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"This is true Liberty, when Freeborn Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free."---Euripides.

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THE WIFE OF SEVEN HUSBANDS.

A LEGEND OF ANCIENT LONDON.

In the beginning of the reign of Edward the First, of long-legged memory, there lived upon Corne-hille, over against the spot where the water-tonne was a few years afterwards built, a certain blithe and buxome widow, very wealthy, and as fair withal as she was wealthy; she was only in her twenty eighth year, of a tall and stately shape and bearing, with commanding and yet right modest features; her face was oval, her hair and eyes of bright black; her forehead high; her eyebrows arched, almost into semi-circles; her nose slightly aquiline; her cheeks high coloured, and yet delicately so; her lips small, and prettily bent; her teeth white and regular; her chin rather forward and dimpled; and her complexion dark though not swarthy; so that upon the whole she had rather a Jewish cast of countenance, and yet there was no rightful reason to suspect that there was even a drop of Israelitish blood in her veins, for her father, and his fathers before him, for many generations back, had been rich and respectable goldworkers, citizens of London, and had always married among their equals and friends. Busy tongues, however, there were that whispered something or other to this effect—that the maternal grandmother of Mrs. Alice (my young and pretty widow,) during the absence of her husband, who was a merchant, had become pretty closely acquainted with a young Hebrew, at that time staying in London; and that when her husband returned, he was, for some reason or other, so angry with his wife, that he put her away from him, and would never after see her, though he provided for her during her life, and himself educated the children she had borne up to the period of their parting. Now, though the latter part of the story is undoubtedly true, I would nevertheless caution my readers, gentle and simple, not to put too much trust in the former part thereof; remembering that husbands are husbands, and, from the beginning of the world to the present day, have been and are, a jealous and wayward race; and, moreover, that the breath of slander will at all times sully the brightest reputations; and, besides, that conclusions are too frequently drawn which the premises will by no fair means justify.

But be this as it may, Mistress Alice was a very handsome woman, and, as has been before said, very wealthy, for her father always petted her, and although he had two other children, sons, he quarrelled with them both, and turned them out of doors, and very solemnly vowed he would disinherit them, and there is little doubt he would have kept his vow, but they prevented him, the eldest by being drowned in the Fleet river, and the other by being murdered in an affray with the city watch. At the old man's death, therefore, he left all his property, real and personal, to his 'deare daughter Alice', who was then twenty-one years old, and had lately been married for the first time in her life. She has been introduced to the reader as a widow, and if he was tempted to be surprised at her being so young a one, what will he think when he reads that she was a widow for the fifth time?—ay, and was now on the eve of being married to her sixth husband—this was a Master Simon Shard, a draper of Corne-hille, who had a well-filled purse, a rather corpulent figure, a round and ruddy face, and was about two-and thirty years of age. It was said he had been enamoured of the fair Alice previously to her three last marriages, but that he had not had courage enough to break his mind to her till some time after the death of her fourth husband, and when he did so, he found she was engaged to her (his?) immediate forerunner, at whose death he again pressed his suit—was accepted, and they were married. After living together for about six months on the most seemingly loving and comfortable terms, Master Shard was found dead in his bed, without any previous illness or indisposition; this was very strange, at least strange it will probably seem to the reader, though it was not so to Mrs. Alice's neighbours, for, wonderful to relate, all her other husbands had died in the same way, and under the same circumstances. There had been from time to time, many various opinions afloat upon this subject, and they had become more prevalent, stronger, and of longer lasting upon the successive deaths of each of her husbands. The most moderate had merely observed, that "for certes Mrs. Alice was a very unlucky or a very lucky woman," according to the speaker's appreciation of wedlock: others looked very wise, and seemed to think a good deal, but said very little, generally contenting themselves with observing, "That it really was very odd;" but again there were others, who, on the death of Mr. Shard's predecessor, declared that "such things were clean out of the common run of nature, and that either Mrs. Alice, or some one not to be named among Christians, must have bewitched her husbands," (and here the speaker and listeners, especially if females, would devoutly cross themselves,) "or else something or other" (also it seemed not to be named among Christians) "had carried him off in a very *odd* way, to say the least of it;" and to this cautious and mysterious opinion the generality of the last mentioned gossips, with additional self-crossing, assented Still, however, Mrs. Alice's conduct was so, not only unobjectionable, but praiseworthy; she was so pious and charitable a woman, so good a neighbour, so kind a friend, and, in short, both publicly and privately fulfilled all the domestic relations of life, in so exemplary a manner, that even the tongues of those who secretly envied her wealth, her beauty, and may be her luck, had not as yet dared to wag in open scandal against her: but a sixth occurrence of so extraordinary an event, it would seem gave sudden loose to their hitherto confined scruples and tongues; or, perhaps the reason why they more freely vented their suspicions or their spite on the present occasion might be that Master Shard had been a man of great influence in the city — his connexions stood high in the eyes of men, and he had a cousin who was sheriff at the time of his death, and who declared when he heard it, "by cock's marrow, he would see into the matter that very moment," and accordingly next morning, for he was just going to sit down to dinner when he made the above declaration, he presented himself with a *posse comitatus* at Mrs. Alice's door — and then the neighbourhood, as with one voice, spoke out against her; for their long held opinion of her (at least they said it had been long held) now found the countenance of power—her piety had been hypocrisy, and they had thought so all along—her charity ostentation—her goodness and kindness, even those that had been benefitted by them, now found some hole to pick in, and in plain and pithy English they called her a murderess.

While this was going on without Mrs. Alice's doors, another kind of scene was taking place within. The sheriff had been readily admitted, and was followed not only by the *posse* of the *county*, but by a *posse* of the *venue*. (to use, I believe, a strictly law phrase), consisting of all sorts of people, who either had or thought they had, or thought they should like to have, some concern in the business. They found the widow by the bedside of her departed husband: she not only did not fly from, but courted investigation, and accordingly the body was investigated, but not the slightest signs of violence was found upon it; no trace of steel or poison — all was as right and as unaccountable as it ought to have been. There were some present who pretended to a great knowledge of human nature, and who strictly watched Mrs. Alice during the whole transaction, and their evidence went still further to clear her from the imputation it was sought to affix upon her: for they said her conduct was so thoroughly natural—she seemed between indignation at the charge brought against her, and grief for the cause thereof; and yet there was no overacting in her grief, it seemed just what she would be likely to feel for the loss of such a husband, and to be rather sorrow for the spell that appeared to be upon her, than for the man himself The sheriff and his friends therefore, whatever they might have thought or wished, found themselves forced to declare her guiltless; and after partaking of a slight refection, consisting of boiled beef, suet puddings, sausages and ale, left the widow to her solitude. His declaration of her guiltlessness was soon known among her neighbours, almost all of whom, without any delay or difficulty, returned to their former good opinion of her, greatly pitying her for the trouble she had been put to, and much wondering how folks should be so spiteful as to tell such wicked stories. In a few days orders were given for the burial of the late Master Shard in Mrs. Alice's family vault, which was in St. Michael's church, and which vault, though one of considerable extent, Mrs. Alice seemed in a fair way of filling choke full with her husbands.

St. Michael's church stood at the period of this tale, and for aught the teller knows to the contrary, stands to this day at the eastern end of Cornhill, and about midway between this church and Mrs. Alice's house there was a pot-house or tavern, known by the sign of the "Sevenne Starres;" in the tap-room of this tavern, upon the afternoon when Master Shard was to be carried to his long home, there assembled a very merry company of some dozen worthy citizens, who were getting full of good things and gratitude towards the giver of the feast, Master Martyn Lessomour, a young merchant, whose safe return from a long and successful voyage in the Mediterranean they were met to celebrate. Master Lessomour was not yet thirty, though hard upon it; tall, strongly and well built; his face was handsome and manly, and his large blue eyes looked like mirrors of his frank heart; his complexion was naturally fair, but exposure to sun and storm had given it a healthy tan, as they had also yet more bleached his light hair, which he wore long and curling down his neck and shoulders; in short, he was altogether a comely young man to look upon, and the rogue knew it too, for it was particularly observed of him that his carriage, which was at all times free and easy, would assume a little bit of a swagger when he either met in the streets, or was passing under windows where were sitting any young and pretty city damsels. In his merry moods he was playful as a month-old kitten, as very a gallard as the best among them; but when business required it, he was as staid and sober as if an idle jest or an extra cup of canary had never passed his lips, so that he was equally well thought of among the grave and the gay; some of the oldest and wealthiest of the citizens would nod to him in passing, and some even went so far as to declare upon 'Change, "they believed young Master Lessomour would be a man well to do in the world, it," for they generally added a reservation, "if he only took care of himself and had good luck." They might indeed have been a little influenced in the formation of this good opinion, by the fact of his being the only heir and great favourite of a very rich and very old uncle. On the afternoon in question, he and his boon companions were at the height of their merriment, when one who was sitting in the bay window, that jutted out into the street, observed the funeral of Master Shard approach, and gave notice thereof to the others. The passing of a dead body being a solemn event, and they being orthodox Christians (according to the orthodoxy of those times), their merriment was therefore suspended, and I will not undertake to say there was not a share of curiosity mixed up with this religious feeling, for they rose, one and all, and huddled into the window recess, in order to have a fair view of the funeral procession, which as matters went then-a-days was a very sumptuous one. Most of the party present being acquainted with the circumstances of the case, at once recognized whose funeral it was, and the ignorant and anxious ears of Master Lessomour were greedily drinking in sundry marvellous tales of the rich widow of Cornehill, when she herself passed immediately by the window, looking becomingly downcast and sorrowful.

'Be she what she may,' exclaimed my young merchant, 'by the pillars of St. Hercules, she is a lovely wench, and steps out like an emperatrice.'

'A witch, Master Martyn,' replied one, the oldest of his companions, 'A wicked witch is she, take an honest man's word for it, who should know something about such things.'

'He is married to a shrew,' said another, in an audible under tone, which produced a heavy laugh against the former speaker; in this, however, Master Lessomour did not join, nor with his companions who resumed their places round the well stored table, but drawing a stool into the window recess, and taking a tankard of ale with him, he sat down, intending, as he said, to have another glimpse of the fair widow as she returned from church; meanwhile, he requested the company to tell him something more about her, as they seemed to know so much, and he nothing, having been so long away from home—and accordingly, Master Andrews (he who had boasted of his knowledge of such things, and was indeed reputed the most garrulous gossip in the parish) with the assistance and interruption of his companions, when they thought he had not made enough of a good point, went through a relation of Mrs. Alice's life and adventures; and, which relation, divested of a considerable share of fiction with which Master Andrews had laden it, and put together, it is humbly hoped, in something of a more coherent manner, corresponds very nearly with that which has already been laid before the reader. During all this while, Martyn Lessomour spoke not a word, and when at length the narration was ended, he slapped his hand lustly on the window-sill, and cried out, 'By the seven stars, and they are ruling ones now,' casting up his eyes to the sign over the door, 'but it *is* a strange tale — and whether true or false I will soon know—for if the mind of man hold good within me four-and-twenty-hours, I will somehow or other serape knowledge with this witching widow.'

At this observation there was a general outcry, some declaring he would do as he said, others that he could not; and some presuming on their long intimacy with him, or on their greater advance in years, vowed he should not.

'And we'll see that, my merry masters, in an eye-twinkle,' cried Lessomour, 'for here comes the dame back as if to my wish;' and with that, to the no small wonderment of his friends, he started from his seat, and clapping his cap on one side of his head, hurried out of the door, and posted himself on the middle of the path whereon Dame Alice with a few attendants was returning; he staid there, till she came within two or three paces of him, and then drew back to make way for her—she looked up and their eyes met, and bowing as gracefully as he could, which was not indifferently, he drew back still further. Mrs Alice turned with the intent to cross the road, but some horsemen riding by at the moment prevented her from doing so; whereupon Master Lessomour stepping to her side said, 'Fair dame, will you let a stranger do his poor duty here, and see you safe over.' She courtesied, and accepted the arm he offered her; and after escorting her across the road, where they again exchanged courtesies, he left her and joined his companions, who from the window had beheld with astonishment his bold gallantry. They conspired to attack him with a good deal of bantering and raillery upon his exploit; but he was in such high spirits at the good success of it, and so well pleased with the way in which he had acquitted himself that he fairly turned the tables upon them; or if, literally speaking, he did not do that, they pretty nearly did it for themselves; for in the course of two hours there was not one of the party, with the exception of Master Lessomour, who was too merry to get drunk, and of Master Andrews, on whom liquor had no more effect than on a sponge, only making him heavy; with these exceptions there was not one who did not turn himself under the table.

(*Conclusion next week.*)

HIGH LIFE IN NEW YORK.

All accounts agree in representing that outwardly New York was never more prosperous than at the present time. To quote the *Times* correspondent, it seems to revel in the heyday of luxury and enjoyment. A new aristocracy has arisen termed the "Greenback aristocracy," which scatters its easily acquired wealth indiscriminately upon those who minister to its vulgar requirements. The theatres are filled to overflowing, the streets overflow with traffic, the shop-keepers were never busier than now.

"Greenbacks fly from hand to hand," says the *Times* correspondent, "in unexampled profusion; and such is the daily expenditure of the government, and so enormous are the gains of contractors and speculators and stock gamblers, that all the trades and manufactures which administer to luxury are more prosperous than at any time within living memory. So many once penniless adventurers and beggars have become rich, that the jewellers, the silkmercers, the carriage manufacturers, the horse dealers, the upholsterers, and others, are kept in perpetual activity to supply the wants of the new class that have arisen to storm the avenues of "Society" by their hospitality and profusion. Never before was so many diamonds sold in New York as are now sold within a week. Never before did the mercers dispose of so many rich silk, damask, and velvet dresses at extravagant prices; the purchasers being the husbands of woman who three years ago may have had visions of satins and velvets in their sleep, but never thought to see the day when they would be able to wear either in a walking state. A "shoddy" aristocracy has arisen, to whom all things in the way of wealth are new, and who surround themselves with every luxury that greenbacks can purchase. The pianoforte manufacturers were never so busy, and cannot supply instruments of the highest price and finish with sufficient rapidity to keep pace with the demand, although the purchasers too often require them for show rather than for use, and have yet to learn the first rudiments of music. And it is not only the class of *nouveaux riches* who indulge in prodigal expenditure or articles of luxury. Men who acquired wealth years ago by honourable trade and industry make haste to invest their greenbacks in real estate, in gold, in jewelry, and in diamonds; in anything, in fact, that is likely to fetch a price in the markets of the world in the days that seem to be fast approaching, when the paper dollar will fall to 30 or 40 cents."

OUTRAGES.—A somewhat unpretending Temple of Bacchus, on the Tusket Road, (over the inner mysteries of which a Prussian named Thomas Lutes, assisted by a sable priestess, presided,) was razed to the ground a few nights since by a party of men with their faces blackened and otherwise disguised. The motives of the rioters are unknown.—A married man belonging to Tusket, who was suspected of visiting a Paphian bower not a hundred miles from Chebogue, rather too often for his own good, and the peace of his family, was shortly afterwards waylaid by the same gang, and adorned with a coat of tar and feathers. Such proceedings are undoubtedly outrageous, but we cannot learn that much regret is felt at their occurrence.—*Yarmouth Tribune.*

The London Times Paris correspondent says:—"Of the determination of the French Government to interfere in favor of Poland there is no doubt."

COLONIAL LEGISLATURE.

COUNCIL CHAMBER,

THURSDAY, March 19.

PETITIONS.

Presented by Hon. Attorney General.—A memorial of the Trustees of the Lunatic Asylum, setting forth that various accommodations are required for that Institution—that a small sum was granted last year for that purpose, and praying a further grant. Laid on the table.

By Hon. Mr. Yeo.—A petition of certain inhabitants of Mount Pleasant, Lot 12, praying for post office accommodation. On motion, the petition was withdrawn, the remedy being elsewhere.

By Hon. Mr. Lord. — A petition of Benedict Richard, School Teacher, Lot One. Laid on the table.

By Hon. Mr. Dingwell. — A petition of inhabitants of East Point, complaining of the irregularity of the mails, and praying redress. I am aware, said his honor, that the petitioners have just cause to complain, and I think their case deserves the consideration of the Legislature. On motion, the petition was withdrawn, the remedy being elsewhere.

By Hon. Mr. Henderson.—A petition of inhabitants of Lots 61, 31, and 65, praying aid towards a ferry. Laid on the table.

By Hon. Attorney General.—A petition of W. C. Bourke, praying a grant for running a steamboat on Elliot River. Also a petition of the Executive Committee of the Charlottetown Reading Room. Both laid on the table.

A number of petitions were also received and laid on the table, praying aid for roads, bridges and wharfs.

The House then resolved itself into Committee of Privileges and Elections, to take into further consideration the allegations contained in the petition of William S. McGowan, against the return of Andrew A. McDonald. The votes of Richard Gill, John Evans, James Wickham, John Gill, and Hugh Rooney, were taken up and discussed at considerable length. The Counsel for the sitting member contended that as they had not been marked *"objected"* by Mr. McGowan, or by any particular candidate, they could not be scrutinized. At the request of his honor the Attorney General, they were passed over and reserved for future consideration.

The evidence relating to the vote of James Mills (polled for Mr. McDonald) was then read.

Hon. Mr. BEER. — If I understand the evidence, the property was sold some years ago for £75, and no improvements have been made since.

Counsel JOHNSTONE.—There is no evidence to show that the land is not worth £100. Charles Frost says it was sold 14 years ago for £75, but says that Mills told him that he was offered £100 for it. Robert Howlet's testimony puts a value of £150 upon it; at least, he says he would not take £100 for it. That is positive evidence; and, unless you say that Howlet has perjured himself, you must take his evidence.

Mr. McGOWAN.—If the learned Counsel had followed the evidence a little further, he would have found that a part of the land was sold for £7 10s.

Counsel JOHNSTONE.—Yes, but the man was leaving the Island.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—It is a question of pure valuation. Frost says it was purchased, together with a piece on Lot 55, for £75. Another evidence says the piece on Lot 55 was sold some years ago for £7 10s. Now, I think that after the evidence of Mills, it was incumbent upon the sitting member to have shown that the property was worth £100. It is nine or ten miles from Grand River Wharf, and I cannot say that 50 acres of wilderness land so situated is worth £100.

Hon. the PRESIDENT.—In all cases a Jury has to act in accordance with the evidence brought before them. In this case one witness says it is worth £150.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—It is a dangerous thing to say what land is worth. I believe it is a trick sometimes practised for a voter to get a friend to offer him a price for his property for the very purpose of enabling him to vote. There is no question of law here, and I would not shave too close; but I cannot stand here, with the knowledge I have of the country, and say that 50 acres of wilderness land, not placed in a very advantageous situation, is worth £100. If I thought it doubtful whether it came within a few pounds of a hundred, I would give the elector the benefit of the doubt.

Hon. the PRESIDENT.—We have no evidence respecting the situation of the land; but one of the evidences says it is worth £150. I understand it is in the vicinity of Grand River Bridge. Frost does not say what the value of it is, and the elector swore that it was worth £100.

Hon. Mr. YEO.—I have paid £2 per acre for land, but very little land is worth that much. I am acquainted with Lot 55, and I know that land there is not good in general. It is not worth more than 10s an acre. I am sure that every one of your Honors will say that £2 an acre is too much for wilderness land. I have sold a great deal for 7s. an acre; though I have some I would not sell for less than 20s. an acre.

Hon. Mr. LORD.—I am sorry to hear such statements made at this Board as that any man would go to his neighbour and get him to offer him a price for his farm for the express purpose of enabling him to vote. I do not think there are people in this Island base enough to do so. With respect to the value of this land, it appears that one piece was sold 15 years ago for £7 10s; but land is worth 500 per cent more now in the vicinity of Grand River than it was then. Mr. Frost is an inteligent man and a strong conservative too, and he would not say it was worth £100 if he did not think so. He should have sworn positively. He is acquainted with all the land aroand there, and knows the value of every foot of it. He does not say the timber is taken off. If the land is within half a mile of a good shiping place, as I think it is, then it is well worth £100. But we must dec de the value of the property by the evidence before us. The first is the Elector himself. Then Howlet says the land is worth £160, and Frost does not deny it. I see no reason to discredit Mills' oath.

Hon. Mr. BEER.—I would be ashamed to see my constituency if I decided that wilderness land on Lot 55 was worth £2 per acre. The land on the adjoining Lot is sold by the Government at 10s an acre with ten years to pay for it. This land has no millstream, no timber, no marsh, nor anything else from the evidence produced to make it more valuable than any other 50 acres of common wilderness land. I am astonished that any man would say it is worth £100. But it is left for this Committee to say what it is worth. The Government is selling land on the adjoining Lot for 10s. and we are asked to say that this is worth 40s. an acre.

Hon. the PRESIDENT.—There are two witnesses who say it is worth £100, the Elector himself and Howlet. We are not aware of the value of the land and can we say that those men have perjured themselves?

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL.—I was not prepared to hear any member of this Committee take upon himself to value land at the head of Grand River in opposition to respectable witnesses. I can state from my own knowledge that 15 yeas ago people from that part were rushing to the United States, and they sold their land at a great sacrifice, and therefore in valuing land now we should not take the price then as a criterion. Some of the men who hold land now at the head of Grand River would not take £300 for 50 acres. But we must decide by the evidence. Can we judge any man's farm? I for one would not take that responsibility.

Hon. Mr. WALKER.—I bought land at the head of Grand River 10 years ago for 10s. an acre and I sold 50 acres last year for £250. Some parties there would not take £10 an acre for their land.

Hon. Mr. LORD.—I do not know a more flourishing place except Summerside. Property there, has increased very much in value within the last five or six years. His Honor from the second District of Queen's County says he would be ashamed to meet his constituency if he valued the land under consideration at £2 an acre. I am sure it would be a great loss if he did not meet them.

Hon. Mr. YEO.—There is no timber on the land, and I do not see any reason for setting such a high price upon it.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—I desire to approach the subject calmly, and to weigh it carfully. There is no reason given in the evidence for valuing this land so much higher than other land. I agree with his Honor the Attorney General that we should take the general price of land in the country as a criterion. I believe it is a common practice in the country to offer men such and such prices for their property just at the hustings for the very purpose of getting them to vote. If any of your Honor's think that such tricks have not been practised you must have come in contact with electors of a different stamp than some of those which I have met. If I were to value this land, which does not appear to have anything particular to enhance its value, at £2 an acre, I would be ashamed to meet my constituency, especially when I remember that the Land Question is before the Legislature this Session. It would be putting a weapon into the Proprietors' hands to break our own heads. If doubts exist in our minds respecting the value of the property we should give the electors the benefit of them; but we must keep from the opposite extreme and not do a gross injury to the general Tenantry of the Island. I think that in this, as in most other cases the truth will be found between the two extremes; and if we are compelled to decide by evidence which is not very clear and satisfactory, we should endeavour to keep nearest that extreme which is likely to be the least injurious to the country generally. Unless it can be shown that this land possesses some peculiar advantages I will not allow my vote to go to establish so high a price for it.

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL.—I would like to know whether it is the intention of your Honors to be guided by the evidence, or by your own judgment, because this may cut two ways. If we do not take the evidence on this case then we cannot take it on another. If we had any knowledge that the witnesses were doubtful characters, the case would be different; but I believe they are both respectable and intelligent men. Mills says he was offered £100 for the property, and Howlet says it is worth more than £100.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—I see no difficulty in the matter. I would act in this case just as I would were I on a jury. When a man comes and swears so and so, and another swears in direct opposition to him we must take the credibility of the witnesses into account. A jury, in such cases, must make use of their own faculties. Now, I know Mr. Frost very well. I have a very fair knowledge of his character and credibility. It is very evident from his testimony that he rather evaded the questions that were put to him. All he says is I do not disbelieve that Mills was offered £100 for his property. I do not disbelieve it either. But does he say it is worth £100. No, he does not; and I doubt if there is a better judge of land within 40 miles. Mr. Frost would not hesitate to say it was worth £100 if he thought so. Such I believe to be his character. The question now rests upon the testimony of Howlet, and if I had no knowledge of the case I might have to receive it; but I cannot shut my eyes and proclaim to the world that land which sold 15 years ago for £7 10s is now worth £100, land without any timber or any thing else to increase its value. If this land has increased in value at such a rate, all the other land on Lot 55 must have increased in value at the same rate. I do not know if Mr. Howlet was examined before the Land Commissioners, if so I would like to see his evidence. I cannot think the land is worth £2 an acre.

Hon. Mr. McLAREN.—I understood that Mills lived on Lot 56, and it appears that this property is on Lot 55. I would not hesitate to say that this man's vote is good if he voted on all his property; but Lots 55 and 56 are not in the same district. I am not aware that land is rising in value at such a rapid rate on either Lot. I believe his Honor Mr. Dingwell is acquainted with the property and he can state whether it is customary to give such a high price for unimproved land on that Lot. I would be guided very much by his opinion.

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL.—I am not particularly acquainted with the land. If I knew that it was on the road from the head of St. Peter's Bay to the head of Grand River I would consider it worth £100. I know that land there is very high. I believe they will not sell it at any price. It is a thriving place; six or seven vessels loaded there last summer.

Hon. Mr. BEER.—If the land was valued at £500, are we going to say it is worth that much, when perhaps it is not worth £10? I know a man who offered to swear to a £100 qualification at the last election, and it was proved that he had offered his property for £25, and could not get it.

Hon. the PRESIDENT.—Are we then to throw all the evidence away, and undertake to judge property we know nothing about? If we do not take the evidence, we will have to go and see the property ourselves.

Hon. Mr. RAMSAY.—I understood his honor from the First District of King's County to say that land from the head of St. Peter's to the head of Grand River is worth £2 an acre.

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL.—I said the people there have set a very high price upon it.

Hon. Mr. RAMSAY.—If wilderness land is worth £2 an acre, it is a wonder that there are so many votes objected to.

Hon. Mr. LORD.—In some places wilderness land is worth £4 or £5 an acre.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—I would not injure any man, but by valuing wilderness land at £2 an acre we may be doing an injury to the country generally. Parties may send the proceedings of this Committee to the proprietors, and they may have the effect of establishing the price of land at a higher rate.

Hon. Mr. WALKER.—I understood that we were sworn to decide according to the evidence brought before us. Well, here is the evidence before us. Frost says he will not value the land. What was he brought there for but to value the land? He says I have no reason to doubt Mills' word.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL proposed a resolution to the effect that it did not appear, by the evidence before the Committee, that the property of James Mills was worth £100, and it was therefore insufficient to qualify him to vote.

The Committee divided:

CONTENTS—Hon. Messrs. Attorney General, Anderson, Yeo, Beer, Ramsay, Henderson, and McLaren—7.

NON-CONTENTS—Hon. Messrs. President, Lord, Walker, and Dingwell—4.

So it passed in the affirmative.

The President then resumed the Chair, and the House adjourned.

AFTERNOON SITTING.

Committee of Privileges resumed.

The evidence relating to the vote of Alexander Nicholson was read.

Hon. Mr. BEER.—I understand that this vote has been objected to on the ground that the man has no deed or lease, and that he has not been in possession of the land a sufficient length of time to acquire a legal title by possession.

Counsel JOHNSTONE.—By the present Election Law, it appears that there must be evidence to throw doubt upon a vote, and then the onus of proving the vote good is thrown upon the opposing candidate; but surely your honors are not going to say that any thing is sufficient to throw doubt upon a vote. His honor the Attorney General says this law is calculated to protect the poorer candidate, but I am of a contrary opinion. A man may believe his vote to be good, and swears to it. The candidate against whom it is polled may raise a doubt upon it by throwing some piece of paper upon the table, then the opposing candidate, who may be a poor man, will have to go to the expense of proving the vote good. In such a state of matters, I cannot see that there is any protection for any party. Now, let me ask, where, in the name of common sense, is the doubt cast upon this vote? The man was asked how long he had been in possession of the land? He said twenty-five or thirty years. Frost says, as far as I can remember, he has been there eighteen or nineteen years. He did not bring forward any evidence to show that he had not been there twenty years. Now, if I know that a man has been in possession of a place for twenty-five years, I can very safely say he has been there eighteen years. Is a man then to be disfranchised because another man chooses to say that he has been in possession of his property for eighteen or nineteen years, when he swears that he has been there twenty-five years? If that is to be the rule, sufficient doubt might be raised upon any vote ever polled. Frost would not swear that the man had not been there twenty years.

Hon. Mr. BEER.—If he had been there twenty years, surely he could have got some person to testify to the fact. Nothing would be easier, in my opinion, than to get one of his neighbours to do so. I am sure every person must say that Frost has cast sufficient doubt upon the vote to call for evidence.

Hon. Mr. LORD.—Frost has been there for thirty or forty years, and it is very surprising that he could not have answered the question positively. But I see no use in discussing the matter for no doubt your honors have all made up your minds.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—When Frost states that Nicholson had only been on the land eighteen or nineteen years, it was incumbent upon the latter *to bring* evidence to show that he had been there twenty years, and that he held so much of the property as now amounts in value *to* £100. We do not know but there may be three or four more claiming to vote on the same land. I have known many such cases.

Hon. Mr. BEER submitted a resolution to the effect that there was no evidence before the Committee to prove the validity of the vote of Alexander Nicholson, and it passed in the affirmative.

The evidence relating to the vote of Donald Clark was then read.

Hon. Mr. WALKER.—I know the circumstances of the family, and I have no doubt but the vote is good.

Hon. Mr. ANDERSON.—The evidence says he has neither deed nor lease, and that he has only been eighteen years in possession.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—On Lot 30 many of those whose votes were questioned produced their deeds, and it is surprising to me that the same plan was not adopted in those cases. It would have saved a great deal of trouble.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—The Act precludes any others but freeholders and leaseholders. Now, I think there has been doubt thrown on this vote for one of the witnesses says he has no deed nor lease, and that he has only been in possession eighteen years. The voter himself must have thought there was doubt thrown upon his vote when he brought his brother to prove it. Suppose we had a Registration Act in this colony, would an officer be satisfied with the vote of a man who would bring his brother to say he had been fourteen years in possession of a farm, and had a writing of some sort, he did not know whether it was a deed or a lease? No he would not. And we are asked to say, upon our oaths, that this man is a qualified elector. What was to prevent him from producing his title, or to bring his father to prove that he had a title? The presumption in law in such cases is, that the man's title is bad, and he is afraid to produce it. If he had said his deed was lost the case would be different.

Hon. Mr. BEER.—When I first heard the evidence read, I thought he had purchased the property from his father, and received a deed; but it appears that it is not the case. I know several persons on Lot 33, who have farms worth from £500 to £700, but their fathers are living, and have not given them any titles, consequently they have no votes.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL submitted a resolution to the effect that the vote of Donald Clarke alleged to be a freeholder, had not been proved and was therefore insufficient.

The question being put thereon it passed in the affirmative.

The evidence relating to the vote of Richard Heartz, polled for Mr. McGowan, was then read.

This elector it appears, acted in the capacity of Poll Clerk for Mr. McGowan; but having neglected to be sworn, his right to record a special vote was questioned.

Mr. McGOWAN.—Mr. Heartz's authority to act as Clerk for me was given in writing, and it was produced at the Sheriff's Court. I could do nothing more; and if the Sheriff did not do his duty, am I to loose the vote on that account? If the sitting member requires any redress let him look to the Sheriff for it. It would be unjust that should loose the vote on account of the Sheriff's neglect. I might have lost a dozen votes in the same way, but I depended upon the Presiding Officers doing their duty.

Hon. Mr. LORD.—I do not think Mr. Heartz had any qualification to vote. He only held a Mortgage on Mr. Haden's property, on which the latter voted himself.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—Mr. Heartz, it appears, voted as Poll Clerk; but if he was not sworn in, he was no Poll Clerk, and could not vote as such. As to Government Officers not performing their duty, I have only to say that Mr. Heartz should not have neglected to be sworn in.

The vote of Mr. Heartz was found invalid, and the Committee resolved accordingly.

The President then resumed the chair and the House adjourned.

FRIDAY, March 20th.

PETITIONS.

Hon. Mr. McDONALD presented a Petition of the Georgetown Ferry Company.

Hon. Mr. DINGWELL, on rising to present a petition of certain inhabitants of Souris and vacinity, praying for aid to extend a breakwater to improve their harbour, said—The petition is very numerously signed, and being personally acquainted with many of the petitioners, I can vouch for their respectability. The petition itself shows the necessity for for precuniary aid. I know of no public work so well deserving of the attention of the Legislature. The petitioners have exerted themselves very much, and have partly succeeded in establishing a breakwater. A further grant is required to complete the work, otherwise what has been done is in danger of being lost. It has been the means of deepening the channel already to some extent. His honor moved that the petition be received and read.

Hon. Mr. WALKER—on rising to second the motion of his honor Mr. Dingwell, remarked that he happened to know something about this breakwater, and considered it well worthy of the attention of the Legislature. Many of the petitioners were a long distance from a harbour, and could not ship their produce from the out shore in the autumn. The petitioners had expended a large sum of money and a great deal of labour, on the enterprise, and had succeeded to some extent. They were confident that a little more outlay would make the harbour sufficient to admit any common trading vessel.

The petition was then read and ordered to be laid on the table.

A number of petitions were also received praying aid for roads, bridges and wharfs.

The Committee of Privilege and Elections, to consider the allegations contained in the petition of W. S. McGowan, against the return of Andrew A. McDonald, was resumed,

The evidence relating to the vote of Alexander McKinnon, polled for Mr. McDonald was read.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL submitted a resolution to the effect that the vote of Alexander McKinnon was not valid in law, and it passed in the affirmative.

The evidence relating to the vote of Duncan McCormack, polled for Mr. McDonald, was then read.

Mr. McGOWAN.—This vote is like many others. He was in attendance at the Court house while the scrutiny was held, and it would not have taken him twenty minutes to have gone for his deed and produced it, if he had one. He would thus have established both his vote and his oath.

Hon. Mr. McDONALD.—There was no evidence brought to cast a doubt upon his title. The only difference was about the value of his property. Mr. Robertson says he has a Pasture Lot in Georgetown Royalty, and that he has a Lot in the Town, the original size of which was 84 by 120 feet, That he sold 30 feet of this Lot at the rate of £1 per foot. I think all the evidence that has been produced has gone to establish the value of the property at more than £100.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—There is not sufficient evidence before the Committee to raise a doubt in my mind that the Pasture Lot and the Town Lot together are worth £100, and there being no question about the title, I think this vote must stand good.