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Knighthood in Canada. If it is true that Mr. Laurier has been offered and has declined the distinction of knighthood, he has done what a good many of his countrymen will heartily approve. It is true that good and honorable men in both political parties have been very willing to accept the distinction. But there is for the opposite course, and that which it is said the Premier has preferred to adopt, equally good and honorable precedent, such precedent as that of Hon. George Brown, Hon. Alexander Mackenzie and Hon. Edward Blake. For our part we approve the course taken by these men as wise and, as being most in keeping with the democratic ideas and institutions of this new country, and we sincerely regret that their position in regard to this matter has not been that also of all our public men, whose abilities and services have been such as to win for them special recognition at the hands of their Sovereign. Class distinctions may be well enough in the old countries, or, whether they are well enough or not, they are too deeply rooted in the hereditary order of things to be abolished, except at the expense of revolution. But there is no good reason why such factitious distinctions should be transplanted to this side of the Atlantic. One of the most wholesome things in connection with our political life in this country has been the closeness of touch between the public men and the people. The man who has accepted knighthood has thereby donned the uniform of class distinction. He is a Sir Somebody, or a Sir Nobody, as the case may be, and his wife is a Lady S or a Lady N to the rest of the world. The thing is unwholesome. The distinction is empty. It ministers to vanity and not to character. It promotes jealousies and small ambitions, and in the case of weak men and ambitious women leads to all kinds of intriguing to attain a merely factitious distinction, without corresponding worth as to ability, service or personal character. If a man possesses ability and has performed services which have won him a high place in the esteem and admiration of his countrymen, he has his reward, the people have knighted him, and any patent of nobility apart from that will be worse than valueless to him. The man of true democratic principles will value far above any poor distinction that New Years or birthday honors can afford, the love and confidence of the people, and he will be profoundly jealous of anything that would tend to make his relations to them less intimate and cordial.

A Lofty Theme. The modern theatre and the Christian church are not supposed to have many interests in common, but the recently reported action of the Common Council of Chicago in prohibiting women, under the penalty of a fine of from \$25 to \$100, from wearing any kind of hat or bonnet in a theatre, suggests that the high hat nuisance at least affords one point of common interest for the two very dissimilar institutions. It appears that the Chicago aldermen have been wise enough not to involve themselves in any discussion with the ladies as to the permissible

height of a hat. They have decided (to speak metaphorically) to cut the dog's tail off just back of his ears, by ordering that in the theatre every hat or bonnet, high or low, must come off. Now it is unfortunate for church-goers that the same styles of hat—we do not say the same hats—that are so objectionable in the theatre are also found in the church, where also they are objectionable and for a like reason, viz, that for the persons who are so unfortunate as to be seated behind those of the lofty headgear, a good view of the platform and the speaker is impossible. If it is so much in the interest of the male devotees of the theatre that the lofty hat should be brought low that city governments feel compelled to deal with the evil by an ordinance, the question naturally arises, have not masculine church-goers some rights in this connection which ought to be respected. There is, however, for the latter class small hope of any redress—a pun was not intended—short of that, which time and a change of fashion is sure to bring and to those who wait. For ladies will not remove their hats in church, it would not be proper, perhaps not scriptural. And it would be absurd to expect them to fly in the face of fashion by wearing another kind of hat. Those who complain that they cannot see the preacher should reflect that they can probably hear as much as they are disposed to make good use of, and if they must see the preacher, why there is the Salvation Army. Diana of the Ephesians was great in her day, no doubt, but she is fairly out-classed by the great modern goddess of fashion.

Sir J. M. Lemoine. Among the "New Year's honors" dispensed by the Queen is that of knighthood upon J. M. Lemoine, of Quebec. Mr. Lemoine, or as we must now call him, Sir J. M. Lemoine, is a man of some prominence in literary circles, but it is something of a surprise that he should be considered as having claims to so marked distinction. Mr. Lemoine has certainly never been regarded as a model stylist, nor in any sense as a great writer. He has been, however, a very industrious literary man, and has done work which is of considerable value and fairly entitles him to the gratitude and esteem of his countrymen. His residence, known as Spencer Grange, is near Spencerwood, the Governor's residence at Quebec. Mr. Lemoine's literary work is chiefly in the way of historical sketches, touching the life of old and new Canada, and, if his writings are not to be commended as models of literary style, they are justly valued for the interest of the subjects with which they deal and the information they afford. Mr. Lemoine has gathered at Spencer Grange a valuable library, with relics and maps of old Canada. These have furnished to other writers data and inspiration for Canadian romances and historical sketches, and writers whose literary fame far surpasses that of the master of Spencer Grange, have gratefully acknowledged their obligations for the materials which he has furnished to their hands.

Russell-Scott Libel Suit. The sensational Russell-Scott libel suit came to an abrupt and unexpected termination on Thursday last by the counsel for the defence announcing that the plea of justification was withdrawn, and that the defence agreed upon a verdict of "guilty." The suit was brought by Earl Russell, against Lady Selina Scott, and is the sequel to difficulties, which for a number of years have existed between the Earl and his wife. Five or six years ago the Countess of Russell, who was Lady Scott's daughter, brought suit against her husband for divorce, but was not successful in proving her charges

and was compelled to pay costs of the action, amounting to over £5,000. The Earl then obtained judicial separation from his wife. Two years ago the Countess brought suit against the Earl for restoration of conjugal rights, but was defeated. Then Lady Scott made statements very damaging to Earl Russell's character, charging him with abominable acts of immorality. Thereupon the Earl brought suit against Lady Scott for criminal libel. The plea of justification was entered, but, as stated, was afterwards withdrawn. Two men Cockerton, an engineer, and Aylott, a valet, gave evidence in support of Lady Scott's charges, and did not withdraw their statements. By the sentence of the Court Lady Scott and the two men were condemned to eight months' imprisonment each without hard labor. Lady Scott is reported to have left the court room after her sentence, saying "Every word I uttered against my daughter's husband is true." On the supposition that the charges against Lord Russell's character were entirely false and malicious, the sentence imposed on the offenders seems absurdly light.

The Famine in India. The information which has reached this country, so far as we have observed, respecting the scarcity of food in India, is not very definite as to the extent and severity of the famine, but a recent London despatch states that ex-Judge Goodridge has lately published in a Calcutta newspaper, a letter, in which he points out that the demands created by the famine are far beyond the means employed by the Indian Government to deal with it. He declares that thousands of persons are dying of starvation, while the people and the Government of Great Britain appear not to have apprehended the gravity of the situation. Russia in the meantime has been forward to lend a helping hand to the famine-stricken country. The Czar has expressed a deep interest in the matter, and, with the Czarina, has done much in promoting efforts to aid the suffering. The newspapers of Moscow and St. Petersburg are making earnest appeals, and in other directions steps are being taken to forward the same benevolent purpose. In some English quarters this action on the part of the Russians is resented, being regarded as hiding a plot to advance that country's political ambitions in India. It is quite true that Russia's attitude toward her neighbors, the Armenians, and toward certain classes of the Czar's subjects within his own empire, have scarcely been of a character to give rise to the expectation that Russia would be found leading in a great humanitarian movement for the relief of a famine-stricken foreign country. But it is certainly more charitable to suppose that the Russian movement for the relief of India was prompted entirely by motives of charity and good will, and that it was intended as a response to the aid given a few years ago at the time of the great Russian famine. The Russian newspapers, it is said, point out, in their appeals for subscriptions, that had it not been for the aid extended by Great Britain and United States to Russian sufferers, there would have been much greater suffering and loss of life.

Irish Taxation Question. The Irish question may be said to have taken on a new phase since a Royal Commission has reported that Ireland is contributing yearly to the Imperial treasury about two and a half million sterling more than her share on the basis of population and wealth. This outcome of the commission has aroused much popular feeling in Ireland, and has had the singular effect of uniting in a common bond of interest all parties—landlord and tenant, Nationalist and Unionist—in a demand upon the government for concessions in regard to this matter of taxation. It is not in the least likely that the Government will concede these demands. It will on the contrary, it is said, propose the appointment of another Royal Commission on the subject. The Irish members, on the other hand, are likely to press their suit with vigor, and if they unite their forces they will no doubt be able to offer so effective obstruction as to interfere very seriously with the Government's programme for the session. What with the storm brewing in this quarter, the difficulties to be expected in connection with the remodeled school bill, and the defence against criticism of its foreign and colonial policies, it is not likely to be very smooth sailing for the administration when parliament meets.