

WINDOM WRITES,

And Tells Something Strange About
Aleutian Hides.

Official and state correspondence is not always a puzzle—it is sometimes a romance, or even an epic poem. While consular agents and foreign ministers have been known to go daft trying to translate one of Secretary Blaine's predecessor's sentences into understandable English, other officials, whose duties bring them within the atmosphere of Secretary of the Treasury Windom's correspondence, are fast being themselves translated into poets, esthetics and things. This was brought to the knowledge of a CHRONICLE reporter detailed to look up the correspondence between Eugene Sullivan, Collector of the port of San Francisco, and Secretary Windom, regarding the exportation of bay rum and Florida water to Alaska. There being some doubt in the Collector's mind as to whether the department would consider these articles as coming under the head of distilled liquors, the importation of which into Alaska is forbidden, he wrote as follows:

SAN FRANCISCO, March 20, 1881.

To the Honorable William Windom, Secretary of the Treasury—DEAR SIR: Shall I prohibit the importation of bay rum and Florida water into Alaska?

SULLIVAN, Collector.

To this a reply was received which at first glance the reporter took to be a red-tape idyll, as it were, but closer inspection showed that it only needed to be broken up into lines of the proper length to make a very good blank-verse poem. Thus treated it reads:

Nay, Sullivan, thy brain's awry and gone—
From o'er much cudg'ling of it—Somewhat
daft,

Or else I twig your favor incorrect.
The natives of Alaska's wilds do ask
For rum, bay rum, you do observe, and
not

Jamaica—sung about in "Olivette,"—
Now this portends, or else I tumble dif-
ficult, or tumble not at all, that they
Would break away from filth's o'ertopping
crust

And comb their hair, and wash it too,
egad!

Then why should we, esthetics all, forbid
Such civilizing tendencies as these?
Now, as to watered Florida (mayhap
The title's twisted by my pen for smoth-
er writing of it), be there none you ken
In San Francisco's cultured throngs who
use

The article for bathing of the skin?
So let them pass unhindered from your
port.

Our trade thereby will greatly be improved,
And sealskins, stripped from natives' backs,
will come

To us already cleaned and scented sweet;
And thus no tanning bills we need incur,
For sealskins are but natives' hides un-
shay-

En, are they not? Yours ever, WINDOM,
Sec.

[From the San Francisco CHRONICLE of
Wednesday, April 13, 1881.]