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A QUIET WEEK IN TRADE.

LAST week was only about half a week in trade. Thanksgiving occurred in the middle of it, and many merchants and stock operators continued the holiday into the remaining days, so the apparent six days were practically only about three. These were tame and devoid of special feature, so the week was dull enough.

The feeling in Wall street was rather firm than otherwise. Easier money and quiet conditions throughout the country tended to slacken stock operations, and the situation showed little change. The leading feature was the tumble in silver, which brought the bullion value of the American silver dollar down below 40 cents, with a continued tendency downward. Various causes are given as contributing to the decline in this metal, such as a proposed cessation of coinage by the Indian mints, shipments of silver by China to London in exchange for gold wherewith to pay her war indemnity, the approach of Mexico and several smaller countries to a gold basis, etc.; but the fact remains that modern machinery has vastly increased the production of the metal, and more is being dug out of the ground than the world has any need of at present, hence the fall in value. Where it will stop nobody knows, but silver is cheaper and more plentiful now than ever before. Even burglars no longer bother with it. What effect the prolonged depreciation will have on international trade is a question which nobody seems able to determine, but it is beginning to be an important factor in many countries, especially those on a silver basis.

As far as the general business of the country is concerned, there is little new to say. The volume of trade continues large, and the bank clearings continue to show an increase over 1901, though the gain last week was small, being only 3.8 per cent. The failures were 213, against 182 for the corresponding week last year. Improved weather has stimulated retail trade in some localities, while continued mild autumnal days have restricted it in others, net conditions remaining about as before. The car shortage and traffic congestion, so loudly complained of for the past two or three months, seem to show signs of improvement, but they are barely perceptible, and in many regions no improvement whatever can be observed. Of course, this hampers business very much by deferring the delivery of goods, and even causing a suspension of factory operations here and there. The shortage in freight cars alone is estimated at 50,000 for the United States, California itself being about 10,000 short. These figures give some idea of the situation. Then there is an equal shortage in locomotives, so the railroads are in tribulation all around.

The great staples continue to make a gratifying exhibit. Sugar has been advancing owing to diminished supplies of the raw product; coffee is firmly held owing to the destruction wrought by volcanoes in several important producing countries; tea and rice are firm, with more or less crop shortages reported from different parts of the world, and provisions have been going down of late owing to increasing supplies of hogs. But beef and mutton, on the contrary, are still higher and in much lighter supply than they used to be years ago.

Wool, hops and hides are firm and bringing good prices, hops being particularly stiff and high. Wheat is quiet and featureless in Europe, and none too steady in the United States, except in California, where we are having a sensational local boom, owing to the extraordinary demand for Australia.

Canned goods are moving freely out of this State, and the pack of 1902 is already heavily broken into. The same may be said of canned salmon, which has been selling heavily in the Eastern States and Europe for some months. The dried fruit market, too, is ruling firm, and every few days some variety advances, the latest to rise being prunes, of which two-thirds of the crop is reported already sold, chiefly for export to Europe, with the regular annual demand for American consumption yet to be satisfied. Hence it will be seen that the farmer is having a good year. People see this, and the result is an improved demand for country lands reported by real estate agents, with prices rising in favored localities.

The above conditions show a good, healthy state of trade, without excitement, and at present little desire to plunge, the recent check in Wall street having had a beneficial effect on those speculators who see the sky full of brilliant rainbows and a pot of gold at the bottom of every one of them. Commercially speaking, the country was never in better condition.

THE CHARTER ELECTIONS.

By the charter elections to be held on Tuesday and Thursday of this week the citizens of San Francisco are to be tested with respect to the amount of interest they take in municipal affairs when separated from partisan contests and personal struggles for office. No party issues and no man's political fortunes are at stake on either election. The voting in each case will be upon a question of municipal business, and the result will show how large a proportion of the citizens are sufficiently interested in such propositions to study them and vote upon them.

The issues to be decided are fully as important as any involved in the election of municipal officers. The proposition to undertake the municipal ownership and operation of the Geary-street railway involves for San Francisco a radical departure from her past policy with respect to public utilities. Should the proposition be adopted we will enter upon what will be really a new era of governmental work, and all who are sufficiently intelligent to understand the law of sequences are well aware that the consequences which will inevitably follow the adoption of the new order of things will be far greater than the mere taking over of a single railway by the city government.

The proposed amendments to the charter which are to be voted upon Thursday do not raise any single question of such general interest as that of acquiring the Geary-street line, and yet they have an importance of their own which must not be overlooked. They may appear to some persons to be matters of little moment, and yet they are designed to remedy defects in the charter, and the defects are by no means trifling. In some cases they provide for economy, and in others they facilitate the transaction of public business. They are not all of equal merit, but every one of them is sufficiently important to challenge the attention of all citizens who take a proper interest in public affairs.

In a special degree the proposed increase of the salary of the Assessor deserves the support of the people. For the right administration of the office there is needed a man of first-rate business ability, and such a man deserves the proposed salary of \$8000 a year. Upon that question the vote ought to be unanimously in the affirmative.

By the press and by the circulation of the sample ballots the public has been fully informed of the meaning and intent of the various amendments proposed, so that it is not necessary to review them again at this time. The important thing to be done now is to bring out a full vote at each election. That task should not be left exclusively to the press. Men of civic patriotism should talk the issues over with their friends and acquaintances and urge them to be sure to vote. We are to show the world just how much interest we take in our own affairs, and every effort should be put forth to making the showing creditable.

It has been said that a referendum method of local government is not practicable in American communities, because the people do not take enough interest in abstract propositions of law of administration to vote on them; so that when questions are referred to the popular vote the results are determined not by the sentiment of the majority of the whole community, but by the few who are specially interested in the particular measure submitted. There have been in the past good grounds to sustain that view of the case. It is to be hoped, however, that in this instance no such manifestation of popular indifference will be made. Whether this or that question be voted up or voted down it is to be hoped the vote will be that of a majority of the legal voters of the city.

The opening of the holiday season has put a heavy pressure of trade upon our business men and their employes, and will be likely to distract the attention of many of them from the elections. It would, however, require very little of their time to go to the polls and vote, and all of them ought to have sufficient public spirit to do so. Our charter provides for many appeals to the people, and in the years to come such appeals may be frequently made. It therefore behooves us to begin at once to take an interest in these special elections. The business and the welfare of every citizen is going to be more or less affected in future by the result of the voting on Tuesday and on Thursday, and each citizen should take part in determining the result on every proposition involved.

Memphis is clamoring for recognition as the most properly arranged city in the Union, and by way of establishing the claim points out that her football ground is just across the street from the City Hospital and within hailing distance of the Medical College.

VIRGINIA CONGRESSMEN.

SOME time ago the negroes of Alabama undertook to bring suit in the United States courts to test the constitutionality of the clause in the Alabama constitution which, by cunning indirection, deprives them of the franchise. The test case was brought months ago, and ought to be well advanced by this time, so that in all probability it will ere long have a hearing before the Supreme Court. A similar course has now been taken by the negroes of Virginia, but their tactics are far bolder and more impressive than those resorted to in Alabama. Instead of bringing suit against a county official who refused them registration, as was done in Mobile, the Virginia negroes have filed a petition in the United States Court at Norfolk asking the court to restrain the State Election Board from canvassing the returns of the Congressional elections, and assigning as a cause why the petition should be granted the fact that the petitioners were illegally deprived of their right to vote in the elections.

The petition runs in the name of three negroes, two of whom allege they are taxpayers and are able to read and write, while the third, in addition, avers that he was a soldier of the United States and took part in Indian wars. Their attorney is John S. Wise, formerly of Virginia but now a resident of New York. It is asserted by Mr. Wise that the petition raises every point at issue in the disfranchisement of the negroes in Virginia, and is of a nature that will entitle it to a speedy hearing.

These cases ought to be granted right of way on the calendars of the courts. The issues affect the whole Union, and are a disturbing factor in our political system. It is well known that there is a strong feeling in Congress in favor of taking some action upon the subject, but public sentiment is as yet adverse to such proceeding. It would raise a sectional issue and excite once more antagonisms that patriotic Americans desire to see buried with the dead past. Still, every lover of justice knows that

something should be done to protect the negro in his rights. It is to the Supreme Court of the United States that the people look in this emergency, and there will be profound gratification when the court hears the whole question, and, by deciding it, puts an end to a controversy which now threatens to become bitter and irritating.

It is announced that the tinplate trust has had to reduce prices to meet the competition of independent companies, and we have thus another evidence that business enterprise will solve the trust problem if given a chance to do it.

THE CITRUS FAIR.

WHILE the Citrus Fair in the ferry building is designed primarily as an object lesson for tourists, carrying a complete demonstration of the orange, lemon and olive growing possibilities of Northern California, it should not be overlooked nor be left without patronage by our own people. Outside of the instruction to be derived from it, the fair affords now one of the pleasantest entertainments in the city, and should be seen and enjoyed by all.

Enterprises of this kind undertaken for the general good bring little in the way of credit or reward to their promoters. Although every resident of Northern California will derive some measure of benefit from the results of the fair, only a very small proportion of the whole population has contributed to its support. It is the work of a comparatively few men and women, done for the good of all. Such being the case, the public ought to show a genuine appreciation of what has been accomplished. The attendance should be large enough every day and every evening to show the managers and exhibitors of the fair that their work is attractive and has won popular recognition by its merits.

Judged by any standard of excellence, the fair is one of the most notable ever held in the State or the country. It is the first citrus fair ever held at Thanksgiving time, and there is no other part of the globe where such a fair could be successfully undertaken. The exhibits at the ferry depot demonstrate the exceptional advantages of Northern California for supplying citrus fruits for the holiday season, and that fact in itself is enough to render the exhibit a significant event in the industrial history of the State.

It is to be regretted that some of the counties of Northern California where citrus fruits can be profitably cultivated in commercial quantities are not represented at the fair. The failure to make use of the opportunity is, however, their loss rather than that of the fair. Visitors looking at the rich and luscious array of fruits displayed will not miss the absent ones, and Eastern people, of course, will not know that there are any counties missing. Just as it stands it is a wonderful exhibition of the rich resources of the orchards of the upper part of the State, and furnishes one of the finest of the holiday attractions of the city.

A story comes from Algiers that some vineyards have been largely damaged by tortoises climbing the vines and eating the grapes. Will some American please match the story? We can't let Africa knock us speechless.

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING.

ONCE more we approach the season of Christmas shopping, and once more The Call repeats its annual plea that in selecting holiday gifts and souvenirs for Eastern friends Californians should, as far as possible, select objects of California production. The choice afforded in such articles is wide and varied, extending from the paintings of artists to the fruits of the orchard and shells of the seashore.

The Christmas trade in bric-a-brac, toys, novelties, curios and luxuries is one of the most important branches of the world's commerce. "There's millions in it." It is worth having, worth sharing, worth working for. Our importations for the holiday trade are enormous. There are some communities in Europe that are almost wholly employed in making holiday goods. The industry is profitable in more ways than one. It utilizes material that is sometimes valueless for anything else, and it develops a high degree of artistic taste and skill among those who carry it on. Thus it has an intellectual as well as a material benefit to confer, and is doubly advantageous to the community that engages in it.

In California we have a great wealth of material that could be worked up into holiday goods and be thus made ten times more valuable in the world's markets than in any other form. We have, too, among our people the representatives of every artistic race on earth. Were a proper encouragement given them there is no doubt that in a comparatively few years we would be able to have an extensive trade in California novelties and find a demand for them not only in our Eastern States, but in Europe as well.

The first step in the development of any new industry is to create a demand for its products, and the only way in which that can be done is to make the products known. A general distribution of California novelties at the Christmas season would be an excellent means of advertising them. Moreover, such novelties would be far more welcome in the East and in Europe than would be some product of those countries. Why send back to New England or old England, to New York or to Germany some article imported from those countries? Why not send something grown or made in California? The subject merits the consideration of all our people at the beginning of the Christmas shopping season.

There is evidently a most strenuous movement for municipal reform in St. Louis, for not only have the big hoodlums been convicted and punished, but the Republic of that city advocates a drastic reformation of the whole community by saying: "There ought to be one street by which a stranger in St. Louis can get to the Union Station at night without being held up."

A Mexican who had for seventy-five years plied the diverting trade of bandit was captured the other day, and one is in doubt whether to pity the old fellow on the rude interruption of his interesting career or to praise the officials for their remarkable persistency.

Boston musical critics say that Mascagni's rendering of "Cavalleria Rusticana" revealed the fact that the music had never before been rightly given in that city. Mascagni alone knows the meaning of it, and only he can interpret its meaning.

Since Colombia has proved so coy a charmer in reference to the concessions involved in a canal treaty, Uncle Sam is flirting with Nicaragua. The old fellow should have a care or he may be cheated by both.

GUNN RESIDENCE TO BE SCENE OF CHARITY TEA ON SATURDAY



MRS. S. G. BUCKBEE and MISS AMY E. GUNN. SOCIETY BUD WHOSE COURAGE IN LAUNCHING FETE FOR CHARITY HAS WON ADMIRATION OF HER MANY FRIENDS, AND MATRON WHO WILL ASSIST AT TEA TO BE GIVEN SATURDAY.

GIVING a benefit for charity under the auspices of a club or society represents considerable work, but for a young woman to give an affair alone calls forth added pluck and enthusiasm. When Miss Amy Gunn obtained her parents' consent to throw open their home to the public in giving a tea to raise funds for the California Girls' Training Home, she telephoned a number of her girl friends, who immediately offered their assistance in making a success of the affair. Enthusiastic work is going on and Saturday the spacious home of the Gunns at Devisadero and Green streets will be the scene of a delightful affair. The music will be excellent. A programme is to be given in the afternoon which children will especially enjoy. A reception will also be given in the evening. Tickets are 50 cents; children, 25 cents. Flowers and attractive gifts will be sold at artistic booths presided over by gracious members of the smart set. Among those who will assist are Mrs. Samuel Buckbee, Mrs. Charles Dunphy, Miss Eleanor Warner, the Misses Taylor, Miss George Speker, Miss Helen Davis, Mrs. James Bishop, Miss Bernice Drown, Miss Jessie Fillmore, Miss Florence Bailey and Miss Mabel Gunn.

The artistic drawing-room of the Jolliffe residence at 2015 Pacific avenue was the scene of a delightfully informal tea yesterday afternoon. Miss Gertrude Jolliffe invited a score of her intimate friends to drop in and they gladly did so. The hostess' sisters were also present and Miss Lurline Spreckels assisted.

There is much pleasure in receiving violets, but when handed to you by a young lady they have an added charm. Addison Mizner could testify to this if he cared to take us into his confidence, for there is an interesting bit of gossip in society that, while Mr. Mizner has been killing time of late at St. Mary's Hospital, his days have been brightened by the regular calls of a typical California girl well known in society. Rays of sunshine must have shined with Mr. Mizner, for he leaves the hospital in a day or two and will soon be doing counts of the gentlemen who talk to her at a dance—that if she is chatting with one friend and another appears who has more money, she must lose the man of little or moderate means immediately, that he may not occupy her time. What a flimsy friendship, that must be which will not stand the test of a few minutes' small talk at a party, especially when the man in question is not even an applicant for her hand! Are there not enough fair weather friends in the world now without uselessly adding the fresh young debutantes to the unrelaxing quantity?

I am pained to hear that advice is being given to some of our young debutantes which may render them prematurely world-wise and mercenary. They come to us so frank and lovable in their girlish enthusiasm and so free from the malicious thoughts that only too often characterize the sayings of the older ones, that it seems a pity they cannot remain as they are. But I regret to say that some one with a long visual range is advising the erstwhile schoolgirl to consider the bank ac-

counts of the gentlemen who talk to her at a dance—that if she is chatting with one friend and another appears who has more money, she must lose the man of little or moderate means immediately, that he may not occupy her time. What a flimsy friendship, that must be which will not stand the test of a few minutes' small talk at a party, especially when the man in question is not even an applicant for her hand! Are there not enough fair weather friends in the world now without uselessly adding the fresh young debutantes to the unrelaxing quantity?

His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Siam bears the San Francisco girls' stamp of approval. I do not mean that he proved a dazzling Prince Charming. The girls think him very likable—two say he is "cute" and another "sort of cunning, really," but only one girl thought she had something of a crush and she is probably over the idea by this time. The Prince went to school at Oxford, has lived considerable time in England, and is prominent in London society. He has a younger brother who is also popular and lives in the Russian Imperial Palace. It was the Prince's request that while here he should meet attractive girls rather than people of distinction, yet there was little informality about it.

PLACING RESPONSIBILITY FOR DELAY IN THE BUILDING OF BATTLESHIPS

AN official of the Union Iron Works submitted a paper that was read and discussed at the meeting of the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers held in New York November 20 and 21. It is entitled "Why It Takes So Long Time to Build and Equip a Naval Vessel for the United States." The subject is timely and interesting. The writer, who has had an experience of sixteen years in the building of warships, criticizes the methods of the Navy Department and especially those of the bureau of construction, and in effect charges the latter with being responsible for delays. He is keenly sarcastic toward the superintending officers, saying among other things: "No other government can boast of a finer staff of competent naval constructors and marine engineers in charge of new work under construction for its navy than that of the United States Navy Department. In fact, the ability of the superintending naval constructor of the United States machinery is often quite embarrassing to the simple shipbuilder. We have often been astonished at the almost supernatural ability of the young naval constructor to acquire knowledge outside of his own profession." There is unquestionably much truth in his intimation that "the great ability of the naval constructor of acts as a cause of delay in the building of a ship," for the majority have had no practical experience and are inclined to "show off." But in charging the bureau of construction with being the chief cause of delay the writer is not fair. He either forgets or ignores the fact that in the hull or in the deck and in the keel or in the superstructure, namely, those of ordnance, equipment, navigation, steam engineering, medical and provisions, each one of which is demanding more than its share of weight, space and arrangement. The bureau of construction decides and reconciles the various conflicting claims and prepares the design, but the board of construction frequently, by a majority vote, decides upon certain methods of construction, which the bureau of construction, which has to bear the brunt of the charge of delay.

The British battleship Hood has just completed a remarkable voyage of 2935 miles, from Malta to Devonport, without a rudder. While in dock at Malta it was found that the rudder could not be satisfactorily repaired at that yard, so it was taken off and lashed on deck and the Hood proceeded homeward rudderless. Malta to Gibraltar, a distance of 811 miles, the average speed was 12 1/2 knots, and the entire voyage was made in a little over six days at an average speed of nearly 13 knots. The officers of the Hood are justly complimented on this remarkable feat, which displayed good seamanship.

Most deplorably inefficient condition. The possession of sea power depends upon including steam power, gun power and men power, and the British, he contends, possesses none of these qualifications. The Terrible, designed for twenty-two knots, had to make the best of a few minutes' small talk at a party, especially when the man in question is not even an applicant for her hand! Are there not enough fair weather friends in the world now without uselessly adding the fresh young debutantes to the unrelaxing quantity?

The Argentine armored cruiser Rivadavia, formerly named General Roca, was launched at Sestri Ponente, Italy, October 22. The ship is a duplicate of another on the stocks at the same yard, and is of 800 tons, 17,000 horsepower and twenty-one knots speed.

The custom of saluting the quarterdeck by persons leaving or coming on board is observed in all navies, but probably not one man in a thousand knows its origin. It dates back to the time when on every ship was carried a small shrine of Our Lady of the Sea, and as the quarterdeck was the holy of the holies, the place of supreme authority, the shrine was always erected there, and it became incumbent, therefore, for every one to salute Our Lady's shrine. It is an inherited custom that has lost its religious significance.

PERSONAL MENTION.

Edward Weindler, a business man of Marysville, is a guest at the Grand. O. I. Woodward, a rancher of Woodward's Island, is staying at the Grand. James M. Lezynsky, a mining man of Denver, Colo., is registered at the Palace. Colonel J. T. Harrington of Colusa, one of the Trustees of the Home for the Feeble Minded at Glen Ellen, is at the Palace. Prunes stuffed with apricots Townsend's. Townsend's California glace fruit and candies, 50c a pound, in artistic fire-etched boxes. A nice present for Eastern friends. 639 Market St., Palace Hotel building. Special information supplied daily to business houses and public men by the Press Clipping Bureau (Allen's), 229 California street Telephone Main 1014.

NEW ADVERTISEMENTS.

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