

FROM OUR OWN OBSERVATORY.

A Memorable Year.

THIS present year 1897 will undoubtedly be a notable one in future histories, even if there have been so far comparatively few events that may figure in the calendar. For Canada, and for Toronto especially, it will be a very conspicuous year. The Jubilee, with the prominent position in all the circumstances attending it taken up by the Canadian representatives, and the meeting of the British Association would be enough to shed lustre upon the name of Canada; but there have been many other events, not the least of which has been the meeting of the Epworth League, which show that Canada, and particularly her two chief cities, if their management be only moderately honest and able, have a bright future before them in the annals of peaceful progress. Owing chiefly to its vast extent, its sparse population, its almost unlimited opportunities, and the absence to a large degree of those dangerous foreign and "colored" elements which give our southern neighbors so much trouble, and notwithstanding many dark blots and much degrading vanity, Canada to-day is wanting in some of the greatest extremes of social life that characterize the more densely-peopled countries. It is for her statesmen to endeavor to facilitate the growth of her people on lines that will lead to their greater happiness and prosperity, not by coercive legislation and intrusive morality, not by class legislation, whether for paupers or for millionaires, but by removing as far as possible every restriction in the way of the freest development of her people—to "make it easy to do right and difficult to do wrong," as Gladstone said, not by a compact with the reactionary element in the church in an attempt to force people into the paths of rectitude, always a matter of doubt, but by the removal of every restriction not absolutely necessary for the public peace and safety. In this view, the recent meeting of Epworth Leaguers is not without an augury for good in its increased spirit of freedom.

The Diamond Jubilee.

Without question, we think, the late jubilee festivities formed in many ways the most remarkable event the world has ever seen. To make a Roman holiday the treasures of many a conquered country were exhibited, with all the luxurious surroundings that immense concentrated wealth alone could give. But this nineteenth century ovation to a very aged woman was a democratic and essentially a peaceful event; and, however vigorously we may object to much of the waste, and to very much of the fulsome and nauseating flattery indulged in by sycophants as well as by jingoes,—*"adoration,"* even, was the word used by Lord Salisbury!—it is needless and useless to shut our eyes to the fact that a vast majority of the white population of the British Empire took an active part in making the jubilee what it was—a practical exhibition of the extent, resources, and to a large degree the present condition of the greatest empire of the world. Naturally, the darkest side of the picture could be but very imperfectly seen, even in the dinners given to the poor; but it is safe, we think, to say that, viewed as a whole, the jubilee shows the British Empire to be at the least as prosperous and happy and substantial as any other country. Perhaps we should be justified in strongly emphasizing this statement; but nothing is more likely to make it appear ridiculous and unreal than an effort to attribute the result to the efforts of the very "respectable," commonplace, and prosaic old lady in whose honor the jubilee was nominally held.