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## TALES OF THE TOWN.

IN DEFEATING the University by-law, I think that the ratepayers hardly realized the full significance of their act. Fifty thousand dollars could hardly be contributed to a more worthy or important object than that of aiding the establishment of a university in Victoria.

Victoria is *par excellence* of all places in British Columbia the spot for the local habitation of the Provincial University. Its pre-eminence commercially, its comparative age, its unique location, its equable climate, and last, but not least, the fact that it is the seat of government—all these things render it almost out of the question that the university should be located elsewhere than at Victoria.

The advantages to the city would be simply enormous, assuming the university started on a broad and liberal basis. Students would throng in not merely from all parts of the Province, but from the Puget Sound district as well, for Americans, when it comes to a question of procuring the best education for their children, always select the best institution within reasonable distance, even if it should happen to be Canadian.

What does the presence of a strong university mean in a city disregarding its commercial value? It means an immeasurable development of the intellectual growth of its inhabitants, a desire to hear and read of everything new in literary and scientific circles. It means a higher standard of political morality, particularly in municipal matters, elevation in its tone of theatrical entertainments, an impetus to the reception and absorption of new ideas in matters of art.

A poem in stone such as the university building at Toronto would, I

imagine, go far to interdicting the erection of any more such barracks of brick as at present disgrace the business quarters of the city. But the greatest consideration of all is the vicinity of the university to the Legislature of the Province. High intellectual environment is always the *sine qua non* of ripe and statesmanlike legislation. Put even such men as Gladstone and Salisbury in a Legislature located in Kootenay and you would still have the most bovine kind of legislation as the result. Else how is it that the cities of Toronto and Boston are on the whole the best governed cities of America, and the habitats of the highest order of local legislation and judiciary? The fact that a powerful university influence and spirit pervades both these cities cannot be a mere coincidence. Given a strong university at Victoria, and I venture to predict that in 10 years' time it will be found not only that her commercial supremacy of this great Province is assured, but that she will be the Boston of the Pacific Coast.

I understand that the citizens of Victoria will probably have the opportunity of reversing their judgment on this question. If so, the man who votes for the by-law votes for better city and provincial legislation; he votes for the beginning of a new order of things; he votes for the suppression of the low and the vile, and when the university rises in mortar and stone, he will gladly admit it to be the chiefest jewel in Victoria's Crown.

I see there has another phase cropped up in the school question, which, to my mind, is nothing more or less than a fight between the Victoria City Council and the Government people across the Bay. Without at all entering into the discussion between this pair of bodies of wiseacres, I am reminded of the Irishman who was called to arbitrate between the Englishman and the Scotchman on the pronunciation of the word "either." One said "eether," the

other said "eyther." Pat said "it's nayther, for its ayther;" and I am thus inclined to think that neither the government nor the city takes the trouble to study this vastly important question in all its bearings. One party wants to get ahead of the other, and, in the endeavor, too blindly anxious to see that this should be no political tool, or party weapon. Each will oppose the other on principle, regardless of consequences.

I see, too, that both the morning and evening papers follow their respective sides with the same blind pertinacity. Mr. Robson is wrong, always was wrong and always will be wrong, says one. Mr. Robson and his government are right and could not be otherwise, say the other, and on these lines the fight is fought, while the children look on at the exemplary conduct of those they are commanded to respect and honor.

Speaking of newspapers, I am often set thinking, as I take up the Colonist over my matutinal egg, or the Times, as I toast my toes at the fireside in the evening. In the country where I received my first impressions of the newspaper, I was always taught to reverence the editor as a spectacled man of awful wisdom, seated in his chair surrounded by all the literary authorities classic, legal and religious, dispensing this wisdom with a lavish hand, or rather pen, and directing the affairs of state with unimpeachable justice. When I was first introduced to one of these individuals, my ideal was realized, not altogether, though I found a man of rare ability and experience, and in his charge I was placed for three years as apprentice. He handed me over to a sub-editor, or the managing reporter, and I was duly installed as a sort of editorial and reportorial messenger boy for one year. The next year I was advanced a step by being allowed to learn type-setting, and the next year I was made a junior reporter. In these