The Oldest Bank

Italian cities have passed out of existence. The State Bank of Venice, the earliest of modern credit institutions, founded in 1171, has passed away. The famous Bank of St. George, founded at Genoa in 1407 ceased to exist over a century ago. The Bank of Naples dates from 1539. It is an institution of a public character, without proprietors, whether shareholders or others, but possessed of a substantial capital, increasing as profits accumulate. The managers are thus happily free from questions of maintaining or increasing the dividend, and are not harassed by the need of supporting the market quotations of their stock. The Bank is one of the note-issuing institutions of Italy, ranking in importance in this regard next after the National Bank.

Bankers and Customers

Some points of fundamental importance were emphasized in an address which Mr. B. E. Walker delivered a couple of years ago to an association of American bankers, and which has since been issued in pamphlet form. He urged that sound banking calls for consideration of the needs and circumstances of customers as much as it demands attention to immediate chances of profit. Not to lend injudiciously, even when funds are plethoric, is a principle of obvious soundness. To lend to customers whose circumstances justify it, even though other opportunities offer in which profits might be greater for the time being, demands more restraint and a capacity for realising the future clearly. But to aid customers in the development of sound business is more to the ultimate benefit of the banker than to snatch a momentarily higher profit. The modern spirit demands of all social arrangements, as Mr. Haldane said he had asked of each part of the British army organisation, what service they are rendering; and if they are rendering it more effectively than any substituted system could be expected to do. As an institution, banking can challenge such an inquiry without the smallest fear of condemnation.

The World's Money Centre

Writing in the New York *Times*, Mr. Edgar Speyer discusses the place of New York in the international money market. The need for capital in the United States has, in late years at least, outrun the capacity of the country to supply itself. The surplus capital available for investment in other countries, need not be sought at a centre where there is no such surplus. If American borrowers will use all the available supplies and pay a higher price than foreigners are willing to pay these latter will not resort to America for loans. Something like this appears to have been the case of late years, and