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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 humble architect of these columns has been subjected to considerable abuse in the past for presuming to interfere in church matters. I desire it to be understood that my expressions on subjects of the kind are invariably based on the opinions of others. For instance, the following letter is only one of a great number I receive every week. It was written by a gentleman who has always taken a deep interest in church questions, and if it does not find an echo in the voices of others, I am greatly mistaken:

"Doubtless the various members of the Church of England have noticed the marked alteration in the administration of its service by the introduction of surplined choirs, a change, be it observed, that has been forced upon the congregation by the clergy without their consent or approbation. The clergy, or rather the priests, as they now love to call themselves, through the discoveries of apostolic succession, don't concern themselves about what the laity may think about such changes. In fact, they have no right, according to their priestly notions, to have any opinion at all about it; former familiar connection of the clergy and congregation in Church of England service by the responses made, no longer prevails. It is offensive to priestly dignities, and these surplined choirs now stand between the wind and their reverences. The especial charm of Church of England service in the past, in contradistinction to all other churches, was that it was congregational; now, that it has become an affair of priest and choral service, if you are present they will do the devotional part for you, and, if you are absent, they (that is priest and choir) will attend to it on your behalf; so that, whether present or absent, you will not be neglected. Church of England ministers, with their high church notions, claim to be supreme and the right to lord it over God's heritage. Verily, there are many a man and woman in the humble walks of life who have a truer and better conception of the the genius of Christianity than these presumptuous, new-fangled priests."

Reasoning on the basis of some recent statistics, I believe that if all the men who now shave their faces would let their faces go unshaven, and if the beards would grow through a term of years as they do when the barber does his work week by week, then, indeed, we would have a strange sort of looking race of men. Instead of the smoothly shaven or close-cropped or moustached menfolk who are now upon the streets and in the homes of the land, there

would be such an array of long beards as would drive the showmen of the land to distraction. In every house, there would be one or more individuals who, in the dime museum or the circus, would earn more money than a bank president. For, did their beards grow as nature intended, or as nature would permit if she had the chance, the average man would be carrying around with him about 28 feet of beard, when he reached the age of say 70. At the age of 45, he would sport a 14-foot beard; at 30, a hirsute appendage some seven feet long, while at 60 he would have a trifling facial covering a matter of some 23 feet in length. This, of course, is upon the supposition that the beard would grow as fast and as regularly when the barber did not cut it as it does when he shaves it regularly.

The mind reels when it tries to think of Mayor Beaven rising to address an audience and holding on his arm a grey beard of some ten or twelve feet in length, a flowing train of hair which the unskilful or careless might tread upon did he not thus care for it? Or how would Ald. Harry Munn's happy countenance appear did it bear a 10-foot beard winding in barber pole bands about his rotund form and falling in a beautiful golden or reddish-brown sheen from his shoulder to the floor of the council chamber? Then to think of those cherished side-whiskers of Ald. Belyea transformed into a sea of silver flowing before him as he walked the street or as he rose among the bewhiskered members of the Council and made a speech in favor of keeping the Chinese out of the country. But when you come to think of Ald. Bragg with a seven-foot-sixer, or Ald. Miller with his glossy whiskers braided in eight feet strands and thick at that, or of any and all of the City Council adorned as never the bearded woman was in the palmiest days of the lamented Barnum—it is all too much for the average brain to contemplate.

Speaking of beards and barbers, some one wants to know why in the name of all that is sensible men will persist in parting their hair on the left side. He says that his barber says there are very few men who part their hair on the right side, and then he wants to know why it is. He points out the fact that it is the most natural thing in the world for a man to raise his hand—his right hand—to the right side of his head and then to make a part on that side—that to twist the hand over to the left side is a piece of gymnastics entirely unwarranted by the natural way of doing things. The barber pointed out the fact that the mothers of the land were responsible for the way the men parted their hair, as they began the parting in childhood and they began it on the left side. Whereat the rejoinder that it

only went to prove that the mothers of the land don't know everything.

The Sons of Erin picnic promises to be a very enjoyable event. The programme contains a long list of athletic sports, and the whole is to conclude with a dance in the evening. The revenue derived from this picnic will be devoted to a most worthy object, that of benevolence. During its existence in this city the British Columbia Benevolent Society has done an immense amount of good, and should be encouraged to continue its charity. The Irishmen, with characteristic generosity, propose to do everything in their power to assist the Benevolent Society, and I have no doubt that their picnic will be liberally patronized.

That there was a large attendance at the sacred concert in The Victoria Sunday evening, speaks well for the religious sentiment which exists in this city. Every one enjoyed the instrumental selections of Mr. Austin and Miss Dawson. The singing of Mrs. Zippora Montelth-Fischel was indeed a treat, more especially her rendition of "The Lost Chord." By the way, I just heard for the first time the other day how the most popular song of modern times came to be written. Only a few months after Sir Arthur Sullivan had accepted the post of Principal of the National Training School for Music he received a severe blow in the death of his brother Frederick, whose talent as an actor is well remembered. For nearly three weeks he watched by the sick man's bedside night and day. One evening, when the end was rapidly approaching, the sufferer had for a time sunk into a peaceful sleep, and as his faithful attendant was sitting as usual by the bedside it chanced that he took up some verses of the late Miss Adelaide Proctor, with which he had some years previously been much impressed. Now in the stillness of the night he read them over again, and almost as he did so he conceived their "musical equivalent." A sheet of music paper was at hand, and he began to write. Slowly the music grew and took shape until, becoming absorbed in it, he determined to finish the song, thinking that even if in the cold light of day it should appear worthless it would at least have helped to pass the weary hours, and so he went on until the last bar was added. Thus was composed a song of which the sale up to now has exceeded a quarter of a million of copies.

Many people have been surprised that, in connection with the ward schools which have been established under, as it were, the wing of the Central and High schools, there were no opportunities afforded the pupils of showing what they and their