The St. Andrews Standard.

PUBLISHED BY A. W. SMITH.] E VARIIS SUMENDUM EST OPTIMUM.—*Cic.* [$2 50 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE

Vol 34 SAINT ANDREWS, NEW BRUNSWICK, APRIL 17, 1867. No 1

Miscellany.

THE GROCER'S STORY.

Ours was a quiet street at most times, a lazy, shady place, where the green blinds were forever closed, and where there was so little passing, that spires of grass grew here and there among the flag-stones, and the stone curbs of the iron-railed areas were fringed with soft green moss. A very quiet place at most times, but late one autumn afternoon a strange cry sounded through it, which awakened all its echoes and called curious faces to the doors and windows.

"Stop, thief."

The strong voice of a policeman uttered the cry at first, and the shrill treble of two boys at play near by took it up and repeated it, and by-and-by there was a full, deep chorus, like the cry of a pack of hounds—a sound you might have known at any distance, however ignorant you were of the language, to be the cry of men who hunted something.

Policemen with their clubs, errand-boys with their bundles, bakers with baskets on their arms, young gentlemen just released from the academy close at hand, and ragged urchins whose school house was the gutter, all joined together in the hot pursuit, and followed the miserable object with bare, begrimmed feet and hatless head that flitted along before them with a speed which only fear could lend to one so worn and wretched—a speed which kept the crowd a long way off, while the burliest of his pursuers panted for breath.

They were out of sight in a moment, but in little while the cry was heard that the thief had baffled them, and some among the crowd rushed back to see if their prey had doubled on his track, and others, sulky and indignant with the useless chase, came back muttering angrily, or swearing with many bitter oaths, that they would have him yet. One policeman, a well-fed fellow with a crimson face, made quite a hero of himself, by asserting that he knew the fellow and would trap him before sundown. There was a good deal of sympathy for the gentleman who had lost the pocket-handkerchief, but none that I could hear for the poor degraded wretch who had purloined it. until a plaid voice at my elbow uttered the following words, apparently in soliloquy:

Well, I may be wrong, but I somehow hope they won't catch him.

I turned in surprise, and confronted our grocer, on whose steps I had sought shelter from the crowd, which, at such a moment, could not be expected to think much of the safety of a woman.

Our grocer was a portly man with a shining bald head fringed by a ring of white hair, and wearing at the moment a Holland apron and a short blue jacket.

Yes'm, he went on, I hope the miserable, starved looking creature will get off.

Then you don't believe he picked the gentleman's pocket? said I.

I'm afraid it's only too certain that he did, ma'am, said the man, shaking his head.—He looked straight at me as he passed, and he had hungry, desperate eyes that that looked like theft—murder, too, for that matter.

And yet you want him to escape when he has broken the laws of the land and will probably do so again!

God forbid that I should help to break the laws, said the old grocer. Good men make them and they are right; but there are other laws that I read in my Bible Sunday nights, that seem to be binding. One of them is: "Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you," and another: "Love thy neighbor as thyself." When I remember these words, I think we may be too hard with a poor, sinful fellow-being and not go beyond the limits of the law either.

The rich gentleman who had his pocket picked will go home and find a dinner and a bottle of wine, no doubt, and the wretch of a thief may have a crust of bread and a glass of burning gin, if he can sell or pawn what he stole, for enough to get them. Somehow, if I could, I wouldn't have him hunted down to night—I vow I wouldn't.

Still, I don't blame those young folks; I'd have been as furious in the chase as any of ers, years ago, but I learnt a lesson once that I never forgot, and I hope I never may. I was a young man and a poor one then, and had a hard struggle to make my little shop keep my family. I was only by pinching and saving, and keeping a sharp lookout for every bargain, that I managed it at all.

We lived in a shabby street, and had only a very few customers. A loaf of bread, a quarter pound of butter, and two ounces of black tea, were quite an order, and most of those who came wanted trust.

As for laying in fine fruit or vegetables.—I never thought of such folly. Diamonds would have been as saleable in that part of the city, where washer-women and all the poorest laboring men were the aristocracy.

Now and then, when a foreign ship came to port with a load of ruined pineapples, or decayed oranges, I bought a lot of these, and charging small profit, sold them easily enough. Although my wife used to say the miserable babies who rolled in the gutters, died off faster after every stock of damaged fruit I sold in the old shop, and I'm afraid that she was right. Well, as I told you, I struggled on as best I might, and after a while things began to improve, and I began to have visions of a clean store in a good street, when I lay down to rest at night.

So one day when I had been to market I brought home half a dozen hams hung them up above the door more for show than anything else, for hams were a grand holiday dinner in those regions, and not an every day affair I can tell you. They went off slowly, as I thought they would. Now and then, some one would come in for a pound, and once I sold half of the smallest one to a woman who wanted it for a Sunday dinner. She was to pay me on Monday morning, but she never did, for on Sunday night her husband killed her with a rum bottle, and they took her body past my shop, with its poor head beaten out of shape, and bloody.

And so the hams hung there all through the summer and through the fall, and quite on into the winter.

It was just as the December nights began to grow long and dark and cold, that I noticed a new policeman on our beat—a young handsome-looking fellow, with very bright eyes, but with such thin cheeks and hands, although he seemed powerfully built and made for a rather stout man, that I could not help watching him and wondering whether he had been ill or not. The first time I noticed him was about sunset, and he passed and repassed my window a dozen times, looking all the while at those hams which dangled from the frame of the awning. I hope he means to buy one, I said to my wife, as we sat together over the tea-table; and I shouldn's wonder if he did, for he seems to have taken quite a fancy to them.

But the evening passed, and though I saw him now and then on the other side of the way looking across with his bright eyes, straight at the hams, he did not come in or speak to me on the subject. And so I made up my mind that he would send for one in the morning, and somehow made so sure of it that whenever I saw a decent looking woman go by with a basket on her arm, I said, there's the policeman's wife coming after the ham." I was mistaken, however; and after the street lamps were lighted that night, I began to see the man passing up and down, with his eyes still fixed as they had been on the night previous, upon the hams. Once he caught me peeping at him, and then he turned so red and looked at me with such glitter in his eyes, that I grew angry and said to myself:

It's well that keeping unsaleable articles isn't a crime in this country, for if it was, I would be sure to be arrested. So I gave him back his look, turned my head and walked back into the shop. I did not see him again that night, but long after everything had been taken in, I heard a tramp, tramp, tramp, upon the pavement, and knew it was the policeman and that he was looking at the hooks where the hams had hung, as well as though I had seen him.

On the third evening he was there again; that you may say, was no wonder, for it was his duty to be upon this beat and no other; but it was curious that he should keep on staring at those hams with those bright wolfish eyes of his. I didn't like it, though I could not have said why. A vessel had been wrecked at sea about that time, and an extra with the latest news of the disaster came out that evening. I bought a paper and sat down behind the counter to read it. It was a stormy night, and but few customers came in, and these were easily served, and somehow, between reading and thinking, time passed on until the clock struck eleven, and I had not yet taken in my goods or put up my shutters.

Just as I was about to do so (in fact I had already put my hand upon the first piece of the shutter,) my door opened and an old woman came in. She was a scottish, miserable creature, known about the place as Irish Kate, and with her red nose and bleared eyes; was as ugly a figure as one ever cast eyes on.—Another dram, I suppose, I said to myself, going around the bar at once, for I wanted to get clear of her as soon as possible, but she, to my surprise, came closer to me and put her great red paw upon my arm.

I've made a diskivery, master, she said, you have not been keeping as bright a lookout as you should; there's being a thafe at work without, this blessed night.

What theft? I asked.

More than I can tell you, she answered.—But I think it's a policeman no less, the black guard.

It's too dark to see his face, she said: but I caught the shine of a star on the coat he has on, and whoever it was, took a ham from the pegs and hid it in the ash-box beyond the corner. You'll find it there if you look; and sure you'll not refuse a sup of whiskey for the information?

I gave the old creature what she wanted, hurried her out of the shop and put up the shutters, growing angrier every moment.

If it is the policeman I'll make him pay dearly for it. So I crept along the sidewalk to the corner, keeping in the shadow all the way and when I stood beside the box and saw by the light of the lamp close by, that the ham was there, wrapped in something that looked like a handkerchief, I bit my lips with rage.—Had it been a common thief, I should not so much have minded; but a policemen! it was more than I could stand. So I crouched myself in a doorway and waited. The watch was relieved at twelve o'clock; I knew that, and knew also that this would be the time when my policeman would come and take the ham out of its hiding place. And sure enough when the time came I heard him challenge the man who was to take his place and come marching down towards the corner. I let him get the ham well under his arm before I was satisfied, and then pounced upon him like a tiger.

"I've got you! I cried. A pretty sort of a policeman you are indeed; but you shall suffer for it I can tell you.

He struggled like a wild thing, and then all of a sudden he dropped the ham and fell down in a helpless sort of a heap upon the ground.

I'm a ruined man! he groaned, a ruined man! there's no hope for me now. Oh my God! my wife—my poor little wife! and he burst out crying like a woman.

You should have thought of that before you became a thief," I said. If the guardian of a man's property is not to be trusted what is to become of him—and you look like a gentleman you don't seem like a scoundrel; how have you stooped to do such a disgraceful thing as this?

He was standing beside me now and the lamp light fell on his face. It was as white as any corpse's and his eyes glittered terribly.

Policeman's families do not often starve, I said with a sneer.

My God! can't you believe me—won't you believe me? panted the man. I have only been appointed three days. I have not received a cent of salary yet. I have been ill a long while and had neither money or credit. Last night we went to bed supperless, to-day there has not been a crust in the house, and those hams tempted me so. You can never know how awfully they tempted me, and I meant to pay you afterwards.

He covered his face with his hands and I could see great tears dropping through his fingers, and before I knew it my own cheeks were moist, and so we stood silent with the ham lying between us on the ground.

At last he turned toward me and said:—Do what you like with me. The last hope is gone.

But I put my hand on his arm and said, God forbid that I should take that last hope from you.

If your story be true—and it is—I pity you more than I blame you.

He looked at me in a sort of bewildered way, as though he scarcely understood me and I took him by the arm and led him back to the shop. There I filled a basket of bread and butter and coffee, and put the ham on the top of all. "Take it home to your wife," I said you'll pay me when you get your salary, and if need before that, come to me I am a poor iman myself and I can feel for other poor men.

I shall never forget that man's face in my life, so wondering, so thankful and so awe-stricken. All he said was "God bless you." but there was a whole sermon in those words, and I slept better for them.

On Christmas night he paid me every cent and from that day until I left the neighborhood he dealt with me regularly. But times grew so much better that I took a store in a good street at the other end of the town, and in one way and another saw no more of my policeman for three good years.

One night just such a night as that on which I first saw him staring at the hams, I was awakened long after midnight by a cry of fire. I started up to see the flames through the floor and to know that the store down stairs was all ablaze. The stairs were on fire also, and when as I opened the entry door, hot air and somke rushed in and almost smothered me, I gave up al hopes of getting my poor wife and helpless little ones out of the burning building alive and safe. I was so faint and ill from the accident you see, that I hadn't all my wits about me, and, believed there was no one missing. My blood run cold when my wife, clasping her hands and with an awful look upon her face, screamed:

Our Little Lucy, our little Lucy is left behind.

She had slept with our servant girl since, her baby brother was born, and the woman in her fright had forgotten our little one. There she was at the top of that burning building out of the reach of any human help; it seemed to me, as I looked up at the wall, a great red and yellow sheet of flame with blue gleams here and there, as though devilish heads were peeping out and grinning at us. Still hopeless as it was, I should have gone back into the burning house, and saved my baby or died with her, if had not been able to stand. No one else would venture. It would be a foolish sacrifice of life, they said; for no doubt the child was already smothered by the smoke, and though I raved and pleaded and made wild promises, they shook their heads and bade me have patience.

Patience! I thought I was going mad, as the face of my little girl—my sweet, pretty little pet—rose up before me. But just then a tall man dashed trough the crowd and came toward me.

Quick! which room is the child in—speak quickly—which room?

The back on the upper floor, I groaned, as he dashed away from me, parting the throng with his strong arms, and in another moment I saw him mounting a ladder. I heard them calling him to come back, bidding him beware and speaking of him as though he were dead already. But he didn't heed them, and I saw him hidden by the black smoke which poured from the window, I covered my face and prayed that the angels that walk in the fiery furnace might go with him.

Perhaps they did. Something stronger than an earthly thing must have been there, for in a few minutes—they seemed years to me—we saw him coming down the ladder with something in his arms, perhaps the dead body of my child I thought, but as he came nearer I saw that it was my own laughing, living darling, with her blue eyes open and her little arms around his neck.

The roof fell in the next moment, but my treasure was safe, and that was all I cared for.

What shall I say or do to thank you? I said as I grasped his hand. I'm a ruined man, and I can only give you my blessing; but let me know your name at least.

Have you forgotten me? Don't you remember me? he said, as he bent over me.—Look again.

It is you, said I, and you have saved my child from such an awful death.

And what did you save me and mine from? he said, with tears in his eyes, starvation, ruin, and utter degredation. I should have been a felon and my dear ones paupers this night but for you. I have not paid the debt. I never can; but when I heard that it was your child that lay at the top of that burning building I prayed that I might save it, and I know God heard me.

And then he told what had brought him to the neighborhood on that night above all others in the year.

I had lost all, for I was not insured, but he was prosperous and stood by me like a brother, nursed me through my illness and loaned me money for a start in life. So that in a while things grew bright again, and here I am you see, as comfortable as most people.

And the policeman? I asked.

His hair is white as my own," said the old man. And my little daughter, the little one he saved that night, is married to his son.

GRAND JURY REPORT.

GRAND JURY ROOM,
APRIL SESSIONS, 1867.

The Grand Jury beg to Report, that they find all the Parish Accounts generally correct, with the exception of Henry Smith's of West Isles; and Hubert McLauchlan's, commissioners; Daniel Lee, collector, and Mark Hall, collector, all of St. George; and they beg to call the attention of the Justices to the account of Justice Craig of Grand Manan, more especially referred to in the report of the Auditor.

The Grand Jury recommend that the claim of David Main, St. Stephen, for printing Tavern Licenses, be paid in a like amount formerly received by A. W. Smith, St. Andrews.

The Grand Jury are of opinion that the long standing and somewhat trifling account of Dr. Gove, coroner, should be immediately piad.

Also the accounts of Moses Park and Jesse Prescott, constables of St. George.

The Grand Jury respectfully submit to the Justices for their consideration, the balance of the Constables accounts.

The Grand Jury having visited the Gaol, report it to be in a cleanly and healthy condition, and subsequently,—Resolved,—That the Order of the Magistrates in Session for re-payment of the Eighty dollars paid by Mr. Mark Young, the Gaoler, at the instigation of a former petty Jury, be now confirmed and the amount refunded.

The Grand Jury having inspected and examined Boyds Wharf, at the crossing of the Railway track, find it much out of repair, and in unsafe condition, and considering it a nuisance, recommend that it should be planked over forthwith.

Upon the representations of the high Sheriff and the Clerk of the Peace, the Grand Jury recommend that the sum of Four hundred dollars ($400) being a Committee's estimate two years ago, be now expended in repairing in full the Roof of the Court House, and a portion of that of the Gaol.

Likewise the sum of Twenty-four dollars for chairs and long table for Grand Jury Room.

Likewise the sum of Forty dollars for repairing and painting the Coat of Arms in front of the Court House.

Also Resolved,—That a suitable Flag and appendages to be furnished to the Court House for particular occasions.

The Grand Jury recommend the sum of One thousand dollars for County Assessment for present year.

Upon the personal application and representation of the County Treasurer, to the effect that the law provides that his salary shall not exceed one hundred dollars per annum, but that he in fact only receives Eighty dollars per annum from the Justices, and in consideration of the fact that the duties of the office, have much increased of late, and that the amount to the credit account of the Treasurer is very satisfactory, the Grand Jury recommend that the salary of the County Treasurer be increased to the full limitation of the law.

The Grand Jury disapprove of charging to the County the account of James A. Grant certified by W. T. Rose, J. P., for rent of Hall, during trial in connection with ship "Shooting Star," and leave the same in the hands of the Justices for their consideration.

The Grand Jury disapproving of the corrupt principle of paying over to a Magistrate, Policeman, or other person giving information of parties selling liquor without license, one half the penalty imposed by the Law, they have Resolved,—That in addition to salaries received for the Performance of rightful duty, a fee not Exceeding one dollar shall be paid to said Justice, policeman or other person giving such information aforesaid, as full compensation for the Act.

The Grand Jury fyle a Bill against John Murphy for larceny, and recommend that the amount of his Bail deposited in St. Stephen Bank, be withdrawn by the County and placed to its credit.

The Grand Jury, in conclusion, recommend that the office of County Auditor be continued, and that the salary per annum attached thereto be Fifty dollars.

J. R. BRADFORD,
GEO. E. SANDS, Foreman
Secretary.

PROBATE COURT.

County of Charlotte.

In the matter of the Estate of ALEXANDER GRANT late of the Parish of Saint Andrews, in the County of Charlotte, deceased.

WHEREAS George D. Street and Charles W. Wardlaw, Esquires, Executors of the last Will and Testament of the said Alexander Grant, deceased, have this day filed their Account with the said Estate, and have prayed that the Creditors and next of Kin of the deceased, and all persons interested in the said Estate, may appear and attend the passing and allowance of the said account.

Notice thereof is therefore hereby given, to all the Creditors and next of Kin of the said deceased, and to all person interested in the said Estate, and they are hereby cited to appear before me at a Court of Probate, to be held at the Office of the Registrar of Probates in Saint Andrews, in the said County of Charlotte, on Wednesday the seventeenth day of April next, at the hour of Eleven in the forenoon, to attend the passing and allowance of the Account of the said Administrators.

L. S. Given under my hand and the Seal of the said Court, this thirteenth day of March, A. D. 1867.

B. R. STEVENSON, Registrar of Probates
J. W. CHANDLER, Judge of Probates for the County of Charlotte, pro hac vice.

To the Court of General Sessions in and for Charlotte County.

The Petition of of the Parish of in the County aforesaid.
Humbly sheweth,

That Petitioner is a Householder, residing in the Parish of in said County, and is desirous of obtaining a Licence to keep a TAVERN at [here specify the place and building] in said Parish. That Petitioner is a person of orderly and sober habits, and has the means of comfortably entertaining travellers, and is prepared in all respects to comply with the Laws of this Proviace, and the Regulations of this Honorable Court, relating to the sale of Spirituous Liquors and the keeping of Taverns.

And as in duty bound will ever pray.

Dated [Parish] the day of A D 1867 } [signed] A. B.

The above petition is to be accompanied with the following recommendation signed by not less than two freeholders; viz:—

The Subscribers, resident freeholders in the Parish aforesaid, certify that we know the above named petitioner, that we believe the statements by him above subscribed, and recommend that the prayer of his petition be complied with.

The foregoing is the form of petition to be signed by applicants for Tavern Licenses at ensuing Sessions, which petition is to be in Court on or before Thursday of the first week of the Court.

Blank forms of petition may be had at the Office of the Clerk of the Peace.

GEO. S. GRIMMER,
Clerk of Peace.

St. Andrews, March 8, 1867. 6 w eas

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