

## PAT FLANNIGAN'S LOGIC.

BY HON. A. B. RICHMOND.

" 'Tis wisdom to beware  
And better shun the bait than struggle in the snare.—*Dryden*,

" But let the strong temptation rise,  
As whirlwinds sweep the sea ;  
We find no strength to 'scape the wreck,  
Save, pitying God, in Thee."

—Mrs. Hale's "Alice Ray."

"Patrick Flannigan," said the District Attorney one day in court, "stand up and plead guilty or not guilty to the charge the Commonwealth has preferred against you !"

When Pat had complied with the polite request thus made by the officer of the law, the attorney proceeded to read from a paper in his hand a very graphic description of a certain transaction in which Pat had been engaged a few days before.

"What say you? Are you guilty or not guilty?" asked the attorney.

"I am not guilty of half thim things ye've read to me," said Pat, looking at the court; but I did have a bit of a row last Saturday week; an' I dunno jist vat I did, fer ye see I was stavin' drunk, on the meanest corn whisky yer honor iver tasted."

"But, Patrick, we never taste it," said the Judge, while a smile lurked in ambush behind the grave judicial countenance.

"Sure now, don't ye, though?" said Pat, with a look of mingled surprise and incredulity—"don't ye though? Well, thin, ye ought to jist once' to know how the crather acts, an' to know how to pity a poor fellow that does. Sure, your honor grants licenses, an' how do ye know the mischief yer doin' to honest men like meself unless ye take a drink now an' thin—jist to see how it makes a man behave hisself."

"Who gave you the liquor, Patrick?" asked the court on a voyage of discovery.

"Well, I dunno vat's his name," said Pat, too honest to turn informer, while a gleam of true native humor twinkled in his eye. "But I know I seed a license hangin' fernist the bar. Ye see, Judge, I was wroughtin' for the city on the streets, jist close by, an' I was drouthy, an' it was so handy, I went in and took a drink that ortent to've hurt a baby; an' in tin seconds I was crazy drunk—an' I dreamt I was at Donnybrook fair; an' that's all I remember till next mornin', whin I was boardin' at Sheriff Ryan's hotel."

"But," said the court, "you are charged with perpetrating an aggravated assault and battery on Mr. S, the hotel keeper."

"Well, yer honor," said Pat, "if I did, I only gin him back jist vat's in his own whisky; an' if yer honor hadn't gin him a license, I wouldn't 've got the drink, an' if I hadn't 've got the drink, I wouldn't 've been drunk, I wouldn't 've got into the fight; an' if I hadn't 've got into the fight, I wouldn't 've been here this mornin', onyhow."

This was a process of reasoning new to the Court. It was a self-evident truth dressed in plain clothes, and while the law was with the Court, Pat evidently had all the logic, and he here summed up the mischief of the license system in a few sentences.

Scores of men are made drunk every day, just because it is so easy to obtain liquor. The law places it in reach of every man. On all the streets of our towns and cities are hung notices of "Choice Liquors," "Cool Lager," "Ale," and "Fancy Drinks," to tempt the laboring man to come in and spend the money for strong drink, that his family need for bread. On the path he must walk to and from his daily occupation he sees these temptations on every side. The licensed saloon and grog-shop afford him every facility to become a drunkard. His appetite, renewed and kept alive by indulgence, urges him on. There is no obstacle in his road to ruin—on the other hand, that road is opened and made plain and easy by the law. What wonder is it then that the rum-shops flourish while the families of their victims starve?

Should a gambling house be opened in our midst, straightway the officers of the law hasten to abate the evil. The owner is arrested, and the law is swift to punish the offender. Why? Because the vice of gambling affects the morals of the community. By it men's passions are depraved and their fortunes wasted away. Does not the grog-shop do more? Does it not more certainly affect the morals of society? Does it not waste the fortunes of men? Is not the circle of its baneful influence greater? Does it not

affect a greater number? And more than all this—does it not also cause disease, that is transmitted from father to son, from generation to generation, poisoning the very spring of human life, while it scatters death on every side?

In a house of ill fame covertly established? Verily it cannot long escape the notice of the moral people around it, or the lynx-eyed guardians of the peace and public welfare, and the punishment dire and certain is meted out to the offender clothed in scarlet. Why, a most just, indignant, and consistent (?) people will not always wait for the slow process of the law, but, in their zeal to purify the public morals, will sometimes take the law in their own hands, and administer to the frail victims of their vengeance punishment most con'fign. Why is this? Because society is so careless of its morals that it will not tolerate temptations to evil in its midst. And when some feeble offender seeks to establish a place wherein to pander to the lusts of men for gain, a Christian community will not permit it. No, it tempts men to sin! Public indignation is aroused, and a mob most likely becomes the champion of virtue and morality!

By the side of this evil stands the grog-shop with its open portals leading from earth to hell. But it is a time-honored institution, beloved by politicians, begotten by law, sustained by license, and tolerated by a Christian people. It rears its poisoned front in all our public thoroughfares, tempts men to sin, invites them to ruin, is a source of nearly all crime, and a libel on the Christian civilization of the age. Verily do we

"Compound sins we are inclined to,  
By damning those we have no mind to."

If we may judge the tree by its fruit, the gambling hell and house of ill-fame—bad as they are—are temples of innocence and virtue compared with the licensed bar-room and grog-shop.

If we license the sale of whisky, why not license gambling and prostitution, or any other vice that will pay a tribute to the State therefore? Yes, why not stamp the broad seal of the commonwealth on the very blade of the knife of the assassin. The influence of this wicked traffic is most often felt in the hand that grasps the hilt. The drops of blood on its point are but so many tributes paid by murder to the law. And if the law sanctions the influence and motive power, why should it not sanctify the instrument and approve the consequences.

Our City Council once constructed a beautiful water fountain in the centre of the public park. It was intended for use as well as ornament—it was deep and large, and was made to hold a supply of water for the use of engines in the event of fire. For a few days after its completion it was left unprotected by a railing, and late one dark and stormy night a poor laborer who was going home from a neighboring licensed hotel (alias grog-shop), too drunk to keep in the pathway, fell into the fountain and was drowned. The body was taken out of the water the next morning, and in the pocket of the unfortunate victim was found a pint flask partly full of whisky. He left a wife and family that depended on him for a miserable support, but, such as it was, it was better than starvation. The coroner's inquest censured the City Council for their negligence in leaving the fountain unprotected by a railing. The citizens were indignant, and particularly the hotel (?) keeper, who had lost a good customer. Anathemas, long, deep, and loud, were hurled at the devoted heads of the "City Fathers," for their carelessness and disregard for the safety of the citizens. Grave and serious as the occasion was, I could not help smiling at the misdirected wrath of the people. It was determined to fence the fountain in immediately with a strong iron railing, to prevent such accidents in the future. I suggested that as there were a number of bridges in the city from which drunken men might fall and get drowned, while they were fencing the fountain, the resolution be so amended as to provide that a fence be first erected around the grog-shop, and the fountain attended to afterwards. I also mildly stated that, as a matter of economy, it would be better, for it was probable that one fence would be all that was necessary, if it were erected in the right spot, to protect all the dangerous places in the city. I wanted a fence around the whisky as well as the water. It was amusing to see the look of blank astonishment on the intellectual faces of the jurymen. The proposition was so new that it required time to take it all in and to give it that consideration which I thought it deserved, but which it never received. One of the jurors sagely remarked to his fellow, that while the City Attorney was reasonably rational on most subjects, he was becoming positively "lunatic" on the question of temperance. And sometimes, when I have been talking to