

...AT THE...

Editor's Desk

THE Christmas season is fast drawing upon us. Before the next issue of the MASSEY-HARRIS ILLUSTRATED appears, another Christmas Day will have been gone, and 1897 will be also among "the things that have been." Most heartily do we wish all our many thousand friends in all parts of Canada, and those—far from few—in old England, and in still further away Australia, a very merry Christmas and a full measure of happiness and prosperity in the year so soon to dawn upon us. As we look around and ponder upon Canada's position of to-day, and remember the lot of her people, we feel that there is not another country on the face of the earth in which "the Merry Christmas" should be so much in evidence. We are not a nation of aristocrats, still less an aggregation of plutocrats, but we are a homely, united people, enjoying, for the most part, above the average of worldly comforts; knowing practically nothing of the sting of that dire distress and life-sapping poverty which in the large cities in the older world and in the United States, claims its thousands and tens of thousands; the remembrance of it eating like a canker into the hearts of true statesmen and of every thoughtful man and woman, most of all at a time when ALL mankind should be rejoicing.

We have our troubles and our trials, of course. Death stalks in our midst and Sorrow enters many a home. Disappointment in some matter large or small, generally the latter, is probably the daily experience of all of us; because we are not free from the infirmity of the age, which gives to ambition too large a share of the space belonging to contentment. Every individual life has its shadows, and why should any one of us in Canada expect to be exempt? Nationally, too, there are doubtless many things done, and as many undone, which do not in themselves contribute to an increase in our peace and happiness. But this also is the lot of every nation in more or less degree; and while we in Canada,

as units and as a nation are subject to the law which prescribes troubles, trials and temptations as part of the lot of mankind, individually and nationally; we cannot fail to recognize with gratitude that the heaven of peace, plenty and prosperity is in evidence in our midst to an extent unsurpassed in any other country; that while as units and as a nation the necessary shadows occupy a place in our lives, no dark cloud has settled or hovers over any part of our fair Dominion.

THE transference of Sir Oliver Mowat from the hurly burly of the political arena in which he has been such a conspicuous figure for at least a generation, to the peace and comparative quiet of Government House, is a step which will meet with cordial approval from all classes regardless of political sympathies. We may, many of us, differ from Sir Oliver on a hundred and one points of a party character; but for well on to a quarter of a century his was the hand shaping the course of the largest province in the Dominion; and the fact remains that for that long period he served the province as its first minister, and, making due allowance for the exigencies of political warfare as it exists to-day, there is no public act of Sir Oliver that even his opponents will not admit was performed in the sincere belief that he was thereby best fulfilling the trust confided to him.

Of the private life of the present Lieutenant Governor we know enough to be convinced that those are fortunate who can count him among their personal friends, and the circle of these is a large one, comprising many who have been his unflinching antagonists in the political field.

However much retirement into strictly private seclusion might benefit physically one who has fought the hard political battle until nigh on to four score years of age, we cannot help feeling that the complete withdrawal into private life of such a strong personality would be a loss to the country. In the Lieutenant Governorship we have a Half-yearhouse. Here we hope we may find Sir Oliver Mowat for the next five years, and