

# THE VICTORIA HOME JOURNAL

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## TALES OF THE TOWN.

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

LAUGHING slyly at the ills and follies, the joys and triumphs, the hopes and ambitions, and the fears and regrets of this tragic-comical world, another year has slipped around the corner of time and taken his place among the shadowy eternities. It was as good as his predecessor, no more cynical and just as pleasant; generous with its sunshine if we with its sorrows; planting as many flowers as it sowed thorns and tares, and some of us breathe easier that it is gone, others of us will greet the New Year with careful, fond memories of the old. After all, looking over the shoulder as we speed along the high road of duty and purpose, it is well to remember that the mind's eye should never rest upon the dark places where regrets writhe and coil and grin hideous. There is enough to occupy the thought without sending it along vain windings in search of the irrevocable and irretrievable.

The new year, indeed, is the true year, coming bravely into the mad race of events with colors bright and favors flying, ready for the long run marked off for it down the endless course toward the unknown. It is the unknown that breeds enthusiasm and sets the pulses tingling with valiant expectation; the going out to encounter we know not what, though faith multiplies a thousand-fold the chances of rich conquest and glorious achievement. There are sunshine and starshine along the forward way, only the trail of expiring embers thrown off by out-run hope along the way we left behind. Over the hills and far away the grapes hang purple, spilling luscious juices from their straining stems, and the pomegranates redden in the sun, and the laurel shines, and the bay leaves glisten, milk flows through the valleys and honey drips sweet from the rocks, and there is laughter and shouting, and applause, and the long love days end with golden rewards to the toilers.

It is over the hills our pathway wends, and swift and strong and sure must be the runner who shall run the race and pluck for his own the fruits and guerdons that wait the winning. The days and the years gone are valuable only in having taught us how to meet and profit by the days and years to come. Happy the man whom the old year has qualified to be friends with the new, to step boldly over the threshold and welcome the stranger with hearty good-will.

This is the time when the foolish make resolves, pledge themselves to eradicate old Adam and give their conduct in charge of unfamiliar angels. The man capable makes no resolves, for he is resolve itself and wisdom lights him through the darkness. Acts are the only resolutions with which to propitiate the young year, that is proud and pure and high-minded and knows not the voice of the sluggard or the idler nor the promiser. Deeds are the wings of the Mercury that is the herald of success and firm purpose the magic wand that dispels the bats of uncertainty and the vampire of doubt that flutter darkling wherever human footsteps tend. Meet the New Year with courage, then, with mind clear and hope unfettered, and when the New Year is in its swift turn the old year it will have been a good year, and there will be music in the heart and contentment in the soul and a white star radiant on ahead.

Several letters have been received at THE HOME JOURNAL office bearing on the recent concert of the Arion Club. In not one of them is issue taken with "Bystander's" criticism; but there are many words of a highly commendatory character as to that gentleman's honesty in pointing out the musical defects and also eulogizing the strong points of those who took part in the entertainment. Notwithstanding all this, one or two of the amateurs feel very much annoyed at "Bystander's" remarks, and they have not been very particular about the language used to express their indignation; and, by the way, this is not the first time that one of these persons has felt himself constrained to criticize the manner in which THE HOME JOURNAL is conducted. For all of which the publishers, of course, feel thankful, but trust he will save himself any trouble on that score in future. This great organ of public opinion only takes counsel with those who support it, and when the Editor wants advice as to the policy to be pursued, he will hesitate before consulting persons who read the paper at other people's expense. So much for THE HOME JOURNAL defamer.

I agree with the writer in the *Manitoba Free Press*, who asserts that there are few amateurs who can accept any sort of adverse criticism with good grace. The reason for this is ascribed to the fact that far too many of them have been spoiled by the "How delightful" and "Thank you so much" of their friends, absolutely unmeaning as a rule, and untrue encomiums of the drawing room. Society unhappily permits many falsehoods, but the foundation of art is truth. The criticisms which have appeared in THE HOME JOURNAL have not been

written with a desire to offend or hurt the feelings of any person, and that "Bystander" has devoted so much attention to the musical organization known as the Arion Club can be accounted for by the reason that it is the only musical society worthy of mention in the city. "Bystander" has no desire, I am assured, to direct his shafts at amateurs, who for a moment come before the people and then drop back into obscurity. True, it sometimes seems, as if "Bystander" were unnecessarily harsh, but there are many who say that, generally speaking, if he has erred at all, it is on the side of mercy.

I might say, as has been remarked of another city, that when one contemplates the development of music which has taken place of recent years in this city—from a fiddle to an efficient orchestra, from an indifferent church school choir to a meritorious organization like the Arion Club—it must be confessed that wonderful things have been accomplished in polishing the musical genius which has hitherto been permitted to sleep. In the interest of music it is well to encourage those who have within them the art which has charms to soothe the savage breast; but I believe it would be a great calamity to insincerely bestow praise, where it was not deserved. If any member of the Arion Club, or any other musical organization, for that matter, feels that he is too sensitive to be subjected to criticism, he can avoid it by sending his name to this office, which will be a far more effective proceeding than ordering his newspaper discontinued.

A musical event of considerable interest will be the appearance here the last two nights of January and the first night of February of the Calhoun Opera Company. This organization to-day stands in every respect as the representative comic opera company of the west. Last year the Calhoun's were seen at The Victoria for a short season, and made an impression on the public which will not soon be forgotten. "The Bohemian Girl," Balfe's fascinating opera, has been added to the repertoire, and its exquisite gems, always fresh and fascinating, lose none of their lustre, in their presentation by this company. Written, as it is, in Balfe's happiest strain, the blending of the light and florid music in the score will always be gratefully received.

In connection with the revival of *Grip*, it will be a matter of interest to many Victorians to learn that Mr. J. J. Bell, M. A., formerly editor of the *Victoria Daily News*, will be associated with Mr. Bengough in its publication. Mr. Bell, although in this city only a short time was regarded as an exceedingly clever