

Society Notes.

The point at issue between our young men and the society girls is not by any means settled yet, and is not likely to be while there is a garrison in the city. There is one question we should like to ask, en passant, of the girls who profess not to consider men in their position in life good enough to marry:—look up your proposal books, young ladies, before answering. Are the "eligible" bachelors of Halifax in the habit of asking you to marry them? If not, it is a little bit premature to talk so dogmatically about what you would or would not do. We would very much like, for instance, to ask Miss Gaseous—who was taken so sarcastic last Saturday—how many of the depised civilians she refused before she captured the roaming uniform? What! Not got him yet? Well, never say die! But you might tell how many plebeian hearts you have broken in the mean time.

You see, we have a strange weakness for facts in the discussion of such an important subject. The men are not likely to supply the necessary statistics, but we should have imagined that the girls would be only too delighted to do so. We can assure those who have long lists that any confidences they please to make will be treated strictly "as such," and used only as data for the correct solution of this most engrossing problem. So far, certainly, the balance of opinion expressed by observers of both sexes goes to show that the "eligible bachelors" do not appear to dangle about the "marriageable maidens" nearly so much as the marriageable maidens dangle about the would-be-indifferent army and navy men.

There is another point that does not seem to have occurred to any of the disputants: Business men are busy in their offices, or in the clubs, as the case may be, all through the best part of the afternoon, just when the ladies want some one to talk to or skate with; and the others, who have nothing particular to do, come in very handy. You see, the art of bringing up house-keepers is as entirely lost in Halifax as most other arts, so that young ladies do not appreciate being left to their own devices all day—it's altogether too slow. Unfortunately, the men who occupy the field in the afternoon are often tempted to make arrangements for the evening also, and so *vous autres*, when you do come home, find it often advisable to loaf off out again and spend your evenings as best you can. If you really want to have a "look-in," why not petition the General to order all junior officers on duty every night for a month or so? He is very good-natured, and no doubt would be willing to give you every chance. But if—as some fair writers seem to insinuate—you have all proposed to all the maids already, and all been refused, perhaps it wouldn't be much use.

Dramatic criticism is about as amusing a game—to watch—as politics. For instance, in Saturday night's *Recorder* Lady Jane, talking about Mrs. West's acting in *The Shaugraun*, says: "I don't believe three people in the audience heard or understood a word she said." And on the same page a correspondent of "Doesticks" states that "She went through her long part without any apparent assistance from the prompters." No doubt both are right, but it's rather hard to reconcile them. It won't matter much to posterity, anyhow, so we won't argue the point, though life is made of trifles.

The fair correspondent quoted takes objection to our one very brief remark on Mrs. West's acting. Where we cannot give an entirely favourable critique of a lady amateur's acting, we prefer to pass it over with brief comment; and we have already had occasion to state very plainly our opinion of this particular lady's capabilities for the stage, and can only regret that she has not thought fit to act on our advice, which was well-considered and well-meant.

Progress is very much down on Mr. Lytell and his company, though why "Proscenium" should judge only by the first night—when Mr. Lytell himself thought it necessary to make an apology,

—it is hard to see, as the same piece, *Hands Across the Sea*, was produced again on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday nights,—with what success, this very prejudiced critic does not condescend to mention.

In our opinion, Mr. Lytell himself is as good an actor as is likely to find it worth while to visit the Maritime Provinces, and his company is as good as he is likely to be able to pay out of the proceeds of a Maritime provincial tour.

The fact is that neither S. John or Halifax is ever likely to see first-rate talent in any branch of art. In any European city people will pay a sovereign to see a good play who would grudge a shilling for such companies as we sister towns delight in, while here people willingly give three shillings to see any rubbish that is put before them, who would not run to ten shillings if Henry Irving and Ellen Terry were advertised to appear.

Our distinguished contemporary at St. John, publishes a yarn about Mr. Lytell going off from Halifax, without paying his hotel bill. An adverse criticism is bad enough, but this is rather too bad, as there is no truth whatever in it; the bill was paid in St. John exactly as arranged by Mr. Lytell, nothing in the shape of a lawyer's letter was called into requisition. We have no doubt that *Progress* will, in common fairness, publish these facts, which we have on the authority of Mr. Hesselein himself.

Apropos of theatricals, it hardly seems fair that all the *kudos* should be showered on Companies that may from time to time occupy our Academy of Music (by the bye, why not *theatre*? Is it unlawful in Halifax to call a spade a spade?)—and not one word should be said about the man who really runs these shows. It is a query, whether if Mr. H. B. Clarke dropped out from this venture, we should get anyone else to take the responsibility; therefore, it is only right in thanking these actors who have given us pleasure, we should at the same time return thanks to Mr. Clarke for having provided the actors themselves.

Does anyone in Halifax read the *San Francisco News Letter*? We looked at the pictures in the Xmas number long ago, and thought them splendid, but only to-day thought of reading the letterpress. The Society notes are interesting—a queer mixture of very old and very new fashions the American Societies display. The cotillon seems to be much in favour, just as the minuet has been here for the last few months. On the other hand, "New Year's Day receptions may now be said to be quite obsolete, becoming but a memory of the past, and a very pleasant memory too, to some, it will be admitted. In its place the custom has arisen of spending the holiday away from home, at some of the out-of-town resorts.

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