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Original Correspondence.

To the Editor of the *North Devon Journal*.

**THE GUDE OLD TIMES IN WELCOMBE
SMUGGLIN.**

As I zed, twis kard aun be Rowe an his wive. Arter thare deth, be hot I kin larn, thare wis a stap put tu it vur som time, till the yur 1792, when thare wis a Dane shiprecked auver the Hartland zide. He wis kal'd Coppinger, an he wis a hawful fellah, but he behaved hissel purty well vur a lit wile. He wis tuke into Golden Park, in Hartland, an he rawt pon a pane ov glass in the parlor winder, "D. H. Coppinger, ship-wrecked December 23rd, 1792, kindly received by Mr. Wm. Arthur." Ive a zeed it thare pon the glass yurs ago, but the pane is ago now, vur I went tu zee tether day. I hev a yerd thit he marryd thare darter, but ware twas tru or no I doant naw, but he marryd somebody. Arter he got recovered vrum his shipwreck trubbel, he begun vur tu luke about, an he fowned thit the vokes's vayns wis vull ov the blid ov smugglers and lawless karackters, (I shude a zed thit he wis the soal survivor ov the reck,) and zo he thort he cude du somthin way

min. He towld the vokes he belonged tu a gude family in Denmark, and thit he went tu say somthin about a marryge dispute, an I hexpect he wis ov gude birth, cus he yused vur rite tu vokes in hi stashuns in his hoam an git munny zend tu en. Well, he gathered awl the ruffians he cud git, an had a vessel a bilded in Denmark thet was kald the Black Prince, an he zet hup as a smuggler. Durin his time he wis sitch a ruff fellah thit hivirybody was afeerd ov en, an he wud giv awders thit noboddy mussen travel sartin paths, an thay wudden for feer ov he. He had a kave out in the kliff ware no wan cude go hexcept way a roap vrum the top, an thay yused vur hawl goods hup vrum the bottom and put in thare; stayl sheap, an hay vur keep min avaur he wanted min, and put min thare. Ive yerd hed got awl soarts, the produce ov awl lands there, vur wen thar wis a vessel recked hoff wud go the cargo, or inny thing thit wis inny yuse tu he or his gang. In the howse ware he marryd the darter, heweever it mite be, he zune got the maester ov it, and the father dide, an he got hold ov neerly awl the munny, an wen he wanted moar he wud ty his wive tu the bed, an drede vur wip hur if the mother wudden gie en som. He had a wonderful swift mare thet he yused tu ride, an noboddy else wud go pon her back. A passon in the nayberhude zed somthin about hes duins an he auvertuke en wan day, and galloped hup tu en like the wind. The passon nawd he cudden git away, so he take wot hed got to gie, wich wis a number ov strokes vrom his long wip, an wen he'd finished, he zed, "Thares yur tithe an niver mind the recayt." Anither time he mit with a tailor kal'd Joe Tape, an som ov his desendants be livin yer now, an he take Joe hup behind en, an wen Joe kom tu his awn howse he wanted tu git hoff, but old Coppinger had buckeld Joe tu hissell, an wen he got awn a bit he zed, "Joe, I promised the divel vur a long time tu bring en a tailor and I mayn tu keep me word tu-nite." I daresay he nawd thit Joe was afferd vur be owt arter nite, as the family hath always a bin tu this day. Poor old Joe jumped hoff an hurted hissell way the val. Coppinger had wan son both def an dum, an thay yused tu zay he wis baurd wayout a sawl, for he delited onny in mischief, and wan time twis thort he pushed anether chield auver a hi place an kill'd it. In time the kontents ov his holt become'd hesawsted, an munny got skase. The King's kutters had haras'd his trader zo much thit his hockupashen wis ago; in short he wis gwain down the hill. Wan day a recker zeed a vessel standin hoff an shawin signals. Thay wis hanserd be old Coppinger vrum the Gull Rock. A bote pulled vrum the vessel tu the rock an he wis a tuked aborde. A feerful storm rause thic nite, an ware he wis

recked or hot becom'd ov en no wan iver nawd. His wive loked and loked vor en, but awl in vayn. He always went be the name of "Crewel Coppinger." Thare wis som verses made owt about en, it begun as vollows: —

Will'ee yer ov Crewl Coppinger,
He cam vrom a furrin land,
He wis brot tu us be the sault watter,
He wis karried away be the wind.
He kom'd yer a shiprecked seylor,
The soal survivor wis he,
Ov a Danish cru ov twenty,
Thit traversed the stormy zay.
Thay zed he wassen wuth savin,
An if hat the time thay'd a nawd,
He wud be, hot he was, sitch a villin,
Thay'd a left en tu sayl abroad.
Or the sharks mite hev had en vur supper,
Or the ravens or gulls had a fayst,
Vur man thay zed he wis niver,
But shorely a reptile or bayst.

Thare yused tu be an old proverb about yer—

"Save a seylor vrum the sey,
An he'll bekom yer henemy."

Ware twis made arter he kom'd yer or no I don't naw, but thare wis som truth in it abowt he. Arter he went the trade wis karried on be a man named Lukey. He lived at Marsland, abowt dree quarters of a mile vrum the baych, an the places thit thay kut owt be the zides ov the rawd, hup auver the Down, vur honlode the kegs, be thare now. I shude tell'ee thit Marsland is a large farm, an he wis hot wis konsiderd a moast respectable man. Ive yerd thit minny vokes yused tu kal thare an taste the licker, an wen

thay wis karin it away thay wud awlways hev som in draft, an if thay did meet inny body thay wud let min drink.

Avaaur I finish this letter I muss give ee the narrative ov the arrival ov the last cargo thit wis iver landed at Welcombe, how it was disposed ov, an the konsequences thit vollowed, as twis towld me be a man now livin in Welcombe, an I beleeve the onny wan livin that iver tuke pairt in it. Let me tell'ee thit Marsland Mouth is a lonely spot rite down tu the end ov a deep gully whare stands West Mill. The Western moast howse in the Barnstaple Division of Devonshire, old Lucy Passmore, a white witch, yused vur live thare, abowt wich I hop tu tell'ee in anether letter. The rawd tu git tu it vrum the Welcombe zide is a very dangerus wan, an thare's a presipeece, thet in passing wan cude push anether auver in a minnet. Pore old Will Vinson and Dick Oke went owt thare wan nite tu luke vur reck, and Will wudden go hunder kliff, and wen Dick kom hup he'd lost Will, an he'd a started hoff, an pon his way in, had a vall'd auver an wis ded. Well this wis the plase ware the hosses had tu pass, but I'll tell ee the man's awn tale zo var as I kin—"Tis now moar thin sixty yurs agone I went owt way father's hosses jist as twas dimmet. Twis a fine mune nite lite, the vessel stude som distance hoff. The agent, Mr. Hendy, wis down pon the baych, an very zune the fust bote lode wis brot ashore, an wey it a lot oo muskets, wich was put into the hands oo thay thit cude shet, if thay wis wanted tu du et, an as thay walked about tu an fraw the baych the muskets glissen'd in the mune lite. The cargo wis nine hunderd tubs, arterwards kald hell tubs, an twis brot ashore abowt forty in a lote. The men ware gurt ruff fellahs, and wen thay'd honloded the bote thay wude take hup the heavy stoans and lift min into the bote like winky—thit wis vur ballast. Aich hoss tuke vower kegs, an us averaged about vower turn aich, zo thare muss hev bin neerly 60 hosses himployed. Us put it down inside a gate ware us wis towld tu, an zeed nobody, but twis all ago avaur us kom agen. Well, twis awl tuke away in this way, an awl gote quite, an then thay begun tu git it hoff tu thare different agents. The mode wis somthin the same. Thay wud lode hoff a lot ov hosses tu varyus plases, wan wis Tawstock, neer Barnstaple." I suppose within aisy axcess ov the town, as no dowt that is ware it went. Arter a time things begun tu luke odd. Miny strangers kept komin about, an kallin at varyus plases, an wan plase ware thay kald wis tu the howse ov wan oo the men thet had wan ov the musskets pon the baych wen the "landin" tuke plase. The fact was thit som aw min had a split pon the tethers, an wen the

Guvurnment hawthoretys had a got awl thare hevydence thay pownsd down pon the vokes like a kat wen he jumpeth tu a mowse, an, wud ee beleeve it, zur, thit owld Hendy thit had himployed the tethers turned agin min tew an helped tu git min trownsd. I may tell ee thit thay let hoff awl thay hot drauve enny hosses, sitch as laburers. Wan aw min towld me som yurs ago thit he had enuf liker rin down his sleeve thickey nite vur make ten men drunk vur thay did a bit ov bisens.

Pon thare own akount thay kard a jar and a gimlet an som spills an wud katch som of the licker an let a lot rin away. Well, awl that soart of peeple got hoff be sayin they wis sorry, wich thay zed they was but twas thit thayd a bin catch'd an shuden hev the chance vur du it no moar. Som ov the varmers sowld owt thare things wen thay nawd hot wis hup, an thay kom'd as I zed an tuke hoff a lot, zom payd, an zum went tu jayl. As yu may suppose thare wis gude works an ill feelin, thay thit payd didden go tu jayl, or if thay did wen thare frends kom vur pay the munny thay let min go agen. The fines was vrom wan hunderd tu vive hunderd pownds. A man kald Sargeant tride tu poison old Hendy, an he went tu jayl vur dree yurs vor it. George Humberley sowld howt awl his things, an kept away vrom min vur a yur. He bide abowt in the hudes by day an wud go tu somebody's howse be nite, then wan plase and then anether. Thay wud kom a lot oo min vur take en, aad wud put thare hosses tu the Blu Fox, an wen thay wis a kom'd hup wud go to a signal. So laesta he wis got weary ov it, an gied hissels hup tu min, an he went tu jayl arter awl. I think the ardest thing in konneckshin way it was the case of farmer Hoak. He refused tu hev inny thing tu du way the "landin," an arter twis awl in Jack King wis takin away a lode ov it wan nite an gote stogged in the mire, an kald Mr. Hoak ware he wis in baid fur help en owt. "No," he zed, "I'll have nort tu du way it," but his son, hu wis got tu a man, got owt unnawn to his father an helped, an his father went tu jayl 10 months vor it. Thay thit split pon the tethers cudden live in much payse yer arterwards. This is the history ov the laest cargo ov smuggled liker thit wis iver landed in Welcombe. If anether had kom thay wud niver hev got inny wan tu help it away.

If the wind was south-west, t'was purty lew above the Gull Rock, awltho the wind mite be blawin rather hy, and the say ruff outside, an as the watter is middlen an deep rite in tu the baych, thay cude moast times land the cargoes way thare botes, but if it shude be blawing a nor-wester, and the say wis tu purty much oo a ruxell twud somtimes happen thit thay cudden land at all wen thay wud come in, zo fur as thay cude

way the vessel, an ty abowt dree kegs together an zink min. Somtimes twud kom aun tu a terribel storm an thay wud brayk away minny aw mun, an wash ashore, wen it wud be catch hew cude, kist like thay wud be reck.

Thank gudeness thayse days be past and gaun, and the vokes luke tu moar honest ways oo gittin a liven. Hot wis a got be sitch ways wis yu may well think, spent in awl zo bad wans.

I shall close this letter wey quotin the confession ov an old man, hew wis fur minny yers hingaged in it, but arter yurs oo reyfleckshun, he zed as follows: —

"Well, zur, I du think when I kom tu luke back, an tu konsider wat lives us jused tu live—drunk awl nite, an idel a baid awl day, cussin, swearin, fitin, gamblin, lyin an awlways prepared fur tu shet the gauger, I du reilly beelieve, Zur, us was surely in sin.

R. GILES.

Welcombe, 26th September, 1885.

(To be continued.)