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The editor of THE CRITIC is responsible for the views expressed in Editorial Notes and Articles, and for such only; but the editor is not to be understood as endorsing the sentiments expressed in the articles contributed to this journal. Our readers are capable of approving or disapproving of any part of an article or contents of the paper; and after exercising due care as to what is to appear in our columns, we shall leave the rest to their intelligent judgment.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Politics are very exciting, and we always thought they were too much for weak minds, and it now transpires that this presumption was not far wrong. For an eminent French physician, Dr. Bal, professor of lunacy at the St. Anne Asylum, has devoted an evening to delivering a discourse on the effects of political discussions on the development of mental disease. He advises all individuals of weak brain power to avoid politicians and political meetings. Halifax is bursting with politics just now, so weak-minded individuals who desire to remain outside Mount Hope had better beware.

We cannot and do not wish to trace the whole course of Mercier's malfeasance in office for our readers; it is not in our line to give the evidence brought out before the Royal Commission, and as it appears pretty fully in the daily press it is unnecessary. Despite the arbitrary change from Liberal to Conservative government, and the party objections to the personnel of the new commission, all honest Liberals have to confess that enough and more than enough has been proved against Mr. Mercier and his colleagues to shut them out of politics for the rest of their lives. The evidence shows shameful robbery of the Province, and the division of the spoil for party purposes as well as personal use. Under such circumstances it is only right that Mr. Mercier should, as *Grip* suggests in a cartoon, depart for the limbo of boodler-statesmen, but he should also receive the severest punishment the law provides for his thefts. The situation in Quebec is deplorable, and down here by the sea we cannot but breathe the wish that Canada was all English.

Few people will deny that books are one of the greatest means of enjoyment, of keeping ourselves in touch with the minds of great men and women; of increasing our knowledge, of helping us to live intellectually and not merely physically; and that they are a solace at all times when we need something to occupy us. We do not refer, of course, to literary trash, but a sound reading. An excellent paper published in Toronto, *Wives and Daughters*, recently contained some very strong opinions on the subject, and stated that the woman who does not take a short time every day for reading, no matter how much she has to do, is sinning against herself and her family. This may be true—we do not wish to dispute it—but we have known of exceptions. There are some women in this weary world whose time is so occupied with making things comfortable for others that they cannot find time for themselves; their names will not go down in story, but the faithful work done in the home circle, which few know of, will be rewarded in that

happy future time, when the "weary are at rest." Those who say that such women are sinning had better see to it that their own lives are as useful. The value of reading is great, but that of work and love may be even greater.

The citizens of a town not a hundred miles from Halifax must have been highly edified by the opinions of a reverend lecturer on the subject of dancing, who "gave his sorrow words" a short time ago. He is reported to have denounced all forms of dancing with one notable exception—that form practiced as a religious ceremony in bible times! If dancing before the Lord was expedient then, why not now, pray, and why do not the ministers of the present day encourage it? The frequenters of the ball-room came in for a sound drubbing from the lecturer, who drew the most unflattering comparisons between ball-room young ladies and artificial flies and such things, saying they were good enough for the foolish fish that bit. The town in which this remarkable wise lecture was delivered has the reputation of being a gay and festive place, a good deal given to having a pleasant time, and to think of the crushed feelings of so many young people is sad. When, oh when, will clergymen give up trying to reform society and live sensible, ordinary lives, taking the good things of the world, dancing included, as blessings from the Creator. Their efforts are useless, for those who dance are not aware of the sinfulness of their ways, and are not likely to take the opinions of those who do not dance and therefore know practically nothing of the matter.

The *Illustrated News of the World* for January 23rd contains a portrait of General Sir Frederick Sleight Roberts, one of the three distinguished men upon whom her Gracious Majesty recently conferred peerages. This distinguished soldier is justly renowned for his achievements in the Afghan war of 1880, and in the African campaigns, the Egyptian and Sudan expeditions, which occupied public attention for a long time. He passed through the Indian mutiny, and his horse was shot under him at the capture of Delhi; he assisted in the relief of Lucknow, the operations at Cawnpore, the final capture of Lucknow, and took part in numerous minor engagements. He was repeatedly mentioned in dispatches and received the Victoria Cross, the thanks of the Governor-General and the brevet of Major. The Northwest Frontier campaign of 1863 was also participated in by Major Roberts, and he superintended the embarkation of the entire army in the Abyssinian campaign of 1868, and obtained the brevet of Lieut.-Colonel for his services. As commander of the Kuram Field Force in the Afghan war Sir Frederick first attracted public attention, and for his notable exploits received the thanks of parliament and of the Governor-General and Government of India in Council, and was created a K. C. B., G. C. B., and a baronet. Since then Sir Frederick Roberts has had the command in Madras, in Burmah, and the whole of India. His promotion to the peerage, and the fact that the active service of the army will henceforth be represented in the House of Lords, not only by Lord Wolseley, but by another excellent soldier, is gratifying to the majority of British subjects.

Canada has now a magazine that stands a fair chance of surviving the shocks of time. It is not large, but it starts well with sixty-four pages, and is thoroughly Canadian in tone. By Canadian work it will stand or fall; and we are safe in predicting a successful future for it if the standard of the first number is maintained throughout those to come. The contributors to the February part are Charles G. D. Roberts, who has the first instalment of a story, "The Raid from Beauséjour," and also conducts a department, "Modern Instances," which we anticipate will be one of the most interesting and entertaining features of the magazine; Helen Fairbairn, R. Tait McKenzie, Douglas Brymner, A. M. MacLeod, Arthur Weir, Duncan Campbell Scott, J. T. Burgess, Arthur J. Lockhart, Samuel M. Baylis and Marjory MacMurphy. There is, unfortunately, no humor—nothing in a lighter vein—in the first numbers, but we hope this will be remedied next month, and a somewhat warmer tone pervade the coming numbers. The cover is pleasing in design, and the maple leaves are not too obtrusive; but they are there all the same. The illustrations are generous and very creditably done, while the whole arrangement of the magazine is satisfactory to the reader. No one in Canada who takes the slightest interest in the affairs of the country, its literature, history, science and progress generally, can afford to go without the *Dominion Illustrated Monthly*, for besides being national in tone it offers quite as good a bill of fare as many of the magazines whose subscription prices are twice as high. It is to be hoped that having a good monthly of our own will stimulate the literary endeavors of young Canadians, and that heretofore hidden talent may be brought to light. "The least literary of the British colonies" is looking up, and perhaps before long Mr. James Payne will have to withdraw his sneer at us.