

THE CANADA MEDICAL RECORD, A Monthly Journal of Medicine and Pharmacy.

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We thank those subscribers who so kindly and so promptly attended to the accounts which were enclosed in the last number of the RECORD. Those who have not done so will oblige by remitting some time during July.

LUNATICS IN THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

What a pity it is that in this nineteenth century, and in the Province of Quebec, party strife runs so high that poor helpless human beings should on the eve of several elections be put into the scales, and amid much contention made to do duty for either side. Let us write more plainly. About the middle of June, a few days previous to two or three political contests one of our Montreal morning papers produced a long article, stating that, with a view of apparent economy, a large number of uncured lunatics and utterly helpless imbeciles from the Longue Pointe Asylum were to be at once, and without preparation, let loose upon society by order of the Quebec Government. The tale as told was quite sufficient to make one's blood stand still, and compel even the boldest to look well to his bolts and bars before retiring. But the next day the medical Superintendent of the asylum, Dr. Henry Howard, announced in a letter that this statement was *untrue*; that since last winter he had under authority prepared monthly statements for the Government of those in a fit condition to be discharged, and that the lunatics about to be sent away were only those whom he had recommended for discharge. Still further examination revealed the fact that the Lady Superior and Dr. Howard have not been upon good terms for some time, and that she rather helped to stir the fire for this kettle, if indeed she did not apply the match which started it. We presume there will be an investigation, and that all the papers will be produced. In the meantime there can be no question as to which side an intelligent public should take, in spite of the absurd political tall writing of either side. Dr. Henry Howard is a gentleman who stands well with the entire profes-

sion—he is an able and a devoted student of his specialty, which has occupied his entire attention for the past twenty years, and upon his opinion we ought to rely, no matter what non-professional opinion may say to the contrary. Incidentally we may remark that the system of farming out lunatics, as adopted in this Province, is simply disgraceful. Our sister Provinces are far ahead of us in these matters. We may add that, to our knowledge, till last winter, when authority was given to Dr. Howard to report to Government those fit to be discharged, beyond visiting and prescribing for the patients he had absolutely no authority. Perhaps the present breeze may be productive of good. In the meantime we feel sure the profession will sustain Dr. Howard in the stand he has taken.

SURGEON-MAJORS.

“Why is it that the M.D.'s of the Canadian Militia cannot rise to the rank of Surgeon-Major? There is a manifest injustice in preventing a medical man from attaining the rank which is open to any other man in the service. Promotion is open to all men up to the rank of Lieut-Colonel, except for the doctors. They get as high as Surgeon—which gives them the rank of Major—and there they stick. This is not fair. Medical men should have no special impediments thrown in their way. After a certain number of years service the rank of Surgeon-Major should be granted to all doctors in the Canadian Militia. If this is not done the doctors will think themselves snubbed, and we know that doctors are touchy on questions of that kind. There is some excuse for not allowing Volunteer officers to attain a higher rank than Lieut-Colonel. They are not professional soldiers, and cannot be expected to know as much of wars and rumors of wars as men who live by the profession of arms. They are not supposed to be able to place their squadrons in the field with the same military order and tactical safeguards as the more experienced professional soldiers. With doctors, however, it is different, and a medical man in civil life is just as able to amputate a limb as a doctor of military service. He requires no special training, for he can take his place beside the ablest army surgeon and do his work just as successfully. His qualification being admitted, what is the reason he is denied the rank? We see none, unless we come to the