

The World in 1900

FIELDING LEWIS, IN THE MIRROR.

I.—THE TREND OF EVENTS.

ALTHOUGH the last year of the nineteenth century developed nothing of pre-eminent importance in literature, science or art, the future historian will revert to it as the beginning of a long series of events necessarily resulting from the insistent and Pan-Anglican policies embracing all the widely separated countries which are dominated by Anglican influences.

No event in American history, or in the history of the world since the Napoleonic wars, has had a greater historical significance than the "Anglo-Saxon" rapprochement, contemplated as a possibility during the whole century, but actually effected only in its closing year. The attempt to restore a harmonious political, commercial and financial milieu vivendi, between England and the United States was made with great skill at the beginning of the century and again at the time of the Opium war, but in both cases the friendly advances of England were rejected, as a result of deep-seated prejudices produced by the wars of the Revolution and of 1812. There existed, too, at that time, a feeling that America had a peculiar destiny as "a herald of liberty to all mankind," and every effort of friendship and alliance from the governing classes in England was met by counter demonstrations of sympathy for Ireland in the famines which have so frequently afflicted it, and under the Anglican coercion acts which have driven so many of its people to America. Such influences as this, co-operating with resentment of the exaltation shown by the English "upper classes" because of our Civil war, postponed, until the final year of the century, the most important single event in international politics since Clive and Hastings laid in India the foundations of that great Anglican empire which survived the suicide of the one and the impeachment of the other.

From any point of view, what has been actually effected in the international politics of the year, seems impossible, incredible! With a population consisting so largely of the descendants of Irishmen, Germans, Scandinavians and others whose sympathy is supposedly with American, rather than Anglican, ideals, the United States seemed destined to be the "Great Republic" of the twentieth century, as at the beginning of the nineteenth, to assert in proud isolation the right to world-leadership by virtue of a distinct national ideal which cannot succeed morally in the politics of the world, even if the Americans without completely revolutionizing the thought and existing political system of England.

THE UNEXPECTED HAPPENS.

What could never have been expected—that what actually happened—during the year was this: England has joined its colonies in a union, which reflects equality and secures the supremacy of the South Briton from the wall of "severance to the Land of the End" over the east, but expects the rest to support South British policies with men and money. Canada and the states of Australia have joined England in overthrowing the South African republics and, having done so, have united more closely with England in the great Pan-Anglican movement which has included the United States, developed the war in China, and resulted in the crushing defeat of the "Liberals" in England and of the "Democrats" in the United States.

The policies of which these results are incidents were carefully matured and, during the last four years, they have been developed with the highest skill and with a determination which stopped at nothing. A part of this plan, matured in advance, was, necessarily, that the United States should annex or control Hawaii, Cuba, Porto Rico and the Philippines, using the latter as a base to support Pan-Anglican operations in the East; thus checking Germany, France and Russia in their rivalry with England.

When, in 1898, it became obvious to intelligent students of politics that this plan had been matured, it was equally apparent that for the Democratic party in the United States and the Liberal party in England, the year would be superior to the astounding audacity of this attack could avail as a means of preventing overwhelming defeat. The necessity was self-evident, intelligence was not lacking and courage would have increased with the year. Neither in England nor America did the opposition have the morale—the faith in itself and its own professions of faith to meet the emergency.

OBSTRUCTIONARY TACTICS.

No matter what the "issues" are, there are two policies which no party in opposition can adopt without disorganizing itself. First—It inevitably defeats itself if, when in opposition, it grows more conservative, as the administration party grows more radical. Both in England and America the "practical" politicians of the Opposition did this. Had they been better linguists they might have reflected that those who grow more conservative on the outside necessarily "conserve" the outside for their pains and stay out!

Second—The Opposition in America attempted what one of the best practical politicians who ever lived concluded to be impossible, a policy for those who make up their minds to the resultant ducking: it attempted to "swap issues while crossing the stream."

No matter what the "paramount" issue is, it can never be successfully changed for another after it has been joined. It will be found, on examination of party organization, both in England and America, that these lethal imbecilities of Opposition politics were the result of a single cause—the skill with which those who controlled the policies of the administration party controlled also the machinery of the Opposition. The attempt to do this is a permanent feature of Machiavellian statesmanship; but if there were nothing novel in the attempt, the complete success it achieved is without precedent in recent politics.

CONDITIONS FAVORABLE.

The social and economic conditions of the year were favorable for it. The "party of moral ideas" ceased to exist in England with Gladstone. Liberal leadership in parliament has been put in the hands of a man of so little moral force that only those who have eccentric memories can recall his name. In America, a bid was made for aristocratic support at the South, and an important part of the work of reconstructing Cuba, under military control, was given to the leading representative of the Lee family, who at the same time, the forces which controlled the administration reached into the Democratic organization and "eliminated" the idealists and "disturbances of business." In the same connection, a general movement was made from London and New York as centers of operation to advance and hold up prices—not merely of manufactured goods, but of agricultural products. Southern cotton and Western grain were advanced under favorable conditions which made it possible to the advance impressive at a time bank clearings were declining. A world-wide exertion of the activity of manufacturers, banks, railroads and merchants followed with this—giving such a splendid illustration of the power of organization as may well be the proudest memory of the last year of the nineteenth century.

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II.—INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION IN 1900.

Intimately associated with the political movement of the year was an unprecedented international movement of trade "expansion," attributed to the closer organization and more effective co-operation of combinations of capital, which takes no account of the boundary lines of countries as they are marked on the maps. The protected industries of the United States, long subject to attack because of their disregard of the export trade, exerted themselves in carrying out well-conceived plans for making such a showing of export business as would silence their opponents on this score. This American activity was met by corresponding activity in England, Germany and other countries of Europe, so that the year shows "expansion" extraordinary in many respects besides its volume. It was accompanied in the United States by increasing restriction and high prices for articles offered in the "home market," the exported "surplus" serving to "relieve the home market" and thus prevent a break. In almost every important line of production, the American market was controlled this year during the whole of the year, and the same phenomenon was marked in England, where the combination of corporations was a feature of the year's business.

EXPORT MOVEMENT.

The export movement from the United States, Canada, England, Germany and France was the most notable feature of the year's history—unlike the movement of the "colonial expansion," with which trade expansion seems to have had an intimate moral relation. In a recent number of the *Banker's Magazine* (London), Mr. J. R. Lawson makes a very intelligent comment on this. "Just now," he says, "the world has seen the crest of a great wave of industrial activity which dwarfs everything else. The most gigantic speculations of the day are carried on, not in stocks, but in coal, iron, copper, cotton, and even breadstuffs. While consols and other gilt-edged securities are being sold, the great staples commodities have doubled or tripled in value. Every manufacturer in the country (England) is busy. Iron works, factories and ship-building yards all are at high pressure. The industrial output, not only of the United States, but of all the commercial states is unprecedented." The statistics fully support this assertion. In the United States during the first three-quarters of the calendar year, exports exceeded \$900,000,000 and for the first time in the history of the port, and every month has exceeded \$100,000,000, while the total of \$1,157,000,000 for March is the largest total ever reached for a single month. The excess of exports over imports averaged \$40,000,000 a month. The gross earnings of American railroads, to October, reached \$908,288,000—a gain of 10 per cent over 1899 and of 23.2 per cent over 1898. The only thing which seems out of sympathy with this movement is bank exchange, which, as reported, (Dunn's) in the United States, for nine months of the year shows a decline, compared with 1899, a loss of 13.4 per cent for the first quarter; 12.5 per cent for the second; and 18.9 per cent for the third. The controller of the currency reports, however, that from March 1st to September 30th, 312 banks were organized under the new act with a capital of \$16,998,000. Unofficial statistics of new industrial and commercial corporations organized from January to August give them a total capital of \$1,889,600,000—impossible figures which go along with the general movement of business.

AN INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT. The statement that this movement was international is fully supported by the reports of reliable English statisticians. They place the increase in the export business of the United States for the fiscal year at 14 per cent over the preceding year; with an increase for Canada of 15 per cent during the same time. From January to July, English exports were \$188,928,000—a gain of \$28,000,000 over 1898. In the export business of the United States, the total of \$1,157,000,000 for March is the largest total ever reached for a single month. The excess of exports over imports averaged \$40,000,000 a month. The gross earnings of American railroads, to October, reached \$908,288,000—a gain of 10 per cent over 1899 and of 23.2 per cent over 1898. The only thing which seems out of sympathy with this movement is bank exchange, which, as reported, (Dunn's) in the United States, for nine months of the year shows a decline, compared with 1899, a loss of 13.4 per cent for the first quarter; 12.5 per cent for the second; and 18.9 per cent for the third. The controller of the currency reports, however, that from March 1st to September 30th, 312 banks were organized under the new act with a capital of \$16,998,000. Unofficial statistics of new industrial and commercial corporations organized from January to August give them a total capital of \$1,889,600,000—impossible figures which go along with the general movement of business.

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Europe and America is full of hope for progress.

III.—THE COLONIAL MOVEMENT.

The concert between the English and American administrations in their colonial policies was the marked feature of the year in international politics, as it was in the campaign which defeated the Liberals in England and the Democrats in America. Its leading features were (1) The war in South Africa (2) the war in the Philippines (3) the war in China (4) the control of Hawaii, Cuba and Porto Rico by military expeditions preparatory to organizing them under whatever modification of the English colonial system may finally be determined on for the United States.

The war in South Africa showed a finer spectacle of determined resistance to overwhelming force than the world had seen since Kosciuszko marshaled his handful of Poles to resist the dismemberment of their country. With a handful of men, the Boers held the Tugela river against Buller's army, until the close of January, and on January 27 forced Buller, who had crossed, to retreat to his original lines. It was not until Cronje's little army of 4,600 men had been surrounded at Paardeberg and captured (February 27) that the British forces of 12,000 men could advance to the close of March. Bloemfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State was occupied by Roberts, after Dundonald had made an unresisted entrance into Ladysmith. (February 28). At Koin Spruit and Reddersburg, the Boers were defeated. In March and April, but they did not attempt a movement in force to check the British advance. On May 16th, Mafeking was relieved, after a siege of 217 days, and on June 5 Lord Roberts entered Pretoria. The Boers made no sign of surrender, however, but, in drawing to the hills, they have since operated with skill and success to cut off British communications. The British plan of campaign since June has consisted largely of burning the houses of Boer families which have members in the field. In October, President Kruger of the Transvaal, sailed for Europe to beg help from the powers, but his case is hopeless, and no interference is to be expected from any quarter with the English plan of crushing the two rebellious and reducing them to imperial colonies.

OTHER WARS.

Messrs. Wessels, Fisher and Wolmarans, the Boer envoys, who visited the United States in May, were politely but unofficially received at the White House and were told that the United States could not interfere against England. At that time administration was carrying on active operations against the Philippines and preparing Cuba for independence. The war in the Philippines seems to have been protected by the Filipino leaders in the hope of Democratic success in the United States. They have probably lost at least 25 men for every American killed or wounded, and their country has been ravaged by the burning of hostile villages. The war in the Philippines and in South Africa did not provoke great enthusiasm either in England or America in the first quarter of the year. Without further activity, there was no assurance of popular support for the independent administration. On February 1st, the way was opened for operations in China by a "joint note," headed by England and the United States, demanding protection for all European and American missionaries in China. This pledge the United States refused to make, and the Powers—a position it had studiously avoided during the first hundred years of the republic. The way was thus prepared for a Holy War in the interest of religion, and no difficulty was found in developing the war against the Chinese who were already on the verge of frenzy because of open and long continued threats of dismembering their country. The Chinese government undoubtedly encouraged them to organize. They committed frequent atrocities, but the extraordinary stories of wholesale massacres of Christians by Chinese soldiers sent out during the preparations for the movement of the allies. On May 21st, the English and American ministers at Peking, supported by the other powers, made a formal demand on the Chinese government for the suppression of the "Boxer" or Nationalist movement. On May 29th, the McKinley administration led the movement of the allies by landing troops under Admiral Sampson to act with the American consul at Tientsin. Vice Admiral Sir Edward Seymour joined the United States forces with 2,000 men (June 16th), and the most intense excitement ensued in Peking. As a result, the German minister was murdered by a mob, and on June 17th the allied forces attacked and captured the Taku forts. A relief expedition commanded by Admiral Seymour advanced to rescue the foreign ministers in Peking, who on June 24th were rescued by the Chinese government to leave the city and join their forces at Tien Tsin or elsewhere, as they pleased. They refused to go under Chinese escort, however, and remained in Peking besieged and frequently attacked until relieved, on August 25th, by the capture of the city. This practically ended the war, though the campaign reports of massacre on both sides, before and since that date, have been frequent and ex-cruciating.

FOREIGN OUTRAGES.

That many atrocities were committed by Chinese "insurgents," encouraged by the government, is certain, but American consuls made reports that they saw Chinese babies tossed on the bayonets of the allies, while when Tien-Tsin, a city of half a million people, was captured by the allies in June, the allies agree that they sacked it and set it on fire to warn the Chinese of the danger of provoking civilized people to anger. The massacre of Chinese in the streets of the city during the sack seems to have been unprecedented since the suppression of the Indian "mutiny" by the British. On October 3, a President of America ordered the withdrawal of American troops from Peking and has since acted in concert with Lord Salisbury in negotiating terms of settlement with the Chinese government, which has promised to deal summarily

with all Boxer leaders, and to make whatever additional reparation may be in its power. The probable settlement is, the virtual control of its finances and its customs ports by the Powers, under the terms of the joint settlement, as called November 12th, China was to be required to abolish its coast defenses and to pledge itself not to import arms and munitions of war. This means, of course, the abdication of its sovereignty. The November demand for abolishing the missionaries, who, in the joint note of February 1st were made the occasion of the peremptory demand on China which opened the way for all the disturbances which preceded the British and American elections.

IV.—COLONIAL POLICIES AND FREE ELECTIONS.

Both in England and America the elections of the year were decided by the Anglican joint colonial policy. In England, the Liberals, "led" by the mournfully inadequate Campbell-Bannerman, were signally defeated in the free elections. The Salisbury administration "appealed to the common sense" of the country and was sustained by a majority of 132 in a total house of 670. In the United States the McKinley administration was sustained by an electoral vote of 284 to 168, and a vote in the house of about 150 to 151. Attempting to shift "paramount" issues during the campaign, the Democratic leaders lost Kansas, Nebraska and the entire West without winning over the Eastern element, which had encouraged them with promises of support on a new "paramount" issue.

The question which really decided the issues of the campaign was that of the annexation of Cuba and Porto Rico. In 1898, Mr. Bryan and the late R. P. Bland were in radical opposition to the administration's plans for annexing these islands, but the administration effected an entrance to the Democratic National committee and after Bland had been "repudiated" in his own state, Mr. Bryan was forced to acquiesce in the administration's Cuban operations. It set the day for the Cuban constitutional convention of the week of the election and carried out its program unopposed, as it did both in Porto Rico and Hawaii. Democratic anti-imperialists, including Mr. Bryan himself, were "shut out" from opposing "imperialism," except as it related to the annexation of the Philippines. As opposition to the high protective tariff and monometallicism was abandoned during the campaign and as the issue against the administration's foreign policies was thus narrowed to the single point of the annexation of the Philippines, the result in the United States exactly paralleled that in England. Boldness and thoroughness were endorsed, rather than timidity. With Cuba, Porto Rico and Hawaii conceded to the administration's handling, as a lamb, the country did not think it advisable to stop at the sheep.

V.—PUBLIC BUSINESS IN THE UNITED STATES.

The receipts for the fiscal year, as officially reported, were \$223,268,000 from customs, and \$272,486,000 from internal taxes (including \$43,837,000 from stamp taxes), which, with miscellaneous receipts, made a total of \$515,652,000 collected during the year. The total disbursements for the year were \$517,731,000. The increase in collections from customs taxes was about \$57,000,000 over 1898-97. The total expenditures rose from \$365,315,000 in 1898-97 to \$487,694,000 in 1900 (the fiscal year). The excess of receipts over expenditures reported for the year was \$238,152,000. The interest-bearing debt at the close of the fiscal year stood at \$1,001,419,000. A gold reserve of \$150,000,000 was maintained during the year with total gold in the treasury in excess of \$200,000,000. The currency basis was strictly money, with free use of silver and silver paper on the gold basis.

Expenditures for war and navy rose from \$22,000,000 in 1896-97 to \$190,000,000 for the fiscal year—an increase of considerably over 300 per cent, due to the war in the Philippines. The war in Cuba, Hawaii and the Philippines. The entire expense of the war with Spain and of the military system inaugurated after it, is stated at \$336,000,000 up to the beginning of the year. Under the new currency act, the funding of the national debt as a basis for a National Bank currency went on during the year. One of the notable features of the new bonds is a handsome engraved portrait of Thomas H. Benton, whose celebrity rests on his opposition to bank notes of all kinds.

THE GOLD STANDARD FIXED.

The most important single act of congress during the year was the law establishing the monometallic basis. The Supreme court sustaining the constitutionality of the law, which supported it without notable dissent. The Democrats in congress made only a pro forma opposition to the bill. They could not have defeated it at any rate, but their "Radicals" were anxious for a fight on it, which would have given them a pretext for the coming of the issue. This was carefully avoided. The Democratic National platform at Kansas City reaffirmed the principles of bi-metallicism, but the fight on the issue was abandoned in congress, where individual Democrats contented themselves with merely going on record. This "conservative" was a strongly marked feature of the year on the Democratic side in the house. In February, Mr. Jones, of Arkansas, offered a free coinage bill in the senate as a substitute for the Republican currency measure, but under the Cleveland administration he had offered a bill to abolish silver coinage altogether and allow the banks to use silver bullion as a basis for their circulation. He had also announced on the question of inaugurating "imperialism" by annexing Porto Rico, that Porto Rico might as well be annexed as it was "no bigger than a saddle blanket anyhow." The element of humor in a radical anti-imperialist and anti-monometallic campaign under such auspices was certainly striking to the few who kept a political note book or have memories equivalent to it.

PORTO RICAN TARIFF.

The Democratic managers showed the same lack of aggressiveness when the question was on the organization of Porto Rico. The real reason from the Democratic standpoint was, of

whether the Porto Ricans were as much entitled as the Filipinos to choose their own form of government. But waiving this on the saddle blanket theory of statesmanship, the Opposition leaders made a desperate resistance to a two years' duty of 15 per cent on imports to Porto Rico to provide a fund for carrying on the government organized over the Porto Ricans by congress. The government as really organized treated Porto Rico as territory acquired without consent by conquest and by purchase. As no objection was made to this, the Democrats in congress thus settled, as far as their party was concerned, the exact similar question involved in "pacifying" the Filipinos. As if this were not enough, however, North Carolina—where the local bankers, railroads and other large interests are "greater than their parties"—proceeded to "jam through" a Constitutional amendment which substituted education and birth as tests of suffrage instead of the "consent of the governed."

As a result of the National election, having been thus decided through the action of the Democratic "managers" in and out of congress, nothing remained except to announce the vote. On February 28th, the house passed the Porto Rican tariff bill. On March 14th, the president signed the gold standard bill. These are the two decisive measures of the year, and the ground which the Democrats lost on them, they did not recover on anything else. Indeed, there was no aggressive fighting on anything else—the Democrats have been thus decided through the action of the Democratic "managers" in and out of congress, nothing remained except to announce the vote. On February 28th, the house passed the Porto Rican tariff bill. On March 14th, the president signed the gold standard bill. These are the two decisive measures of the year, and the ground which the Democrats lost on them, they did not recover on anything else. 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