

and his calm judgment in understanding and dignified dealing with the white men. Not only his own people but the white settlers in the North-West owe much of their success, peace and prosperity to the wise rule of this strong but simple-hearted chief.

The chapter upon the various forms of religious observances, the traditions, sacred numbers and myths now fast being swept away, to live, ere long, only in the fading memories of the older chiefs among them, or in the songs of the women is, perhaps, the most valuable in the book, and should be read *in extenso* to be appreciated at its true value.

"Canadian Savage Folk" will be a standard work for all time in the history of Canada, but for the sake of the author we would heartily wish a speedy proof of the value of his work being given him by a large sale of the book and a consequent practical return for the great amount of faithful labour he has expended in its production.

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### Mr. Speaker.\*

MISS FOLLETT'S book on "The Speaker of the House of Representatives" is a remarkable work. It is not uncomplimentary to remark that no person would have taken it to be the work of a woman. The subject is not one which would appeal to the ordinary feminine mind. Politics in action are often as attractive to women as men, but politics at rest and embodied in musty records, are not attractive to either men or women. Of the two sexes a man is more likely to face the drudgery of investigation into a dry subject than a woman, whose leaning is ordinarily towards imagination or fancy. In the first place, therefore, the subject of the work is masculine. In the next place, the mode in which the subject is treated is that of a man. The authoress has kept herself well in hand and has let no sympathies run away with her. There is no fine writing, and the statements of facts are plain, simple, and business-like. The only part of the book which displays a feminine hand is the preface, which reads as if it had been written by a woman, or a very young man. In making these remarks, we most decidedly wish to be considered as not having any intention to depreciate feminine work or feminine industry. All we wish to point out is, that this book, written by a woman, is an evidence of feminine labour in a new field. The result is satisfactory, and as old co-workers in the same line, we cordially welcome a recruit who produces a book of such exceptional value and excellence. The introduction of Dr. Hart states that heretofore there has been no elaborate or thorough study of the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Next to the President, he is the most powerful man in the United States, and his influence is increasing. To us in Canada, who are on the eve of seeing a new House of Commons and a new Speaker installed, a comparison of the two positions is interesting. "Whatever is, is right," is a comfortable maxim, and both Miss Follett and Dr. Hart appear to be satisfied with the American theory of the constitutional position of Speaker as developed by United States practice. In Canada, the Speaker is a judicial officer—he is non-partizan. In the United States, the Speaker is a party officer, appointed by his party to serve party interests. The difference in the system of government of the two countries explains the difference in the position of the two Speakers. In Canada the governing party is represented in the House of Commons by the responsible Ministers who have seats in the House. In the United States, the officers of State have no seats in the House of Representatives. Thus, while they are leaders of the party, in the House of Representatives they are not officially recognized, and therefore the Speaker takes the place of leader of the dominant party. Without prejudice either way, one would say that to have a presiding officer who was non-partizan, would be a better system than to have a partizan one. As we all know the results of our own system fairly well, it will be useful to see how the American plan succeeds. Under both systems the principles of choice, except as to political motives, are the same. The position

requires knowledge of parliamentary procedure, previous service in the House, and certain personal characteristics of tact and judgment, which latter, of course, vary with the individual.

It does not take much experience in debate to become aware of the power a presiding officer has by technical objections or by adroit favouritism to help a friend or embarrass a *persona non grata*. It does not also require much experience in practical politics to know how savagely the party dogs bite one another. The questions debated in a national assembly like the House of Commons or the House of Representatives are also of not merely academic interest. They stir up the passions and appeal to the feelings of the most cold-blooded. If a moderate-minded man is thus tempted to forget himself, how much more will an uncompromising partizan be likely to require a curb. A presiding officer over such an assemblage has, therefore, as his first duty, that of the maintenance of order. As a corollary to that power he has to deal with obstruction. Then, as to routine procedure, it is his duty to open and close the sittings of the House, he must see that the order of business is preserved, he must authenticate documents and verify the official account of proceedings. Further, he is the mouth-piece of the House. He must on complimentary occasions receive and welcome strangers. Should also a member be guilty of an offence against the rules of order and require reprimand, the Speaker must carry out the disagreeable duty of admonishing that member. These duties are common to the presiding officers of all properly managed assemblies, and it is obvious that they place of themselves great powers in the hands of the presiding officer. An abuse of these powers is rare under the English or Canadian system. The general tone of feeling of the assembly has been against it.

The three main functions of the Speaker, discussed by Miss Follett, are these: (1) acting against filibustering, (2) appointing committees, (3) recognizing members.

Miss Follett leads up to her discussion of these points by a sketch of the history of the Speakership. In order to understand the present state of affairs in connection with this office, it is necessary to follow this history and we propose to give, in a succeeding paper, a short summary of her account, and thus lead to a better understanding of what appears to us an anomalous and unsatisfactory political situation—one to be avoided, not one to be followed. Montesquieu says the Romans succeeded by adopting whatever was admirable in the nations they conquered. Canada is engaged in a struggle to perpetuate her individual national existence. It is necessary for us to know what other systems are. If they are worthy of adoption let them be admitted. If we shun them, let it be after examination and consideration. The Americans have developed a great many idiosyncrasies in their political theories. This particular feature of the subordination of a House of Representatives to a presiding officer who is a partizan deserves special investigation in order to see how it works out in practice.

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### Poems and Pastels.\*

CARPING critics have asserted that no song birds fill our native woods with melody, and no poets are numbered in our rough-hewn Canadian literature. That the one is as unauthorized a statement as the other, dainty little volumes of tuneful verse, upon whose pages pure thoughts and living truths are clothed in melodious measure, are issued by our Canadian press to prove.

In the little book by William Hunt, whom we recognize more readily as "Keppel Strange," there is enough of beauty and of true poetry to entitle the author to a place in the first rank of Canadian poets. There is some unevenness here and there, weak lines which later the author will be the first to find and strengthen; but the music of the rhymes, the light and tender touch which is the gift of genius, and the Hall mark of genuineness is there and strikes the reader pleasantly. Many of his poems, too, grow upon one, and the spirit of them, the thought he has so deftly dressed shines out the stronger as we read them again and once again with

\* "The Speaker of the House of Representatives." By M. P. Follett. With an Introduction by Albert Bushnell Hart, Ph.D. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. London and Bombay. 1896.

\* "Poems and Pastels." By William Edward Hunt (Keppel Strange.) William Briggs, Toronto.