

By-the-Bye.

What cruel, heartless, reckless people Halifaxians are! Have they no care for human life? Why don't they put a little ashes before their doors during this slippery weather? In all my travels I have never seen so many persons slipping, floundering, balancing and creeping in the streets as during the past few months in this town. And yet it does not occur to more than two or three persons in a block to put out the cheap, all-saving ashes. Surely the fact that ashes are cheap ought to appeal to the good people here! Whatever else may be said against us, no one can assert that we do not know the art of getting as much as we can for nothing. But then that is only indirectly connected with the putting out of ashes on the ice.

What a blessing Lent is to Society, especially in a place like this, where no one is ever enthusiastic over anything but amusement. Whenever I go abroad, and people ask me what the Halifaxians are like, I say, "French—very French. They sing, they dance, they have picnics, teas, theatricals, concerts, suppers, dinners—and then they die." But Lent gives us a breathing spell, and we certainly need it. One reads a great deal of sarcasm in the papers about fashionable people's Lents, but much of it is rubbish. My experience is that fashionable people keep it just as well, on the whole, as the unfashionable; and some of the best Christians I have ever known have been acknowledged leaders in Society. This is true of Halifax, as well as of other places.

By-the-bye, I hear we are to have a new weekly paper. Well, I certainly wish it good luck. But I should personally prefer to see a new daily. We need one. It is true we have three excellent daily papers already, which in their separate styles cannot be surpassed. But it strikes me there is a great opening for a daily of a different order, one whose object would be to give us local news, telegrams, innocent gossip from abroad, and interesting reading matter of every kind. Mind you, I assert again that our existing journals are excellent in their respective lines. I always dissent when I hear everybody running them down, and in my own house I never permit anyone to say there is nothing in them. I always point to the advertisements and say, "What do you call that? Is not that good reading? I should like to know how you would ever have heard of Paine's Celery Compound or the Nasal Balm without the daily press? You know very well if you want to read anything you must read about them!" And my indignation generally produces an impression. Then, too, I am justly angry at people who say they are ashamed to send our papers to their friends abroad, and the following note from England roused my fiercest wrath. It ran: "DEAR MOTHER,—Do not send me any more Halifax papers, as I have to show them round, and the people in this house laugh at them and say we cannot do any better. They also call me a Yankee. Your loving daughter, MARY ELLEN." Such sentiments are unpatriotic, to say the least, and if Mary Ellen were my daughter she should have nothing but Halifax papers to read for a year, till she learned to like them. It is an acquired taste, I admit, but I have no hesitation in saying to grumblers that if they were set down in a desert island, with nothing but a bundle of the three Halifax dailies to read, they might be glad of them.

Consequently I shall not be suspected of ill-feeling when I say I should like a different sort of two-cent paper coming out every evening. I am not hard to please, and the kind I want is not difficult to find. It is sold in the streets of St. John, Montreal.

Boston, New York, London, Paris and other places, and the principal quality for which one buys it is news.

I always like to see a new idea take well and succeed. The Bishop of North Dakota, who spent a part of last summer in Halifax with Bishop Courtney, has started a Church Car, in which he goes about holding services in all the small places of his diocese through which the railway passes. The car is fitted up as a chapel, with altar, organ and all essentials. The Bishop has also a small room for himself. He does all the work alone—sweeping, cooking, preaching, christening, playing the organ, leading the singing, and even ringing the bell. This Cathedral on wheels is a great success. Only twice since it has been going its rounds has it not been crowded. The Bishop visits in its mining camps, lumbering camps, isolated villages and new settlements; and many people come to him who have not attended a Christian service for fifteen and twenty years. It is nick-named in Dakota the "Roamin Catholic Cathedral."

ETHELBERT L. WISE.

Correspondence.

To the Editor of "Our Society":

SIR,—May I, in your columns, say that if the writer in an evening paper who signs herself "Lady Jane," will copy the straight-forwardness of the amateur actress whom she attacks, and write, as that lady did, over her own signature, I also will do the same, and over my own signature repeat what I now say: That Lady Jane's statement as to that lady's having, at Mr. Lytell's benefit, to be "audibly prompted by the other actresses," is simply utterly and entirely untrue.

The lady in question was once or twice prompted by the regular prompter, but I doubt his professional whisper having been heard off the stage, and if "Lady Jane" knew more of the "ins and outs" of a hastily rehearsed professional performance, she would not have committed herself by a so easily disproved—what shall we say? "Tarrididdle?" but would understand, why, well inclined as they were to help an amateur *con-sœur* (Lady J. having been abroad can say whether that is allowable French) it would have been almost impossible for either Mrs. Edwards or Miss Celeste to help her in that way.

Also, inaudible speech being one of the faults most severely criticized, and least easily forgiven by an audience, it seems strange that the lady in question should have made so good an amateur reputation for herself, if what Lady Jane says of her be true.

As for "promptings" by amateur actresses. "Ah! sure." Is it the fault of the unlucky wights who may be acting with her? that a lady amateur (nicknamed "Prompter") should so pride herself, not only on her lessons in "eloquence" (that infallible amateur receipt for actress-making) but on her "memory," so that she always insists on learning, not only her own part, but that of everyone else, and woe betide anyone who may pause, for gesture, "business" or stage effect. Invariably down she comes on them, with an ostentatiously "audible," and generally unwelcome "prompt."

"Lady Jane" herself is, I know, not one of "our amateurs," at least, not in the play-acting line; but, is it possible that she still "knows nothing about Prompts?"

I should say that the reason why "amateurs are so anxious to join professionals" (does Lady J. mean act with them?) is that whatever art you may dabble in, be it music, painting, cookery, or even acting, is, if worth doing at all, worth doing well, and the best way to learn to do a thing well is to practice it among

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