

knowledge he had of the needs of a merchantile establishment. Mr. Stewart put up a building which is today, I believed, far better arranged than any of the modern structures which are being erected. He seemed to know just what was needed."

"Did you know Mr. Stewart," I asked.

"Yes, I met him often when I was a young man. I used to buy goods of him, and I have reason to think that he took a liking to me. One day, I remember, I was in his woolen department buying some stuffs for my store here when he came up to me and asked me if I would be in the store for fifteen minutes longer. I replied that I would. He then went away. At the end of the fifteen minutes he returned and handed me a slip of paper, saying:

"Young man, I understand you have a mission school in Philadelphia; use that for it."

"Before I could reply he had left. I looked down at the slip of paper. It was a check for \$1,000."

"But A. T. Stewart was not noted for his charities, was he, Mr. Wanamaker?"

"He did a great deal of good in secret," was the reply. "He was always doing something for others. He gave \$50,000 to the people who lost by the Chicago fire, and when he died, you know, he was building a million dollar home for the working girls of New York. He had many charitable plans which were never carried out. After the Franco-German war he sent to France a lot of flour for the starving people of Paris, and during the famine in Ireland he sent a lot of provisions to that country. He was, in fact, a very charitable man."

"How did Mr. Stewart look, Mr. Wanamaker?"

"He was rather slight and not over medium height, with fair hair and light blue eyes. He was a man of fine taste and of much culture."

"Was he a great merchant?"

"Yes; I think he was the greatest this century has ever had. Look over his life and you will think the same. He was the son of an Irish farmer. He first came to the United States as a teacher. When he was 21 years old he bought \$3,000 worth of Belfast laces and linens and opened a store for the sale of these in New York. He slept at this time in the rear of his shop. He turned his capital over and increased his business until he had what he said to be the largest retail store in the world. The building alone cost Mr. Stewart nearly \$3,000,000, and its current expenses at the time of his death were about \$1,000,000 a year. In his two stores he was at that time doing a business of about \$200,000,000 a year. He had, in addition to these, branch houses in different parts of the world, and he was the owner of a number of mills and factories. When he died it was said that he was worth about \$40,000,000."

"How about your connection with the post office department. Have you ever regretted your official career there?"

"I can't say that I have," replied Mr. Wanamaker. "I don't like to criticise the post office and postal matters, now that I am out of office. The machine is not rightly organized and managed as it should be. The real boss of the department is Congress at the other end of the city on the hill. Congress makes the laws which govern the department, and the postmaster general is dependent on Congress for everything he gets. There are scores of ways in which the business there might be bettered, if the postmaster general had only the power to act. He has not the power, however, and our postal system will never be what it should be under our present system of government."

"You were strongly in favor of postal savings banks, were you not?"

"Yes," was the reply, "I thought they would help the poor."

"How about the times, Mr. Wanamaker, is business improving?"

"Yes, somewhat," was the reply. "The tariff has opened the gate, and the beneficial effects which are coming from it have been added to by the misfortunes of other nations in having poor crops while we have good ones. As yet, however, there are still many people unemployed. Many of those who have secured work through the better times are saving their money to pay their debts, so we do not yet feel the good times as we shall later on."

"Then you think our prosperity will continue?"

"I believe we shall have a spell of good times. We cannot expect that the crops will always be poor in South America, India and Europe, and this element of our present prosperity may be lacking next year. Still the tariff will start the mills to going and our biggest demand after all is the demand at home."

"Has the tariff already raised the prices of goods?"

"Certainly it has," was the reply. "We received today, for instance, an invoice of steamer rugs. They actually cost us \$7.57 apiece. These same rugs we have been selling here in the store under the old tariff rate for \$7.50. No one would ask us to sell rugs for that price which really cost us seven cents more, so you see the price must go up. It is the same with other things. The tariff must necessarily make a general rise of prices."

"Do the people realize that prices are increasing?"

"Yes, indeed they do," replied the merchant. "There has been no time with in recent years when the people have realized just how many cents there are in a dollar so well as they do now. They have learned through the hard times to figure closely, and they are much more economical than they were before the hard times came."

"Is not that a good thing all around, Mr. Wanamaker?"

"I don't know about that," was the reply. "In order for us to have good times the people must not only make money, but they must also spend it freely. The two things are reciprocal. It is the market that keeps the factories and the store going, and pays the wages."

"How about the department stores, Mr. Wanamaker, and the charge that they are running the smaller merchants out of business?"

"I don't regard my store as a department store," was the reply. "A department store, I take it, is an overgrown country store, where you can get a small and cheap assortment of a great many different kinds of articles. You may be able to get a suit of clothes, but you must not be particular as to the cut or the quality of the goods, for you are restricted to what the man has on hand. We have no such store here. This is an aggregation of large stores. We have a book store, for instance, which is as large and complete as any in the country. We aim to keep everything that is published. We have one of the largest shoe stores in the city. It is the same with clothing and other things."

"Now, as to such stores running other people out of business," Mr. Wanamaker went on, "I have often heard that charge. I don't believe it is true to anything like the extent that is generally believed. There are more licenses to sell goods given out now in Philadelphia than ever before, and there are, you know, other stores of the same nature as mine in the city. The trouble with the men who have gone out of business is that they have

been working upon wrong lines. They were afflicted with the dry rot, and they would have played out sooner or later. Besides, it is a question of the greatest good to the greatest number. If I can see my way to benefitting thousands by selling goods cheaper and at the same time make a profit, is it my duty to refuse to do so because some half dozen men will be afflicted by my competition? Take the Baldwin locomotive works, for instance. At first their large and complete establishment must have hurt the other workers in iron, but by their cheap and excellent locomotives travel has been extended where it could not be extended before. New railways have been built and the great public have been enriched."

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

OUR SAN FRANCISCO LETTER.

San Francisco, Cal., Oct. 6th, 1897.

The past week has been particularly active in all circles, and conditions appear more prosperous than for some time past. The city is filling up with strangers and the streets and public resorts are beginning to assume signs of new life. The chief interest of the week was centered in the Dixon-Smith glove contest and the former, who was the favorite, with the majority, has been the means of depleting many pocket-books. His defeat has bankrupted the colored population of the town.

The weather indications have threatened rain but up to date only a very light shower has visited the city.

A great deal has been said of the benefits that taxpayers will derive from the appointment of the new board of supervisors, and that body has already made itself conspicuous by reducing the appropriations for the maintenance of the several departments of the city government. This reduction has necessitated a reduction of the working forces employed by the city, and in many instances, the departments have been left without sufficient men to carry out the necessary work, while the wages of the men retained will be cut down much below what they formerly were. Though the question as to which is the legal board of supervisors has not been finally settled by the supreme court, there is every reason for believing that the new board will remain in power, and the economical methods they have adopted will remain in force.

The grand jury is preparing to investigate the charges of witness-bribing in connection with the Fair-Craven litigation. The attorneys for both sides are particularly loud in their insinuations and accusations that their opponents are responsible for the crookedness, and each side claims to have affidavits to support their charges. There is no doubt in the public mind that the proceedings were influenced by money and the case bears evidence of rottenness all the way through; and it is sincerely hoped that the grand jury will investigate the matter thoroughly and place the punishment where it belongs.

The city is infected by a gang of foot-pads and burglars and the police force appears to be unable to check their depredations, though in each instance of crime they claim to have the proverbial clue and are in hot pursuit. Hold-ups are a nightly occurrence and it has become unsafe to venture at night beyond the glare of the street lights. Burglaries are being committed day and night almost under the nose of the officers of the law. In some cases the thieves have boldly entered residences while the family was at dinner and carried off rich hauls. Though sometimes dis-