

CITY CHIMES.

ART IN HOME DECORATION.—Heretofore a one-sided battle has been waged by the lords and masters of our households against tidies, table-laden with nic-nacks, etc., with little chance of victory. I say one-sided because the women-folk have said little on the subject while they calmly pursued their own way and pinned a tidy which mustn't be loaned against on any account on one chair, a large sized bow on another, and so on as their fancy prompted or as the articles named came to hand. Now, however, a day of victory appears on the horizon.

In speaking of art in home decoration Mrs. Henrietta Russell says the greatest defect in our houses is having too many things, especially too many small things, in each room, and quotes a rule given by William Morris, which if carried out would mean a complete transformation in many houses in Halifax. It is—'Never have anything in your house that you do not believe to be beautiful and do not know to be useful.' Methinks the auction rooms of our city would be overloaded with goods if that rule were put into immediate effect in the most expensively furnished as well as among the less pretentious homes of Halifax.

Mrs. Russell has no sympathy with the idea that furnishing consists in the multitude of pieces of furniture. Art in furnishing does not consist in ribbon-bows, sashes on picture frames, ('potticoated frames' Mrs. Russell terms them) fans and like decorations nor in conspicuous furniture, though from the appearance presented by the modern drawing rooms one almost accepts as a fact that such must be the case. Little tables here and there in such profusion that one must take a zig-zag course in crossing a room is very bad taste. The mania for things, beautiful or otherwise, useful or useless, Mrs. Russell considers the secret of the inartistic appearance of the average home.

With some of us it certainly is considered a code of honor and respect to our friends to keep every gift we receive from them and to place those gifts in prominence in our rooms whether they be suitable, beautiful, useful or possessing none of these qualities.

The second great defect is the desire for conspicuousness. Gilt frames on every wall, doors and windows painted in contrast to the color of the walls, gaudy carpets, conspicuous mantel draperies and table covers, etc. Mrs. Russell quaintly remarks that she considers these things of less consequence than people, and, therefore, objects to them being made the prominent feature of a room.

This mania for things and the lack of taste displayed in conspicuous furnishings leave out of consideration the necessity for a certain amount of space if one would have a room furnished artistically. The number of pictures usually seen on the walls, conspicuous colorings in draperies, and so on leave no calm space on which to rest the eyes, or proper background for the people who will gather in the rooms.

Mrs. Russell thinks every girl in her school days should study the laws of composition as an artist studies them, that she may know how to arrange her home, when she possesses one, as well as an artist understands blending the colors for his pictures. That a home is of more importance than a picture all will agree.

Another matter upon which Mrs. Russell spoke while on this subject, was the mistake too often made in lighting a room. Chandeliers she considers bad, as the light coming from above throws downward shadows upon the faces underneath, and these downward shadows make one look ill or sad. For example in theatres when the actor is to be made look bright and beautiful the stage is lighted by foot lights, but when he must needs look sick or dead a greenish light is thrown from above. An error often made in lighting a room is in the use of colored lamp shades. Bright red in shades or in the curtains of a room kills all other colors, and while it may be favorable to the homely, ill-dressed woman it is decidedly unkind to the beautiful and artistically gowned ladies who will people the room. Only the palest tints favor health and beauty. Candle-light needs no artificial coloring, and if gas, electric or lamp-light be used none but the faintest shades of pink or yellow must be used for shading the light.

Do not, even the few hints gleaned from Mrs. Russell's store of knowledge impress you, my readers, with the conviction that you are woefully deficient in artistic taste? As you gaze around your rooms which you have hitherto considered quite well furnished do you not see many things that do not come under the heading of beautiful or useful. Something put here 'to fill up' or something else placed there because you paid a good price for it sometime ago when you thought it pretty and now feel that you cannot afford to give it away. Mrs. Russell would say, clear out everything that is not useful or beautiful, always avoid violent contrasts either of light and dark or of two prominent colors, and banish the conspicuous furniture.

Mrs. Russell makes the assertion that she can take any room, no matter how badly furnished, even though it have a glaring carpet, (provided it is a Brussels) and given permission to remove unnecessary articles, will make it a place to please the most artistic eye.

'What about the glaring carpet?' I asked.

'Oh,' said Mrs. R., 'I would simply turn it wrong side out and it would make a beautiful floor. I've often had it done.'

Say it softly, but Mrs. Russell considers much of the furniture displayed in the windows of the furniture establishments of Halifax glaring illustrations of inartistic taste. She thinks however that good pieces could be secured without difficulty at these same stores if we only knew how to select them, if we could only put some knowledge in our pockets with our purses when we go shopping. She has noticed some good wall paper displayed by the paper hangers which is encouraging for those who would fain do their best to improve by Mrs. Russell's instructions.

If the money spent on quantity was expended on quality with an eye to artistic effect in furnishing a house the result would be much more pleasing.

Mrs. Russell has had very interesting talks with her classes, and has placed the art of Delsarte upon a firm footing among the 'upper tandom' of Halifax. It will seem a pity if some arrangements cannot be made for a more general diffusion of the knowledge which has been imparted to a select few. There are a large number of ladies in Halifax who would appreciate the benefits of instruction in Delsartism who have been afforded no opportunity of doing so. Mrs. Russell will leave in a week or two, and if anything is to be done to give a more extended circulation to the ideas she has to impart, some move should be made without delay. I do not know that Mrs. Russell would give a public lecture, but I feel sure that such a lecture would be well received.

AN AFTERNOON RECITAL.—An afternoon concert is not very often offered to the public of Halifax, but it may prove a very pleasing innovation during the coming winter. Although Halifax is proverbially dull, yet the complaint of few spare evenings is commonly made. There seems to be something going on constantly, whether it be business, religious or social engagements, to call people from their home fireside. Therefore I think the idea conceived by Miss Grant of giving an afternoon entertainment is worthy of imitation. The programme on Tuesday afternoon was a repetition of that given in Dartmouth the preceding evening, and on both occasions was well rendered, so I hear, for I regret to say that I was not present. We "paper people" almost always wait for "complimentaries," and through some mistake the tickets for Miss Grant's recital did not arrive at this office until shortly before six o'clock Tuesday afternoon, a case of after the Fair was over. However, thanks are due Miss Grant, and are tendered herewith.

THE THEATRE—Theatre goers have had a week off, but the doors of the Academy of Music will again be thrown invitingly open on Monday evening when the Rehan company will produce the drama "The Plunger." The engagement is for two weeks, during which time some taking plays will be put on.

FOOTBALL—The football match between the Wanderers and Dalhousie to-morrow promises to be one of the most interesting of the series. These teams are now tied, and in order to win the coveted glory one fifteen must take both games which are to be played to-morrow and the Saturday following. The junior Wanderers and Dalhousie play a game to-morrow afternoon at 2.20 on the Crescents' grounds. Dalhousie is planning to meet the team from Acadia College on the 18th, and there will probably be a big game arranged for Thanksgiving Day.

A HINT TO ATHLETIC CLUBS OF THE PROVINCES—It has been deplored over and over again that the good old English sport of cricket has not gained a more firm hold in our Province, but so far there appears little prospect of it becoming more popular. Cricketers are enthusiastic over the game, but the difficulty lies in the fact that a comparatively few of our young athletes have taken up the sport. It has been supplanted in public favor by football, and Halifaxians will turn out by hundreds to witness a football match. Since the trophy league has been organized interest in football has been stimulated to such an extent that from the drawing-room belle to the tiny school girl as well as from the college professor or dignified business man to the irrepressible small boy every one is well up in the technique of the game. Now is there any reason why cricket should not be given the same chance to become popular. In addition to the city athletic clubs, the Wanderers, Crescents, Hornets, Garrison, Navy, and the Chebuctos of Dartmouth, athletic clubs in the following places can raise cricket teams:—Truro, Westville, New Glasgow, Pictou, Stellarton, Amherst, Antigonish, Acadia Mines, Springhill, Windsor, Sydney, C. B., Moncton, St. John, Fredericton, Sussex, Charlottetown and probably a few other towns. Would it not be practicable to form a Maritime Provincial Cricket League. During the coming winter months a correspondence could be opened with representatives of athletic organizations in the above named places, and the matter well discussed so that when the spring opens the Maritime Cricket League would be an established fact. I hope some of our enterprising athletes will accept this suggestion and that it may ere long be put into effect. Depend upon it there is fine sport in the old game in which our English cousins revel, and all that is necessary is that the various teams be united in an effort to revive public interest.

THE WEEK—Really nothing interesting has come to my notice this week in looking up the doings of the people of this steady-going old city. Business appears to be going on much as usual. Society is filling in time in a quiet way, and with the exception of the football games outdoor amusements have not been numerous.

A BOON FOR NORTHERNERS.—The merchants of the North end (which by the way is almost a city in itself) are rejoicing in the success of their efforts to secure a branch post office. Word received from Ottawa announces the appointment of G. J. Kaine, the Göttingen Street stationer, as postmaster, and it is therefore taken for granted that the residents and business men of that portion of the city will in the near future have the benefit of a registration and money order office, the privilege of mailing papers and parcels, and of procuring stamps without going to the central post office.

DALHOUSIE'S MUSICIANS.—The Glee Club of Dalhousie is getting into working order for the winter. The services of Mr. Gatward have been secured for the leadership of the club, and under his instruction this aspiring body of musicians should make good progress. CHAS.