

United States before they bought Alaska. England never seized a foreign ship and had her condemned for approaching St. Helena, or for fishing in a tract of sea north of Scotland, where Mr. Harrison says she prohibited such fishing, or for fishing for pearls near Ceylon; so that the *tu quoque* argument urged by Mr. Harrison fails; and neither England nor the United States ever declined to take fish outside the three-mile line on the Atlantic side because such fish were bred and fed inside that line; and if Pribiloff seals go outside the three-mile line to catch fish for food, they feed on fish to which the United States have certainly no exclusive claim.

It would seem, therefore, that these arguments are futile; but as Mr. Harrison and many of his fellow-countrymen, whose opinions are entitled to the utmost respect, believe them to be valid (at least we are willing to assume good faith on their part), the arbitration is most desirable, and we have full confidence that the decision of such men as are to be appointed on it will command the assent of the "other powers" which the treaty wisely provides the high contracting parties shall endeavor to obtain; for if the United States have the rights they claim, they have them against the world, and no other nation has a right to catch a seal in Behring Sea if England has not.

It has been said that Lord Salisbury cannot consistently, by continuing the *modus vivendi*, aid the United States in enforcing a right of which he denies the existence, but he did so during the last season, and has at least equally good reasons for continuing it during the coming one and the pendency of the arbitration. And however firmly we may believe that England's contention is just and clear, our very consent to arbitrate shows that we admit that our opponents may honestly believe in the righteousness of their claim. A close season would be useless if agreed to only by England and the United States. The arbitration will settle the vexed question: Whether the United States have or have not the exclusive right they claim, and that relating to a close season if necessary, a point on which it has been said the experts employed by the contending parties have not agreed; and if they have, our Parliament has not yet had their report before it. The Hon. Mr. Tupper has not spoken on the subject from his seat, and he must undoubtedly have much valuable information bearing on many disputed points about the habits of the seal and its destruction or preservation. Let us hope, then, that the continuation of the *modus vivendi* may be granted, and the arbitrators appointed, so that a decision may be assured, and peace and good will with it:—the costs such continuance may occasion must be paid by the party by whose fault or error they are occasioned, and will be as nothing in comparison with the mischief which would attend the prolongation of this dispute between two nations whose relations should be more than friendly, and between whom "a small unkindness is a great offence."

Since writing the above, we have seen it stated that Lord Salisbury has proposed modifications of the terms on which he will consent to a continuation of the *modus vivendi*, which the Senate may accept, and we shall be glad if this is true—or the discussion may take some other turn before this number is distributed. All we desire is that the arbitration may proceed and a decision be given.

March 23.