



## And Now—1917

TENNYSON'S notion of a New Year poem was appropriate enough when 1913 was born and we danced on the grave of 1912. But just as Tennyson's pretty chattering about life seems incompetent to express the profound distresses to which men have grown accustomed in a brief two years, so does "Ring Out, Wild Bells . . . Ring out the Old! Ring in the New!" express only the old trifling life, rather than the soberer, sturdier life we needs must live to-day. Far be it from us to discourage optimists. Happy laughter is as priceless as sunlight, and brooding over what has passed is as wrong as ever it was. We are not less cheerful than Tennyson, but wiser. We used to be like children whose innocent greetings take no account of what grave news or what great news the stranger in the drawing-room may bring. Those who suffered, kept their sufferings to themselves—it was not permitted to thin the wine of good spirits with tears. Tennyson and his age might well have refused to believe that a single year could paint such horror on men's minds, or press through the horrid mill of war such world-wide heroism. We know now what a year can bring. We cannot lightly turn our backs on the year that is dead. For the New Year—we can only look resolutely, cheerfully, steadily into its face, receiving what it may bring to us without too great elation—without wincing, confident only that the ultimate gifts of the years are good gifts.

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## Welshmen Are Popular

STRANGE how the Welsh begin to crop up in our very midst now that one of them presides over the destiny of the Empire. It is not because they are any less modest in disposition, but because we who are not Welsh have now something definite to associate with the name. In other times if some big man with a queer snarling music in his voice confided to you that he came from Gwynedd or Deheubarth or Powys, you paused a moment to wonder how he spelled the name—you may even have tried to say it after him; but in a moment you forgot that he was anything but an Englishman—a term which is about as accurate as though one described an Englishman as a European. But now two million Welshmen in Wales, to say nothing of those in other parts of the world, are distinguished before all mankind by the fact that it is one of their breed that directs the Empire's forces in the present war. Like another Rhodri Mawr, who led his Welsh against the Saxons on land and the Danes on the sea, Lloyd George leads now the very people who spent so many centuries putting the lid on Snowdon. Like the Chinese who have conquered wave after wave of conquerors simply by making them Chinamen, so the Welsh have conquered London. It is a compliment both to Wales and to London: to Wales because it could produce a Lloyd George; to London because, like no other city in the world, it can absorb and put to such excellent service, men of all parts of the Empire.

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## The Psychological President

AN intellectoscope turned on the brain of President Wilson when he wrote that remarkable note to the belligerent powers would have shown that the President was having a serious time with his inner consciousness. The note is a masterpiece of inversion. As a literary document intended to prove to both sides of the war in his own country that the nation did right in re-electing him it deserves to become famous. It was evidently more important to be re-elected than to be right. But if Woodrow Wilson, President of Princeton University, had been sent such an essay by one of his students in logic and history he would have smiled and put down several bad marks for lack of judicial acumen.

The passage that best reveals the peculiar workings of the President's mind is as follows:

He takes the liberty of calling attention to the fact that the objects which the statesmen of the belligerents on both sides have in mind in this war are virtually the same, as stated in general terms to their own peoples and to the world. Each side desires to make the rights and privileges of weak peoples and small States as secure against aggression and denial in the future as the rights and privileges of weak peoples and small States now at war. Each wishes itself to be made secure in the future, along with all other nations and peoples, against the recurrence of wars like this and against aggression or selfish interference of any kind.

Let us deal with it briefly seriatim. "Calling attention to the fact that" . . . down to "the world" should read "calling attention to the fiction." The President knew right well this was not a fact when he penned it. But it was a fiction that could be fixed up to look like a fact. The brains of diplomacy abroad are able to see through this inversion. Germany chuckled at it. This fiction masquerading as a fact suits Germany. President Wilson knows it.

Further . . . "Each side desires to make" . . . down to "are at war." This is a finely regulated sequence to the other. And it contains a world of professorial ingenuity. Having pleased Germany and nettled the Allies in the first statement he proceeds to try pleasing the Allies in the next by hinting at the wrong done to weak peoples and small States. Of course, in his inner consciousness he knew very well that none of the Allies had the least design upon weak peoples and small States—and that Germany had. He knows that Austria bludgeoned by Germany intended to eat up Serbia; and that Germany without consulting Austria committed a world crime against Belgium. The Allies are welcome to extract comfort from this oblique insinuation in the form of a fact perverted to a double meaning that makes it into a fiction.

In this same psychic sentence also may be traced a desire of the ethical President to ease the national consciousness embodied in himself. When Germany violated the rights of Belgium, and England went to war because of it, the United States made no protest. Neutrality was elaborately defined by the President. It included an utter omission of any reference to the wrong done to Belgium in defiance of the signatories at the Hague, which included the United States. Another paragraph of the note explicitly states that the United States has as much interest in respecting and preserving the rights of small nations as has any of the belligerents. This again is a furtive attempt to square the President with the Allies.

Take the passage, "Each wishes itself"—down to "interference of any kind." Here indeed the President must have rubbed his hands and smiled to think how he was beguiling everybody. He takes Germany's oft-repeated protestations that she was in danger of being over-ridden by France, Russia and England at their face value. That pleases Germany. He also admits that each of the Allies desires to be made secure; and they do. Here again, by the neat trick of doubling up, the President produces a fiction that looks like a fact.

And so on throughout the document which, as a piece of solemn buncombe dressed up to look like diplomacy, must seem to any of the belligerent powers like a well-educated elephant trying to walk a tight rope without a parasol.

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## A Matter of Business

A BULKY issue emerges in the recent action of chief Mr. John Stanfield, member for Colchester, resigning his position as chief Conservative whip because he disagrees with Mr. Gutelius in the management of the Intercolonial Railway. That is putting it broadly. Mr. Stanfield does not differ with the general manager of our national railways on the expert railroading end of the business. The difficulty arises over the placing of contracts. We refrain from calling it patronage, which is a very uncomfortable word, and should be read out of court. But whatever it may be called

Mr. Stanfield and Mr. Gutelius do not agree on just who are to get certain contracts on the Intercolonial. Mr. Stanfield claims that certain contracts should go to easterners. He may have much ground for his belief. He surely would not resign his position as chief whip on a slight pretext. We imagine he could make out a very good argument to justify his action. But would the same argument put Mr. Gutelius in the wrong? At this distance it looks as though the only way to make a national railway or a national anything effective is to make it a matter of straight business. We are finding out now as never before the value of big business men in public places. Mr. Gutelius is a big-business railroader. He was put in charge of the Intercolonial because he is a railwayman, not a politician. Under his management the Intercolonial has made progress. Without the management of some such man no such railway ever could make progress. Therefore Mr. Gutelius must be responsible to the Government for the complete management of the system—including the placing of contracts. Whatever political and provincial argument Mr. Stanfield may have on his side, the national business argument is in favour of Mr. Gutelius.

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## Standardize Free Land

BONAR LAW promises that some sort of central bureau will, if possible, be established in London to handle the applications of returned soldiers for land in the various colonies. He intimated to a number of callers not long ago that it was the hope of the British Government and the colonial Governments at least to standardize the conditions under which land is to be given the fighting men, and to control to some extent the tide of emigration from the Old Country. It must be borne in mind that this one of the Ministers is a Centralizationist. In some things it may not be possible to agree with his policy, but the standardization of the Empire's free land policy is at least sound. There will have to be many conferences or consultations between the various provinces in this country before we can say just what sort of land scheme Canada will endorse. Just at present British Columbia seems to have made more progress than any other province. Her suggestion for "group settlement" around co-operative centres is the wisest yet put forward.

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## De-Railroading Us

PROPOSE to take a thousand miles of railway from this country and you see at once how we have prepared ourselves for tracks and traffic. We don't really like to part even with a mile of what we have—yet one might have thought, six months ago, that thousands upon thousands of miles could have been spared. Of course, we shall spare the thousand, more than a thousand for the sake of defeating Germany, but one of the first tasks that must be undertaken by our steel mills when the need for munitions is at an end, will be the making of new rails to take the place of those we part with now. Our railways, expensive though they may have seemed, guarantee to us that we shall be able, better than any of the belligerents, to re-absorb, re-digest our armies when they are returned to these shores. They are our surety against "clotting." With this machinery at hand it is going to be possible to handle our returning men and whatever new peoples may come with them or follow them, wisely and with ease.

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EPIGRAMS that express action are more useful nowadays than the quintessence of wisdom. One of the most useful epigrams coined within the past two weeks is that of Lloyd George: "You can't run a war with a Sanhedrin." Rt. Hon. Arthur Balfour must have chuckled over that. It was the kind of hustings phrase that never could be found in "The Foundations of Belief."