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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."*

THE stringency of money matters just at present would be very much relieved if those who owe small accounts would pay them, and pay the large ones if possible. But the paying of small ones even would make a great difference in the business of the city, and its favorable effect would be decidedly noticeable. Many think that because money is "close" they should hoard their money, so that they may have the means to meet any little expenses they may incur in the future. This hoarding idea is a wrong one, especially at this time, and every one who has a cent to spare, and is owing accounts, should liquidate them immediately and thus help those who have helped them. There is plenty of money in the country to do business, but it is out of circulation. Banks dare not loan what they have for fear deposits may be called for at any time and find them unprepared; and their hoarding and hoarding by private individuals for want of confidence, is what makes the so-called hard times. In view of these things it is almost imperative that the small creditors put in circulation what they can by paying what they owe.

An exchange says that there is some not unnatural apprehension in Canada lest the wave of financial disaster in the United States should reach Canada. There is really no reason why Canada should necessarily suffer. The causes which have led to the trouble in the United States do not exist here, and whatever little difficulties we have had have been confined to speculators in stocks. The principal thing to be feared here, as elsewhere, is panic. If our business men follow a conservative policy and attempt to do a safe business rather than a big busi-

ness, their prospects are not bad this year.

It very often occurs that young men engaged in the newspaper business boast of their "toughness," and utter indifference to pay their indebtedness. I heard a young man connected with one of the daily papers remarking that "newspaper men never paid their debts." There is nothing more reprehensible on the part of newspaper writers than the frivolity and self-depreciation they show when referring to their individual responsibility. There is no reason why a newspaper man should not be as honest as other men; nor is there any reason why his credit should not be as good as that of a man in any business with similar income. So far as income goes the average newspaper man to-day is very well paid, in comparison with men in other occupations, for his ability, his services and his independence. I mean by that latter word, that no class of worker has the freedom in his work, the independence from minute control of conduct that the newspaper writer (whether editor or reporter) enjoys. There is a deplorable fashion among newspaper men of poking fun at themselves in print. They are quick enough to resent anything of the sort from a layman, but they themselves encourage it and weaken respect felt for them by continually libeling themselves.

Generally speaking, the newspaper reporter is a generous, whole-souled fellow; but I have heard of one or two exceptions to this rule. For instance, not long ago, a degraded menial who occupies the lowest position on one of the city papers, made himself conspicuous by refusing to contribute even a bawbee toward a present which his superiors, mentally and socially, were getting up for a much-respected member of the staff. This was not the first time either that this creature carried his peculiar ideas of economy to

downright meanness, and he now reaps his reward in being despised by every one connected with the press in Victoria. In justice to the other newspaper reporters of the city it should be remarked that the impression prevails that this slimy serpent was fished out of the slums of the Old Country and shipped to Canada as ballast; and having ears which could be applied to keyholes with ease he eventually developed into a general news scavenger.

It will interest Victoria ladies to learn that white stockings are to be generally worn again, several princesses of royal blood have declared that white stockings must be worn, and have emphasized their pronouncement by packing several pairs into their trunks. The Princess May, who has just been married to Prince George, is one of the royal personages who has made up her mind for white hosiery, and of course all loyal English women will follow her lead, and still more of course the Canadian girls will follow the example of their English cousins. It is at least 20 years since the plain white stocking was generally worn in Europe and on this continent. Then came the era of the stripes with all their hideous variegations in colors and patterns. It stood the attacks of the humorous paragraphists, and the heavier artillery of the dress reformers who are always anxious to change the prevailing mode of dress for the sake of making a change. For years the striped stocking maintained its position, seemed as if it would hold it definitely, when suddenly the dead black article came into existence, and was taken up at once with avidity by Dame Fashion and her followers. Before this black stocking had only been worn by Hamlet, and, on rare occasions, by little girls in deep mourning in private life.

The annual exhibition opens Monday and will continue until the end of the week. The list of the exhibits is a