

Mr. Netherstone's Fence. BY ROBERT J. BURDETTE. "It will have to come in, Mr. Netherstone," said the engineer.

"How much?" "Five inches where it joins Baseline's fence, and four feet three at the other end. It swings out very rapidly on your lot. The man must have been cross-eyed who ran that line."

And there was more resignation than patient acquiescence in the miller's tone. He turned away without further remark and went into the house, while the civil engineer and his assistants gathered up their instruments and paraphernalia appertaining to their profession, and went away to run the line for the curbing on the south side of Jonagan's alley, from Market street to the river, and they drop into their municipal duties and out of our narrative.

Mr. Netherstone was out of humour, to say the least. He was a man of yielding and peaceful disposition; he said so himself. He liked his ease, and he disliked controversy. He had never quarreled with a neighbor in his life, until Baseline fairly forced him into this unpleasantness. He was amazed at what he termed his neighbor's insufferable, meddlesome meanness. What difference did it make to him if the fence was shaped like a crescent, long as "the city" didn't care, and the council didn't interfere? Not that the honest miller was covetous, and wanted unlawful possession of the little strip of the city's street upon which his front fence had encroached ever since old Isaac Stringer laid off his farm in town lots twenty-eight years ago.

Mr. Netherstone had offered the city three times the value of the strip if he might let his fence stand; but streets are streets, and the lines must be accurately run and rigidly adhered to, and a great part of the duty of the engineer of to-day is to correct the blunders of the engineer of yesterday. So Mr. Netherstone's fence must come in, and its removal would throw two of his finest maples, and an elegant rose bush, a "king of the blacks" and a "Baltimore belle," that crept along the inside of the fence like a hedge of blossoms and perfume, all outside; and how long would such things last on a sidewalk? Mr. Netherstone was fairly ill with vexation. He had exhausted every plea and argument with his neighbor; he had pleaded, he had argued, he had reasoned, he had temporized, he had promised—used every mental resource—used every argument and expedient save threats—for the miller was not a quarrelsome man—but all to no purpose. There came a time when the evil day could be put off no longer, and Mr. Baseline took the regular legal measures to compel his neighbor to comply with the "ordnances made and provided," and the fence had to come in.

Netherstone's lots seemed to swing out a little at the south end, where Netherstone's place abutted on Hamilton street, he at once insisted on having it straightened.

Mr. Baseline, usually so yielding and good-naturedly compliant, objected in an evasive, undecided manner. He had been in the habit of complying with his neighbor's whims, and had, to a great extent, acted on his advice in the ornamentation of his yard, the disposal of shrubbery and arrangement of a few lawn ornaments. But he didn't want to move the fence; it stood just where the old fence did when he bought the ground; he didn't believe it encroached on the sidewalk; if it did, he would buy it and pay the city well for it.

In short, he didn't want to move the fence, and the more Mr. Baseline insisted, the more the usually quiet and compliant miller determined that he would fight.

The neighbors were astonished at Mr. Netherstone's unheard-of obstinacy. And they were no less amazed at Mr. Baseline's remarkable patience. For nearly two years he endured the incredible tortures of this crooked fence, and its power for cruelty was greatly aggravated after he rectified his own line, because that left a great unsightly gap of five inches where the two fences joined. And only after suffering untold agonies, and after the peace of his home had been well-nigh destroyed by the unsymmetrical fence, had he laid the matter before the city council and obtained redress for his outraged feelings, in a peremptory mandate from the municipal government instructing the city engineer to correct the alignment of Mr. Netherstone's pickets.

The miller acquiesced in the judgment of the powers that be, and within a few hours after the departure of the engineer, the fence came down, and men were setting posts on the newly-established and legally recognized line.

Mr. Baseline's eyes danced with evenly distributed joy, one eye beaming more brightly than the other. That night he slept the sleep of the happy man; and in the exuberance of his spirits, he snored, it was with equal and regular cadence of a well balanced mind. Well for the just man and the hater of rugged inequalities had his waking been as smooth as his sleep.

When he walked out on the piazza after breakfast, his neighbor the miller had already marshaled the men who were cunning to work with hammer and hatchet, and was building his new fence.

And such a fence! Mr. Baseline caught his breath in one eager, feverish grasp, and fell into a balcony chair, almost swooning. Great, ragged, unplaned boards, with the checked marks of the weather and the lumber-pile mottling their surfaces; grinning at Mr. Baseline with the most horrible knots; warped out of all shape and into all shapes; culms from the refuse of the rats; a bit of sixteen foot fencing tumbled over a broken piece of nine foot flooring; here and there a slab from the saw-mill, nailed on with the round side to the street and the bark hanging to it in shreds and patches.

The boys in the street stopped to stare at it; the horses in the street-car, when they came within sight of that fence, balked, and when whipped past it by the wondering drivers, shied and tried to leave the track. Vagrant dogs looked at it suspiciously, and whimpering with a vague terror, scampered clear around the block rather than run by it.

The neighbors got out of bed and came to look at it, and old Isaac Stringer said "that's a new fence of Netherstone's 'old curdle the milk in the cellar.' The policeman on that beat jocosely asked Mr. Netherstone if he was going to leave it all night?" And a reporter, who heard of it, came up to look at it, told Mr. Netherstone the county central committee would like to buy it for a campaign document.

In response to the wonder of neighbors, the chaffing of his friends, the reproachful agony of Mr. Baseline, and the serious inquiries of newspaper reporters, the miller simply said his business had been very dull with this year, he was greatly embarrassed, and compelled to practice the most rigid economy in order to pull through, and that was the best fence he could afford to build.

And when Mr. Baseline rebukingly asked him what he had done with the good fence he had taken down, and why he did not put it up on the new line, Mr. Netherstone calmly replied that he had lost it through a hole in his pocket, and it had dropped in the straw on the floor of the car, and he could not find it. And when his neighbor, with considerable heat, scoffed at this reply as evasive and deceitful, Mr. Netherstone then, with an expression of grave humility, confessed that he had carelessly dropped the old fence through a crack in the sidewalk, and a boy got it and ran away with it. He bade his distressed neighbor, however, give himself no uneasiness, as he would have the new fence fixed up in the most artistic and modern style to-morrow.

Traveler's Column. D. T. JOHNSTONE. Chatham Livery Stables. Regular Coaches to trains leaving and arriving at CHATHAM RAILWAY STATION.

CHANGING OF TIME TABLE STEAMERS. "New Era" and "Andover." On Mondays, Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays: Leave Newcastle for Chatham at 8.30 a.m.

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Table with columns: FROM, TO, Fares, etc. for Intercolonial Railway Points.

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Notice. All persons having any legal claims against the estate of the late George Grant, deceased, will please send them to the undersigned.

Notice to Trespassers. All persons are hereby forbidden to land on the lands of the late Helen Logan, deceased, until they have obtained the consent of the undersigned.

Notice of Sale. To Arthur Palmer and Eleanor Palmer his wife, of Black Brook, in the Parish of Chatham, County of Northumberland, in the Province of New Brunswick.

Notice of Sale. To Timothy Sullivan of the Parish of Chatham, County of Northumberland, laborer, and Ann Sullivan, his wife, and also Thomas D. Sullivan, his son.

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Notice. The subscriber is going out of the dry goods business and will sell at a small advance on cost, all his stock in this line, consisting of Sheet-Iron, Tin-work, and Gas-Fitting.

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JNO. J. HARRINGTON, ATTORNEY-AT-LAW, NOTARY PUBLIC, &c. OFFICE, UP-STAIRS, McLAUGHLIN'S BUILDING.

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