March 10, 1886.

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SUN, ST. JOHN.

The Weekly Sun.

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THE LAST BUCCANEER.

Oh, England is a pleasant place for them that's rich and high,
But England is a cruel place for such poor folks as I;
And such a port for mariners I ne'er shall see again,
As the pleasantest isle of Aves, beside the Spanish main.

There were forty craft in Aves that were both swift and stout,
All furnished well with small arms and cannons round about;
And a thousand men in Aves made laws so fair and free
To choose their valiant captains and obey them loyally.

Thence we sailed against the Spaniard, with his hoards of plate and gold,
Which he wrung with cruel tortures from Indian folk of old;
Likewise the merchant captains, with hearts as hard as stone,
Who flog men and keel-haul them, and starve them to the bone.

Oh, the palms grow high in Aves, and fruits that shone like gold;
And the colibris and parrots, they were gorgeous to behold;
And the negro maids to Aves from bondage fast did flee,
To welcome gallant sailors a-sweeping in from sea.

Oh, sweet it was in Aves to hear the landward breeze,
A swing with good tobacco in a net between the trees,
With a negro lass to fan you, while you listened to the roar
Of the breakers on the reef outside, that never touched the shore.

But scripture saith an ending to all fine things must be;
So the king's ships sailed on Aves, and quite put down were we.
All day we fought like bull-dogs, but they burst the booms at night;
And I fled in a piragua, sore wounded, from the fight.

Nine days I floated starving, and a negro lass beside,
Till, for all I tried to cheer, the poor young thing she died;
But as I lay a-gasping, a Bristol sail came by
And brought me home to England here, to beg until I die.

And now I'm old and going—I'm sure I can't tell where;
One comfort is, this world's so hard I can't be worse off there;
If I might but be a sea-dove, I'd fly across the main
To the pleasant isle of Aves, to view it once again.

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

THE FORGED LETTER.

A Mysterious Disappearance.

BY AN ENGLISH EX-DETECTIVE.

Arthur Armstrong was a commercial traveller, representing a large firm of jewellers in London, and had for some years stood high in the estimation of his employers. He was engaged to a young Scotch lady named Hammond, to whom he was ardently attached, and the day fixed for the wedding was not far distant.

Arthur Armstrong left Glasgow by the mail train for London on Saturday morning, the 27th of November, and had not been heard of since that date. He had with him valuable property in the way of samples, besides a considerable sum of money belonging to the firm. A week had elapsed before this matter was placed in my hands. I called upon Armstrong's employers, but could extract little additional information from them. Up to the time of his disappearance they had placed implicit confidence in him and he had been so successful in his capacity of traveller that it was very probable he would shortly have had a small share in the business. He was a pushing, steady, young fellow, and had a fair prospect of making his way in the world.

'Have you any reason, Mr. Blanke, to suppose that Armstrong was in monetary difficulties?' I asked.

'None whatever,' he replied. 'Indeed, that is what makes his disappearance more inexplicable, for although the money and valuables which he had with him when he left Glasgow were worth a considerable sum of money we find that he has managed to save a sum, which lies at his bankers, that would amply cover the amount of the goods and money he had with him.'

I resolved to leave London that night; and on arriving in Glasgow put up at the Cobden Hotel. After having breakfasted, I proceeded to Sanchiehall street, where Miss Hammond lived, saw her, and was at once convinced that Armstrong had not given her the slip; for it has never been my lot to meet with a more amiable and more lovely young lady.

In talking matters over with her mother I learned that her daughter had received various offers of marriage, some of a very advantageous kind, but all of which she had refused in favor of Armstrong. I also learned that the young lady had a small fortune in her own right.

While I was conversing with Mrs. Hammond a visitor was announced, whom the lady introduced to me as Dr. Allan, a gentlemanly-looking man of about forty—indeed, a singularly handsome-looking man, but, nevertheless, with a somewhat harsh expression of countenance.

'I am utterly at a loss to account for Armstrong absconding,' said the doctor.

It is by no means certain that he has absconded,' I replied.

'How, then, can you account for his heartless desertion of Miss Hammond?' he replied.

'I am not prepared at the present moment to answer that question, but I felt confident that whatever the cause of his disappearance may be it is not of his seeking; and of that,' I said, turning to Miss Hammond, who had reentered the room, 'you may rest perfectly assured. Have you a photograph of Mr. Armstrong?'

'Yes,' was the young lady's reply. 'I have one which was taken very recently.'

She procured it for me, and I promised to take every care of it.

I then returned to my hotel to ponder over all I had heard, and endeavor to devise some means to elucidate the mystery. Perhaps it would be best to return to London, and set enquiries on foot there. It struck me that by questioning the guard who was in charge of the train by which Armstrong travelled I might be able to obtain some clew.

My reflections were suddenly disturbed by the entrance of a waiter, who handed me a note. I was surprised to find it was from Miss Hammond, written evidently in a hurried manner, and requesting me to call upon her at the earliest possible moment. I lost no time in reaching Sanchiehall Street, and found Miss Hammond in a terribly agitated state—the cause of which I found to be a letter from Armstrong himself which ran as follows:

LONDON, December 6th.

My Dear Helen:—I fear what you will term my disappearance must have caused you pain; but, believe me, what I have done is for the best. Before you receive this I shall be on my way to a distant country, from which I shall never return. In a short time, I trust, you will forget one who is totally unworthy of your love.

Yours very truly, ARTHUR ARMSTRONG.

This heartless letter almost rendered me speechless, and for a moment I was utterly unable to offer a word of consolation. However, procuring another of Armstrong's letters, I placed the two in the hands of an expert, who in less than a quarter of an hour pronounced the letter which had caused Miss Hammond so much trouble a forgery.

I had little difficulty in gaining the following particulars from the railway guard who had charge of the train on the 27th of November. He recollected perfectly well seeing Mr. Armstrong, and he was certain that gentleman arrived safe in London. He could remember seeing him in the carriage at the last stoppage prior to the train reaching St. Pancras. That was the last he had seen of him up to that time.

Immediately on my arrival at St. Pancras I asked to see the station-master, and acquainting him with as many particulars of the case as I deemed necessary, I expressed a wish to examine the porters who were in attendance on the arrival of the train from Scotland on the 27th of November. With this request he readily complied.

The first four to whom I showed Armstrong's photograph had no recollection of seeing the gentleman in question; but on the fifth being shown the likeness, he at once said that he remembered the gentleman perfectly well. The night was intensely foggy, and he had taken the gentleman's traps to a four-wheeler, and was about to put them on the cab, when Mr. Armstrong was accosted by two men—one of whom held a paper in his hand. They took him aside. He could not hear what was said, but he could see the young man was much agitated. After a minute or two he became calmer, another cab was called, the luggage was put on the top, and the three persons went off together.

I could extract nothing further from the porter, and, at an interview I had with the cabman who was first called, I found the particulars I had gleaned verified, with the additional information that the persons who held the paper had asked the young man if his name was Armstrong, and, on his replying in the affirmative, was taken aside for a few minutes. The cabman was about to 'out up rough' on account of losing his fare, when the other party handed him a crown—which, however, proved to be a 'flash' one.

This was all the information I could glean from these men but it was most important. Armstrong had by some plausible tale evidently been decoyed away by two ruffians, and it must have been a carefully-planned plot—commercial travellers being, as a rule, wide-awake fellows, and not easily led away. The circumstance of the 'flash' half-crown convinced me that the two men were thorough rogues, playing a deep game.

I laid the particulars which I had gleaned before my chief, who placed every possible means at my disposal for following up the clew I had obtained. I travelled in various disguises, with plenty of luggage, from London to Glasgow, in the hope that the ruffians, being successful with Armstrong, might again try the same game; but nothing came of it.

Four months had passed away, and I was again returning to London, having gained no further particulars. The train stopping at a station for a few minutes, I proceeded to the refreshment bar, and had just ordered a glass of bitters when I observed the barmaid return a half crown to a customer, with the announcement that it was a bad one. The man, of course, expressed his surprise, stated that he had received it at the booking-office in Glasgow, and tendered another in its stead. I made up my mind to watch this man, and saw him enter a third-class carriage. I entered the compartment in which this suspicious individual travelled, there being no further stoppage before reaching London. It may be mentioned that I was on this occasion carefully got up as a countryman.

I had not been many minutes seated when I was asked to take a hand at cards, to which I at once consented.

We played 'nap,' and I soon discovered that I was playing with a thorough blackleg. Apparently taking no notice, however, I played on, and while he won about three pounds from me, I had obtained about a pound of his money, which was all spurious.

I pretended to lose with a good grace, and laughingly said I had plenty of money—a remark which induced him to become very confidential.

After plying me with innumerable questions as to what I was going to London for—what my business was—had I any friends in London—where was I going to put up upon my arrival, etc., I led him to believe that it was my first visit to the metropolis, that I had no particular business, and was simply going to the great city for the purpose of seeing a little life and spending my money.

The bait took, and on our arrival in London he generously treated me to a sumptuous supper, being careful to pay, lest I might attempt to pass some of the spurious coin which he had given me.

Feeling sure of my man, I refused his invitation to sleep at his mother's house at Finchley, and on expressing my determination to stay at a coffee-house in Catherine Street, Strand, he reluctantly left me, promising to call on me early the following morning. Resolving to sleep at the coffee-house, so as to allay all suspicions, I engaged a bed, and afterwards made arrangements for three plain-clothes men to be in attendance upon me early the next morning—i. e., to watch outside the coffee-house, and follow me throughout the course of the day.

As I had anticipated, early the next morning my 'pal' of the previous evening called at the coffee-house where he generously paid my bill, fearing, as I knew perfectly well, that I should part with some of the base coins. To prevent this, he asked and obtained from me change of a sovereign.

Leaving the coffee-house, I found my assistants stationed outside, and allowed my 'pal' to do with me what he liked. Not to weary the readers with details I may simply state that we went to several places during the course of the day, drank together, dined together, and, when, night approached, I accepted his offer to sleep at his mother's house at Finchley.

After remaining for half an hour at a public-house in Tottenham-Court road, we left. There was a four-wheeler at the door, into which my 'pal' jumped, followed by myself, knowing full well that my assistants would follow.

We pulled up at a public house in Finchley, where my 'pal' discharged the cab. We had something to drink and while there I observed my assistants in another compartment. So far everything had happened as I wished. We then proceeded toward 'his mother's' house, which I found to be in a very retired part. No sooner had I discovered the situation of the house than, quick as thought, I slipped the handcuffs upon his wrists. For a moment or two he seemed utterly bewildered; then he gave a peculiar whistle, and, maniacled as he was fought with the fury of an enraged tiger.

I had signalled for my attendants, whom I expected every moment. Then I heard footsteps rapidly approaching from the direction in which the house was situated. In a few moments more I found myself confronted by two men, with nothing to defend myself but a stout stick. I defended myself as well as I could, but received a blow which sent me reeling to the ground, where I was brutally kicked by the fellow I had handcuffed. Luckily, my assistants now appeared on the scene, and the ruffians were secured. I then decided to convey our prisoners to the house and dispatch a messenger for more men. The door was locked, and it was only by forcing one of the windows that we gained an entrance. Not a living soul was to be seen in the first hurried survey of the premises. After the prisoners were in safe custody, I decided to remain with one of my assistants. Early in the morning we began a thorough search of the house—which was a very old one, but had been built in a most substantial manner—and it was some hours before we discovered a carefully-concealed entrance to a chamber at the end of the hall, which led down some steps to a cellar. Here we found all the material used by coiners, and a quantity of base coin all ready for the 'market.' This discovery I had fully expected but I had some indefinite idea that I should find something relating to Armstrong, from the fact of the coin which I had received from the cabman tallying in all particulars with the coins which I got from one of my prisoners.

I was about to give up all hopes of learning anything more about the matter, when an exclamation from my assistant drew my attention to another entrance, which he discovered.

We managed to gain admittance, and found ourselves, after descending a few ansteps, in a cellar, and saw a man lying on a coarse bed in a corner of the den, evidently in a dying state. We had him removed to another room, there was a good bed; then a doctor was obtained, and everything possible done to bring the man round. Judge my surprise when I found that this man, rescued from the jaws of death, was no other than Arthur Armstrong.

Armstrong's story was briefly as follows: On the night of his disappearance; and when he was about to enter a cab, he was accosted by two men, who said they were detectives sent from Scotland Yard with a warrant for his apprehension on a charge of forgery at the instance of Messrs. Blanke and Co. He was of course indignant, but they said if he could prove his entire innocence he would not be detained, and advised him to go quietly with them, else they would have to use force. No sooner was he in the cab than the ruffians gagged him, and when he left the cab he was blindfolded, put into the cellar, and had been there until he was discovered by my instrumentality. He had been fairly well treated in the way of food, and had been attended all the time by an old woman who lived in the house. A serious illness had reduced him to the state in which we found him.

Our prisoners were sent to long terms of penal servitude, and but for the confession of one of them, this in all probability would have been the end of the story.

This fellow admitted that an attorney in Glasgow, who had at one time succeeded in getting him off from a charge of passing base coin, had engaged him to do the job, furnished him with all particulars connected with Armstrong, and suggested the means by which he could easily be entrapped. The understanding was that Armstrong was to be well treated, but on no account to be allowed to communicate with any one, and four hundred pounds a year was to be paid to them so long as he was in their custody.

I lost no time in reaching Glasgow, but my bird had flown, and I found that the same day Miss Hammond and her mother left Glasgow, Dr. Allan, who had read my letter to the young lady, had committed suicide by blowing out his brains.

I drew this conclusion: It had been at the instigation of the doctor that the knavish attorney, whom I found he was well acquainted with, had engaged to have Armstrong got out of the way, and that the motive which had actuated him in so doing was the hope of being able to secure Miss Hammond and her little fortune.

Maintaining Silence.

GLADSTONE KEEPING HIS OWN COUNSEL ON THE IRISH QUESTION.

LONDON, March 9.—Mr. Gladstone retains so complete a silence as to the actual points of his Irish policy that nothing really is known about it, except in a general way. His illness, which is giving way to care and medical treatment, has not prevented his attending to political matters. Probably it will not confine him to his house any longer. In the meantime reports continue and grow concerning his home rule scheme. It is stated that one part of it stipulates that customs and excise duties shall remain uniform throughout the kingdom. Whatever plan is adopted for the control of Ireland, these important elements of government will continue to be managed by the British house of commons. It is quite possible, however, that Mr. Gladstone may intrust the right to levy and collect such taxes to the Irish authorities. In the event of the lords rejecting the home rule scheme, an appeal will be made to the country. Mr. Gladstone's friends reckon on his complete triumph by a majority between 50 and 80. This, added to the increased number of Parnellites, would give Mr. Gladstone a working majority in the commons of 150.

Cotton has reached its lowest price for thirty-two years.

WHERE ARE WE AND WHITHER TENDING?

No. 2.

Speculations of this kind, remarks one, are wholly unprofitable. We have to deal with today and today only. It matters not to us what may have been the status of the past. The past is dead; the future is unborn. If we can make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before; if we can ameliorate the condition of the toiling and suffering millions of whom we are a unit, the task were worthy of our best endeavors. And yet if the world's productions were to be doubled, it is a question if the world's wealth would be perceptibly increased, values being utterly fictitious, and dependent upon the balances of supply and demand. The intrinsic value of iron is unmeasurably greater than that of gold. As for the toiling and suffering millions—it is a question yet unanswered, whether their toils and sufferings are any more irksome than those of the so-called higher classes, whose apparent immunity from life's bitterest ills excite their envy. There are, and always have been, those who would break open the doors that separate us from the past, concerning which it is strange that we know so little, and who would tear aside the curtain that veils the tomorrows of ages yet to be. Such curiosity, if curiosity it may be called, is neither incomprehensible nor unprofitable. Wisdom is gathered from the experiences of the past, and the experiences of thousands of years ago are no less instructive than the experiences of today. Even the ant anticipates the tomorrow of its progeny, and why should man be less interested in the ultimate earthly destiny of his race?

Says Mr. Harvey, There is an old story related by the venerable Bede, eleven hundred years ago, which is very touching and has often been quoted. Paulinus, a Christian missionary, had reached Northumbria, a kingdom of the Saxon heptarchy. The King, Eadwine, assembled his chieftains in council, in order to decide whether the stranger should be heard. After a long debate, a gray haired chief arose and said, 'Let us certainly hear what this man can tell us, for it seems to me that the life of man is like the flight of a sparrow through a large room, where you, king, are sitting at supper in winter, whilst storms of snow and rain rage abroad. The sparrow, flying in at one window and straightway out again at another is, while within, safe from the storm; but soon it vanishes out of sight into the darkness whence it came. So the life of man appears for a short space, but of what went before, or what is to follow, we are always ignorant. If this stranger can give us any knowledge of this thing let us willingly hear him. So eleven hundred years ago men sought the light, and so, like the gray haired chieftain of eleven hundred years ago, Tennyson exclaims today:—

"What am I?
An infant crying in the night!
An infant crying for the light!
And with no language but a cry."

Mr. Harvey says "evil is diminishing and good increasing; the lamp of knowledge is burning with increasing brilliancy and the realm of darkness is lessening. Slowly but surely suffering declines, though the amount is still oppressive. We have no absolute perfection, but we have improvement to which, so far as we discern, no limit can be placed. The suffering spurs on to effort, out of which comes the highest form of goodness which we know. In the battle with evil the noblest faculties and the tenderest feelings which adorn our humanity are gradually developed. Errors lead up to truth; wants to acquisition; poverty to wealth. From the superstition and absurdities of astrology, the star eyed science, astronomy, with its brilliant disclosures, slowly emerged; the blunderings of alchemy resulted in modern chemistry, whose discoveries are blessing mankind. . . . From the lowest forms of life have come the vast series of animated existences which now occupy the globe, at the head of which stands thinking, reasoning man. From the rude primeval savage, with his club and flint hatchet, has developed intellectual man, with his mastery over the forces of nature, and all the appliances of civilization which mark him the crown and glory of creation. . . . In all humanity's poor gropings and blunderings in the past there was some redeeming virtue—something not wholly bad underlying the evil—some truth at the root of every error. Slowly the falsities and mistakes died out as the light of knowledge increased. Even war, with all its brutalities and cruelties gave rise to chivalry, unflinching courage and unsullied honor. Nay, more, the very miseries of war, awoke pity and compassion for the sufferers, and brought them help and comfort, and kindled, too, that spirit which condemns all war, and will usher in one day the age of peace. The miseries of slavery kindled the spirit of freedom. . . . Nature's laws have evolved those institutions which tend to establish justice and secure the rights of all. Under its laws all our benevolent societies, which devote themselves to the discovery and relief of human misery, the removal of ignorance and vice, and all evils which oppress and destroy, have had their origin. Our churches, missions, charities, are truly an outcome of humanity, and therefore of nature. All the love and pity of the whole human family, which, through past ages, have been accumulating and embodying themselves in religious and reformatory institutions, must be taken into account when we form our estimate of nature and its tendencies. Not merely in the hurricane, the earthquake or the pestilence are we to read the character and purpose of the supreme intelligence, but also in the compassion we feel for one another, in the love which he has breathed into human hearts to beautify and bless our life and redress and remove its sufferings. . . . All the good achieved by the great ones of the past will be gathered up by the greater men who are to follow, in the successive birth of the ages, and will be reverently preserved in history's golden urn. To these their own contributions of good will be added, as a precious heritage to humanity. While, then, we may at times be saddened by the slowness and uncertainty of the march, at its defeats and failures, let us remember that in the future, as in the past, the great ones will be near to cheer the faint-hearted, to breathe courage into the despondent, to guide the host onward and upward."

To prove that our scientific discoveries have given us increased command over the powers of nature and that the various appliances of modern civilization have sensibly improved the condition of the great masses of the people, Mr. Harvey says, "There is no setting aside of statistics, and these show that the average fortunes of the rich (in Great Britain) are 11 per cent. lower than in 1840, while the condition of the working classes has improved one hundred per cent. During the period from 1870 to 1880, saving banks deposits increased thirty-two per cent. Since 1840 the increase of depositors has multiplied from three per cent. of population to eleven per cent., and the ratio of paupers has fallen to three per cent. of the inhabitants of the united kingdom—the lowest known since the beginning of the century. In 1861, with a population in England and Wales of 19,886,000 there were 1,033,974 paupers; in 1881, with a population of 25,965,971, there were only 802,126 paupers. * * * * For eighteen hundred years Christianity—the religion of love and hope—has been at work in the world, slowly leavening the foremost nations of the earth with its divine spirit, promoting civilization and progress, quickening thought, purifying morals, and breathing a more humane and tender spirit into human souls. With all the corruptions and perversions which Christianity has suffered in the ruder ages of the past, and notwithstanding all the cruelties and persecutions which have been perpetrated in its name, it has been one of the mightiest factors of civilization and moral progress. It has communicated that outward impulse and kindled that undying hope of man's future, wanting which, science, philosophy, and art would have been comparatively powerless. Its presence "still—as one of the mightiest forces in modern society—furnishes the best guarantee of the permanency of human progress. Its pure and lofty morality is still far ahead of the most civilized communities of Europe and America, and still furnishes a standard of excellence towards which they will do well to aspire. In fact, we may truly say its divine power is as yet but very partially felt and that a real Christian era is yet to come. No nation has yet adopted the moral code of the religion whose essence is love as its overruling law. When its spirit pervades human society and its principles become the guide of life, the dawn of the millenium will have appeared."

In a brief review of Mr. Harvey's volume the *N. Y. Independent* says, "It is a noticable feature in all such discussions that on the bare question of preponderating facts the pessimists have the best of the argument. It is only when philosophy appears on the stage, or, better yet, the broader philosophy of religion, that we begin to see our way out." Mr. Harvey concludes that humanity is slowly, but surely progressing in every thing calculated to enhance the world's peace and happiness. He arrives at this conclusion after a careful and dispassionate series of observations, but it is evident that he considers the period thousands of ages removed when, with man divested of inhumanity, the ills that vex and perplex our lives shall be relegated to the past. Indeed Mr. Harvey sometimes seems to entertain grave doubts as to the reality of progress, and without a larger knowledge of the civilizations that existed prior to the commencement of the Christian era, the question where are we and whither tending, cannot be definitely answered. We know that from the date of creation through many centuries God communicated with man directly or through his prophets: we have reason to believe that physically and morally men in the early ages of the world were far superior to us whose blood and brains are corrupted by the sins of our progenitors. And who shall say that the religion of Christ will retain its purity and survive the abrasions of time, as long or longer than were the doctrines inculcated by God himself and through his prophets when man and the world were in their infancy. The theory of evolution seems to conflict with the fact that the known achievements of prehistoric times furnish conclusive evidence of a more thorough knowledge of some of the sciences than is possessed at the present day. The builders of the pyramids and obelisks of Egypt, of Nineveh and Pompeii, the painters and sculptors of Greece and Rome, and the mound builders of Western America as well as the races that inhabited Central America and Mexico centuries ago, possessed a knowledge of engineering, astronomy, architecture and many of the polite arts, far deeper than has been acquired by us of the 19th century, which for ages seems to have been utterly lost. The monuments of the civilization of these extinct races of men, of which modern times furnish no parallel, are but the imperishable specimens of their handy work. But how much of their great works must have gone to decay? The pyramids will yet be young when every monument and architectural example of modern date shall have crumbled into dust. The disentombed paintings, sculptures, palaces, potterys and articles of ornament and use of the ages that are forgotten indicate a degree of culture and refinement surpassing that of the present day, and point to a knowledge of all the arts of our own time, which have been rediscovered after years of experiment and study. After the lapse of more than two thousand years, Aristotle, Aristides, Archimedes, Apelles, Anaxagoras, Alexander and Alcibiades, Cato, Julius Cæsar and Cicero, Demosthenes, Euripedes, Homer, Horace and Hipparchus, Livy, Plato, Pliny, Plutarch, Phidias, Pericles, Pindar, Pyrrhus and Pythagoras, Sallust, Seneca and Socrates, Tacitus, Themistocles and Thucydides are the world's instructors. It has been urged that the march of civilization is irresistible, but history shows that all the civilizations of the past have decayed or fallen before the onslaught of barbarism. Unquestionably the experiences of the past will be repeated in the future, and thousands of years hence relics of existing races will be unearthed by some future archaeologist who will speculate profoundly upon our customs, religion and advancement in morals and the arts. Or, it may be, that like Atlantis, our continents shall be engulphed, and other continents shall rise to replace them. That suffering and sin walk through the world hand in hand, that without sin man would not be man, and that civilization utterly fails to eradicate man's natural tendency to evil, though it may divert it from one direction to another, seem to be assertions difficult to disprove.

Yankee Farmers

WHO WANT TO USE CANADIAN MILLS.

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 9.—The secretary of the treasury has written to Senator Morrill in regard to a petition of the people of Derby Line, Vt., for the restoration of the privilege, formerly enjoyed by them by sufferance, of carrying grain to mills in Canada and returning the grists without payment of duty thereon. The secretary says that since a special law, viz.: the act of March 3, 1883, was deemed necessary to legalize a long established practice of bringing Canadian grain to mills in the United States to be ground and returned to Canada without payment of duty, or a similar authority for the restoration of the practice now in question appears to be indispensable.

The Butter Question.

ST. JOHN, N. B., March 4, 1886.

To the Editor of The Sun:—

SIR—I have read with interest your article on butter, as well as the observations of leading grocers and correspondents. That the average quality of butter offered in the St. John market is poor is patent to all, but the same applies to Halifax and Charlottetown, and I have seen lots of poor samples in Montreal. In fact, all our our leading wholesale butter markets seem to be overstocked with poor butter every winter. I have noticed that during summer the quality is much better, in fact it seemed to me that the longer butter was kept, in most cases, the worse it got, and the farther the market was from the producers, the worse the average quality of stocks offered in winter. The reason to a great extent is to be found in the packages in which butter is kept and shipped. Butter in sugar barrels, butter in apple barrels, butter in dry goods boxes, butter in boot and shoe boxes, varied by lots in tubs, always cakey, often dirty. To this market butter is shipped by steamer, rail and schooners; shipped with other freight, say fish, meats and vegetables, and as the butter is in packages that are far from air tight, it absorbs the odors of all the miscellaneous freight it is shipped with. Occasionally a few casks of oil, say kerosene, add pungency to the odors of mixed freight. Supplement this with the addition of cartage on an open dray one or more miles and storage in a warehouse with miscellaneous grocer's stock, and the wonder is not so much that the butter is poor but that it is not worse. One of your grocers gives it as his opinion that butter will keep dry. I have always found that where the tubs leaked the pickle the butter became rancid, but I grant that butter will keep dry if kept in an ice house at a little above the freezing point, but ordinary butter in ordinary stores must be kept covered with brine to ensure its keeping. One of the reasons given by some St. John dealers of large experience why butter kept better years ago than it does now was that butter was shipped at this market in air tight firkins covered with brine, consequently it did not absorb the odors or germs of decay in transit. A test was made on P. E. Island last year as to the keeping qualities of butter. A number of packages of butter, several of which had taken first prize at the provincial exhibition were placed in warehouse six months, at the end of that time it was found that the soft wood tubs had leaked or soaked up all the brine, and in one case the soft wood tub had imparted a flavor of balsam to its contents. The result of the test was that not a single tub of butter passed muster, and the prizes aggregating $50 were not awarded to butter packed in crocks although that in tubs had taken first prizes at the exhibition held six months previously, the reason being that the crocks did not leak and the covering of salt kept out the air. This, to my mind, is proof that butter will not keep except in tight packages.

In New York butter is stored in refrigators and packed in white ash tubs; in Boston soft woods tubs are used to a large extent with the result that old butter is always at a discount. As these tubs are made with lees covers the sap and balsam of the wood injures the flavor of the butter. Shippers to the West Indies use tins hermetically sealed, but the absence of pickle causes the butter to become rancid—tins of butter being quoted at low prices. Some years ago a Mr. Hodgson, then one of the largest butter dealers in Montreal, put up a quantity of butter by some patent process; the principle of the process was that butter dry, hermetically sealed, would keep without brine or other preservative agent. The sample when put up was the best he could buy for money, but when opened some months later the quality had become so impaired that it sold for less than common, or about the price of cooking butter.

For existing evils there is almost always a remedy, but inspection of an article that is so badly packed as butter would not cure the evil, as butter in existing common packages that was prime in September would probably be rancid in December and the richest brand would only disappoint the consumer. To get a good uniform quality of butter the plan is to start creameries. Where tried the farmer has averaged more money from the product of his cows, and his often overworked wife and daughters have had a chance to practice on an organ that previously they only kept for ornament. The creamery butter sells at from three to five cents per pound more than fair dairy butter. Through the enterprise of Mr. Manchester and othes a creamery has been started at Sussex and although the formidable competition of St. John compels them to pay a high rate for milk, it is holding its own and there is prospect of fair dividends for the stockholders in this creamery. A DeLavel separator is used and besides the advantage of having fresh skim milk which is only possible by the use of these machines which separates, the cream from the milk within an hour after the milking is over, there is the added advantage of a gain of 10 per cent in the product of butter over the ordinary way. The creamery at Millview, P. E. I., was burned down last year, but the testimony of farmers was that they got more money from their cows than ever they got before. The high grade of Canadian cheese in Europe is all to be placed to the credit of the butter and cheese factory systems. I met a Mr. Brill, of Guelph, some years ago, and his statement was that he got an average in London of 24 cents per pound for the make of his three creameries while at the same time 17 cts. was the price of good average private dairies, so to be a success, farmers should combine and build creameries in the principal settlements. I say the farmers, for the reason that it would remove the danger of competition and any profits would be shared by the settlements according to the quantity of milk supplied by each farmer. If this course was generally adopted, and only tight packages used for butter intended to be held, the province would annually be the gainer to the extent of thousands of dollars and the complaint as to bad butter would cease, besides which it would be possible for merchants to ship any surplus to Europe and the West Indies, instead of as now, selling it at 6 cts. per lb, to the nearest bakery. For isolated farmers where factories are impracticable, the course is to salt butter well and keep it covered with brine made of pure water and the best butter salt to be got, pack in tight ash or oak or earthenware packages, cover with brine and keep in a clean cool dairy or cellar, but on no account store vegetables in the same room with your butter.

Yours respectfully,
H. F. COOMBS.

Here is what an ornithologist saw in a New York street car: "The car contained thirteen women, of whom eleven wore birds, as follows: (1) heads and wings of three European starlings; (2) an entire bird (species unknown) of foreign origin; (3) seven warblers, representing four species; (4) a large tern; (5) the heads and wings of three shore-larks; (6) the wings of seven shore-larks and grass finches; (7) one-half of a gallinule; (8) a small tern; (9) a turtle dove; (10) a vireo and a yellow-breasted chat; (11) ostrich plumes." This ornithologist protests against the slaughter of birds. He is strongly backed by the Buffalo *Express*.

An immense body of silver ore has recently been struck in a Mexican mine that assays $1,000 per ton.

The greatest gushing gas well in the world has just been struck in Washington county, Pa.