AN ENTERPRISING SWINDLER.

Once in a while a man appears on the surface of retail trade who has laid his plans to swindle those who trust him, and to make "a pot" of money, big or little, out of them. This was evidently the game played last autumn by H. M. Winter, who opened a sort of departmental store in Berlin, Ont. He stated to wholesale houses that he was putting $4,000 of his own money into the business at the start and that he had $2,000 more of his own available. To the mercantile agencies he told the same story.

On August 24th of the present year of grace this cunning adventurer, who professed to have been a wide traveller, and was alleged to be a corn-doctor, opened his premises in Berlin, the front of which he had painted sky-blue, and suspended aloft the sign "The Poor Man's Friend." He signalized the opening by a procession and a band of music. As the summer waned, and the fall of the leaf drew near, Mr. Winter conceived that a branch store or two would be an advantage. So he brought from Chicago a son-in-law, named Goldsmith, and establishing him in Elora begins to ship him goods from the Berlin shop. Also he had a sister in Guelph, Mrs. Hurley, to whom he sent some stock. These circumstances becoming known, suspicion was aroused, which was not allayed when Winter suddenly assigned to the Mayor of Berlin, with liabilities of $6,600, and assets of only $800. A few days afterward, his creditors having met in the meantime, he was arrested on an information alleging fraud, and committed by the police magistrate for trial. When asked what had become of the goods or money to represent the deficit shown, Winter answered that he had lost it playing poker. But strangely enough he could not name anyone to whom he had lost such large sums, so this was evidently untrue. He also blamed the "jealousy" of other Berlin store-keepers, which he said prevented his getting goods. Clearly there was nothing small about Winter—as a liar.

Meanwhile his son-in-law, Goldsmith, on being guaranteed permission to leave the country, admitted that he had received the goods of the Elora store from Winter, and had not paid a cent for them. And Mrs. Hurley owned to getting some of his merchandise. Besides, there were quantities of goods found in corners and cupboards of his dwelling-house.

The other day his trial came on before Judge Chisholm and a jury. The judge characterized Winter's testimony as a tissue of lies and his proceedings as a deliberate swindle. And the jury did not take five minutes in finding the defendant guilty of fraud. So he was sentenced to imprisonment for one year and twenty days, and a fine of $800. In default of payment of this sum he is to have another year in the Central Prison.

The community is to be congratulated that this plotting rascal is behind prison bars, and that his pocket as well as his person is to suffer for his knavery. It is very satisfactory, also, to learn that no suggestion of compromise was for a moment listened to by creditors in this case, among whom were, Knox, Morgan & Co., and McPherson, Glassco & Co., of Hamilton; John Macdonald & Co., Perkins, Ince & Co., and W. B. Hamilton, of Toronto. The prosecution of this man is a proof that the creditors who undertook it have risen above the consideration of saving a few dollars by compromising with a swindler, and have exerted themselves, for the sake of business morality, to have him punished. They have done well.

TWO OF THIS WEEK'S FAILURES.

Word comes from London of the considerable failure of the R. Greene Manufacturing Company, which made clothing. It was not incorporated. A meeting of creditors is to be held on 2nd January. The liabilities are stated at $110,000, and the assets under $80,000.

The Toronto firm of Morley & Armstrong, who have been doing a jobbing business in shoes, appear to have been robbed by their bookkeeper, who is now across the Line 45. They had to consult their creditors, who must have sympathized with them, for a compromise has been agreed upon at 50 per cent., spread over three months, secured. They owe $21,000, and have $14,000 assets.