

# The St. Andrews Standard.

PUBLISHED BY A. W. SMITH.

E. VANES SUMMENDUM EST OPTIMUM.—Cic.

\$2.50 PER ANNUM, IN ADVANCE.

VOL. XLVI.

SAINT ANDREWS, NEW BRUNSWICK, JANUARY 22, 1879.

NO. 4.

**The Old Stone Basin.**  
In the heart of the busy city,  
In the scorching noon-tide heat,  
A sound of bubbling water  
Falls on the din of the street.

It falls in a gray stone basin,  
And over the cool wet brink  
The heads of the thirsty horses  
Each moment are stretched to drink.

And peeping between the crowning heads  
As the horses come and go,  
"The Gift of Three Little Sisters"  
Is read on the stone below.

Ah, beset as not taught letters,  
They know no alphabet;  
And never a horse in all these years  
Has read the words, and yet

I think that each toll-worn creature  
Who stops to drink by the way,  
His thanks in his own dumb fashion,  
To the sisters small must pay.

Years have gone by since busy hands  
Wrought at the basin's stone;  
The kindly little sisters  
Are all to woman grown.

I do not know their home or fate  
Or the name they bear to men,  
But the sweetness of their gracious deed  
Is just as fresh as then.

And all life long, and after life,  
They must the happier be,  
For this "cup of water" given by them  
When they were children three.

—Susan Coolidge, in St. Nicholas.

## Prince of Kiev's War-Horse.

A SLAVONIAN LEGEND.

Afternoon in Central Asia; a bright, cloudless, burning July afternoon, under the blinding glare of which the gray unending level of the Tartar desert looks vaster and dreamier than ever, while along the horizon looms a quivering haze of intense heat, as if from the mouth of an oven. The very camel that pasture upon the stray tufts of prickly herbage have couched their long necks upon the ground, as if they never meant to rise any more; and the only moving thing appears to be a passing vulture, which, poised on its wings far overhead, hangs like a blot upon the clear blue sky.

But, nearer to the Syr-Daria (the name of "Clean river" must have been given ironically, for even the Nile and the Volga are not more hopelessly muddy) itself, there is life and motion in plenty. The narrow belt of green fertile soil lying between the great river and the burning waste beyond, silent and lonely as a tomb but a few hours ago, is now alive with all the bustle of twelve hundred fighting men. Tents are being pitched, arms piled, bundles of firewood slashed from the surrounding thickets; and several flocks have already been kindled, over which the battered camp-kettles are hissing and spitting like miniature volcanoes.

Wild-looking fellows they are, these soldiers of the steppe—tall, sinewy, gant as wolf-hounds, with hands that look like coils of rope covered with leather. Those who have only seen them as they appear in the imagination of untraveled artists, accoutred with big coats, fur caps and long lances, mounted on dwarfish ponies, and thrown out against a background of icebergs and everlasting snow, would hardly recognize them under this tropical heat, armed with Bersard rifles and bayonets, clad in soiled cotton jackets, red goat-skin trousers, and flat white horse shoes, beneath which the dark lean faces and close-cropped black hair look doubly grim. But, nevertheless, these are actually the famous Cossacks, of whom so much is said and so little known—the men whose very name is in Western Europe a symbol of plunder, fire, murder and outrage of every kind.

In reality (though they can be fierce enough in the heat of battle) these hobgoblins are very jolly, hospitable, boyishly good-humored comrades—otherwise I should hardly be walking among them unarmed, and exchanging countless greetings in the native dialect as I pass along. And seldom, indeed, even among the pilgrims of Mecca and Jerusalem, have I met with a more picturesque band than this. Here sits a grizzled veteran, gravelly repairing his damaged "pans," with the dexterity of long practice. There, several swarthy, dust-begrimed figures are lying at their ease in the shade, forgetful alike of the toil-some march which is just over, and of the death-grapple with a merciless enemy that awaits them a few days hence. Beside this nearest camp fire, four or five stalwart fellows are shouting, laughing and pushing each other about, with all the boyish, unthinking gaiety of their strangely-mingled nature. And yonder, a little apart from the rest, a tall, handsome lad is coming over, with a moisture in his bold black eyes of which he is very unnecessarily ashamed, a creased, blotched, almost illegible letter (written, probably, by the hand of some village priest) from the aged, lonely widow who is watching and praying

for her only son, far away on the sunny slopes of the Ural mountains.

But, close to the river itself, I spy a group which at once rivets my attention. Five or six Cossacks have gathered around a frightfully scared old "mustache" with one eye and half a nose, who is evidently preparing to tell them a long story.

"Well, brothers, what shall I tell you?"

"Tell us about Ilya Muromets and the Nightingale Brigand."

"No; Alexey Popovitch's fight with the Tartar!"

"No; Oleg and his war-horse!"

The last suggestion is greeted with a general murmur of approval; and the narrator, reddening and lighting his short pipe with the air of a man who feels himself master of the situation, prepares to commence his tale, while his hearers, grouping themselves around him, listen with eager delight for the first words of a story which at least one-half of them have heard a dozen times before. The main facts of this legend (immortalized by the greatest of Russian poets) have received the confirmation of history.

"OLEG AND HIS WAR-HORSE."

"You must know, then, brothers, that long, long ago, in the days when holy Russia was still a heathen land; and before 'Mother Moscow' was built or thought of, there lived in the city of Kiev a great prince called Oleg Sviatoslavitch (son of Sviatoslav). A famous warrior he was, and his men were all true Russians, afraid of nothing and nobody; they weren't at all the same sort of army that we are now. No white jackets and metal buttons; no forage-caps and high boots among them! They were bare-headed and barelimbed, with their hair hanging loose over their shoulders, just like the Tartars that one sees around here, and they wore sheepskin cloaks and helmets of horsehide, and some of them had actually earrings in their ears—think of that! And instead of rifles and bayonets, they went into battle with nothing but spears, and axes, and bows, and such-like trash; but they could fight for all that.

"And, indeed, they had got to fight, too; for the rascally tribes who lived all around them knew well enough that holy Russia must one day be the greatest nation in the world, and that their only chance was to choke her before she grew too big. So the Tartars, and the Petchenegs, and the Bulgarians, and the lying Polacks themselves, came up against Oleg again and again; but Oleg met them in true Russian style, and chased them away, as a housewife chases poultry when they come into her hut.

"Well, one day Prince Oleg was returning from one of these expeditions to his city of Kiev, which was then, they say, the capital of Russia. But I've heard book-learned men say that it was a very different place in those days from what it is now; and that instead of the bright-colored houses, and green church-towers and gilded domes, and the great iron railway bridge across the Dnieper, there was nothing but a little wooden fort on the top of the hill, just big enough for Oleg and his warriors; and in the middle of it stood the great ugly image of Peroun, the Thunder-god, which our father, Prince Vladimir, afterward broke in pieces when Russia became Christian—and quite right too!"

"Now, as Prince Oleg came riding up to the foot of the hill, he saw a man coming forward to meet him, and who should this be but a Christian hermit, who had made himself a cell in one of the hill-caves a year or two before. Just at first the Russian warriors hadn't thought much of him, for they cared only for men who could fight; but when they saw how he came and went among them as if he feared nothing, and how he worked for himself, asking no help from any one, and how clever he was in curing all their hurts and sicknesses, they began to pay him great reverence, and Oleg himself never went by without stopping to have a talk with him, and to get his blessing.

"There they stood, face to face—the dark-robed old man with his long gray beard, and the towering warrior with his golden looks hanging over his shoulders, and his bright blue eyes looking fearlessly out from beneath the shining helmet. But the hermit's face was very sad, and his voice sounded strange and hollow as he spoke:

"'Thou hast done great deeds, my son, and thine heart is lifted up; but beware of pride—for pride goeth before destruction!'

"'Destruction!' cried Oleg, laughing scornfully. 'Think you, then, that I fear death? Hearken, father—men say that you can foretell what shall come to pass; tell me, I pray you, by what death I must die!'

"The old man looked at him for a while, very sadly and earnestly, without

answering a word; but he spoke at last, and this is what he said:

"'Son, hear me! the warrior's soul is fame, and thine shall be great in the field; with deeds of renown shalt thou blazon thy name. And hang on Greek portals thy shield; And ocean and earth shall thy bidding obey, While foemen behold thee with envious dismay.'

"Oleg's eyes sparkled, as he listened, like stars on a frosty night; but the old man continued, more sadly and solemnly than ever:

"'The mountainous waves of the blue-rolling main In the hour of the wide-waiting gale, The shaft, and the sling, and the dagger, in vain The conqueror's life shall assail; No wound 'neath thy mail shalt thou fear to endure, A guardian unseen doth the mighty secure.'

"'No danger, no toil, can thy charger dismay, No will but his lord's doth he know, Whether bidden to dash thro' the battle array, Or stand 'neath the shafts of the foe; And famine and frost are as naught to thy steed. Yet know, ye from him that thy doom shall proceed.'

"The prince started, and then gave a scornful smile; but the smile faded as you may see the sunshine melt from a stormy sky, and for a time he held counsel with himself, none daring to interrupt him. At length he leaped from the saddle, and cried sternly:

"'The truth of that saying shall soon be tested, I trow! Ho there! I lead away my steed, and see that ye tend him carefully. Farewell, my old comrade! Farewell!'

"He pressed his face one moment to the smooth arched neck; and the brave beast seemed to understand it all, for he drooped his head, and turned his large bright eye sadly upon the master whom he had borne so long. And so they parted.

"Years came and went, and Oleg's golden hair was gray as my own; and he had fought many a battle, and had hung his shield in triumph above the great gate of Tzargrad (Constantinople) as the Christian hermit had foretold. But whenever he had returned from a foray, his first question was always 'How fares it with my horse?' At last, one day, his man told him that the horse was dead.

"Then Oleg laughed, and said, 'Where is the hermit's prophecy now? I will go forth, and look upon the bones from which my doom was to proceed?' But just then there tottered through the crowd an old, old man, wrinkled, white-haired, half-blind, barely able to stand. It was the Christian hermit, and he stretched forth his trembling hands, and cried imploringly, 'Beware, my son! I go not forth!'

"Beware is no word for the Prince of Kiev," answered Oleg proudly; and forth he went, with his warriors around him, to the spot where the charger's skeleton lay bleaching amid the wild grass of the prairie. And when he saw it, he cried disdainfully, 'Is this the enemy that was to cause my death? and he spat on the skull with his foot.

"There was a sharp hiss—a flash of greenish light seemed to leap forth from the hollow skull—a terrible cry was heard—and the warriors saw their prince writhing in mortal agony, and a venomous snake gliding away into the thicket.

"So died Oleg, the son of Sviatoslav; and the Russian host set the young Prince Igor on a shield, and made him their chief in his stead. Darkness came down over plain and river, and the aged hermit sat weeping, all alone, beside the grave of the man whom he had warned in vain."—David Ker, in Spirit of the Times.

## How These Cars are Heated.

There were twenty-three passengers in the car on the Elevated road on Third avenue. The pipes under the seats looked like large icicles, and the children wondered what they were. Anybody who attempted to touch them was frozen. A lady fly who had ventured out without an ulster, and who had been carrying two hot bricks around until coal went down, sat on one of the pipes, spit on his hands and froze to death. It was a cold night outside, but inside it was colder.

"What do you heat these cars with?" asked the reporter of a blue-uniformed—all paid for—employee of the road.

"Passengers," said he, indifferently. "Is it true that you mean to set up an ice cream factory in the cars?"

"These cars ain't for ice cream; they're run for 'em," suggested the interrogation point.

"What are those pipes for?"

"To look at. When you do that you begin realize how much better you're off than the folks at the north pole, which they resemble."—New York Star.

## Skates and Skating.

A recent issue of a New York paper says: Just now the parks are alive with many thousands of skaters, both experts and novices, males and females, who are making the best of the stout frost which has fallen over all the land. This popular winter exercise has a long history of its own, which, however, has not yet been written. According to the best recognized authority on the literature of the subject, blunt skates have been in use from time immemorial in Scandinavia, Denmark, England and the whole northwest of Europe. Binding firmly to his feet pieces of polished wood, bone, or iron, two or three times the length of his foot, and shaped like a keelless eight-oared boat, the skater, keeping both feet on the ice, would propel himself along by the aid of a sort of alpenstock. When, and by whom, the keel or cutting blade, was first introduced back into the world in the midst of antiquity. There has been a steady progress in skating, although the sturdy *hollanders* and equally sturdy *wagons* of Holland still use the old-fashioned skate with a long, straight blade, a square heel, and in front a point rising high over the toes, and even sometimes curling back like the prow of a Burmese war canoe. It is astonishing how rapidly an experienced skater can make his way over good ice. For short distances, at the top of his speed, a good skater can, under favorable conditions, accomplish a mile in 2.20, and two miles in 4.47. For twenty miles the average ought to be about sixteen miles an hour. Everything depends, however, as practiced skaters know, on the condition of the ice, the state of the wind, and the weight and height of the skater. In the meantime, if the ice lasts, we know of no reason why parents should not encourage their boys and girls to turn the frost to good purpose. Skating upon sound ice is, for the young, who fall lightly and with little risk of broken bones, a pastime as safe and free from all perils as dancing itself, and certainly more wholesome and invigorating. For those who are not afraid to face winter weather there is no exercise more pleasant or graceful, nor is there a prettier sight than that of a young girl gliding easily, and almost without perceptible effort, over a clear stretch of ice. The rapid passage through the air quickens the pulse and sends the blood coursing rapidly through the veins, while the exertion is far less than that of walking, or even of walking at an ordinary pace. Of boys—well, it would be impossible to keep them off the ice, even if we wished to do so.

## A Tight Squeeze.

A man of fifty, shrouded in an ulster and carrying a whip in his hand, and followed by a woman who looked fully as old, entered a Woodward avenue store the other evening to make some purchases. They talked together as man and wife would, and pretty soon the woman saw something in a showcase to interest her. Her elbows were placed on the glass, and there was a crash which startled everybody in the store. The husband took in the situation at a glance, and remarked as he made for the door:

"Well, I guess I won't buy to-day, as I'm in a hurry."

The wife started to follow, but the merchant called to her, and she in turn called to her husband, who paid not the least attention. The merchant, however, overhauled him as he was unhitching his team, and said:

"See here, sir, you must pay for the damage done by your wife."

"My wife! Do you call that woman my wife?" replied the man.

"Why, I thought she was; she came in with you."

"Can't a woman go into a store with a man and not be his wife?" protested the man.

"But I am your wife—of course I am!" put in the woman, coming up just at that time.

"You are, eh?"

"Of course she is!" indignantly exclaimed the merchant. "Come, now, I want my pay."

"How much?" queried the man, looking from one to the other.

"Well, about twelve shillings."

The man hesitated, but finally counted out the money, while the woman took a seat in the sleigh.

"And you admit that she is your wife?" queried the merchant, as he pocketed the money.

"I s'pose she's a relative."

"But isn't she your wife?"

"Why don't you tell him I am, John?" urged his wife.

"Oh! you keep still!" he growled, as he kicked the snow off his toes; "if that 'ere damage had been twenty shillings instead of twelve, I wouldn't have owned you for a brother-in-law! Hitch along, and bless yer stars that I ain't as mean as some husbands!"—Detroit Free Press.

## SOME QUEER PEOPLE.

With Their Queer Tastes and Whims.

If your child had three sticks of candy per day for a week you'd feel almost certain that the doctor would have to be sent for the week after. Yet, what do you think of a lady who has eaten a full pound of candy per day for weeks past? There is such a lady living in Detroit, and she sends for her sweets as regularly as a business man sends for his mail. About a year ago, after recovering from a severe attack of typhoid fever, the lady developed a sudden fondness for raisins. Not satisfied with a handful, she bought them by the pound and the box, and it is a fact which can be substantiated to the satisfaction of any doubter that she has been known to devour as many as two pounds of the best and largest raisins in a day. After a time her taste changed to confections, and now she eats it day and night, on the car, at the opera, and even in church. She buys only finest and most expensive, and never less than a pound per day. One day last fall she purchased a pound of caramels just before going on the ferryboat, and in an hour she had eaten the last one and tossed the empty box overboard. The doctors have reasoned, warned and counseled in vain—she'll have candy if she has to go without fire. There is a citizen fifty-three years old living on Michigan avenue who has resided in Detroit ever since the first street car was started, and yet he has never entered a car. When people ask him the cause of this eccentric behavior he replies that his legs are a good enough vehicle for him. In rain and snow and heat he jogs along the walk, moaning and being passed by cars, but yet nothing can drive him into becoming a passenger. When the present postoffice building was erected the site displeased him, and he has never yet entered the building—hardly ever passing it. In going up and down Michigan avenue he always walks on the south side, and no man can remember of ever having seen him on the other side.

There is a gentleman living on a prominent street in this city who has for years kept a hostler and a man-of-all-work and two servant girls in the house, and he has always insisted that the men should be black-haired and the females red. Circumstances have often left him short of help, but a red-headed man or a girl with black hair could not have secured positions had they offered to work for nothing. He once visited an intelligence office in the city in search of a servant girl with red hair, and he would employ none other, though he was short of help for a week. It is said that the key to this eccentricity is the fact that years ago, when a young man, he passed a black-haired and a red-haired girl walking arm in arm, and during the next ten steps he picked up a wallet with a large sum of money in it, which was never claimed. His good luck brought with it the whim that he now indulges.

There are plenty of men and women in this city who will not ride after a white horse on consideration, being superstitious enough to believe that their next ride would be in a funeral procession.

On Sixth street lives a middle-aged man who will not exchange a single word of conversation with a man wearing a slopewheel hat. He will not trade with a grocer or merchant who wears one, and once, after sending for the doctor for his wife, he refused to let the physician enter the yard because he had a silk hat on. Some young men knowing of this peculiarity once thought to play a joke on him. He had had one certain milkman for years, and the boys halted the man on the street one morning and traded him a good "plug" for his old tile. He drove around to the house in airy style, rang his bell and ladled out his milk, but instead of the usual "good morning," he received plump, plain notice that he could never sell another pint of milk at that house. He asked for an explanation, but none was given, and it was weeks afterward before "the boys" enlightened him.—Detroit Free Press.

A Vienna paper tells a good story of a Russian corporal who had so distinguished himself in the recent Turkish war that, before its close, he had received two crosses of St. George, and was about to receive a third. When his general was about to confer the third cross upon him, he first asked the corporal whether he would rather have the cross or a reward of 100 roubles. The corporal paused thoughtfully for a moment, and then inquired the monetary value of the cross. "Four roubles," replied the general. "Then," replied the ingenious corporal, "I should prefer that your excellency would give me the cross and ninety-six roubles."

## The Sailor's Wife.

"God bless you, lass!" once more they kissed; And straight aboard he sprang; The sails shook out, the glad waves hissed, She watched the vessel round the pier, And waved her last good-byes, And turned away with spirit drear, And hard, unmoistened eyes.

She sat within, forlorn and weak— There came not any sound; And yet his kiss was on her cheek, His strong arms clasped her round. "Ah, little heart! I love thee best, No more we part for aye!" She bent her head against his breast, And let the tears have way.

## Items of Interest.

Colorado is about to import into its mountainous districts the yak or Thibet ox. Garlic is said to be a sovereign remedy for gout. There is no remedy for a garlie. The members of the Vermont legislature held a prayer meeting every morning. Mary had a little lam For rearing her big sister; Her mother slapped her hard, and then she said, "Woman-like—she kissed her."

"After the Turtle" is the name of a new book published in London. If it is the least bit lively it ought to be able to catch up.

London has nearly 14,000 cabmen, among them are men who have been clergymen, doctors, lawyers, and a real lord.

An Irishman tells of a fight in which he was one of the men who were to the whole crowd, "and that belongs to the tea kettle."

Might doesn't always make right, be sure, but then the fellow with the most muscle in his elbows generally gets the best seat for viewing Fourth July fireworks.

The Chicago Inter-Ocean finds fault for reflection to the extent of three-quarters of a column, in the complex idea that a woman when abroad in the service of cold weather, never has her ears pinched, never slaps them as men do theirs, and yet never apparently gets them frozen. Prince Metternich, lately Austrian ambassador in Paris, once made a clever little speech to the lady who was the best dressed grande dame of the second empire. "I notice," said his excellency, "that your bonnet grows smaller as you grow smaller, and the bills larger and larger. One of these days the maker will bring nothing but the bill."

## Prepared to Defend Himself.

The Louisville Courier-Journal has late presented its readers with some stage stories. Among them is the following in relation to the elder Booth. Once "Richard III." was played at Rochester, and at rehearsal the members of the company warned the gentleman to whom "Richmond" was assigned, who had never played "against Booth." "Richard," he was told that Booth frequently made the duel a very serious matter, and his apprehensions were worked upon to such a degree that he resolved to prepare himself for the encounter. Instead of applying to the property manager for the sword usually used by "Richmond," he obtained the immense weapon reserved for the "Richelieu." When play was produced, and when the final scene came about Booth thundered at and met his "Richmond" holding aloft a blade of enormous size. "What the deuce do you mean by having such a sword as that?" exclaimed Booth, so vociferously that "Richmond" whispered to "Richmond," "I've heard of your doing of your tricks upon me I'll beat the best out of you!" Booth was so astonished that the combat and death of "Richard" is said to have been on the occasion exceedingly tame and disappointing.

## Sweet Candor.

In a first-class railway carriage by five o'clock train from Easton arrived two gentlemen, up to that time, at probably since, strangers to each other. The elder lived near Crewe; the younger, en route for Ireland, intended to sleep at Chester. The conversation between them grew animated. The elder presently said, "Give up your idea of sleeping at Chester, and do me the honor of passing the night at my house. The offer was accepted with grateful effusion. On leaving in the morning said the guest: "Answer my question frankly. What induced you, on an insufficient acquaintance, to confer great a benefit on me?" Replied the host: "As you press me, your question shall be frankly answered. My wife always tells me that I am the ugliest man in Great Britain; I wished to show her that there was an uglier.—London World.

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