

DIPHTHERIA.

I had not intended to speak again on this subject, but the meeting of the Board of Health last Friday, and the very stringent quarantine regulations passed by that board, have compelled me—as they have compelled many others—to speak out in self-defence.

It is indeed a marvellous thing that, at a most important meeting, not one of this board, composed of doctors and practical business men, should have thought of an expedient adopted in every civilized town throughout the civilized world. It may be that the doctors are too full of work to be able to give the subject that mature consideration, without which it is useless to attempt to handle it. It may be that the laity have left the thinking to the medical men, and been content to adopt their suggestions; but the result is certainly open to most grave objections. Indeed, it is very questionable whether the series of most energetic regulations published in last Saturday's papers will not prove—unless corrected—even more pernicious than the inactivity that has until now characterized the proceedings of the City Councils.

The one idea in the minds of the health-officers seems to be the necessity of *quarantine*, but their conception of quarantine differs fundamentally from mine. I appeal to the public, and to the health-officers themselves; weigh well in your minds these two systems of *quarantine*, and say without reserve which seems to you the more sensible.

Firstly—There is the system adopted by the Board of Health last Friday, and already—I presume—put in force. It amounts to this: Directly a case of diphtheria is reported—say in this house, with over twenty people—the rest of those in the house are to be given the option of going at once or staying for good. Now it is all very fine to give us the option of going from a house already stricken with the plague, but can anyone suggest where we are supposed to go to? Halifax people are fairly good-natured, I know, and the hotel-keepers are always ready to do anything to oblige; but I do not think any of them would receive us with open arms, even though we took a certificate from the “special” to prove that we had changed our clothes. Now consider the alternative; those who remain are not to be allowed to pass the threshold of their doors till after the placard is pulled down. This is the true meaning of *quarantine*, as interpreted by the civic authorities. The nineteen who are whole are to be cooped up in close proximity with the one who is infected, without even being allowed to take a daily constitutional, or open air exercise of any kind, so as to be healthy and able to make a fair stand against the disease. No! we are simply to sit and wait; before the first patient has recovered—or died—a second is certain to be stricken—and so on. After six or seven weeks of such confinement, will the legislating doctors please tell me what sort of condition we grown-up people will be in, that we should hope to escape with our lives?

Secondly—I will revert to the plan proposed by me last week, which is no day-dream, but a practical scheme already carried out by almost every city in the world. I do not ask for the building of a hospital, and the outlay of large sums of money: I simply say that the city ought at once to secure a house in a convenient position, and have it heated, and furnished with beds, with a nurse and a doctor told off, ready to receive patients at half an hour's notice. The quarantine regulations would then be of some use; after the infected one is removed, and the house disinfected, let the other occupants be quarantined with all stringency; it is a crying shame that they have been allowed to mix freely with their neighbors through all these months;—that they have done so, I myself can testify: it was only the other day that a certain gentleman, with whom I had some business in town, told me casually that he had just left his little girl, who was very bad with diphtheria. It struck me very forcibly then that there was need of some sort of quarantine being enforced.

The importance of the subject must be my apology for saying

so much. I am not writing aimlessly, but with one practical point, the common sense of which is witnessed to by the verdict of experts throughout the world; and I call on all those interested to insist on its being carried out here in Halifax. And as to the regulations now in force, they sound very grand, certainly but I venture to think that even the majesty of the law, as embodied in the person of a special constable, would not avail to prevent a man with any sense—I might say, even a respectable school-master—from creating a void in that part of his garden fence that looks towards Point Pleasant, and escaping to exchange for a few hours an atmosphere of fir-pines for that of city drains and accumulated refuse.

H. M. BRADFORD.

Paris Jottings.

During the performance of *Mireille* at the Opera Comique, a curious accident occurred a few evenings ago. A spectator at the extreme end of the second gallery leaned over so far that, losing his balance, he fell over into the orchestra among the musicians. He was carried out insensible, but the doctor who was called in could find no signs of internal injury, and in a few minutes he came to himself; and being taken home appeared to be so little hurt that it is thought he will most probably have quite recovered in a few days' time. As the individual in question fell, he struck against the balustrade of the balcony underneath, which broke his fall to some extent, and landed exactly in the place of the player on the French horn, who, fortunately for him, was not in his seat at the moment, and thus had a narrow squeak of being unceremoniously “pounded.”

A very successful revival of Saint-Saens' *Patrie* took place at the Grand Opera on Thursday night. The piece was most effective, and the music good, and thoroughly in harmony with the subject. M. Lassalle was excellent in the part of Ryson, as were also Mesdames Aldiny and Bossman in the roles of Dolores and Rafael respectively.

The Theatre de la Comedie-Francaise and Paris have lost one of their cleverest and most popular of actresses, in the person of Madame Celine Montaland, who died on Thursday morning—a victim to her maternal devotion. A few days ago, the charming *societaire* caught the measles while attending one of her children, and the disease proved rapidly fatal. The deceased actress made her *debut* on the stage at the age of four, and acquired, as the interpreter of children's roles, a reputation that might have been envied by mature actresses. That famous critic, Jules Janin, heaped upon her all the complimentary adjectives in his extensive vocabulary; and the child-actress, while on a tour in Italy, made a conquest of that *roi galant*, Victor Emmanuel. Dramatic authors, the celebrated Scribe amongst them, wrote plays for her, and at ten years of age she was as famous as Madame Schneider, then playing in another Paris theatre. In 1860 she played at the Porte St. Martin Theatre and the Gymnase, securing success in all the branches of her art, and winning universal homage by her seductive beauty. She made her second *debut* at the Comedie-Francaise in 1884 in *La Butaille de Dames*, meeting a reception as great as that accorded her years before. Between her appearance as *pensionnaire* and her promotion to the *societariat* only a very brief interval elapsed. Celine Montaland has been described as *le sourire qui fait la femme*, and her beauty remained unimpaired by the lapse of years.

One never knows the value of a piece of bric-a-brac until it is broken,” sighed Mrs. Wellover, as she surveyed the remains of a broken rose jar.

“That's true enough,” rejoined Mr. Wellover. “It wasn't until Tom Kickie broke Miss Pinkeye's heart that she discovered it was worth £500.”