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TALES OF THE TOWN.

THE members of the House have returned to their homes, as also have the Brothers Kennedy, of Westminster, who were temporarily incarcerated in the Provincial jail, for what the majority of the members of the House, in their representative capacity, voted to have been a contempt of the House. The Speaker's warrant of commitment required the sergeant-at arms "to take the bodies of the said James M. Kennedy and Robert Kennedy and them to keep safely during the pleasure of the said Legislative Assembly, or until the same shall be prorogued, or until the Legislative Assembly shall be dissolved, whichever event shall first be signified or happen."

The Kennedys having, by the punishment which they have undergone, purged themselves of their contempt, it now remains to be seen what will be their next step. They make no bones about saying that they propose to test the powers and prerogatives of the Legislature in every possible way, while the Attorney-General has formally announced that the Government contemplate submitting the question of the powers of commitment possessed by the Legislature to the Supreme Court under the Supreme Court Reference Act.

Whatever may be the result of this reference, it is certain that a strong feeling exists in many quarters adversely to the action which was taken. In the first place, there are many who strongly object to the assertion among us of what they regard as an antiquated principle—and the exercise, under it, of authority—by what is regarded by them as not much more than an ordinary County Council—to commit and imprison, without reference to any other jurisdiction those who may act in what its members decide is in contempt of them. There are many who have yet to be convinced that a Provincial Legislature is

a "High Court of Parliament," and for long to come it may be expected that the changes will be rung upon this incident as well in the press as upon the platform. Many people contend that the House should have made itself absolutely sure before it went ahead—the more particularly as each member of the House who felt himself aggrieved would have had ample opportunity to vindicate himself and obtain substantial redress under the existing almost all-comprehensive libel law.

Already the Trades and Labor element has taken up the subject, and their influence is not to be belittled. They have emphatically condemned the action of the House, "as an interference with the liberty of the press—the true and only safeguard of the people's liberties." Some people may say that this is only a spark that will flicker for a moment and then disappear; but sparks have set the heather on fire. In any case the end is not yet.

Apropos to the reference, the *Colonist* (a well-known Ministerial mouth-piece) says: "We must say that we do not attach much importance to this reference to the judges. Press prosecutions are not in accordance with British public opinion or with the spirit of the age, and it is not likely that, whatever may be the decision of the judges, the practice of our little Provincial Parliament in such matters will differ much from that of the big Parliaments of larger countries. . . . Whether the Legislative Assembly has or has not the power to call them [the Messrs. Kennedy] to account, and to punish them, makes no difference in the moral aspect of their case. Neither will the decision either way be of much consequence to the community." There are many people who will differ widely from the last remark quoted; for if the press is to be muzzled what will become of free speech or of public rights?

"I have heard of many odd things

in connection with funerals," said a member of a little group a few days since, "but this tale regarding last sad rites is the most ghoulish, I think. A prominent citizen of an Arkansas town died and the boys laid out to give him a great send-off. They did. In doing so they all got loaded. At the grave they gave three cheers for the undertaker. When they left the mourners at the residence of the departed they cheered the widow and orphans. Then they hurrahed for the parson who preached the sermon, and wound up with three and a tiger for the corpse."

"Pshaw! That's nothing to what I saw in Salt Lake at a Chinese funeral," said a little, quiet man, who had hitherto said nothing. "The Celestials had no band and they hired an Irish musical organization. After the preliminary services, such as introducing the corpse to his rations, had been performed, the coffin was loaded in the hearse, and to the cemetery they started to the tune of, 'Some Day I'll Wander Back Again.' When the box was lowered the almond-eyed sleeper was laid to rest to the soul-inspiring strains of 'Down Went McGinty.'"

The above recalls to my mind an incident in the life of Joey Beef. This character had been a private in the British army at one time, and after his regiment disbanded, he located in Montreal, where he started a cheap eating and lodging-house. An abbreviated description of Joey's "canteen" may be of interest to HOME JOURNAL readers. The dining-room and bar were combined, in rear of which was a capacious hall, used for the purpose of furnishing patrons of the place with a cheap variety entertainment. This was patronized by all classes, in fact it was not an unusual sight to see some of the best people in the city in Joey's theatre.

In his youth, our hero wooed, won and subsequently married a young woman in his own station in life. For