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## TALES OF THE TOWN.

THE near approach of Easter turns all eyes in the direction of the hen. This fowl has been discussed considerably of late years, but I believe I have some information concerning her that is not generally known. A few days ago I met a man who makes a business of poultry raising and eggs, and made the following inquiry: "How many eggs is a hen wound up to lay during her natural laying life, do you suppose?" His answer was: "You've no idea, eh?" and then he proceeded thus to enlighten me on the subject of hens generally. A good healthy hen—I'm not speaking of Wyandottes, Leg-horns, Plymouth Rocks, or any particular breed, but just a hen—a good healthy hen doesn't fulfil her destiny until she has turned out 600 eggs—50 dozen. That is what nature fitted up the hen to do in the way of eggs, and gives her eight years to do it in. The first year of her egg-producing life the hen lays only 20 eggs, but in the three succeeding years she rolls up a score of 370. That leaves her only 230 to get rid of in the four remaining years that she is to be on duty in that line, and she divides the task up among these four years so that in the eighth year she lays only 20 eggs again—the number she started in with. Then she has ended her career as an egg producer, and too often, if she is in the hands of a thrifty owner, begins another career, this time as a summer-boarder spring chicken.

There is a lot about hens' eggs, familiar as they are to every one, that people don't suspect. Now, here's an egg that would be a rooster if it should be hatched out. This one would develop into a hen. How do I know? I learned it by long observation of eggs and their habits. The small end of a hen's egg will be either as smooth as marble or wrinkled like a nutmeg. Some folks won't buy eggs that are wrinkled because wrinkles are a sure sign of age. A wrinkled egg indicates

that it holds a rooster in embryo. A protoplasmic hen is enveloped by the smooth-ended shell. But they both taste alike. Each has its proportion of phosphorus, olein, albumen, sulphur, caseine and margarine. There is water a-plenty in a fresh-laid egg, but no more air than there is in a hammer. As long as you can keep the air out of your egg it will remain sweet and fresh, but nobody has succeeded yet in keeping it out more than six days. The insidious oxygen is bound to find its way through the egg shell's pores, and the only way to save that egg then is to eat it. It sounds funny, but the moment you give an egg fresh air, that moment you ruin its health. People wonder why it is that a bad egg is so positive and obtrusive as to odor, but they shouldn't. What do they expect of a combination of putrified albumen, decayed cheese, sulphuric acid, carbonic acid gas, ammonia and ultra rancid margarine set free? Honeysuckles?

There is no accounting for the freaks hens often take in the laying of eggs. Now, what sort of consistency is there in a hen that is almost big enough to eat her corn from the top of a barrel laying an egg no bigger than a sugar plum? And why should a hen that you can cover with a quart bowl get it into her head that unless she lays an egg that weighs half a pound or so she is not doing her duty to herself and family? And who may account for the purpose that seems to actuate hens now and then to lay four or five eggs at one time, one inside of another, like a nest of Japanese jars? Yet such freaks are only a few that are common in the poultry yard.

It is an ill wind that blows no good. Just now the rude equinoctial is rustling through our editorial whiskers in a way that is at once grievous and irreverent. Neither has it, as I have often noticed, any regard for the tall, pensive maiden that minces her way on Government street, and here's where the good comes in, it revealeth

the statuesque beauty of shapely nether limbs. Notwithstanding the discomforts that you bring, abide with us a while, say I, O equinoctial.

Speaking of the equinoctial, it is fitting that just now there should be a tempest in the teapot over James Bay over the trans Georgian journalists of New Westminster. The fourth estate, as represented by the Messrs. Kennedy, have flung back a defi in answer to Mr. Speaker's awful summons to grovel at the Legislature's Bar. Whereupon the Government arose in its wrath and after a deal of fuss and fume—committed the recalcitrants? No—commit-teed the matter—a truly transparent way of confessing their defeat. Indeed, the lawyers say that the Legislature bit off more than it could chew, and wisely enough have resolved not to run any risk of straining its digestive organs.

Turning to the legal columns of the day, we notice that it is the workman's innings just now in the courts. The other day, a jury salted a saw mill corporation for the full amount claimed, which medicine the Appellate Court thought rightly administered. Talking of verdicts against corporations reminds me of the story of the thief who was so moved by a worthy pastor's appeal to give something to charity that, addressing himself to his neighbor's pocket, he turned out the contents and deposited them on the plate. I have often thought that our judges might occasionally hint to the jury that it is not always proper to be charitable to a plaintiff with a defendant corporation's shekels.

The action of the Victoria Trades Assembly in adopting resolutions discountenancing speculation in townsite property, commends itself to the best class of the people of the city. There is no room for doubt that these townsites have been a great injury, and the sooner they are wiped out of existence, the better it will be for all. By this move, the Assembly has enlarged its

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