

A New Year's Message

FROM NEIL M. LECKIE, B. A.

THE latest freshman to arrive within the halls and class-rooms of the Ontario Agricultural College is a youth who, like the beast in the Apocalypse, is known by a number instead of by a name. His number is One Thousand Nine Hundred and Nineteen. He is taking all the classes, and from various hints it looks as if he intends to do all his work, and take all his prizes within the space of twelve calendar months, and then depart again. He is quiet and diligent, and never sleeps. He visits all his fellow students, and reminds them that hours are few and precious. He takes a strange interest in clocks, and in the ringing of the bells which send the classes to their tasks. He is forever muttering formulas about the brevity and uncertainty of time; and is altogether a personality and a presence with which every one in some measure has to reckon. He comes of an old family of years, and those who have been with us longest can remember many others of the family who have come and gone, all following the same mode of life and playing the same part amongst us.

This new year which has come into college rooms seems to have arrived elsewhere as well; and has indeed, like Fafnir, spread itself over all the land. It is to be a new year in many ways. It promises to be a year of peace, a year full of the sense of a great task accomplished, and of new and even greater duties opening out before us. To win a war is to reassert our claim to a place upon the surface of the

Earth, and to go on to show that we are better able to use and adorn that place than those who tried to take it from us. The last four years have witnessed the attempt of one group of peoples to dislodge another, and the year just gone has seen the failure of this enterprise. We are to remain, in the meantime, undisturbed in the possession of our altars and our hearths, our fields and homes. We have been at least strong enough to hold off the aggressor. Now we are to be wise enough, skilful and industrious enough to show that we are better able than our enemies to occupy and use the plot of land upon which we have retained our hold.

We have, it may now be claimed, proven ourselves superior to the aggressor in arms; we have outdone him in the quality of mercy and of human kindness; we have outrivalled him in the art of arranging and governing without the help of kings to tell us how to do it. But there are other excellences to which in the meantime we can lay no such claim. In knowledge and the arts we are not supreme. The free movement of the mind which we have attained in the business of governing ourselves has not been gained, has hardly even been claimed in other departments of our life. Even in the one region in which we may be said to have excelled, that of making governments express the will of many, our success is only partial and immature. In Canada, in many an instance, our people are unlovely and self-satisfied; our towns and cities are often squalid