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TALES OF THE TOWN.

“WELL, if the Legislature succeeds in bringing the Kennedy brothers before the Bar of the House, it will be about the only thing they will have accomplished worthy of note this session.” So said a corner grocery politician the other night, and his remarks reminded me of a story I heard some years ago, while travelling through New Hampshire. This state has one institution which she has never had any reason to be proud of, and that institution is her Legislature. For every one thousand persons in the state there is a member of the Legislature at Concord. Within the memory of old men, the New Hampshire Legislature passed but one important bill, and that was an act providing for a bounty of ten cents each on woodchucks' tails, providing that said tails were not taken from woodchucks killed on Sunday. This act, thus uniting Church and State by means of the tail of a woodchuck, existed but a year, and then the Concord statesmen, in their capacity as representatives of a sovereign people, rose up and repealed it. In supporting the motion for repeal, one member set forth with eloquence that not only had the tails of woodchucks killed on the Sabbath been palmed off upon officers as secular tails, but the boys along the Connecticut River had entered into a wicked conspiracy to import tails from Vermont, and to get a bounty of ten cents each on them in New Hampshire. Therefore the bill had to go, and there is nothing left in the record of the Legislature to which the members (I speak of six years ago) can since point with pride. But the application of the story is this: What will the Legislature have to show for the work of the session, if the brothers Kennedy refuse to be brought before the Bar of the House. There are people who say that so far the time of the legislators has been employed in doctoring up previous legislation, and

a glance over the amendments, etc., appears to justify the statement. However, it remains with the publishers of the Columbian to come forward and redeem the Legislature.

The somewhat strained relations now existing between Great Britain and the United States, and the “hot words” that are now passing between the officers and men of the Daphne and the Chief of Police of Vancouver have led me to make a few inquiries about what position the British navy would be in to repel an attack of the combined forces of Chief of Police McLaren and the United States. A friend of mine, who is thoroughly posted on naval matters, tells me that England has anticipated trouble of this kind for some time past, and has made preparations for it. He further states that the British Government has decided to lay down three new battleships of a new and improved design, and the building of seventy new ships at a cost of £21,000,000 is nearing completion. These 70 are made up of 10 battleships, 42 cruisers and 18 torpedo or gunboats. Should the new programme be carried out on the same scale, these three new battleships will have built with them 12 cruisers and 7 torpedo or gunboats. However, exclusive of these, the present Government will have completed 161 warships, this number being made up of 31 battleships, 63 cruisers and 67 other vessels. The battleships built since 1885 average 2,500 tons heavier and nearly double the horse power of those built in the preceding ten years, while the protected cruisers for the same period average double tonnage and quadruple horse power of those of the preceding 10 years. With such facts as these before us, and the knowledge that the building of other ships are contemplated, we may still look upon our navy as second to none in the world. At least we have nothing to fear from a country the ships of which are likely to receive as great damage from the discharge of their

own guns as they can inflict upon the ships of an enemy.

A visit to Chinatown is an event inseparable from a visit to Victoria, and the tourist who neglects making a trip through the labyrinth of dark, narrow, little alleys, shadowed by tall, decayed wooden buildings, which constitute that portion of the city known as the Chinese quarters, has overlooked a very important point of interest to the traveller. Perhaps the most conspicuous building in Chinatown is the Joss House. A long flight of stairs leads up through a building to the third story, to the shrine of the Joss. Until quite recently the wall on either side of the stairway was decorated with the names of visitors from all over the continent. These names have quite recently been obliterated by a coat of whitewash. Passing into the room the altars, upon which are huge bronze vases and a metal representation of Chinese trades, are the first objects which attract the eyes of the visitor. The last altar is occupied by old Joss himself, a sinister looking monster.

It is at these altars the Chinese worship. It is before these gaudy altars they find their fate and ascertain their luck. The Chinaman doesn't pray; he shakes dice taken from the altars, or crosses his palm with curious sticks or coins, but that is all he does do. Moreover, he “worships” alone, he goes to the Joss house at any time he chooses, alone, and wants to do his “worshipping” as quickly and as quietly as he can, alone. There is no chant arising from sweet-faced choristers or uplifted songs from worshipful throats in this sanctuary. All the incantations said to Joss are dreary and gruesome, and are positively mournful. Christians regard it as a pathetic scene to see the superstitious people shake dice and bow down before a cast-iron idol; but it is with reluctance that a Chinaman gives up his heathenish religion, and I am told that it is the one