SAN FRANCISCO'S FIRST THINGS.

First House, First Hotel, First Newspaper, First Bricks, First Physician, First Horsecar Line.

Various phases of the beginnings of San Francisco life are interesting as historical facts and as pictures which present a striking contrast to the present.

For most of these beginnings we must already search historical records. The gray-bearded pioneers who could once have told about them are about all gone. There are plenty of the Argonauts of '49 and a number who came here in 1848, but while they saw San Francisco as a little village of a few hundred people they came some time after the ordinary occupations of life had been established here.

They saw the tide come up to Montgomery street, and perhaps strolled out of town across the ravine and climbed the sandhill where the Palace Hotel stands, but the first hotels already needed new coats of paint; there were two newspapers with "Vol. 11" on their first pages; the man who "used to keep" a livery-stable had gone to Coloma, and they found already established a good-sized, progressive community.

The pioneers who could tell about many of the "first things" are those who came here before gold was thought of, moved by a spirit of adventure or attracted by the fame of Upper California as a new country of rich lands, a fine climate and a great future, which fame had reached the East even before the Mexican War.

There are only two or three of these pioneers left in this city. One of them is W. F. Swasey, who came here in 1845, and another is Colonel Stevenson, who brought his regiment of volunteers here from the war in Mexico in 1847.

Memories are sometimes uncertain, histories do not agree, and many "first things" are recorded only incidentally, if at all, so that a search for those who began various occupations here in some cases takes one into a misty past where the traces are few and uncertain.

THE FIRST HOUSE.

Clay street has the honor of the first house in San Francisco, as well as that of the first cable road. Of course, it was not Clay street then, but the rude house that was the first where the metropolis of the Pacific Coast stands happened to stand where that thoroughfare afterward ran. At that time the old Mission Dolores had already started on its down-hill trip and an old soldier was watchman at the rude barracks at the Presidio. There was a saddle trail through the sand and brush from the Mission to where the town was afterward started.

An Englishman named Richardson, who did business with the whalers that put into the bay, moved from Sausalito and put up a tent near Clay and Kearny streets in the winter of 1835-36, but tents do not count.

In the spring of 1836 Jacob P. Leese, who was in business at Monterey, took somebody's advice and decided to establish a trading-store at Yerba Buena, where he could collect hides for ships that came hither them. He had a little trouble gett ng permission to occupy a plat of ground, but he finally succeeded, and in July, 1836, he built a rude house on what is now the south side of Clay street, near Dupont. He didn't know then that a Chinese shoe-shop would stand there some day, nor did he dream that his little house and store was the first of a collection of buildings that would house 350,000 people.

Leese chose this site by the cove which then ran up to where Montgomery and Washington streets now intersect rather than the Presidio or the Mission Landing because he thought it a more convenient landing for small boats, and that natural circumstance governed the location of the first ones who followed him here and established the nucleus of a city.

The Hudson Bay Company soon established a trading-post here, and the agent ran Leese out of business, bought his house and occupied it. Trade slowly increased with the whalers and trading ships that entered the bay, and the Mexicans throughout the country, and Yerba Buena slowly became a small business center.

According to Hittell, in 1844, eight years after the first house was built, the houses of Yerba Buena were: The Hudson Bay Company's store (Leese's), the stores of Spear and Hinckley and William A. Leidesdorff, the groceries of David Cooper, J. J. Vioget, Peter Sherreback and Victor Prudon, the restaurant of John Fuller, the grogshops of Gregorio Escalante and Jacinto Moreno, the blacksmith shop of Tinker & Thompson, the carpenter-shops of Andrews, Davis and Reynolds and Rose, and the dwelling of Senora Briones. These stores and shops were probably all of them dwellings as well.

We have here mention of what were probably the first restaurateur, saloon-keepers, blacksmith and carpenters of San Francisco, but history does not record the quality of John Fuller's baked beans or Escalante's rum or the prosperity of Tinker & Thompson's smithy.

This was on the eve of a new era—the American occupation—and between this time and the gold discovery in 1848 there was to be a comparatively rapid growth and the development of most of the features of an American community. Hence it is into this period that we must dig for most "first things."

Just before and during the Mexican War Americans began drifting into California in increasing numbers, and the times became eventful ones. In January, 1846, there were thirty buildings in Yerba Buena. In August, 1847, seventeen months later, there were 187 houses and the population was 459.

THE FIRST PRINTING PRESS.

In July, 1846, the American flag was raised in the plaza by the captain of the United States man-of-war Portsmouth, and three weeks later the ship Brooklyn arrived from New York with 238 Mormons under the leadership of Samuel Brannan, who brought to San Francisco its first printing press and type. Soon after this the name of the town was changed to San Francisco.

The Mormons went to work and their coming created a boom, which continued and received another impetus by the arrival of the Thomas H. Perkins, with Stevenson's regiment, in March, 1847.

During this period appeared the first hotel, newspaper, livery-stable, physicians, lawyers and tradesmen of various kinds.

A restaurant, or something like it, was naturally one of the earliest establishments in Yerba Buena. Before the Americans came to ruin the old Mexican spirit of hospitality, which made every stranger a welcome guest without price, hotels were not wanted.

Naturally the earliest style of public accommodation was the little "fonda," or Mexican road house, where bad liquors were sold and Mexican fare and a floor to sleep one were provided. People traveled on horseback in those days and a saddle and a pair of blankets would always afford a bed. Fuller's "restaurant" of 1844 in Yerba Buena was probably that sort of a place.

The "Portsmouth House" was the next one and was opened about 1846. It was a little one-story frame building, standing on the south side of Clay street, just below Kearny. It was first kept by the Kettlemans, according to W. F. Swasey, and then it passed into the hands of J. H. Brown. The earliest record of the Portsmouth House appears to be the advertisement which Brown put into the Californian soon after that pioneer sheet was started at Monterey. It read as follows:

PORTSMOUTH HOUSE—Yerba Buena—The undersigned has opened a public house under the above title where he is prepared to entertain all those who may please to call on him. His table will be furnished with the best the market affords and his bar with the best liquors.

J. BROWN.

YERBA BUENA, October 16, 1846. 10 tf

It did not take Brown long to get a bigger and better establishment, and the squatty and rather primitive Portsmouth passed into the hands of E. P. Jones. Jones had married one of the Kettleman girls, was a "character" here then, and in 1850 left for the East a rich man. He appears to have taken hold of it when it was left by Brown in the owner's hands, and early in 1847 he announced in the Star that "this establishment has recently been enlarged to double its former size, repainted and fitted and is now prepared for the reception of boarders and transient persons."

But the Portsmouth's days of prosperity and prestige were soon numbered. The following advertisement appears in the Californian:

For sale—The well-known establishment, called the "Portsmouth House," and let at advantageous terms. Apply to JOHN VIOGET.

San Francisco, Nov. 3, 1847.

In a few months the gold excitement was on, hotels of greater size and fame multiplied and the Portsmouth went into obscurity.

THE FIRST HOTEL.

The first real hotel was the City Hotel on the southwest corner of Clay and Kearny streets. This, too, was a product of this second era. At first it was the residence of William A. Leidesdorff, in whose honor a street was named and who was one of the earliest of the early pioneers and a prominent man of Monterey and Yerba Buena. In September, 1846, the Californian, while published at Monterey, gave the following mention of a high old time in this building:

BALL AT THE YERBA BUENA.—A grand ball was given at the large saloon at the residence of William A. Liedesdorff, Esq., by the United States officers and citizens of that place on the 8th inst. Upwards of 100 Californian and American ladies were present, with a large number of gentlemen. The utmost hilarity and unanimity of sentiment prevailed. The dancing was very spirited and kept up till the rising sun rendered candle-light useless. This was the first general gathering of ladies and genti men since the hoisting of the American flag.

J. H. Brown opened "Brown's Hotel" in this building in the winter of 1846-47 after giving up the Portsmouth. The building was erected by Leidesdorff, and was owned by him during its early history as a hotel. Hittell describes it as a long, low, story and a half adobe building, and Captain Swasey says it was built in the Mexican style with long piazzas. It could lodge but a few people, but became the principal resort and loafing place. There was a big bar and gambling-room in the center, and when the gold excitement first enlivened things here it was the main gambling resort, where crowds could nightly be seen about the monte and faro tables. Its prestige soon gave way to other bigger resorts. The building was enlarged about 1847. A lithograph of San Francisco in 1847 shows it to be a two and a half story building with a long frontage on Kearny street and a wing running back from each end. In the west end of the Clay-street wing was the Alcalde's office.

Brown seems to have done pretty well according to the following advertisement in the Californian:

BROWN'S HOTEL.

The subscriber returns his most sincere thanks for the liberal patronage he has received and hopes to merit a continuance of the public favors by an assiduous attention to business.

His bar is furnished with the best of liquors and his table is furnished with the best the market can afford. His rooms are as well furnished as the circumstances of the country will admit. No pains shall be spared to make his visitors comfortable. J. H. BROWN.

San Francisco, May 22, 1847.

The advertising columns of the little Californian afford the following additional bit of hotel history:

NOTICE.

The hotel of this place, formerly known as "Brown's Hotel," will hereafter be called the City Hotel and conducted from Monday next by Mr. and Mrs Skinner. Boarding at the former prices and the table as good as the market can afford.

N. B.—A careful person will be in attendance to receive horses and baggage from gentlemen arriving from any part of the country.

San Francisco, October 23, 1847.

The editor of the Californian, which had been moved to San Francisco, probably got board at the City Hotel at reduced rates about October 27, 1847, for on that date he said in his paper, "We can assure the public from personal experience that the City Hotel, formerly Brown's, is well worthy of their patronage."

This pioneer hostelry was at that time the most conspicuous building in San Francisco. A low frame building on the corner of Clay and Kearny streets would not arrest attention from the bay now, for it could not even be seen, but in 1846-47 there were but four or five buildings of any kind on both sides of Clay street, on the slope down to the shore at Montgomery street, and the City Hotel loomed up in a striking way on the side hill with sandy stretches of vacant space around it, and brush and stunted trees growing all over the untouched region beginning a half block to the south and north, and extending over hills and ravines clear out to the far away and lonely looking Mission Dolores.

The hotel had a conspicuous sign apparently, for a new arrival, in a letter to the East published at the time, in 1847, said of the appearance of the town from the ship as anchor was dropped in the bay one evening:

Some of the houses are quite large, one at the left of the square seemed to extend almost to the next street; upon examining it with the glass we found it to be the "City Hotel."

Having seen this inviting sign, the passengers decided to go ashore at once, and they probably celebrated their arrival at the bar that night.

The City Hotel continued the leading and practically the only hotel and the leading drinking and gambling resort as well until the gold excitement produced its rush, its boom and its spirit of enterprise, recklessness and lavish expenditure.

The hostelry was a result of that first boom for San Francisco, the American occupation, but it quickly fell to the rear of the procession when gold dust began to roll in by the barrel.

When the gold excitement broke out San Francisco, with its five or six hundred people, was at first depopulated, but quickly pulled itself together and began to bound forward as the metropolis of the coast.

THE FIRST RESTAURANT.

About the time that the gold discovery began to be believed in here, in April, 1848, the Californian published an advertisement by William Conway of the Colonnade House on Kearny street, a "new and genteel establishment. As a restaurant it will be open at all hours."

This is the first reference to a restaurant, readily found, after the alleged one run by John Fuller in 1844.

The first pretentious hotel, run like an Eastern hotel in American style, was the Parker House, which was built on the present site of the old City Hall, with a vacant lot between it and the corner of Washington street, where the famous El Dorado canvas gambling-house was established soon after. The Parker House was built and run by Robert A. Parker, with W. F. Swasey, then engaged with Parker in merchandising, as a silent partner.

The influx of gold-seekers had not fairly begun before the winter of 1848-49, but just before and during this winter the rapid era of plenty had come and gambling assumed great proportions here. The Parker House was the first grand center of gambling until the El Dorado was opened next to it, and many fortunes changed hands in its rooms. A single small room in the Parker House was rented for gambling for six months for $10,000, and at one time the income of the house from gambling was at the rate of $300,000 a year.

In the winter of 1849-50 the Ward House, on the south side of Clay street, opposite the Plaza, was opened. This for some time was the Palace Hotel of San Francisco. It was the "high-toned" place of the town. Other hotels, famous in their day, followed, flourished and were in turn swept into oblivion. It is getting too close to recent history to say much about the grand Globe Hotel, now a foul Chinatown hive, and the What Cheer House, which is still a hotel, though sadly degenerated.

And the old City Hotel is linked by the memory of yet vigorous men with the Palace Hotel of to-day!

THE FIRST NEWSPAPER.

The history of the first San Francisco newspaper has naturally often been told, and only the very earliest of the history of the San Francisco press need be recalled here.

The Star was the pioneer. Samuel Brannan, as heretofore noted, arrived in July, 1846, with a large party of Mormons and a printing outfit. The outfit was the one he had used in publishing The Prophet in New York. The Mormons nearly all remained in Yerba Buena and went to work building, establishing occupations and seeking employment.

Brannan set up his printing outfit and got ready for job work in September, 1846. In October he got out an advance extra of the California Star, and the first regular number was issued January 9, 1847, under the editorship of E. P. Jones. The Star was a diminutive sheet for some time.

The Californian was the pioneer of the State, but not of San Francisco. It was established in Monterey as a weekly in August, 1846, by R. R. Buckelew, a watchmaker by trade and a general rustler of those early days. He got hold of a small lot of old Mexican type and a press from some Mission monastery, bought some wrapping-paper and issued a small four-paged sheet of antique style. The Spanish alphabet has no W in it, so the Californian used two capital V's instead. It spoke of VVilliam Leidesdorff et al. until the editor could get a few W's from the Sandwich Islands, where a missionary paper and printing establishment flourished.

The editor could find very little news until the Mexican War yielded brief reports occasionally, and its few advertisements were mainly official proclamations, often in both English and Spanish, and a few business cards of Monterey and Yerba Buena.

In May, 1847, Yerba Buena had not as large a population as Monterey, but it was a more important business center and the Californian was moved hither.

The Californian suspended publication for a time in 1848, but resumed when the editor got back from the mines in August of that year.

The Star and Californian were consolidated in November, 1848, and January 4, 1849, appeared as the Alta California. It became a tri-weekly December 10, 1849, and a daily after January 20, 1850.

R. R. Buckelew, the founder of the Californian, was the first watchmaker here. Not long after his paper appeared in Yerba Buena it contained this announcement:

R. R. Buckelew respectfully informs the citizens of California that he has located permanently in the town of San Francisco for the purpose of pursuing his profession. Watches, clocks, jewelry and other fine metallic work repaired in the best manner. Cash invariably required except otherwise previously understood.

Soon after this the Californian contained an item saying:

Here is what a certain *somebody* in this town said of us, "It is unaccountable to me that a good 'watchmaker' should *stoop* to be a *miserable editor*."

Then the editor proceeds to rather carefully speak his mind.

THE FIRST PHYSICIAN.

Surgeons of United States men-of-war which occasionally anchored in the bay mainly supplied the important medical and surgical attendance needed by the people of Yerba Buena before it became large enough to support a resident physician.

The first physician to appear was a Dr. Townsend, a Western man of fair medical skill, who came to California in 1844 and was in Yerba Buena perhaps before any other physician.

The pioneer resident physician was unundoubtedly Dr. Victor Fourgeaud, who was a naval surgeon and a finely educated man. Dr. W. C. Parker, surgeon of Stevenson's regiment, came here with that regiment in 1847. In 1847 or 1848 Doctors Parker and Fourgeaud performed here a remarkable operation, which attracted world-wide attention and was reported in a London medical journal. A sailor had been severely cut in the side, and during the operation Dr. Fourgeaud put his hand through an opening which had laid bare that organ, took the heart in his hand and settled the long disputed question of whether the sound of the heart's beating was caused by the action of the organ itself or its beating against the walls of its cavity. The sailor recovered.

The first physician's card published here was Dr. Fourgeaud's, in the Californian, November 17, 1847, as follows:

MEDICAL NOTICE.

Dr. Fourgeaud has the honor to offer his professional services to the citizens of San Francisco and its vicinity. Office at Jones' Hotel.

During the latter part of 1847 and the following winter the town of a few hundred people had, as before stated, taken on quite a spirit of life under the new American rule and occupation. The residents were then as enthusiastic, hopeful and confident of the future of the place as the people of new Western towns have often been since, and, with characteristic American push, went to work to boom the town all they could. The new-comers became enthusiastic Californians, talked enterprisingly at home, and scattered letters among Eastern friends and newspapers in praise of the town and country, their climate, riches and future.

The Star and the Californian, with prophetic vision, constantly puffed their home as the future metropolis of the coast, which was its sure destiny as anybody could see. To further boom the town and region the community resorted to the newspapers as communities do to-day. Dr. Fourgeaud agreed to write an extensive exposition of the advantages and glories of this part of the world and the first of two sections of it filled six columns in the Star. Two thousand copies were sent East. Before the rest of it could be published the gold excitement had filled the world, San Francisco had no further need for advertising and Dr. Fourgeaud's second boom chapter was forgotten and unread.

Dr. J. M. Leavenworth, the last Alcalde of San Francisco, was an early physician, but appears never to have actively practiced here.

THE FIRST SURVEYOR.

The first surveyor, or, at least, the man who did the first surveying, was John Vioget, a merchant, who came very early in the forties. About 1844 it was decided that some streets should be laid out, and Vioget undertook the job. He fixed the limits of a few blocks about the region where the few houses were scattered, and determined the widths of Montgomery, Kearny, Dupont and intersecting streets.

The original chain used to lay out the streets of San Francisco is now in the cabinet of the California Pioneers.

In 1847, O'Farrell, who knew more about the business, was engaged for a similar job, and was the first professional surveyor. He found that the streets did not run in proper lines, and he swung the town around with Kearny and Washington streets as a pivot. This became known as "O'Farrell's swing." As the street lines were moved several buildings were left in the street; but only one man protested, and he finally got his house back out of the way.

It was desired then to widen Dupont, Kearny and Montgomery streets, but the expense of moving the few frame buildings was considered too great. Market street was out of town but it was given its direction because it was the highway to the Mission and was expected to become an important thoroughfare. O'Farrell made the blocks south of Market so large because they were so far from the business center.

THE FIRST LIVERY-STABLE.

What is reputed to be the first livery-stable was established in November, 1867, by Jacob W. Harlan, who came to California overland in 1846, and later wrote a book entitled "California, '46 to '88." In it he gives the following account:

"I determined to establish a livery-stable in San Francisco. William Fowler wished to join me in this. He had seven saddle-horses, two workhorses and a wagon. I had three horses and I bought five more. I judged that fifteen horses would be enough to start on. They were all saddle-horses, and had never been in harness, but in those days every one rode on horseback. So to San Francisco we went and commenced business.

"Engaging in the livery-stable business in San Francisco at the end of 1847 was not a very sure speculation, but we determined to try it. On arriving there the first thing to do was to find a proper location, and chance directed me to one."

A rude stable was erected on the corner of Union and Dupont streets. In the harbor at the time were eight whalers, ten merchantmen and the man-of-war Ohio.

"On the first day," Harlan's account continues, "there was a general rush for horses. The sailors all wanted to ride, and I let out all the horses for the half-day at $2 each. On mounting they all started for the Presidio at full gallop, running races and displaying some of the most astonishing horsemanship I had ever seen.

"Before noon my riders came back, and I was ready to hire the horses to a new batch of mariners for the afternoon, who also paid me $2 each for their half-day. To be sure, the horses suffered some, but they were California horses, and could stand it. They made a great sensation in the little town, and were a first-rate advertisement for our stable. On the first day I took in $60. At hard labor I could not have earned that sum in less than two months, and I saw at once that I had struck the keynote in the money-making way. At the end of three weeks I bought Fowler out, and managed the stable alone from that time till March, 1848."

The stable suddenly closed and Harlan was soon running a store at Coloma with a few goods and fabulous prices.

THE FIRST BRICKS.

Lewis E. Morgan, who, according to a recent dispatch from Philadelphia, made the first bricks ever used in this city, died in Philadelphia last Monday.

Whether Mr. Morgan made the first bricks used here or not is a matter about which there is some difference of opinion among the pioneers, who remember when and where the first brick building was erected. Among these is J. F. Marshall, who came here as a carpenter in the forties and helped do the woodwork on Miller & Howard's building on Montgomery street, near Clay, adjoining THE MORNING CALL office on the south, which was built in 1849, being the first brick building erected here.

In speaking of the first buildings erected here Mr. Marshall said:

"No, I don't know just where or the exact date bricks were first burned here, but it was some time in '49, and I think out near where Larkin street now is, and on the side of a hill to the right of the present line of Union street. Lumber, though, being more in my line, I remember more about. It came from the other side of the bay, some from Santa Cruz, but most of it came from Corte Madera, and on account of the scarcity of procurable labor at the mills it was very scarce, and what little there was to be had was very high.

"While I was at work on the old Parker House, which occupied the present site of the old City Hall, I remember hearing it said that the lumber used in its construction cost the builders $1 per foot, and I guess it was so, because the lumber used in buildings some time after that cost ordinarily from $500 to $600 a thousand and some of it much more.

"Oh, yes, I remember, as do most of the early builders, the first houses built here after 1848. One of them was built for a residence for Charles L. Rosa and stood on Washington street, just above Portsmouth square. It was a frame building, and for some time after completion was used as a church.

"Then there was the old City Hotel, at the corner of Kearny and Pacific streets, and the little frame building on Clay street, where Dr. Leavenworth held the first court, and many more, more or less interesting on account of early associations.

"The first schoolhouse was built of wood, and stood on Clay street, I believe, a short distance above Kearny. This was also used as a place for religious meetings."

Police Captain Short was seen at Pioneer Hall and asked if he remembered who made the first brick here and where they were burned.

"I cannot say positively," said the captain, "but very early in 1850 there were some men by the name of Buckley burning bricks on the side of a hill off to the right of where Union street now runs and the other side of Larkin street.

"Union street had not been cut through at that time and the brickyards were reached by a trail running zigzag through the chaparral. After a while, when more buildings were put up and people began to move into that quarter, the Supervisors passed an ordinance prohibiting brick-burning in the neighborhood, and after fighting the law for three years the Buckleys had to move."

"It is quite likely that the first bricks were made by Marshall, though where I am unable to say.

"One of the first brick buildings I remember here was a residence at the corner of Washington and Powell streets. It was first a one and a half story affair, but as the street has been cut down the house has been built up from the bottom until now it is three stories high.

"I'll tell you something about early brickwork here which may be interesting. I refer to the first jail built in the city.

"There was a brig came from Baltimore, with a cargo of brick and cement, at about the time Hays was elected Sheriff, and he was authorized to buy the cargo and have a jail built. The bricks were a trifle smaller than the usual size and very hard, and the cement was of the first quality.

"Well, the jail was built and consisted of fifteen cells and an office, all in one story. Go down to the County Jail now and you will find that the building is built on the old structure, which is as solid as a rock and firmer now than when it was built.

"Some years since I had a prisoner there who was to be taken to the penitentiary in the course of a couple of weeks, and during all that time he worked with might and main and did not succeed in removing even the cement around one brick.

"If any one doubts this statement I am prepared to furnish the tools and let him try to dig out unmolested in a month."

THE FIRST HORSECARS.

In the rapid march of nineteenth century events the horsecar system seems already to have grown rusty with age and become a relic of the past, but it is, in fact, not so very long since it was first introduced, and before 1862 the residents of San Francisco had only a stage service at their disposal, and very limited at that.

When the first horsecar line was started, Edward F. Drum of 135 Ivy avenue claims that he was the first conductor employed on it, and he has many anecdotes, both thrilling and ludicrous, to tell of the stirring times of those early days.

He came from Lancaster, Ohio, across the plains with others of those hardy pioneers who helped to swell the activities of the rapidly growing young city, and besides being connected with the horsecar service, first as conductor for a year, then as assistant superintendent for thirteen years, has also distinguished himself as a State Senator.

He is getting old now and a complication of maladies has made him prisoner, but when asked about his horsecar experiences of those early times his eye brightened as he said:

"Ah! I did have something exciting once in awhile then I can tell you.

"I was a young man then with plenty of muscle and had to use it too, occasionally, pretty freely.

"A man could not get a policeman so easily then to look after a troublesome character.

"The town was full of tough people who were always ready to jump a gun when there was an opportunity.

"Every man had to look out for himself, and he either had to give a licking or take it and put up with it.

"Before horsecars were started I used to drive a stage on the only route there was then along Third street to North Beach and South Park.

"Old Abe Warner's saloon was the stopping-place at North Beach. It was near where Meiggs wharf stands. I think he is there yet.

"Old Abe kept a great collection of monkeys and birds, and the place was called Old Abe's Monkeys.

"There were no parks in the city at that time and Old Abe's was the general resort on holidays and Sundays for the people to go to.

"It is many a time I have swung along from there with the old stage at night with a jolly crowd aboard that had more whisky than sea air in them, and they would make the night howl.

"When the first car line was built in 1862 and 1863 on Third Street by the Omnibus Railroad Company, I was made conductor, and was in that capacity for a year when I was made superintendent in Mr. Gardner's place temporarily, then assistant superintendent. I remained with the company for thirteen years.

"The next line built after Third street was on Howard street. Of course there was always something happening, but I remember better two occasions that were rather out of the common, and though they seemed pretty serious at the time, I have often laughed over them since.

"When the cars were first put on the road there was a rule made by the company that colored people were not to ride inside of the cars. One night rather late when the car was going along empty it was hailed, and a colored man named Brown, who used to have a livery stable where the Appraiser's office now stands, and who was the father, I believe, of the editor of the Vindicator, a newspaper published for the colored people, got on the car with three colored women, his daughters, his son, James E. Brown, and his son-in-law, named Dennis. It was a wet, drizzly, nasty night, and it seemed to me rather hard to turn the women out. So I went in, and said to Brown: 'You'll have to get out on the front platform. You know the rule of the company, but as it is such a bad night I will let the women stay in.' 'Why,' said he, 'isn't there room here?' 'Yes,' said I, 'but the company don't allow colored people to ride inside the car.' 'Put me out, then,' said he, and he squared himself up to me. I am a small-sized man, but I caught him by the lapels of his coat with both hands and jerked him down on the seat, and as he came down he smashed a window.

"Then the women screamed out 'You low white trash,' jumped off the seats and sailed into me, and they were fighters too, I can tell you. It became a regular free fight for awhile with the whole gang on me. Sometimes I was on top and sometimes I was underneath. The air for awhile was full of petticoats and legs and arms flying around like the fans of a windmill. All the windows in the car were smashed to atoms and my clothes were badly torn, but I was determined I would not give in. I was going to show them who was the boss of that car, and finally after a hard tussle I succeeded in getting them all out, but the car was so badly damaged that it had to be hauled up for repairs and cost the company a tidy little sum to put it in shape again. That happened on Jackson street, opposite the old Tremont House, between Montgomery and Sansome."

A result of this incident was a suit against the company, in which it was contended for the first time in this city that under the fourteenth amendment to the constitution colored people were entitled to ride in cars that were common carriers. This contention was upheld by the courts.

A QUEER OLD MAN.

Sings Impromptu Hymns to Oaklanders.

His Songs Lack Rhyme and Melody Somewhat, but They Amuse the Crowd.

Oh, ye sinners, do not die.
Oh, ye sinners, come be saved.
Time is long, sinners,
Life is short

There is not much rhyme nor meter to these lines, but the tall old man who sings them in a deep bass voice that is not unpleasant, though a trifle thin, seems to think they are rare poetry.

He wanders around the broad-gauge stations in Oakland and is harmless, but very much of a crank.

Yesterday afternoon he performed for the edification of a big crowd of passengers waiting for the down train at the Broadway station.

He got out in the street and walked back and forth the length of the station, singing "Oh, ye sinners," with a vigor quite astonishing in one so aged, and in a tune peculiarly his own.

Though very poorly dressed, he is quite neat and clean in appearance. His coat is very old and sadly faded, but neatly patched and whole. He wears a clean white collar and a threadbare black cravat. His hat and shoes are not much to speak of, but they are well brushed, and his beard, though long, is not shaggy.

He does not preach, only sings, but his song is always an impromptu exhortation for the sinners to come in out of the cold and escape an impending fate that is terrible.

When night comes he goes away, no one appears to know where. By 7 o'clock in the morning he is on hand again. When he has sung for two or three crowds at one station he moves down to the next. All day he is on the tramp.

He must be over 70 years old, but he walks as straight as a young man and his lungs are still lusty.

He never passes the hat around at the end of his exhortations, never turns his attention to any one particular member of the crowd, but just sings right along like a nickel-in-the-slot singing phonograph.

Yesterday afternoon at Broadway the crowd was very large, and the old man was in his glory. He kept singing till the shrill whistle of Mr. Huntington's locomotive drowned his voice. Then he stopped and walked down the street toward the next station.

He is an odd old man, and his history is as odd as himself.

He was a soldier in the rebellion, say those who know something of him. When the war was over he became a saloon-keeper in New York City. He amassed a good deal of money in the liquor business, and was in a fair way of becoming a New York Alderman.

But one day, all of a sudden, he left liquor and took to religion. He had been a hard drinker. He became an enthusiastic convert to the street missionaries.

He lost his mental balance a little, and with it lost his money, and his chances of becoming a Tammany brave.

He draws a small pension and spends all his time now in musical exhortation.

No Demand for Violins.

"One of the hardest things to realize on," said a pawnbroker to a Chicago Tribune reporter, "is a violin. I never make much of an advance on such an instrument. Not long ago a man brought in one and asked what I would give him on it. I told him $5. He turned white. He asked me if I knew what that violin was worth. I told him I did; I knew it was worth about $300. I told him that it did not look any better than a violin that was worth $10. No one but a musician would ever know the difference. I told him I never could make any one but an old musician believe it was worth any more than a poor violin. I had rather advance a man $10 on a $15 overcoat than $5 on a $100 violin, unless I happened to know where I could get a purchaser for the violin. I might sell the overcoat for what I advanced on it, but I never could get the money or anything near it on the violin. A violin in a pawnbroker's shop is a hoodoo."

Elocution Lessons in a Chicago School.

Dr. J. M. Rice, in the April Forum.

The teacher—"Heads back." All the pupils here stretched their heads as far back as they would go (attitude of pride), and said slowly and impressively, "I am proud because I know what I am. "The teacher—"Heads on left shoulders." The pupils with their heads poised on their left shoulders glanced sideways and upward (attitude of admiration), saying, "How beautiful that looks!" The teacher—"Heads on right shoulders." With their heads on their right shoulders and their eyes glancing sideways (attitude of cunning), the pupils said, "Do you think you can fool me?" The teacher—"Heads down." The pupils with heads on their chests (attitude of grief) said mournfully, "All my money is gone." The teacher—"Heads erect." With their heads erect (attitude of obstinacy) the pupils in strongly accentuated tones, slightly nodding their heads while uttering each word, said, "I won't do it."

WHEN going out to spend the evening with your friends don't forget to take some of White's Yucatan Guzi with you.

A BAD BARGAIN.

The Mechanics' Institute Is Puzzled.

JOHN CENTER'S MARSH LOT.

A Ceaseless Drain of Interest—The Block Cost Already $144,000, and Cannot Bring $75,000.

"How John Center must laugh in his sleeve at the sale of this property," said George Cumming, one of the directors of the Mechanics' Institute, yesterday afternoon as he stood with his hands in his pockets mournfully contemplating the lot owned by the institute on Fifteenth and Folsom streets.

"It is a white elephant on our hands and will be hard to get rid of," he continued, pointing gloomily to a lot of pools of sluggish water, a dilapidated fence, and to swamp land six feet below the level of the Folsom-street sidewalk.

His remark was heard by a number of the directors of the institute and a CALL reporter, who were there to attend an inspection of the property. There were present President A. S. Hallidie and Directors Oscar Lewis, C. A. Malm, R. T. Doolan and George Cummings. They will make a report at the next meeting of the board.

R. T. Doolan, the recording secretary of the Mechanics' Institute, gave the history of the lot to those who were unacquainted with it.

"It is about eight years," he said, "since this lot was bought from Center for $100,000. He owns property all along and about it. He even reserved the choicest section of the lot on the southwest corner of Sixteenth and Harrison streets, but said he would donate this portion providing a mechanics' pavilion was erected on the site within a certain time. That time has expired some time ago, and Center holds on to his choice portion of the lot, which is four fifty-varas on Folsom street by two on Fifteenth.

"When the property was bought the institute directors borrowed the $100,000 and mortgaged other property of the institute—that on Post street and also that on Larkin street, in order to secure the bank. The interest was 6 per cent.

"Since the institute made this mortgage not one cent of the principal has ever been paid. So the $100,000 still stands against us. More than this, since the acquisition of the property the institute has paid $44,000 in interest for the money that John Center has in his pocket. We have the lot, but it has cost us $144,000.

"The cost is still continuing. We are still paying interest, but not to the Hibernia Bank. Last year the bank determined to raise the interest to 6½ per cent, but A. S. Hallidie negotiated with the State University, and the regents took up the $100,000 at 6 per cent.

"So you see, we are still paying interest and see no way to reduce the principal. The interest costs the institute just $27 50 a day. That is a big sum when you consider what it is for. The interest amounts to the dues of 1000 of the members of the institute, or one-fourth of the entire membership. This is a terrible drain and shows consummate business folly.

"It would not be so bad," continued Mr. Doolan, "if the lot was a good and valuable one and had prospects. But the fact is, though we paid $100,000 for it eight years ago, real estate experts tell us we cannot possibly get more than $75,000 for the property. As we have paid already $44,000 in interest, and if we sell and only get $75,000 that will be a loss of $25,000 more, or a net loss of $69,000 in a little over seven years.

"That is why we are puzzling over this proposition, and want to devise some way by which to get rid of this white elephant and stop the drain of $27 50 a day interest. Something must be done, for the Hayes-street property does not pay for itself, and the library on Post street is not self-sustaining. The annual fairs have been the only things which saved the institute. If we do not have one this year our way will not be very clear."

The unanimous verdict of the party after making an inspection of the property was that it was a very bad bargain indeed.

President Hallidie, speaking of the lot said:

"Of course this turned out a bad investment. There is no denying that. But when the property was bought rates were higher out this way, and the bargain was thought to have been a very good one. It turned out otherwise. We thought the property was valuable because it was supposed that the business growth of the city was trending this way. P. B. Cornwall was president of the institute at the time.

"I must admit now that, though I think the lot a good one, it has been a poor investment, and the question is, What shall we do with it?"

The members present expressed various views on the subject. All admitted that the lot had not turned out as expected. It was shown how a smaller lot, very little smaller, and a block higher up, had been lately offered with some improvements on it for $75,000, with no takers. It was also shown that a lot on the block below, with a 25-foot frontage, had last week only brought $1800, or about $72 a front foot. Yet, in order to get their money back the institute will have to realize several hundred dollars a front foot. There are no improvements on the lot. The only street improved on its borders is Folsom street. It will cost $5000 each to improve the other streets surrounding it. Again, it will cost some thousands of dollars to fill up the lot to bring it to the level of the sidewalk.

Director Cumming said he was in favor of dividing the block up in small lots and selling them on easy terms to people who desire homes. Director Doolan appeared to be in favor of getting rid of the lot by selling it outright and building at once on the Hayes-street property.

The party left the place very much dampened by the outlook. A report will be made at the next meeting of the institute, and some definite action will probably be taken.

A Terrible Warning.

The possibility of the hoop-skirt coming again in vogue causes the Electrical Review to sound forth the following terrible warning: "It is a well-known fact that any metallic wire if brought near another wire carrying a current of electricity will have a current induced in it. In a crinoline there is a considerable amount of wire, and it naturally follows that if the wearer comes near an electric-light circuit a charge will be induced around her and the hoop-skirt will become a living, seething mass of wriggling, sparkling electricity, and no one dare imagine what might become of the poor unfortunate within. If she has the sangfroid to come in the neighborhood of an electric light there is no telling the awful consequences that might arise. The reason why the ancient dames who donned the crinolines were not ruthlessly slaughtered by the thousands is because there was no electricity lying around loose in those days."

"This Is the State of Man."

London St. James' Gazette.

There are few things in real life more pathetic than the speech of Mr. Munro, who three years ago was worth £500,000, and was Prime Minister of Victoria. At a temperance meeting in Victoria he is reported to have said: "I came to Melbourne over thirty years ago with hardly a penny in my pocket. I worked hard as a workingman, and received every honor which a free state could confer on any of its citizens, until at last I held the highest position in the land. Now I stand before you, 61 years of age, without a shilling in my pocket. For the first time in my life, through liabilities which I undertook, never expecting to be called upon to meet them, I am unable to pay 20 shillings in the pound."

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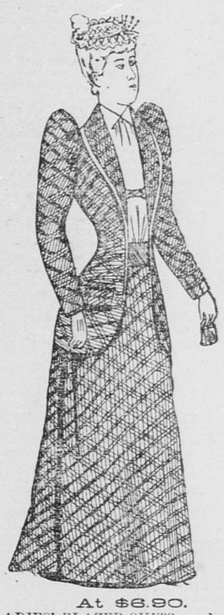

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