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TALES OF THE TOWN.

*"I must have liberty,
Withal as large a charter as the wind—
To blow on whom I please."*

WHEN Rev. P. McF. Macleod announced from the pulpit of the old Methodist Church last Sunday evening that the efforts of certain members of his former congregation to drive him from the city had proved unavailing, he was greeted with applause, subdued and respectful, but applause nevertheless. The fact is, the opponents of the rev. gentleman have been altogether too assiduous in their endeavors to drive him out of the house dedicated to the worship of God, and the result is, they have defeated their own ends and made a martyr of Mr. Macleod. Many who formerly took very little, if any, interest in the church war, are now enrolling under the standard of the deposed pastor of St. Andrew's; and a new congregation has been formed, which bids fair in time to become one of the largest in the city. It will surprise many to learn that already 142 names are on the roll of the new congregation, and every day adds to the number.

The latest development in the prolonged strife is that Mr. Macleod has been summoned to appear before a meeting of the Presbytery, to be held Thursday next at the First Presbyterian Church, to explain why he still continues preaching, presumably without authority from the congregation of St. Andrew's. It is stated that the rev. gentleman received a letter signed by three members of the Presbytery, warning him not to preach last Sunday, under penalty of the displeas-

ure of the Presbytery. Mr. Macleod, on receipt of the notification, called a meeting of the committee who have charge of the new church and laid the matter before them. They regarded the note in the light of an attempted intimidation and unanimously decided to continue the meeting in spite of persecution, no matter from what quarter it might emanate. Of course no other issues than the one for which the meeting has been called can be discussed. A committee has also been appointed to represent the petitioners at the next meeting of the Presbytery to deal with the matter of organization.

From the above it will be concluded that Mr. Macleod's new friends are as determined that he shall remain here as are his enemies that he shall depart from our midst. Judging by the phenomenal growth of the new congregation it looks as if many members of St. Andrew's were following the advice of the elders who at the last meeting of the Presbytery hinted that any one in the church who was dissatisfied with the manner in which its affairs were conducted could "get out."

There has been considerable discussion of late concerning the attempt of certain Episcopalian clergymen to introduce the confessional in that church, and it may interest many to learn that Chief Justice Sir Frederick Jeune, of the London Court of Probate and Divorce, recently compelled the minister of a high Church branch of the Church of England to reveal on the witness stand the secrets confided to him by a penitent in the confessional.

I believe that it is not customary for the law to compel a priest of the Catholic Church to divulge the secrets of the confessional, and therefore the action of the Chief Justice in forcing the clergyman of the High Church to do so, will no doubt call forth comment from many quarters.

A learned priest of the Catholic Church believes that the decision of Judge Jeune rests on the fact that the Church of England—the State Church—does not recognize the Sacrament of Penance, and hence that the secrets confessed in a ritualistic confessional do not come under the sacramental seal; that the clergyman in receiving such a confession acts unofficially, not ministerially. The decision thus viewed is technically correct, for it in no way runs counter to the claims of the church of which the ritualistic clergyman is a minister. His right to immunity from the obligations of a witness in court, if he have any, is not personal, but professional, and is derived from the rights of the religious body to which he belongs. The Church of England, not recognizing the Sacrament of Penance and the sacred obligations of confession, does not claim protection for its confessing penitent or immunity on the part of the clergyman who receives such confession, from the obligation of giving testimony when called on by the court. The confidence reposed in him by the penitent is therefore non-professional and as such is not protected by the law. If the Church of England claimed for its penitence and clergymen the protection of the sacramental seal the ritualistic clergyman would have a ground of defense;

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