

# THE VICTORIA HOME JOURNAL

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## TALES OF THE TOWN.

**A**MONG all the virtues that are possessed by the men of to-day, virtues which they are forced to acquire and carry about in plain sight, by present circumstances and by our advanced state of civilization, there are none more to be admired than patience and self-control. I saw an example of the incarnation of these two virtues not long ago, and I must tell you of it. A gentleman started out for a sail in his staunch craft, and took with him several friends. His first experience was to find the wind too strong for him, and blowing in such a way that he could not reef his sails. Then, in making a landing, his vessel was blown on the rocks by adverse breezes, and it took time, generalship and strength to get her off. Then, departing, he was blown on a lee shore again, and by the time he had gotten clear of that danger a submerged dock arose from the depths and caressed clingingly his keel. At last he gained the open main, and still he smiled and never an impatient word escaped him. Next he missed a boat to which he was conveying some guests by not more than a minute. And still not a sound except the rustle of a shade of sorrow which slowly fell over his bronzed features. To add to all, when he arrived at his home he found that his man servant and his maid servant and his ox and his ass had deserted him for some neighborhood festivities, and he was alone to brew the icy nectar of his land and to caparison his chargers. But he was patient through it all, and his self-control was so great that it would have impressed a marble statue. Now, a man without these virtues would have brandished the brand of discord and waved the red flag of obsolete rhetoric, but he remained calm, and soothed all others by his contained demeanor and by different appliances otherwise contained.

I observe in the July number of an esteemed contemporary, the *Nineteenth Century*, a lengthy article on "The American Newspaper Press," from the pen of Mr. Edward Delille. If Mr. Delille had not gone a little out of his way to sneer at THE HOME JOURNAL, *Harper's Weekly*, and other periodicals published on this continent, I might suffer his remarks to pass by unnoticed, but I believe that if he were treated with the silent contempt he so justly deserves, readers of this paper in Europe, where I understand the *Nineteenth Century* has a large and constantly increasing circulation also, might accept the criticisms as an acknowledgment of their truth.

In the first place I would inquire, without unbecoming curiosity, who is this Mr. Edward Delille, that he should constitute himself the censor of newspaper ethics?

Have the doctrines taught by this great family newspaper, and I might say indispensable household guide, been too far advanced for Mr. Delille? Has THE HOME JOURNAL made this frog-eating Frenchman (I am told he is a native of France) its quarry, and does he still bleed from the wounds of its talons? I rather think not; this paper has enough to do to straighten out matters pertaining to the conduct of the Victoria municipal board, without crossing the Atlantic.

"The American Press" [THE HOME JOURNAL, of course, included], Mr. Delille says, "is not artistic, not literary, not didactic, not even political, save in the sense of partisanship according to personal interest." If not encroaching too much on Mr. Delille's time, I would ask him what he has ever seen in this paper that was not highly artistic? Its literary work will compare favorably with any papers I have ever read from France, but, of course, it will be said in reply that I read French indifferently. As to the charge of not being didactic, I refer the censor to the instruction which the Victoria city aldermen have received time and time again through the columns of this journal. But the last clause of Mr. Delille's letter is by all means the most misleading. When he says that papers such as THE HOME JOURNAL "are not even political save in the sense of partisanship according to personal interest," he is a prevaricator according to the book. This paper, so far as I am aware, has never bent the suppliant knee that thrift might follow fawning. Its support of political parties has been founded on what it conceived to be a deep sense of duty and justice. As yet it has not gone into the market offering to barter away its political opinions for a mess of porridge. As a matter of fact, never has any politician dared approach the editor with a bribe. So much for personal interest and political bribery. However, there is one consolation in this attempt to belittle the reputation of THE HOME JOURNAL, and that is the well-defined belief that it will be some time before any European writer of note will consider the dry bones of the Victoria daily press of sufficient importance to discuss them in a periodical conducted with the high literary ability of the *Nineteenth Century*.

While I am on the subject of news-papers, I wish to direct the attention of the daily press to the fact that they have not yet apologized for the highly complimentary remarks which appeared in their columns respecting THE HOME JOURNAL. It will be remembered that a few weeks ago I charged the municipal authorities with refusing to pay the men who had been performing quarantine and other duties. This charge has since been

emphasized by two of the daily papers; but nevertheless they have so far overlooked the fact that they called me some pretty hard names in attempting to demonstrate that I had no license to pick up a scoop when it came my way.

Every morning and evening, I wade through the smallpox literature with which the daily papers of this city have been surcharged for the past few weeks; I read the arguments for and against vaccination, and, in truth, as I peruse the latest ukase from the Czar, I shudder contemplating the horrors of Siberian exile; but I must confess withal that I was not just prepared for the attack made upon Mr. Wm. C. Pope by Dr. Watt, in the *Times* Thursday evening. I can understand that the doctor's professional pride would not permit him to pass unnoticed a reflection on the medical fraternity, but why he should have stooped to use such very common language in replying to Mr. Pope is something beyond my powers of comprehension. Certainly Mr. Pope was wrong when he presumed to quote such a plain, common, every-day authority as Dr. Gunn, of New York, to disprove the higher authority of Dr. Watt. And Dr. Watt answers Mr. Pope conclusively when he asks: "Who is this Dr. Gunn of New York anyway?" All I am sorry for is that Dr. Watt did not go even further and crush Mr. Pope by inquiring: "Where is New York, anyway?" But aside from all this, I merely want to say that Dr. Watt has a big contract on hand if he hopes to prove that Mr. Pope is either a crank or one void of understanding. If the doctor, who is doing so much for suffering humanity, would inquire of those intimately acquainted with Mr. Pope, he would learn that that person is a highly intelligent gentleman, who has the courage of his convictions, and retains the respect and friendship of all till the end.

The destruction of the tramway power house has resulted in several theories being advanced to account for the origin of the fire. In this connection, I desire to draw the attention of my readers to a new theory brought out in Belgium to explain otherwise unaccountable conflagrations. These fires are caused by an overflow of electricity from the ground through the medium of prominent points, such as buildings, trees, mountains, etc. These overflows occur quadrennially in Belgium, and are connected with volcanic disturbances in other parts of the world. A Belgium law journal contains an interesting discussion of the theory which is based upon the idea that currents of electricity escape with extraordinary abundance in certain years, called quadrennial years. For the present period, they have been as follows: 1862-63, 1866-67, 1870-71, 1875, 1879-

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