profitable source of trade for San Francisco merchants, and of development by San Francisco capitalists.

Like the rest of the state, San Francisco had for years been advocating an overland railroad. But its citizens were confident that when the time arrived to build the road, San Francisco would put up the capital to make a start, San Francisco energy would carry it through, and of course San Franciscans would be in control. For the obscure corporation sponsored by a group of upstate merchants and without a single representative from the metropolis the citizens could see no hope; obviously the scheme would get nowhere.

But it presently grew clear that the scheme was getting much farther than anyone had anticipated, and by 1863 San Franciscans proved willing to give it moderate support. That year the state legislature passed a bill authorizing the city to subscribe for stock to the amount of a million dollars in the Central Pacific and in another project, the Western Pacific. The latter road, which hoped to build from San Francisco to Sacramento, via Stockton, was absorbed by the Central Pacific in 1865. The act was one of a number enabling California counties to grant subsidies to the Central Pacific, which in two counties, Sacramento and Placer, overburdened the taxpayers for a generation. The legislation had to be confirmed by the voters. This was done readily enough in the interior counties, but San Francisco had already repented of its generosity, and violent opposition developed.

The opposition was based partly on the sound argument that the city had no business investing in so speculative an enterprise as a railroad. But a more potent factor was civic pride. Why should San Francisco, where hitherto every important enterprise on the Coast had originated, lend support to "Stanford's moonshine project"? Besides, construction work, after being vigorously pushed for a year, had begun to slow down, and the merchants in control were known to be hard-pressed for cash. San Franciscans were confirmed in their opinion that the project was headed for early failure. As the date for voting the stock subscription approached, all the city's newspapers and a large section of its citizens opposed it bitterly.

Railroad officials realized that only extraordinary efforts
would save the measure from defeat. To them the matter was important enough to justify drastic steps. Their resources and their borrowing power had been strained to the limit to finance the first thirty-two-mile section, which needed to be completed before the federal subsidy would become available. Victory in the San Francisco election would mean that $600,000 cash would be immediately forthcoming; the sum was ample to rescue them from a critical situation.

It was the first time the future Big Four had had a vital stake in an election, but they proved to be anything but bungling amateurs. In Coast cities of the day, electioneering methods were without subtleties; those who needed votes and who could afford the expense followed the simple procedure of going out and buying them. San Francisco had thousands of voters who regarded their trips to the polls chiefly as an opportunity to pick up a few extra dollars. To those who knew the ropes any hotly contested election was good for a week’s board and lodging.

Realists in politics as in everything else, the railroad group wasted no time in appeals to the logic of the voters. Instead their agents circulated among ward politicians, passing out liberally the only arguments they knew would be effective. But the issue was too important to leave anything to chance, and the railroad forces continued their persuasion before the very doors of the election booths. The election-day activities of the group were later reported in detail in The Dutch Flat Swindle, a thick pamphlet issued by the opposition and widely distributed at the time. Like much anti-railroad literature, however, the work soon disappeared from circulation, and it is now one of the prime rarities of Californiana. Its pages, given over to circumstantial accounts of activities of railroad agents at the polls, reveal that even at the beginning of their careers the partners knew how to protect their interests. The foreword comments:

"... One of the largest stockholders of the company, the owner of 660 shares, the brother of its President, the agent of the Railroad Company for this purpose, with money procured from the Company, went through the polls, scattering money as in-

ducements to vote in favor of the subscription; bought a large number of votes; and through the whole election day used his money profusely; now throwing it by the handful among the voters, who gathered around him in crowds; now making bargains with gangs of men to vote in a body for the subscription.

Typical of the score or more sworn statements of spectators is the affidavit of one William Kayser. On the morning of the election Kayser was at the polls of the fourth ward when the Governor’s brother, Philip Stanford, drove up. "... He came there in a buggy and had a large crowd of men around him, and was handing money to them liberally; he held out money to all who offered to take; I didn’t see him refuse anyone. He said to the persons standing by, ‘Now go to work for the Railroad; do all you can.’ Kayser later saw Stanford at the sixth ward “handing out money liberally” and, passing on to the fifth ward, again encountered the industrious campaigner. "... The said Stanford came there in a buggy; he paid out money to persons standing around the polls, and then said to some persons, whom he had paid nothing to, that he had exhausted all the money he had brought with him, and that he would go back and get some more and come back in an hour...."

The railroad forces carried the election, but their methods of persuasion proved a bit too open even for the time and place. Although it was then obligated to complete the transaction, the city stubbornly refused to pay a dollar. The question was accordingly thrown into the courts, and San Franciscans managed to keep it there for over two years. In the spring of 1864 a compromise was effected by which the $600,000 stock subscription was canceled and the city agreed instead to give the Central Pacific $400,000 in municipal bonds. But the thought of presenting the despised corporation with so large a sum proved no less revolting to civic pride than the stock subscription had been. When it came time to deliver the bonds, Mayor Coon refused to sign them, and the exasperated railroad officials had to resort again to the law. The state supreme court eventually ordered the Mayor to affix his signature to the documents. He did so—then pointed out that a city ordi-
nance required that they must be countersigned by the city clerk. This time it was the latter, William Loewy, who refused to sign. Again the railroad went to the supreme court and again the city was able to delay the issue for months. Not until April 1865 was the last legal resource exhausted and the bonds reluctantly paid over. By that time the Big Four had no pressing need of the money. Although they were eventually defeated, San Franciscans had the satisfaction of knowing that it had cost the railroad group over $100,000 to collect their debt.

SAN FRANCISCO's opposition to the Big Four was only partly because its citizens enjoyed a good fight. The railroad had not been long in operation before many came to realize that the interests of the corporation were opposed to those of the city.

Long before the Central Pacific was completed, the partners foresaw the possibility that they might control transportation of the Coast, and plans toward that end occupied their thoughts for years. A first step was to acquire local railroads in California: some already in operation, others building, others still in the paper stage. Before the end of the '60s, two lines adjacent to the Central Pacific's terminus at Sacramento had been bought: the California Central and the pioneer Sacramento Valley Railroad—the latter was the project that had first brought Theodore Judah west. At the same time the associates consolidated their control of transportation in the interior by beginning the construction of two new roads: the California & Oregon, extending north up the Sacramento Valley, and eventually on to Portland, and the San Joaquin Valley, which they built south. These two roads formed the nucleus of the corporation that became the Big Four's most valuable property, the Southern Pacific Railroad.

But control of the traffic of the interior was at first a minor aspect of the program. More important was the necessity for extending the transcontinental line from its original terminus at Sacramento to San Francisco and the elimination of competing roads between the two cities. From the beginning the Big Four had anticipated a large traffic of goods and passengers between Europe and the Far East, for the new railroad reduced the time required for passage between China and Japan and the countries of Western Europe by nearly half. They were accordingly eager for deep-water connections on the bay, where boats from the Orient could dock adjacent to the Central Pacific tracks.

During the late '60s the acquisition of such facilities in both Oakland and San Francisco received much attention. The associates went about the business with characteristic thoroughness, keeping in mind not only that their lines must have convenient terminal facilities on the bay, but that competing railroads must be prevented from having any at all. So skillfully did they play the game in Oakland that the railroad's "fence around the harbor" proved all but impenetrable. Not until nearly three decades had passed did any competitor manage to squeeze through.

When they tried to duplicate the feat in San Francisco, however, that city's suspicion of the Big Four's motives led to instant opposition, and another bitter quarrel ensued. Because San Francisco's waterfront was (and still is) under state control, the railroad first dealt with the legislature at Sacramento. In 1868 that body accommodatingly introduced a bill turning over to the Central Pacific and one of its recently acquired subsidiaries, the San Francisco & San Jose Railroad, title to a six-thousand-acre strip of land. The property extended eight miles along the city's bay frontage; its ownership by the Central Pacific would have prevented any competing line from entering the city.

Details of the bill reached San Francisco, and citizens and newspapers opposed the plan with their accustomed vigor. Citizens crowded halls at mass meetings, sent threats and recriminations to the Sacramento politicians, and in general made so much commotion that the bill was withdrawn. Defeated at this point, the group next sought control of Yerba Buena Island (popularly called Goat Island), midway between the Oakland and San Francisco shores. The legislature granted the company a block of submerged tideland north of the island for warehouses and docks, and a similar bill was introduced at Washington to permit use.
of the island itself, which was federal property. In this move San Franciscans again professed to see a threat to their independence. Again the irate citizens sprang to arms; again petitions were prepared and signed, orators addressed mass meetings, and delegations hurried to Washington to combat Huntington’s lobbyists. After months of negotiation had failed to win a single concession from the city, the Big Four were forced to yield, and the Goat Island project was also abandoned. Meantime, by the purchase of two minor eastbay railroads and their trans-bay ferries, and by connecting these with its own road at Niles, the company obtained a reasonably direct route between Sacramento and the bay.

Control of the only transcontinental line and of the network of local railroads in California was, however, but part of the Big Four’s strategy. Monopoly of the Coast was possible only if water transportation could also be brought into line. Such competition was of three sorts. Affecting the local situation were the river steamers operating between San Francisco, Sacramento, and Stockton, all of which had done a large business in freight and passengers since the early ‘50s. In addition there was a considerable coastwise trade between San Francisco and ports in the southern part of the state. Control of the river transportation was easy because the business was chiefly in the hands of one organization, the California Steam Navigation Company. The purchase of this company in 1869 put the Big Four in almost complete control of the traffic between San Francisco and the interior towns. During the early years the associates were unconcerned by the coastwise trade, since the boats did not come into direct competition with them until the Southern Pacific’s Los Angeles branch was opened in 1876.

Of more immediate concern were the steamers and sailing ships plying between San Francisco and the East. Here, as in the case of river transportation, much of the business was controlled by one company, the pioneer Pacific Mail. The latter had entered the field before the discovery of gold, aided by a federal subsidy in the form of lucrative mail contracts. For more than twenty years, the company had done a huge business and made large profits for its owners. By the time the overland railroad was built, the Pacific Mail was not only a competitor for the coast-to-coast traffic but also controlled the trans-Pacific trade, operating a line of steamers between San Francisco and the Orient—a fact of importance to the Big Four, who were still hoping for a heavy traffic between the Far East and Europe.

The Big Four recognized the competition of the Pacific Mail as a formidable obstacle to their plans for monopoly. Obviously they would either have to control the company or find means of forcing it into a working agreement. As a first step in that direction the Central Pacific group joined the Union Pacific in establishing a competing line of trans-Pacific steamers, the Occidental and Oriental Steamship Company, and proceeded, by cutting rates below operating costs, to take virtually all the business away from the older company. This feat, together with the threat to put competing steamers on the run between San Francisco and Panama, was sufficient to bring the Pacific Mail into line. An agreement was presently signed by which the Big Four guaranteed that company a certain monthly profit from the operation of its Panama steamers, and in return the Pacific Mail agreed to raise its tariffs to approximately the same levels as those of the railroad. Their understanding with the Pacific Mail was important to the Big Four for another reason: the steamship company had long enjoyed an exclusive contract with the Panama Railroad for carrying its freight across the Isthmus, at rates so much below those charged others as to prevent any competitor from entering the field.

In the early ’90s, a visiting Eastern journalist, after a week’s close reading of Coast newspapers, remarked to Arthur McEwen: “Why are you all roaring, and roaring all the time, against the Southern Pacific? It’s only one railroad. Can’t you find anything else to complain of?”

The answer might have been that California’s citizens feared the corporation because in one way or another they were all under its domination and because two decades of
effort to break its control had accomplished nothing. The Big Four, having succeeded, in their effort to control the movement of freight to and from California and within the borders of the state, established their rate-schedules on the basis of “all the traffic will bear,” and they succeeded in maintaining that policy for more than thirty years. It was perhaps the nation’s choicest example of a complete and sustained monopoly, an almost ideal demonstration of the power of a corporation to control for its own profit the economic resources of a region comprising one sixth of the area of the nation. That practically the entire population of the Coast realized what power the Big Four held over them, and for years fought stubbornly to break it, adds to the magnitude of the achievement. Although the citizens had on their side every important newspaper of the state save those frankly in the pay of the Southern Pacific, efforts to remedy the situation were uniformly unsuccessful because of the railroad’s control of the legislature, of state regulatory bodies, of city and county governments, and, in many cases, of the courts.

The result was that from the middle ’70s to 1910 the major share of the profit of virtually every business and industry on the Coast was diverted from its normal channel into the hands of the railroad and its controlling group. The merchant who brought in stock from the East paid freight bills so high that to sell his goods at all he had to cut his profit almost to the vanishing-point. The degree of prosperity of every business or industry was directly dependent upon the officials at Fourth and Townsend streets who fixed the railroad’s freight rates. The latter performed their numerous and delicate duties with skill. They and their agents kept watch on the businesses of the railroad’s customers; in San Francisco they even claimed—and were given—the right to make periodical inspections of shippers’ books. If merchants were found to be growing prosperous, rates were raised; if too many went bankrupt, rates were lowered. The manufacturer was allowed to earn enough to keep his plant in operation; freight rates on the farmer’s products were nicely calculated to enable him to clear enough to plant and harvest his next year’s crop and to support himself, not too extravagantly, in the meantime.

San Francisco papers and those of the interior regularly printed letters from shippers relating their experiences with the Southern Pacific’s freight agents. Rates on agricultural products were fixed on the basis of current market prices. A farmer who had grain to ship found that the grain rate was high when prices were high, low when they were low. The producer was usually allowed to clear enough to continue to produce, but in good years the profit went, not to him, but to the railroad. In the ’80s a group of men began developing a gold mine near the town of Shasta, at the northern edge of the state, and started shipping quartz to a mill near San Francisco. The Southern Pacific was asked to fix a freight rate, and did so: $50 per car for the threehundred-mile haul. The owners found that a profit was possible and soon were shipping an average of three cars a day. The railroad accordingly increased the rate to $73 per car and, when the miners continued to ship, raised it to $100. This brought the owners to the freight office at San Francisco, where they announced that the $100 rate would force them to shut down. The company official assured them that the railroad wished to put no one out of business. He then proposed that they produce the records of what they had received for their ore; railroad officials would then figure what profit they were making and the rate would be fixed accordingly. Scores of such incidents were recorded in local newspapers. In 1885 Northern California sheepraisers found that the cost of shipping wool east absorbed every dollar of their profit. Unable to obtain a reduced rate, the embattled ranchers loaded their product on wagons and sent it off on a three-hundred-mile haul to deep water on San Francisco Bay, from which point it was shipped by sail around the Horn to the Massachusetts mills.

One of the most celebrated of California’s “rate cases” was that affecting Southern California’s leading industry, the production of oranges. For years the rate of shipping oranges from California to points on the Atlantic Coast was $1.25 per hundred pounds—approximately $.90 a box. The growers proved that this charge left them an average profit of $.13 a box, a return that kept them perpetually on the borderline of bankruptcy. It required six years of concerted effort before the Interstate Commerce Commission, in 1905, forced a reduction from $1.25 to $1.15.
The $1.00 difference netted the growers in excess of $1,000,000 per year and literally elevated tens of thousands from poverty to a degree of comfort. Not so fortunate were the lemon-growers. The early producers had found a ready market and satisfactory prices, and in consequence the acreage devoted to lemons rapidly increased. However, the growers’ prosperity came to the attention of the railroad tariff-fixing officials, who concluded that a larger freight return was possible from this source, and the rate was increased $.15 per box. It chanced that the company’s experts here made a serious error, for the $.15 difference not only equaled the growers’ net profit, but exceeded it. The growers hung on for several seasons while they attempted by persuasion and force to have the old rate restored. Then, tiring of producing lemons for the profit of the company that hauled them east, they began uprooting their orchards and planting other crops. Thereupon Southern Pacific officials, recognizing their error, restored the old rate—and the growers accommodately planted their acres with lemon trees again.

But the story was not yet ended. Even after the old rate was restored, it was found that the cost of delivering California lemons in Atlantic Coast cities was too high to enable producers to compete in price with Italian lemons, although there was a substantial tariff on the latter. California growers thereupon began a campaign for a higher tariff on lemons and at length succeeded in obtaining a fifty-per-cent increase. The growers of course foresaw a much wider market for California lemons and higher prices. But a few weeks after the new tariff went into effect the Southern Pacific again raised the rate on lemons from $1.00 to $1.15, and the growers’ jubilation vanished. This, however, was in 1910, when the railroad’s long period of immunity from government control was nearing its end. A few months later the Interstate Commerce Commission forced the company to restore the rate to $1.00 per box.

Instances of exorbitant and discriminatory freight charges could be cited endlessly. The Southern Pacific owned a twenty-one-mile railroad between Los Angeles and San Pedro. This line was the means by which the company discouraged merchants from having goods bought on the Atlantic Coast shipped west by sea. Including wharfage tolls, the rates were as high as $3.50 per ton for the forty-five-minute journey—practically half as much as it cost to carry goods on the five to seven months’ journey from European or Oriental ports. A conversation between a Chinese merchant in Hankow and the captain of an American sailing ship was widely printed at the time. The vessel was loading pig iron at the Chinese port for shipment to Los Angeles. The merchant asked the rate per ton and was told it would amount to $8.00 per ton. “How much of that goes to the owner of the ship?” “Four dollars,” said the captain. “Ah, then Los Angeles must be far inland.” The captain produced a map and the incredulous Oriental traced with his forefinger the 5,700-mile journey down the river to the ocean and across the Pacific to San Pedro, then the scarcely perceptible space between San Pedro and Los Angeles. Four dollars a ton for the first haul; $2 for the second. The Chinese regarded the other with polite disbelief. Only two explanations were possible: either Americans were all crazy or his friend the captain was an outrageous liar. Yet every shipper on the Coast could cite dozens of such rates. One Sacramento newspaper published the schedule of freight charges between that city and a number of points in Nevada, listing in an adjoining column the far lower rates charged by wagnetains before the railroad was built. The editor called on Stanford to elaborate his frequent boast that the road had proved an unparalleled economic boon to the Coast.

Occasionally some reckless individual waged private warfare with the railroad and caused its owners restless days and nights before the insurrection could be put down.

One of the most picturesque of the rebels was John L. Davie, ex-cowpuncher, ex-opera-singer, ex-miner. When he came in conflict with the Southern Pacific, Davie was an Oakland storekeeper, selling—on the same premises—coal and books. One day in 1894 a salesman for a salt company persuaded him to add further variety to his stock; Davie placed an initial order for two schooner-loads of the sales-
man’s product. Rather than have his coal and book business buried under a mountain of salt, he decided to build a warehouse on the Oakland waterfront. He selected a site on the estuary, a navigable arm of the bay that extended close to the town’s business district, and submitted plans for his warehouse and wharf to the city officials, who had control over this one small section of the waterfront. Then his troubles began.

It must be explained that by a series of complicated moves the Central Pacific had in the late ’60s acquired title to virtually the entire Oakland waterfront. By this move its owners hoped not only to control the local traffic between San Francisco and the growing eastbay communities, but also to prevent any rival railroad from acquiring a deep-water terminus and convenient access by ferry to San Francisco. In both aims they met with more than average success. Thirty years were to pass before the completion of “Borax” Smith’s Key Route provided the first effective competition with the Southern Pacific’s interurban system, and it was not until 1900 that the Santa Fe’s line to Point Richmond gave a rival transcontinental line an outlet on the bay.

In Oakland the Central Pacific’s “wall around the waterfront” put the town at the mercy of the corporation and, as population and civic ambitions grew, a struggle to break the monopoly got under way. It was during this period that Davie entered the picture, with his plan for a warehouse on the estuary. The Southern Pacific was then discouraging the development of the city’s strip of waterfront, preferring that such industries as were established be on Southern Pacific land where the shipping could be controlled. According to its custom, the corporation had made certain that its local interests would be protected by the device of securing political control of the city and by putting into office men pledged to support its policies.

Accordingly, when Davie’s application reached the board of public works, the board’s president, a loyal railroad man named Tom Carothers, succeeded in delaying approval of it from week to week. Once Carothers based his objections on aesthetic grounds: he did not like the design of the clock tower with which Davie proposed to embellish his warehouse. Davie finally tired of waiting, abandoned the original site, and leased two acres of tideland at the foot of Webster Street, owned by the Morgan Oyster Company. This company held title under a state law popularly known as the Oyster Bed Act; hence it was not subject to control by either the railroad or the city.

The land was filled in and the warehouse and wharf were erected. On one corner of the property stood a shack used as headquarters by a group of hoodlums who called themselves the oyster pirates; one of its members was a lusty young rough named Jack London. Davie was careful not to disturb this group; he foresaw that they might prove useful. Meantime he had decided to move his coal business to the new site, and bunkers were built beside the wharf. One day he went to San Francisco and ordered three thousand tons of coal.

“Where are you going to land it?” he was asked.

Davie gave the location of his wharf.

“We can’t send ships to Oakland,” was the reply. “The railroad has a fence around the city.”

Davie stated that the matter of getting the coal landed was his problem; it was duly sent and found its way without opposition into the new bunkers. Meanwhile word reached Davie that the railroad was about to go into action; he held a conference with the oyster pirates, then went to a dealer in firearms and bought all the rifles he had in stock. These Davie loaned, with ammunition, to the gang. Incidentally, he never got any of his weapons back, nor had he expected to. The coal and salt business was ready to function.

A Sunday passed. On Monday morning Davie approached the foot of Webster Street and had some difficulty finding his new business establishment. Over the holiday a twelve-foot fence had been thrown up about the entire two acres. From inside issued the sound of hammers and axes. David found a crack in the fence and peered within. A gang of workmen were demolishing the warehouse and tossing the lumber into the estuary, where men and boys in rowboats were cheerfully towing it off. It was the railroad’s wrecking crew, which had more than once discouraged those who tried to gain a foothold on the Oakland waterfront.

The angry coal merchant pried a board from the fence,
squeezed through the aperture, and confronted the leader of the crew. The latter ordered him off the property, while others gathered about. David argued and threatened and carelessly neglected to watch a man who was circling behind him, a length of two-by-four in his hand. The timber descended, and Davie later awoke to find himself lying on his face in the street outside.

The former cowpuncher made his way to the nearest saloon, poured himself a drink, and went home to wash his wounds. An hour later he was on the street again, stalking back toward his disappearing warehouse. A group of citizens followed at a cautious distance, eying the two revolvers strapped to his waist, the shotgun across his arm. For the second time that morning he squeezed unnoticed through the fence. This time the company's wreckers were taken by surprise. With the muzzle of the shotgun close to their ribs, and Davie shouting profanity in their ears, half a dozen of the invaders were forced over the edge of the wharf into the estuary. A growing crowd of spectators cheered the exploit.

When the bloodless battle was over, Davie turned the enthusiasm of the onlookers to use. With the abandoned tools of the wreckers the crowd went to work on the fence, which disappeared in half an hour. Reporters for San Francisco papers had meantime reached the scene, and within a few hours Oakland's "waterfront war" was a major sensation. It was the first check the railroad had met during the years it had been maintaining its hold on the Oakland tidelands. The picturesque details of Davie's exploit stirred popular enthusiasm, and an interested public awaited the next phase of the battle.

It was not long delayed. In the emergency the railroad summoned its local political boss, Carrothers, and the latter summoned the Oakland police. Carrothers, the police chief, and a squad of patrolmen presently appeared at the estuary bearing a warrant for Davie's arrest. But the attention given the affair by anti-railroad papers had proved effective and the police were met by a belligerent mob of close to five hundred. They ignored the police chief's commands to disperse and at length the exasperated officer ordered his men to charge. The assault was met with enthusiasm by Davie's supporters, the oyster pirates in the van. Police clubs were swung effectively for a few moments, then the superiority of numbers asserted itself and the invaders were forced off the property and into the street. A few scalps were laid open on both sides, a few eyes closed and noses broken, but there were no major casualties. The chief gathered his disorganized forces and withdrew, leaving Davie's army in possession.

This second successful skirmish solidified sentiment in favor of the embattled coal merchant. The use of the local police in fighting the railroad's battle was soundly condemned. The boss, Carrothers, found himself in a difficult position, with the railroad demanding that Davie be dispossessed forthwith and the public equally insistent that the police keep hands off. The logical alternative was resort to law, but the railroad was not anxious at the moment to submit to the courts the question of its title to the property.

According to Davie's later account, a less violent attempt to reach a settlement was next tried. Carrothers sought out the rebel and in a reasonable mood informed him that if he continued to hold the property it would jeopardize the railroad's title to the entire waterfront. He ended with a suggestion that Davie accept a blank check, fill it out for any amount his conscience dictated, and live at his ease in Paris for ten years. Davie had no supporting testimony for this charge, for no third person was present. In any event, he failed to take up residence in Paris, and warfare was resumed.

The contest by then had taken on the appearance of a siege. Davie and his oyster pirates remained on the property day and night, with rifles stacked in readiness and a sentry constantly on duty. The railroad's next move was an attempt to establish possession of a part of the land by landing a grain barge there at high tide. News of the coup leaked out and again crowds gathered to see the show. The implements of warfare were drawn up: two locomotives arrived on the adjacent tracks, and two flatcars loaded with chains. The chains were attached to the barge and the locomotives, and all waited for high tide. Crowding the barge was a group of men of the determined variety the railroad chose when work of this kind was in pros-
pect. All were armed, as were many among the Davie force.

The situation began to assume a serious aspect, for the anti-railroad faction was determined to prevent the landing of the barge at any cost. Many of Davie's recruits were young roughs whose hatred of the railroad was based on encounters with brakemen in numerous freight-yards and lonely sidings, and the prospect of fighting it out now under the eyes of a sympathetic audience, and with the odds even, had so strong an appeal that Davie had difficulty keeping his forces in check. Meantime the water rose in the estuary, the crowd on the banks swelled, and verbal exchanges between the rival groups grew in frankness. At last the engines came to life, the slack of the chains was taken up, and the barge began to edge toward the shore.

What followed was in the same key as the melodramas unfolded nightly at Morosco's Theater across the bay. A skiff put out from shore carrying Davie and several helpers. While the gallery cheered and the railroad forces shouted threats and warnings, the skiff reached the tightening chains and the men attacked them furiously with hacksaws. On the barge and ashore loaded guns were held in readiness. Sanity, by some miracle, prevailed, however, and no shots were fired. In true Morosco style, the last chain parted just as the barge touched the edge of the disputed land. As it drifted out into the estuary the Davie force elected to follow up and complete the victory. Rowboats and planks formed a precarious bridge, over which passed an active file of Oakland youths intent on settling long-standing feuds with railroad policemen. Clubs and fists were swung for a few minutes, then the forces of the attackers turned the tide. The defenders were forced back and finally broke ranks; those still on their feet found dubious safety by jumping over the side.

But victory, as usual, went to the heads of the winners. The mob milled about, eager for further conquests, lacking only an objective. The latter was presently provided. The Southern Pacific had recently extended its inter-urban system by building a connecting link between its Oakland and Alameda tracks. In laying out this line the company, with permission of the city officials, had built directly through a city plaza at Fifth and Harrison streets, disregarding protests of the citizens. The battle on the barge recalled the incident, and the victors moved in a body to the plaza. On the way they broke into a railroad tool-house and armed themselves with sledges and crowbars. While the police, after another futile attempt to control the mob, stood by, the rails were ripped from the plaza, whereupon the wreckers, warmed to their work, continued to tear up the track for some distance in both directions, carrying off the ties for firewood and throwing the rails into the estuary.

As the evening progressed, the mob swelled and the destruction continued. The main-line tracks along First Street came in for attention, and track-wrecking continued until the hard work involved began to fail. More spectacular mischief then occurred to the ringleaders. The railroad's Oakland station, a small frame structure with a bell tower as its chief architectural ornament, stood near by. The suggestion that the crowd make off with the building was readily accepted. A dray was commandeered and drawn up beside the little structure, while half a hundred revelers lifted it bodily on board—the company's agent, badly frightened, still inside. With the bell ringing vigorously, the building was drawn up the street to a spot opposite the city hall, where the mob proposed to deposit it as an object lesson to the city officials.

At that point occurred the first real casualty of an afternoon and night of rioting. Too enthusiastic pulling of the rope loosened the station bell from its fastenings and it crashed to the ground, killing one unfortunate who failed to jump in time. The accident sobered the mob, which presently melted away.

The implications of the riot were recognized by the railroad officials; they abandoned force and resorted to law. On subsequent events of Oakland's waterfront war it is unnecessary to dwell in detail. The company's claim to complete control of the harbor was pressed in the state and
federal courts and abandoned only after the Supreme Court rendered an adverse decision.

Meantime the company's efforts to maintain a monopoly on trans-bay passenger traffic brought on another series of picturesque incidents. Tiring of the high fares and inadequate service of the railroad's ferries, a group of Oaklanders, headed by the troublesome Davie, purchased a speedy steamer and set up a rival line. The fare was fixed at five cents, one third that charged on the Southern Pacific boats. The new "nickel ferry," the Rosalie, was both fast and luxurious and of course she was heavily patronized. On trips across the bay her captain occasionally amused himself and his passengers by overtaking the box-like company ferries and literally running rings around them.

Oakland patrons of the new boat soon discovered that they could ride to her dock on the railroad's interurban trains without cost; the road's franchise specified that no fares could be collected within the city limits. Hundreds of commuters accordingly crowded the trains for San Francisco, stepped off at the station nearest the new company's dock, and crossed the bay on the Rosalie. Acting as feeder for a rival ferry, without compensation, was naturally displeasing to the railroad officials, but for some time they were unable to find any way of preventing it. When stops convenient to the Rosalie were abandoned, the inconvenienced free passengers raised indignant outcries. Local public opinion was so strongly against the railroad that when it attempted to have its franchise amended to permit collection of local fares, the city officials, by then thoroughly intimidated, delayed for weeks before granting it.

Meantime, of course, the Southern Pacific was fighting the new line with all the considerable means at its command. The battle resolved itself into one of docking-facilities, the company doing all it could to hinder the arrival and departure of the Rosalie and the other boats that were added to the "nickel ferry" fleet.

The Southern Pacific then had far more influence at Sacramento than in Oakland or San Francisco. The state board of harbor commissioners, which controlled San Francisco's waterfront, in time discovered that it could not continue to give the "nickel ferries" regular docking-facilities.

When the boats found a place at which to tie up on the San Francisco side, it was usually at the end of a pier that in some mysterious way was so closely packed with drays that it was next to impossible for passengers to make their way to the street. This difficulty was removed when Davie enlisted the aid of a San Francisco politician who organized a gang of longshoremen to clear the pier of the offending drays. This was not accomplished by peaceful means, for in the battle that followed, dozens were thrown into the water, but the nickel ferry's passengers suffered no further inconvenience from that source.

At the opposite end of the run they were not so fortunate. The approach to the Oakland terminus was through the narrow estuary. The Southern Pacific rearranged its schedule so that its slower boats would reach the mouth ahead of the Rosalie. Once in the estuary, the railroad's boats pursued a leisurely zigzag course, ignoring the speedier boat's signals that she wanted to pass. As on the San Francisco side, the new line could obtain no regular docking-facilities. When, as frequently happened, no other space was available, the Rosalie's captain entered the railroad's slip and there discharged and received passengers. The company discouraged the practice by releasing half a ton of coal dust from a near-by bunker just as the Rosalie's patrons were crowding the ferry apron, enveloping them in a dust-cloud from which they emerged stifled and unrecognizable.

About that time, Cleveland's Secretary of the Navy, Thomas Lamont, visited Oakland. The miniature naval war on the estuary aroused his professional interest, and he listened attentively while Davie gave his version of the strife. Davie was particularly disturbed by the refusal of the ferryboat captains to allow the Rosalie to pass. Lamont inquired about details of that vessel's construction. Was she soundly built? Could she withstand a considerable blow on, say, her bow—such, for instance, as might be sustained in a severe collision? Davie replied in the affirmative, and Lamont suggested mildly that he might profitably consult a maritime attorney. Davie took the hint, posted himself on the legal aspects of the situation, and prepared for action.

On one of her trips a day or two later, the Rosalie
lagged behind and allowed the railroad's ferry, the Alameda, to enter the estuary first. The Rosalie then drew astern and gave the signal for passing. The rival boat continued its course, weaving from side to side to prevent the other craft from slipping past. The Rosalie crept closer, repeating her signal several times. It was ignored, as usual. What happened next, however, was not. From the pilot house of the Rosalie orders were issued to clear the passengers from the bow; then the engine-room signal jingled for full speed ahead. The fast vessel gained momentum, rapidly closed the gap between her sharp bow and the stern of the Alameda. When the officers of the railroad boat realized what was impending, it was too late to avoid a collision. The ships met with a crash, the Rosalie's prow cutting fifteen feet into the Alameda's stern.

Passengers on both ships picked themselves up and rushed to the rails. The Rosalie backed off, little harmed, while the captain of the Alameda, fearing that his craft was about to sink, beached her at the edge of the estuary. The Rosalie stood by, her passengers hooting while the patrons of the Alameda climbed over the side and waded ashore through the mud. The railroad had previously met the competition of the nickel ferries by slashing their own rate to five cents for the round trip. Patrons who had been lured by this unquestioned bargain were contemptuously called "nickel-splitters" by the anti-railroad faction, and the sight of the economical ones wading ashore provided material for the humorists crowding the Rosalie's rails. Thereafter the laws of passing were observed by the company's ferries.

But warfare on the estuary was not at an end. The nickel ferries finally established their Oakland terminus at a point some distance beyond the railroad's slip. To reach the new dock, it was necessary to pass the railroad's wooden drawbridge at the foot of Webster Street, over which it operated trains, on an hourly schedule, between Oakland and Alameda. In its control of the bridge the company saw an opportunity to disrupt the schedule of its rival. Accordingly, the bridge-tender was instructed to keep the draw closed during the time its trains were on the Oakland side, and the tender thereupon became deaf to the signals of the rival ferries.

Half the population of the bay area awaited the next move of the nickel ferries expectantly. Again the public was not disappointed in its anticipation of prompt reprisals. The bridge-tender one day had a caller who explained to him the laws of right of way as they concerned the operation of drawbridges. The tender was unimpressed. He was a railroad employee and it seemed to him sound judgment to obey the orders of those who paid his wages. He continued to ignore the signals of the nickel ferries while the company's trains were on the Oakland side of the estuary. One day the Rosalie's whistle was more persistent than usual; moreover, she continued to edge upstream until her bow was uncommonly close to the closed draw. A deckhand appeared at the ferry's bow with a coil of rope, which he tossed upward. A man who had been loitering on the bridge caught its end, drew in the slack, and hoisted up a hawser that was attached to its end. In an instant, the hawser was made fast to one of the wooden supports of the bridge. At the same time the Rosalie, her engines reversed, drew away from the bridge. The slack of the hawser was rapidly taken up and the loiterer raced to safety on shore. The bridge-tender did not act so promptly; instead he lost his head and ran about panic-stricken in the center of the draw. While this was going on, the hawser snapped taut and, with a crash of rending timbers, the draw tilted sharply and dropped into the estuary. The wreckage floated off with the drenched tender clinging to its top, and the ferry passed on to its dock.

The exploit caused Davie's arrest, but a friendly grand jury delayed issuing an indictment and he was never brought to trial. This episode marked the end of active warfare on the estuary. The railroad was then meeting successive defeats in its legal fight to maintain its Oakland waterfront monopoly, and it preferred to devote its energies to that more important issue. Moreover, the company realized that the nickel ferries were operating at a loss and that their backers would eventually tire of the game. This prediction proved correct. A few months later the rival line went out of existence and the Southern Pacific, again in control of the traffic across the bay, restored its former rates.
During the spring of 1880, half a hundred workmen put
the finishing touches on Hopkins's Nob Hill mansion—which Uncle Mark had not lived quite long enough to occupy—and Leland Stanford and his wife and son set off on another of their protracted junkets to Europe.

Two hundred and forty miles to the south, events of another nature were taking place. The construction crews of the company's new southern route were pushing through the deserts of the Southwest to complete a second through-line to the East, and the Southern Pacific's land office was busy populating the broad area of the lower San Joaquin Valley.

From the '70s onward, circulars setting forth the advantages of the region south of Fresno had been widely distributed through the East and Middle West. Settlers were urged to come west and buy railroad land, at extremely liberal terms, in the new Eden. The circulars were effective; the settlers came—long emigrant trainloads of them, complete communities that rolled westward as a unit, one family to a car that was jammed with household furniture, farm implements, horses, cows, children, young fruit trees, seed for the first season's problematical crops. The emigrants reached the new land of opportunity, dusty cars were shunted on sidings, and from their doors groups of travelers looked out at one or another of a dozen barren stations south of Fresno: Goshen, Tulare, Kingsburg, Tipton, Hanford...

The Argonauts descended—and took up one of the most remarkable struggles for existence in the history of the pioneer West. Throughout the decade of the '70s the American farmer's instinct to hold on to his unproductive acres up to the point of actual starvation was demonstrated to perfection by these settlers in the Tulare basin. They were inhabiting a region potentially as fertile as any in the country, which, before the century was out, was to be transformed into a park-like district of vineyards and orange groves, traversed by well-kept roads and dotted

with the mansard roofs and stable towers of a spacious era.

It was a different story in the '70s, when the board
shacks of the pioneers were first thrown up in the parched
valley. The seasons were a cycle of discomfort. In sum-
mer furnace-like winds swept down from the north, leav-
ing burnt crops and fruit trees in their wake. Winter
brought floods and washouts, spring frosts destroyed what-
ever young crops were above ground, and the sandstorms
of autumn often completed the destruction. Homeliev-
ness for the green meadows of the East, and their common
poverty, united the settlers into a group so compact that
when a new obstacle presented itself, they surprised the
West with their united opposition.

Having no property but their unproductive land, no
working capital, and no resources except their labor, the
group pooled the latter and set to work to build a system
of water-distribution that would make their sterile acres
productive. As the work progressed, it became in the li-
ter sense a race against starvation. Foothill streams were
dammed, miles of irrigation canals and tributary ditches
were dug about the edges of rocky hillsides, all without
proper tools or equipment. Because there was no money
to hire engineers to run their lines, they twice bungled
the job, and the relics of one of their abandoned canals, a
slanting scar across the face of a Sierra foothill, is still to
be seen. Motorists, streaking past on the paved highway
below, regard it with curiosity.

The staple food of the construction gangs was corn, in-
adequately ground in household coffee-mills, supported by
jackrabbit stew and varied by occasional feasts of trout
from foothill streams. There were repeated setbacks and
almost interminable delays. But the work was at last com-
pleted; the hoped-for streams of water reached the parched
fields, and the fields responded with startling gen-
erosity. For the first time, except in the railroad's circulars,
Starvation Valley began to belie its name. Figuratively, the
farmers enjoyed the fruits of victory; actually, they set to
work to learn, with more costly errors, the technique of
irrigation farming. Nevertheless, life in the Tulare basin
grew easier. The sack of corn and the coffee mill were no
longer mainstays in the farmhouse kitchens, and letters
sent back to old communities beyond the Rockies began
to strain credulity by boasts of the variety and quantity of crops. The hard-won victory over natural forces brought easier times to the valley.

Other forces remained to be dealt with. The Big Four were engaged in the huge scheme of expansion necessary to their plan for control of the traffic of the Coast. To the north, the costly road of the Oregon branch was pushing across the granite ridges of the Siskiyous, and many miles of unpopulated desert remained to be traversed on the long race to El Paso. Revenue had to be got where it was available, and little was allowed to escape officials at Fourth and Townsend streets. The new signs of prosperity in the Tulare basin were not overlooked.

The company's methods were characteristically direct. According to the circulars sent out by the land department, settlers were not to be required to pay for the property until the railroad could convey title to it. It could convey title only after the federal grants—of which this land was part—were accepted from the government. Hence the land the settlers had occupied during the early years and laboriously made profitable was owned, not by themselves or the railroad, but by the national government, and was reserved by the government until such time as the company wished to claim title to it. The latter had delayed taking over ownership for an understandable reason: ownership of property involves the obligation to pay taxes, and a company that was bending its resources to achieve a monopoly of Pacific Coast transportation had no money to spare for taxes. The settlers of the Fresno-Tulare district held their land by right of documents that proved less stable than deeds: by guarantees from the railroad that their claim to the property would be respected; that the sale price, when it was fixed, would be moderate. Ten dollars an acre was the highest price mentioned in the railroad's literature, and from $2.50 to $5.00 per acre was fixed as the "average" price. Moreover, the settlers' agreements stated that:

"In ascertaining the value, any improvement that a settler or other person may have on the lands will not be taken into consideration: neither will the price be increased in consequence thereof. Settlers are thus assured that in

addition to being accorded the first privilege of purchase, they will be protected in their improvements."

These were explicit promises, made in the name of the largest corporation in the West. They were made because the company wished to populate the country through which its new line passed without incurring the expense of taking over ownership of the land during the first unproductive years. It was an excellent piece of business for the railroad. Population meant not only traffic but enhanced values of the vast areas of government land it had received for building the road.

In 1877, the lean years in Starvation Valley having come to an end, the company began to assume title to the lands and, of course, immediately fixed prices for sale to the public. The settlers then learned three things:

That the land they were occupying was being placed on the open market for sale to the highest bidder.

That the sale price had been fixed, not at from $2.50 to $10.00 per acre, but at from $25.00 to $40.00 per acre, and that every improvement they had made—houses, roads, orchards, crops, and their irrigation system—had been considered and charged for in the company's sale price.

The settlers were not concerned when these facts reached them. The company, they recognized, was engaged in many activities; it had merely overlooked the earlier promises to them. To the railroad's local agents they presented copies of the papers which, they supposed, guaranteed their rights, and offered to begin purchasing the farms on the terms originally specified. The documents were forwarded to headquarters at San Francisco and the settlers went about their business while they awaited a reply. No reply was forthcoming. Weeks passed without an acknowledgment of their protest. Meantime, plans for the public sale of the property went forward.

It was not until advertisements appeared throughout the state offering the lands for public sale that the settlers began to grow apprehensive. Thereupon anger and determination took the place of confidence. The community that had fought through to success during the earlier period refused to give way before this new threat. Because they were accustomed to acting together in adversity, the
Events then followed one another rapidly. The railroad's advertising campaign had begun to produce results. The offer of improved, irrigated lands for sale attracted groups of purchasers, and within a few weeks half a dozen new houses had been added to the settlers' community. New fields were laid out and new ditches were dug to tap the irrigation canal. For a time the settlers remained inactive; then one moonless night a crowd assembled, moved down dusty roads to one of the new houses. Its occupants were ordered to leave and, in silence, household possessions were removed beyond the danger area. New timbers were soaked with oil and for the next hour a prophetic red glow spread over the Tulare basin. News of the burning traveled. Prospective buyers of the land weighed its implications and decided to purchase elsewhere. The company's land boom collapsed.

Word of the midnight bonfire filtered upward through the railroad's organization and presently engaged the attention of the executives in San Francisco. One of the results was that a few days later an afternoon train from the north deposited two strangers at Hanford. These were prospective settlers, but of another variety than those who had preceded them. They had come into the valley, as it later developed, because the railroad had offered them free farms provided they were able to maintain possession of them against the settlers. The confident pair, Hartt and Crow, announced their ability to uphold their part of the bargain.

Their arrival completed the preparatory work. From the federal court the railroad had secured writs of ejectment against several of the original settlers. These were put in the hands of the federal marshal of the district, with instructions to dispossess the farmers named and install Hartt and Crow in their places.

On May 10, 1880 the marshal arrived at Hanford to carry out his orders, and a feeling of expectancy gripped the valley. The League members were by then determined to allow none of their number to be ejected until their case was passed on by the Supreme Court; public opinion of the entire countryside supported them. The president of the League, and its spokesman, was Major Thomas McQuiddy, one of the original settlers. McQuiddy continued to advise moderation and sent an appeal to the marshal urging him not to serve the writs. But early the next morning, before his message had been delivered, the official set off to carry them into effect.

The marshal traveled in a livery buggy, attended by the local land agent of the railroad. In a second buggy, close behind, rode Hartt and Crow, their vehicle supplied with shotguns, rifles, revolvers, and supplies of ammunition. The shotgun shells had been emptied of their original contents and reloaded with lead slugs. The two were taking no avoidable chances.

For an hour the two vehicles rolled across the countryside, then came to a stop inside the gate of a settler named Branden. A meeting of the League was in progress down the valley, and Branden was attending it. The four entered the farmhouse and stripped it of its possessions, deposing them at the roadside. The marshal thereupon declared Hartt lawfully in possession of the property. Four loaded rifle cartridges were left on the doorstep, a symbolic greeting to Branden on his return. The marshal, still attended by his escort, continued on to serve his second writ, this time on a farmer named Brewer, three miles and a half to the north.

Toward the middle of the morning the party arrived before Brewer's farm. Brewer was at work in his fields. With
his three companions the marshal drove through the yard, past the farmhouse. He had progressed some distance into the field when a group of a dozen or more settlers came forward to meet them. The buggies drew to a stop, their occupants regarding the approaching group. They were League members, a serious-faced group of farmers who advanced slowly, several on horseback, the others on foot. They carried no visible weapons, though it developed that about half of them were armed with pistols.

The marshal descended from his buggy and went forward to meet the group. A spokesman for the farmers demanded that he delay dispossessing any of their number until the higher court had passed on the legality of the points at issue. The marshal replied that he had no choice in the matter and must obey orders. Thereupon the settlers insisted that they would not allow him to proceed. The group closed about him and demanded his surrender on the promise that he would be conducted to the railroad station and seen safely out of the county. The marshal, who had no taste for his role, submitted. Four settlers were assigned to conduct him and the railroad’s agent to the nearest station.

Thirty yards away, Hartt and Crow sat in their buggy, interested spectators of what was going on. When it grew clear that the settlers were gaining control of the situation, Hartt reached to the floor of the buggy. His hand closed over the stock of his rifle.

“Let’s shoot,” said he.

His companion, the cooler head of the two, waved for him to be silent. It was not yet time for action. It became time a second or two later.

A man on horseback, James Harris, left the group and rode toward the buggy. He stopped a few feet distant and ordered the two to give up their weapons. Crow’s shotgun, its hammers cocked, lay between his knees. He threw its stock to his shoulder, took deliberate aim, and pulled the trigger. Harris received the discharge full in the face. He was blown from the saddle.

The shot caused the group to spin around. As Harris’s body fell, his neighbor, a farmer named Henderson, spurred forward, drawing his revolver. The sights were focused on Crow, the hammer descended, but the cartridge failed to explode. The narrow seat cramped the movements of the now active pair in the buggy. Hartt, gun in hand, started to spring to the ground. Henderson’s revolver worked then, and Hartt pitched to the ground, shot in the stomach. The next second Crow’s shotgun spoke again, killing Henderson. He tossed the empty gun away, seized a revolver, and leaped from the buggy, shooting into the group of farmers. He fired rapidly and accurately, wasting no ammunition. Daniel Kelly, urging his frightened horse forward, was shot three times in the body. Iver Kneutson fell dead as he drew his revolver. Edward Haymaker crumpled to the ground, shot in the head. Archibald McGregor, unarmed and on foot, received two bullets in his chest and ran screaming across the field. From a distance of a hundred and fifty feet Crow sent another bullet into his back and he pitched forward on his face in the grass.

An abrupt silence descended. The reek of black powder drifted over the field. For some seconds no one moved; dead and wounded lay unattended on the ground. Crow alone was busy; he had seized the opportunity to reload his guns. The spell of inaction was broken by the appearance, at a full gallop, of the League’s leader, who had spent the morning trying to locate and overtake the marshal. McQuiddy assumed charge, directed the federal officer to forbid further shooting, then turned toward the still menacing Crow. The latter suddenly whirled about, bent low, and scurried toward the protection of the near-by barn. He gained the building, ran half around it, then turned and raced toward an adjacent field of standing wheat. Still stooping, he disappeared between the tall stalks, and Major McQuiddy, issued an order:

“Don’t let that man escape!”

One of the survivors, whose identity was persistently kept secret by his companions, took up the trampled trail through the wheat. For a mile and a half, across a series of wheatfields, the flight and pursuit continued. McQuiddy meantime had guessed that the fugitive would try to reach the farm of his brother-in-law, one Hass. He sent two mounted men to watch there for his appearance. These waited beside a bridge over the irrigation canal near the Hass farm. There, a moment after their arrival, Hass himself appeared, driving a light farm wagon. In its bed
were six additional guns and further supplies of ammunition.

"Where's Crow?" he shouted to the waiting pair.

At that instant Crow himself plunged into sight along the irrigation canal. He saw the two waiting at the bridge, leaped to cover, and raised his rifle. But the unknown who had followed him into the wheatfield was bringing the chase to a close. His rifle, not Crow's, spoke first. Crow spun about and fell dead beside the ditch.

Meanwhile on the field at Brewer's farm the survivors were carrying the fallen men to the farmhouse. Kneutson, Harris, and Henderson were placed on the porch; they were dead. The wounded—Kelly, McGregor, Haymaker, Hart—were carried inside, crowding the floor of the hot little room. Two doctors, summoned from Hanford, found three of them mortally wounded. McGregor and Kelly died that night, Hart the next day. Of the eight hit, seven died. Haymaker eventually recovered.

This ended what became known in California as the Battle of Mussel Slough. Its result was the rout of the settlers and the defeat of their cause. Even public sympathy was largely denied them, for as soon as news of the happenings on Brewer's field filtered into neighboring towns, railroad officials, in control of communication, clamped down a rigid censorship. At Goshen, the nearest telegraph office, a notice was posted that company telegrams only would be transmitted. At Hanford, railroad officials announced that the telegraph office there had been closed and its operator driven away by the outlaw farmers; that, because of "armed insurrection" in the district, the passage of all trains had been canceled.

In San Francisco a group of railroad officials, headed by Charles Crocker, made the rounds of the newspaper offices, where they convinced editors that their agents had been attacked by bands of ruffians. Other avenues of information being closed, the papers printed the version, and in that form the account of the fight was sent throughout the country. Later, other facts came to light. Reporters reached the spot and wired in their stories. Witnesses and survivors gave testimony. The railroad's telegraph operator at Hanford reached San Francisco and made it known that it was the company officials, not the farmers, who had ordered him from his instrument and closed the office.

The battle was a three-day sensation. The five dead farmers were buried on May 12 and a funeral queue two miles long followed the hearses to the cemetery. A few weeks later their families were evicted. Many arrests followed; five of the settlers received jail sentences, and the League recognized the futility of further resistance. From discouragement and from lack of funds to fight further, the pending test case was dropped.

Ironically, some years later the identical question between the railroad and settlers' rights was raised in another county of the state. This time the landowners succeeded in carrying their appeal to the Supreme Court. The decision upheld their agreements with the railroad.

Nearly twenty years later, a young Californian, Frank Norris, published a massive novel, *The Octopus*, and in one of its later chapters the morning on Brewer's farm was made to live again in one of the most impressive passages in the whole range of American literature.

May 10, 1880 was forgotten by the country at large before the week was out. California and the West remembered it a little longer. The railroad company, engaged in more far-reaching activities, gave the incident little further attention. For more than a score of years afterwards, Tulare County observed the day with public memorial services. But these too have been forgotten. Today in Hanford and Goshen, inquiry for the location of Brewer's farm awakens no glimmer of memory.