

“A Twentieth Century Palace of Commerce. The Emporium of San Francisco”

From the *Overland Monthly*, Vol. XXVI. (Second series),
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“The Emporium. From the architects’ drawing. Courtesy Pissis & Moore.”
(pp. 461)

“An idea suggests itself as one stands before that vast monument to the commerce of the 20th Century on Market Street, San Francisco, – The Emporium. Passers may not have given the subject a thought as they hurried back and forth day after day as this building neared completion, – for this is the day of great buildings, – but this Emporium building is the greatest of its kind on earth. The idea that suggests itself is, – Would it not be interesting to place in the heart of this structure – the climax of the architect’s skill – a museum, showing by models or object lessons the development of commerce in its many branches from the first dawning of primitive barter down to the present methods of trade, steel-steamships, Bon Marchés, and Emporium Buildings? Dugouts and wampum would furnish vistas of history that would cause the sight-seer more fully to realize that commerce as well as the sciences have influenced the development of the human race. The study of the stars and the study of the almighty dollar and what it represents have marched hand in hand down this vista of the ages, until their humble origin and first steps

have been forgotten. There is a world of history and a world of human achievements mixed with the mortar and iron in one of these wonderful marts. The products from the utter-most parts of the earth meet within the stone and iron walls, and make of it a museum of modern manufactures, that outrivals the dreams of Cleopatra, and is within itself a miniature World's Fair. It all represents a chapter in the romance of history, as the introduction of the silver coin, doing away with the long lines of camels that carried on their swaying backs the barter between Egypt and Chaldea, represents another.

“In the ancient world the two important conditions for the extension of international traffic – transport facilities and security – were conspicuously wanting.

“On the collapse of the Roman Empire the ancient seats of industry and commerce were undergoing the process of decay, and civilization began to show symptoms of moving northward. During the feudal ages Europe afforded little encouragement for the extension of trade and international commerce was at a low ebb. The commercial spirit had to seek for itself places of security, and these could only be found in municipally governed towns which were capable of defending themselves. For mutual protection such towns formed themselves into leagues, and the productive arts and manufacturing industries flourished under the system. Such was the origin of the Hanseatic League, which, founded in 1241, extended itself from Lubeck and Hamburg until it included eighty-five important towns. What Venice was in the Mediterranean, the towns of Holland were in the northern seas.

“The next stage of development reached by commerce was marked by the discovery of the mariner's compass. The Cape of Good Hope was doubled, India, the Spice Islands, and China, were visited, and a new world was discovered.

At last the great final change was affected by the utilization of steam power on sea and land and in factories. During the three centuries preceding this marvelous innovation the whole world had been explored, and all parts of it had been brought into commercial intercourse.

“The extension of commerce during the present century is unparalleled (sic) in history. At every great progressive stride made by commerce new features in her operations have displayed themselves not only in a general but also in a detail point of view. The most conspicuous of the latter in the present age is the institution of department establishments for the local distribution of commodities of every kind and description. These great establishments occupy relatively the same position in a nation which the greater emporiums of commerce do in the world at large; they are, in fact, retail emporiums for the concentration and distribution of foreign and domestic productions locally

desirable and in demand, and have been brought into vogue by the vast scope of modern commerce.

“The most prominent of these institutions are the Bon Marchés and Louvre of Paris, Whiteley’s of London, Wanamaker’s of Philadelphia, Marshall Field & Co. of Chicago, and Hilton, Hughes & Denning of New York. These are soon to be more than equaled in San Francisco.

“Only he that has wandered hour after hour through the corridors, up and down the grand stairways, along the almost endless aisles, of such wonderful expositions as the Louvre and the Bon Marchés in Paris can form any adequate conception of what this Emporium of San Francisco, a greater exposition, will be. The eye must really see to believe, the mind can not grasp it aided simply by photograph and printed letter.

“Convenience and the reduction of retail prices are the mainsprings of the success which attends these great department emporiums. The concentration of the productions of all industries at a single point in a flourishing seat of population affords the consumer facilities for purchase without waste of time which individual stores scattered over a large area cannot present; while the fact that most of the goods with which these establishments are stocked are supplied directly from the manufacture, without the intervention of the wholesale dealer and middle-men, points conclusively to low prices.

“These may be regarded as the chief factors of success, but there are others, far from unimportant, which may be catalogued under the general term *attractions*. Such great institutions as those mentioned afford veritable spectacles, which invite the attention of the resident and transient public alike. The magnificence and gorgeousness of the displays, the immense variety of goods, the grandeur of the building, the marble stairways and wide passages, and the great concourse of people, purchasers, idlers, and sightseers, promenading through the numerous departments, excite the wonder of the visitor and arouse in him feelings of pleasure and satisfaction second only to those experienced on a visit to a world’s fair.

“Establishments of this character exist in all of the large cities of the world. San Francisco has been, perhaps, dilatory in producing an institution of the kind befitting her rank as Queen of the Pacific, but she is now about to make amends, and will soon have an emporium greater in area, more magnificent in architecture, and more complete in all its arrangements than any of the great establishments mentioned or existing elsewhere. This vast enterprise, which when completed will represent a capital of five million dollars and give employment to from two thousand and to two thousand five hundred people, has been created and carried out by the brains and capital of San Francisco’s own citizens, and is one of the most potent indications of the dawn of the new era of prosperity which is opening for our State.

“Five and twenty years ago the stranger visiting San Francisco was struck with wonder at beholding a city that had sprung up in two decades on the site of an insignificant trading post. The Cosmopolitan, Occidental, Lick House, and the Grand Hotel, had been built; on Montgomery, Kearney, and Market streets fine stores offered the purchaser almost every variety of articles manufactured in all quarters of the globe; theaters had been built, great churches had been erected, and the visitor marveled at the tremendous energy and activity displayed by the city builders of the West. Commerce was the cause of this wonderful transformation; for it was California’s wealth in gold, the commercial medium of exchange, that started her in her career of prosperity.

“But the contrast between the aspect of the city at the time alluded to and that which it now wears is immense. The foundation stones of the Palace Hotel and the New City Hall had not been laid, California Street Hill and Van Ness Avenue were almost without buildings; the railroad ran down Valencia Street, and steam paddies were leveling sand hills south of Market Street; none of the notably great and fine business structures and private mansions that now adorn San Francisco then existed. Today they proclaim the rapidity and permanency of her progress, and the new building will be a worthy addition to them, both architectural and commercial.

“Its site was formerly owned by the Society of Jesus and for many years was occupied by the Jesuit College. After the Society moved to their new quarters, the lot was purchased by the Parrott Estate, but owing to its great size the Estate could determine upon no advantageous improvement until the Emporium Company was formed, and it was decided to erect a structure exceptionally ornamental to the city and to be devoted to an enterprise in step with the entire building for twenty years has been made with this Company.

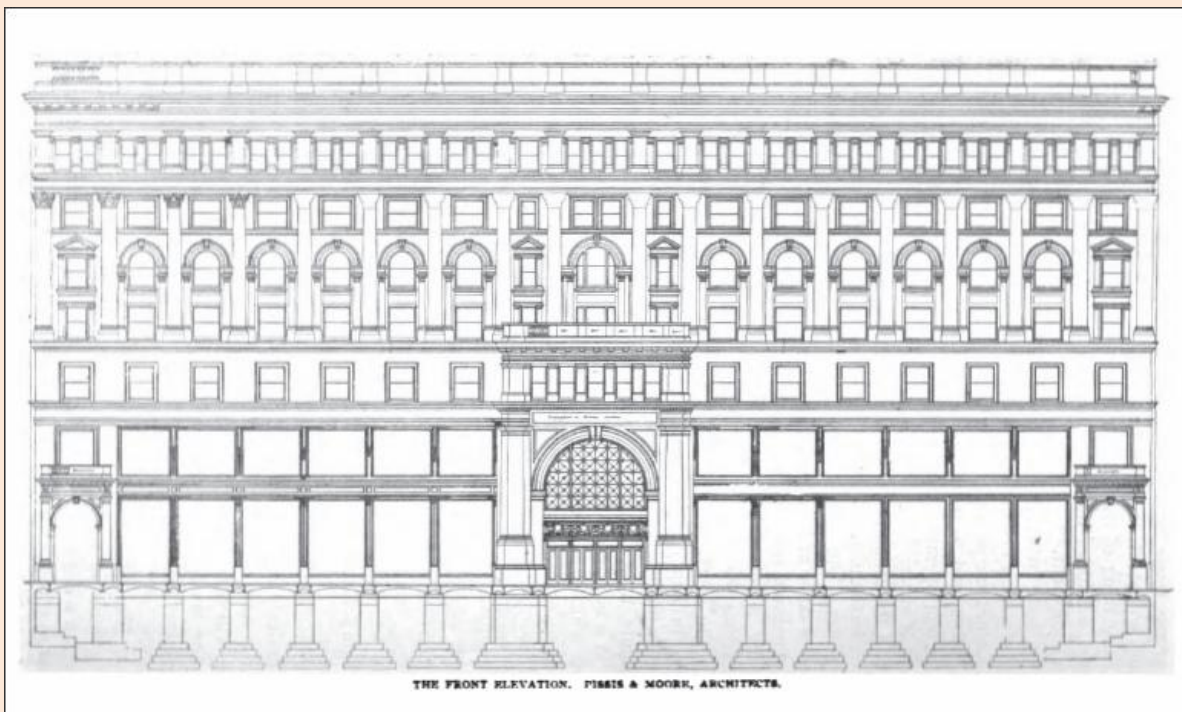
“No more favorable position could have been chosen for the establishment. Situated at a point on the main artery of the city most easy of access from all parts; placed in the very center of public movement; within short distance of the New City Hall and the future Post Office, the building will be a focus of congregation and a lodestone of attraction.

“As you stand on Market Street and gaze at the magnificent façade, 275 feet in length and seven stories high, you can hardly realize the great size of its component parts. This is due to the symmetry and harmony of the architecture, the style of which is Modern Renaissance. Whether you look at the grand main entrance, with its flanking Doric pilasters and massive entablature, or at that striking feature of the façade, the long row of Corinthian columns, you are hardly conscious of their real size. The superficial area of the main entrance is immense, the span of the arch alone being 25 feet and its height 40 feet. It is the largest single bond arch as yet constructed in any

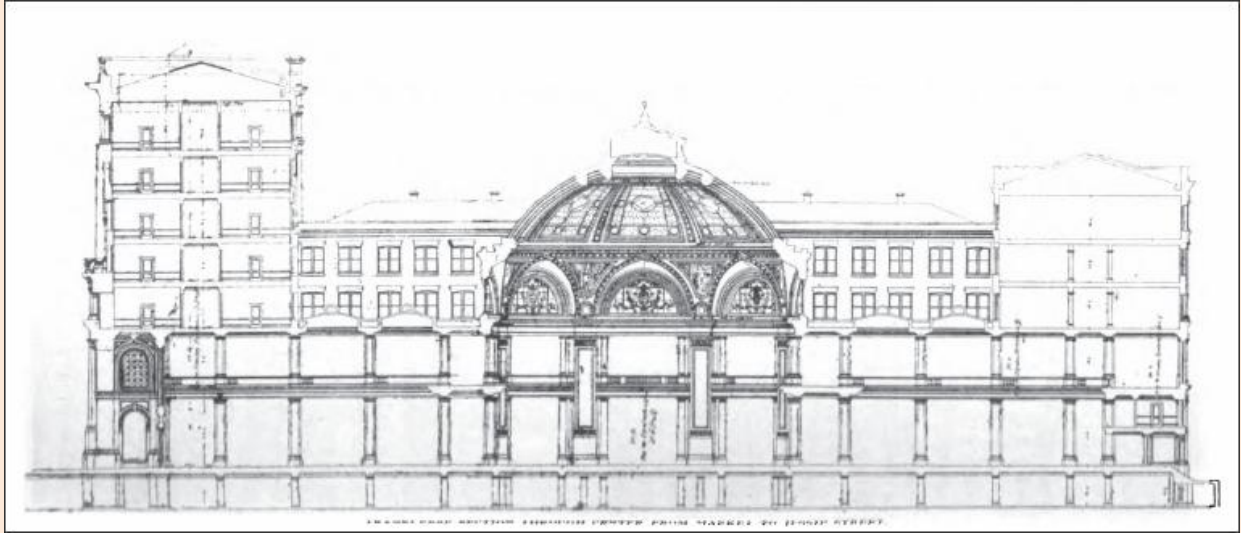
mercantile building or business block, and some of the stones used in it weigh twelve and even fourteen tons each.

“The building is provided with two other handsome entrances, one at each end, leading to the office floors of the building, and the spaces between them and the main entrance are occupied by great show windows, twelve in number, which will present an almost unbroken surface of plate glass and furnish a gorgeous spectacle with their brilliant displays of rich goods. The second story will also be similarly glazed on the Market Street front.

“Above the third story rises the imposing colonnade of Corinthian columns, eighteen in number, flanked to half their height by pilasters. These columns reach to the top of the sixth story, thus covering with bases and capitals included, a height of three stories. Their entablature is simple and elegant, and above it rises the façade of the seventh story, which is surmounted by a rich cornice and stone balustrade.



“The front elevation. Pissis & Moore, Architects.” (pp. 478)



(pp. 464)

“This beautiful front is built entirely of Oregon gray sandstone, taken from the Pioneer Quarry, Lincoln County, and Yaquina Bay, Oregon. About 5500 tons of this handsome building material, which resembles granite, was used in the construction.

“But even the great length and height of the façade do not fully convey a realization of the actual magnitude of the edifice; for it has a depth of no less than 350 feet, and therefore, an area of 96,250 square feet, while that of the basement is still larger by 8,250 square feet, owing to extensions of twenty feet under Market Street and ten feet under Jessie Street. This immense basement will be complete and perfect in all its numerous arrangements, and it will be devoted mainly to departments of this great store; but in it will also be located the heating and ventilating apparatus, an electric plant, supplying motive power for the elevators and light for innumerable incandescent and arc burners, and all the modern contrivances or the comfort and convenience of the numerous occupants of the building.

“A grand and lofty vestibule, embellished with magnificent carvings in stone, and having show windows upon either side, forms a fitting entrance to this great establishment. It is without doubt the grandest entrance to any mercantile establishment. From this vestibule the visitor passes through the doors and beholds a spectacle unequalled in the world. This is a single room 275 feet wide, 350 feet long, and from 45 to 100 feet high. There is seen a forest of magnificent pillars, but nowhere is there a single partition to divide this vast room. The fixtures and shelving for the merchandise alone serve the purpose of dividing the different departments from one another. The visitor now stands upon the main aisle of the store, - a veritable highway. It is paved with beautiful marble and is forty feet wide. Along its sides begin the rows of

massive pillars which uphold the second story, built as balconies in this vast room. This grand aisle extends in a straight line for one hundred and twenty-five feet from both ends, and then with the same width of forty feet extends in semi-circular form to the right and left, forming a rotunda one hundred and forty feet in diameter, in the center of the store.

“This grand aisle is remarkable by reason of the fact that over the straight portion its ceiling is 45 feet from its floor, and over its circular portion comes the grand dome in the center, one hundred feet above the floor at its apex.

“On the east and west sides of the rotunda, and leading from the main aisle, are the grand and massive stairways, sixteen feet wide, which lead to the basement floor and to the second or mezzanine floor. Four huge, but nevertheless beautiful elevators, one upon each side of these stairways, run from the basement and second floor for the accommodation of passengers only.

“These superb stairways will be ornamental features of the Emporium, which will excite the admiration of every one. The wide steps and spacious landings will be of white marble, and the handsome railings, balustrades, and newel posts, of ornamental bronze. Costly chandeliers of beautiful design, ablaze by night with electric lights, will add to the grandeur and brilliancy of their appearance. Each stairway is continued from its broad landing on the first story in two flights, right and left, to the floor of the second story.

“Of the individual structural features the most conspicuous, and the most interesting to the visitor as a thing of beauty, with doubtless be the rotunda with its great light-supplying glass dome. One hundred and twenty-five tons of steel have been used in the construction of its framework. The beautiful windows at the base of the dome will be of ornamental art glass in figured designs by prominent artists, and the main skylights of crystallized plate glass in decorated design.

“A beautiful balustrade will extend along the entire edge of the second floor, and following this line, a space of sixteen feet wide will form the main aisle of the second floor, and as parts of this aisle, two graceful bridges will span the main aisle at the rotunda, thus facilitating passage from one side to the other on this second floor.

“An ornamented pavilion sixty feet in diameter, for the purpose of a Café, will occupy the center of the rotunda, and on its roof will be a fern garden, to be utilized when occasion requires for a bandstand.

“On a sub-mezzanine floor, respectively on the east and west side of the rotunda, are the ladies’ parlors and corresponding apartments for men, which will include reading and writing rooms.

“This peculiar and ingenious construction of the two main floors in one vast room, with their spacious aisles, off of which are located various departments, gives opportunity for a delightful promenade to either purchaser or sight-seer either by day or night. From five to ten thousand people will not overcrowd these aisles. At night, when the whole place is illuminated by countless electric lights, the aisles are hedged by beautiful grill fences, which temporarily enclose the departments, still giving opportunity for the display of the goods, and the band is dispensing its sweet strains to the there assembled throng, this establishment will form a picture heretofore only conceived in fairy land.

“Every conceivable article of merchandise will be carried, and each line will be more complete than that of any single store devoted entirely to that line in the city today.

“This grand structure will be completed and the department store ‘The Emporium’ will be opened about March 1st, 1896.

“Fifteen elevators, run by electric power, will be in operation for passengers and freight.

“The front of the five upper stories will be rented for office purposes, confined exclusively to professional and other callings of the highest standing. In its appointments this portion of the edifice will equal any building in San Francisco or the country. It will contain every convenience that modern architecture can furnish, and possess several new features of great advantage to the occupants. It is estimated that there will be from 300 to 350 offices, according to the final decision made as to the subdivision.

“Indicative of the high class of tenants for whom this portion of the building is intended is the fact that already the Supreme Court of California has leased the entire seventh floor for its court rooms and the transaction of its business in this city.

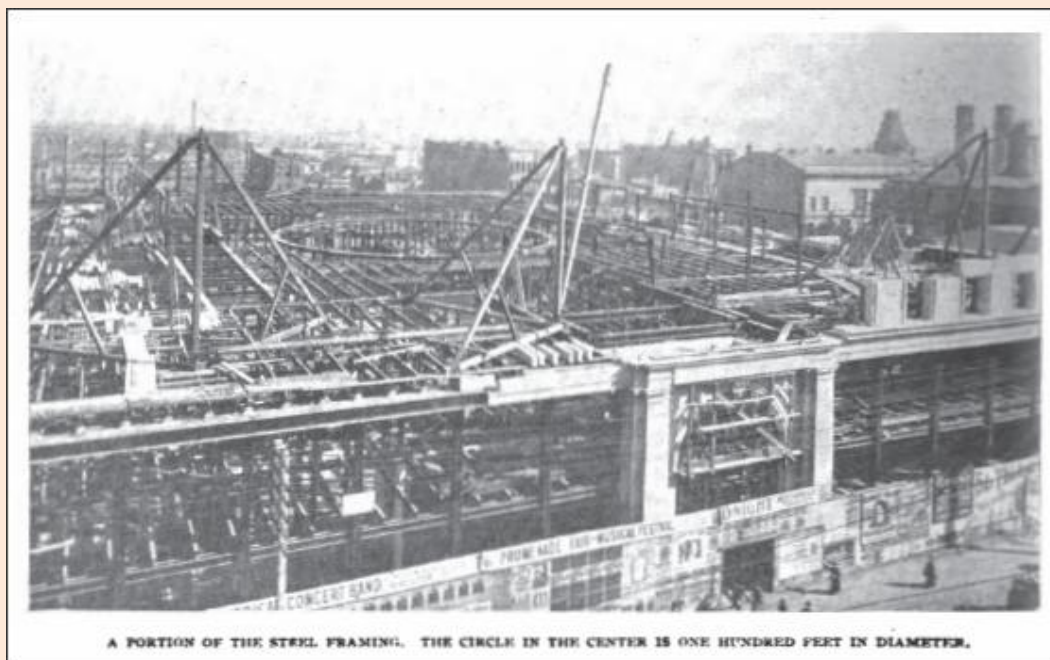
“The building has been made practically fireproof. Constructed throughout on a mammoth skeleton of steel, and protected laterally by brick fire walls against danger from outside, the structural material of the interior – mostly terra cotta, steel, and stone – reduces the risk of fire inside to a minimum. Each story that contains department stores – wherein will lie the bulk of combustible things – will be isolated, as it were, from those above and below it by an absolutely fireproof packing or stratum of concrete, composed of cement and ashes, laid beneath the floorings of the stories and rendering the transmission of flame from one story to the next almost impossible. At the same time the arrangements in the way of water supply, pipes, and hose, distributed all over the building for the suppression of fire, are so complete as to make it most improbable that a fire, if started at any point, could extend itself into a conflagration in any single story whatever.

“The great edifice is erected on a foundation as firm as human skill can make it, and terrible would be earthquake shock that could harm it. Three hundred concrete piers, wide-based and capped with granite, unyielding resist the pressure and support the steel-bound building as immovably as if it rested on adamantine rock. The granite, a great quantity of which has been used, is from our own State, being supplied by the Raymond Granite Company, Raymond, Fresno County.* It is of the finest quality in the country, and some of the blocks are very large. The granite step in the main entrance, 28 feet long and nearly 7 feet wide, is a marvel of its kind.

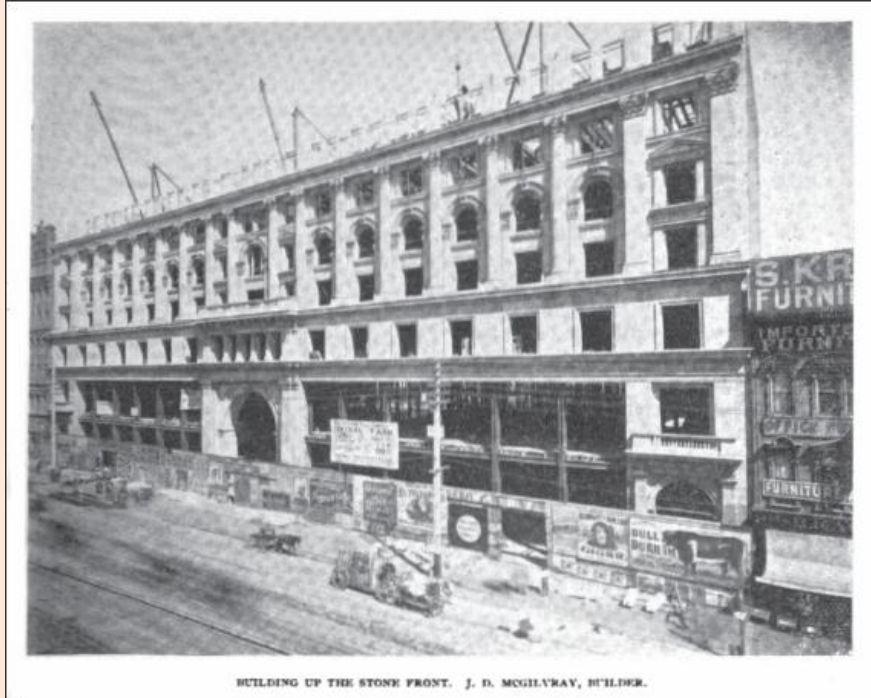
(The Raymond granite quarry is located in Madera County – not Fresno County. Peggy B. Perazzo)*

“Neither money nor thought has been spared to produce a building which, for style of architecture, for the sumptuousness of its interior, the perfection of its arrangements, and the multiplicity of its conveniences and attractions, will justly be regarded with pride by our citizens. The marble floors of the great hallway, of the passages and corridors, the lofty pillars which form the central supports, cased with the same beautiful stone, and the marble wainscots will be long-lasting though mute witnesses to the art of Ruffino & Bianchi, and an evidence of the grand conception of the designers, while the whole structure will be a noble monument to the commercial enterprise of Californians.

The Construction of The Building

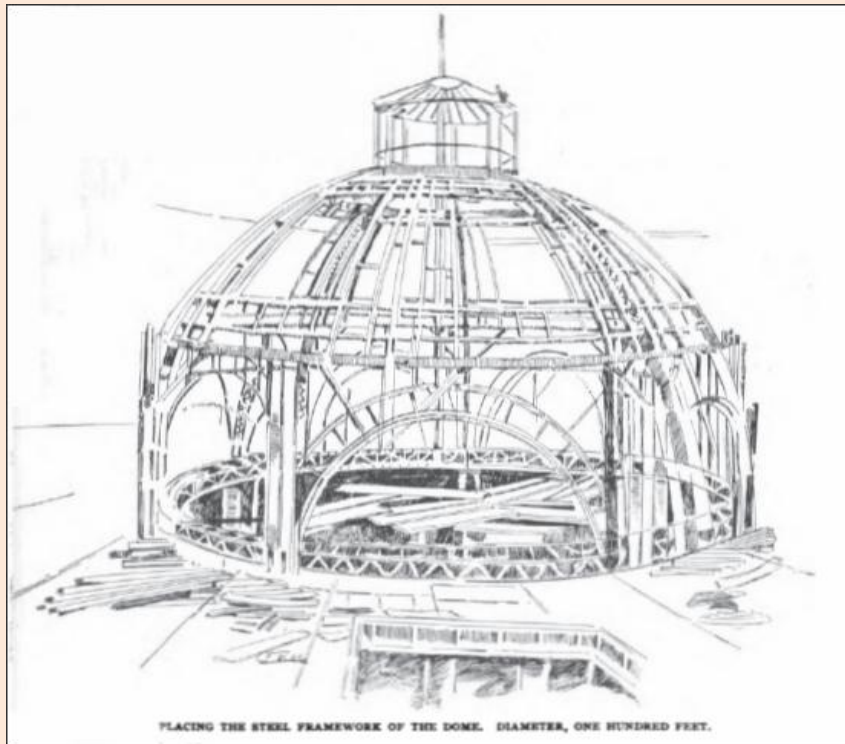


“A portion of the steel framing. The circle in the center is one hundred feet in diameter.” (pp. 462)



BUILDING UP THE STONE FRONT. J. D. MCGILVRAY, BUILDER.

“Building up the stone front. J. D. McGilvray, Builder.” (pp. 463)



PLACING THE STEEL FRAMEWORK OF THE DOME. DIAMETER, ONE HUNDRED FEET.

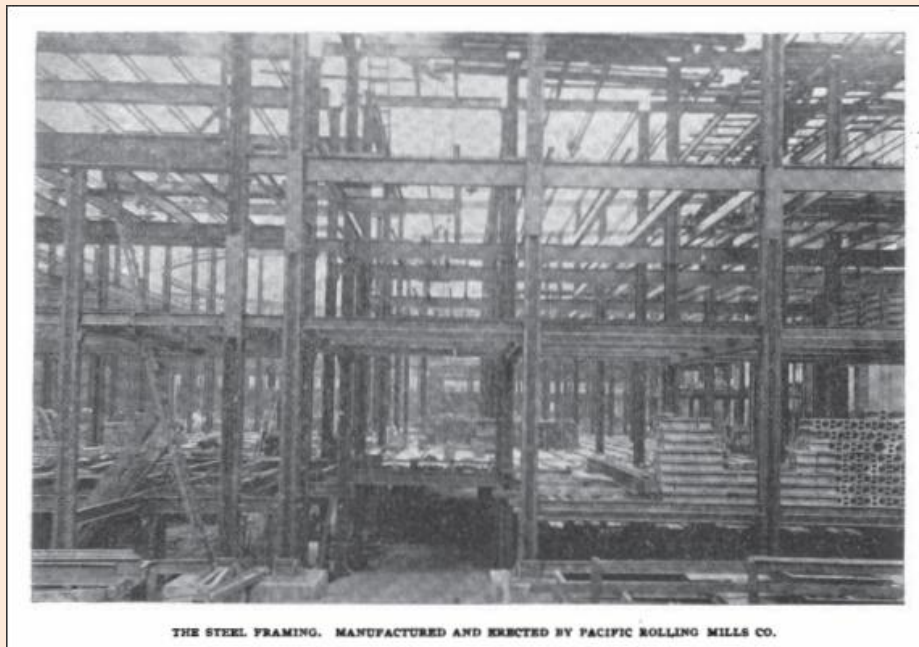
“Placing the steel framework of the dome. Diameter, one hundred feet.”
(pp. 465)





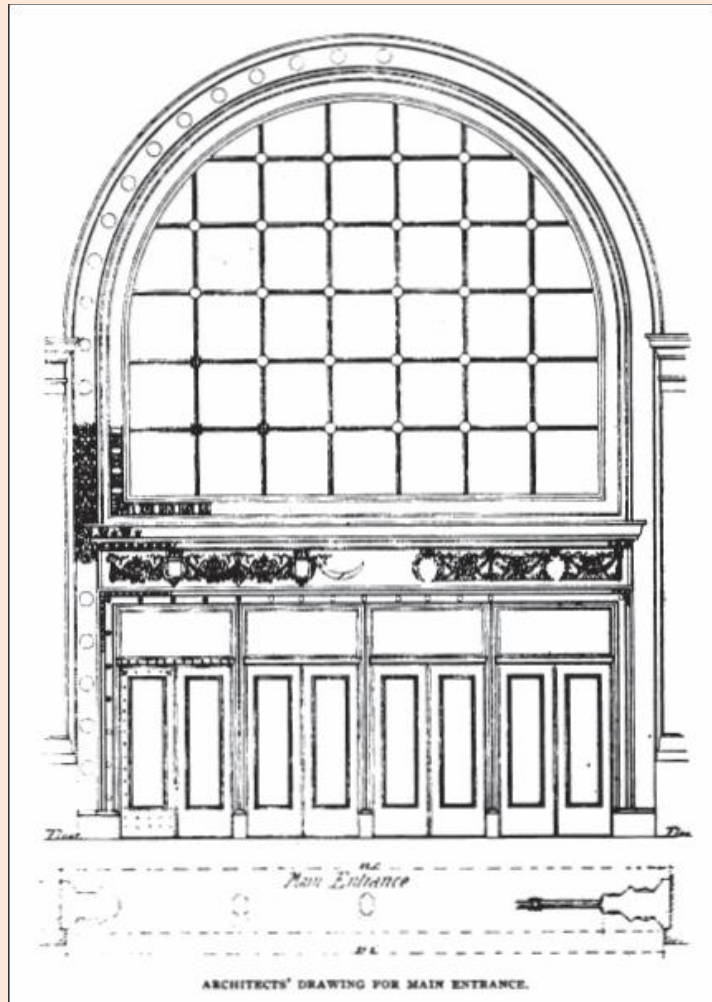
THE CONCRETE PIERS, BUILT BY GOODMAN.

“The concrete piers, built by Goodman.” (pp. 468)

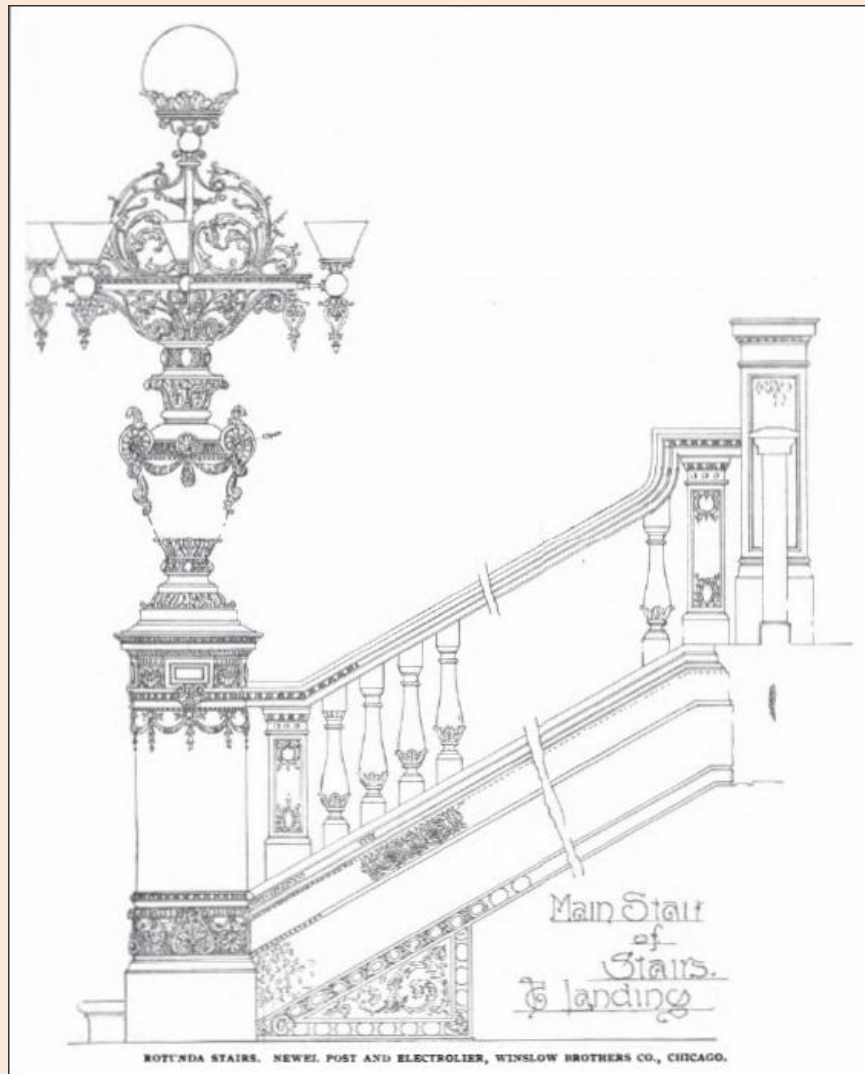


THE STEEL FRAMING. MANUFACTURED AND ERECTED BY PACIFIC ROLLING MILLS CO.

“The steel framing. Manufactured and erected by Pacific Rolling Mills Co.” (pp. 469)



“Architects’ drawing for main entrance.” (pp. 470)



“Rotunda stairs. Newel post and electrolier, Winslow Brothers Co., Chicago.”
(pp. 471)

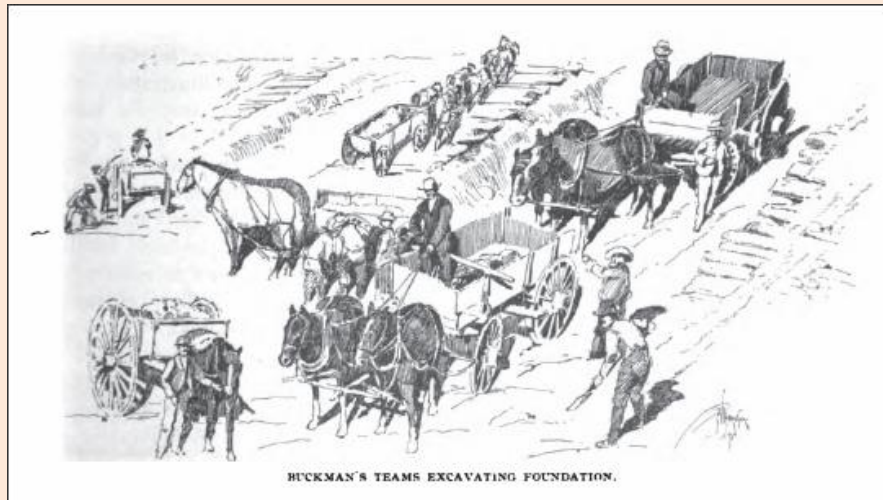
“When the Parrott Estate Company decided to build on the property purchased from the Jesuit fathers, they invited plans for building, the lower floors of which were to be used for a grand department store, and the upper floors for office purposes.

“The plans for the edifice were prepared by Messrs. Pissis & Moore, who were the architects of the Hibernia Bank, Mercantile Library, The Wenban, the Hotel Savoy, and a number of other buildings on our principal thoroughfares; and all the work has been performed under their supervision. The superintendent of construction of this as well as the other buildings erected by the Parrott Estate was our well-known Mr. F. Bernard.

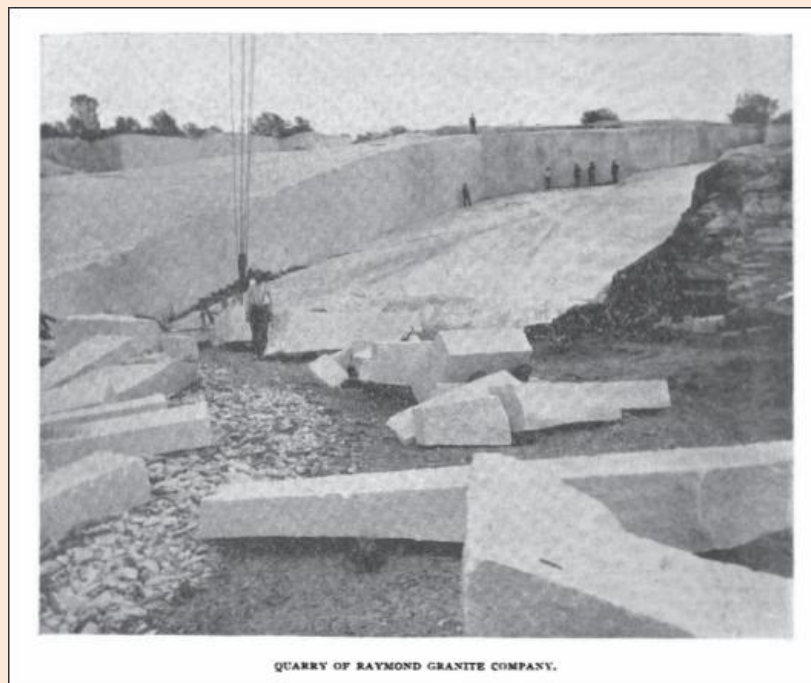
“The plans for the building having been accepted by the owners, the work of excavating the site began. The whole surface of the ground extending from Market to Jessie streets, including the portion of the streets covered by the sidewalk, a space of three hundred and eighty-one feet by two hundred and seventy-five feet, was excavated to the depth of twenty feet, requiring the removal of about 50,000 cubic yards of earth. A. E. Buckman, the contractor, pushed the work with a great deal of vigor, sometimes having as many as one hundred teams employed.

“In addition to this the foundations for the piers and walls were excavated to a depth of about eight feet. This was difficult work, as each pier had to be sheet-piled to prevent the sand from running as below this level the ground is filled with water. The sheet-piling was driven down, the water and sand pumped out, and in the spaces was placed the concrete for foundations. The building is almost entirely built on isolated concrete piers, of which there are three hundred and two, varying in size from nine feet square to twenty-two feet square, and eight feet deep. All of the piers were put in at least six feet below the water level. The sixteen large piers on the Market Street front, which carry the whole frontage of steel and stone, were constructed very carefully of Josson cement, sharp-beach gravel, and crushed basalt rock, no finer or more carefully constructed piers have ever been built, and they reflect credit on George Goodman, the veteran contractor. Mr. Goodman also built the exterior walls and retaining walls along the whole length of the street frontage, two hundred and seventy-five feet in length and fifteen feet high, and has laid the first three floors of the building in concrete composed of ashes, cinders, and cement, for fire-proofing. The basement floors sidewalks yet unfinished. During construction of this work over sixty-five hundred cubic yards of rock, etc. were used and over ten thousand barrels of Josson cement, which after competitive tests was decided to be the best. This cement comes from Niel on Rupell, Belgium, and is used, on account of its great strength and regularity of manufacture in concrete for fortifications built by the United States Government, and has been supplied to some of the largest buildings, locks, Portland and other water works, on the Coast.

“As soon as the concrete piers were finished they were capped with granite from the Raymond Granite Company’s quarry, the iron shoes were placed in position, and the Pacific Rolling Mills began the erection of the steel frame, over fifty-five hundred tons of steel pillars, girders, and joists, were used. There are three hundred pillars reaching from the concrete piers to the top of the building, and the steel joists are bolted to them. In the dome alone, which E. F. Jones, the constructor, is just completing, there are two hundred tons of steel from the spring to the top. The Pacific Rolling Mills, a local corporation, took the contract in open competition with large Eastern firms, and thus kept the work and workingmen’s wages at home.



“Buckman’s teams excavating foundation.” (pp. 473)



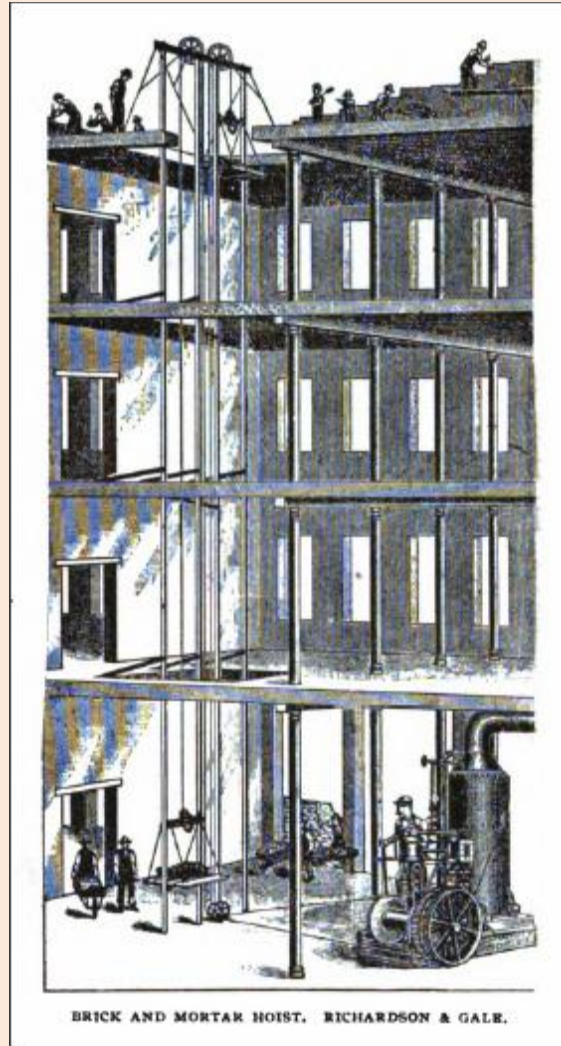
“Quarry of Raymond Granite Company.” (pp. 474)

“The bases of the sandstone pilasters which weigh seventeen and a half tons each, and the main entrance door-sill, an immense granite slab, twenty-four feet seven inches by six feet six inches, and one foot thick, were also supplied by the Raymond Granite Company, for which Messrs. Knowles and Hosmer are resident agents. The illustration shows the capacity of the quarry for turning out immense blocks.

“John D. McGilvray, who has built scores of stone buildings all over the country, commenced on the front immediately after the erection of the steel skeleton frame. His work shows to more advantage than that of the other contractors, as it is directly in evidence. The stone used was Oregon sandstone from the Oregon Sandstone Company’s quarry near Yaquina Bay. The cutting and carving was done at McGilvray’s yard in San Francisco.

“Richardson & Gale, the contractors for the brick work, erected in each of the four corners of the building hoisting elevators, by which the brick and mortar were handled from the basement to the different floor levels. This rapid service enabled the placing in position of about 45,000 brick (sic) per day. The brick work contract was the largest contract for similar work ever let in San Francisco, and included the brick walls from the concrete and iron lintels to the capping of the firewall above the roof. To illustrate the size of the contract, the walls on the third floor if extended in a straight line would reach 2500 feet. During the twenty years Richardson & Gale have been in business they have erected some of the largest buildings on the Coast.

“All the steel columns and girders are covered with terra cotta fire-proofing which was manufactured by Gladding, McBean & Company, at their Lincoln, Placer County, Terra Cotta Works. This firm also built the terra cotta arches of the three lower and mezzanine floor, making the building thoroughly fire-proof. They also, in connection with the Forderer Cornice Works, will roof the building.

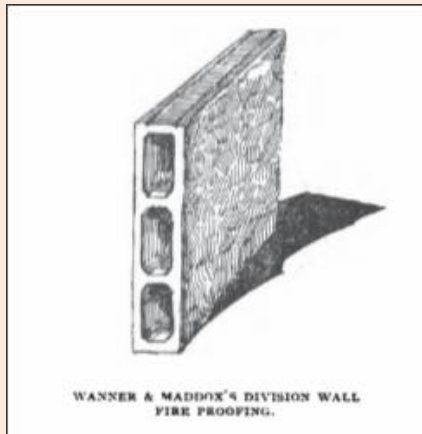


“Brick and mortar hoist. Richardson & Gale.” (p. 475)

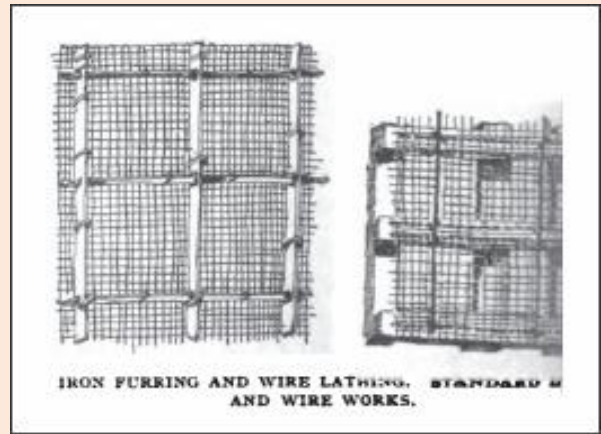
“To render the interior of the building still more fire-resisting, a new fireproof material, manufactured by the firm of Wanner & Maddox, is to be used for all the interior division wall (sic) on the three lower floors, and as furring for all the brick work of the building. This material, which is a cement compound containing dead air, is used by the United States Government for all its buildings, and after the most severe tests has been pronounced to be the best fire-resisting building material known. In addition to this, there are no wooden laths in the building, – in their place is used a new style of wire lathing, which is manufactured and supplied by the Standard Iron and Wire Works, of San Francisco.

“The wire cloth is stiffened throughout by means of steel rods, and is held down from face of joists by a three eighths inch number 18 wire on edge, thus insuring a perfect covering of mortar to the wood work, and leaving no contact

between wood and metal. The patent iron furring which is ingeniously applied and secured to the terra cotta arches on the lower floors consists of one and one quarter inch by three sixteenth inch iron, standing on edge, and having one half inch by one eighth iron woven through them, and twisted on either side of the one and one quarter inch by three sixteenth iron also bringing the edge of the iron down and flush with the main iron, giving a strong and even surface, to which the wire cloth is applied by means of wire clips, designed for the purpose.



“Wanner & Maddox’s Division Wall Fire Proofing.” (pp. 476)



“Iron furring and wire lathing. Standard Iron and Wire Works.” (pp. 476)

“The cast iron used for construction and other purposes was supplied by the Joshua Hendy Machine Works.

“The four upper floors on the front and the two in the rear are supported by heavy wooden joists, which were placed in position by F. W. Kern. Mr. Kern’s work included, in addition to placing the joists, the roof trusses and roof boards, the laying of all the wooden floors, and the setting of all window and door frames.



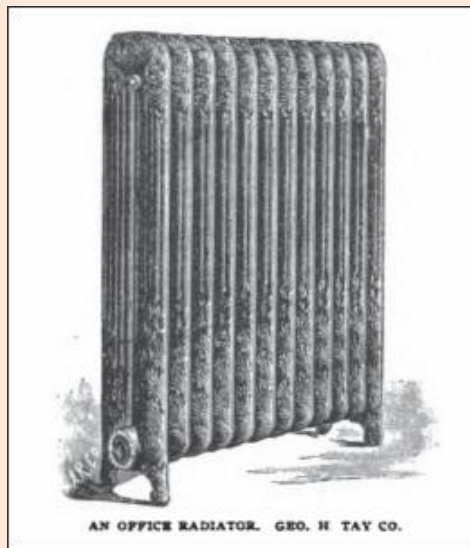
he building is to be heated by steam used at a low pressure, either the exhaust steam from the engines, or steam taken direct from boilers and reduced in pressure.

“The system of piping used is the single pipe overhead gravity return system, working at a gauge pressure of from one to five pounds. This system is being used extensively throughout the Eastern cities in all the large buildings.

“The main steam pipe, which starts from the boiler room in the Jessie Street end, will be covered with sectional covering to prevent loss of heat by

condensation. As the pipes supplying the radiators are taken from the main steam pipe, it is reduced in size. In the boiler room the main steam pipe will be valved so that either the live or exhaust steam can be used.

“In each office and throughout the stores and corridors, cast iron ornamental radiators will be placed, artistically decorated. These radiators are of the manufacture of the American Radiator Company of Chicago, who are the largest radiator manufacturers in the world, and who received the award at the World’s Fair in that city.



“An office radiator. Geo. H. Tay. Co.” (pp. 477)

“All of the latest scientific appliances for the better control and regulation of steam systems are being used on this plant which is being put in by the George H. Tay Company, and it bids fair to be the most perfect system in use on the Pacific Coast.



r. E. H. Forst..., contractor for the electrical work in the world-famous Sutro Baths and Cliff House, will install the electrical apparatus in the building. The entire installation is of the most modern pattern; iron and brass armored conduct is used throughout, – an innovation in the electrical annals of San Francisco while the marble switch board, in the basement of the Jessie Street portion of the building, will excel, in size and completeness, any thing of its kind on the Pacific Coast, outside of the largest central station equipment.

“To keep pace with the improved methods of electrical installation, special drilling machines are at work on the tile and wood floors, and so perfect is their construction and operation that the difficult problem of successful and economical installation of the conduit system seems to have found a solution. A special feature of the building will be the marvelous illumination of dome and rotunda. More than two thousand incandescent lights, reinforced by a splendid array of arc lights, encircling the dome and windows opening to the court, will lend to this promenade a brilliancy as yet unequalled in any similar building in the West.

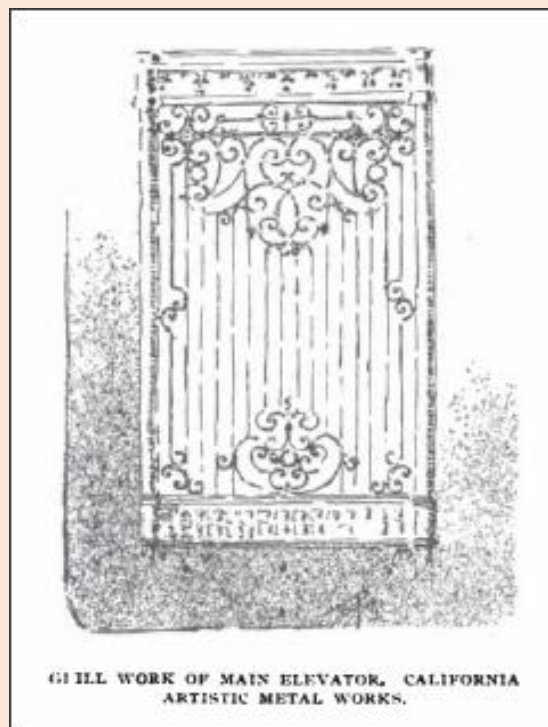
“As absolute hygienic (sic) sanitation is necessary in a building of the size of the Emporium, which will contain, with its army of employees, and office tenants on the upper floors, a population equal to a good-sized small town, the matter of plumbing was carefully looked into. R. A. Vance, the plumbing contractor, is using the Durham system, which, generally speaking, consists of wrought iron pipes with screwed joints, which will stand a steam pressure and have no leaky caulked joints.

“The ‘Durham’ is recommended by the best sanitary experts, and is used in all the large modern Eastern buildings. Mr. Vance will also furnish the marble tiling for the laboratory floors and walls, and all the other material in his line used in the building.

“On each floor of the building there will be a number of iron folding doors, some of which will be forty-five feet in length, and so constructed that extended they will be as firm as a wall, though in circular form, and having no stiffening top bars. When closed they will take only sixteen inches of wall space. These are constructed under patents belonging to the California Artistic Metal Works, and are being built by them. Coppieters & Moeckel, the proprietors, are also building the elevator enclosures for the four main office elevators. They have made grill work of all kinds for the principal buildings in San Francisco, and do all kinds of artistic metal work in iron, copper, brass, or bronze.



“Ornamental iron work by California Artistic Metal Works.” (pp. 479)



“Grill work of main elevator, California Artistic Metal Works.” (pp. 479)



“A rotunda elevator enclosure. Winslow Brothers Company, Chicago.”
(pp. 480)

“When completed the interior of the building will be beautiful in the extreme. The luxurious marble entrances, floors, marble-cased pillars and wainscoting, the beautiful copper bronzed and dark-finished ornamental iron grill and stair and elevator enclosure work, which are the main furnishings, will be superb in their elegance and completeness. The marble work throughout the building will be the handiwork of Messrs. Ruffino & Bianchi, whose beautiful marble ornaments nearly all our large buildings. They will furnish and place in position the marble floors, etc., wainscoting for all the halls and passageways, the steps and all the interior furnishings, – which will be of white Italian marble, and colored marble from all parts of the world.

“One very noticeable feature will be the lavish use of copper-bronzed and dark-finished ornamental iron on the store fronts and the interior of the building. In its artistic effects, as well as in the superior excellence in points of workmanship, the ornamental iron in the Emporium, manufactured by the Winslow Brothers Company, of Chicago, makes a fitting finish to the great building, and is fully up to its architectural beauty and structural merits. The

store fronts and entrances on Market Street are of iron duplex plated of copper bronze.

“In iron, electroplated in bronze, the ornamentation can be accentuated by brightening the relief lines, however low, and the absence of decisive shadows gives it a dreamy, sketchy look that is very beautiful, and specially so when its effect is heightened by the sheen of plate glass.

“This style is used on all the iron work on the front of the building, the entrances, the rotunda stairs, electrolier frames, and other rotunda decorations. The finish around the rotunda elevator enclosure is a combination of electro-bronze and Bower-Barff, all the grill work being of the latter matchless finish, whose smooth, soft beauty has done so much to extend the reputation of the Winslow Brothers Company. The main rotunda stairs, the design for which is shown in this article, are perfect in their artistic proportion, and will be the handsomest in the city, fitting ornaments for the great circle and an optical feast to the thousands who will pass through it. Messrs. Winslow Brothers Company are doing much through the excellence of their work to stimulate the ornamental iron business, and hardly any recently erected large building, no matter where located, but is beautified by their handiwork.

“To the Western Iron Works, Sims & Morris, proprietors, is entrusted the work of building the iron stairs which extend from basement to roof in the front and rear of the building. They will be highly ornamental, – those in the front copper bronze plated, the rear stairs of black iron with hand forgings.”

(NOTE: The Emporium-Capwell building has been incorporated into the present-day Westfield San Francisco Centre. You can read more about this Centre and the old Emporium-Capwell building on Wikipedia in the “Westfield San Francisco Centre” section. According to Wikipedia, “Only the front facade and landmark dome of the original structure were preserved; the rest of the structure was completely gutted and replaced.” Peggy B. Perazzo)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westfield_San_Francisco_Centre