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TALES OF THE TOWN.

THE proprietors of THE HOME JOURNAL have kindly favored me with a perusal of a letter written by a young man of the city of Victoria, in which is poured out upon the head of the humble architect and builder of the "Tales of the Town" a little harmless abuse. Naturally, my curiosity was aroused to know what manner of man this youth might be, and my inquisitiveness was more than satisfied at beholding this quaint shadow of a horrid dream on the brow of Beacon Hill, last Tuesday night. It was difficult to get his correct dimensions, his arms being entwined once or twice around the waist of a comely young woman, who was indeed fair to look upon. As she did not appear to offer any resistance, I took it for granted that the sickly-looking youth had a license to use all reasonable means within his power to protect her from the chilly breezes which ever and anon came sowing upward from Goodacre Lake.

I am not prepared to say that this beardless youth, who has the reputation of being a very poor auctioneer, impressed me favorably. His physiognomy is weak, and I verily believe that he could pass for an imbecile in almost any ordinary assemblage of idiots. To make matters worse, his head is badly shaped. The humps indicative of low, vulgar origin are abnormally developed, as are also those which plainly mark viciousness. Taking him altogether, he is about as poor a specimen of humanity as one would expect to see among the freaks in a dime museum, and I am led to the conclusion that this shape must have been born in an English workhouse, and that its dissembling nature can be attributed to the never failing laws of heredity. I would offer the youthful auctioneer some advice, but it might be thrown away. In the meantime I will leave him, but in a future issue I may take him up again, as offering an interesting theme in the way of biological study.

"It may surprise many people to learn that already in Victoria there are at least 150 Icelanders," says Mr. J. B. Johnson, the proprietor of the grocery at the junction of Humboldt street and Churchway. This gentleman, the other evening, informed me that in the Province of Manitoba there is an Icelandic population of nearly 10,000 or nearly one-seventh of the entire resident population of the island of Iceland itself. That the Icelanders are a most desirable class of immigrants is evidenced by the fact that there is not one of the nationality confined in the Manitoba penitentiary. In Victoria they have a regular place of worship, on Fernwood Road, Spring Ridge, which is well attended every Sunday morning.

In the interest of these people there are now published in Winnipeg two weekly newspapers, and one monthly periodical devoted to ecclesiastical matters. They have a synod of their own, belonging to the Lutheran church, to which church the larger number of the scattered congregations belong. Preparations are now being made for establishing a higher institution of learning under the auspices of the Icelandic synod.

In the latter part of the ninth century, when Norway was disturbed by political animosities, many of her nobility quit their native land, their estates and homes, and settled in Iceland. Here, on an isolated island on the broad Atlantic, they founded a republic which for centuries flourished, free from the tyranny of kings or an alien government. It was a model republic. The legislative power was vested in the althing, an assembly, where the more influential men met once a year to discuss national questions. In this modest legislature some specimens of oratory and statesmanship were displayed that have never been excelled. The althing vies with the immortal Roman senate for the glory of ancient legislation.

The only religion of the Icelanders

was the same as that of other Scandinavian nations, their principal gods being Thor and Odin. Christianity was established in the year 1000, and the manner in which it was finally accomplished was remarkable. All the nobles and leaders of the island had flocked with their retinues to the althing. Some of these had already adopted Christianity; the others were radically opposed to it. A discussion now arose as to which religion should be taken as the state religion. Both parties contended desperately for their principles and both prepared for battle, that the sword might decide, but at the last hour a compromise was effected by selecting one man, a man admitted to be the wisest of the land, who should decide the question. This person was Thorgier. He betook himself to his "booth," where he stayed for three days, not taking any food nor permitting anyone to come near him. Having reached a conclusion, Thorgier arose and went to the althing to announce his decision. It was that Christianity should be the religion of the land. Both factions, true to their promise, submitted to the decision.

During this medieval period literature and learning flourished on the island, and Iceland came to be known as the "Land of the Skald (poet) and Saga (history)." Hither resorted the historian, and even to-day all the Scandinavian nations draw their historical knowledge from facts preserved in the Icelandic language.

It was in the tenth century that an Icelander by the name of Eric and called the Red, discovered Greenland. In 1001 his more famous son, Leifur Heppni (Leif the Fortunate), discovered an unknown land on the west side of the Atlantic, which he called, from the abundance of vines growing there, Vinland. The point at which Leif landed is now known to have been within the present confines of the United States, probably in Massachusetts or Rhode Island. Here the Icelanders formed a little colony, which

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