

# TO STRIKE THE FETTERS FROM COMMERCE.

## What the Harbor Commissioners Propose to Do About It.

E. L. COLNOR SPEAKS.

### An Attempt to Be Made to Lift This Port Out of Politics.

### FAVORS CIVIL SERVICE RULES.

### An Important Official Expression Looking Toward the Relief of Merchants.

The paper which was read by Captain W. L. Merry at the conference of the Shipowners' Association with local organizations of similar character, in the hall of the Chamber of Commerce on Friday afternoon, was the subject of general comment on the water front yesterday. The purpose of the conference being to devise ways and means for lightening the burdens upon shipping entering the harbor, Captain Merry dealt with the tax collected by the Harbor Commission, which he considered excessive. He also made some rather plain statements touching the administration of that very important department of the State government, broadly intimating that things there were not just as they should be. E. L. Colnor, president of the commission, was asked by a CALL reporter what he thought of the captain's remarks.

"I agree perfectly with the captain that there has been in the past—and is today, in fact—too much politics in the affairs of the commission. No position in the service requiring special aptitude or previous training should be given to a Democrat because he is a Democrat, or to a Republican because he is a Republican, nor should any employee be discharged on account of his politics. Every man qualified for the place which he fills should be retained in it during good behavior. This lengthening of the tenure would allow of the compensation being reduced. There is not an officer or employe of the board—save, possibly, the chief engineer—who would not consent to a decrease of his pay in return for an assurance of prolonged employment, unaffected by politics or the change incident to a State election. Salaries in most cases are too high and are disproportionate to the responsibilities involved; but the board is not responsible for this, as the standard has been fixed by the Legislature on the positions that are statutory. There is no reason why for similar service the State should pay 30 or 50 per cent more on the water front than the General Government pays in the Post-office, except that in the former case the job lasts only so long as the "pull" endures which obtained it, while in the latter it may be lifelong, in the discretion of the possessor."

"But how is this ideal condition of things to be reached?"

"Now you are getting to the point. The matter was long ago discussed by the Governor, Colonel Chadbourne and myself, and we have agreed that a bill shall be presented to the next Legislature taking the water front out of politics by making the tenure of the officers and employes of the Harbor Commission dependent solely upon good behavior, as in the classified service of the Federal Government. In other words, we have resolved upon civil service reform. If Captain Merry and the Shipowners' Association will assist us in this endeavor, a step in the direction indicated by Friday's conference will have been taken."

"What do you think of the proposition of turning the management of the water front over to the Federal Government?"

"That is a possibility so infinitely remote as not to be entitled to serious consideration. But if it were possible, what would be gained by it? The history of similar affairs does not justify the belief that the management would be any more economical than it is at present or that it could easily be made by the reforms spoken of."

"The statement that if the General Government should finish the seawall the work could be done for two and a half millions, whereas if the State should undertake it the cost would be twenty millions, is preposterous. The General Government would do the work precisely as the State government has done it, by letting contracts, according to the requirements of the law, to the lowest bidder. It is wild assertions such as these that have created the impression there is something mysteriously wrong or rotten on the water front and that have prevented the inauguration of the reforms that are really needed by directing attention to evils that are purely imaginary. There is no excuse for a person who can read English and assume to speak on the subject not knowing what the provisions are of the State law with respect to the construction of the seawall. It is as binding an enactment as could be framed, hedging about with restrictions and safeguards every movement of this commission in the matter to which it relates."

"I notice that Captain Merry also spoke of the flimsy wharf constructions, the only exception being the proposed new Pacific street wharf, as though they indicated a management that might be criminally wrong, when the fact is that the wharves of the State are to-day as durable and in as good condition as those of private parties similarly situated with respect to the ravages of the teredo. Assuredly the destruction wrought by this parasite is not to be charged to the dereliction of the Harbor Commission. The Southern Pacific Railroad Company has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in endeavors to beat the busy little worm, but there is no evidence that I have been able to obtain that the corporation is any better off than the State in the conflict that is incessantly going on."

"What do you think of the proposition of Captain Merry that the law should be changed so that no one would be eligible for the Harbor Commission who did not possess a certain degree of technical knowledge of ships and shipping?"

"The daily routine of a commercial house, but nevertheless yielding to the same application of common-sense and judgment as determines the conduct of affairs in general of the same magnitude. I can easily conceive of a master mariner of conspicuous advancement as such making an equally conspicuous failure as Harbor Commissioner. At all events there is nowhere a point of contact in the two functions. Nor am I speaking wholly as a landsman, for in the earlier years of my life I had some little experience of ships and shipping, which, as I said, I have found not the least useful in this position, save on one occasion, when I told the former superintendent of tugs that if the deckhands couldn't do all the necessary rope-splicing I'd go down and do it myself."

"There is one statement," President Colnor concluded, "which with your permission I would like to make, and is in reference to the closing words of Captain Merry at the Chamber of Commerce meeting, where he intimated that possibly all the revenue collected on the water front did not find its way into the public treasury. If the captain felt that he had sufficient information to warrant such a public statement, the consciousness of his obligations as a citizen should have persuaded him that the place to make the disclosure was before the Grand Jury."

"This commission would thank Captain Merry or any one else who should put it in possession of information touching the shortcoming of any of its agents or employes, but in the absence of anything more definite than a vague intimation it must assume that everything is all right, the intending accuser only being wrong. The episode furnishes an occasion for saying that the system of collecting and accounting for the revenues of this commission is as nearly perfect as human ingenuity can devise it. In saying this I take no credit to myself, for the system has been in vogue, as I understand, ever since ex-Governor Irwin was a commissioner. And I venture to say that there is not a mercantile house or other business concern in San Francisco that has a better arrangement of checks and balances, or that collects more closely than this commission. Not a dollar of dues escapes of the average of over \$50,000 a month accruing. As to what becomes of it after collection, if anybody has complaint to make or knowledge of malfeasance, the place to lodge the information, as I have said, is before the Grand Jury."

## FANNIE BOWMAN TO WED.

### San Francisco's Pretty Little Soubrette Engaged to Charles P. Hall.

### The Marriage Ceremony Expected to Take Place Some Time Before the Holidays.

Pretty little Fannie Bowman, the popular soubrette of San Francisco, now travel-



FANNIE BOWMAN. [From a photograph.]

ing with Frederick Warde in the East, is engaged to marry Charles P. Hall, the well-known theatrical manager, formerly of this City and now manager and proprietor of Hall's Auditorium of San Jose.

Although the matter has been known to a few intimate friends of the couple for



Charles P. Hall.

several months, it has been kept from general public notice.

Miss Bowman's marriage will mean her retirement from the stage for good, according to her plans as now outlined. While extremely fond of her profession, she finds her greatest pleasure in her home, even now. When absent she does not permit a day to pass without writing to her family, and, as her little sister Mabel expresses it, "There is not another sister like her in the world."

The marriage will take place in this City shortly before Christmas, and the couple will reside in this City. They first met about two years ago.

Miss Bowman is not yet fully out of her teens, and has been before the footlights regularly as a professional for only five years, but during this comparatively brief period has made rapid headway in her profession, and on every occasion of her appearance has won popular approval.

The parts in which she has made the most decided hits are Henri in "The Mountebank," Virginia in "Virginia," Marcella in "In the Lion's Mouth" and Marjory in "Runnymede."

She is now traveling with Frederick Warde and has just finished a season at New Orleans. She has been with Warde for the past three years, and has a contract with him to finish the season, which does not end till May, with the option of renewing it for another season. She has, however, already tendered her resignation, and will leave New Orleans for her home in this City to-morrow, with the expectation of arriving here next Saturday. Before engaging with Warde she was leading soubrette at the Alcazar.

Charles P. Hall is said to be about 43 years of age, and was best known in this City as the manager of the Bush-street Theater. He has had a wide and varied



experience as a theatrical agent and manager, and is reported to be more than comfortably provided for as far as this world's goods are concerned. He was at one time an agent for P. T. Barnum, and was not only trusted employe of the great showman, but an intimate friend. He also had the management of the Grand Opera-house at New York, when it was owned by

kind are bound to be started about buildings in which murders have been committed.

A number of policemen whose duty it is to guard the building day and night to see that nothing is disturbed until Theodore Durrant's fate is finally settled believe that such is the case, and when the day comes for them to take their night watch in the dark and silent edifice they go with heavy hearts and start at every sound that breaks the awful silence of the sanctuary.

Since the day that the bodies of Blanche Lamont and Minnie Williams were discovered in the church a constant watch has been kept, under Chief Crowley's orders, to see that nothing is disturbed, the idea being to prevent anything which might be used as evidence in the case from being removed or defaced. The task has devolved upon the patrolmen of the Seventeenth-street station, and in regular rotation they take six-hour watches in the building.

Those who are on day duty do not mind it so much, but the night watch, particularly that from midnight to 6 A. M., is their terror.

At least half the watch has complained of the feeling of oppression and vague sense of the presence of some one near them during the hours between midnight and dawn, and some have been actually ill from the experience.

At first the watchers sat comfortably in chairs inside the doors away from the rain or wind as the case might be, but now only the most stout-hearted venture inside, the others pace up and down outside until relieved.

Bartlett street is deserted long before midnight, and except for the footfall of some belated pedestrian on his way to his cozy home or the distant hum of the electric cars passing to and fro on adjacent streets there is nothing to break the silence and gloom. After 1 o'clock only the distant shriek of passing locomotives relieves the stillness that is almost that of a tomb.

This is the time most feared by the guardians of the peace. One of them tells of an experience a few nights ago that would have shaken the nerves of even the most courageous.

"I had concluded that the stories I had heard of sounds at night were all in the imagination of the narrators," he said, "when something happened that sends a thrill through me every time I think of it. I was sitting in a chair thinking how comfortable it was to be in out of the cold, when suddenly I felt a presence near me. It came on suddenly, and in almost an instant I was all in a tremble."

"I suppose you have had one of those terrible nightmares that bring you upright in bed, with starting eyes and a feeling that your peril must be real—it is so vivid. It seems as though some hideous animal was pursuing to devour you and that you were unable to escape, or that you were falling from a precipice to be dashed on the rocks below. That is just the way I felt."

# THE CHURCH HAUNTED

## Fears That Unman Even the Sturdiest Policemen.

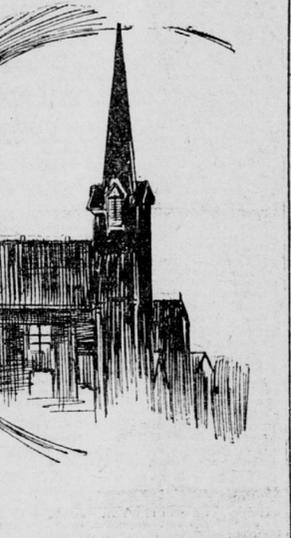
### WEIRD NIGHT WATCHES.

### Bells That Tinkled and Skirts That Rustled Across the Floor.

### NOT FOND OF THE DETAIL.

### Queer Story of a Bluecoat Who Was on Duty at the Sacred Edifice.

Is Emmanuel Baptist Church haunted by the spirits of the two young girls who were murdered within its walls? Of course not; but queer stories of that



kind are bound to be started about buildings in which murders have been committed.

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"The blood rushed from my heart and a cold chill went through my limbs. I was unable to move, and while in that condition I heard one of the electric bells in the rear of the church ring three times—clearly, distinctly."

"Then came the strangest sensations of all. I was sitting with one of my legs outstretched and I felt distinctly a sensation as of a woman's skirt being brushed across it."

# NEW TO-DAY.



## Toys.

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- Black Figured Mohairs, 25c.
- Black Crepon, lovely, 75c.
- 54-inch Black or Colored Ladies' Cloth, 37 1/2c.
- Boucle Suits, black or colors, 50c.
- Extra Drives in Black Boucles, \$1 00, \$1 50, \$1 75.
- Scotch Tartan Plaids, all wool, 50c.
- English Novelty Black Goods, 50c.
- Black or Colored Crepons, \$2 00 quality, \$1 25.

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# NEW TO-DAY.



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# NEW TO-DAY.



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Black or blue, very full sleeves, 28 inches long, nicely stitched all around, anywhere else \$7 50 would be cheap for it.

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Ladies' Capes, blue or black beaver, satin band on collar and upper cape, five rows of stitching, 30 inches long, all sizes, awfully cheap at \$10.

## \$7.50 Capes.

Ladies' Beaver Capes in black or blue, collar and upper cape trimmed with black shirred edging, two rows of Hercules braiding on collar and three rows on upper and lower cape, cheap anywhere at \$12 50.

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Ladies' Jackets in black or blue boucle cloth, 26 inches long, full mandolin sleeve, ripple black and velvet collar. This is our exclusive style, made by us and not found elsewhere, and nothing like it within \$5.

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Very full sweep, 25 inches long, in black kerseys, handsomely embroidered with silk cord and worth every cent there is in \$15.

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## Last Season's Suits, \$6.00 and \$7.50.

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