

LONG USED TO EARTHQUAKES

Golden Gate Metropolis Has Been Shaken Often In the Past.

PRESENT WORST EVER KNOWN

Some of the Skyscrapers and Other Buildings Destroyed—Magnificent City Hall in Ruins—Fires Arrested by Dynamite—Earthquake of 1868 Described by Mark Twain.

THE recent disastrous earthquake extending over so large a part of the Pacific coast region and wrecking such an extensive section of the city of San Francisco was not the first of these catastrophes known in the western metropolis, though by all odds the most damaging. For many years the municipal authorities refused to permit tall buildings in the city because of the fear of earthquakes, several of which had already been experienced. Finally the interdiction was removed, however, and a number of skyscrapers resulted. Prior to 1800 there was hardly a building in excess of five stories and only a few of that height. Today there is one eighteen stories high and quite a number from twelve to fourteen stories.

In the spring of 1808, about 10 o'clock one night, the city had a seismic shock that put to test its high structures. It was the worst earthquake since 1808, when for eight or nine blocks on the main street (Market) the ground was cracked open several inches.

In the upheaval of 1808 the tall buildings were given a fearful shaking, and some of their occupants were made dizzy and sick. The structures were uninjured, and ever since that time there has not been so much question of the safety of high buildings of modern construction—that is, buildings of structural iron frame and facings of pressed brick, terra cotta or stone.

It was M. H. De Young, the proprietor and editor of the Chronicle, who was the pioneer in this respect.

met with opposition from the municipal authorities fourteen years ago when he decided to erect a ten-story house for his newspaper. It was considered to be a dangerous undertaking because of the earthquake fear, but Mr. De Young won out and thereby set an example of enterprise to other wealthy men who have since built more tall buildings. For instance, D. O. Mills, the New York banker, who owns a great deal of San Francisco property, has one of the tallest and finest structures in the city.

Claus Spreckels, known throughout the country as the sugar king and the

riches, the eight storied being most numerous.

The Call and Examiner buildings were almost totally destroyed in the earthquake and many other skyscrapers were severely shaken, cracked and damaged.

One of the chief buildings which collapsed was the new postoffice. This was a substantial structure of granite, costing to exceed \$5,000,000. While not striking from an architectural standpoint, the postoffice was impressive from its massiveness.

The Postal building was badly damaged, and the opening room was a wreck. Power of every kind was destroyed, and there were no lights, either gas or electric. Neither the Palace hotel nor the St. Francis was destroyed as far as the framework goes, but the inside plastering and decorations were greatly damaged.

The business section of the city from Market street to Mission street and

Other imposing edifices, many of which have been more or less severely injured, are the Hotel St. Francis, the Palace hotel, the Hall of Justice, the Mutual Bank building, the Pacific Mutual Life building and the Callaghan building. The greatest property damage resulted in the manufacturing district and the greatest loss of life in the tenement house district.

The chief street of the city is Market, running diagonally for many miles. The destruction of many of the department stores and other business blocks on Market and Mission streets was almost complete. Fire added to the horrors of the situation, and, as the water mains had been burst by the shock, the fire department was helpless. The flames ate their way along Market street, and other fires started in different parts of the city.

As the earthquake occurred but a little after 5 o'clock in the morning, practically the entire population was in



THE CALL BUILDING, ALSO DESTROYED.

from the bay back was almost completely wrecked.

The most conspicuous building in San Francisco, the city hall, is almost totally ruined. It cost from \$6,000,000 to \$7,000,000, took twenty-five years in construction and was surmounted by a dome 332 feet high. It was thought to be very solidly constructed, being built substantially of brick, with the walls covered by cement. The interior of the dome was decorated with expensive marbles taken from the Pacific coast mountains.

Another very fine building, which cost over \$5,000,000, is the splendid ho-

bed. Men and women rushed wildly forth in their night robes and fled in panic through the streets. Many were caught by the falling roofs and walls, and in the poorer districts the tenements collapsed like eggshells, crushing and suffocating their inmates before they had time to escape. In many cases fire finished the work of death, catching the victims as they were pinned still alive under the debris.

To arrest the spread of the fire along Market street many buildings were dynamited.

The track of one railroad was depressed four feet or more for a distance of three miles. At one point in the city the earth cracked open for a distance of six feet, leaving a yawning chasm of fathomless depth.

The destruction of all telegraph wires, except one belonging to the Postal union, made it almost impossible for the stricken city to communicate with the outside world. The severe injury to the Western Union and Postal offices, also the Associated Press, greatly added to the difficulty.

The practical destruction of six or eight blocks, coupled with the immense loss of life and damage to property throughout San Francisco and the entire coast region, makes this the worst earthquake disaster in American history, exceeding even the historic Charleston earthquake of a few years ago.

San Francisco has suffered from many slight seismic shocks, one of them occurring about a year ago. At that time a long article appeared in one of the papers, signed by a professor in one of the observatories near by, stating that there was no particular danger from these tremors of the earth's surface. The coast region, according to this writer, was newer than parts of the country farther east and was therefore settling. He said people should feel no alarm, as nothing serious was liable to happen.

Evidently the earth's crust in the Golden Gate region has been doing some more "settling."

The most severe earthquake San Francisco has known prior to the present one was in 1868. Quite a little damage resulted, though nothing remotely comparable to this. It was the 1868 shakeup that was made famous by Mark Twain. The most surprising thing the genial Mark saw at that time was the opening up of the ceiling of his room, the pieces of the orifice working to and fro like a mouth and a brick slipping through and held in suspension, like one lone tooth on the jaw of an old man.

The last earthquake that occurred in San Francisco was in January, 1900. Several distinct shocks were felt early in the morning, causing the vibration of buildings all over the city. The chief building affected was the St. Nicholas hotel, which was severely shaken. The walls collapsed in certain parts of the structure, and furniture was thrown out of their beds and furniture was destroyed.

In 1904 there was a severe seismic disturbance in Los Angeles, which was felt throughout the city and for a radius of several miles around.

SAN FRANCISCO IN HISTORY

Stricken City Long Permeated With an Air of Romance.

IN THE DAYS OF VIGILANTES

How the Metropolis of California Was Purged of Disorder—Lynchings of Casey—The Days of the Forty-niners—Town Depopulated by the Rush of Gold Seekers.

SAN FRANCISCO, the earthquake stricken city, has long been permeated with an air of romance and adventure. Nowhere may one turn without being reminded of the legends that have been woven around the forty-niners and their immediate followers. The names of the streets and of the business blocks, such as Kearney, Sutter, Montgomery, Dupont, Flood, Crocker and Sharon, bring to the mind of the visitor long forgotten stories of riot or adventure and of fortunes whose vastness once excited his wonder or made him incredulous.

The site of the city was first visited by Europeans in 1769, and in 1775 Biscnell ordered a fort, presidio and mission founded on the bay. One year later, the year of the Declaration of

Independence, the Spanish settlers began the work, and when Vancouver, the explorer, visited the place in 1792 the presidio represented the military authority, while the pueblo and mission stood for the civil and religious factors respectively. The mission was secularized in 1824 and a town laid out the year following.

In 1846 an American man-of-war, under command of Commodore John B. Montgomery, entered the harbor and hoisted the stars and stripes over the town. Mexico, which succeeded Spain as the owner of California, was then at war with the United States, and the act of Commodore Montgomery ended her dominion over San Francisco. Montgomery appointed Lieutenant Washington A. Bartlett to be Frisco's first alcalde, or mayor, under the new regime. Under Spanish and Mexican rule the town was a sleepy, unprogressive place, but with the coming of Americans and the discovery of gold in 1848 there came an era of growth and hustle. This did not eventuate at once, for the first news of the discovery of gold practically depopulated San Francisco.

The town was smitten as by a plague, and one historian thus describes what happened: "Its houses were left unoccupied and unprotected, its former trade ceased, its lots fell to a small part of their value, its two weekly newspapers were suspended, and the town, deserted by the bulk of its inhabitants, was at one time without a single officer clothed with civil authority."

After the first rush to the gold diggings the town began to regain its lost ground, and ere long the influx of gold seekers gave quite an impetus to its growth. The town was incorporated in April, 1850, and the first common council elected proceeded with diligence to plunder the city treasury. The same year the state was admitted to the Union, and when the steamer Oregon brought the news—there was no telegraphic communication in those days—business was entirely suspended and the entire population rushed to the wharves to welcome the harbinger. The town had about 10,000 inhabitants at that time, and when the people were informed that the signal flags of the Oregon indicated that California was a sovereign state of the United States of America "a universal shout arose from 10,000 voices on the wharves, in the streets, upon the hills, housetops and the world of shipping in the bay."

In its early history the city suffered from several disastrous fires. Between December, 1849, and June, 1851, six conflagrations played havoc with the growing young town. Better buildings were planned and several fire companies were organized. These were steps in the right direction. It was also discovered that the fires were started by criminals who profited by the confusion.

This fact and the inefficiency and corruption of the city government led a large number of citizens to organize the famous vigilance committee which ruled the place in 1851. Quite a number of crooks were lynched by the committee, others were driven out, like John Oakhurst, the leading figure in Bret Harte's "Outcasts of Poker

northern. Beyond Mason street ran the trail to the Presidio, past scattered cottages, cabins and sheds, amid dairies and gardens, with a branch path to the Marine hospital, on Fillbert street, and another to the North Beach anchorage, where speculators were planning a wharf to attract settlement.

After the vigilance committee disbanded the criminal element became bolder, and in 1856 the crime and corruption in the city had become intolerable to those who wished to live a decent and orderly life. When Editor King of the Bulletin, who had denounced the thugs, was murdered by James P. Casey, a new vigilance organization was created, and in a few days Casey and another murderer named Cora were executed in front of the committee's headquarters. Many lawbreakers were later put to death, and the regime of the California "bad man" came to an end.

It has been asserted that San Francisco is the most cosmopolitan city in the world, and by cosmopolitan is meant a population from all parts of the world. Not long ago the records indicated that 43 per cent of the people of the city were born in foreign lands, not in two or three different countries, but in practically every land under the sun. According to the national census reports for 1890, San Francisco had a total population of 268,997. Of these 172,186 were native born and 126,811 were born outside of the United States. Fully half the grown persons in the community moved to California from alien lands, while a large percentage of the other half and of the general body of children were of foreign parentage. In 1900 San Francisco had a population of 342,782, of which 34.1 per cent was foreign born.

San Francisco has long been famed as one of the "wide open" cities of the United States. As in the days of 1849, the gambler devotes himself to his vocation with little interference from the authorities. Prior to the



MARKET STREET FROM SECOND STREET WEST.

earthquake two of the most prominent corners in the city were occupied by gambling dens. One of them, known as the Cafe Royal, has been a veritable gold mine for its proprietors.

The California supreme court has rendered a decision to the effect that the game of draw poker is not a game of chance, but involves judgment and other elements as well as chance or luck, and because of this decision these places are permitted to be maintained.

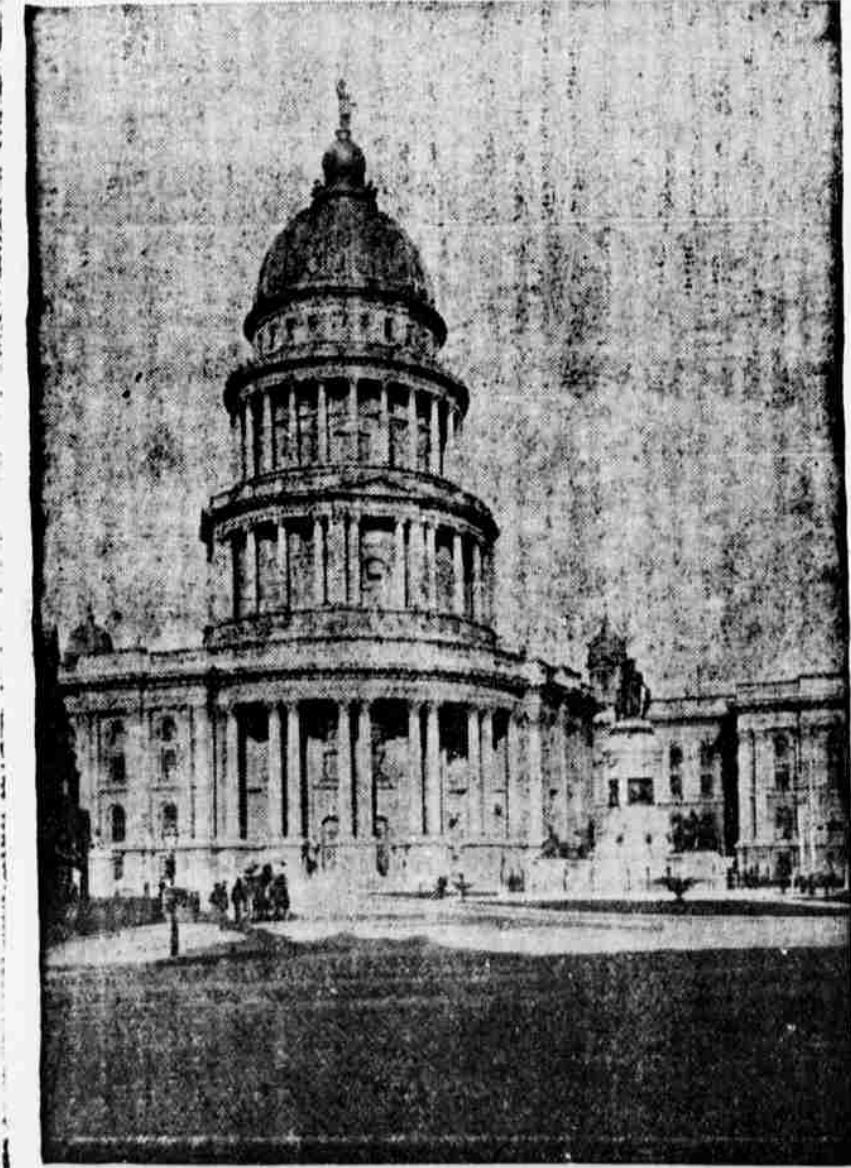
They are frequented by a hard looking crowd of men, and many scandals are told associated with these places. A visitor's life is probably safe in these resorts, but his money is not. It is said that the son of the premier of British Columbia was fleeced of \$8,500 in the Cafe Royal a few years ago. He lost \$1,500 in cash, but stopped payment on \$7,000 in checks.

San Francisco has forty-seven square miles of territory, or about 30,000 acres, within the municipal limits. The finest residences are on Nob hill and Pacific heights, both of which districts command magnificent views of the bay and the Golden Gate. The city has six large parks and twenty-two small ones, and Golden Gate park occupies over 1,000 acres.

Flat," and the city went through a purification process that was of great benefit to it.

The aspect of San Francisco at this time was not inspiring to inflowing gold seekers. It was a straggling medley of low, dingy adobes, frail wooden shanties, born in an afternoon, with a sprinkling of more respectable frame houses and a mass of canvas and rubber habitations. It was mainly a city of tents, rising in a crescent upon the shores of the cove. From Clark point it skirted the land to Telegraph hill, along the Clay street slopes, tapering away to the California street ridge. The larger number passed to the southwest shores of the cove, beyond the Market street ridge, a region sheltered from blustering winds and provided with good spring water and named the Happy Valley.

Stockton street, stretching from Sacramento to Green streets, presented the nearest cluster of dwellings, and Powell street was the abode of churches, for of the six churches in existence in the middle of 1850 three graced its sides and two stood upon cross streets, within half a block. Mason street, above it, was really the western limit of the city, as Green street was the



CITY HALL, WHICH WAS WRECKED.

richest San Franciscan, owns a building seventeen stories high, commonly known as the Call building. On three of the corner sites, where Third street intersects Market, is located the great Spreckels building, the home of the Call; the De Young building, the home of the Chronicle, and the Hearst building, occupied by the Examiner, the three great Pacific coast newspapers having contributed handsomely to the building development of San Francisco in recent years. The city now has its share of tall buildings, one being eighteen stories in height. The major part of them are eight, ten and twelve sto-

tel erected by Mrs. Herman Oelrichs on fashionable Nob hill. Mrs. Oelrichs, who is a daughter of the late Senator Fair, has shown fine taste in the architectural plans of Fairmont, the appropriate name of the new hotel. Seen from the bay this structure, with its classic outlines, makes the beholder think of a Greek temple. White and graceful, it looms above the busy market places, the great wholesale district, the crowded business section and picturesque Chinatown, which, by the way, is fast disappearing owing to the encroachments of commerce and the dwindling of the Chinese population.



SAN FRANCISCO HARBOR.