

## THE OLD BOYS' MOVEMENT AND THE HOME-COMERS' FESTIVAL

WITHIN the past few years there has manifested itself in Canada a somewhat novel and noteworthy movement resulting in the formation of a number of so-called "Old Boys'" societies, which promise to exercise a decided influence upon the life of the community. They are in no sense political, philanthropic, or educational organizations, but thus far have been of a purely fraternal and social character, although, as we shall presently point out, they may, and indeed ought, to take on a more serious purpose, which would render them of substantial benefit.

So far as we can learn, the Durham County Old Boys are entitled to be considered the pioneers in the new development, but they were quickly followed by others, and the list is constantly increasing, so that ere long it may include every one of the older counties in the province, and thence spread, let us hope, to the sister provinces.

The inspiration of the movement probably came, like many other good ideas, from the United States, where associations, clubs, and societies, having for their purpose the recalling of the past in one way or another, abound to a remarkable degree, and where banquets, picnics, barbecues, excursions, and similar joyous methods of meeting are in vogue throughout the year.

Some of these have grown into great organizations, with permanent headquarters and paid officials, and their influence has extended even into the political arena, although this was not at all germane to their original object.

There is a certain element, both of humor and of pathos, about the whole thing, which strongly appeals to one. Neither the United States nor the Dominion can lay claim to any sort of antiquity, as compared with the empires and kingdoms of Europe, for instance. We are still in our callow youth, so to speak. Yet we have already begun to cherish with ardor the pretence of age, if

the phrase may be permitted. An endearing form of address that is applied entirely irrespective of the facts is "old man," and every excuse is seized for employing the epithet "old" in connection with persons, places, and things.

To this sentiment the Old Boys' associations minister in a pleasant way. They bring together again those who, although they have much in common in their youth, have drifted apart in the course of years, and are glad to revive former friendships, or they unite on a common ground of interest those who have hitherto been entire strangers.

To attend one of their meetings, and to hear from the lips of whitehaired judges, bank presidents, doctors, and merchants of high estate, the reminiscences of their boyhood days, the merry pranks they played, the queer characters they knew, and the great changes that have taken place in localities and people with the flight of years, is an experience of uncommon interest, and one is brought to realize the force of Wordsworth's lines in regard to how the past has "deposited upon the silent shore of memory images and precious thoughts that shall not die, and cannot be destroyed."

As we have said, the impulse of the movement would not appear so far to carry it beyond the social reunion phase. The winter banquet and the summer picnic have been the chief features of its expression, and we would venture to suggest that, as it grows and gathers strength, there is a field of usefulness before it which it would do well to occupy.

This young Canada of ours has made history at so rapid a rate, and has not only opened up so wonderful a future, but has already achieved so astonishing a present that there is no small danger of the memorials of the past being lost sight of in the whirl of things.

We have very little indeed that may be