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TALES OF THE TOWN.

THE Government performed a wise act when they issued the commission to Sir Matthew Begbie to enquire into the circumstances of the recent smallpox affair. They could not have selected a more capable man, and it was certainly not possible to have chosen a more fearless, impartial and painstaking enquirer. If there has been a laxity of duty among those in high places, he is the last man to shield the offenders from reprimand; he is no respecter of persons; on the Bench he is as fearless to-day as he was in the turbulent days up-country, when he went out and quelled with a look the mob that raged for his removal. Some people say hard things of Sir Matthew, but they don't know him. It is said he is harsh and prejudiced; generally those who speak in that strain, it will be found, have been rapped over the knuckles by Sir Matthew at some time or another. The public is watching with interest the proceedings of this enquiry; already there have been some important particulars elicited, and the result will, without doubt, be instructive.

The familiar face and form of my friend, the Hon. Marmaduke Wood, caught my eye in town the other day. I find he is down from Plumper's Pass showing his friend Mr. Daly the beauties and attractions of Victoria. Mr. Daly is recently out from the Old Country, and for the purposes of becoming initiated into the peculiarities of this western life, could not have a more accomplished tutor than the Hon. Marmaduke, who is a host in himself in the matter of entertaining. They have so far had a thoroughly enjoyable time, with some little adventure, all, however, calculated to cause them to have a lasting remembrance of their visit.

A contemporary attempts to throw ridicule on the scheme of bringing the remains of Christopher Columbus to Chicago, and asks, "which remains?" Two cities have the dust of the explorer "quietly inurned." Indubitable proof is aducible that the little urn set in the inner wall hard by the chancel in the cathedral at Havana contains his dust, and evidence at San Domingo is paralyzing in its convincingness that the good monks of San Domingo played a strategic act of substitution when the Spanish authorities called for the sacred ashes. But that should make no difference in the plans of Chicago. By all means let the fair have the two dusts and give each dust a fair show to prove that it is genuine. Famous historians can plead the two cases and the matter can be settled, once for all, by a voting contest, the votes to be opened and

counted at the close of the fair. Thus universal suffrage, of which Columbus was ignorant, can elect the proper dust of Columbus to hold office, or rather to hold urn for the full term of office—namely forever.

The dress reform craze is spreading in Victoria, and if there is one reform more necessary to-day than all others, or one temperance question less consistently presented, it is that which pertains to woman's dress. To make better conditions and better demands is the first step toward a real reform in woman's dress. The semi-fitting gown is as graceless in itself as are the millions of the wearer, while the feeling is as little rhythmic as is the foot in a loose shoe. Partly suspended from the shoulders, but chiefly from the throat, it produces the same friction that the semi-fitting shoe produces, and moves automatically in all directions. Woman is still reluctant to acknowledge that a framework of over 200 bones, gracefully supported by more than 500 muscles, is sufficient for her support and comfort. The dress reformer who can first persuade woman to study and apply these fundamental laws of freedom without compromising principle is the reformer that can truly serve the highest type of womanhood, and when she is fully appreciated in her efforts, womankind everywhere will demand a style of dress that will serve her. When we behold the simple elegance of the Greek statuary in its graceful drapery from the shoulders, while the face and attitude indicate a corresponding repose and ease, we may well wonder how woman has ever been led to adopt any other style than the flowing gown. Surely it can be readily modified to suit our climate and our habits of life.

The feeling that Victoria should next year have a mayor and council composed of business men, is rapidly growing, and, no doubt, a movement in this direction will be made before long. The benefits which the city would derive from a business administration cannot be overestimated. It should, however, be remarked that I do not mean by "business" the "outfit" of half-a-dozen or so who have organized themselves into what is known as a "Business Man's Progressive Union." This organization, I understand, is headed by a young man whose great desire is to secure cheap notoriety, and right here I would observe that he will receive enough of it before long. A movement in the right direction of electing a business mayor and council must be engineered by a man of standing in the community, and not by an ignoramus, whose time could be better employed in conducting his little business in a clean and orderly manner. I

will have more to say on this subject in a future issue.

I understand that the bi-chloride of gold institute, lately established in Victoria, has already two or three subjects under treatment, with a strong probability of effecting a permanent cure of their bibulous propensities. While I cannot speak from experience, I must confess that I have great faith in the efficacy of this remedy. Of course there have been cases where it has not been successful, but should it effect cures in 75 per cent. of the patients, it must readily be confessed that its mission in this world is not a failure. Temperance societies have never claimed such marvellous results, although they have accomplished a great work in their own way.

Old friends of T. M. Daly, jr., the new Minister of the Interior, now resident in this city, are joyful over the promotion of that gentleman to the cabinet. "Tom," as he is familiarly known, is one of nature's noblemen, and is popular with all classes. The appointment of so young a man to such an important cabinet position is accepted by the young Canadians with much pleasure, and as an indication of the fact that the political mossbacks must make room for younger and, if not better, at least just as good men.

There have been several attempts made to open up Bird Cage Walk by our city fathers, to the shores of the Straits, and I hope they will succeed this time. It is what should have been done years ago. The street proposed to be widened is not very thickly built upon and would cost but a trifle compared with the expenditure a year or two hence. What signifies the extra taxes to each lot if they will increase the value of the same to nearly double?

An eastern writer notes the fact that the prime motive of the man who insures his life either for a large or small amount is the laudable wish to place the women and children depending on his exertions beyond immediate want in case of his taking off. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, where policies are held for purely business reasons, but it is safe to say that more than seventy-five per cent. of the life insurance held on this continent is for the sole benefit of women. One might, therefore, be pardoned for supposing that as the gentler sex is an important factor in the insurance business, the companies, always anxious for new policies where men are concerned, would at least look with a kindly eye on an application from a woman. Such, however, is not the case; and, ungallant as it may be to say so, ruth compels the admission that a mean