

TOPICS OF AN OLD-TIMER

"The Golden Story of California" Continued—The Central Pacific Railroad Company and Its Odious Methods—Stanford, Huntington, and Crocker—How They Were Undone by a Minion of Their Own Named Cohen—General John C. Fremont and the "Mariposa Grant"—Henry George and James McClatchy—"Progress and Poverty."

The railroad group of California's big men are C. P. Huntington, Leland Stanford, Chas. Crocker and perhaps Jas. B. Haggin. When the writer was in California there were no better hated body of men on earth. They had all been merchants in Sacramento, and not in a very large way either. They were successful enough to form a company to build the Union Pacific Railroad and took advantage of their position to ride over and rob their fellow men regardless of every scruple of conscience. The United States government gave them land enough, spread out on each side of their road, to build it, all along its route. But little, if any, of this land had been surveyed by the government, but thousands of squatters had settled upon it and made improvements in the confidence that when it was surveyed they, of course, would have the preference in entering it for purchase. But down came those railroad cormorants in full swoop and spread their grants over it remorselessly, thus ruining thousands of poor families, who were dispossessed by the company without any redress from them or the United States Government in which they put their trust. Thus were the labor and improvements of many years swept away and used to fill the maws of a huge and unscrupulous corporation. This was not all. They imported Chinese labor to do the railroad building, when plenty of white labor was available. Many laboring men who had the expectation of work on the railroad were disappointed and stranded and thousands were put in a condition bordering on starvation in a land of plenty. When they got their road constructed they were allowed to charge what they pleased for carrying freight and passengers, and that was the utmost farthing freight would bear and that passengers could be compelled to pay. It was monstrous. But they did not stop at this in their iniquitous career. Some of the close corporation had stores of their own, dealing in hardware and other articles of commerce in Sacramento and San Francisco, and discriminated in their charges against their rivals and everybody else that criticised their conduct, and thus ruined several merchants who were unfortunates enough to come under their displeasure. Every other railroad enterprise in California they crushed or stole. They hired all the able lawyers and left the public without defense. One honorable newspaper in Sacramento, The Union, that exposed their villainy, they crushed by threatening to take away the railroad shops from the place if the merchants continued to advertise in it. They set up a claim on some pretext or another to many of the harbors on the coast. They had their dishonest and disdainful tools working for them everywhere, and for a time the legislature was only the register of their will. I have myself seen that benevolent man, Leland Stanford, take his seat at the entrance to the legislative chamber and intercept the members as they passed by and direct those who were his tools. California was almost in despair from this arrogant railroad corporation and the hordes of Chinese they imported to do their work and the work of those who saw wealth in cheap, Mongolian labor. Yet, the United States government looked on without doing anything to mitigate the evil. More people were leaving the state than were coming into it and thousands of people were anxious to get away but did not have the means. I have seen mobs of men in the streets of San Francisco in front of labor offices every day in the hope of getting something to do, and satisfied with a mess of oatmeal to appease their hunger.

This condition of things could not go on forever, and at last relief came from unexpected quarters. The railroad company had an agent at San Francisco named Cohen. He was a lawyer by profession and was said to be an English Jew. He was as selfish and as smart as any of them. He was commissioned by Huntington to purchase property in San Francisco upon which to build railroad offices. Huntington charged him with dishonesty by making a profit out of the transaction for himself, and dismissed him. Cohen lived over in the town of Alameda and had the management of the ferry boats owned by the company that crossed from San Francisco to Alameda, Oakland, Berkeley and other points. Of course he held the annual pass. Of course he held the day that pass up, for he told me of it and what Cohen said to him about it. "I will make the taking up of my pass cost the company dear!" And he did, for he knew all their weak points.

tures on which they prided themselves. He took them in hand one by one and showed them up to the Queen's taste. Huntington he flayed alive and left exposed to the jeers and contempt of the public. Some of the papers, especially the "Chronicle" and "Bulletin," published his speeches in full and the public devoured them as sweet morsels. Never were men so thoroughly humiliated, and this by one of their own minions. It was No. 1 on the pass account.

Mr. Cohen soon exposed another card he had up his sleeve. Of course the railroad company were great money borrowers, principally in Europe. He prepared a pamphlet on the railroad's money transactions and their devices to keep their credit up and good. Their robberies, their dishonest methods and their deceptions were fully set forth. This pamphlet was mailed to all the European money lenders, banks, etc., and made the company squirm.

The worst was yet to come. The legislature was about to meet and when it did meet one of the first bills of which notice was given was a bill to "regulate the rates of freights and fares in California." A member from Santa Clara county fathered it, but all its details were drawn up by Cohen. I was in Sacramento and in the State capital when this bill was referred to a committee. Stanford was the member of the unhalloved combine who attended the legislature to defeat the bill and have it thrown out. His lobby and himself had lost their influence over the members and the latter were very exacting. The bill was defeated, but it was said it cost the company in the neighborhood of a million of dollars to do it. He was Artagnon's "No. 3," but the company soon cried "peccavi." A friend of mine had a grievance against them and he went to Mr. Cohen with it. He said "I am no longer fighting the company; they have made their peace with me!" Thus was the ticket raising avenged by Cohen and the public were pleased.

There is a picture of a man presented in this "Golden Story" that at one time I had a great regard for and looked upon him as a hero. Everybody knows the name of General John C. Fremont, "the Pathfinder," who performed heroic parts by his various expeditions to California before the American conquest of that country. I think he made four or five of those expeditions and in some of them experienced very great hardships. His starting point was Saint Louis, in the State of Missouri, at that time the most southwesterly state of the American Union. The men that composed his company were mostly French-Canadians, as they were most willing and experienced voyagers of that time; and he was of French descent himself. He was involved in the conquest of California by the Americans but was brought back a prisoner for an undue assumption of authority. But he became a favorite of the American people and was the first candidate for President of the United States of the Republican party after its organization. In the war of the rebellion he commanded a division of the army in the southwest. He was reprimanded or suspended for his action in freighting slaves before there was any warrant for his doing so by the president. There was a bit of romance too, in his career on account of his clandestine marriage with Jessie Benton, the daughter of United States Senator Benton of Missouri. For all this I have no fault to find with him. The American Government, as a reward for his services, made him a present of a large tract of land in California, known as the "Mariposa Grant," which afterwards was involved in a large amount of litigation and showed his greediness, as like the Central Pacific Railroad cormorants, he spread it over other people's properties and improvements and showed himself a veritable land thief. I used to know an old lady that resided at the Mission of San Jose, in Alameda County, whose father was director of the Philadelphia mint at the time of Fremont's marriage with Jessie Benton, and at whose father's house the marriage ceremony was performed in Washington, and who used to regale me occasionally with incidents of that celebrated wedding. Mrs. Fremont lived longer than her renowned hus-

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band and spent most of her time in California, where she had many an adventure that has often been told of in print. She is but a few years dead.

Henry George went to California during the sixties. He sought employment in a San Francisco newspaper named the "Times," which at that time was edited by an Irishman named James McClatchy. He was a printer by trade and at first set type on the paper. He wrote some articles and submitted them to the editor, who published them and thought highly of them, and invited him to take a desk in the editorial room, which he did and soon made his mark. I was not long in San Francisco when I heard of Mr. George. He was at that time editing a Democratic paper at Sacramento. But he was soon in San Francisco and preparing to publish an evening paper named "The Post," at one cent a copy. This was an innovation. The difficulty that confronted him was that there was no copper coin then in circulation in the Land of Gold. He met this difficulty by importing from the Philadelphia mint several barrels of copper coins. While engaged in preparing for this particular enterprise it was that I first met him. I was introduced to him on Montgomery street by one Frank Mahon, a printer from New Orleans, and a man of intelligence, who was a great admirer of Mr. George. After that I often met him and we became fast friends. He sold "The Post" newspaper, it was said, to Senator Jones of Nevada, who at that particular time had "money to burn," and went to work on his great book "Progress and Poverty." Put let me state an incident that happened in his career previous to this, and of which I was a witness. It was one day in the office of the "Daily Bee," in Sacramento, which was edited and partly

Tevis, that were great land-grabbers, whose names became odious among the people. They were large employers of Chinese labor, too, and made their money on the misfortune of others.

Stephen J. Field was one of the celebrated Field family, who was a justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, but whose reputation was not good in California. There were a great many land cases belonging to that state that went to the Supreme Court from the State Court, and that he adjudicated upon. His decisions were almost invariably in favor of the rich corporations and therefore he was considered an enemy of the state.

Charles Crocker was one of the railroad magnates of Sacramento, where he showed his love of art by opening a picture gallery for public view as an evidence of his newly acquired wealth. He afterwards moved to "Nob Hill" in San Francisco, where he built a great house and made a great show.

My space is here exhausted and I must defer further remarks on the "Golden Story of California" to the next issue of the "Register."

WILLIAM HALLEY. The Holy House of Loreto (Freeman's Journal.) A few weeks ago in the district of Benijofar, in the Province of Alicante, Spain, the priest of the parish saved the lives of twenty-five persons during a great inundation caused by the vast rainfall. Seeing their homes swept away, he constructed a float of timber, and at the risk of his life paddled from house to house in the raging torrent and brought them to his own humble abode. Among those saved were a number of women and children.

DECAY OF FAITH

Decrease of Religion Makes a Difference in Business Confidence, says Wall Street Journal.

"Whatever may be a man's own personal beliefs, says the Wall Street Journal, there is no one who would not prefer to do business with a person who really believes in a future life. If there are fewer men of such faith in the world, it makes a big difference, and if faith is to continue to decline, this will require new adjustments. There are certainly, on the surface, many signs of such a decline. Perhaps, if it were possible to probe deeply into the subject, it might be found that faith still abounded, but is no longer expressed in the old way. But we are obliged to accept the surface indications. These include a falling off in church attendance, the abandonment of family worship, the giving over of Sunday, more and more, to pleasure and labor, the separation of religious from secular education, under the stern demands of non-sectarianism, the growing up of a generation un-instructed as our teachers were in the study of the Bible, the secularization of a portion of the Church itself, and its inability in a large way to gain the confidence of the laboring people. If these are really signs of a decay of religious faith, then, indeed there is no more important problem before us than that of either discovering some adequate substitute for faith, or to take immediate steps to check a development that has within it the seeds of a national disaster."

AGAINST AGLIPAY

Philippine Supreme Court Decision Ends Controversy Over Possession of Parish Church in the Islands.

The "Sun," New York, prints the following special cable despatch from Manila, date of Nov. 24th: "The Supreme Court handed down to-day the most important decision it has rendered since its organization, and thereby definitely finished the controversy over the possession of the parish churches in the islands. "The court finds unanimously in favor of Bishop Barin, the native Filipino prelate who was consecrated in Manila last June, and against the adherents of the schismatic Bishop Aglipay, the head of the so-called National Catholic Church of the Philippines. Aglipay's followers were represented in the case by Padre Ramirez, an ex-priest, who joined Aglipay retaining the parish edifices and municipality of Lagonoy, Luzon. The decision decrees that possession of all the churches in the Philippines erected and dedicated by the Spanish Government is legally in the Roman Catholic Church. "Apparently the case is ideal from a legal standpoint, as it embraces the majority of the issues that were in contention and creates the strongest kind of precedent, as affecting the suits pending, which involve the title to fifty churches and convents seized by Aglipay and his followers."

Died of Leprosy

The news of the death of another priest hero, another Father Damien, has reached the world from remote Dutch Guiana. Father Lemmens, chaplain of the life colony at Paramaribo recently died of leprosy.

Born at Maestricht, Holland, on July 28, 1850, Father Lemmens entered the Dutch army as an officer at an early period of his life. In that capacity he went to Surinam, Dutch Guiana, in 1878. Four years later he abandoned the military life at the age of thirty-two, exchanging the uniform of a military officer for the habit of a Redemptorist missionary. In 1886 he was ordained a priest and immediately devoted himself to the work of attending to the spiritual, as well as the physical well being of the lepers. There could be only one result of this devotion. The anticipated took place. Father Lemmens, like Father Damien, was stricken with leprosy. He thereupon voluntarily isolated himself and became the chaplain to a hospital for lepers in Paramaribo, the capital of Dutch Guiana. And so cut off from all society except that of lepers, he worked on patiently, bravely, heroically, for four years, till his Divine Master called him to his eternal reward.

A Miracle of the Holy Eucharist

A letter from a Redemptorist missionary to one of his brethren, dated from Buga, in Columbia, March 21 of the present year, contains an account of a miraculous occurrence during the earthquakes which, as he declares, were felt north of the equator south of the equator, and along the Pacific coast. The account offers an inspiring example of heroic faith and the Blessed Eucharist.

"The parish of Tumaco," writes the missionary, "comprises a group of islands; it is a miniature archipelago. The principal island amongst them at which vessels are laden, is Tumaco. On the 31st of January, about ten o'clock in the morning, an earthquake was felt there. The shock was violent and prolonged; in some districts, it lasted seven minutes; in others, a quarter of an hour, causing ruin and consternation everywhere. About eleven o'clock the inhabitants of Tumaco saw the sea rising to a mountainous height and threatening to submerge the country. Their terror knew no bounds; they uttered the most heart-rending cries: 'We are doomed!' "They rushed tumultuously toward the shore, where the parish priest was standing, to beg him for a last absolution. At sight of them the courageous priest was seized by a heavenly inspiration. He hurried to the church, and by an impulse of heroic faith, brought thence the Blessed Sacrament. Accompanied by Father Gerard Larrondo, and followed by the praying multitude he returned to the shore, presenting the thrice Holy Host to the angry element. At that very moment the first mountain of water broke, foaming at the priest's feet. A second arose above the horizon; the intrepid pastor awaited its approach with unshaken confidence, still holding toward it the Blessed Sacrament. The wave roared ominously appearing furiously agitated, but presently spent itself within a few paces of the priest. The sea, in presence of the Sacred Host, gradually calmed, and the people regained courage. At the very moment when this sublime scene was in progress the island of Gorgona opposite Tumaco, was engulfed with all its inhabitants."

The flexing joy of candy and flowers for Christmas cannot take the place of the permanent pleasure of the gift of books for the holidays. Christmas books need not be stories; there is an infinite variety of Catholic Literature published suited to the tastes and minds of all classes of the community. This variety may be found at the store of W. E. Blake, 123 Church street, Toronto.



This Beautiful Group of the Nativity

Is most artistically painted and is all hand carved out of one solid block of wood, and life size. Any person desirous of presenting it to the Church for Christmas can have it at a low figure for cash. The Statue may be seen in the hall of St. Michael's Palace, Church St. Communications to be addressed to C. F. MOWBRAY, care of THE CATHOLIC REGISTER, 117 Wellington St. West.

owned by the James McClatchy already referred to. The two were discussing a new outrage on the part of some corporation perpetrated on a body of settlers known as "the Mussel Slough Settlers." Both were boiling with indignation over the circumstance. They were exactly in accord on the land question and had made records. "It is full time," said McClatchy, "that some one write a book showing up the infamy of those outrages and the iniquity of land monopoly; you, George, are now at liberty to undertake a work of this kind and have the ability necessary for the undertaking." "No, McClatchy," said George, you are the man yourself; you are my preceptor in this doctrine, and such a work should bear your name as the author." McClatchy's answer was: "No, George, you are younger than I am and have now the necessary time; you have a state office, the work of which can be performed by your brother; edit the 'The Bee' claims all my attention." George agreed to tackle the job, and the result was that wonderful literary work known to all the world as "Progress and Poverty." I may say that I was present at its conception.

Would Consecrate Human Race to the Blessed Virgin

The well-known Arch-confraternity of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary, for the conversion of sinners, an association established in connection with the Church of Notre Dame des Victoires, Paris, is promoting the general signing by Catholics the world over of a petition to the Holy Father respectfully requesting His Holiness to further the extension of the cult of the Blessed Virgin by consecrating the whole human race to her immaculate heart. In the course of the petition reference is made to the following paragraph of Pius X's encyclical letter of February 2, 1904: "We may promise ourselves the realization, in a not distant future, of the high and assuredly not unreasonably venturesome hopes inspired in our predecessor, Pius IX., and the whole Catholic episcopate, by the solemn definition of the dogma of Mary's Immaculate Conception."

It is reported that the Pope will hold both secret and public consistories the same day, December 6th, and will also deliver an allocution and announce the appointment of 84 residential and titular bishops, including three Americans and four Canadians and Newfoundlanders.

James B. Haggin is favored with honorable mention in this article. He did nothing for the people. He was one of the firm of Haggin &