

## TITLES GREAT AND SMALL.

—Is it not a trifle ungracious to make an outcry against the well-meant action of our gracious Queen in conferring the distinction of knighthood on certain of our prominent public men? I can understand the objection to initiating a hereditary aristocracy, one of the things which it is now too late in the world's day to manufacture,—because it could not have that ancient and historical prestige which seems to be the only justification for counting men *noble* through the mere accident of *birth*. But if a man distinguishes himself by serving his country in public affairs,—if he unites to ability and honourable conduct a disinterested devotion to the well-being of his country—whether his policy be or be not absolutely right—I can see no reason why he, *personally*, should not receive from the fountain of honour, and worthily wear, such a distinction as knighthood, any more than why our good friend Dr. Pindar should not as worthily wear the LL.D. with which his University has decorated him. If we may logically decry such a title as Knight of St. Michael and St. George, I don't well see why we philosophically put up with doctors of 'laws and literature'—will any one rise and explain? Both are distinctions in their several ways, and there are doubtless many men who deserve them quite as well as the recipients to whom they never come. Like most similar things in the world, they seem to come by lottery—the black and white beans of circumstance. Why not congratulate the winner on his distinction in both cases, and be good natured about it, even though we may think we know a dozen people, —ourselves possibly among the number,—who deserve the honour equally well? So long as the distinction is conferred for some real merit or service, and not for some merely adventitious reason, such as that of being mayor during a royal visit, I see no

reason for complaint, unless we are to start a crusade against all 'handles' whatsoever, which we are hardly yet, I think, in a condition to do. Honorary distinctions have in all ages acted as *stimuli* to an honourable ambition, and the world would perhaps have been a little worse to-day without them. And be it remembered that we do not as yet live under a purely democratic régime. Why should a Canadian knight irritate us more than an English Duke or Marquis? Distinctions of this kind are a sort of link between us and the monarchical system of government, of which few Canadian subjects of Queen Victoria are yet tired. It does not hurt or humiliate me to say 'Sir John' any more than 'Dr. Pindar'; and the man must be a very snob who takes any airs on account of either distinction. I, for one, should have been glad if Mr. Mackenzie's principles would have permitted him to accept and wear a well-earned decoration. But I honour still more the noble conscientiousness which could refuse an honour tempting to most men, and forbids our calling him Sir Alexander. At the same time, I see no reason why others, who do not share his scruples, should not gracefully wear the honour Her Majesty has conferred. If we never have anything worse to fear for Canada than knighthood for its meritorious publicists, I think we shall do very well, even if the wives of the said publicists do, by courtesy, share the honour of their husbands. F.

## ROYALTY IN THE STOCK-MARKET.

—If Royalty were susceptible to the subtle influences of the Market, and were governed in its value, like stocks, by the mysterious causes which drive brokers and jobbers into mad excitement, what a curious corner would the *Mark Lane Express*, or other Commer-