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TALES OF THE TOWN.

A GENTLEMAN remarked to me the other night at the theatre that the Jews were rapidly increasing in numbers in Victoria. And I noticed in a newspaper not long ago that the Jews are much more numerous and wealthy to-day than ever before in the history of the world. In the days of the greatest prosperity and power of the Jewish kingdom, under David and Solomon, they probably did not number, all told, more than five millions. Now they number considerably more than twice as many. In Asia, their original home, there are not more than half a million, settled in Syria, Persia, Arabia, India and China. Perhaps half a million more are to be found in Africa, chiefly in Morocco, the descendants of those Jews who, in the year of Columbus's discovery of America, were expelled from Spain. A considerable contingent is to be found in America. But the chief modern home of the Jew is Eastern and Central Europe, where they settled in the days of the crusades. At one time, the kingdom of Poland contained nine-tenths of all the Jews of the world. Two years ago, there were in the Russian empire, chiefly in its Polish provinces, fully five million Jews. In the Polish provinces of Austria, there are two million, and, in Germany, seven hundred and fifty thousand, and in the United States one million.

A baseless charge has been made that the spread of the cholera is due to the unclean Jews who have inundated Western Europe from Russia. On the contrary, the prohibitory measures of the Mosaic law, distinguishing between clean and unclean food, harmonize so exactly with the lessons of modern science that it is impossible to regard them as actuated by anything else than regard for the public health. The observance of the Jewish religion is eminently calculated to foster sobriety and healthfulness. Judaism does not regard cleanliness as next to godliness, but on equality with it, and the Mosaic code is a standing protest against unsanitation and uncleanness, or an impure life. A visitation of cholera may remind many how much we and the Jewish community at large owe to these very laws. The Jews huddled in the ghettos of Europe were more likely to exist under unsanitary conditions than their fellow men, and, when epidemic diseases have raged, the poor Hebrews, huddled together among non-Jews under precisely the same conditions, have invariably escaped with death rate so light as to be utterly inexplicable except upon the presumption that the hygienic laws and sanitary institutions of the Pentateuch are responsible for it.

These epidemic scares are funny things,

and they really have no proper *raison d'être*. A story comes from Europe that a certain epidemic is on its travels, and immediately the whole country begins to feel the symptoms which have been so graphically described and so widely published by the enterprising purveyors of news. The universal scare is not necessary by any means, but we are a sympathetic lot of people and we, of course, have to feel what the rest of the world is suffering. If people would only think a few minutes now and then, just for luck, they would not have so many symptoms and run up against so many serious results. It is true that the enterprising scribe does a good deal towards spreading feelings of terror by his lurid reports of the scenes of horrible and sudden death, but the average mortal ought to know that the same scribe is working on space and is obliged to get out his "string." The newspaper man cannot be blamed, but the intelligence of the average mortal should be taken to task. In a climate like ours, where the frost is never late and is never side-tracked, the most ordinary sanitary precautions are sufficient to prevent the obsession of any contagious epidemic, which usually finds its best foothold in some of the ignorant or semi-barbaric countries where cleanliness of person and town are among the lost arts. Just remember that cleanliness and a proper regard for sanitary condition will keep all epidemics away.

It is encouraging to know that a portion at least of the rising generation of British Columbia has a natural contempt for that species of humanity called the dude. I know a little lady of five or six summers who would be the very idol of Alderman Hunter's heart. She is the apple of the eye of a much esteemed friend of mine living some little distance out of town, and has often spoken in terms of the greatest contempt of anything dudish or foppish. An instance occurred a few mornings since. Her father decided, in view of the rainy weather, to wear a pair of riding breeches and top boots into town, in addition to his other attire of course. The little one had never before seen a pair of tight fitting, light colored continuations of this character, and mistook them for undergarments. "Oh, papa," cried the child in a tone of deep reproach, "you are not going downstairs like that!" and she pointed horror stricken at her progenitor's tightly encased limbs. The expression on the child's features was a picture of mingled feelings. I shall not forget it for some time.

Although the fall fair was such a brilliant success, so far as exhibits go, the apathy of the citizens generally was very disappointing. In this it may be said that they were led by the civic government.

Not a flag from the City Hall or fire engine houses; not a thread of bunting to be seen flying in any part of the city; it seemed as though Victoria had gone out for the day and locked the door, leaving only the cat behind to mind the house. Probably the excuse will be made that Wednesday, the first day of the fair, was a bleak, rainy day. That is no excuse; it was raining pretty nearly all the time at the Westminster show, but the people had lots of get-up about them in the way of decorating, nevertheless. Quite a number of visitors whom I came across remarked very strongly on this point.

In this connection, too, the unsightly smallpox colony was not a very wise advertisement for Victoria. There surely could have been something done to hide the city's negligence in that matter, even if the buildings could not have been wholly removed. The appearance of general untidiness, slovenliness, and even dirt, about the whole affair is not edifying at any time, but it is positively disgusting about this time. Mr. Rithet made the city an offer of a valuable site for the purposes of an Old Folk's Home, with the very reasonable stipulation that a proper building be erected. This offer was treated with silent contempt. Then Mr. Rithet offered the site for a building for infectious diseases, a gift which met with similar treatment. It seems like throwing pearls before swine, and I should like to see Mr. Rithet unconditionally withdraw his offer. He has acted like a big brother to Victoria; fighting all her battles, and foremost in every enterprise. It is a wonder to many as well as myself that such a public-spirited man does not become disgusted with such treatment.

Sandwiched between the autographs of a number of other notabilities on the register of that well known hostelry, the Skookum House, was the name "Jimmy Chickens." THE HOME JOURNAL official interviewer at once sent up his card, and was shortly afterwards ushered into the presence of the illustrious and public-spirited Jimmy, who extended a very friendly welcome to the visitor. "Won't you join me at breakfast?" he asked the reporter-journalist, and he rang for the necessary service. "It is generally rumored, Mr. Chickens, that Her Majesty, from a sense of appreciation of your great personal merit and your brilliant public career, has sounded you as to whether you would accept the distinction of a peerage of the British realm."

Mr. Chickens nipped at the nail of the third finger of his right hand on which sparkled a great diamond ring. The first finger of his left hand was encased in a silken thumb stall, owing to a slight