

visitors a most favorable impression of the character of our citizens. On the part of permanent residents, these homesteads are sure guarantees of good citizenship and honest government. Perhaps it would be hardly possible to estimate the benefits, immediate or direct, present or prospective, that have already resulted or will hereafter ensue from the efforts of the Real Estate Associates, or "Town Builders," as they are popularly styled, to transform the sandy wastes outside the business part of the city into habitable sites for dwelling-places. They have covered these barren tracts with homesteads, which have been sold to buyers on the payment of a certain amount of cash, and the remainder is liquidated by a monthly rental of a stated sum. By this means communities have been organized, where isolation would probably have prevailed for years. Such neighborhoods, composed of frugal and industrious people, give additional value to adjoining land and invite corresponding settlement. To this Association too much praise cannot be given for their labor and energy in the great work of building up this city. The company was originally started for buying and selling unimproved real estate. It began with a capital of \$120,000; but it now has a paid-up capital of \$1,000,000, and a large and flourishing business. Although its primary object was to make money, the management has always been noted for integrity and faithfulness in all its transactions. The idea of building homes and selling them by monthly installments, covering a period of from one to ten years, originated with William Hollis, the president and manager of the institution since its incorporation. Under his direction, upward of two thousand houses have been erected, and as many families have been furnished with comfortable homes. This gentleman believes that the success of the company is due in a great measure to their giving each buyer full return for his money, compared with the market values at the time of purchase. Mr. Hollis states that he does not build a house simply to sell it. He proposes to give a perfect house, whether it cost \$1,500 or \$15,000. The company makes a rule to build only on their own land, and positively decline to take contracts to build for lot-owners, although daily requested to do so. All the mechanical work of the Associates is done by day labor, under the immediate superintendence of J. B. Gonyeau, who is acknowledged to be as competent a master mechanic as can be found on the coast. Plans, elevations, and working drawings are prepared by John A. Remer, the well-known architect of Baldwin's Hotel, who is regularly employed by the company. The pay-roll in busy seasons reaches \$10,000 weekly, distributed among some four hundred mechanics.

The crowning work of the Real Estate Associates during the year 1877 was the completion of one of the finest edifices on Montgomery Street, in which the offices of the company are now situated. Although surrounded by some of the most stately and valuable structures on this important thoroughfare, the R. E. A. Building stands conspicuously prominent, a fitting monument to the taste and judgment of the owners. This property alone is worth \$250,000. Owing to general business depression the past year, the company have made but few purchases, although their customary outlay for land has ranged between \$1,500,000 and \$2,000,000 annually. About \$500,000 is spent each year for lumber, \$180,000 for mill work, \$120,000 for plumbing, \$30,000 for paints and oils, \$24,000 for glass, and about \$36,000 for hardware. The outlook for 1878 is considered very hopeful, and little doubt is entertained that the business of the present year will be much in excess of that of the past.

The financial condition of the concern is represented to be better than at any period in its history—a fact that will be as gratifying to all who have the welfare of the city at heart, as it undoubtedly is to all stockholders in The Real Estate Associates.

The Mechanics' Real Estate Association was incorporated September 16th, 1876, with a capital of \$1,000,000. D. L. McDonald is president. During the year 1877 forty-five houses were built by this association, and of these all but ten have been sold, the average price being \$4,500. The managers of the institution anticipate a large increase of building during the coming year.

In addition to the above, there are several other building and real-estate associations, including the California Real Estate Association, the San Francisco Real-Estate Associates, and the County Real Estate Associates. These also do considerable business on either the cash or installment plan.

Street Improvements.

The report of the Superintendent of Streets for the last fiscal year, shows that the length of sewers constructed during that time was 103,136 feet, or nearly twenty miles, and about six miles more than have been constructed in any one previous year. The city now has upward of one hundred and ten miles of sewers in working order. The cost of the work on sewers during the year is as follows: Brick sewers, \$346,784.85; Iron-stone-pipe sewers, \$59,654.29; Cement-pipe sewers, \$64,430.74; redwood sewers, \$26,953.67; total: \$497,823.55. There were 1,028,014 square feet of paving laid, the cost of which was \$361,959.38. This (with the exception of 212,765 square feet of cobbles and carbonized brick pavement, amounting to \$2,127.65), was basalt and granite blocks. The entire cost to owners of property by street work during the year was \$1,862,194.81. Of this sum \$1,325,255.78 was for permanent improvement of public streets. The cost of grading streets was \$473,948.09. Street-sweeping and sewer-cleaning cost respectively \$40,851.50 and \$13,608.57. The expense of lighting the streets, etc., was \$275,686.85. During the year deputies served 19,720 notices, in each case