this Christmas, '90. The old woman maintained herself in comparative comfort until old age forced her to seek shelter in the Auckland Refuge, whence she was transferred with the other inmates to the Costley Home on July 11th, 1890.

ELECTROPLATING BODIES.

THE LATEST EMBALMING IDEA.

Among the topics constantly agitating social and sanitary experts are the difficulties of urban sepulture. The larger cities no longer tolerate burials in the cemeteries within their limits. The expense and trouble that this prohibition involves have given rise to the alternative ideas of incineration and other similar methods for the disposition of the dead. So many details of the present way of conducting funerals have been developed by the progressive spirit of the times that it is no wonder that in this peculiar field also there should be an application of scientific elements.

This is the age of electrical wonders. The area of human affairs into which the mysterious current does not run and revolutionise existing conditions is practically unknown. The domain of the "great majority" is its latest field of operation.

A scientist of most advanced electrical ideas, who recently returned from Europe, is the advocate of an application of electrical methods for the preservation of the dead. He holds that his experiments prove it not only entirely practical, but the genuine end of the age system of permanent embalming. He has been a laborious student of Egyptology, and is familiar with all the discoveries made in the disintegrating of the mummies from their ancient coverings.

During a stay in Rome he visited the famous Cemetery of the Capuchins, under the church of that order, in the Piazza de Cappuccini. Here the vaults contain tombs with earth from Jerusalem. When new interments are to be made the bones longest undisturbed in these vaults are taken out. From these the most ghastly decorations for the walls and roof have been fashioned. While looking at the crumbling remains of the four thousand departed monks lined up against the walls it occurred to him that if the bodies were only treated to the electrical process by which they could be encased in a metallic surface they would thus be preserved intact and life-like for all time.

Experiments followed which the scientist regards as highly satisfactory. To those unfamiliar with the process of electro-plating it may be said that to have a thin film of metal deposited on the desired surface it is first covered with plumbago—more familiar to un-scientific ken in stove polish. Then with an acid bath and the electric current the transfer is effected.

Ordinary metallic platings of table ware and other articles of familiar use are common enough, but experiments had to show that the idea was also applicable to other substances. Meat and vegetable fibres were so treated to his satisfaction and then he advanced to his embalming theory.

In this the body is prepared as for ordinary embalming. The viscera are removed and a preservative liquid is injected into the veins. A coating of metal applied by the electroplating process then hermetically encases the whole frame and it is preserved intact for ever.

In this outer shell gold, silver, copper or nickel could be used to suit the purse and fancy of those having the embalment done. With it coffins and caskets can be done away with. A man could perpetuate himself in enduring brass or more precious metals.

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