

OUR CITIES--OLD AND NEW.

The Anglo-German agreement has elicited a vast stock of evidence as to the variety of opinions that may exist on any single question. That in the United Kingdom there should be divergence between the two parties was only to be expected. There was like divergence on every development of foreign policy under Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Gladstone, and in the ministries that preceded them. But seldom has there been such a marked discrepancy between the two extremes of most favourable and most adverse judgments. In the interval between these, again, there is every possible diversity of view, from simple acquiescence to wild exultation, on the one hand, and from mild dissent to violent denunciation, on the other, and the prophecy of disaster as the consequence. In Germany there has been the same diversity, and so, through the whole European press the controversy has taken every imaginable shape. In France, the mass of public opinion is against the agreement, as in some vague way, a menace to the interests of the Republic. Any aggrandizement of Germany in Europe could hardly produce any feeling but hostility in France. The possession of Heligoland is made out to be a great gain from a naval point of view—a conviction which is, no doubt, deepened by the exultant tone of the German official organs. One paper, for instance, looks upon the acquisition of the island as the fulfilment of the long cherished aspiration of the German people, and cheaply purchased by the surrender of a few advantages in Africa. This has been the refrain of a large portion of the press, and, although it is the utterance of patriotic pride at the removal of a foreign garrison from Germany's door rather than a well-weighed recognition of any real advantage, the French press naturally accepts it as proof of a great renunciation on Lord Salisbury's part, and sees in it a real danger to France. *Le Temps* has, however, given equal, if not more, attention to the African part of the bargain, and declares that there, too, England has been overreached by German wiles, or overpersuaded by some powerful inducement. Here again the German press confirms French suspicion by pronouncing the agreement a guarantee of long enduring peace between Germany and England. And, in fact, this is just the view on which Lord Salisbury himself has laid stress. Does he mean thereby that Germany is so formidable that it is worth England's while to part with territory and influence in order to conciliate her? That is unhappily the impression that has been given to the world.

In discussing the prospects of success and possibilities of failure that lie before the Beet Sugar Company, now being organized in Ontario, the *Canadian Manufacturer* is of opinion that all the objections made to the project can be overruled; that the experience of Quebec was due to causes that have been satisfactorily accounted for; that there is no climatic obstacle, and that there is no reason why Ontario should not succeed in such an undertaking as fully as California or Nebraska. This last point was urged several years ago, when the enterprise was first started in this Province; nor, indeed, is there any reason, either in the soil or in the climate, why the cultivation of the sugar beet should not thrive as well here as in the Western States, or even in Europe. The difficulty experienced did not spring from physical so much as from moral sources. The farmers could not be induced to plant beets—although they were assured that whatever crops they raised would be purchased by the company—instead of the ordinary quota of grains and vegetables to which they had been accustomed. The consequence was that the factory fell short of the expected supply, and much time and energy were wasted. And, as success engenders success, failure engenders failure, and at this moment there is in Quebec a far-reaching prejudice against beet culture. In Ontario they have had no such damaging experience, and, therefore, they will enter on the undertaking with an unclouded forecast. It is to be hoped that our contemporary's sanguine forecast will be fulfilled. Where there's a will there's a way—they have both will and way.

Sir Daniel Wilson, in his "Prehistoric Man," contrasts and compares the early growth of communities in the Old World with those in the New. Whereas the old-world cities have their mystic founders and quaint legends still commemorated in heraldic blazonry, there is little, if any, mystery about the beginnings of our cis-Atlantic towns. And then, taking one of our provincial capitals as an example of the latter, he points out with what minuteness the local historian has chronicled the successive changes in its early development. All our cities are not, indeed, so young as the one thus selected for illustration, and several of those of even later growth have traditions that carry the mind back to dates more remote. In the Maritime Provinces the English, Scotch, German and Loyalist settlements were mostly established on sites which the French had already occupied temporarily or permanently. The same thing may be said of some of the Upper Canadian towns and cities, while in the North-West the localities chosen had, in many instances, been already designated by the French explorers or the Hudson's Bay or North-West Company. Montreal bears a name which has associations with the reign of Francis the First. If we accept the time of Cartier's visit in 1535 as the commencement of its colonial history, it will take precedence of even St. Augustine or Santa Fé. Even if we limit ourselves to the years of actual occupation and settlement by Europeans, our Eastern cities are not all of yesterday, and some of them have a history of respectable length. In most cases devoted students have placed on record at least the most salient events in their annals, while some of them have been the themes of bulky volumes or even series of volumes. Treatises of this kind, which demand considerable research are of no slight value to the general historian.

Another source of information regarding the condition of our cities and towns at various periods, is found in the works of travellers and tourists who record the impressions made on them by the places that they visit, their inhabitants, their dwellings, the amount and nature of their business, their social life, and the intellectual status of their people. In books of this class it is possible to trace the progress of most of our important towns and cities for periods varying from half a century to two centuries. Quebec has attracted most notice from these birds of passage. In his excellent history of the Ancient Capital, Mr. LeMoine makes frequent quotations from, or references to, the distinguished personages, from royalty down to the literary or professional man, who have pronounced judgment on the city of Champlain. Similar illustrative gleanings could be gathered touching all our other chief centres; and, indeed, from the observations, suggestions and reflections of travellers a fairly consecutive account of our growth as a people might be compiled.

If we start at the Atlantic Coast and take a devious trip across the Continent—on such a plan, for instance, as Dr. Withrow has outlined in "Our Own Country"—we shall find as we proceed from town to town that every locality on our route has some special claims to consideration which are either peculiar to itself or which it enjoys in a way or to an extent that gives it an advantage, in some one respect, over the rest of the Dominion. It may be something in the site and surroundings; some exceptional charm of scenery; some natural advantage, improved by art, for the prosecution of some special industry; it may be the centre of a mining, a lumbering, an agricultural district of rare importance; it may have official pre-eminence as a provincial metropolis; it may be the seat of a university; it may be a fishing town, a railway terminus, or a health resort, or it may combine a number of attractions, every one of which is of interest to a class of tourists or to people generally. Possibly, it may possess advantages of one kind or another that have never been developed through lack of capital, of local enterprise, or of that enduring energy that is essential to success. But, as a rule, wherever families have congregated and a town has grown up to a certain stage in population and prosperity, the original settlers have been drawn thither by some feature or features in the situation that

gave promise of more than a mere livelihood. In ancient times security was the main object, and, if with security could be combined convenience for traffic, so much the better. The slope of a mountain, the summit of some almost inaccessible rock, the bank of a river, or a bay of the sea, with possibilities of defence in the land adjacent, were the sites most commonly chosen. Till a comparatively recent period, indeed, the question of protection against aggressive foes, always presented itself for solution, and unless the other advantages were allied with this requisite, art and toil had to supply what Nature denied. Our own earlier towns and cities were founded with deliberate or instinctive reference to both these essentials. The situation of some of our cities could not be surpassed. Quebec, for instance, was long and is still called the Gibraltar of America. Since the railway movement began, however, the rule of past centuries has undergone material modification. The walled city has virtually become obsolete, the methods both of attack and defence having shared in the revolution that has overtaken the art of war. Cities and towns, which in feudal times were fortresses as well as marts of trade, have during the present century multiplied amazingly. In the New World and in our own generation the pace of development has had no precedent in the history of mankind. Wherever the iron steed has penetrated cities have started to life in his resistless track. The western outposts of civilization, which, in the beginning of the century, were on the hither side of the Mississippi, were year by year pushed farther towards the setting sun, till at last the whole vast region between the two oceans had been opened up to settlement. After the first great central transcontinental line had been followed by like routes to the north and south of it, the same results ensued, and now Canada, which had conceived such an undertaking years before it had met with favour in the United States is undergoing just the same experience.

In this rapid development of city life it is difficult to keep trace of these new claimants on our attention. We hear of a city with an unfamiliar name and we seek in vain for any information concerning it in ordinary works of reference, or we find a few lines devoted to it, as it was in the initial stage of its career. Live business men, however, both in the new centres and in the larger older centres of trade have learned how to meet this want. The latter send out their agents and learn at first hand what the needs of the pioneers may be, and lose no time in supplying the demand. As for the pioneers themselves, they do not await the arrival of the tourist or depend on his book for an introduction to the world. They set to work in a different way. They issue special editions of some good illustrated paper with views of their town, its public buildings, its points of scenic interest, its blocks of business houses, and they fill page after page of letter-press with the history of their city's origin and growth, biographies of its leading merchants and manufacturers, an account of its municipal administration, its water works, its schools, its churches, its parks, its railways, and whatever else is worthy of mention in, around and in connection with it. This plan has been found to work so well in the States that it is now coming into vogue in Canada, and those who have tried it have no hesitation in saying that it pays. It is simply a legitimate application, on a large scale, of the ordinary advertisement. The firms that advertise most largely are, as a rule, the firms that have the most remarkable success. Nor are there any firms, however old, however stable, that may not be benefited by comprehensive and judicious advertising. It has been found the same with cities and towns. To the new communities it is—in some form or other—an absolute necessity, and the old, if they would not be beaten in the race, must keep themselves before the world. Of course, much depends on the manner in which the task is discharged. If a city or town allows itself to be caricatured by unworthy cuts, it must pay the penalty. Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well, and pictorial advertising, to have its due effect on the public mind, should be of the highest attainable excellence.