SHEEP INDUSTRY MENACED:

IRRETRIEVABLE LOSS THE REVIVAL OF FREE WOOL WOULD ENTAIL.

Growers and Manufacturers, Now Almost Recovered From the Effects of the Law of 1894, Regard Bryan's Candidacy With Great Anxiety—A Review of American Sheep Husbandry, Showing the Vast Expenditure of Effort and Money in Bringing It to Its Present Standard of Excellence.

No commercial review of recent years shows so well how inseparably bound are the manufacturing and stock breeding interests of this country to a Republican Administration as a review of the progress of American sheep husbandry just issued by the Department of Agriculture. The report was prepared by J. R. Dodge, a special agent of the Department, than whom there is no man in the country more conversant with the history of wool growing in the United States. Mr. Dodge's report goes into the minutest details of the sheep-raising industry, carrying it back to Colonial days, and is exceedingly interesting. The industry has had a checkered career those engaged in it having suffered greatly from frequent fluctuations in the tariff. To-day the industry is recovering from the Tariff law of 1894, which made wool absolutely free as well as all forms of shoddy and waste materials used in adulteration. It has taken all of this time for the sheep-raising industry, which was almost wiped out by that law to get its head above water again, but, as Mr. Dodge says, the manufacturing and growing industries, which are inseparably connected, will increase steadily if the prosperity of both industries are maintained. What Mr. Dodge means is that the great business of wool growing, which necessitates the employment of thousands of persons both on ranches and in factories all over the land, knocked out as it has been time and again by short-sighted tariff changes, has under the Administration of President McKinley taken on new life, and that if this new life is to be maintained it must be protected as it has been since Grover Cleveland went out of office and William McKinley succeeded him.

If it is not, the markets of the United States will be glutted again with foreign made cloths, and the domestic products will have absolutely no chance with them. It will mean the disappearance of the great herds of carefully reared sheep in the West as well as in the East. From time to time these great herds have been reduced because of the enactment of laws which practically shut the American wool grower out, and it looked as though the animals which it had taken over a century to bring to their present condition of excellence in this country would disappear in a few months. The men who rear the fine strains of sheep that afford the American people the clothing they wear and the men who weave it into cloth are the men who look with most anxious eyes to-day on the danger which menaces the country in the candidacy of William J. Bryan. The arguments of theorists to the contrary notwithstanding, the wool growing and cloth making industries cannot live in this country unless they receive the protection which the Republican party will give it, and which the Democratic party will take away from it the first chance it gets. Mr. Dodge's report shows this conclusively. The experiment has been tried many times, and the present splendid condition of the industry, is almost beyond belief when one reads the results of these experiments. It is all too evident that this great industry, the greatest in the land, perhaps, will stand or fall with the coming election. Another blow like that of 1894 would end it, for the vitality and energy which have kept it alive through adversity, while characteristically American, could scarcely survive another such shock. The wiping out of this great industry would of course be the most serious result of another declaration of free wool, but the fact that almost a million people who are steadily employed and making good wages to-day would be thrown out of employment is not a thing to be overlooked.

Mr. Dodge begins his report with a brief review of wool growing in Colonial times. The first settlers in New York, Virginia and Massachusetts either brought sheep with them from the old country, or imported them with the first of the supplies they sent for after reaching here. The loom and the spinning wheel were articles of furniture in every household in those days. The matron of the household was a weaver and the daughter a spinster. The sheep were mainly from England and Holland and were of the coarse wool breeds. It is said that the first of these sheep brought into the colonies landed at Jamestown, Va., in 1609. In 1649 there were 3,000 sheep in Virginia. There were early importations in Massachusetts, and in 1640 the number of sheep in that State was estimated at 3,000. The Dutch brought flocks to New Netherlands in 1625 and again in 1630. A Swedish colony brought eighty into Delaware in 1663; in fact, in all of the colonies the domestic manufacture of wool was encouraged. The Colonial Legislatures encouraged the industry by offering premiums, which were eagerly sought, with the result that in 1656 a skilled weaver, induced by a grant of thirty acres of land, settled in Lowell, Mass., which has since become a great centre of textile industry. Efforts were made steadily to encourage weavers and artisans to come here from foreign countries and establish the germ of the later factory system, and it was so successful that in the following century the carding, weaving and spinning of wool and the dressing of cloth became general in all of the colonies before the War of the Revolution.

The bitter feeling against England just before the Revolution led to a patriotic resolve on the part of the colonists to wear goods of home manufacture, and it is said that the Harvard graduating class of 1770 appeared in black cloth of New England manufacture. From this time on there was a patriotic devotion to homespun, and the industry was encouraged by all of the public spirited men of the time. This was the situation at the time of the formation of the National Government. There is no record of the number of sheep here at that time, but in proportion to the population they may have been nearly as numerous as at present, although not yielding such heavy fleeces. Twenty years afterward, there were, according to the best estimates, more sheep than people.

Mr. Dodge says that the Spanish merino is the foundation of the present fine wool flocks of all countries. It is a type of sheep which antedates the Christian era. In Spain the King, the nobles and the clergy held the sheep, and their exportation was prohibited. Until the nineteenth century none could be obtained except by royal favor or by smuggling, which was very difficult. In 1765, three hundred were introduced into Saxony by royal favor. They were mostly of the Escurial family, assumed to bear the finest wool. The French merino had its origin in the breeding of the royal sheep folds at Rambouillet, beginning with 300 imported from Spain by royal courtesy in 1786. A record of the average weights of their fleeces in the last years of the eighteenth century, was from seven to nine pounds. This was only the beginning of the improvement that produced the large forms and fleeces of later days. There is a record of three merinos imported in 1793 by William Foster of Boston, who gave them to a friend who killed them for mutton. In the first year of the present century a Frenchman sent four ram lambs to this country, only one of which survived. This one was the founder of some good grade flocks for his owner. In 1802, the American Minister to France, Mr. Livingston, sent home two pairs of French merinos from the royal flock at Chalons, and afterward one from Rambouillet. About 1810 he sold full-blood ram lambs at $1,000 each, and grades at very high prices. He sold the wool of full bloods at $2 a pound, of three-fourths blood at $1 25 and of half bloods at 75 cents. Later in the same year Col. Humphreys, the American Minister to Spain, brought home twenty-one rams and seventy ewes, believed to be of the Infantado family, and from this importation may be traced some of the finest flocks of the present day. The Atwood strain grew out of it. This Atwood flock was the first example of patient, skilful and long-continued breeding. It was built up with careful selections from the Humphreys importation, and afterward maintained and improved by selection of individuals within the flock. In 1840 the form was Spanish slightly modified, wool short, fine, well crimped, shorter on the belly, not yet fully covering legs and head. Some of the rams had pendulous dewlaps and neck folds or wrinkles. As the Spanish merino came into especial favor, this flock became popular, and colonies were scattered through the country, especially in New York, some deteriorating, others continuing to improve. This was a notable beginning worthy of all praise, but not yet was the American merino thoroughly established as a new breed of the merino type.

Though many breeders worked together in the improvement which has developed the most notable and valuable breed of the world, Edwin Hammond of Middlebury, Vt., is fairly entitled to be considered the founder of the American merino breed. He made three purchases between 1844 and 1856 of average selections from the different qualities of the Atwood flock, first breeding in three lines of sub-families, the dark, the light and intermediate, afterward producing his best sheep by crossing these lines with a skill and judgment which entitle him to rank with Bakewell in the long-wool improvement in England. He changed the thin, light-boned, imperfectly covered sheep into models of fine wool beauty, large, round, low and strong-boned. The ewes weighed, as reported in 1863, from 110 to 140 pounds, the heaviest fleece weighing 17¾ pounds. The ram Sweepstakes, 1856, sometimes referred to as the origin of the American merino, as a breed distinct from the old Spanish, had a weight record of 140 pounds and a fleece of 27 pounds.

Mr. Dodge has noticed in the history of our sheep breeding an ever-existing tendency to change. The flocks of one period have perceptibly differed from those of ten years later. To meet the requirements of manufacturers of various kinds and qualities of wools, foreign breeds have been successively introduced. At the present time the tendency of breeding is toward an increase of merinos. For at least thirty years, Mr. Dodge says, there has been a tendency, strengthened by the steady and rapid increase of population demanding meat, toward increase of coarse wool sheep and enlargement of mutton production. Even earlier than this a greater need of worsted wools was felt and the initiative was taken toward their supply. Mr. Dodge as early as 1862 urged that the American farmers should seek a profit in mutton and wool rather than in wool alone. The present distribution of mutton sheep is more general than ever before. They have invaded the pastures so long sacred to the development of the American merino. They have nearly driven out the fine wool competition in Indiana and Illinois and have taken possession of sheep pasturage on the meat-producing prairies of the Missouri Valley.

Mr. Dodge says that for strength and durability American wools are unsurpassed and make more durable clothing than the average product of any other nation. American sheep have been appreciated abroad and at the London World's Exhibition four prize medals were given to American sheep. At the Hamburg Exhibition in 1863 two first-class premiums were awarded to merinos from Vermont, which were in competition with representatives of the finest flocks in Europe. An enumeration of sheep was made in 1840, when it was found that there were 19,311,000. There was little increase in twenty years, but between 1860 and 1870 there was a jump to about 42,000,000, followed later by a decline to 31,000,000. There were periods of prosperity and adversity, one of the worst times being from 1866 to 1871, when the sale by the Quartermaster-General of an enormous amount of military clothing broke a market already weak. The tariff of 1867 came too late to save the industry. As early as 1865 the imports of manufactured wools, more than double the requirements of demand, began to glut the market. Prices were falling throughout the world. However, the enactment of 1867 opened the way to a new era of prosperity for wool growing after the glut of goods had been absorbed. In 1883 there was a slight change in the tariff and in years following, revenue decisions liberal to importers, tended to discourage wool growers and reduce the flocks. The number of sheep in this country was reduced 8,000,000 in five years. It was an expectation of tariff revision that prevented further destruction of flocks.

A new era of prosperity commenced in 1890. In four years the number of sheep increased to 47,851,000, or 11 per cent. from 1889, and the farm value advanced in January, 1893, to $2 66, the highest value for eighteen years since 1875. In 1894 was enacted a law making wool absolutely free, as well as all forms of shoddy and materials used in adulteration. The effect was instantaneous. Prices of wool and of sheep declined, resulting in destruction of flocks and indifference and neglect in their care.

The law of 1897 followed, restoring customs duties on wool. The effect of this act has been to restore confidence in the future of wool growing and a large degree of prosperity, though the enormous accumulation of foreign wool has retarded manufacture and sale until quite recently. For two years the mill stocks and wool markets were weighted down with foreign wool. Estimates of the trade authorities made the supply in January, 1900, 250,000,000 pounds less than in the preceding January. Consumption has been unprecedented and manufacture extremely active. The value of sheep is nearly doubled. The Department estimate of average value in January, 1895, was $1 58 a head, and last January, $2 93.

The effect of the law of 1894 on manufacturers was scarcely less injurious than upon wool growers. They were not subjected to free goods, but were exposed to a competition under a reduced rate of duty, which they could not withstand, flooding the country, stopping sales, first exhausting profits, then reducing wages and finally shutting down mills.

The flocks of the United States to-day do not aggregate so large a number of sheep as in 1893 or in 1884, but they are increasing rapidly, and bid fair to exceed before many seasons the highest former figures. They include a greater variety than at any former period. If manufacturers desire a selection from all the wools in the world they can get all varieties of much value without going out of the country. That this is no idle boast can readily be proved in our principal wool markets. The general feeling at the present time as to the condition and prospects of sheep husbandry is one of relative content and satisfaction, and of confidence and hopefulness for the future. If all growers are not equally suited and satisfied, they are at least measurably content with the situation. The one thing that they dread is a violent change of conditions.

In concluding his report Mr. Dodge says:

"The data presented in this report show that this country produces wool suited to almost every variety of honest fabric that is made; that, excepting the lower grade of wools, domestic manufacture has at some dates had a nearly full supply; that in a very brief period a full supply of clothing and worsted wools can be reasonably expected. It has also been shown that our manufacturers cannot be successful without a comparatively full supply of home-grown wools.

"In conclusion, it has been fully demonstrated, and needed not the bitter experience of 1894-1897 for emphasis, that the prosperity of manufacturers is inseparably bound up with that of the wool growers. A full supply of wool products for domestic consumption can easily be produced for a constantly increasing population, and ultimately some for exportation is possible, but never with foreign wool. In some lines even now foreign shipments of manufactures of wool are made and they are increasing. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 1900, the value of exports of wool manufactures was $1,253,092, against $1,047,497 in the preceding fiscal year, largely in wearing apparel. This will increase if the prosperity of both industries is maintained."

THE BUSY SPELLBINDERS.

CAMPAIGN SPEECHES SUPPLIED BY AN ARMY OF ORATORS.

The Employment of Variety Actors an Experiment This Year—Interruptions That Ruin Eloquence—Apt Answers to Questions—Debates in the South and West.

The term spellbinder was first applied generally to campaign speakers in 1888, when thousands of men who could talk in public were employed by the Republican and Democratic National committees. They were sent into every State and city and the system is now recognized as an important part of the work of electing a President. The great army of orators, the men who go from town to town speaking day and night in halls or at open air meetings are employed at fixed salaries ranging from $50 to $200 a week, according to their ability and reputation. This year the experiment of employing professional comedians and monologue artists has been made, because the essential qualification of a spellbinder is ability to interest and hold an audience. A man who can tell funny stories, tell them well and apply them aptly to some important public question is always in demand and ranks higher in the business than the declaimer of stock arguments who has no sense of humor.

The idea of the campaign managers is to get certain facts and statements presented to the voters in an entertaining way. The spellbinders are supplied with campaign text books upon which they draw for facts and arguments. The web of words they must weave for themselves. It is essential that they shall be immune from stage fright, ready-witted and quick at speech and repartee. Many ambitious young orators have been routed utterly by an embarrassing question from an audience which they could not answer. A man who can parry leading questions, turn an unexpected interruption to good account and gauge the mood of his audience at a glance is the one who succeeds as a spellbinder. Such a one is a certain orator, without much of a reputation outside of the political stump, who can hold and interest an audience that would probably jeer the greatest orator in the country. In 1896 this man was making a speech for McKinley to an audience composed largely of Populists, and was discussing the money question. When the speaker asserted that the stamp of a government did not create money a farmer wearing a long beard jumped up and waving a one-dollar bill in the air asked:

"What makes that bit of paper money if it ain't the printing done on it by the Government?"

"My friend," said the spellbinder instantly, "suppose the Government stamped the word 'hay' on your whiskers, would your cows eat them?"

The audience howled with delight, the farmer dropped crestfallen into his seat and the speaker was not again interrupted. Many men who have some local reputation as public speakers fall before a strange audience and the spellbinder who loses his temper is doomed to discomfiture. It often happens that men of considerable reputation are withdrawn by the campaign managers after their first public speech because of some unfortunate or mistaken utterance that would follow them wherever they went if they continued on the stump.

In the middle of the national campaign of 1896 one of the best and most popular spellbinders employed by the Republicans lost his employment and his reputation through absent-mindedness. He was constitutionally and utterly unable to remember even the most important and familiar names and dates and it was his habit to carry in the inside pocket of his coat a slip of paper on which he had written names and figures to be used at particular places in the discourse. This speaker was instructed to address a big mass meeting of factory operatives in New Jersey one night, just before leaving his hotel for the ferry he changed coats and forgot to transfer his written list of names and figures to be used in his speech. The meeting was in a big hall which was crowded to the doors when the speaker from National Headquarters was presented. He did not know that the factory employees present were evenly divided in their political affiliations. Believing that he had a sympathetic audience the speaker began in his best style to describe the benefits of protection and the gold standard. He warmed up to the subject rapidly and began in his most impressive manner the delivery of a paragraph of his popular speech that had never before failed to arouse the greatest enthusiasm.

"My friends," he said, standing close to the footlights of the stage, "one of the candidates for President this year is a soldier, statesman and patriot whose name will never be forgotten in the homes of American workingmen. Because of a bill that bears his name the wheels of your mills and factories hum and you are all employed at good wages to-day! Yonder man stands before you the champion of your cause the defender of the right of every workingman to employment at living wages, to be paid in the best money. Generations of American workingmen as yet unborn will rise up to bless the name of——the name, fellow citizens, for which the orator felt in his coat pocket for his list of names and failed to find it.

"Great legions unborn will bless the name of——"

Another frantic ransacking of coat pockets and increasing embarrassment.

"The name of that great patriot and statesman—I mean to kill time while he hurriedly searched all pockets.

"The name of that great friend of the people, that champion of the cause of the workingman.

"William J. Bryan!" shouted a strong-lunged man in the gallery.

"Yes, my friends, that splendid patriot, William J. Bryan," the thoroughly embarrassed spellbinder shouted, mechanically accepting the suggestion.

Instantly the meeting was in an uproar. There were shouts and yells for Bryan and cheers for McKinley. The local committee seated on the stage tried to prompt the speaker, but he was rattled by this time and failed to realize that he had made a mistake. The men on the stage could not shut him off, and the audience quickly discovered his failure of memory and transposition of names. He was guyed and laughed at until the meeting broke up in confusion. The protest sent to national headquarters next day by the local committee caused the immediate discharge of the absent-minded spellbinder.

In Indianapolis in 1896, a Democratic speaker of great reputation was completely vanquished and a large meeting broken up by one word spoken by a small boy. The speaker was saying with much eloquence and vehemence that all the working men of the country demanded the free coinage of silver. Then he began a peroration like this:

"Our opponents say there are thousands of gold men right here in Indianapolis last night I spoke to an audience of 5,000 honest workingmen. They were all for free silver. I believe that every man in this great audience favors free coinage. Now where are the gold men?"

"Working!" shouted the shrill voice of a boy in the gallery. A laugh started and swept over the entire audience, so confusing the speaker that he made no effort to continue his address.

In the same campaign a man who had made more than 1,000 stump speeches and boasted that he had never been rattled by a question or interruption was so completely knockedout by an innocent question asked by a factory girl that he broke down completely. The Republican National Committee had sent him to Newark, N. J., to address a night meeting of workingmen and women in a private hall. In his most impressive voice and manner he began his speech with this question.

"My friends, do you understand the question of the free coinage of silver?"

There was perfect silence as he paused oratorically, until a young working girl sitting in one of the boxes asked in a clear voice:

"Do you?"

The question was unexpected and puzzling. First the audience laughed, then cheered the girl, and ended by insisting that the speaker answer the question then and there. He attempted to do so, but was overcome by stage fright and slipped out by a back door. Next day he went to headquarters and asked to be assigned to farmers' meetings for the remainder of the season.

In a recent campaign in New York a young spellbinder attempted to earn double pay by speaking for both parties. The second night he got mixed in his dates and appointments and attempted to deliver a red hot Republican speech at a Democratic meeting. By swift and skilful dodging he got off the stage physically intact, but the news of the blunder reached the two headquarters and the next day the young man lost both jobs.

During the New York city campaign of 1897 a club of deaf mutes sent to one of the headquarters for a speaker to address a meeting on a certain evening. The manager of the spellbinders assumed that a man was wanted who could talk a speech which would be interpreted into the sign language by a member of the club. A message was sent to one of the best spellbinders in the service of the committee asking him to address a club meeting on the night specified. By an oversight he was not informed of the character of the club and arriving late he missed the reception committee and interpreter. Finding a waiting audience and no one speaking, the spellbinder stepped to the front of the stage and after a brief apology for being late began to speak. He did his best. He was eloquent and emphatic, humorous and pathetic but when his best jokes failed to cause a laugh, when his most eloquent phrases were received in silence and his pathos provoked faint smiles, he felt cold chills creeping down his spine. Bracing up, he went at them again. He raved and stormed until his voice began to fail and perspiration poured in streams from his face, without provoking a handclap. The committee and interpreter who had gone to meet him appeared upon the stage just as the spellbinder sank exhausted into a chair. When the situation was explained to him he was compelled to join in the general laugh that followed and when rested repeated the speech, which, interpreted to the audience, aroused great enthusiasm.

The falsetto voice of the Hon. Thomas B. Reed was not familiar to the voters of Indiana when he entered that State in 1896 for a brief speaking tour and his first meeting survived an interruption that would have dismayed the average spellbinder. He faced a large audience in the biggest hall in the town and there was perfect silence after the first great outburst of applause had subsided.

"My fellow citizens," in the piping voice of Reed sounded faint and far away, and a Hoosier who was hard of hearing promptly asked of a companion in a voice audible all over the hall: "Is that Tom?"

"Did you think it was the voice of Balaam?" responded Reed and the ripple of half suppressed laughter broke into a storm of applause.

In the South and some of the Western States nearly all political speaking is by joint debate, the candidates of the opposing parties making a tour of the State, district or county together and dividing time equally. This arrangement insures an audience composed of the voters of each party, where votes may be gained by good argument. During the progress of such debates any voter in the audience is at liberty to ask questions of the candidates, and the latter are expected to answer without taking or giving offence. The opposing candidates, no matter what their personal feelings or relations may be, are compelled to treat each other with respect and the most formal courtesy in the presence of a mixed audience. No matter how great the political excitement may be these joint discussions rarely result in conflict between the opposing parties or factions, because the leaders of each side hesitate to be first to start a row or strike a blow. The hired spellbinder is never employed for such debates. Campaign managers say that few votes are changed by the work of the spellbinders, but the voters of the country demand entertainment and discussion, so the hired orator has become a fixture in American politics.

PROHIBITION IN KANSAS.

The Sightless Drug Store Man, the Noisy Phonograph and the Slot That Tells No Tales.

From the New Orleans Times-Democrat.

"I have been spending my vacation at the home of my brother in a little town in middle Kansas," said a New Orleans man yesterday, "and during my stay I saw some funny examples of the actual workings of prohibition. I don't drink myself, but I have a number of friends up there who take their nose paint pretty regularly, so it wasn't long before I became acquainted with the fact that the principal bar of the place was located directly in the rear of the prescription case of the leading drug store. Two or three large flagons were kept standing on the marble ledge behind the ground glass screen, together with tumblers, ice water lemons and sugar, and in one corner was a barrel of bottle beer put up in pints. Whenever an habitué of the establishment wanted a life preserver he simply reached back of the case, helped himself and laid deposited the price in the slot of a cash box.

"I dare say you have seen the hero in the melodrama who saunters down the stage in blissful ignorance of the villain crouching in plain view behind a small pasteboard rock. Well, this was the attitude of the druggist while ceremonies were in progress in the rear of the ground-glass screen. Under the polite conventions of the house he was supposed to be totally unaware of what was going on, and was consequently able to swear, if necessary, that no liquor was sold on the premises 'to his personal knowledge.' I was told he had testified on nine different occasions that he 'never saw anybody take a drink in the store,' all of which was doubtless perfectly true. Incidentally, he was superintendent of the biggest Sunday school in town.

"The arrangement I have described would have worked very well had it not been for the fact that there was a strong prohibition sentiment in the place, especially among the women, who organized themselves into smelling committees and were continually prowling around looking for evidence of violations of the law. The drug store had a large trade in fancy goods, soaps, perfumery and so on, and a group of ladies and children were almost always clustered around the soda fountain near the door, in easy earshot of the tinkle of the glasses and popping of beer corks in the sub rosa groggery at the other end of the establishment. In order to drown these suspicious noises the proprietor kept a big phonograph constantly grinding on the front counter. He had a supply of the most vociferous cylinders in the market, and ragtime coon songs, brass band overtures, anvil choruses and all that sort of thing, and the dexterity with which he would snatch off one record and slam on another was wonderful to behold. As a piece of sleight of hand it was equal to anything done by Herrmann. The old customers of the bar had learned to know exactly when each cylinder was about to become exhausted, and at that stage of proceedings a sudden hush would fall over the group. They would stand transfixed, with their glasses in the air, until the new record began to bellow and then jollity again resumed sway. One prominent citizen was barred out because he was stone-deaf. He was otherwise unobjectionable and had a thirst that was without parallel in that Congressional district, but the poor fellow could never catch the 'stop-note' and his patronage was consequently regarded as too dangerous.

"The only time I ever came near getting caught," the druggist told me in strict confidence, "was about six months ago, when I got in a lot of new records from Chicago. One of them was a rattling good recitation, loud enough to loosen the wall paper, but unfortunately there was a dead stop right in the middle. The phonograph people called it an 'oratorical pause,' but, in plain English, the fellow telling the story simply ceased speaking for about five seconds. I didn't know anything about the confounded gap, and the afternoon I put on the cylinder for the first time I had at least a dozen women at the counter, and among them the President of our local W. C. T. U. I started the thing going and they were all immensely amused, but presently, to my horror, we struck the oratorical pause. The recitation stopped, stock still, and at the same time we heard the voice of old Judge——saying: 'Well, boys, I think I'll have about four fingers of good Kentucky bourbon.' The women all looked daggers at me, and I thought I'd faint in my tracks. The episode came mighty near getting me indicted," he added, "and I had a big mind to put in a claim for damages with the record manufacturers. After the store closed I took an axe and I didn't do a thing to that cylinder."

MOSS-MAD FOLKS IN MAINE.

Neat Sum Made by a Yankee Skipper Out of a New Summer Fashion.

CAPE ROZIER, Me., Oct. 5.—The latest vagary which the summer visitors have brought to the front in Maine is the erection of wooden cottages having the outside boarding densely coated with a heavy growth of green and gray moss. The abandoned farmhouses were searched for lichened corner and straddle boards, and extravagant prices were paid for bits of ancient wood that held living specimens of mossy growth. Some anxious souls went so far as to peel the moss-grown bark from the north sides of beeches and maples and use it for veneer to disguise the newness of the wood inside.

Early in September, when most of the summer visitors had gone moss mad, an old skipper came to the wharf with a load of new boards from the Bangor sawmills. He could not sell a stick, though his customers told him they would pay any price for boards that displayed a good crop of moss, the more moss the better.

"How many of these boards do you want?" asked the captain.

"All you can get for us—a whole cargo if it is possible."

"Don't buy any from other men who offer you mossed boards, and wait here two weeks, and if I don't give you all the moss you want I'll let you have this cargo for nothing."

He hurried his load upon the wharf and was out of sight before the sun had set. Ten days later his schooner came back loaded to the water line with aged boards so deeply clad in moss that no one but a barber could tell the kind of lumber that supported the crop. The boards were piled upon cross timbers so that the delicate lichens could not be rubbed away, and every piece from the top of the swelling deck load to the keelson, ten feet below water, was matted in rank masses of the plants, which everybody was trying to secure. He sold out his load for three times the price asked for clear pine, and made enough by the trifle to buy a new schooner.

After the money had been paid over and the skipper was ready to go away he told his customers where he had found so many ancient boards. Near where he lived was an old and poverty-stricken line of railroad, which had lately been leased to a new and wealthy corporation. Among the first improvements undertaken was to pull down a long stretch of fence that had been put up to keep the snow from drifting across the rails, and to replace the rotting barrier with something new and more substantial. The corporation offered to give the old fence to anybody who would pull it down and take it away. Believing that the boards were worthless the captain had laughed at the offer until he came to Cape Rozier and learned of the local passion for moss-clad homes. After this he lost no time in closing the trade with the new company, making more than $2,000 out of a cargo of boards that were good for nothing except firewood and not worth the taking down for that purpose.

THE FATE OF LAST ISLAND.

THE DESTRUCTION OF GALVESTON RECALLS A FORMER TRAGEDY.

Four Hundred of the Best-Known People of the South Sent From Merrymaking to Death by a Great Wave From the Gulf of Mexico.

From the St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

The terrible cyclone that destroyed Galveston Island is not the first calamity of the kind that has occurred in the Mexican Gulf. It vividly recalls an incident that will ever live in memory. Over forty years ago there was a similar calamity in the destruction of Last Island, off the Louisiana coast, by a cyclone, Sept. 12, 1856.

Last Island was a long, low streak of green, bound around the edge with a line of intensely white sand. Seen in these days from the Louisiana mainland (fifteen miles away, the lower end of the Parish of Lafourche), and part of the Parish of St. Mary's (the garden of Louisiana) it seemed but a slender bit of green floating upon the bosom of the summer sea. As you drew nearer the land displayed its charms. The island proper was about seven miles wide by about twenty-five long. The soil was very rich and highly cultivated. Propinquity brought out as in a delicate photograph all its lines of radiant beauty. Of forest, so deep and dense in the far South, there was none. But a few enormous live-oak trees had grown upon the island, and in the weird light of the semi-tropic moon covered from crown to lowest bough with a long, gray moss of the latitude, they seem like great giants wrapped in their funeral robes, waving their arms aloft as they fled from a coming dies irae. Beyond these there were no forest trees, as I have said. The island was but one long sand spit (only a few feet above the highest tide level of the sea), covered with ever-living green. But it was a very Eden of flowers. The fallen leaves of the live-oak for centuries had created in their decay a bed of rich alluvium, which artificial means had greatly increased. The ever-warm air from the further south seas had given to the shrub growth an extraordinary richness of verdure. The orange and lemon trees, the olive, the oleander (which in Louisiana is a tree thirty feet high), all of the tribe of japonicas, and the scented summer flower, jessamine yellow and cape, and hundreds of others unknown here, made the island coruscant with brilliant colored blooms. It seemed that all that was rich and lovely and beautiful in the vegetation of the semi-tropics here found its most congenial home.

In the evening, when the sun went down and the warm south wind drew in from the sea, the air would be heavy with sweet, but unfamiliar, flower odors. You would be enveloped in a very caress of perfume, direct from the heart of the great white Persian jessamine. Ah, the dreamy, happy life of that wonderful isle in the days of long ago! True it was a watering place, with a most splendid surf bathing on the side next the open sea. But it had none of the garishness of seacoast places of later days. It could never have been like Long Branch or Cape May. To gamblers and games of the half-world Last Island was as difficult as Paradise. It was impossible to pass the Argus eyes of the dozen who watched the gangway of the boat as the passengers came on board for the enchanted isle, as for Adam to return to Eden when it was guarded by the angel with the flaming sword. The men who gathered there were not strangers to each other, for in Louisiana then everybody who was anybody knew of his social equal, if he was not a personal acquaintance, no matter in what region he lived. So here was a spot, not very much known to the outer world, where could gather, when summer days became long and the dog star raged, the great aristocracy of magnates of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, or the rich, courtly Creole sugar growers from the Bayou Lafourche country or the Cote d'or, on the Mississippi River, and their congeners, the American sugar planters from the Felicianas and wealthy, aristocratic Rapides.

Once a year the very cream of the countryside gentry from the States I have named, with a sprinkling of wealthy "city men," merchants and factors from New Orleans, a few bankers, popular clergymen from the rich city parishes, who employed good living and believed St. Paul was right when he exhorted Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake—all these people, with their wives and daughters, would congregate at Last Island and eat of the divinest combinations of the French cuisine, produced by cordons bleus, drink—sparingly generally—of the good red wines of France—for your old-time planter, especially if he was of creole blood, never abused "God's good things"—take daily plunges into the warm surf, and thus decorously enjoy a month of dolce far niente. Never were men more courtly. Never were women lovelier. It was the very paradise of gentle, graceful, courteous attention to beautiful women. Here Cupid was enshrined, for who could resist the witchery of the perfumed summer night or the dark-eyed Creole women? Ah, how it seemed that sweet old story told there—that old story, but ever new—which Adam first whispered amid the roses that bloomed supernal in Eden! And sometimes, but not often, the scene varied. Men were younger then, and the blood of youth ever runs hot. A quick word and the promenade, a jealous look at the ball and early next morning on the sands there would be seen the flash and gleam of the long, slender, tri-colored duelling sword on the broad, hard, white beach or a pair of duelling pistols—a part of every gentleman's personal belongings would be taken from their mahogany cases, loaded with the steel, and a man would lie prone as his blood reddened the sand, run through the body, or the sharp crack of the duelling pistol and a limp, white-faced body, forever still, would be silently carried back to the hotel. But this was not often. It was the gentle, kindly, courteous life of the master of the monks of Thelema, whose sole injunction was *Fay qui youdras*.

The season of 1856 at Last Island was one of the most charming ever known since the famous watering place had been established. Never did more men and charming women congregate at this charming rendezvous in greater numbers or in a fuller, finer spirit of happiness and hopeful expectation. The season was at its height. Not only was the hotel proper filled, but the dozen or so of cottages—generally known as "the bachelors' quarters"—were occupied by as high bred, as gallant and gay a company of gentlemen as the entire South could show. It was agreed that a greater number of representative Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi men and women had never been gathered together at any Southern watering place before. The season had been fortunate in other respects. Thus far none of those morning rendezvous upon the sands, which have been mentioned before, had occurred. The cool, white beach had not known the flash of the *coup-de-grâce* or the crack of the deadly duelling pistol. The season of 1856 would be particularly hated these things, but what could they do? Thus far they had escaped any of these horrors, and, for that, gentle hearts full of kindly happiness and good will to all the world, thank God.

The morning of Sept. 10, 1856, was one of almost unearthly loveliness. The sea was sometimes as smooth as translucent glass, now as green as an emerald, then sapphire hued. Its surface was covered with a faint ish, misty haze. Its loveliness was supernal. The fishing boats in sight seemed like great white sea birds trailing their wings as they basked in the morning sunbeams. They were softened in the semi-mist delicately vaporized to an ethereal beauty. Toward the mainland the forest visible seemed gray and veiled in diaphanous, nebulous vapor. But it was early then, and the sun had scarcely had time to drive away the ghostly gray fog (blended with that of the sea) from the great Lafourche marshes lying along the nearest shore. As the sun rose higher the sea mist vanished. But such a day as it was! The thermometric measurement of September in Louisiana is not greatly different in its altitude of heat from that of New York or Washington. This day, however, there was such a downpour of solar warmth that the island was almost burning. Gentle puffs of wind blew and rippled the sea water and turned it into opalescent green. But the cooling sea breezes, reviving and refreshing all living things, did not come. The day was uncomfortable. Men wandered about listlessly. Politics, it was the great Know Nothing year, yet talked of in Louisiana political annals—even ceased to charm. In the air there was a stillness as though Nature was watching and waiting in silence, baleful, mysterious, ominous. The sunset that evening affrighted the timid souls. It went down in the west, and the sky red as vermeil, an angry sun, and left the Occident blazing across the waves as though a world was in flames. All that night the Dago fishermen (a curious, superstitious class, half Spanish-Italian and half creole) talking to the waves like sea gulls heard out at sea strange sounds, by means as though some supernatural being was in awful agony. The morning of the 11th was like that of the previous day. Toward night there came up a terrible thunder storm. The thunder was as unlike that of the northern dwellers as a fire-cracker is to the crack and roar of a 6-inch gun. The dweller on the mainland and the Teche and Lafourche planters had never before seen such lightning. It flashed from the zenith to the eastern and western horizon in great broad green, purple and flamed colored bands. An electric blaze a degree in width. And after each awful crash, that almost rent the ear drums, there would be a distinctly sulphurous tinge perceptible in the air. Toward the morning of the 12th the thunder and lightning ceased, but the rain continued, and the wind grew stronger from the southwest. The sail boats of the frightened fisherman could be seen in the early morning light flying before the wind for secure landings in the safe streams and waters of cheniere caminada.

There was to be at the principal hotel that evening the grand ball of the season, for it was to be the last. The band of the French Opera House was there from New Orleans, then unequalled for its music in America. There were no wind instrument except the cornet. There were flutes and similar sweet sound producers, the others were strings. The ball room was distant from the main hotel perhaps twenty yards and was reached by a covered way, elevated to the level of both buildings. It was built very near the sea and set upon brick pillars six feet above the surface of the earth. The hotel was constructed in the same fashion so that the breezes could blow under both edifices and produce better ventilation. Broad, wide piazzas surrounded the ball room on three sides, upon which doors opened so that after each dance one might take a turn in promenading on the gallery and enjoy the coolness of the fresh night breeze from the sea. The piazzas were about 100 feet long by 80 wide. Around the ball room were two rows of chairs, and the usual dressing rooms were in the rear. The musicians occupied a high dais that extended across the end of the ball room. The buildings were lighted with gas. So much in the way of description. Toward noon of the 12th the sun shone out for an hour, but it was a dull, orange-hued orb, surrounded by a yellow misty haze that changed constantly. As night came on the sky was covered with a cloud of the deepest blackness. There was a renewal of the vivid sheet lightning, but no thunder. The sea was in such agitation as the oldest present had never before seen. Great, brilliant lights burst from the waves as they were rolled in by the tremendous southwest wind. Deep phosphorescent fires, incandescent in serpentine forms, were seen rising from the waves like shadowy monsters. And, most terrible of all, there was distinctly audible at intervals in the blackness and gloom an unearthly moan from the depths of the sea. The women become seriously frightened, and the men realized that nature was in one of her most unusual and marvellous moods. Still, no one anticipated any real danger. There had been great storms before. This was but the beginning of the equinoctial blow. The ballroom was lighted. There was nothing else to do but go to the dance. Women clothed themselves for the evening's ball, aided by deft-handed maids, but with hearts ill at ease. Other thoughts than those of conquests were filling their souls with dread of what might come. But they would go; perhaps the gay dresses, the brilliant lights, the soft, sweet dance music might drive away the vague fears that oppressed their souls.

At 10 o'clock the dance was at its height. Outside the storm was raging. The intense blackness of darkness was broken by the constant broad flashes of lightning and phosphorescent blaze of the sea. A terrible wind blew, with torrents of slanting rain that was as warm as newly drawn blood. The band was playing one of Gottschalk's sweetest dreamy waltzes (he was a Louisianian, you know), "Creole Eyes," when a girl screamed. Her white satin bottine had been wetted by water coming up through the floor! Terror then beset all. A rush was made for the hotel, but the covered way was gone. It had been carried off by a tremendous wave of the raging sea! Mothers had left their little children asleep in the other house. How should they get to them? It was utterly impossible, unless one had wings, to pass through the tossing, boiling flood of maddened sea that rolled between. Of the horrors that followed no living tongue could ever tell. But about midnight a strange sea moan that became a roar grew nearer and louder, until it was like 10,000 thundering Niagaras. It was a tidal wave 1,000 miles long, 10 miles wide and 60 feet high! And as it rolled resistless, hotel, ball room, all, all was swallowed up in the maw of the pitiless sea. Men, women and little ones were parted never again to meet until that final day, "when the sea shall give up its dead!"

Such a tragedy had never been known before in the nation's history. Nothing was left of the lovely isle but a few broken brick pillars to mark