



THEY tell me that the custom of calling on New Year's Day is reviving. More ladies are staying at home to receive visitors; and more gentlemen are making the rounds. It was a good old custom in many ways, though it did—in days when drinking was more common than it is now—lead to unfortunate results from too much conviviality. But now that we have become too civilised to look upon even the incipient imbecility of maudlinism with tolerance, we ought to be able to revive the sociability, the old-fashioned courtesy, the gayety of the custom without its less desirable features. The fact is that, outside the pale of "high society," our gentlemen do not pay sufficient court to our ladies after they have once entered the sober dales of matrimony. Only the young people practise in our prosaic day any of that chivalry which was so captivating a feature in the life of our ancestors; and it would be excellent training for most middle-aged husbands of my acquaintance to be required to spruce up on New Year's Day, hire a sleigh and drive around to make calls on all their wives' lady friends.

* * *

NEW YEAR'S DAY at all events calls for a more joyous celebration than it usually receives. We get jollity enough at Christmas. That is a holiday which our people have taken to with great relish, led on, I fancy, by the unconquerable hosts of boys and girls who after all do most of our holiday-celebrating in this country, whether in mid-winter or mid-summer. But, with most of us, New Year's Day is little more than a day free from our customary labour. The Scotch who still retain memories of the old land make more of it; but it is difficult for them to get up much of a celebration in the midst of a cold and unstirred community. Yet it is a most significant anniversary. It is the beginning of the New Year. In Paris, people mark it by going to dine with their friends or having their friends in to dine with them. And, as Christmas is the family festival, we might well make of New Year's the festival of friendship. If we will not go a-calling as our grandfathers did, we can at least gather our friends around a festal board and turn the diary of the year just gone as it may affect our little circle.

* * *

THIS last year has been a good one to us in Canada. It has seen us out of the deep trouble in which we were at its beginning. Good times may not have come again in full force; but the bad times have gone. There is now no more real uneasiness as to the future. All we dispute about is the date when the final revival will appear. It would be most difficult in any case to check for long the progressive prosperity of Canada. Nature is too bountiful to us. It is like trying to keep a man poor who has a large income from investments which constantly dump into his lap another fat instalment. Nations which have no such outside sources of income, and which must toil for every cent they get, are in a different position. They have no royal road away from hard times. They must work out their own salvation. We have merely to hold out our hats at the right time to get them filled. With a quarter-continent of almost virgin soil being rapidly filled up and full of the activity of railway construction, wealth must bubble up all around us in Canada; and nothing in the world can keep us long in the trough of the sea.

* * *

BUT it is just as well for us to realise the foundations of our national security. Otherwise we may fall into the error of imagining that it is due to our superior merit as a people or because Providence has an especially friendly eye over us. But a very little examination will show us that our comfortable position is due to outside circumstances, one of which at least proves superior merit in another people—not in ourselves at all. The first cause of our prosperity—as has been hinted—is undoubtedly the fabulous natural wealth which is now open to the exploitation of a comparative handful of men. We are six millions with a half-continent to harvest. We are spreading out over land which we have not drained or enriched

or worked in any way. We are finding mines from which wealth pours in a steady stream. We are living fat off capital which other peoples have saved and which they now send in here in search of the opportunities which our new country offers.

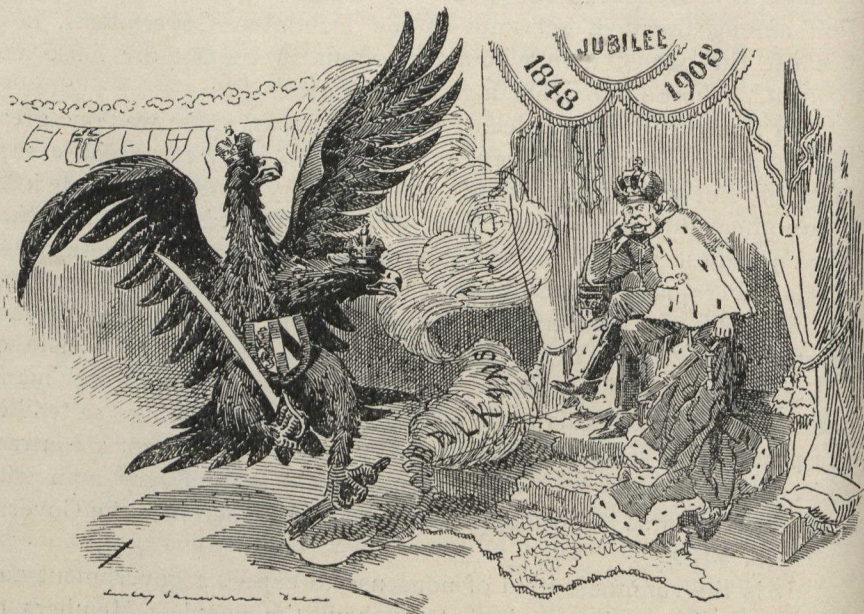
* * *

THEN Canada has another advantage which is well-nigh unique. It is safe from war's alarms, and yet it has neither a navy nor an army to justify this safety. No other country in the world is so happily placed. Australia—in many ways a similar land politically—has an Asiatic peril on its northern frontier, and is building a local navy and talking of universal military service. South Africa has just been torn by a great war. Not a land in Europe can be sure that a hostile army will not cross its frontiers; and not one can escape the burden of supporting an army. The United States is building one of the great navies of the world, and her people will have to bear greater military burdens as the years go by. Canada alone is exempt—so long as she chooses to be so—and why? Because the people of the United Kingdom furnish her with protection. Whitechapel Jack casts his shield over the self-satisfied Peace Society of "Little Ontario." So long as we accept this position of "peace without honour," we are on the charity list of the poorest wretch in the Mother Country. But I expect that we will grow ashamed of it some day and take up our share of the burden. If Britain should get into serious trouble over these European complications and unfortunately find her power crippled—which God forbid—we may feel the pressure of the burden sooner than we expect.

N'IMPORTE

Lord Roseberry on Municipal Government

I KNOW there used to be a cheap sneer at municipal matters by calling them 'parochial.' I suppose I have what one of your more eminent burgesses, Lord Beaconsfield, used to call a 'parochial mind.' But my belief is that every day that passes over us the great municipalities of this country are growing in power, in influence and in majesty. Their offices are daily more coveted, their honours daily more cherished, and their work expands every hour in usefulness and benefit to the country at large. I think I am not saying too much when I say that the time is not remote when men who wish to do the public service will prefer even to do it in municipal rather than in parliamentary life. And I think so for this reason; that in the practical work which you do in municipal life you get a more immediate return for it than you do in Parliament. A politician's life is apt to be spent in futile action and barren criticism. But you, on your side, if you embark in the council of the town to which you belong, have the opportunity of seeing your work ready to your hand fruitful around you. What you are able to effect you see achieved at once, and you see the results in the increased beauty of your city and in the increased welfare and happiness of your neighbours and surroundings. As we know, politicians, on the other hand, with the highest aims and objects before them, often have to wait for their lifetime and not even to see in their lifetime the object realised after which they seek."—Address on Social Problems. Glasgow, 1890.



A BIRD OUT OF HAND.

Emperor of Austria (to his Bird). "If you're doing this war-dance in honour of my jubilee, I rather wish you wouldn't. I'm an old man and it don't amuse me." "Punch" intimates that His Majesty, Franz Joseph, hardly approves of Austria's recent aggressions.