

# THE CANDID FRIEND

An Independent Review of Men and Things That Figure in the Contemporary Life of California

By Edward F. Cahill

**M**Y young friend, Guy Barham, has started a new evening paper in Los Angeles, and I gather that he is something short of experience in the game. So much one may infer from the tenor of a slashing editorial which appears to carry his earmarks. In a local way it might be regarded as incendiary and calculated to "hurt business" in a fashion that southern California towns so hotly resent. Mr. Barham should reflect on the fate of an unhappy correspondent who sent out a press dispatch from Santa Ana describing the disastrous and ruinous consequences of a wind and sand storm of the sort named after that town. Mr. Barham doubtless remembers how the Santa Ana board of trade met on the morrow of the publication and in a set of scathing resolutions demanded the instant dismissal—nowadays we name it recall—of the unlucky correspondent.



## AN UNWISE GUY

Mr. Barham, with as little sense of local interests, writes of the order made by the commerce court enjoining the enforcement of the interstate commerce commission's adjustment of freight rates for Reno, Spokane and Phoenix, Ariz. Mr. Barham, apparently quite oblivious of the Los Angeles and San Francisco jobbers, calls the new court a "strangler hurrying to the rescue of the trans-continental railroads," and he concludes:

When the interstate commerce commission handed down its decision some months ago the people of Spokane and Reno and other intermountain cities held celebrations, burned red fire and declared half holidays for public rejoicing. They had been waiting ten years for this justice to be done them. The roads' discrimination had been a handicap on their growth and progress and a discouragement to their business interests. Relief came like water to the thirsty or as anodyne to pain.

Now these same cities will suffer as from a relapse, and their indignation and resentment can scarcely be exaggerated. That some reflection of this will fall upon the president is likely, since the five judges who compose the "court of commerce" are creatures of his appointment.

This is a case where the popular impulse would be to apply the recall, if that remedy were applicable.

## COURTS MUST PLEASE BOTH SIDES

Quite so; when a court does not give satisfaction let it be recalled on the instant. If a judge is a "strangler," off with his head. He should strive to please, if possible, both sides. But, although much may be forgiven to youth and inexperience, Mr. Barham either forgets or does not know that the injunction which he so unsparingly denounces was all in favor of Los Angeles and the other towns on the coast. Indeed, we need not be surprised to hear that Mr. Barham, having got in wrong, is being pursued by a mob of infuriated jobbers headed by the egregious Gregson thirsting for his blood. If any San Francisco editor dared talk like Barham he would have William R. Wheeler and Seth Mann after him with a hammer and tongs.

## THE LEFTOVER STUFF

Brother Barham is like the man who had a clock which he took to pieces and when he put it together again he had enough left to make another clock. Brother Barham, in his profitable experience as a custom house broker, acquired so much wisdom that he has enough left over to run a newspaper. The sample quoted is some of the leftover stuff—mostly wheels.

## THE SIMPLE EDITORIAL LIFE

For the present, and until Brother Barham gets the lay of the land, I would prescribe a gentle editorial diet of good roads, Los Angeles as a summer resort and other amiable promotion stuff. It is not safe to be so incautiously outspoken in a town where the city council is preparing to enact an ordinance to muzzle obstreperous roosters and other things that crow on inauspicious occasions.



## THE MOST DISTRESSFUL CITY

'Tis the most distressful city—Los Angeles—that ever yet was seen. Loud and despairing cries for help are raised to rend the welkin. The crack of doom is ready to pop. Forty newspapers yelling like one declare they are ruined

ladies if Job Harriman is elected next month. They are seeing ghosts, as, for example, the Times:

A socialist mayor and council would have the power, and it may be presumed that they would exercise the power, to establish and publish a municipal newspaper, and no more certain opportunity for financial loss could be devised.

They would have the power to establish and conduct all public utilities such as telephone, electric lights, and power, gas, water and streetcars, the conduct of which at popular prices might make heavy inroads upon the public treasury.

They would have the power to establish and conduct theaters, concert halls, automobile lines, express wagons, storage warehouses, hotels, restaurants and baseball matches.

## A RUINED MUNICIPALITY

One and all, they agree that if Harriman is elected the credit of the city will be destroyed and, therefore, it would be impossible to borrow the \$18,000,000 authorized bond issue to complete the Owens river project, the harbor and other public improvements. Now, this sort of stuff would be certain to injure the credit of the city whether Harriman were elected or not, if people paid any attention or attached the smallest importance to the words of their newspapers, but, in fact, everybody knows that it is nothing better than the sort of political guff that old-fashioned newspapers ladle out so liberally in campaign seasons.

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

What material difference is there between Mayor Alexander, who seeks re-election, and his opponent, Job Harriman? Can any resident of Berkeley tell the difference between the administration of Stitt Wilson and that of his predecessor, Beverly Hodghead? The proposed municipal newspaper that offends Harrison Grey Otis so deeply is a pet project of the goo goos that elected Alexander. There are few towns in America that have adopted and put in practice more ideas in municipal socialism than Los Angeles.

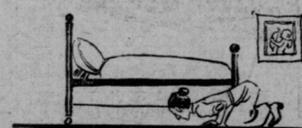
## A CLAMOROUS SCARE

The clamorous scare in that city becomes diverting. The goo goos are looking under the bed for concealed socialists and, quite forgetting their most prideful protestations, they are calling loudly on Walter Parker for help. It is like hiring Beelzebub to fight Satan.

Then comes the canny editor of the Graphic and advises just the least taste in life of "practical politics," as, for example:

We believe in making small sacrifices to attain large ends and if Barney Healy can be lured to the Alexander camp by a modest offering of this nature, why not hang up the prize? In the same way we would employ the redoubtable Benny Cohen to go out into the highways and byways to drum up votes for the good government candidate for mayor, believing the end justifies the means. Only, we would advise putting Benny on a salary basis; Barney Healy would make an excellent public servant, but we are not prepared to say as much for the blandiferous Benjamin.

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death. It is not often you can see 300,000 people standing on their heads and thinking with their feet, all scared out of their wits by a word.



## "JUST BEAUTIFUL"

As an example of the Los Angeles state of mind, apart from politics, I may be allowed to print without comment a letter to the editor:

Editor Herald: I haven't seen any expression of opinion in the Herald about the hybrid, "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere," which Woodrow Wilson has said was "mushy." But John D. Rockefeller, he likes it, and I wish you would print a verse of it:

Somewhere, somewhere,  
Beautiful Isle of Somewhere,  
Land of the true, where we live anew,  
Beautiful Isle of Somewhere.

I think that is just beautiful. I wish others would write what they think about it. MRS. T. W. T., Los Angeles, Cal.

## A NEW THEORY OF EARTHQUAKES

The Chronicle has discovered a new theory of earthquakes and announces it with a cocksure and diverting air of finality. From an editorial on the recent earthquake in Europe we learn:

All the mystery with which earthquake shocks were once surrounded has disappeared. Somewhere in the bowels of the earth something gives way, there is a greater or less subsidence at that point and the shock of it is conveyed through the earth, sometimes for hundreds of miles, so as to make an easily noticeable disturbance and gradually dying away to tremors discernible only by delicate instruments.

## A COMMON LAW RIGHT

It is the inalienable right of every American citizen to own and cherish his private theory of earthquakes, sup-

ported by a full sense that he knows as much about it as any other man. There is, for example, Professor See of the Mare island observatory, who, not content with searching the depths of space with a telescope, has explored the dark, unfathomed caves of ocean in the interest of his earthquake theory, and finds them leaky. When the ocean leaks the water boils under California and the land blows up, and "that is all there is to it," as the Chronicle might say. It is the proximity of a leaky and melancholy ocean that puts California in the earthquake zone and, alas, there is no present prospect that we can plug the bottom of the Pacific. So far we have discovered no pill to cure earthquakes.

## A MINE OF INFORMATION

But the Chronicle store of information on this subject is not yet exhausted, and here is some more:

It is probable that all earthquakes originate in mountainous districts, for it is there that the strata have been upheaved and the faults occur. From there the waves spread in all directions, with most force on marshy or filled land and with least force in the more resistant rocks.

Naturally, the mountains, being heavier than the plains, they make the weary earth shrink and shiver like a mule cringing under a weighty pack.

## SOME MISINFORMATION

Without desiring to infringe the Chronicle's right to its private theory of earthquakes, it should not be permitted to pervert the facts of local history, as the following paragraph does:

Our own earthquake of 1906 was a slipping and subsidence, which was traced from Santa Barbara county certainly as far north as Humboldt county and passing in front of this city some distance out at sea. For this entire distance the earth settled from one to five feet.

There was no subsidence except in a few scattered spots of made ground. There was a very marked rending and splitting. Shortly after the temblor I followed the line of the fault for twenty-five miles on foot and in an automobile. I found that the shock had split open a wide furrow or trench from three to five feet across at the surface of the ground and of about the same depth. The line in San Mateo county ran through or close alongside of the Spring Valley company's system of reservoirs. It crossed at right angles the eastern end of the Crystal springs concrete dam, and if there had been any subsidence of the ground that vast structure would have been left hanging in the air at one end, with the water running out through the gap.



## THE EDITOR'S APOLOGY

The Fresno Mirror apologizes to Hon. Lowry:

We agree with Poundmaster Lowry that dog catching is a scientific occupation, and if our testimony is needed to prove that Mr. Lowry is a man of science we will give it cheerfully. A dog catcher must be an athlete, a diplomatist, a business man and a humanitarian, and Mr. Lowry is all of these things. He also possesses a lot of common sense, which some of his critics on the health board seem to be deficient in. Mr. Lowry has served Fresno faithfully for a number of years. He has been bitten by bad dogs, glad dogs, bad dogs and mad dogs, but goes about his work with a cheerful industry that deserves the highest commendation. Fresno never had a poundmaster to whom our one and only bowwow paid tribute more willingly than Mr. Lowry. May he live long and flourish.

## TOM, DICK AND HARRY

State Controller Nye is a man of level head who is not afraid to venture on shaky political ground, and he writes:

If initiative propositions are left to be drafted by Tom, Dick and Harry, without expert assistance, a great many of them—probably most of them—will be so badly framed that they will be as likely to defeat as to accomplish the purposes of the proponents. Even if they do not have quite that effect they will be vague and uncertain, giving a great deal of trouble to legislators and the courts. Of course, no one, or no set of men, can undertake to say that people shall not work up initiative measures in any form which may seem good to them; but it is possible to offer them the benefit of skilled assistance, if they are willing to accept it, in drafting the measures.

In other words, I would have appointed a small committee composed of fair minded lawyers and business men, who could say to all movers in these matters: "If you would like to have us do so, we will take any proposal you intend to work up, and put it into such statutory or constitutional form as is best adapted to carry out your intention and at the same time do not do other things which you do not intend or desire to do."

Does Mr. Nye distrust the people or doubt their infallibility and their unerring wisdom, of which we heard so much in the recent campaign? Besides, this committee business that Mr. Nye proposes looks like an odious trick or device put up by the Money Devil to work off jokers on an unsuspecting people engaged in the exalted office of legislation by counting noses. Mr. Nye is getting old fangled. He should join the bar association and prepare to shed tears.

## AFRAID OF HIS OWN LOGIC

Then Mr. Nye proceeds to offer an illustration which, to my mind, upsets his own argument, to wit:

A case somewhat in point occurred last winter. Governor Gillett, or some person acting for him, drew up a state highway act, which, inasmuch as it carried provisions for the issue of \$18,000,000 of bonds, was submitted to vote of the people after the legislature had acted on it. The people ratified it, and then the attorney general ruled that the succeeding legislature could enact nothing contradictory to that act, although it might be supplemented.

Within three months after the voters ratified the act practically every member of the new legislature was satisfied that it was so faulty in construction that it ought to be thoroughly revised. But it couldn't be, and

for twenty years it will be a millstone around our necks, constantly reminding us of the danger of starting wrong in the enactment of a proposition which can not be amended, unless by a slow constitutional process.

This is like kicking the corpse. Mr. Nye may be, and doubtless is, right about the highway act, but why should he expect his Money Devil committee to do better for the people than the collective wisdom of California in legislature assembled and reinforced by Governor Gillett, who is supposed to be a lawyer? Mr. Nye is afraid of his own logic, which goes to the danger of the clumsy and awkward process for the enactment of laws that can not be repealed or amended except by the same ponderous and fumbling machinery. But, of course, that would be treason and lese majeste and several other things. If Mr. Nye had ventured on any such treacherous ground he would have the whole state capitol literary bureau jumping on his stomach, including the janitor.



## "THE MOB"

Who and what is the mob? You and I, of whom Mr. Nye speaks disrespectfully as Tom, Dick and Harry, are the mob, and we can tell just what a law or a proposed law means by reading the headlines in the newspapers. You distrust the people, Mr. Controller. In the language of the poet:

Fie!  
Nye!

## PANDORA'S BOX

Although compelled to differ radically from Mr. Nye as to his contemptuous references to the mob of Toms and Dicks and Harrys (which includes Maud and Gwendolyn and Aspasia), I agree with him wholly that the highway act is Pandora's box of tricks that will set the state by the cars for twenty years to come. The law is not only clumsy and ill planned, but it is, besides, a hot, strong and bitter stimulant for local jealousies. Here, for example, is the San Bernardino Sun talking about Riverside:

A determined effort is to be made to actually gobble that state highway, those unscrupulous people in Riverside not being satisfied to get it themselves, but they are bending every effort to prevent any of their neighbors from getting it, and are in on a program to draw it across the southwest corner of this county, from Ontario, cutting out Upland, Rialto, San Bernardino, Highland and Redlands. What do the boosting enthusiasts of these nearby towns think of the plan?

This is a great state highway. By reason of our larger wealth, San Bernardino county contributes more toward its construction than does Riverside. Yet the latter seems actuated by the notion that it is being laid out for the special benefit of the county southward. Forget it!

This is moderate and gentlemanly compared with some of the current exchanges between rival sections.

## SOME MILLSTONES

However, we should by this time be reasonably well accustomed to packing millstones. Ever since I have been in the newspaper trade I have been hearing about legal and political millstones in variety. Doubtless, as Lord Rosebery said of the British in the Boer war, we shall "muddle through" somehow. Besides, as Mr. Nye observes, we have newly provided a full installation of machinery for the manufacture of millstones, and so it seems that wrestling with the intricacies and stupidities of the highway act should be good practice to fit us for our future state. Hiram Johnson is having the time of his life with that millstone right now.



## A REVEREND JUMP

Rev. Herbert Jump, who comes shortly to Oakland with a fine press agent's reputation, appears to know the game. Like Doctor Aked in New York, he signaled his final appearance in a New England church by roundly scoring his congregation, or, perhaps one should say, scoring his late congregation from his late pulpit. This is the way the Waterbury American saw the affair:

Rev. Herbert A. Jump, who arraigned the congregation of the South church in New Britain rather severely Sunday by way of a farewell address, may have done some good by his plain speaking, but he doubtless stirred up much professed anger. If a man has succeeded as a leader it does his followers good to be denounced for their shortcomings now and then, for they know he means it and that he understands the situation and will be ready and willing to help them better matters when they show a readiness to be helped. But when he admits, as Mr. Jump did, that he has been unable to translate his point of view so that they might view the object to be attained in the same light, he would do himself more honor to refrain from mentioning it in public. Without knowing all the facts in the case, it seems probable that Mr. Jump was too aggressive a radical to do his best work in this particular church. His was a case of temperamental disagreement, as shown by his parting shot. He goes to a church in Oakland, Cal., nurtured on radicalism, the church of Rev. Dr. Brown, a very remarkable man, both as a preacher and as a social leader, who is now the dean of the Yale theological seminary. Like Doctor Aked, Mr. Jump will doubtless find in Oakland a more congenial field of work—a field in which he will do better work.

It is rather odd and not very well explained—this movement of the rebellious persons on California. Do we need them or do they need us?