

# SACRAMENTO STREET CARNIVAL



## GREAT PREPARATIONS FOR THE FIRST FAIR OF THIS KIND EVER HELD IN CALIFORNIA.



THE "Ye Olde English Fayre" has gone through a process of evolution. Sacramento is to see its outcome. On April 23 the first street fair of California will take place. It is a novelty on the Pacific Coast, although it does not originate here. It was in Veedersburg, Ind., that the first American street fair took place. Once upon a time Veedersburg was making preparations for a fair of the usual kind—potatoes and pumpkins and blue-ribbon babies displayed in rows in a public hall. But something inconvenient happened just as everything was ready; the hall burned. This was very embarrassing. The potatoes and pumpkins and babies all

threatened vengeance if the townspeople waited to build another hall. The potatoes and pumpkins said they would shrivel and the babies swore they would grow up. So there was nothing for it but to turn the whole thing into a street fair. Booths were erected in the middle of the street. Fruits and vegetables and other things were displayed in the open air, and people came to see. Some way they liked the idea. The breezes could blow and keep them cool as they never could in a stuffy hall. So the street fair came to be an annual celebration, drawing thousands of farmers from the surrounding country. That was only nine years ago, but even in those few years the idea has got loose.

Decatur fell in line and added a corn carnival to the celebration; Louisville, Kansas City, Des Moines, Akron, Buffalo and Alabama cities did likewise. Terre Haute, with a population of 4,000, boasts of 50,000 visitors on McKinley day. At last California is to have a street fair of its own, lasting from April 23 through the following Saturday. It will differ a bit from "ye olde English Fayre," but there is no doubt about its being a lineal descendant. The word "fair" nowadays means an industrial exhibition with added amusement features. The old fairs of Europe were immense markets where the products of all the world were exhibited and sold. Most of

the famous fairs of medieval England and Europe were grants from the sovereign to abbots, bishops or other ecclesiastical dignitaries. The first great English fair is said to have been the outcome of an idea which popped into the head of Carauseuse, the rebel Emperor of Britain. "This buying is too troublesome a business," he remarked one day in the year 307 A. D. His eyebrows were tied in a hard knot atop of his nose and there were ditches in his forehead. "Bring me all the products of the world," he thundered. "Let me see them spread out in the highway that I may ride by and inspect them. Slice an ear off the head of every farmer who refuses to

bring his goods to the fair." Then Carauseuse untied his eyebrows and smiled a blase smile at the thought of what was in store for him. The Mayor of Sacramento has been doing a similar act. "Bring forth your potatoes and pumpkins and fat babies," he has thundered. "Let us see them gathered in the highway." Sacramento has several highways, being a different style of town from that of ancient Britain, and the final choice is L street—that is, for the merchants' booth. The whole fair and carnival will be spread over the streets surrounding the Capitol building. Commencing on L street at Tenth the merchants' booths will reach for five blocks east and west and some will be on N street. The space from L to N on Fifteenth street will be utilized for band stands and free exhibitions by vaudeville performers—not the "step-up-ladies-and-gentlemen-only-five-cents" kind, but really free bowery songs and ragtime babies. Whether it costs more to get out of these attractive tents than to get in is not yet announced.

At the bottom of all the complex arrangements stands the executive committee of the State Fair Club. They have been in communication with the Mayors of Eastern cities where street fairs have been held in order to learn the newest kinks, which are, in truth, nothing but the oldest, for the greatest novelty that a street fair can boast is the reproduction of some ancient and forgotten custom. J. G. Mooser was appointed as director general. The executive committee includes, besides the Mayor, representative business men who are members of the Chamber of Commerce. The falls at Folsom furnish Sacramento thousands of volts of electricity that will be utilized in a plan for illumination. Lights will gleam from the Capitol building and from all the trees and shrubbery of the park. The plans for the six days of celebration are already laid. The first will be devoted to the reception of visiting Elks, Odd Fellows, Masons and Native Sons. Every city of the State will send a band. These bands will take part in the parades sandwiched between floats, whereupon spangled ladies will pretend to be the heroines of history and the symbols of industry. A floral celebration will occupy another of the six days—floral parade, rose battle and May queen. The last day will be a

carnival in European style, with masks and dominoes abroad to deceive. At 8 in the evening King Rex will enter the city at the head of his retinue, while at the little children in the streets will open their mouths in wonder and all the parents will grow cross answering questions. The carnival will be a combination of all the Italian carnivals, the New Orleans Mardi Gras, the St. Louis Veiled Procession, the Kansas City Priests of Pallas and the California fiestas that ever haunted their glories and blew their own trumpets through American streets. It will be mad and merry, and the prunes and daisies people had better stay where they belong—at home. The frolic and easy ways of southern festivals have been creeping into American rejoicings for some time past. The New Orleans Mardi Gras learned long ago of Italy. Los Angeles ran riot during its fiesta of 1877. San Francisco has felt the intoxication of lawless merriment—there was a taste of it last summer at the volunteers' home-coming, and the new year was furiously ushered in. Sacramento will be no more reckless, but far more splendid.

Confetti throwing will be limited. You will have a right to throw all the candy you like at anybody you like, and you will have to be nice about all that is thrown back at you. There is a rose shower coming down on your head from the window above, and there is nothing to be seen but a flirt of a vanishing gown when you look up, and nothing to be heard but a laugh. From the next window you may receive a shower of peanut shells, and there will be only a glimpse and a laugh behind them likewise. The parade will be at night, and will carry along its own daylight in the form of Greek fire. Domino-clad figures will march beside the floats, carrying torches of the colored Greek fire. Lights will flame from the floats themselves—from what Cable calls the "tableaux drawn on cars." There is no telling which of one's relatives may be recognized in these tableaux. There will be enough people on the different ones to fill half of an interior town, and they will be attired as never before. Uncle Jack will wear the flowing robe of Liberty—he chose to impersonate her because of his straight nose and majestic forehead. Annie at the next corner will recognize Papa in the puffy

Neptune, who is obliged to wield his trident over several square yards of bunting ocean. The reason that Mamie's tailoring brother will wear long black hair is that he will be Pocahontas for Mardi Gras night and must fling himself between death and Captain Smith for several twisting miles of Sacramento streets. Floral Day will see everybody's carriage dressed in Sunday best. There will be red rose buggies and pink rose buggies and the sweet peas will be on hand to decorate wheels and tongues and bridges. Bicycles will be twined in all the flowers that May day brings. One bicycle is already planned for; it will be dressed in white sweet peas and made to represent a sea gull with flapping wings outspread. Others will be shaded by flower umbrellas and propelled by floral persons. There will be burros and horses wearing flower blankets and saddles, and the parade will dwindle from rumbling coaches down to the tiniest go cart in all Sacramento. Prizes will be arranged for the coaches. Society girls will occupy them—the coaches that they will have decorated with their own hands. Schools will display rival turnouts. The concluding ball will take place at the great pavilion in which the State Fair is held. King Rex will march thither after his parade is over and the last night's gayeries will commence. Masks will invite, masks will tease, masks will deceive. You will wait with Jack, believing him to be Fred, and he will fancy you are only Mamie and so not bother to reverse, whereas if he knew you were Alice he would know you always insisted—while you can't do so now because you don't dare speak lest your voice give you away. It is fun to be hiding out how he acts with Mamie, and the fun becomes more complex when you know that the man you thought was the other thought you were the other, and therefore you didn't find out how the other acted with the other after all. After it is all over—of course there will be the usual of the rebel Emperor Carauseuse, 307 A. D. It is probably merrier than in those days. Even the blase Emperor might have taken a certain pleasure in sneaking himself in a pink domino and doing things that an Emperor in Emperor's guise may not do. But the Sacramento fair is a lineal descendant of his idea, for all that.