

The San Francisco Call

JOHN D. SPRECKELS, Proprietor
CHARLES W. HORNICK, General Manager
ERNEST S. SIMPSON, Managing Editor

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SOME EDITORIAL VIEWS OF RUEF'S CASE

It scarcely needed the gift of prophecy to anticipate that Otis and Dargie would rejoice in the failure to convict Ruef. Listen to Dargie in the Oakland Tribune:

Not a few men believe that the failure to convict Ruef, however guilty he may be in other respects, is rather a moral victory than a miscarriage of justice. The elements of decency and fair play entered largely into the equation. Good citizens resented the infamous deal with confessed crooks and perjurers, and the unscrupulous measures adopted to convict a few men of wealth, prominence and good reputation with the testimony of thieves who had violated their oaths of office and organized themselves as a pirate crew.

Otis is not so indiscreetly jubilant, but he finds that the real sinner is the graft prosecution. It was like this, says the Los Angeles Times:

It must gall the tax payers of San Francisco, who were cinched for so many years by the scoundrelly gang, to now perforce foot the bills for an ineffective and ridiculous prosecution—bills amounting to more than the steals.

The people of San Francisco have been so unmercifully bled, bamboozled and disappointed by the graft prosecution that 'tis small wonder that they have lost confidence in it, and that a jury cannot be found to convict such an arch-rogue as Abe Ruef.

Of course, the real offense of the prosecution, in the minds of Otis and Dargie, lies in the endeavor to bring the "higher ups" to justice. They care little about Ruef, one way or another, except in so far as his evidence might be dangerous to the bribe givers, but since Ruef has concluded a treaty of alliance with the "higher ups" the failure to convict him looks to Dargie something like "a moral victory."

It is gratifying to know that neither Dargie nor Otis represents the temper of the California press as a whole. From all parts of the coast come expressions of sorrow and disgust, elicited by the miscarriage of justice. A strong editorial in the Sacramento-Bee may be taken as representative of this sentiment. We quote:

Clearly, there was no missing link in the chain of direct and positive evidence. No stronger case could have been presented. So the conclusion is irresistible that the six jurymen who voted for acquittal deliberately ignored the convincing testimony and sought for some pretext to mask their conduct.

When one bears in mind the corrupting power of the great corporations leagued together to defeat the graft prosecutions in San Francisco, because of their corrupt community of interest in these bribery cases, it is not surprising that such a disgraceful failure to convict has occurred. Doubtless no stone was left unturned to defeat the prosecution, through the exercise of every means of persuasion that could be brought to bear upon the result. Abe Ruef himself, being a millionaire, would of course part with a large share of his wealth rather than go to the penitentiary. The reason why the corrupting corporations are aiding Ruef is not that they have any friendliness or sympathy for him, but because he is in a position to testify against certain of their high officials, which might send them to prison.

The graft prosecution can not please the Chronicle, the Examiner, the Oakland Tribune or the Los Angeles Times, and does not have to please them. If those newspapers are satisfied with their course The Call is content to leave them and their motives to the judgment of honest men. It is a suggestive conjunction of names that makes up the quartet—Otis, Hearst, de Young, Dargie.

RECKLESS AIRSHIP EXPERIMENTS

BERKELEY'S police have done well to forbid any repetition of airship "demonstrations" within their confines. The reckless disregard for the safety of life and limb displayed by the Morrell undertaking was little short of criminal. It is admitted by the promoters of the enterprise that the experiment was made for speculative purposes, because certain stock holders were in a hurry to see what they were getting for their money. They wanted something done and the management was ready to oblige without counting the possible cost. They were ready to take all the chances of imperfect equipment in order to satisfy clamorous stock holders, and in the expectation that if nothing in the way of disaster happened it would then be easy to float more stock.

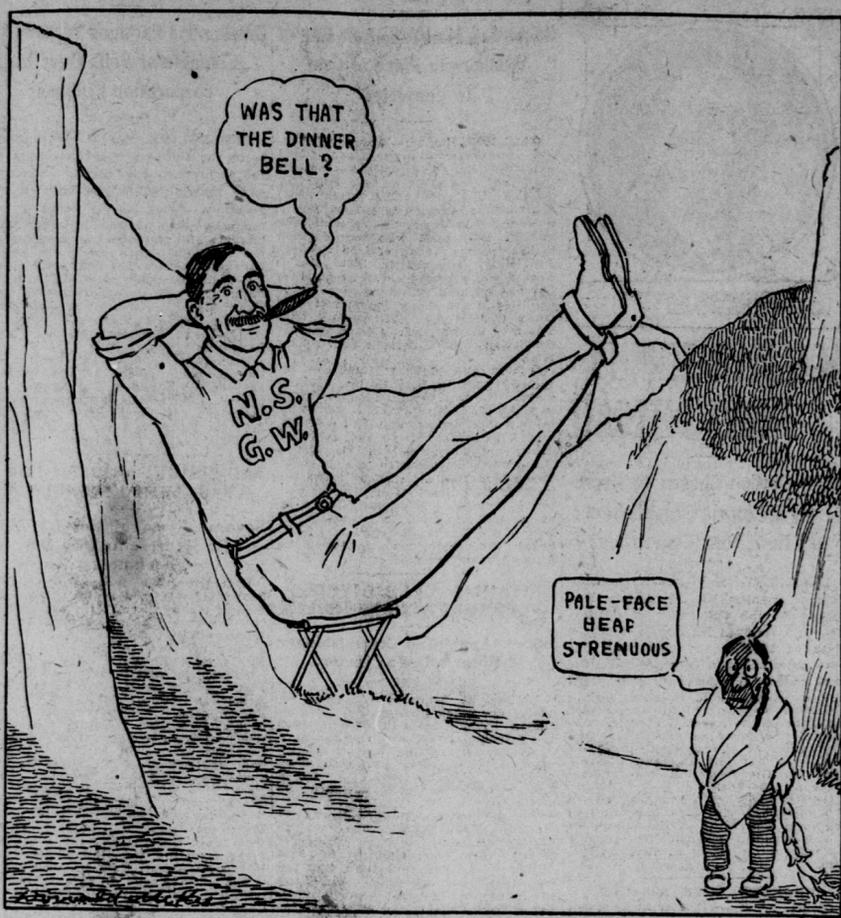
A man may have the right to risk his own life in this dangerous field of aeronautics; if he chooses a balloon or a flying machine at his own proper peril, that is his privilege. But when he invites a miscellaneous and numerous gathering of people to share the risks he is guilty of a grave offense. When the attempt is made with inadequate and untried equipment the enormity of the offense is aggravated beyond measure. It is, perhaps, indication of the reckless character of the Morrell experiment that it was made within a few feet of the high power line of transmission for electric current from the Colgate power house. If the ship had touched that wire, carrying 60,000 volts, not one of the passengers would have escaped alive.

WHY THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC IS IN POLITICS

LOS ANGELES once more finds itself in a position very like that of San Francisco and the riverine counties when the Southern Pacific sought to destroy river navigation by means of a bridge across the Carquinez straits. That was a long and hard fight, but the people finally won. Los Angeles is having a similar experience with San Pedro harbor.

Last winter Senator Flint, who owes his seat to Herrin, introduced a resolution in the senate which would have given the Southern Pacific complete control of the water frontage of San Pedro harbor. Fortunately the purpose of the resolution was detected before it could be adopted, and Senator Flint was forced to an ignominious withdrawal and repudiation of the instrument by the storm of indignation that sprang up in a moment. He declared that he had been imposed on by some one in the war department. It is true that the war department repudiates the suggestion and declares that Colonel Leach, who drew the resolution for Senator Flint, acted at the senator's request only as a "skilled amanuensis." But as Senator Flint's repentance was apparently sincere and the obnoxious resolu-

The Lily of the Valley



tion was killed the matter was allowed to rest. But the Southern Pacific was not asleep.

The corporation now seeks to obtain by executive order that which it failed to secure from congress. "Some one in the war department" appears to be at work again and has secured from Assistant Secretary Oliver an order substantially the same in character as that which Senator Flint adopted as his own and then turned out on a pitiless world. The true fatherhood of this persevering orphan remains a mystery.

It is not necessary here to go into the details of the order and its purpose, because they concern only the communities dependent on San Pedro harbor as a point of shipment. The episode is related here in connection with the Carquinez straits controversy to illustrate the need of constant vigilance against underground work by the Southern Pacific and to explain why that corporation is in politics.

CALIFORNIA HAS PASSED OUT OF THE PIONEER STAGE

THE country listens to Uncle Jim Hill with respect despite the gloomy habit of mind which the great railroad builder has taken on as a regular thing of recent years. We forget how many millions of dollars it was that Mr. Hill demanded last year as imperatively needed to put the railroads in right shape to handle the business that was crowding them beyond their capacity. Now Mr. Hill has taken up a different theme of woe and dilates on national waste of resources. At the recent conference of governors in Washington he spoke of the wasteful habits of the American farmer and the loss of fertile soil by erosion. We quote from his address:

There are two ways in which the productive power of the earth is lessened; first by erosion and the sweeping away of the fertile surface into streams and thence to the sea; and second, by exhaustion through wrong methods of cultivation. The former process has gone far. Thousands of acres in the east and south have been made unfit for tillage. North Carolina was a century ago one of the great agricultural states of the country and one of the wealthiest. To day as you ride through the south you see everywhere land gullied by torrential rains, red and yellow clay banks exposed where once were fertile fields and agriculture reduced because its main support has been washed away. Millions of acres, in places to the extent of one-tenth of the entire arable area, have been so injured that no industry and no care can restore them.

Far more ruinous, because universal and continuing in its effects, is the process of soil exhaustion. It is creeping over the land from east to west. The abandoned farms that are now the playthings of the city's rich or the game preserves of the patrons of sport bear witness to the melancholy change. New Hampshire, Vermont, northern New York show long lists of them. In western Massachusetts, which once supported a flourishing agriculture, farm properties are now for sale for half the cost of the improvements. Professor Carver of Harvard has declared after a personal examination of the country that "agriculture as an independent industry, able in itself to support a community, does not exist in the hilly parts of New England."

The same process of deterioration is affecting the farm lands of western New York, Ohio and Indiana. Where prices of farms should rise by increase of population, in many places they are falling. Between 1880 and 1900 the land values of Ohio shrank \$60,000,000. Official investigation of two counties in central New York disclosed a condition of agricultural decay. In one land was for sale for about the cost of improvement and 150 vacant houses were counted in a limited area. In the other the population in 1905 was nearly 4,000 less than in 1855.

These are the sins of a people engaged in subduing a wilderness and only now emerging from the pioneer stage of growth. Undoubtedly they have been "skinning" the land and however well inclined they may have been a careful conservation of resources was made impossible by lack of capital. The pioneer is usually a poor man. He wants results and must have them at once if he is to survive. He cannot afford to be concerned for the good of those who may come after him.

Speaking for California we believe that this community has passed beyond the stage described by Mr. Hill. The old day of big grain farms has been superseded in great measure by cultivation under irrigation that does not materially impair fertility. Orchards and vineyards and alfalfa fields are forms of intensive farming that readily lend themselves to the improvement of soils by artificial means. They are permanent possessions that impel the owner to keep them up to standard. The use of irrigation in agriculture means stability and its incidental tendency is to restrain and prevent the erosion which Mr. Hill deprecates. Running water is so valuable in California that the day is coming when the flow of every stream will be so regulated that flood waters will be in large measure deprived of their destructive force.

Answers to Queries

SUEZ CANAL—P. D. L. City. When was the Suez canal opened? It was formally opened to traffic November 16, 1869.
In the term of a United States interstate commissioner? Six years.
STATE OFFICIALS—F. C. A. City. Please publish the names of the following officers of the state of California: (1) Lieutenant governor, (2) attorney general, (3) controller, (4) treasurer, (5) surveyor general. (1) Warren R. Porter, (2) U. S. Webb, (3) A. B. Nye, (4) William R. Williams, (5) W. E. Kingsbury.

The Insider

Tells how the appearance of Katherine Grey recalls a good story about "A Doll's House" in the southern metropolis of the state

Treated Children to "A Doll House"

THE appearance of Katherine Grey in Ibsen's "A Doll's House" a good story comes from Los Angeles. It appears that the usual billboard announcements of the coming of this play to that city were made on an occasion when another actress assumed the principal role and one kind hearted dame fond of children and desirous of adding her mite to helping the world along, albeit not well versed in Ibsenish intricacies, conceived the idea of taking a party of youngsters to see "the dear, delightful play; just the thing for children and so nice of Ibsen to think of it." Unfortunately for the children the dame kept her plans largely to herself and gave no one reason even to suspect them. So the appointed day arrived and she with her little troop marched gayly off down the street, minus the least misgiving. That is, they were gay when they went, but when they returned—long before the end of the first act—thereby hangs this tale. Five disappointed children rent the air with sounds of anguish and somehow the story got abroad. The dame, who was really kind hearted, didn't mind her discomfiture so much, but when she saw placarded on the billboards, three weeks later, on the occasion of the production of the same play for a night or two, "This is not a child's play," she sought seclusion, and to this day those children are uncertain what happened to that doll's house they had waited so long and anxiously to behold.

Quotes Poet for Feminine Peaches

The city editor looked over the story which had been handed to him and frowned. It was a description of a certain crowd of San Francisco damozels who had been helping to entertain the fleet. "Here!" he called. "I don't like this expression you have used here—'feminine peaches.'" "Why not?" asked the reporter. "Well, it isn't quite the thing for a dignified newspaper," replied the boss scribe, flourishing a blue pencil. "Anyway," replied the hiring scribe, "I've got mighty good authority for the use of it." "What's that?" "Longfellow." "Longfellow?" "Yes, sir. If you will look in section V of part II of 'Evangeline' you will find it recorded that 'the peach is the emblem of beauty.' How can you get away from that?"

Two Women Differ on Political Air

There was a great playing of patriotic music in the theaters during the stay of the fleet with us and particularly was the national anthem, the "Star Spangled Banner," sounded from the orchestras between the acts. In accordance with the patriotic tradition every one within hearing of the air should stand, and so when the "Star Spangled Banner" would wave from the throat of the cornets and the trombones there would be a rattle of skirts and clutched for hats and uneasiness generally among the audience. One evening at the Alcazar theater the orchestra struck up the air and patriotic Sutter street arose in its place. Two women behind me followed the worthy custom, but in a very unworthy mood. "That piece kinder makes me tired, it's pretty and all that, but I don't like to have to stand up," said one. "It's the 'Star Spangled Banner,' ain't it?" she added, turning to her companion. "No, it's 'My Country, 'Tis of Thee,'" answered the other. "I always thought it was the 'Star Spangled Banner,'" replied the first as she wearily sank into her seat, "but may be you're right. I guess it is 'My Country, 'Tis of Thee.'"

The Smart Set

A WEDDING of great interest to Californians will take place in Washington, D. C., tomorrow, when Miss Laura Sherman of that city and Prentiss Nathaniel Gray, prominent in social circles here, will be married. The bride is the oldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Hoyt Sherman and is connected with several of Washington's first families. Her friendship with Mr. Gray dates from a visit she made here several months ago; their engagement being announced only four weeks after they first met. Mr. Gray is connected with George D. Gray & Co. and is a son of the prominent Oakland family of that name. The wedding will take place at 4 o'clock tomorrow afternoon in St. John's church, Washington. Mr. Gray and his bride will spend several weeks in travel before reaching this city.

The wedding of Miss Helen Corbet and Aleck Curlett will take place in the Corbet home in Scott street at 6 o'clock the afternoon of Wednesday, June 3. The ceremony, which will be witnessed by 70 friends and relatives, will be solemnized by the Rev. Dr. Hemphill. A reception and an elaborate wedding supper will follow, after which Mr. Curlett and his bride will leave for a three weeks' trip to the south. The wedding gown will be of white chiffon satin, trimmed with exquisite lace. With it lilacs of the valley will be carried. Mrs. John Selby, who will wear white messaline, will be matron of honor, and Miss Mary Corbet and Miss Ethel Curlett will be bridesmaids. They will be dressed alike in pink chiffon over messaline silk. John Selby will attend the groom as best man. After their wedding journey Mr. Curlett and his bride will make their home in this city.

The wedding of Miss Beatrice Fife and Captain Edmund Shortridge, which will be a military wedding and one of the most brilliant of the season, will take place Wednesday, June 17, in Saint Paul's church in this city. Several hundred society-people will be invited to the affair, and the bride, who is the pretty daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Fife of Palo Alto, will have as attendants, Miss Jeanette Deal will be maid of honor and Dr. Rupert Blue will attend Captain Shortridge as best man. Four bridesmaids, not yet selected, and four ushers will complete the wedding party. After the wedding Captain Shortridge and his bride will spend a fortnight in the southern part of the state before leaving for their new home in the east.

About 50 prominent members of the younger set will be Mrs. Helen Baker's guests the evening of Tuesday, June 2, for an informal dance, which will take place in the Campbell home in Sausalito, where the Bakers are spending the summer. The rooms of the lower floor, which are very large, will be thrown into one for this occasion, making a splendid dancing space, and the wide porches will also be used by the dancers. At midnight a supper will be served, the dancing being continued for a short time afterward. Almost all of Miss Baker's guests will come from this side of the bay or from San Rafael, several of the girls being Mrs. Baker's house guests for the night.

Mr. and Mrs. Emery Winslip and Miss Patricia Cosgrave, who have been in the east for six months, returned yesterday to California, and will at once reopen the handsome Winslip home in Ross Valley. The Winslips usually divide the year between their beautiful home in Georgia, where Mr. Winslip spent his boyhood, and the Ross Valley home.

Miss Florence Roberts, one of the Berkeley girls who are also popular on this side of the bay, sailed for Honolulu Saturday to be gone for several months. Mrs. Daniel E. Shean will reach town tomorrow from Santa Barbara where she has been spending several weeks, and will stay here a month, dividing her time between her aunt, Mrs. L. L. Baker in Sausalito, and her sister, Mrs. Alexander Fraser Douglas in this city. Late in June Mrs. Shean will join her father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Stone in Reno, for a visit. Lieutenant Shean will return this week to his regiment in Fort Crockett.

Miss Lenora Melgs of Santa Barbara is spending several weeks with her sister in Mill Valley. Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Edward White and a party of guests came up from Santa Barbara in Mr. White's motor car last week, visiting the big hotels and favorite stopping places en route. They returned to the south a day or two ago.

Miss Jennie Flood arrived in Menlo Park last week, and will be the guest of her brother, James Flood, in his beautiful home there for some time. Miss Flood's plans are indefinite, but she will visit friends in this city in another week or two, when much entertainment will be done in her honor.

Mrs. T. F. Payne and her daughters are in London, having sailed from New York in the Mauretania last week. They will spend several weeks in the English capital, crossing to Paris in June.

Mr. and Mrs. John Landers and Miss Eleanor Landers will spend the greater part of the summer at the Peninsula hotel, where they have secured apartments.

Impertinent Question No. 52

What's the Cheapest Thing in California? For the most original or wittiest answer to this question—and the briefer the better—The Call will pay FIVE DOLLARS. For the next five answers The Call will pay ONE DOLLAR each. Prize winning answers will be printed next Wednesday and checks mailed to the winners at once. Make your answer short and address it to IMPERTINENT QUESTIONS, THE CALL.