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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."*

WHEN I got down to my office, last Tuesday morning, I was reminded that St. Valentine's Day had arrived; also that my friends had decided to observe the occasion by forwarding to my address sundry works of art—not expensive, but rather expressive of the high esteem in which I am held in this community. I had only opened a few of the envelopes which contained the artistic treasures when I became convinced that there had been no settled arrangement among the aforesaid friends as to the precise manner in which I should be represented. One portrait—not in oil—pictured me with a nasal organ which would lead one to believe that I was of the elephant species, while another conceived the idea that it would be well to remind me that a complete absence of hair on my cranium had reduced me to a pitiable state of immodesty. Yet another likened me unto a fat and oily alderman, and so on. My age was variously estimated at from three score and ten to one hundred, again revealing a lack of unanimity among those who had contributed their hard-earned dollars to make the event a memorable one for the architect of this column.

I turned with a sigh to a delicately perfumed missive, which contained the somewhat startling announcement that the heart of the writer was mine. To further emphasize her modest confession, she sang:

I did but look and love awhile,
'Twas but for half an hour,
Then to resist I had no will,
And now I have no power.

Oh, would you pity give my heart,
One corner of your breast?
'Twould learn of yours the winning art,
And quickly steal the rest.

If the above lines should come under the eagle eye of my friend Aaron Lewis, I would ask him, was he, even in his palmiest days, ever called upon to entertain such a flattering proposition. I opine not. The sentiment is exquisite, but the greatest objection I see to the poem, is the open avowal of the authoress to feloniously become possessed of my heart. I cannot encourage a theft, therefore if one be committed, I call my readers to witness that I am not an accessory to the crime. Moreover, even under more favorable conditions than do now exist, I fear I could not accede to this damsel's request. I am already the father of a family, and the law might intervene if I conceded all that she desires. However, I have become a convert to the doc-

trine of the Christadelphians, and if, after I have shuffled off this mortal coil, I again take up my residence on earth, I will consider her proposal.

There is something about this custom of sending valentines that I rather admire. It gives those who are so inclined an opportunity of saying many things which at other times are out of place. It is only the supersensitive who take offense at anything said in a letter of this character. Scarcely anyone intends to subject the recipient of one of those anonymous missives to indignity or annoyance. I must confess that if I were addicted to the pastime, I would not think it worth my while to send a valentine to anyone whom I did not hold in esteem; in fact the only two I ever sent were to persons for whom I entertained the highest respect and regard. Of course, occasionally mean things are written, but the rare privilege of reminding your friends that you now and then think of them, should not be condemned because it is abused by a few.

Regard for other people's feelings is a pronounced characteristic of my composition, and it is needless to remark that I was deeply grieved when I read that sketch entitled "The rise and fall of a British Columbia newspaper reporter," which appeared a few days ago in a New York newspaper. There can be no question, as to the young man's identity, for his name appears in cold, calculating type. I am not very well acquainted with him, but I have learned to despise him. However, I do not care much more for the "space man" who wrote the article. I wonder did the latter hesitate to think what injury he might be doing the "ambitious creature," of whom he writes? Just think of it. The paper in which the sketch appeared has a large circulation. It is on exchange in every prominent newspaper office in the Union and in Canada. It is customary when a shop article, like the one referred to, comes under the scissors of the exchange man, it is cut out and "bulletined," and there it remains. I have no doubt that the sketch of the British Columbia reporter adorns the pages of two hundred black lists in the United States to-day. Should the young man ever visit one of those offices with the intention of looking for work, he would, in all probability, be confronted with the article from the New York paper. It has come to a queer pass if "journalists" are to be treated in this manner by unscrupulous and irresponsible "space writers." What will the brother journalists of the maligned young man in Asia, Europe, and even the very fastnesses of Africa, think of him when they read the New York paper? The thought is too distressing,

and I drop the curtain on the harrowing scene.

In a late issue of THE HOME JOURNAL, I outlined the prominent characteristics of men who had frequently crossed my path. If I remember correctly, I left off at the insinuating man, but since I wrote last, an opportunity presented itself of studying this character more minutely, and the result of my observations I will now present to the readers of this great advance guard of enterprising journalism. A prominent gentleman the other day, in a short conversation, defined the insinuating man as a person who directly "injured others by creating the impression that he won't say anything, because he can't say anything good." This definition fully covers the insinuating rascal to whom I referred. He is yet to be seen on our streets, prowling around like a roaring lion seeking characters to ruin. Everybody knows him, and little faith is now put in anything he says. I rather admire a person who openly expresses his dislike for another in emphatic language. Very often he possesses an element of honesty, if not bravery, that will prevent his ever becoming an actual evil, but he who uses insinuations as a weapon, is akin in instinct to the assassin who stabs his victim in the dark. There are two kinds of cowardice. One is not disgraceful, even if it be sometimes humiliating. The other is satisfied as long as it can keep out of danger. It realizes its weakness, but is none the less vindictive—a vindictiveness which can be measured by the intensity with which it pursues a plan of injury in its own peculiar way.

There is yet another class of men of whom I would speak, because I met one of the tribe quite recently. I mean the taciturn man. Right here I would remark that the worst I can say about this man is that he is disagreeable. His very silence is awe-inspiring. He creates the impression that he knows something terrible, but isn't just ready to tell it, and consequently is like the desperado who goes round with an arsenal of concealed weapons. Even if he barely knows enough to make his way through life he is credited with great wisdom because of his silence. His taciturnity is accepted as evidence that he "knows it all," and many a brilliant story has been ruined, and the narrator made to tremble and blush by the grim menacing and condemnatory silence of the taciturn man.

The cautious man is irritating. He is a sort of a mustard plaster going round on two legs. He is like a flea that irritates you upon every part of your body, and yet can't injure you. He whispers, he suggests all sorts of evils, he tells you