

FALSE ALARMS.

From time to time reports continue to be circulated as to alleged poisoning from the consumption of tinned goods, and it would appear that if anyone dies suddenly, and there is no specific disease to account for death, in England, the question is usually asked, says the *London Grocer*: Have any canned goods been eaten? Should the reply happen to be in the affirmative, the whole mystery is at once considered to be explained, and, without any corroborative proof being required, the daily papers publish alarmist reports warning people against the consumption of "such unwholesome food!" In this way, a great deal of injury is done to a large and important branch of the provision trade; while consumers, especially those of the nervous sort, are often unnecessarily alarmed. Under these circumstances, it is pleasing to note that the Preserved Food Trade Section of the London Chamber of Commerce has taken action in reference to a case of alleged poisoning by eating tinned salmon, which was investigated before the Marylebone Coroner recently. We have no hesitation in saying that there was nothing like conclusive evidence in this case on which to build up a charge of poisoning against tinned goods, and yet in all the large daily papers, from the *London Times* downwards, the usual sensational accounts have been published attributing all the mischief to the cause alleged. No wonder, therefore, that Mr. McAuslane, a canned goods dealer and broker, speaking at the meeting of the Preserved Food Section, said that the papers in which reports of the inquest had appeared had very large circulations, and such statements going abroad must seriously damage the canned goods trade; and he considered that was especially a question in which they should take some definite action. He thought they should be represented by somebody before the coroner when the adjourned inquest took place, and he also thought it would be only right for them to be in communication with the parties who had been poisoned, and with the doctor, to see whether there was any foundation for the allegation made. The action of the Preserved Food Section will surely meet with the cordial approval of many readers of THE COMMERCIAL JOURNAL, and it has obviously had a salutary effect.

The verdict of the jury, however, at the inquest, regarded from a trade point of view, is unsatisfactory. Dr. Luff, who had been employed as analyst in the case, stated that he made an analysis of the stomach for mineral or organic poisons, but found none present. In reply to the coroner, he further said he found no tin poison present; he had never found in such food tin poison. On examining the empty salmon tin, he found it to be in good condition, and on afterwards examining a full tin of salmon of the same kind, purchased at the same shop, he found that it smelt fresh, looked in good condition and was absolutely free from any poison. There was no decomposition in the salmon, which was, in his opinion, a wholesome food. This evidence of a scientific expert was quite conclusive, and no attempt was made to controvert it in the slightest degree. Indeed, it was entirely corrobor-

ated by trade testimony of a most unimpeachable kind. Yet, in the face of all this, what is the verdict of the enlightened British jury? It is:

"That the deceased had died from the mortal effects of an irritant poison, and that such irritant poison—potassium—was probably conveyed in the tin of salmon eaten by the deceased. The jury further desire to say that the sample tins of salmon similar to that eaten by the deceased have been medically examined, and have been found sound and properly preserved, and that there is no blame to be attached to the vendor."

A more inconsistent verdict was surely never arrived at by a body of sensible men. They say that the poison "was probably conveyed in the tin of salmon," but such an assumption, unsupported by evidence, is unjustifiable, and is an unfair aspersion on the canned goods trade. If the jury were not certain on this point—and of course they could not be so—they should not have indulged their injudicious taste for probabilities, which, in connection with a serious inquiry of this kind, are quite out of place. Here we see how false reports are first industriously circulated, and, even when exposed, die very hard indeed. But in this case, happily, judgment has not, as usually happens, been allowed to go by default, and trade interests were admirably represented by the Preserved Food Section and the Metropolitan Grocers' Association.

AN EXPORT TRADE IN CANNED GOODS.

The conditions for doing an export trade in canned goods, particularly in fruits, are now realized. We have an abundance of small fruits, there is a demand for these fruits in the British market, our sugar is on the free list, and our tin plate is likewise duty-free. The fact that the United States duty on tin plate is 2 1/2c. per lb. handicaps our only competitor on this continent in the rivalry for British and European trade in the small fruits grown in this country. In other respects, we are on the same footing. For sugar is enjoyed by the United States, and what tends probably to keep prices at a lower level than they rule here is the fact that raw up to No. 16 Dutch standard is also free, while raw is free here only up to No. 14 of the same standard. We have an advantage in the fact that there is a general disposition in Britain to foster a more strictly internal trade policy among the parts of the Empire, though of course not to the exclusion of trade with other nations. The first item in the programme of subjects suggested for consideration at the Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire for 1892, is "Commercial relations of the Mother Country with her colonies and possessions, with special regard to the renewal of European treaties, and recent commercial legislation in the United States."

Of course the United States canners will not feel at once the full force of the disadvantage the heavy duty on their plate places them under. The duty came into effect after several months' warning on the 1st of July, so that they had ample opportunity, that they did not neglect, to lay in large supplies in advance of present needs before the change in the tariff affected

them. But at the best their tin plate cost them 1 1/10c. per lb. more than ours, as prior to the 1st of July it had to bear a duty equal to that difference. But the difference in the comparative cost of tin plate to us and the United States is not balanced by adding an amount to our outlay for tin plate equal to an equivalent rate of duty. Our plate is cheaper to us by another circumstance. The necessity for buying before the 1st of July, recognized simultaneously by all United States' importers of tin plate, turned a very sudden and heavy volume of demand upon the English market which brought up the value of the tin plate. When that demand ceased, prices went down, and there was yet time for Canadians to do some business. The United States tin plate importers therefore bought on a rising market, while the Canadians bought on a falling one. When we come to sell our fruits, this advantage should tell very greatly in our favor.—*The Canadian Grocer*.

THE WHITE SILK STOCKING.

News comes from Europe that the white silk stocking is coming into fashion. For some time, speculation has been rife as to what would take the place of black when the craze for that color subsides. Some claim that red would again be the favorite color. In case it is true that white silk stockings are to be the fashionable thing, then it is probable that white will succeed in other lines, as the fad for any color or material always commences at the fashion centers among the elite.

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S MINERAL WEALTH.

A correspondent writes THE COMMERCIAL JOURNAL as follows:

The Kootenay Lake country is now recognized as a mining of the first magnitude. Mining men of vast experience have declared that the surface showings are the greatest of any mineral country they have ever seen. With the coming of capital, it must become one of the richest producing districts on the American continent. One great want, at present, is transportation facilities, but this obstacle is being gradually got over.

The principle districts are Toad mountain, Warm Springs and Trail Creek, in all of which most promising prospects have been opened up, and several rich mines are now in operation, notably, the Silver King, on Toad Mountain, which makes the greatest showing of any mine in the world, for the amount of work that has been done.

What little capital has come into the country is principally American, and the prospects are fair for more. If British capital could only be induced to come in here, it would not only be an enormous benefit to the country, but a rich reward would await those who have the courage and foresight to invest.

Trail Creek, July 30.

Thunder has never been heard more than fourteen miles from the flash of lightning. The report of artillery has reached much greater distances. The cannonading of the battle of Waterloo was heard at the town of Creil, in the north of France, about 115 miles from the field.