

Society Notes.

It is not often that man can find anything interesting or amusing in ladies fashion columns. They are generally too technical for the understanding of the sterner sex. Neither does man waste much time over the stiff and unnatural cuts that are sometimes interspersed in the text. "Carrie Carless" column of New York fashion in *Progress*, however, is a remarkable exception to this rule. Its illustrations are rather striking occasionally, even when the question of the toilet represented is ignored or not understood. They have a certain raciness, which is decidedly an innovation. Many Halifax men turn to this page immediately they get their *Progress* every week in the hopes of discovering some delightful tid-bit.

A local paper last Saturday gave clipping (from the *Leisure Hour*, if we remember aright) with some particulars about the author of *John Halifax, Gentleman*. In our early years we were taught the three R's. by an old dame who had first instilled the same into the mind of Miss Muloch, and who gave us some very interesting reminiscences of the famous authoress. The old lady said that Miss Muloch was a great tom boy, always getting into scrapes, and showing great ingenuity in extricating herself therefrom. She never prepared her lessons but picked up her knowledge whilst the class was going on, and in "exercises" or examinations at the end of the quarter she always came to the front. Many of the scenes and the characters in *John Halifax, Gentleman*, were drawn from life in the district in which Miss Muloch or Mrs. Craik (to give her her legal name) was born. They are easily recognized by natives of the district. We, ourselves, as a small boy, played about the tan yard which finds a place in *John Halifax, Gentleman*. It is in Staffordshire, not in Tewksbury, as the *Leisure Hour* would lead one to believe. In after life Mrs. Craik supported a small home for poor boys near Bromley in Kent, and we well remember the pride she used to take in showing visitors, or rather friends, the arrangements of the house.

There are one or two points about the Academy to which we wish to refer. The first is the crowd of young men that begin to gather on the sidewalk, outside the doors, about half-past seven every night there is a performance. Some of them are street loafers, who spend the day in lounging around corners and watering the pavement with tobacco juice. For these some excuse can be made. It is their habit, and custom is second nature. But there are others who take up their station just outside the box office. They call themselves gentlemen, their names figure in the "six hundred." They very rarely cross the threshold of the Academy, probably because they cannot raise the sum that the genial Wilson always requires before he will part with the magic pasteboard that opens the crimson portals and passes one through to the Paradise beyond. They hang about, they criticise the ladies as they come up to the doors, they give vent to loud guffaws when anything stirs their easily aroused sense of humour (save the word). And yet if anyone were to suggest that these are not the acts of gentlemen, the Brigade would feel themselves injured and insulted. There is generally a policeman on hand; why does he not follow the example of his English comrade and keep those loafers moving on?

Another thing that seems to us reprehensible is the way in which the majority of the audience, when they see the actors on the stage beginning to group themselves for the final "situation," take it as a hint that they should begin to dive under the seats for their hats, or wrestle with their tippets or spring jackets as the case may be. The result is that the shuffling of feet that this involves renders the closing sentences of the play (often by far the strongest part of the whole) quite inaudible to those who would like to hear them. Moreover, it is an act of discourtesy to the actors. Even stronger words might with justice be used. Some of our best society people are the worst offenders in this particular. Doubtless they have never given the matter a thought,

and we trust after this hint the annoyance will not be so noticeable.

Some remarks can be made too about the conduct of some of the men of the audience whilst "God Save the Queen" is being played. Nowadays it is not considered necessary to sing the words when leaving a theatre, or for the matter of that to hum or whistle the tune, but it is customary for loyal subjects of the empire to remain uncovered. It is remarkable that well bred foreigners always pay our Queen and our nation the compliment of holding their hats in their hands, whilst many of her own subjects jam their hats on their heads at once. A trivial matter truly, but then little things are noticed. *Verb. sap.*

The terms in which we spoke of the Redmund-Barry Company in our last issue were certainly eulogistic, but after having seen *Herminie* last week, we feel inclined to speak in more laudatory manner than ever. *Herminie* is adapted by Mr. William Redmund from the French of Ernst Ferrier--*La Vivandiere*. Viewed from the higher platforms of theatrical criticism it is doubtless somewhat gaudy and sensational, but, the sensationalism is inoffensive. Unfortunately we are unacquainted with the original *La Vivandiere*, so that we are unable to say in what way the honours are to be divided between Mr. Redmund and M. Ferrier. There were one or two weak points in the dialogue, where characters appeared to give utterance to sentiments and sentences that seemed to have little to do with the play, but this may perhaps be due to a hand untrained in the more mechanical part of playwriting. As regards the construction of the drama, it is certainly strong, and shows that the author has complete knowledge of his art, both theoretically and practically.

Of Mr. Redmund's acting as Paul Durand we can only say it is excellent, with his conception of the character we can find no fault. Mrs. Barry's earnest and sympathetic rendering of *Herminie* was good. She showed to better advantage in the later acts of the play, than in the first as the *Vivandiere*.

Miss Thompson, of whom we spoke highly last week, confirmed us in the opinion we have formed of her. Her dresses, especially that marvellous combination of black and white, were to the male eye rather startling.

Miss Pearce is very vivacious as Estelle. She announced her objection to being called "pretty," so we had better say she is "crummy," which was the latest slang when we left England. We hope Estelle will not "raise an objection to that."

Mr. Simpson as the German Spy was more noticeable for his resemblance to our portrait this week than anything else.

The performance ran smoothly, the battle business being well done.

The night we were present there was a disturbance in the gallery. We could not help contrasting Mr. Redmund's way of dealing with the difficulty, with that which Mr. W. H. Lytell used to adopt. He did not walk down to the footlights, and in an ungrammatical speech set forth his views about the disturbance; he just said to a man in the wings, "Ring down," and down came the curtain. The call he got at the close of the act must have atoned for the annoyance he doubtless felt over the incident.

There is nothing in the world like an old friend (unless it be an old pipe), but a time comes when the best friends have to part. It is very sad when one has to hint that one can dispense with the services of an acquaintance of old standing. We have long gazed upon the unruffled placidity of the "Lake of Como," which serves as the drop scene at the Academy; but in spite of this long companionship we venture to suggest that it is time that the *laggio* were pensioned, and its place filled by something else. In case the authorities should agree with us in this matter, we think that the next scene should be a representation of drapery or hangings, without any pronounced features or tones, which would not grow stale so rapidly as a pictorial scene. We throw out the suggestion to stand or fall by its merits.

We print this week an interesting letter from a popular officer of the North Atlantic Squadron, describing the doings of the men