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ALFRED CARL HOTTES—A TRIBUTE

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HORTICULTURE lost a unique and dynamic figure with the sudden passing of Alfred Carl Hottes in La Jolla on February 28. His death was the result of a cerebral hemorrhage while hanging pictures at a local gallery.

Mr. Hottes was born at Ithaca, New York, March 16, 1891. He graduated from Cornell University in 1913 and one year later received the Master's degree from the same institution. He served as an instructor in floriculture for two years at Cornell, leaving in 1916 to go to Ohio State University to head up the work in floriculture and ornamental horticulture. At Ohio State he wrote many of his books on gardening,

which sold widely. He built up facilities which laid the foundation of one of the outstanding centers of floricultural instruction and research.

In 1929 Mr. Hottes left Ohio State to join the staff of the Meredith Publishing Company, Des Moines, Iowa, where he was garden editor of "Better Homes and Gardens" until 1942. This was followed by a move to Ja Lolla, California, where he continued to edit garden pages for several national magazines, write and revise books, and to give many lectures on horticultural subjects. As a speaker Mr. Hottes was unusually gifted. His unbounded enthusiasm, and keen sense of humor, coupled with a remarkable memory, made his lectures memorable. He might perhaps have been an outstanding actor.

Mr. Hottes was a born collector and most of these hobby interests were pursued over relatively long periods of time. Many of his writings reveal considerable erudition which came from his unceasing search for unusual and obscure facts related to a subject. He maintained voluminous files on horticultural topics. He had a large stamp collection, and was interested in Japanese prints at one time. Regardless of where he lived, he always had a backyard garden or a greenhouse or lathhouse where many plants were tried. He had a remarkably comprehensive collection of succulent plants at the time of his death. He acquired a particularly valuable library collection of early herbals. He always lived among a multitude of bibelots, which in large part were acquired on his travels in Europe, Mexico, or Alaska.

As a man of unusual versatility and many interests, perhaps it is significant that he was greatly attracted by a number of great figures of art and literature of the Renaissance type such as Leonardo da Vinci, Goethe, Rembrandt, and others and had made a detailed study of their lives.

Unquestionably, the influence of the late Liberty Hyde Bailey at Cornell University* was the guiding inspiration for his career. The books of Mr. Hottes complemented admirably the massive contributions of Bailey, but were oriented toward the amateur and the student, as well as the professional horticulturist. His books on plant propagation, "The Book of Annuals," "The Book of Perennials," "The Book of Shrubs," "The Book of Trees," "Climber and Ground Covers," "Garden Facts and Fancies," "One Thousand and One Garden Questions Answered," and others influenced and guided a whole generation of gardeners and students of horticulture.

He was unusually gifted in sketching, and in later life took up water color painting. He completed many paintings of species of ornamental trees and shrubs grown in California to illustrate a book on the subject. Unfortunately, the cost of publication made the appearance of this volume impossible. It could have been published with line illustrations, but he steadfastly refused to compromise on his original plan for the book.

His personality was essentially complex and he was an individualist and non-conformist. He had a deep insight into human nature, but was tolerant of human foibles. Although he accepted no religious dogmas of any sort, in his later years he gave frequent talks before various church organizations, largely because he was an authority on the customs and traditions of Christmas. The book which he wrote on this subject had a long period of preparation. This particular interest is difficult to explain, but the basic idea of giving was typical of the man. His life was freely given to his many students, to his books, his lectures and other work with characteristic intensity.

Although he never married, he was fond of children and they were instinctively attracted to him. His unusually wide circle of warm friends substituted for family life. His interest in humanity was matched also by a fervent love, not only of plants, but of the larger world of nature. He was one of those unforgettable personalities we encounter all too seldom.

*See p. 47, current issue, *Lasca Leaves*.



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