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"AN IDIOT'S TALE."

ON Sunday evening a small piece of cloth covering the cinematograph at the Orpheum caught fire, and for a few seconds blazed into an open flame. Some members of the audience became alarmed and started for the doors, but the fire was extinguished in a moment, and they returned to their seats. The entertainment of the evening was interrupted for only about five minutes, and the sole effect upon the performance was to render it impossible to give the cinematograph exhibition.

The incident, trifling in itself, gave the *Examiner* a chance to fake up a lurid sensation, and it proceeded to do so. On the first page of that paper there was printed yesterday two pictures. One represented the interior of a blazing theater; the balcony was wrapped in smoke and flames, the main floor of the auditorium was thronged with a rushing, panic-stricken crowd, in which one man was pictured dragging another bodily backward over the seats, while a third was in the act of jumping on him, and the whole scene was designed to give the impression of a fierce and fateful conflagration devouring a holocaust of victims. The second picture showed a mob of maddened people on the streets with several stalwart citizens in the midst trying to prevent a truck-driver from rushing his team through the crowd and crushing mangled bodies beneath the feet of his fiery steeds.

The account given of the affair was made to accord with the pictures. Evidently the artist did his work first, and the reporter was instructed to follow along the same lines. The public was told that "blazing flakes fell on the heads of the audience below." That a panic broke out and "the audience piled into the aisles headlong and topsy-turvy. There was no consideration for age or sex. Men trampled and shoved. Women shrieked. Then clothes were torn. One woman was thrown down in the aisle. She managed to get to her feet with a bleeding face."

To pile horror upon horror's head the *Examiner* proceeded, after exhausting its screaming adjectives on the incident itself, to recount the "disastrous fire in the charity bazaar in Paris, when the noblest of the French aristocracy perished in the flames." It suggested a parallel between the two occurrences, and expressed wonder, surprise, astonishment, amazement that nobody was killed. Thus it spread the verbiage for something like five columns, compelling the reader to go through all that mass of words to find out from statements scattered in the mixture that "the affair was all over in a moment or two"; that "the panic did not last"; that "so far as learned none of the audience suffered anything worse than a little crowding and a bad fright."

This is the way in which the *Examiner* reports happenings at home. It reports happenings abroad in the same way. The public may be excused if it is sometimes deceived by sensational dispatches in the yellow faker from the Emperor of China and other foreign dignitaries, but by noting the lurid way in which the affair at the Orpheum has been exaggerated the people can readily estimate what an *Examiner* report is worth from any part of the world. In fact when you see it in the *Examiner* you know it is "an idiot's tale, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

One rumor has it that C. P. Huntington offered a relative $10 not to go on the vaudeville stage, and another places the sum at $25,000. In view of Mr. Huntington's well-known habit of not letting go of $25,000 and the fact that the relative is on the stage a consensus of opinion is that the former amount is correct.

The spectacle of a dog out of jail on $500 bonds is certainly unique, but somewhat of a reflection upon the integrity of the animal. Many a prisoner not entitled to half the respect any worthy dog may claim gets released on his own recognizance.

The Massachusetts women whose battle cry is "No Bachelors in Politics" are inconsistent. Surely bachelors have as much right in politics as can be claimed by a lot of old maids.

THE MONKEY-GARDEN SCHEME.

WHEN THE CALL first announced its opposition to the scheme for establishing a park and a zoological garden in the Mission an effort was made in some quarters to induce the public to believe that the great majority of taxpayers in that district desired the park; that they had a right to it as their share of municipal improvements, and that antagonism to the scheme was antagonism to the interests of the Mission itself.

That effort has failed. Among the men who in interviews with THE CALL have expressed a decided opposition to the proposed increase of taxation for the zoo and the park, none have been more forcible than those who are themselves residents of the Mission. The taxpayers of that section of the City are in accord with those of other portions.

There is no sectionalism in the issue whatever. It is not a question of one quarter of the community against the others. It is simply an issue of taxpayers against a land-selling scheme. That is the way in which it is regarded throughout the City, and in the Mission as well as elsewhere the course of THE CALL is heartily sustained by nearly every citizen upon whose property the scheme would entail an additional burden of taxation.

San Francisco has no money to spare for a zoological garden, nor for another park. Such money as we can afford for pleasure grounds will bring the best results if expended at Golden Gate. Our improvements for many years must be in the line of bettering the condition of our streets and sewers. We have a park which is an ornament to the City, while our streets are a disgrace to it. We have all the pleasure ground and breathing spaces we require for the holiday enjoyment of our people, but our sewers are an increasing menace to public health.

The Mission taxpayers understand these things as well as any one else, and are not giving the land boomers the support they claim. Let us quit monkeying about the monkey garden and go forward to other and more important things.

Somebody has taken the trouble to telegraph from Spokane that Bat Masterson is not dead. Doubtless there are many other people in Spokane equally free from the inconvenience of rigor mortis, and in some instances the circumstance is really of greater importance than in the case of Masterson.

A Chicago minister who explains that he has been "frozen out" of the church is on his way to the Klondike. Probably he found the process he mentions so disagreeable that he intends to completely reverse it by being frozen in.

The ability of an American gunboat to nose out reefs and make the location certain by bumping into them ought to be valuable to the makers of marine charts, but it is hard on the gunboats.

BRYAN VS. BRYAN.

MR. WILLIAM J. BRYAN, who calls himself a bimetallist, has given his views of the rise in wheat and other prices, and the readers of THE CALL have read his authoritative statement from his standpoint of the reasons for silver falling while other prices rise.

Mr. Bryan's statement is long but not lucid, and will be accepted only by the thoroughly thick-and-thin element among his followers.

It is to be regretted that his statement, like many of his repetitions of speech, is not in logical form, but is rhapsodical rather than argumentative. The comminuted quality of his style serves admirably, however, to conceal the infinite contradictions in which his position makes it necessary to involve himself.

He says: "Bimetallists contend that the law of supply and demand is universal. Wheat has risen because the foreign crop has been exceedingly short." Then, after wandering over some ground that we will traverse later, he says:

"While the Republicans seem to have come over to our position there is an essential difference between them and the bimetallists. The latter desire to raise all prices to a bimetallic level and keep them there by a financial system which will furnish a standard money sufficient in volume to keep pace with the demand for money." Having just said that the law of supply and demand is universal he proposes to raise all prices to a bimetallic level, whatever that may be, and then keep them there. Is it not plain then that he proposes to raise prices and keep them up regardless of the law of supply and demand, which he has just said is universal? If universal, it is a natural law, and if a natural law the bimetallists can affect it as little as they can the law of gravitation.

Suppose that Mr. Bryan has raised all prices to a bimetallic level and the crop fails again over two-thirds of the wheat zone, by what device does he propose to keep wheat from rising above the mythical bimetallic level? How is he going to keep it there if supply and demand act as a universal law? If the wheat zone pours out a vast supply, exceeding the world's demand, by what device does he propose to keep the price from going below the bimetallic level?

Let it be understood that we use the term "bimetallic level" only because he uses it. It is one of those abracadabra in which his statements abound. He never defines it, never tells what prices would be under the influence of this mythical jackscrew. We attach no meaning to it, and it has none except as an imaginary level above that of present prices to which all values are to be elevated by act of Congress, regardless of the universal law of supply and demand.

Leaving that there are two elements in his statement which deserve reference. He says: "We were told last fall that an appreciating dollar was a national blessing." By whom were we told anything of the kind? A man of Mr. Bryan's public prominence must be exact in statements of fact. In what platform, speech or effort of persuasion in the campaign last fall appears the declaration that an appreciating dollar is a national blessing?

We are aware of the difficulties of Mr. Bryan's position. A discredited prophet is like a mill when the stream changes its channel—it is not further useful as a mill. Mr. Bryan's place in politics was achieved by his consummate art in playing prophet. It is his misfortune that he frequently became specific. A prophet should lurk in the shadows of figurative expression. He fixed public attention upon his often-made declaration that wheat and silver go together in price, a bushel of wheat and an ounce of silver being always equal in the marketplace.

This declaration was never true. The history of prices shows that we had wheat at 85 cents and wheat at $2, both with silver at $1 29 per ounce. The universal law of supply and demand made the price of wheat and silver then, and the same law now sends wheat to $1 and sinks silver to 56 cents.

The next immaterial, incompetent and irrelevant observation of Mr. Bryan is the statement that wages have not risen with wheat and other prices.

He should know that wages did not fall with other prices. It is true that the sum total of wages paid was less, because millions of laboring men were out of employment since the panic of 1893. But as most of the country's great wage-paying energies were destroyed or paralyzed the scale was but little affected. As industries begin to move again labor is being gradually absorbed in employment, and having had nothing with which to pay low prices at least has something with which to pay the higher prices now current.

But why does Mr. Bryan talk of wages here when in Mexico he has a chance to study the "bimetallic level" prices and wages all at once? In that country it takes $2 40 in silver to buy $1 in gold. Therefore in the market what costs $1 here approximately costs there $2 40. Silver being the Mexican standard of value and medium of exchange, as its value declines so does its purchasing power, and prices appear to rise to Mr. Bryan's bimetallic level. But have wages risen there in response to this fall in the purchasing power of silver? Mr. Bryan knows they have not. The Mexican wage scale is normally about one-third the United States scale, and stands unchanged while "bimetallic level" prices of the necessaries of life have risen 140 per cent.

Even the outspoken opponents of pugilism will agree with Rev. William Rader that a Corbett-Fitzsimmons affair is less disgusting in its brutality than such an episode as the recent class rush at Berkeley. Out of this came one youth, wandering about gibbering like an idiot, his head and face bearing the imprint of shoe heels and his brain jarred beyond a thinking condition. Another did not come out at once, a broken leg preventing. Higher education lacks much of perfection, and human endeavor cannot remedy all the defects. But such glaringly disgraceful episodes as these rushes may easily be eliminated.

THE STATE FAIR OPENS.

ELABORATE and comprehensive is the exhibit of California's raw and manufactured products at the State Fair just inaugurated at Sacramento. It embraces our agricultural, mechanical and industrial resources, and is altogether of a character that older States of the Union well might envy.

Of cereals, fruit, vegetables, wool and wine there are displays which might challenge comparison at any international exposition. In fact, there is ample evidence to prove that the highest grade of agricultural development is being attained in the Golden West.

The fair grows wider in its scope every year, and is of greater merit and attractiveness than ever. It affords a liberal education on the question of the many advantages offered by the soil and climate of the various parts of the State. There is a fresh demand for agricultural machinery that will lessen the expense and increase rapidity of action in the handling of the soil and its products. Hence, the farmer who is in clover now is taking a lively interest in the exhibit of improved implements of his industry there.

The horse-racing programme for the season is declared to be a superb one, and it is not improbable that record-smashing may mark some of the contests in trotting, pacing and running. The California livestock display will be quite comparable to the livestock shows of Kentucky and Tennessee, and we are destined in time to surpass those rivals.

The capital is filling up with visitors and is taking on an appearance of bustle and excitement the like of which it has not seen since the last session of the Legislature. A trip to the fair will make a Californian prouder than ever that he belongs to this matchless, glorious State.

When a saloon is known to be the resort of thieves and is continually contributing large items to the local criminal record it would seem to be a matter of public policy to find some way of closing it.

Senator Tillman's statement that he does not prepare his speeches is not surprising. Nobody seems to do it for him, either.

PERSONAL.

J. W. Drysdale of Madera is at the Grand.

J. Maher of Merced is at the Cosmopolitan.

Thomas E. B. Rice of Modesto is at the Russ.

Dr. C. R. Aiken of Covelo is a guest at the Russ.

M. Michael, a Woodland merchant, is at the Grand.

Dr. George Fee of Reno, Nev., is at the Grand.

D. G. Buckley of Grass Valley is at the Cosmopolitan.

Miss A. Wier of Santa Cruz is stopping at the Cosmopolitan.

Dr. Lewis R. Morris of New York City is at the Occidental.

J. H. Hoever, a jeweler of Willows, is visiting at the Grand.

Charles A. Baylon of Victoria, B. C., is at the Cosmopolitan.

Dr. Charles B. Younger of Santa Cruz is a guest at the Palace.

P. P. Danbridge, a civil engineer of Monterey, is at the Grand.

F. S. Freeman, a grain-broker of Woodland, is a guest at the Grand.

C. A. Campbell, a merchant of Red Bluff, is registered at the Grand.

C. A. Campbell, a general merchant of Red Bluff, is registered at the Grand.

C. P. Moorman, a wholesale liquor-dealer of Louisville, Ky., is at the Palace.

W. E. Briggs of Sacramento is at the California, accompanied by his wife and daughter.

T. F. Nichols, an Episcopal clergyman of Oxford, England, returned yesterday to the Occidental.

Alexander H. Rutherford of New York, the young stepson of George Crocker, registered yesterday at the Palace.

J. A. Fillmore, general manager of the Southern Pacific, left Sunday for Bartlett Springs for a two weeks' outing.

Dr. David S. Jordan of Palo Alto, president of Stanford University and of the California Academy of Sciences, is at the Palace.

T. M. Patterson of Denver, Colo., proprietor of the Rocky Mountain News, and a prominent attorney, is a recent arrival at the Palace.

S. W. Rosenstock, the retired merchant, returned to the Palace yesterday, accompanied by his wife, after a sojourn at different nearby resorts.

Louis Koehler Jr., the wealthy young brewer of St. Louis, who a few days since married Miss Margaret Craven in this City, returned to town yesterday from Del Monte and is at the Palace with his bride.

Al Shiebe, one of the Palace bellboys, yesterday defeated Phil Newhouse in a mile bicycle race on the park cinder track, covering the distance in 2:23¼, settling a long dispute as to the hotel championship and winning a side bet.

GOOD TIMES SONG.

Good times comin',
An' de mill wheels fly.
When de pork sells cheap,
An' de cotton sells high.
Good times comin',
When de crib's full of corn—
Good times, nigger,
When de hard times' gone.

Good times, good times, dat's my song,
Boss man, boss man, push em erlong;
Scrape dat floor when de sugar mills hum,
Swing de gals when de good times come.

Good times comin',
Whar dar's ducks fo' to shoot,
Good times, nigzer,
When de steamboats toot.
Good times comin',
Tell de tariff-tinkers dat,
When de taters am sweet
An' de possum am fat.

Good times, good times, dat's my song,
Boss man, boss man, push em erlong;
Scrape dat floor when de sugar mills hum,
Swing de gals when de good times comin.
—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

A QUESTION OF LABELS.

SAN FRANCISCO, Cal., Sept. 6.

To the Editor of the San Francisco Call—DEAR SIR: In your issue of the 4th inst. there appears under the heading, "Sang a Song of Labels," a report of the proceedings of the San Francisco Labor Council with reference to the request of the Ironmolders' Union that the various branches there represented gather statistics showing the extent to which they are affected by the importation and sale of prison products in our midst, and while said report is in the main correct I am afraid a false impression is likely to be created in the public mind regarding the true sentiment prevailing in the Manufacturers' and Producers' Association of California toward organized labor, and believing it to be for the general good that the true relation between labor and capital represented in said association be known to the public generally I have determined to write you a short letter, with the request that in a spirit of fairness you give it place in the columns of your great newspaper.

Being a member of the executive committee I am in a position to know just what it is doing and what are its aims. I cannot state its objects more briefly than by quoting the following from a circular issued by its consent a short time ago: "The Manufacturers' and Producers' Association of California is an organization formed for the purpose of encouraging and assisting the manufacture and consumption of home products. All good citizens are interested in the prosperity of the community in which they live. This association appeals to you to assist in the good work in which it is engaged by buying and using articles of home production whenever you can without a sacrifice of price or quality. By so doing you will help place idle men at work in nearly every factory of this State, their earnings will go into the various channels of trade and we will indeed see the dawn of prosperity for all our people.

"We know that there are many articles—food products, wearing apparel and of household and general use—made in this State that are of equal or better quality and that will cost no more than the imported article.

"We ask you to give this matter your careful and earnest attention, and, when buying, give California products preference, everything being equal, and by so doing you will help not only the community, but yourself as well."

The objects of the association are such that all good citizens can and will join in the work they have on hand. Said association has no connection whatever with the late Engineers' and Iron-founders' Association, which has long since ceased to exist. The latter seemed to have for its object the destruction of the various labor unions and I must admit that the fight was long and bitter, as Mr. Furuseth said on Friday evening, and the molders were in it, but the unions still exist while that association is dead; it is true that some of its members are now in the Manufacturers' and Producers' Association, but they are wiser and more liberal men for the experience they have had. "If wise men did not make mistakes, it would go very hard with the fool in this world," and I would like to declare to every trades union man, wherever he may be located, that now, so far as I can learn from conversation with the members of the executive committee of the Manufacturers' and Producers' Association, there is not the slightest enmity existing toward organized labor; on the contrary, the feeling from date of organization to the present time has been most friendly.

My predecessor in the executive committee was Mr. McGlynn of the Typographical Union, and when he resigned I was elected in his place. They all know that I have been identified with the Ironmolders' Union for twenty years, yet they have made me a member of their committee without any suggestion from my union or myself. The molders heartily appreciated this as a token of good will to all organized labor and hope it marks the dawn of a new era in which labor and capital engaged in manufacturing here shall be friends instead of enemies.

For many years the Molders' Union has been fighting against prison products coming in competition with those of free labor, and in conjunction with other societies we have succeeded in having the evil almost obliterated in this State, but unfortunately these products are being dumped into California from nearly every other State in the Union, to be sold at any price they will bring, thus seriously crippling our home industries, because no manufacturer can sell the products of free labor at a profit in competition with prison-made wares; he must stand aside until all the vile trash is disposed of and then supply the deficiency in the market at whatever price he can get, and out of his meager profits pay taxes to support the institutions that are ruining his business.

Heretofore organized labor has been contending alone against this evil, but now manufacturers are willing to join in the fight. With that end in view the Manufacturers' and Producers' Association have proposed that statistics be gathered from every line of industry showing the extent to which we are afflicted by this competition, with the hope of having laws enacted to give the necessary relief. The molders gladly adopted the suggestion of the Manufacturers' and Producers' Association and requested the San Francisco Labor Council, of which we are a part, to join in the good work, and, to our surprise, that body of representative men refused to grant our request or do anything in the matter until the manufacturers would consent to put union labels on all their goods, something which they have never yet been requested to do. In other words, as union men, they would work like Turks single-handed for a worthy measure when there was little or no prospect of success, but just as soon as the promise of help comes from men who, joining hands with labor, will make success almost certain, they will do nothing but find fault and obstruct the path to victory. The union label is a good thing, but to put union labels on all free products, instead of properly identifying the objectionable article, is to my mind like the poor simpleton who had lost the proper bung for his cider barrel, and finding a misfit bung in his shop, had a new barrel made to fit it, instead of having a bung made to fit his barrel.

For my part I hope the day will soon come when employer and employe will be friends and work together for their mutual benefit. I can see no good in keeping up strife and stirring up mud. My union is with me in this feeling, and I am sure the rank and file of every labor union in the City also share this sentiment. The council has reconsidered its action and practically granted our request. If we succeed it will benefit them quite as much as it will us, and that is our object. Let us have home industry, then we can organize the workers into unions, and when we create the necessary demand for union-made goods every manufacturer in town will want union labels, and not till then. "Don't put the cart before the horse." Respectfully submitted,

213B Guerrero street. SAMUEL MCKEE.

THE MAYOR'S POWER.

To the Editor of the San Francisco Call—SIR: All thoughtful men who may in any true and large sense be called genuine Americans and therefore strongly attached to our republican institutions, and yet who are led to think favorably of a municipal charter which practically makes the Mayor a dictator as a means of securing better government, must now and then be haunted with misgivings and perturbed by qualms of conscience. It cannot be true that they never have moments when they are at least dimly conscious of the inconsistency of upholding in theory our form of government as the best, and in practice of repudiating it as a failure.

Unsuspected by these men, there may lie concealed in this theory a subtle purpose, cherished by the leisure class of this country, whose great wealth and social aspirations unfit them for much sympathy with the common people without refinement of manners, whose hands are hard and rough with rude and coarse work, but which has been frankly expressed by Professor Peck of the Columbia University.

In a paper written by Professor Peck on "Modern Education" for the July number of the Cosmopolitan Magazine, on page 270 he holds that the higher institutions of learning should produce only, as he puts it, "a small and highly trained patriciate, a caste, an aristocracy, if you will, * * * whose intellectual force and innate gift of government enable them to dominate and control the destinies of States, driving in harness the hewers of wood and drawers of water, who constitute the vast majority of the human race, and whose happiness is greater and whose welfare is more thoroughly conserved when governed than when governing."

No believer in the divine right of kings and the superiority of nobles could speak with less concern or regard for "the vast majority of the human race" than this teacher of Latin in the great New York university, of which Seth Low is president. I beg to dissent from this view of the proper place of the vast majority as hewers of wood and drawers of water driven in harness by an aristocracy in our American commonwealth or in any other country, and I turn from Professor Peck to President Lincoln, with his deep love and tender sympathy for the great plain people as the true American and noble patriot.

I think it not wise and not safe, if I can read aright the signs of the times, to begin to set up small dictators in the delusive name of law and order in our American cities and throw discredit on the intelligence, honesty and trustworthiness of the American people. It will be a sad day for our country when this view prevails. Mark one first result and consider well the sequence of events.

The first result will be the implanting in the public mind of the idea that successful city government must have a dictator for Mayor. Many of the great daily newspapers from which most men take their political views are already industriously inculcating this idea of a dictator for Mayor. These newspapers are not owned by poor men who voice the convictions of the great plain people, but the mass of readers do not seem to be alive to this important fact. In due time the public will become accustomed to the dictatorship of the Mayor and will be lulled to sleep on the brink of a precipice. When they awake they will be at the bottom and a dictator will be in the Presidential chair. JOSEPH ASBURY JOHNSON.

11 Essex street, Sept. 6, 1897.

WITH YOUR COFFEE.

A.—Have you ever heard the eight-year-old violin-player who is creating such a sensation?

B.—Oh, yes; I heard him in Berlin twelve years ago.—Tit-Bits.

"Thank you," she said, with considerable cordiality, when he had saved her from drowning.

For girls feel free to do things at the seaside which they would never think of doing in town.—Detroit Journal.

He—Miss Quickstep, they say you tabulate your admirers as "preferred," "eligible," "tolerable," "so-so," "emergency," "intolerable," "not to be thought of," and the like. Where do I come in?

She—I—I'm afraid, Mr. Rinckley, you are a little too late to classify.—Chicago Tribune.

"Here's some more of the horrible work of the blamed monopolists," said Farmer Hayricks, as he hung his coat over the foot of the bed.

"Goodness, where?" asked his wife.

"Here's a sign what says 'Don't blow out the gas.' I s'pose they make these folks burn it all night, so's to run up their bills on 'em. Gosh, I don't know what this country's comin' to!"—Cleveland Leader.

Little Girl—Mrs. Brown, ma wants to know if she could borrow a dozen eggs. She wants to put 'em under a hen.

Neighbor—So you've got a hen setting, have you? I didn't know you kept hens.

Little Girl—No, ma'am, we don't, but Mrs. Smith's going to lend us a hen that's goin' to set, an' ma thought that if you'd lend us some eggs we'd find a nest ourselves.—Household Words.

MEN AND WOMEN.

Though a simple and unaffected monarch, King Oscar of Sweden is the sovereign who makes use of his crown most frequently.

The youngest member of the House of Lords, the Duke of Roxburghe, attained his majority July 25, and is qualified to take his seat.

In a sermon at Salina, Kans., on a recent Sunday, Rev. J. H. Lockwood said: "Let us give a man a little more taffy when living, and not so much epitaffy when he is dead."

Long Wolf, an old Indian warrior on the Upper Columbia River, is the possessor of a lariat made of the hair of white women who have been scalped. It is said to be strong enough to hold a wild buffalo.

Charles Dickens' great character, Sam Weller, is said to have had an actor named Vale as its original. Vale at that time constantly introduced queer comparisons on the stage, and many are reproduced in "Pickwick Papers."

Elizabeth Marbury, playwright and adapter also of Sardou and other French dramatists for the American stage, has just been decorated by the French Government with the purple ribbon that indicates an officer of the French Academy.

UNCLE SAM'S REINDEERS.

New York Tribune.

The Government reindeer farm near Fort Clarence, Alaska, in the vicinity of the Lower Yukon, now has more than 1000 animals, and they are multiplying rapidly. The herd was started five years ago. None of the animals have been utilized as yet for any purpose, although it is said that some of them may be put to service in transporting the mails. The Boston Traveler now suggests that a certain number of the deer be sold to the seekers after wealth in the Klondike. The revenue derived from their sale, it is argued, would reduce the heavy expenses attending the maintenance of the rest of the herd, and they would be the greatest possible aid to the miners.

ITALY'S QUICK-FIRING RIFLE.

New York Tribune.

Italy's military authorities are devoting great attention to a remarkable rifle which has been invented by an officer of the "Bersaglieri," and which is declared to be superior to the Mauser, to the latest design of Mannlicher and the Lee-Metford. Its characteristic is that eighty shots can be fired in a minute without the weapon being removed from the shoulder. Its acceptance, which is regarded as probable, will involve the rearming of the entire Italian army at an enormous cost, which the country can ill afford.

MISSION RESIDENTS MAKE STRONG TALKS AGAINST THE SCHEME

Those Who Have Taxes to Pay See No Necessity for a New Park Just at Present.

NEED STREETS AND SEWERS FIRST

Supervisors Should Stand by Their Ante-Election Pledges.

SOME FIGURES IN THE CASE.

A High Price That Seems to Have an Ulterior Object in View.

While those who are engineering the Mission Park and Zoo deal have the satisfaction of knowing that residents of Berkeley, Alameda and other suburbs are strongly in favor of taxing San Francisco citizens for the purpose of building a zoological garden and incidentally paying an exorbitant price for the property, the people living in the Mission and who pay taxes on property there are strong in their denunciation of the scheme.

The whole plan has been to give the idea that the taxpayers of the Mission are crying for an animal show, yet the people there are doing all in their power to prevent the consummation of the deal whereby it is expected to unload a lot of property on the City at many times its value. Following are more expressions of the taxpapers in the Mission:

John Center, one of the earliest settlers in the Mission, having located in that section in 1849, and at one time owning forty acres of land all around where he still resides at the present time. He is now one of the heaviest taxpayers of real estate in the Mission: "I look upon this thing of locating a park and a so-called zoo out on the Gum Tree Tract as one of the modern schemes of plundering the people. And I am forced to this conclusion from my experience in the late deal just had in the buying of the school lot for the Mission High School. As an example of how property is bought for the City I will cite my experience. When they came around here to get my views on the subject I offered them a piece of property at $28,000. The answer was: 'Too little; make it $38,000. You know, we want sufficient to meet the expense of the brokers.' Now, I suppose the amount asked for the Gum Tree land has been set much upon this principle. So much for the land, and the rest—the greater sum—for the brokers. But this does not matter much if the taxpayers are made to stand the deal.

"If I thought that for a moment a park would be of any benefit to the Mission I would be one of the first to advocate its location in the Mission, because anything that would benefit the Mission would certainly benefit me, as all my interests are located in this place. And as it is with me so it is with all others owning property in this section. Hence we would one and all be the first to advocate the proposition. But there is no such scheme on foot. It is a scheme to dispose of a piece of almost worthless land to the City at more than three times its value. The land offered never was worth $500 an acre. It would make any man poor to own it. It is a barren unproductive piece wholly unfit for a park. It faces the west and is at all times exposed to the chilling effect produced from the winds that blow from that quarter. And, besides this, it would require half a million of dollars to put it into anything like condition to even give it the appearance of a park.

"As for the zoo, why, it is so absurd on its face that a person would be disposed to look upon it as a huge joke. We all recollect the animal collection that had been at Woodward's Gardens. As long as Woodward lived the gardens and the animals were taken pretty good care of. But as soon as he died the gardens and the animals were neglected, and the Mission residents petitioned time and again to have the nuisance abated. Then, when it was deemed to be a filthy nuisance, no one could be found to take the collection for love or money. In the end the animals had to be shot.

"Look at our streets and sewers! Why, we should be ashamed of them; and add to this condition the schools and public buildings—all are in a deplorable state. Thousands of our little children are walking about the streets for want of school accommodation. We have three County jails, all looked after by a set of politicians, when one good and substantial building should answer for that purpose. Again, our Fire Department is struggling along under great difficulties because of the want of sufficient funds to properly equip it, and as a result insurance rates are high. Yet in the face of all this we are asked to buy a piece of land for a park and a zoo, for the keeping of a lot of wild animals! Why, it is enough to make a man wonder if the promoters of this bubble are really sane or if they consider us a pack of demented fools. We have an excellent park as it is, and to keep it in good condition is sufficient of a tax on the people. It might as well be understood now as at any other time that the Mission residents and taxpayers are to a man decidedly opposed to the Gum Tree bubble and the few men who are behind it.

"I am, however, pleased to find that we have one paper in the City, THE CALL, that is willing to throw aside all selfishness and come out in the interest of the people. I consider it nothing short of robbery to ask the taxpayers to pay $387,500 for the proposed land. It is assessed for something like $60,000, and I am free to state all the Mission real estate is now assessed at 10 per cent over its real value. And in the face of this the schemers who have the brazen audacity to foist this tract of land upon the people are asking more than three times its value. And this in the face of hard times, when we have thousands of willing boys and men walking about the streets looking for work, with no manufacturing industries open for them, and this in a measure because men of capital are afraid to invest in manufacturing pursuits because of the high rate of taxation and the uncertainty that their investments will not be overtaxed. As a consequence, the generous people had to contribute out of their pockets over $30,000 last year to give the unemployed work on a boulevard. This was done as an act of charity, and yet in the face of this we have a lot of schemers in our midst who wish to saddle us with such bubbles as a zoo and a large park out at a distance from any portion of the City where it can be reached by the people without carfare. It will be recognized that the proprietor of THE CALL has an interest in the Mission second to none, and if a park and a zoo were to benefit the Mission or the Mission people surely he would be among the first to advocate its being placed there. I know of no man so thoroughly identified with the interests of the Mission and its people as is the proprietor of THE CALL, Mr. John D. Spreckels. He has, besides his home in this place, moneyed interests amounting to thousands of dollars, and for him to oppose a park upon any but good reasons would be so absurd that the most stupid man on earth would not for a moment believe it. But, like the balance of good citizens, he sees in the proposition a huge scheme to draw from the taxpayers money that there is no necessity for unless it is to make a few schemers wealthy at the expense of the many."

George K. Fitch, formerly one of the proprietors of the "Morning Call" and Evening Bulletin, and also a large property-owner: "Well, really I have been so busy with other matters, which the people of this City are somewhat conversant with, that I have not given the matter much thought; but, on the face of the proposition, I am in favor of the people in the Mission having a park, or, in other words, of having a large park out in the southern portion of the City. But not now, however. I do not want the Supervisors to violate their pledges. They were elected on the dollar-limit pledge, and it would be unfair of the people or any portion of the people to ask them to violate that pledge. A park out south, say in twenty or thirty years from now, would be a great benefit to not only the people residing in that locality but to the entire community. But before that should take place the proposition should be submitted to the people at the ballot-box. There are other and far more important questions which need looking after than the purchasing of a piece of land for a park at the present time. Our City has needs of a great many improvements that could be done if we had an economical administration at the City Hall. But, perhaps, by-and-by there may be a change for the better in that direction. At least we shall hope so."

C. W. Welch, capitalist and land-owner, 728 Guerrero street: "I have been a resident of the Mission for twenty years and have many thousands of dollars invested in land here. The zoological scheme is a fraud. The price asked is four times its value. The location is not in the Mission district, neither is it the Gum Tree Tract. It is a steep gulch, a mile west of the Gum Tree Tract, and can never be made into a park. This scheme to rob the City must be stopped. We want good streets and clean sewers. No more parks at present. The Board of Supervisors have no right to spend the taxpayers' money for wild animals. We have elephants enough on our hands already—at the City Hall. We of the Mission hope THE CALL will keep up the fight. Where are the other morning papers?

Thomas Kerby, retired builder and contractor, 40 Hill street: The people of the Mission do not want a wild animal rancheria. They have never asked for it, and the projectors of this scheme, when they say the Mission wants a zoo, are not telling the truth. We have parks enough until taxes are lower. If the Board of Supervisors buy the worthless gulch offered for this purpose they should be impeached. The whole scheme is a fraud. The land cannot be and is not intended to be converted into a park. The programme is to sell the land to the City for five times its value, divide the profits and abandon the park.

H. Nolt, mining engineer, 3520 Twenty-first street: The people of the Mission do not want a zoological park. They have never asked for such a thing. The want clean sewers and good streets.

A. P. Van Duzer, attorney and secretary of the Mission Defense Union: "Sell the land for the monkey barracks to the City for $400,000; actual value of same (highest figure) $100,000; profits in the deal $300,000, divided thus: Placed where it will do the most good $50,000; net profits of the real estate ring which is promoting the steal $250,000. In this programme, as usual, the schemers get rich and the taxpayers get robbed. The above are frozen facts, and I commend them to the consideration of Professor David Starr Jorden, president of Stanford University, who, from his recent letter in the Post, seems to have lent himself—innocently, no doubt—to this outrageous swindle."

CALIFORNIA glace fruits, 50c lb. Townsend's.

Major Elijah Halford, who was private secretary of President Harrison, has made a reputation in Denver as a church-debt raiser. He was largely instrumental in wiping off a mortgage of $60,000 on Trinity Methodist Church, in that city.

The town of Dawson, Northwest Territory, was named after Judge "Lafe" Dawson, a Missouri politician, who died at Maysville, Ky., a few months ago.

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