

The Year 1860.

Very few single years of the passing century that have transpired will show on the page of history a much brighter record than this. In this we do not forget or overlook the earlier years of the same, when Britain and France were in almost continuous grapple for the ascendancy in Europe; nor the invasion of Russia by Napoleon I.; nor the decisive year of Waterloo that consigned him to his island retreat; nor the revolutionary years of France; nor the exciting seasons in political circles; nor the late civil war in the United States; each year of which was full of agony and excitement, and challenged the attention of the whole world. For probably not one of those years evolved so much that has had or will have a widespread influence upon the great future of the world as has either been perfected or set in motion in the present.

And it is of no small moment to us in looking over the events of the closing year that nearly all the agitation has been in or among the British, American, and German nationalities, peoples of cognate blood, similar in original thought, and similar in the general ideas of civilization; each with an enviable past history to be proud of, and with a glorious future to be looked forward to with animation and national pride. The rapid development of the other nations and principalities has gone on quietly but probably not less surely; and barbarism has held its sway and its peace, while waiting for the word from the first named races. The heart of Europe—Germany—with its right arm in Great Britain, and its right hand in the United States of America and the British Provinces will soon in the unanimity of their action indicate to the whole world its true line of progress.

In the Empire of Great Britain including its dependencies there has been no lack of public commotions, though none of so serious a nature as to threaten certain war, or even respectable anarchy. The terrible affliction of a short crop of rice in certain districts of India, particularly in Bengal, the most populous section of the rice eating population, has resulted in wide spread famine. How many poor creatures will go down to the grave from this sad condition of things will probably never be known, but from the tremendous density of population there, it is feared that millions will succumb before relief can be obtained. This sad calamity has not occurred in that country on so extensive a scale since about a hundred years ago. As it is the result in part of superstitious veneration for the unwise customs of the natives as to food, it may reasonably be hoped that the dispensation of sorrow will lead them to new views of life, and a change in the habits of the people.

But otherwise there has been peace and prosperity in British India and in all the other provinces under her sway in the East. In our American Provinces there has been a speck of war arising from the malicious invasion of a set of wicked or crazy fellows of Irish blood, calling themselves Fenians, and pretending that they are seeking the liberation of Ireland from British sway. How they are to do this by murdering the peaceful people of the Provinces passes a wise man's comprehension. It looks like one of the famous Irish bulls we read of. It certainly illustrates their faults in the old saying that "the longest way round is the shortest way home;" and a few of the invaders realized the truth of the adage, for they found themselves soon at home in the jail, and perhaps will not escape going to a longer home. The machinations