

observe in the very streets not only from decade to decade but one might almost say from year to year, in city and country how rapidly prosperity grows.

It is true that the outlay on many important culture projects is still too small with us. But why should the cause of this be put down to excess in expenditure on war equipment? Our taxation system is still far from perfect, and could with a little willing sacrifice in some directions be made much more productive without creating any sort of onerous pressure. The finer grades of tobacco are taxed very low; North Germany irrationally pays a considerably lower duty on beer than South Germany; the excise duty on brandy is ripe for reform; and an imperial death-duty would be by no means inopportune. In former years and generations relatively higher dues were undoubtedly paid than we do at the present day, when luxury has so greatly increased among all classes. According to a recent publication of the Swiss member of the Federal Council, Numa Droz, the burgher of the German Empire pays considerably less in taxes than the Swiss.

Many causes have contributed to this increase of prosperity, but the foremost of all is undoubtedly the long continuance of peace. A century counting so few years of war as the nineteenth, or even as in the last decades of the century, is unexampled in the history of the world. To what is this due? Again this is due to many circumstances, but most of all to the heavier war equipment (preparations), which make any prospect of war appear so terrible that it is but rarely that anyone can be found to assume the responsibility of engaging in war, and at the present, it would seem, there is no one so inclined.