

PROGRESS, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1894.

## WHY BREAD IS SO CHEAP.

HOW MR. BUTLER GOT AHEAD OF THE BAKERS.

A "King" which had the Tables Turned Upon it Neatly—Moir Was to Get the Contract, no Matter Which Baker's Tender was Lowest—How He Lost It.

HALIFAX, Dec. 27.—This city is getting its bakers' bread today cheaper than ever before, and not only that, but for a cent a loaf less than a month ago, though flour has recently gone up in price. The history of that reduction is interesting. It is not owing to competition in the bakers' trade, but, in one sentence, it is due to the breaking up of a ring organized to get big prices for filling the army contract. Nearly 2,000 barrels of flour a year are necessary to feed the troops in this garrison. With rare exceptions, for many years, Moir, Son & Co., have had the bread contract. The coming year will be a off season with them, for they have lost it. William J. Butler, for the next twelve months, will supply the Halifax garrison with the staff of life.

Before telling the story of this bread contract, a few lines may be appropriately inserted about the recent oil tenders. Officers were received from the various oil dealers of the city. The army authorities may not pay much attention to market quotations, but when the lowest tender is 20, far above the correct price as it was on this occasion, they are apt to smell a rat. They did conclude that there was something radically wrong about it, and Colonel Shannon sent for Shattford Brothers, who were the lowest, asking them to amend their tender. The reply was that for certain reasons they could not amend their tender, but they were quite willing to quote a rate independently of the tenders. That they did, and they will supply the illuminating oil for military use, considerably below their tender price.

To return to the bread story. The master bakers had a society for the protection of mutual interests. That organization is said to have collapsed, but the ring to manage the military contract was a very much alive organization when the tenders went in not long ago for the supply of bread to the troops here during 1895. Seven tenderers responded to the advertisement. The tenders were from Kew, Gunn & Co., W. J. Butler, Moir, Son & Co., Scripen, Fry and Musgrave. Kew's was the lowest tender; Gunn's the second; Butler's third; and Moir was fourth from the bottom. It had been the understanding with these bakers for years that no matter which was lowest Moir was to get the contract. Two years ago there was almost a break in the arrangement, just like the present, only that now there is an actual break—and not an approach to it.

On that occasion J. A. Leaman and A. Gunn put their heads together and sent in a tender on the quiet, and unknown to the bakers. They were below Moir, but had a good figure. That firm got the contract, however, but it cost more than \$2,000. It was a clean \$2,000, at least, for Gunn and Leaman. The next year Moir had only his fellow bakers to deal with, and he again got the contract. Leaman had planned his game once and had made enough to be done with it for ever. William J. Butler, as did one or two others, heard how things were done, and like the shrewd business man that he is, determined that he could make an honest penny by the contract.

Perhaps he did not, but Mr. Butler may have figured it out something like this: The bakers charge the public for their 2-pound loaves at retail 5 cents; Moir got from the military on his contract, from 6½ to 6¾ cents for the same quantity. He saw that on say 1,900 barrels, and even with flour at \$3.75 per barrel, there was a profit of more than \$5,000. A good slice of that was a plum worth striving for if it could be so, orally done, and Mr. Butler found it to be.

Mr. Butler's tender went in with the other six and it was the third from the lowest. What saved it was that it was lower than Moir's.

None of the bakers, and least of all Moir, ever suspected that an outsider, and a man who never baked a loaf in his life, was to be in the ring. They had it all arranged without counting Butler in, which was a fatal mistake.

The tenders were duly opened and Kew was given the contract, because he was lowest of course he backed out. Then Gunn's turn came, and he was out of town, so that his tender was out of the question. Naturally Moir would now have come in for the job—but Butler's tender was there. And he was not in it to sell out, either, though he was not a baker. He had sent in to Colonel Shannon a cashier's check for \$3,900 as an evidence of good faith. When Mr. Butler was sent for to complete his contract his check was returned but he was asked for two sureties, and they were forthcoming in W. Y. Kennedy and M. B. Morrow.

The next step for Mr. Butler was to complete arrangements with one of the

bakers to turn out the product. Scriven agreed to do the work. Scriven did so with his eyes open, for the successful tenderer told him he knew that he was in the bakers' contract ring, and that if he was afraid of the consequences from Moir, he had better refuse to have anything to do with the business. Butler was independent, for he had arranged to get his bread baked elsewhere if necessary, so Scriven took the job.

It was a tremendous surprise not only to Moir, when Butler got the contract, but to the other bakers as well. The smaller concerns, found it to be a painful surprise in a double sense. Some of them not only were out of the advantage to be derived from allowing the contract to go to Moir, but they were brought face to face with a war of extermination, if not of revenge, because Butler had it and Scriven was the baker.

Moir may be able, with his new machinery, to sell two pounds of bread for four cents, but the smaller bakers cannot. Even Scriven, notwithstanding the better price he gets from Butler for the army bread, will feel the cut terribly. Some years ago Miller took the contract under similar circumstances, and the same cut followed on the part of the big firm, so that he had to retire from business, glad to get out of it.

Does it not seem peculiar that the British government should, all those years, have been paying so much more for their soldiers' bread in Halifax than the public paid? It is also peculiar that an outsider now should have so quietly stepped in and saved the government something at least and put himself in a position at the same time to considerably augment his bank account. But the most peculiar thing is that Moir's loss of the fat contract should be followed by war upon all the other dealers, some of whom have helped him to get the contract in times past, and that in consequence the public should now be getting bread for four cents a loaf, for which the military have been paying seven cents.

This is the inside history, before this unwritten, of the bread contract, and the real reason for the cheap loaves which Halifax people are now eating.

## NAPOLÉON AS A HORSEMAN.

He Was a Cruel One and Changed His Mount Frequently.

Napoleon was a cruel horseman and changed his mount frequently during battle. At Waterloo, however, he rode only the famous Marengo. Another celebrated war horse of the great Corsican was Austrelitz. Napoleon, always insisted that his horses should be white or gray. Twelve were killed under him. He was once carried quite within the enemy's lines, where he narrowly escaped capture, by a mad charger. Napoleon's runaway, it is only fair to confess, was caused by a terrible wound that gashed the poor steed to uncontrollable madness. Men lose their heads from pain; why not a horse? For a dumb combatant of unqualified savagery we must go to the camp of those masters of warfare—the French of Napoleon's day.

One of the emperor's aides, Capt. de Marbot, owned a mare named Lizzette, noted in peace or war for viciousness under certain provocation. Once with her master on her back, she was surrounded by Russians. A huge grenadier made a lunge at Marbot with his bayonet, but Lizzette dispatched him with tigerish ferocity, using only her teeth. Afterward she backed off, clearing with her iron heels a space among the Russians pressing on her flanks, then wheeled, dragging down to death beneath her hoofs an officer as she did so, and dashing through the astonished crowd to a place of safety. In that brief encounter she killed two Russians outright, and crippled several others with her heels, and it all came from a cruel bayonet that aroused all the poor creature's latent frenzy.

## Wanted a Receipt.

When the late French Senator Renaud first came as a senator to Paris from his home in the Pyrenees, he engaged a room at a hotel and paid a month's rent—150 francs—in advance. The proprietor asked him if he would have a receipt. "It is not necessary," replied Renaud. God has witnessed the payment. "Do you believe in God?" sneered the host. "Most assuredly," replied Renaud. "Don't you?" "Not I, monsieur." "Ah," said the senator, "in that case, please make me out a receipt!"

## Reporting in New Zealand.

Thus does the Wairarapa (New Zealand) Star refer to an encore demanded at a concert given by a Miss Bessie Doyle. "The audience was charmed, delighted, spell-bound. It sat entranced beneath the spell of heavenly music. It could not help itself. Six hundred eyes were riveted, three hundred mouths extended, then six hundred legs and six hundred arms moved frantically, and Bessie Doyle was moved."

## Articles of Aluminium.

Novel uses said to have been found for aluminium are for a folding pocket scale one meter long; a necktie made of metal, frosted or otherwise ornamented, in various shapes, imitating the ordinary silk or satin article, which is recommended for summer wear; and military helmets.

One of the most complete and valuable collections of hymn-books in existence is said to be that which Mr. Gladstone has accumulated at Hawarden.

## THOSE "AT HOME" DAYS.

THEIR MANY DISADVANTAGES SET FORTH BY "ASTRA."

A Convenience to a Few, but an Inconvenience to Many—People who Receive on the Same Days—How Some Have to go Calling Every Day.

I think of all the inconvenient social customs that ever obtained a foothold in society that of every lady having an especial day set apart in each week to be "at home" to her friends, is the most thoroughly uncomfortable one! I know very well that it originated in a desire to simplify the many difficulties and complications which beset the path of the social pilgrim, and make the penance of ceremonial calls as light as possible, but somehow the intended reform has not proved an unqualified success. It was supposed, when the custom first became general that it would be so much easier for the society dame when starting out to make a round of calls, if she knew exactly on what day to pay a visit to each acquaintance, and be sure of finding her at home; that it would promote social intercourse, and tend to do away with the senseless custom of interchanging cards almost indefinitely without visitor and visited ever crossing each other's threshold.

To a limited extent it has been successful in this respect, but perhaps too successful to meet with general favor!

For instance—Mrs. A. detests Mrs. B. and never used to rally forth to call upon her without an inward prayer that the servant would say "not at home" when she went to the door; but now all pleasing uncertainty is at an end, and Mrs. A. is in for a bad quarter of an hour, without hope of reprieve. Still more—Mrs. R. and Mrs. S., who live at opposite ends of the town, are both at home on Thursday, and a rather clear understanding exists amongst their friends that they are not at home even to their most intimate acquaintances on any other day in the week, also that they do not expect visitors before four o'clock, or after six. Such rigid rules are not observed in small towns, or in the country, I know, but they are quite clearly defined in cities of any size: and therefore the visitor is obliged to devote almost an entire afternoon to two calls, as it is very probable that any other acquaintances she may have in the two neighborhoods, only receive on Friday or Wednesday, so she will have to take another day to call on them.

"I haven't a reception day myself," said a busy woman to me the other day. "I have too much consideration for my friends, because I know what it is to spend nearly a whole afternoon on one call. It may sound like an exaggeration, but not long ago there were six friends to whom I owed calls, and I actually had to take six different afternoons before I got all the different "at home" days arranged in my own mind, and the calls paid. I have very little time for visiting as you know, and that really was the finishing touch, for I made up my mind then that in future my friends would have to see me just when I could come. Ever since I have made my calls when I could find the time, and if my friends are not at home I am very sorry, but I cannot help it, my convenience is of quit as much importance as theirs!"

I thought she showed great good sense, and I also thought bitterly of the many times I had hesitated with my hand almost on the bell of some house where I was not very intimate, trying to remember whether the reception day was Wednesday or Friday, and have finally been obliged to go away and wait until I could spare another day for making calls, though perhaps I had been calling almost next door, and the street was a mile out of my usual course.

The other day I happened to ask a society woman who is noted both for her strong common sense, and her rather strict adherence to etiquette, on what day she was at home; I had never seen any special day mentioned on her cards, and yet I wanted to be sure of seeing her when I called, and I was anxious not to go at the wrong time. I was very much impressed by her answer. "I am at home a great deal," she said, and I am glad to see my friends whenever they come. I should not dream of restricting them to one day in the week, so I have never put any day on my cards. I may be old-fashioned, but I prefer my friends to feel that they are welcome whenever they like to come and see me."

It quiet warmed my heart, to hear such hospitable sentiments in these degenerate and formal days, and I wished there were more people in the world who thought like the speaker.

I have no doubt, that the fashion of setting apart one day in each week to receive one's friends is useful in its way! It is a boon to the woman of affairs, who can ill spare two hours a week from her manifold duties, and to the busy housewife who finds it impossible to look properly after house and her large brood of children and be ready to receive visitors every afternoon; but I must contend it has its drawbacks and they are far from being insignificant.

One point which I have never been able to decide satisfactorily is how two ladies whose

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reception days are the same ever manage to call upon each other. If each one makes it a rule to remain at home all Friday afternoon, and they are not sufficiently intimate to visit each other on the off days, how in the world is the acquaintance to be kept up?

"Do come and see me, I am always at home on Thursday," said a lady to me. "So am I, invariably," I responded, and then we both laughed; but all the same we have not exchanged visits yet, though that was some months ago, and I don't know when we will unless we come to some special understanding and set apart an afternoon when we will be at home to each other. Until then we are about as effectually separated as if we lived in different counties, as far as social intercourse is concerned, because I, who belong to the working classes, can only spare one afternoon in the week and she is a busy woman in her way too, so there seems to be a sort of deadlock as far as our further acquaintance is concerned. True, we might visit each other in the evening, but we are not intimate enough for that, and as far as I can see, never will be.

So the reception day is a decided blessing to a few, but the very reverse to the many; and the most of it is that I cannot for the life of me see how the evil is going to be remedied now, without making matters worse than they were before.

## The Trotting Sulky's Small Wheel.

When the first pneumatic sulky, with its 28-inch wheels, began to lower, the trotting records thousands of horsemen and mechanics at once began to reason that if there was such advantage in the pneumatic tire as to make the little wheels win, what couldn't be done if the same tire were placed on a large wheel. For obvious reasons we shall never know how many experiments were tried, but enough of them have come to light to prove that the 28-inch wheels which are universally used to day, were not accepted blindly. The question has been repeatedly asked. Are not large wheels better than small ones, and if so, how do you account for the present revolution in trotting gigs? The answer is that large wheels are certainly better than small ones in theory and within certain limits they are better in practice. A pneumatic tire is comparatively heavy, and has required a flanged metal tire under it which will weight fully as much per running foot as would a standard steel tire for the same vehicle. And, besides, the smaller a pneumatic tire is the more practical it is to make and maintain. The pneumatic tire is a disadvantage. From the advantage of the one we subtract the disadvantage of the other, and find that we have a balance in favor of that combination, viz., 28-inch wheels and 1½-inch tire.

## In Defence of Tears.

A capacity for tears—abundant, warm and ready ones—is, says a physician, one of the surest preservatives of feminine beauty. It is a grievous mistake to think tears can injure the sweetest eyes or dig furrows in any face when their rain is fresh and most frequent. They are the natural outlet of emotion—a sort of liquid lightning-rod in which excitement and passion is most easily and rapidly dissipated. Sweet Alice, that wept at a frown, retained until late in her career has rounded contours, unfurrowed brows, dimpled lips, shining eyes, and her hair so brown. So do nearly all weeping women who can let rivers of hot, salt tears course down over their cheeks. It is she who keeps up a power of thinking, who has few tears to shed, and those flow with an effort, whose facial lines and grey hairs come early. A capacity for tears is worth cultivating, since not only does a lack of them score heavily against one's freshness of face, but has its marked effect in general temperament. The women who weep easily have correspondingly light hearts, tender, demonstrative, and impulsive ways, and a charm the dry-eyed woman lack.

## Singular.

Mrs. Portly—I often wonder how people manage to understand each other in France. Mrs. Portly—How absurd? Mrs. Portly—I don't think it absurd at all. Both my daughters speak French, and they can't understand each other.

## The Hatchet Was Burred.

For repeating to General Butler, then in command of the army of the James, a disparaging remark made by a subordinate concerning the General's military efficiency, an officer in a Pennsylvania regiment was promised a sound thrashing by the officer whom he had reported, and who, in consequence, had suffered a bad quarter of an hour in the General's society. The thrashing was to be bestowed after the war was over, at their very first meeting, no matter under what circumstances it might occur. The two officers became prominent civilians in adjoining States. For many years one of them went around armed with a revolver; the other with a blank ball-bond. Though often in this city (where one of them resided) at the same time, they never met until last Saturday, and then they encountered each other face to face in the surf at Atlantic City. Each had grown so stout as to weigh over 250 pounds, yet they instantly recognized each other. Something ludicrous in the thought of such vast spheres of flesh engaged in a rough-and-tumble fight may have entered their minds at the same moment, for they called each other by name, smiled and shook hands. The feud was thus terminated.

## Chinese Courtesy.

Whether or not the Chinese put a term insulting to Japan their declaration of war against that country they seem to be under ordinary circumstances the politest people on earth. A German traveller, who has just returned from China, and who has been publishing his impressions of the Chinese people, declares that in writing a letter to a perfect stranger a Chinaman calls his correspondent "my elder brother." The letter begins with such a phrase as "May all the blessings of life be showered upon you, such is the wish of your imbecile junior." In speaking of his own family the writer says: "We ants." The address on the top of the letter is, "From my humble cabin to the glorious palace of pearls of my elder brother," and the preamble is, "To my excellent and benevolent elder brother who ascends the staircase of honors." At the end is the form, "The undersigned, your most obedient monkey, raises his hands in supplication to your excellency in order that your excellency may deign to approach the miserable ruins of our house." Finally as a further token of humility the signature of the writer is so small as to be almost illegible.

## Suicides Bovecutting Niagara Falls.

Even though the times have been hard for a year past and many people have been in tough luck, it is frequently remarked that no one has ended life by jumping over the falls, it memory serves correctly, since Noble Kenny of Buffalo went over at Prospect Point two years ago last summer. A park officer remarked that previous to that not a season passed without witnessing from three to seven of such cases. One day a man and a woman committed suicide, one from Prospect Point and one from Luna Island. It is not argued that suicides throughout the country are less frequent than formerly, but the fact seems to be apparent that the falls is less popular as a means of ending life than in days gone by.

## Getting Even With Him.

The Husband—You want to know where I was so late last night? I was at the office balancing my books. The Wife—It seems to me that you balance your books very often. That excuse is about threadbare. The H.—I'm! If you don't believe me, why don't you consult a fortune teller? The W.—Not much. I consulted one once, and she told me a pack of lies. The H.—Indeed? What did she tell you? The W.—She told me I would get a rich, attentive, and truthful husband.

## Not Spending Money for Nothing.

"John," whispered Mrs. Billus at the play, "somebody behind me is making ill-natured remarks about my high bonnet. Shall I take it off?" "Not on your life, Maria," answered Mr. Billus, with a ferocious grin. "That bonnet cost me \$22.50, and I want you to get the full worth of the money."

## A Poser for Gallants.

The young man clutched his elderly friend in a frantic grasp. "What ought a feller to say," he asked, "when a young woman asks him if he thinks she is as old as she looks?"

Such as Christmas-time: The turkey is not a brilliant bird, When all is done and said, For on all great occasions He's sure to lose his head.

## Advice:

Don't buy clothes from force of habit—unthinkingly, without a reason. True, you may need new clothes; but that's no reason. Your old suit or overcoat may look worn and faded, but take our advice and consider that UNGAR MAKES THE OLD NEW. Have your old clothes made new by him.

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