

sence of the police magistrate may not count for the small number of convictions secured. It is not a satisfactory explanation of the smallness of the number of informations laid, and it does not apply to the Muskoka district. The inspector for that large territory, including Gravenhurst and Bracebridge, only laid five informations during the three months ending January 31, and secured only one conviction. Everybody at all conversant with the district under his inspection know that this condition of affairs simply means, to take the most favorable view of it, inexcusable negligence on the part of the inspector. The Scott Act is violated in Muskoka, openly, flagrantly, shamefully. An officer with a desire to do his duty would have no trouble in securing convictions. Complaints have been sent to this office about this disgraceful condition of affairs, but the published records are enough. If the Scott Act is repealed in Simcoe county it will be repealed because of failure to enforce the law, and the men responsible for that enforcement will be held by the public, blameable for the catastrophe, should it occur.

Correspondence.

Prohibition and License.

Editor Canada Citizen.

Sir, - In fulfillment of the promise in my last letter I venture to give some reasons why not merely a fee, but a very high one, should be made a condition of obtaining a license to sell alcoholic liquors.

1. That the traffic in and consumption of these liquors are a fruitful cause of pauperism, crime and other sociological evils cannot be denied. Paupers are a burden on the community, and if the profits made by selling the liquor can be made a means of lightening that burden, then it is legitimate to divert as much as possible of it into the public treasury. The hypothesis here is that we have a license law, and that the only questions are whether we shall charge a license fee, and whether it shall be a high or a low one, for the privilege of selling. In Ontario the Government pay each year large sums for the support of institutions which are chiefly devoted to mitigating the evils of pauperism. Hospitals, orphanages and asylums of other kinds are aided out of the provincial treasury. Many of their inhabitants are there because of their own drinking habits or of the drinking habits of others. Those who sold the liquor made a large profit on the business; why should they not be required to surrender to the province just as much of that profit as can be squeezed out of them in the shape of a high license fee? The more they are made to pay the more liberal the province can afford to be to its charities, and the less expensive will the latter be. Very similar is the argument for high license based on the relation between crime and the liquor traffic. The province of Ontario pays yearly a large proportion of the expense of administering justice on local circuits. That expense is largely due to the sale of intoxicating drink. Then the province ought to appropriate by law as much as possible of the profits of the traffic in order that it may be as liberal as possible in its contributions in relief of local burdens. To those who would say that the traffic should be abolished I reply, I am now giving reasons, not for allowing exceptions to our prohibitory laws, but for adding a high license fee as one of the conditions attached to the retention of the privilege of selling.

2. I regard it as axiomatic that the amount of drinking done will always vary more or less directly as facilities for drinking are afforded. Assuming that we are to allow some parties to retain their common law right to sell, then I contend that to make the license fee very high is one of the most effective ways of reducing the number of licensees. If each licensee in Toronto were required to pay for his privilege \$1,000, instead of the paltry sum we now require of him, the number of applicants for license would soon diminish. This policy of high license should be accompanied by stringent enforcement of the prohibition against all unlicensed sellers, the penalty being imprisonment without the option of a fine. It should be accompanied also with the requirement of a guarantee, in the shape of a bond given by responsible persons, that the licensee shall not transgress the law. In some parts of the United States the bond is as high as \$2,000, and in order to prevent licensees from falling into the hands of

liquor manufacturers the latter are expressly forbidden to become bondsmen, and no person is allowed to go on more than one bond. Under such a system the tendency would be to lessen drinking and to rid society of some of the worst evils of the traffic.

3. So far from increasing the aggregate amount of "vested right" created under our license laws this system of high license would greatly diminish it. If there is anything in the "vested right" theory it is in the sound and valid for the small saloon as for the gorgeous hotel bar. So long as business is legally conducted it matters not whether the interest is small or great. To diminish the number of liquor selling places, then, by the gentle but powerful operation of a high license would be to diminish the number of persons with "interests" and to lessen the aggregate stake in the traffic. Individual persons may have their interests made more important through the operation of such a system, but this does not disprove my contention.

I have incidentally explained some of the amendments I would like to see made in the Scotts Act. In another letter I will give these and other changes in a more systematic way.

Wm. H. STON

Toronto, March 5th, 1888.

Wearing Father's Shoes, and What Came of It.

THE worst feature of beer and whiskey drinking is that these drinks not only hurt the user, but bring suffering to the innocent. The *British Workmen* tells of how a man's course of life was changed by a little incident the appearance of his son wearing his shoes, and the innocent words of the boy when questioned about it. The man's name was Simon Tanner, a capable carpenter who earned more for drinking and lounging round the saloon than he did for honest hard work. One morning he felt the need of a glass of beer, and though he had not a cent in his pocket, he was bold enough to ask the fat, coarse looking saloon keeper for a drink on "trust." But notwithstanding his promise of payment as soon as he got some money the saloon keeper was deaf to his appeal. Simon still hung round, hoping some friend would drop in and "stand treat," and he finally took a seat back of the bar and sought, with indifferent success, to ward off his thirst by reading the police reports in an old news paper.

The bar was empty at that time, but in a few minutes others came in—three men in the Holland suits worn by painters and house decorators. They were all strangers to Simon, being men just come down to paint some houses in an adjoining road, of a better class than the row, and Simon, guessing there was no hope in that direction, went on with his paper.

He was deep in a case of wife-beating arising from drink—in which he had a sort of sympathetic feeling, having occasionally given a few blows to Mrs. Tanner instead of bread when she asked for it—when a roar of laughter from the men caused him to look up to find what had given rise to the merriment.

It was a little child, a boy with a wan face that spoke volumes, standing just within the door. The rage he had upon his poor little pinched frame were not worthy of the name of clothes, and his little feet were thrust into a pair of battered, dingy boots big enough for a man. It was the boots the painters were laughing at, and at first sight the appearance of the child was undoubtedly ludicrous.

But their laughter soon ceased. The boots might be absurd, but the little limbs, almost in the huge proportions of the battered coverings to his feet, were touching to look upon, and when the men lifted their eyes to the sad face they became silent. The child was mute, too. He simply stood there with his eyes asking for bread.

The man nearest to him, a big, black whiskered fellow with a kind face, broke the silence. "Halloo, little Jack," he said, "what do you want?"

"My name isn't Jack, it's Jim," replied the child; "and I want a bit of bread."

"Poor little fellow!" said the man. "Here, master, give us a cracker for the boy. What a shame for a man to send his child about in his old boots!"

"Not old boots!" said the boy with a shrewd look—"father's best Sunday boots."

This drew out another roar of laughter, and one of the men, hoisting the child up, cried out: "Look, mates! here's a pair of best Sunday boots for you. What a nice, respectable father he must be if the rest of his clothes are only like them!" And they all laughed again.

By this time the little fellow had

got his cracker, and was eating it with the haste of hunger, watched with interest by the men. The saloon-keeper, seeing which way the wind blew, and being anxious to get the good opinion of customers who were respectable and could pay, filled a small glass with beer and put it upon the counter.

"Give that to the boy," he said. "No, I don't think we will do that," said the man who had bought the cracker, "for I reckon he's got a drunkard for a father, and it is just as well he should be kept from beer at present, but there's no harm in giving him another cracker, if you like."

Mr. Bouncer was nerved, but he strove to hide it. Nobody likes to have an offer refused, especially opinionated people, and he was sure that his ideas, political, business and domestic, were all founded upon correct assumptions—a drop of beer was better than a cracker, in his eyes. With an unpleasant look upon his face, something between a smile and a frown, he brought out the cracker, and one of the men put it into the boy's hand.

"I don't know who the child is," said Mr. Bouncer, "and his father may be a drunkard for all I can tell, but he can't have a bad heart to give the boy his best boots."

"Father never gives me anything," said Jim quickly, "except knocks about my head. Stones in the cruel road cut my feet."

"Well, little chap," said the man who had Jim in his arms, putting him upon his feet, "I see you've got hard lines of it. Go home and tell your father to knock off his drink for a week and get you a proper pair of boots."

The child laughed now in his turn, but he did not explain why he did so, nor did anybody ask him why. They understood that laugh, for it was without merriment, and they knew as well as the child how improbable it was that a man given to drink would listen to any appeal but that of his awful craving. Little Jim, with the remains of one cracker in his hand and the other hugged to his breast, went out of the saloon with his big boots slouching and swinging about on his tender little feet, and the men went back to their beer.

And who is this that has listened with bitter shame to all that passed, covering behind the newspaper to hide his burning cheeks? Simon Tanner, the idle, dissolute father of little Jim.

Yes, it was his own child who, unconscious of the full depth of the iniquity of the story he was telling, had laid bare his shame to strangers. The child, even with closed lips, was a silent witness against him; his tongue had given such confirmation that none could doubt. Even Mr. Bouncer, who was, of course, a sturdy defender of the theory of strong drinks being beneficial, was compelled to admit that in this case it would be better if the father, whoever he was, took a little less.

"All I can say is," said the man who had paid for the first cracker, "that I would not stand in that man's shoes for a mint of money."

"And how do you know you won't one day?" cried Simon Tanner, springing to his feet and glaring at him with sudden fury. "Do you think I was always a drunkard? I was once as good a man as you, if not better, and it's the drink that's brought me down."

"So you are the father of that boy," said the man. "A nice fellow you must be."

"Yes, I am," replied Simon, "and don't you go calling me hard names, for your turn may come, and the turn of all you, and if the drink does get hold of you, then you will understand why that poor little chap was driven to do what he did. That man there knows me, and he knows I spend every penny I earn in his house, and yet this morning when I wanted him to trust me one pint he said 'No.'"

"You always had beer for your money," said Mr. Bouncer, "and there's no reason why I should give it to you for nothing."

"I suppose not," replied Simon; "you've got the law and prejudice on your side, and there's everything against me. But I'm not going to be beaten. My child has put a new spirit into me to-day, and I'll tell you what I'm going to do, and that is, by God's help I'll never touch drink again. Do you hear? Never touch it again! And when I'm a decent man I'll come again here, and stand outside and tell the people my story."

"If you come here and make a disturbance," said Mr. Bouncer loftily, "I'll have you locked up."

"I shan't make any disturbance," returned Simon, as he moved towards the door; "there'll be no need to do that. The very look of drunken

Simon, as I'm called, in good clothes, will be enough to set people thinking, and if any of them choose to ask me a question I shall be at liberty to answer it, I suppose."

Strong in his resolve, Simon Tanner turned his back upon the saloon, leaving behind him at the bar a little knot of perturbed, astonished men. "Well, what do you think of that?" said Mr. Bouncer, after a long silence. "Did you ever come nigh such impudence?"

"I don't see anything particularly impudent in what he said," replied one. "He's in the right, and, as far as I'm concerned, you can take back the little beer left in my pot. Bob Brown will never touch another drop." Now, mates, do as I do—there were signs of wavering, some for, and some against the motion—"at any rate, don't drink any more here. Take an hour to think and talk it over."

"Agreed," they said, and marched out in a body, leaving Mr. Bouncer in a dazed state of mind, and rather inclined to think that all the world, himself included, was being turned upside down.

Simon went home and told his wife of his resolve to quit drinking, which of course filled her heart with joy. She hoped for better days. While they were talking together little Jim came in, this time without the borrowed shoes, which, with the cunning born of the street-life he led, he had left for a while on the landing outside. He had not seen his father at the saloon, because the paper hid him from view, and he had no suspicion of his little peccadillo having been discovered, or of the good it had effected. So he was greatly astonished and frightened at first when his father raised him in his arms and with a glad smile asked him for the shoes.

A few hours before and he might have denied having seen them, for the dread of being cruelly treated will often lead a child to lie; but the smile disarmed him, and he told where they were. Simon Tanner went out and fetched them, and bade his wife put them away.

"We will keep these," he said, "and I trust in God to lead me aright, so that when Jim is a man he may be thankful for the day he put them on."

A few minutes afterwards Simon was out seeking work, and by night he had found a little to do. On his return home he found Robert Brown, the painter, waiting to see him.

"I thought I would find you out and have a talk with you," he said, "for it is a pity such good resolutions as you and I made to-day should ever grow cold. The lesson I had I never can forget. I have a wife and children, too, and I don't think I need say more than that I shuddered as I thought of what drink might bring them to. I am going to sign the pledge. Will you come with me?"

A ready affirmation was given, and with Simon Tanner carrying little Jim in his arms, as proud of him as if he had been a prince of royal blood, they went to a temperance advocate in the town and put down their names. On their way home Robert Brown unbared his mind of something he had had upon it all day.

"Here's a boot-shop," he said, pulling up, "and I want you to let me buy Jim a pair that will fit him. It's a poor little gift for what he has done for me this day."

It was a generous offer not to be refused on any account, and they went into the shop, where little Jim in a dream of delight—he could hardly believe it was real—was fitted up with a pair of sound boots, with sufficient ornament about them to please his childish fancy, and strong enough to stand the test of ordinary wear.

They did not cost much; but no king on gaining additional territory ever knew the unqualified delight the little fellow felt that night as he strutted from the shop in his new possessions.

Of all that followed it would require a little book to tell. Little by little Simon Tanner made his home full of simple delights and pure joys, such as no votaries of drink could ever know, let them say what they will; and if he did not actually carry out this threat to stand against the door of the saloon, a living proof of the benefits of temperance, to teach the men who squandered their earnings there, the change in his life was still sufficiently well known to do some good and excite the unswerving but unavailing animosity of Mr. Bouncer.—*Youth's Temperance Banner.*



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