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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."*

ALTHOUGH it has been necessary more than once in these columns to refer to family troubles, the task is an exceedingly disagreeable one. The general wish is that when we shut the street door the skeleton is securely locked up in the cupboard inside the house, but now and then the troubles of a much abused, long-suffering wife cry out, eloquent in the silence in which they are borne. There was a case in the police court the other day, wherein an unfortunate woman was tied to a brute miscalled a man, who beat her and otherwise illused her. My simple advice to a woman in that position is to walk out—have absolutely nothing more to do with the contemptible coward. The other night, this mistake on mankind struck his wife several times, hit her on the face in two places and tore the flesh from her wrist. These wounds she showed when she applied for a summons. She cannot bear the smell of tobacco, and once asked her husband to keep away from her when he was chewing. He replied that he desired her to get used to it, and forced the quid that he was chewing from his mouth into hers.

Why a woman will remain with a creature of this character, I cannot imagine, but no doubt there is some explanation. Mrs. Russel may, however, take to herself the poor consolation that she is not the only woman in Victoria who is chained to a something more loathsome than a corpse. There are other brutes of husbands, whose salvation is that their poor wives

have not the moral courage of Mrs. Russel to appeal to the law for protection. I know cases of brutality, neglect and abuse, some of which it may be necessary to publish before many days; cases where the misnomer of a man idles his time among disreputable companions, and after parading the streets in the early morning with an abandoned, painted creature on his arm, he goes "home" and pollutes his pure and good wife by his very presence. "Home!" No, that is a mistake; the place, comfortless, cheerless and cold, where the suffering, silent, little woman hides, or endeavors to hide, the abuse and deprivation which are but too apparent. Young man, do you recognize the picture?

Ald. Bragg has, in common with other civic orators, been complaining lately of misreporting, and has written to the daily papers demanding that what he does say should be reported, and what he does not say should be left out. In order to please the worthy alderman, and to show these fervid debaters what is lost to posterity through their not having an official reporter, I give below an extract of one of Ald. Bragg's speeches transcribed from the actual shorthand notes taken at the time, which will show how light is the task of the reporter in endeavoring to get a little common sense, and a few coherent ideas, out of the rubbish spoken by the average alderman that Victorians go out of their way to vote for.

He says, in the course of his remarks: "Now, sir, I take it that in a matter of this kind that it is nothing but right that the city should give its consent, considerin'

ing that it has to go before the people, and the people, as you all know, and I might say that as regards that other railway that we had before the people some little while ago, that I was one of them as was in favor of that scheme and voted for the funds that the projectors asked from the people, and I was one of them that was in favor of seein' that railway scheme carried out to a successful issue, and I was well aware, as you are all well aware, that it has been for some time been practically a dead issue, and, as I have said before, this other company, as you are all well aware, is comin' in, and I say let the best man win and let the ratepayers decide, and I have no doubt that both schemes will take a stand on its merits. * * *

It has already been stated, as you are all well aware, that in the last sittin' of the Legislature the house passed upon assistin' this company, and, therefore, I think I am of opinion that surely that the council should give the projectors at any rate let the by-law, the board ought to let the by-law go before the people."

Now the above is delightful material for an unfortunate reporter to make a "speech" out of. But then how can people expect men who vote in favor of Chinese to speak intelligible English. Ald. Bragg must not speak of misreporting, or I will publish verbatim the above memorable effusion of his, and let him see what stuff he talks when he gets on his feet, and how it strikes other people. But Ald. Bragg is not the only one in the crowd; I have a whole batch of such gems of oratorical brilliancy from the aldermanic board.

These are times when men are