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TALES OF THE TOWN.

MY REMARKS, ~~last week~~ directed against hardened and calculating libertines, who regard every young woman coming within the scope of their influence as legitimate prey, have been severely criticized by some. I am told that I should not meddle with things which do not personally and directly interest me, which mode of reasoning reminds me very much of the convict serving a term for manslaughter. He was asked by a visiting chaplain what man he had killed, and said, "It was a woman, my wife, and altogether a private matter, with which the public has no concern." It is the business of the newspaper to wrestle with immorality and vice, and the writer who, for worldly gain, neglects his duty is most unworthily prostituting his talents. I am accused also of being too severe on the man while I permit the woman to go free. Surely the unfortunate creature suffers enough from the shame she must ever endure without adding to her cup of misery! Generally, however, I am pleased to note that the majority of ~~Home Journal~~ readers commend me in my desire to rid this fair city of a being more dangerous than a leper.

I do not deny that women are very often to blame for the misfortunes which overtake them. It is painfully evident that young women of the present day are not nearly so circumspect in their behaviour as they should be. Often, perhaps unconsciously, young women attract the attention of men in several ways. Have the readers of this paper ever observed that the moment a young girl takes her seat in a street car she begins a survey of her fellow-passengers. True, she only gives a quick, aweeping glance up one side and down the other, but the monster is on the alert. He catches that single glance, and is often vain enough to imagine that it was intended for him, more especially if the girl has a pair of soft, languorous eyes. Her unconscious glance has been fatal. She will be pursued, and if she permits her vanity to get the best of her, the ending of what was intended to be a harmless flirtation may prove disastrous.

Another young girl will sit down in a street-car and thrust out a small foot daintily shod. It acts like a tassel on the male hawk sitting opposite. He at once begins to stare at the pretty foot, often imagining that it was thrust out purposely to catch his eye. In such a case she has a right to give a man his quietus as speedily as possible, even if in doing so she violates the custom of good society. She can console herself with the truth to be found in the old saying, you must combat the devil with his own choice of weapons, even if it be rudeness. The above are only a few of

the instances I could cite in which young women are led into forming acquaintances of the most undesirable kind. ~~If any one doubts that some of our young ladies are not averse to courting attentions of this character, I would recommend the doubter to take a walk around Beacon Hill any beautiful Sunday afternoon, and be convinced of the truth of my remarks. Happily cheap and undignified women are not numerous in Victoria. This latter fact I attribute to the thoroughly practical character of their early instruction and the notes of warning that are incessantly sounded from the pulpit by our good Christian clergymen. The press is also entitled to its share of praise for its fearlessness in exposing wickedness, no matter whether it lurks within the stately mansion of Croesus, the vine-clad cottage of the middle class, or in the cabin of the humblest toiler for bread.~~

I do not wish to be understood as condemning the greatest latitude of association between the young male and female within reason. But fathers and mothers should see to it that the young men who visit their daughters possess that which is better than wealth—a good moral character. I would go so far as to deprecate the habit some parents have of constantly watching young couples who are keeping company. Such conduct demonstrates a lack of faith in the common sense of the young people. I am led to these latter remarks by something my friend Bill and I observed not long ago while taking our regular Sunday evening walk, and right here I would say that Bill and I see some wonderful things while roaming around on a beautiful Sunday evening. That it may go down to posterity I have immortalized one of our observations in what I allege to be poetry, thus:—

I love to sit on summer eve,
Afar from eyes paternal,
On a sequestered hammock, hid
From espial accidental,
And feel the eyes of him I love
With adoration scanning me,
His left arm round my happy waist,
His right employed in fanning me.

The hammock has become popular of late years. On the principle that I may as well suffer death for stealing a sheep as a lamb, I will inflict on my readers another piece of poetry as illustrating how young people enjoyed themselves when I was a boy; and it will be observed that I account in my own way for the downfall of the once popular swing. If you have tears, prepare to shed them now:

We sat in the swing in the twilight
And talked of the beautiful To Be,
And the words that I murmured and whispered
Were as soft as the song of the sea.
I said, "We'll be happy together,
Like birds in a nest, before long,"

And Evangeline's weight was two hundred,
And the rope of the swing wasn't strong.

We talked of the hopes of the future
And spoke of the dreams of the past;
Some dreams had been broken and shattered
As roses are killed by the blast,
But ours, they were built on affection
Too lasting to die like a song;

And Evangeline's weight was two hundred,
And the rope of the swing wasn't strong.

And then, in ecstatic devotion,
She murmured, "My hero, my Prince!"
What followed I do not remember,
But I've walked on a crutch ever since.
The swing isn't working this summer
In the place where it used to belong,
For Evangeline's weight was two hundred,
And the rope of the swing wasn't strong.

It strikes me that the average reporter's conception of things lies either in the superlatively bad or superlatively good. A thing is either immeasurably superior, absolutely perfect, or it is deplorably bad, utterly beyond improvement; it is either wholesale and overpowering flattery or general condemnation with him. I am amused sometimes, particularly with a certain daily paper of this city, which will publish advance notices of the most absurd flattery about a play that its representatives have never seen, and when the play has come along and gone away, the paper will come out with a volley of abuse, not criticism, worthy of the veriest dyspeptic in the great critical circles of the old world. In the meantime the daily paper referred to has accepted with a smile some twelve or fourteen dead-head seats. This is hardly square dealing towards the theatrical company. Let the papers either take an independent stand and give the company a fair show by not accepting the dead-head tickets, or if they must go to the theatre, let them let things slide, and not give the company mud after the people have been gulled into paying good money for a bad show from the misrepresentation of the press. The people are led largely by what the papers say about a company beforehand, and if the press gives praise indiscriminately beforehand, and blame to the same extent afterwards, the people will, if they are not already, soon be down on the press for false statements. If advance notices must be given, select them from newspapers of undoubted good standing in the journalistic world.

In regard to the question of criticism by the daily papers, I might say that, although it takes a great deal to surprise me, I did not eat my breakfast last Sunday morning after reading another daily paper. It contained a notice of Mr. Chapman's pictures, and had I not known the man and his work pretty thoroughly, I should have been led to believe that we had another Reubens, Michael Angelo, Sir Joshua Reynolds, or some of the great masters among us. According

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