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## TALES OF THE TOWN.

*I must have liberty,  
That as large a charter as the wind—  
Blow on whom I please."*

ACCORDING to the commercial paper of this city, the tide has turned. The statement does not mean that business is booming. It means simply that at the commercial and industrial institutions of the province, and more particularly those of Victoria, have regained that sense of confidence which will enable them in a short time to go ahead and conduct business on their former extensive scale. That this will be along conservative lines follows almost as a matter of course; that it will be some time before a better condition of affairs extends to all lines must be accepted without qualification; that it will be a still longer time before the full effect of the change is manifested in all grades of trade—among manufacturers, jobbers and retailers, equally—the only logical conclusion.

The waiting policy is played out. So long as labor in large masses is unemployed; so long as, numerically speaking, there is much idle machinery; so long as consumers are not pressing in their demands, and so long as prices remain as low as they have been on nearly all staple goods, a full restoration to the volume of trade of two years ago cannot be reasonably expected. It will come, but it will come with no rush. Business of the mercantile sort must go ahead and prove its ability to gain confidence before the financial institutions of the country adopt a different policy from that which now causes the accumulation of so much idle money in their hands.

Of course there is considerable difference of opinion as to how soon the evident change in business will eventuate. There are some who contend that no material improvement is possible until the opening spring; but this, evidently, does not take into consideration the fact that retail merchants have very low stocks and, having collected closer than they ever have done before, are in better position, in respect to existing obligations on their part, to contract new obligations. Indeed, in this connection one should remember that country collections in British Columbia have been reported as fair to good for some time. One thing is certain, that with the return of commercial and industrial prosperity poor people will have no further cause for complaint, and the benevolent societies will no longer be begged for work or bread.

If there is one shop that has attractions over and above all others for the feminine

heart—and eye—it is the toilette specialist's. I don't think there is a regular store of that nature in this city, but there is scarcely a druggist who does not run such a department. And when a woman goes into a drug store to wait for a car, or perhaps purchase a little court plaster, how lovingly she will linger around the case which contains powders and rouges, fine soaps and delicious toilette creams, manicure tools, perfumes and lotions. There is nothing in that case that she doesn't sigh to own. She has everything she needs; she wishes she hadn't that she might revel in the luxury of buying them again, no matter if the times are hard.

The swell woman now-a-days makes quite as much of her toilette table as the actress. She has quite as many jars of mysterious preparations, and she spends no end of time getting herself up into a delicious state of loveliness and finished daintiness. To be well groomed is as much the mark of good station as slender hands and high brow are the marks of good blood. The dressing room is sacred ground, and one is shy of drawing the portier aside to witness its secrets, yet they are such interesting secrets one is tempted to whisper them. A lady friend of ~~THE HOME JOURNAL~~ writes that she knows of a room of this sort that is perfectly appointed. There is a wide mirror on one wall and a full length glass with folding leaves at one side of a wide window. Upon the other side of this window is the table surmounted by an oval glass. There are candelabra on both sides of all the mirrors, making a perfect light to detect any flaw in the grand accomplishment of dressing. Upon my lady's table are instruments mounted with silver of every nature that might be utilized. A magnifying glass is provided that the eye may not prove treacherous in its judgment.

To see the fair mistress of this apartment in a robe of negligé seated before the table, scrutinizing the tip of her nose, or searching for the threads of care which late parties leave around the eyes, one would suspect the examination to be a most serious one. There is a lounging adjustable chair in the room where the mistress reposes while the maid gives the facial massage, manicores or pedicures her. At night, if she is very weary, the maid tenderly rubs her entire body with a refreshing mixture of alcohol, camphor and sea salt. The glossy hair is always brushed and stroked for a quarter of an hour, and with the sweet kiss of sleep on her eyelids she stretches herself on a lace canopied bed, about which clings the shy perfume of violets and with perfect repose undoes the cares of the day of social exactions.

It appears to me that there is a growing tendency on the part of our young women to throw all the work of the household on the mother. As a result of this mothers are old long before their time. A father, one day, while talking to his careless daughter, said: I want to speak to you of your mother. It may be that you have noticed a careworn look upon her face lately. Of course it has not been brought there by any act of yours; still it is your duty to chase it away. I want you to get up to-morrow morning and get breakfast, and when your mother comes and expresses her surprise, go right up to her and kiss her on the mouth. You can't imagine how it will brighten her dear face. Besides you owe her a kiss or two. Away back when you were a little girl, she kissed you when no one else was tempted by your fever-tainted breath and swollen face. You were not as attractive then as you are now. And through these years of childish sunshine and shadow she was always ready to cure by the magic of a mother's kiss, the little, dirty, chubby hands, whenever they were injured in these first skirmishes in the rough old world. And then the midnight kiss with which she routed so many bad dreams as she leaned over your restless pillow, have all been on interest these years. Of course, she is not as pretty and kissable as you are, but if you had done your share of work the last ten years, the contrast would not have been so marked. Her face has more wrinkles than yours—far more; and yet if you were sick that face would appear more beautiful than an angel's, as it hovered over you, watching every opportunity to minister to your comfort, and all those wrinkles would seem to be wavelets of sunshine chasing each other over her dear face. She will leave you one of these days. These burdens, if not lifted from her shoulders, will break her down. Those rough, hard hands that have done so many necessary things for you will be crossed upon her breast. Those neglected lips that gave you your first baby kiss will be forever closed, and those sad, tired eyes will have opened in eternity, and then you will appreciate your mother, but it will be too late.

The suggestion thrown out by THE HOME JOURNAL, a couple of weeks ago respecting the desirability of amalgamating the different athletic clubs is regarded favorably by the young men of the city. In fact I am informed that some of the members of the Provincial Legislature who take an interest in such matters are urging the amateur athletes to this end. As was said before, it is far better to have one good strong association than half a dozen struggling for an existence. I predict a large membership, and this means a large increase in revenue, which