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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."*

WHENEVER trade is dull and money scarce, the pessimist, with his doleful account of the state of things is sure to appear; but bad as times may be it is satisfactory to know that the city of Victoria has great powers of recuperation—that indeed it would be difficult to find a city of its size and population with so large an amount of general wealth and so hard to beat. Everybody knows the cause of the present financial stringency, viz, that it has arisen from over speculation during the boom period, that floating capital has been locked up and is not at present available. All that can be done now is to "wait till the clouds roll by."

In Cervantes interesting novel, Don Quixote, when the knight errant with his eccentric adventures got into trouble his squire, Sancho Panza, used to cheer him up with the observation of "Don't be downhearted, master; there're tarts and cheese cakes coming." And we, in due time, if we keep up our pluck, shall have these tart and cheese good times, and, when they do come, we shall know how to appreciate them.

How true that one-half the world doesn't know how the other half lives. I was questioning a little newsboy the other morning, after he had sold his last paper, and was surprised at the self-reliance and independence that the little fellow showed. He is not yet 9 years old, but he makes from \$3 to \$4 a week, and gives it all to his mother, who is a widow with several children, of whom he is the oldest. When asked if he didn't spend most of it for himself, he said that he was not old enough to have money, and that it made him happier to help his mother, who had done so much for him. He expressed a good deal of

scorn and contempt for the boys who lost or spent their earnings foolishly in those channels which are ever open to the boyish fancy, and declared he wouldn't be like one of them "never not for nothin'." His work is hard, but he is cheerful and happy all the time. As early as six, every morning, rain or shine, he is at his post down town selling the early papers, and looking after other odd jobs, and not until after dark does he reach his home and gets the rest which he needs. His life is one of little pleasure, constant self denial and hard work, and still the pampered children of the rich with all their toys, fine clothes and leisure are not half as happy. These are the germs which are the beginnings of some of the strongest factors in the Province, and many a man who to-day holds positions of importance and influence looks back on just the same kind of early training, and feels that to it he owes his present success.

There are people in this world who never miss an opportunity of expressing an opinion. They are to be found in every community, and the following little parody on Laura Sheldon's poem applies with much force to a few of them who reside in Victoria:

There are things in this world that we don't understand,  
The secrets of ocean, of air and of land,  
But nothing can ever their silence command  
For they're bound to express an opinion.

There are questions in politics, science and law,  
Knotty problems in finance, in commerce and war,  
But there's never a one that can silence them,  
for  
They're bound to express an opinion.

There are family secrets, half-bared to the light,  
Mysterious rumors and hints in the night,  
But no matter the source of their mischievous flight,  
They're bound to express an opinion.

'Tis only important this knowledge to glean  
That the skeleton prances abaft of the screen,  
For no matter how dimly its shadow is seen,  
They're bound to express an opinion.

There are things that look queer to our half-seeing eyes;  
Our ears are beladen with one-sided cries,  
But regardless how little they know or surmise,  
They're bound to express an opinion.

But ill winds and good ones incessantly blow,  
And reports, good and bad, from their mutterings grow.

But in spite of how much or how little they know,  
They're bound to express an opinion.

The other day I read of a person who was slipping out of the world willingly and without other cause or reason than through the lack of desire to live. It was an elderly woman who had lost husband and children and seemed to have no further aim or purpose in life—the life of this planet, at least. Can one die at will? Can one let himself slip away from the shore of this known country by simply letting go gently? The thought recalled to me a queer story, that of a person I knew some few years ago, now dead and gone. It was a woman, young, beautiful, rich and popular, married to a man whom she fairly worshipped as her ideal of goodness, purity, honor and fidelity. After nearly three years of happy married life came a tremendous tragedy. Her husband was called away to another city on business. He departed hastily, leaving her behind. Twenty miles from the city where she remained the train collided with another. There was a frightful mangling of human beings. This woman's husband was cut to pieces. Telegrams broke the news to her. They feared she would go mad. Perhaps she did for the time—yet it was a quiet kind of frenzy, without shriek or sob, deceptive. So deceptive that without her friends suspecting she contrived to obtain deadly poison to take her own life. They discovered her in an almost dying condition a morning or two later. Of course they proceeded to revive her. And strangely enough they succeeded. It was a miraculous rescue. The doctors considered it such when they knew what she had taken. She came back to life unwillingly, but uncomplainingly. She had not been able with the terrible, keen implements in her grasp to sever the strands that bound her to this shore.

When she had begun to come back to life and strength it became known

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