The San Francisco Call

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Spring Valley's Impudent Proposition

THE water rate payers of San Francisco are in receipt officially from the hands of President Bourn of the Spring Valley water company of an arithmetical definition of a "sensible" man. When Mr. Bourn, through his mouthpiece, the Chronicle, announced that "a sensible man" would give the water company all it demanded in the way of rates there was a certain embarrassing vagueness about the proposition. Of course, in the view announced by the Chronicle the city had been wrong from the beginning of the six years' fight in the courts concerning water rates, and a "sensible man" would make immediate surrender on all points and dismiss the suits or confess judgment. The Chronicle, however, did not put the conditions of surrender in terms of arithmetic, and this omission has been supplied with effusion by Mr. Bourn.

It appears, then, from Mr. Bourn's protocol laid before the board of supervisors that "a sensible man" is of three degrees, positive, comparative and superlative. The positively sensible man would give the water company by official decree a 15 per cent advance of rates. The comparatively sensible man would put up the rates 20 per cent, and the incomparable superlative and fine flower of this arithmetical progression would allow Mr. Bourn's corporation a thumping 25 per cent increase.

Mr. Bourn's eagerness for a settlement on his own terms at this particular stage of the proceedings is easily explained. After dragging through the courts for six years the suits to define the value of the Spring Valley plant and settle a definite basis for making water rates are at last in a way to come up for trial. Mr. Bourn does not like the situation at all. The case for exorbitant rates made on behalf of his corporation has broken down, and he knows as much. If judgment could be stalled off by compromise it would be a great victory for the corporation. In fine, Mr. Bourn, with the assistance of the Chronicle, is working a bunko game on the board of supervisors and the public.

The supervisors will not, of course, be flimflammed. The plain and unavoidable course is to proceed to judgment in the water rate suits, making no bargain of any sort with Spring Valley. Mr. Bourn is fertile in propositions and all of them are in dishonest derogation of the rights of rate payers. With such people there is but one safe course and that is to hold them at arms' length and give them just what the law allows and no more.

Press the water suits to judgment. Disregard all propositions for compromise and proceed without faltering on the Hetch Hetchy project. It is a simple program, honest and straightforward, but it does not please Mr. Bourn or the Chronicle. It would be more "sensible" to give the greedy monopoly a quarter more.

Moving the Raisins

IT is slow business getting people interested even in so meritorious a product as raisins. A great deal is heard in California about raisins and the work of advertising them that is in progress, but the movement proceeds slowly. It is a hard matter to move a great and inert mass, to excite even a passing interest among the busy communities distant from the point of production and wrapped up in their own affairs. We think in California that a great deal is being done for raisins, but here is the way it seemed to the New York Journal of Commerce one day last week:

Buyers still display apathy toward raisins, but the more sanguine in the trade attribute this to the fact that retail distributers and consumers are not yet posted as to the campaign that is being pushed by the growers from the coast end and which has been gradually working east, the purpose of which is to make April 30 a national "Raisin day." Some of the local brokers have taken steps to create buying interest by calling attention to the date by a stamp placed upon their correspondence, while others are going further and are issuing circular letters to the trade urging that jobbers bring the matter prominently to the attention of the retailers. In the meantime very little actual business is being done in spot goods, and while a considerable quantity is moving from the coast it seems to be chiefly in the shape of consignments made in anticipation of the demand, which it is hoped will be created by the liberal advertising of "Raisin day" that is being done, particularly in the west. The market here is unsettled and weak.

We have been talking raisins in California for a month or more and they have just about begun to hear of it in trade circles at the east. Apparently no impression had been made on the consumers or prospective consumers of the product. The advertising had not reached them and the trade was only beginning to anticipate the movement. There is only one ascertained law of advertising, and it is that if you have a meritorious product you must keep everlastingly advertising it. It is slow and difficult at the start, but it quickly gains accelerated force and volume of results.

Consequences of the Spokane Rate Decision

THE Spokane rate decision by the interstate commerce commission has become a cause of confusion in railroad offices, and traffic managers are in much doubt as to the meaning and bearing of the rule. In fine, the commission appears to have decided as little as possible and left the rest in the air. Chiefly the decision holds that the rates charged to Spokane from eastern points by the Hill roads were unreasonable because they were excessively high. But Spokane is served by two systems—the Hill and Harriman roads. The Hill line from the east is only 1,500 miles in length, whereas the Harriman road is 2,300 miles. It is clear, then, that an excessive rate for a 1,500 mile haul might be quite reasonable when charged for 2,300 miles. But in the service of a competitive point the low rate must govern transactions. The Oregonian puts the dilemma thus:

If the rates ordered by the commission are reasonable for the Hill lines with a 1,500 mile haul, they are certainly unreasonable for the Harriman lines, which have a much longer haul. If the Harriman lines accept the rate of the commission as a permanent or compulsory rate, they will virtually admit the reasonableness of the rate. This in turn would leave the rate of the Hill lines, with a 1,500 mile haul, much too high, and more litigation would necessarily ensue. The Harriman lines are apparently fighting against the order, which would force them to admit that the Spokane rate is a reasonable rate for a 2,300 mile haul. If it is reasonable, then, Colfax, Walla Walla, Pendleton and all of the intervening points are entitled to a lower rate and will surely get it.

If the rates are unreasonable, the O. R. & N. will not be obliged to obey the commission order, and it would be optional with the company whether it should put into effect any rate necessary to meet that of its competitors and at the same time cut the rate on all O. R. & N. points in Spokane terrtory which could be reached with shorter mileage. For the same reasons Spokane will also lose practically all of her jobbing business east of the city.

Before the commission gave its decision Spokane rates were determined by regard for the law that absence of water competition justifies higher charges, although the distance may be considerably shorter. Thus the rates from Chicago to Spokane were higher than from Chicago to Seattle or Portland, where competition by sea is available. The commission does not set aside this principle, which, in fact, is founded on the facts of geography, but merely decided that the Hill roads had been making too much money on the Spokane haul. The decision is obviously an invitation to further protracted litigation.

America's Shame on the Seas

THE traveling vicissitudes of the Hicks family supply a melancholy commentary on the decline of the American merchant marine. W. J. Hicks, a prosperous mechanic of this city, left his children behind in Australia when he came here. Doing well at his trade in this city he wanted to bring his family here. He had the money and prepaid the fares at this end. That was three months ago and the children arrived here Tuesday. A normal voyage from Australian ports to San Francisco should last about a month, and that would be the time if there were a direct steamship line on this route. As things are, the voyage is broken and transfers from one ship to another must be made at Honolulu or some other port on the Pacific. Of course, the inconvenience and delays due to these transfers kill the regular passenger trade, which was formerly very considerable. Worse still, it has destroyed the trade that had grown up between Australia and the Pacific coast, because roundabout, uncertain service is fatal to a profitable commerce. The mails, of course, are delayed, and, in fine, the Pacific ocean is eliminated as a factor in trade with the Australian continent as far as the United States is concerned.

The ocean mail carrying bill which the house of representatives of the late congress defeated by three votes would, if passed, have provided the remedy for this disgraceful condition. The bill was not a subsidy measure, but provided pay for legitimate service on a scale to make the undertaking commercially possible. It will scarcely be denied that a direct mail and passenger service between the Pacific coast and Australia is a necessity of civilization demanded by the requirements of commerce.

A Raisin for Care, a Raisin for Woe

ABDUL HAMID

By O. H. FERNBACH

FAST held by the walls of Yildiz,
In the city of blood and tears,
Lies the tyrant Turk, and about him lurk
The shades of a doom that nears:
There is death in his vizier's whisper,
There is death in his slave girl's lyre,
And the sun of morn o'er the Golden Horn
Writes death in its rays of fire.

THE ghosts of the midnight revel,
For they hear the avengers' tread,
And the fiends rejoice with a mocking voice
As they gather to claim their Dead.
See! The sacked and the bowstringed legions
From the silent Bosphorus rise,
And the shrieks resound of the harem's drowned
Who hasten to grasp their prize.

NOW woe to the Sultan Hamid!
Lo! the writing is on the wall,
And the visions rise to his blood bleared eyes
Of Midhat, and Murad's fall.
Through Yildiz the death cry echoes,
From his bosom shall hope depart:
For the flashing sword of th' avenging horde
Seeks rest in the tyrant's heart!

Answers to Queries

EXPATRIATION—M. M., Sonderberg, Germany. I resided in San Francisco, where I was naturalized in 1876. Lived there until October, 1906, left for Germany and have lived here ever since, but it has always been my intention to return to San Francisco. Have I lost my American citzenship?

The law relative to expatriation says: "When any naturalized citizen shall have resided for two years in the foreign state from which he came, or five years in ony other foreign state, it shall be presumed that he has ceased to be an American citizen and the place of his general abode shall be deemed his place of residence during such years. Provided, however, that such presumption may be overcome on the presentation of satisfactory evidence to a diplomatic or consular officer of the United States, under such rules and regulations as the department of state may prescribe; and provided also, that no American citizen shall be allowed to expatriate himhelf when this country is at war."

* * *

FOOL'S DAY—Subscriber, Mare Island, and A. B. C., City. What is the origin of all fool's day on April 1?

This question has often been asked, but it is impossible to give a thoroughly satisfactory reply. In the literature of the last two centuries there are found many references to the day, but beyond that it is impossible to go. The antiquarians appear to be unable to trace the origin of the custom of April fooling. One suggestion is to the following effect: It is supposed that the custom of playing tricks on the 1st of April was derived from some pagan custom, such as the Hull festival among the Hindus or the Roman festival of fools. The practice prevails in many countries and this might indicate that the custom dates away back to the early history of the race.

* * *

CLARA STREET—J. C. C., City. What is the proper name of a street which starts at the west line of Ritch street, between Folsom and Harrison, running west to Sixth? Is it Clara or Clary?

Before the big fire of 1906—that street had a dual name—Clary and Clara. Way back in the fifties, when the small streets south of Market were named, women's names were used to designate them, such as Minna, Jessie, Clementina and so on, and the street you ask about was called Clara. In latter years, so the story goes, a painter was told to paint street corner signs and when it came to Clara, he painted one "Clary" and being too tired to make the change "let it go at that," and it went up on one of the corners.

* * *

POPULATION OF THE EARTH—E. L. R., Berkeley, Cal. It has been asserted that the entire population of the earth could be accomodated in the state of Texas by placing nine people on every acre in the state. Is this so? What is the population of the earth? What is the area of the state of Texas in square miles?

The population of the earth is estimated at 1,522,700,000. The gross area in square miles of the state of Texas is 265,780. There are 640 acres to the square mile.

* * *

INCORPORATION—S. E. A., Red Bluff, Cal. Tell me where I can procure a book of information on the subject of incorporating a small commercial company in California?

The best book that this department can refer you to is the codes of the state, which will give you the law on the subject.

* * *

PEARL HARBOR—H. D., City. What is the United States government doing at Pearl harbor, Hawaiian islands, at this time?

At last accounts the government was dredging the harbor so as to make it a naval base and repair station.

* * *

THREE DATES—A. S., Cupertino, Cal. On what day of the week did the following dates fall: May 26, 1884; November 9, 1884, and September 8, 1894.

Respectively, Thursday, Sunday and Saturday.

* * *

ST. GAUDEN COINS—Subscriber, City. Where can I ascertain how many St. Gauden coins were minted?

Address a letter of inquiry to the director of the United States mint.

* * *

AMBASSADORS—A. K., Belmont, Cal. Did President Taft remove any ambassador between the date of the inauguration and 20 days thereafter?

He did not.

* * *

ANTI-CHINESE—F. G. B., City. When was the anti-Chinese convention held in California?

At Sacramento, March 10, 1886.

THE SMART SET

THE St. Francis musical art society held the final concert of the season last evening in the colonial ballroom at the St. Francis hotel and the affair was a brilliant and successful ending to the series of winter concerts by famous artists. The violinist Mischa Elman was the attraction last evening and several hundred guests assembled to hear the program. Among those who entertained box parties were:

Mrs. Eleanor Martin
Mr. and Mrs. William G. Irwin
Mr. and Mrs. William B. Bourn
Mr. and Mrs. George A. Newhall
Mr. and Mrs. Horace E. Pillsbury
Henry T. Scott
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Martin
Miss Jennie Crocker

* * *

Mr. and Mrs. William Mayo Newhall sent out cards yesterday for the marriage of their daughter, Miss Margaret Newhall, and Athol McBean, which will take place May 12 at high noon in Trinity Episcopal church and will be followed by a reception at the Newhall home.

* * *

Miss Fernanda Pratt will entertain Thursday, April 29, at an informal tea to be given at her home in compliment to Miss Nellie Grant, the charming granddaughter of General Grant, who is the guest of relatives in this city. Only the younger friends of the hostess have been bidden for this occasion.

* * *

Mrs. Edward Eyre entertained yesterday at an informal luncheon given at her home in Sacramento street in compliment to Mrs. William Mintzer, who has recently returned from the east. Among those who greeted the guest of honor on this occasion were:

Mrs. Newman MacLaren
Mrs. Patrick Calhoun
Miss Beaver
Mrs. James Otis
Mrs. Walter MacGavin

* * *

The Presidio hop last evening was a particularly enjoyable affair and attracted more than 100 guests to the officers' club. A number of dinner parties preceded the dance and among the elaborate dinners was that given by Captain and Mrs. Sterling Postley Adams. The table decorations were entirely in pink. Covers were laid for the following guests:

Miss Marcia Fee
Jerome Fee
Miss Dolly MacGavin
A. J. Owen
Edward Gunn
Miss Elizabeth Simpson
Lieut. Naylor, U. S. A.
Miss Nancy Clark
Miss Eliza McMullin

* * *

Mrs. Anna Farrell and her daughter, Miss Kathleen Farrell, are making a tour of the holy land and at last account were in Nazareth visiting the places of historic interest. They will visit Damascus and expect to arrive in Naples early in May.

* * *

Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Sharon, accompanied by Miss Florence Breckenridge, are enjoying a delightful stay in New York, but will sail Saturday for Paris, where they will remain for the greater part of the summer and will return in October in time to be present at the opening of the new Palace hotel.

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Mr. and Mrs. Charles Josselyn leave about May 1 for New York and will sail shortly for Paris, where they will pass the summer.

* * *

The friends of Miss Anna Weller will be delighted to learn that the attractive debutante is recovering from her injuries sustained in the recent runaway accident at San Rafael, and it is hoped that her complete recovery will be a matter of only a few days longer.

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Baroness Damie de Croze will leave in a few days for New York and after a short stay in the eastern city will sail for Paris, where she expects to remain during the summer.

* * *

Lawrence McCreary expects to leave shortly for New York, and after a brief stay in the east will sail for Europe, where he will travel during the summer.

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Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Miller have returned after an extended visit in the east and are at the Fairmont for the early summer.

* * *

Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Crowley sailed this week from New York on the Prinzess Irene and will enjoy a leisurely tour of Naples and Genoa and other interesting cities of Italy.

* * *

Henry P. Bowie has opened his home, "Sovern Lodge," in El Cerrito park, and will probably remain at the pretty country place during the summer since he has recently returned from a tour of Europe and the orient.

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One of the enjoyable affairs of the week was the informal dinner given by Miss Erna St. Goar at her home in California street. Among the young people who enjoyed the hospitality of the hostess on this occasion were:

Miss Marcia Fee
Miss Helen Baker
Miss Edith Lowe
Miss Margaret Ross
Miss Dorothy Woods
Ivan Langstroth
Jack Lowe
Harold Bingham
George Willcutt
Fred St. Goar

* * *

Miss Maud Wilson entertained last evening at a bridge party given at her home in Pacific avenue in compliment to her house guest, Miss Beatrice Wetmore.

* * *

Miss Flood and Miss Sally Maynard leave one week from Saturday for an extended visit in the east.

* * *

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Selfridge have returned to their home in Willitts after a brief stay in town.

* * *

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hayes Smith are enjoying a motor tour of the southern part of the state and have returned to their home in Willits on the trip.

Gossip of Railwaymen

E. B. McCord, the veteran passenger-man of the Southern Pacific, has a poetical nature, is a lover of the beautiful, no matter in what shape, and lives at Fruitvale. In that charming spot he raises flowers which would excite even the envy of a W. A. Bissell. His roses are even more fragrant than those grown at Berkeley or Alameda, while his lawns are the wonder of the county.

Despite the tender care he lavishes on his Paul Nerons and his Cecile Bruners, snails and slugs infest garden and satisfy their appetites on beautiful petals. His anguish can be imagined, for the buds he would sport in his lapel are ruined by these awful creatures.

He would go to church on Sunday mornings, he says, but the snails keep him at home, and in his garden he spends the time hurling slugs and snails to their destruction in the roadway.

One morning he heard excited exclamations issuing from the lips of excited Frenchmen on their way to a club in a villa a few yards away.

"Sacre!" he heard one man shout, "this man must be a Goth, a Visigoth, a barbarian, to throw into the street these lovely animals. I will approach him. I will speak with him. Yes, I will even if it costs me my life. Say farewell to me, beloved ones, if I perish.

"Are you the man that kills to their death these harmless, valuable and beautiful things?" said the Frenchman to McCord, pointing to a snail on a rosebush.

"You bet I do."

"Man, you are insane!" cried the Frenchman. "You are mad to destroy a delicacy like this."

McCord reached for his pruning knife. He thought he was in the presence of a lunatic.

"Hold!" shouted the Frenchman. "I eat them. We eat them. You eat them."

"No, I don't," shouted McCord, aghast at the suggestion that he devoured snails.

"Well," said the Frenchman, "you look intelligent. Suppose we make a bargain. Our man come to your garden and gather the snails. They are of the delicious variety."

"Well, yes," said McCord, "but he must come on Sunday or else what excuse have I for my wife to stay at home?"

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Considerable interest is being taken in the location of the ticket office of the Western Pacific, as it is understood that seven different place in Market street, west of the Palace hotel, have been selected, and that the choice of these places rests with the president. It is thought that the new Gould road will get as near to the office of the Southern Pacific as possible, and as the Flood building will house railroad offices for several years to come, the Western Pacific passenger office will be somewhere close by. It is rumored also that W. J. Shotwell will be the head of the freight and passenger departments on this coast. Judging from the progress that is being made in building the line, and if nothing unforeseen happens it should be ready for traffic by the end of September.

* * *

Notwithstanding the prohibition movement in various states wine shipments of California, both rail and water, show a small increase over like periods of 1908 when compared for the first three months of this year. The rumor that congress is to increase the duty on French wines, it was thought, would result in increased shipments from that country to the consequent detriment of California tonnage, but if such is the case the effect has not been shown as yet.

* * *

The Santa Fe has opened a new route via Vicksburg, Miss., and Shreveport, La., from southeastern territory to Californian points. This will be a preferred route for southeastern traffic, as it is considerably shorter from the major portion of this territory than routes now in effect by East St. Louis, New Orleans and Memphis.

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Bartholomew Julien, master car builder of the Union Pacific at Omaha, and William Point, his assistant, have invented a steel platform for baggage and mail cars. The latter includes steel end construction connected with a rigid floor frame, roof and sides traces so arranged as to take up and distribute the force of a blow in a collision. Resistance to a pressure of 750,000 pounds is claimed for the center of the passenger car platform.

* * *

C. J. Millis, general manager of the Coos Bay, Roseburg and Eastern, is in the city. This line will connect Drain, Ore., on the Shasta route with Marshfield and is now under construction. Millis in speaking of the work that is being done in that country said there were several logging roads being built to get out the timber which is being cut in immense quantities.

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Some idea of the territory through which the Pan-American railroad runs can be learned from the fact that a 3,000,000 tie order has been placed by a firm dealing in ties to be cut from a strip of land 30 miles long through which the railroad passes, embracing 52,000 acres. It is in the state of Chiapas and is covered with Spanish cedar.

Impertinent Question No. 100

What's a Bargain?

For the most original or wittiest answer to this question—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 *SEND IT ON A POSTAL CARD* to

IMPERTINENT QUESTIONS,
THE CALL.

Winning Answers to "What's an Impertinent Question?"

$5 prize to Edward E. Aobe, general hospital, Presidio, city.
She asked it all right—I arrived home at 3 a. m.

$1 prize to M. Christensen, 2009 Folsom street, city.
What Call reader doesn't know, after 99 lessons?

$1 prize to L. Chetwood, room 812, Sheldon building, city.
A short cut to a sharp answer.

$1 prize to L. Schumann, 233 A street, Richmond district, city.
The real thing to "start something."

$1 prize to G. Bertolacci, 1614 Milvia street, Berkeley.
From my year and a half experience, a synonym for "stung."

$1 prize to C. J. Lister, 311 Crocker building, city.
Asking for a slot machine after July 1 without a search warrant.