

The Year that has Gone.

INTERNATIONAL STRUGGLES.

The year 1911 is remarkable for three great international struggles. In one case war was averted for the time being, in the second case war is now in progress, and in the third case war is just beginning and it is difficult to foretell the outcome.

Germany needs additional territory and she has manifested her need in many ways. In her last attempt to get her desires she has not been altogether unsuccessful, while France has had no reason to complain of the settlement arrived at. It is clear, however, that eventually there must be a renewal of hostilities, with the Congo rather than Morocco as the centre of interest. It is a cause for congratulation that of all the German-born who have settled in Canada but one voice has been heard condemning the home government for the part it played in staying the war. England's part has not been merely that of a self-protecting power. She has been the best friend of both nations in following the policy she thought necessary and wise.

Tripoli is an insignificant port, but it was Italy's last hope in the dark continent. The great feature of the struggle which began with the siege of this city has been the return of both nations to mediaeval practices in dealing with prisoners and non-combatants. There is always a point at which civilized nations can interfere and it is time that a stop should be put to the atrocities that are so common. It is surely better to take this view than that of the pessimist who declares that the world would be sweeter if the war is allowed to go to a finish, and if the two nations reduce each other to nothingness after the fashion of the gingham dog and the calico cat.

Persia and Russia—here is indeed a problem. Should the former stand out she will surely lose name and territory and the "Great Bear" will have his heart's desire. Should Persia yield it is but the first step to the same goal but by a lingering method, unless Britain once again kindly speaks the word that is necessary to preserve the peace of the nation.

INTERNATIONAL PEACE.

These three great international struggles indicate that the year has not been one of peace, and yet no year has held out greater promise for permanent peace among the nations than 1911. It is no small thing that President Taft should have used these words:—

"If, now, we can negotiate and put through a positive agreement with some great nation to abide by the adjudication of an international arbitral court in every issue which cannot be settled by negotiations, no matter what it involves, whether honor, territory, or money, we shall have made a long step forward, by demonstrating that it is possible for two nations at least to establish as between them the same system of due process of law that exists between individuals under a government."

It is even more gratifying to read that Sir Edward Grey in referring to this speech of the President was even more pronounced.

"Such a statement ought not to go without response. We should be delighted to have such a proposal made to us. We should feel that it was something so momentous and so far reaching in its possible consequences that it would require not only the signature of both governments but the deliberate and decided sanction of parliament. That I believe would be given."

As a result of these two speeches negotiations were opened, and the promise is that not only England and the United States will enter an agreement, but that France is asking for a treaty and Germany will have to follow, while Japan is ready and anxious to accept the ideals set forth. So, out of war, peace has been born.

CIVIL STRUGGLES.

More remarkable than the international wars of the year have been the civil wars. First of all there is the Chinese rebellion which is a protest against the

rule of the Manchus. Democrats like ourselves will subscribe heartily to the demands of the revolutionaries—the demand for freedom, just taxation, representative government, pure administration, and China for the Chinese. The most serious feature of the Chinese revolution is that an uncontrollable element is to find a place among the nations of the world. The Yellow Peril will mean something entirely different when the Chinese people, through self-government, have become conscious of their own strength and when they begin to have world ambitions.

Russia, too, has had her troubles. The assassination of the Prime Minister is but another indication that the time is come when the people of Russia must be entrusted with power and responsibility and given that freedom which is the birthright of all men. History is being made rapidly in this great country. It is only a matter of a few years when absolute monarchy shall give way to limited monarchy, which is the best form of government. Then we shall have a newer and better Russia to deal with. Then Siberian prisons and Jewish persecutions and all the other hateful things that have given this country such a bad name will be things of the past.

We pass over other civil troubles to refer more particularly to the important happenings in

accorded her the franchise, it will be no error to grant her what she seeks.

The struggle for political and social equality is no more keen than that for a more equitable distribution of wealth. Out of this, has grown the trades union and the strike. Nothing better illustrates the injustice of the strike to society than the action of the ship-owners and their employees last summer. The strike of the coal miners in our own field is another marked illustration of the same injustice. Usually in such matters the owner and the worker wrestle away at their problems as if the great third party—the public—had not some interests at stake. It may be that public ownership or control of all public utilities is absolutely necessary to the peace and safety of society. The surest way to bring about such a result is for employers and unions to act just as they did in the cases mentioned.

But whatever difficulties arise in the mother-land there are men equal to them. This last year has displayed the splendid qualities of our newly-crowned king; it has witnessed the royal opposition of two really great leaders—Asquith and Balfour; and it has brought to the front in a new capacity the ablest advocate of democracy and perhaps in some quarters the most hated man—Lloyd-George. Our old land is not waning in wisdom or courage. We are proud to reach our hand across the sea and claim kinship. Though mistress in our own house we can never forget the love we bear to her who gave us birth.

OUR OWN LAND.

Politically, the great event of the year was the change of Government. Our people have said that if there is to be a lowering of the tariff it must be the result of our own independent action. Our financial policy must not depend upon the decision of any other nation. If the vote of our people is rightly interpreted it means that the effort of all Canadians who see in the tariff a hardship or an evil, must be to seek redress not through reciprocity but through direct legislation. Reciprocity is dead, but tariff agitation is and will continue to be much alive until the man who produces the grain is satisfied that he is on an equality with the man who makes his implements.

The year to Canada has had more to make it memorable than the changing of governments. That is always best worth considering which comes closest to the intellectual and moral progress of a people. This year has witnessed in Canada an educational awakening. The people are beginning to see what schools might do, how their work may extend so as to include technical as well as liberal education, how the play of children must be supervised even during vacation, how the rural school may be invigorated and rendered more efficient, how school buildings may become social centres. The church, too, by seeking union where it will mean greater efficiency and less cost, has been taking a step forward. It is natural that in a democratic community people should place less emphasis upon distinctions than do the people of older lands. In some few things it is possible for children to teach their parents.

Not only in religion and education has there been a forward movement. The agitation for prison reform is an evidence that the ideals of christianity are becoming the guides to action. That country is in a hopeful condition which lays it down as an axiom that it cannot afford to lose permanently the services of any one of its citizens. Every erring soul must be reclaimed.

SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS.

The year 1911 will go down in history as the year of the aeroplane. In a practical way the air-ship has been used in war, and though it may never become a means of transportation of freight, there is every reason to believe that it will serve for the carrying of passengers. Thus will intercommunication be established, and intercommunication is the key to progress in civilization.

On the whole 1911 stands for peace, humanity, scientific progress, and for the Empire and Canada it means added prestige and power.

Winter Bells.

When Winter wraps the world in white,
And silent lie the snowy dells,
'Tis sweet to hear amid the night
The cadence of the fairy bells;
They seem to set the winds astray
With eerie music soft and low,
And gently shake the modest fir
Clad in its garb of spotless snow.

They tinkle 'neath the watchful stars,
Whose beams upon the whiteness fall,
And as they near the meadow bars
What recollections they recall!
The trying tree which Summer knows,
And clothes in hues of living green,
Stands out against the sky and throws
Its lonely shadow o'er the scene.

O Winter bells that tell of mirth!
Thy music fills the heart with joy
And makes a paradise of earth—
A lover's year without alloy
Across the fields there seems to come
The music which of pleasure tells,
And every hearth and every home
Rejoices at the winter bells.

I hear them echo where the snow
Lies softly on the frozen ground,
And where December's winds are low
I list to catch their merry sound:
A maiden at the lattice waits
For swiftly through the moonlit dells,
Toward her heart's wide-open gates,
A lover rides behind the bells.

THE MOTHER LAND.

Undoubtedly the event of greatest political importance was the vote which ended the struggle between the peers and the people. In the wake of this event there is Irish Home Rule and there is Manhood Suffrage, not yet accomplished, but immediately to receive recognition. To us who are so accustomed to the Canadian form of government, Home Rule for England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, with a Higher Parliament for the whole realm, dealing with matters affecting the whole, and limiting where necessary the action of the local legislatures, seems both logical and necessary. Home Rule for Ireland will be the first step towards a scheme of that kind.

The English vote at the last election showed that many men voted twenty times, because they had holdings in twenty constituencies. An act which gives a man but one vote and which therefor crowds the voting into a single day, will add much to the power of the common people. It is doubtful, however, if the principal of manhood suffrage without careful limitations is sound, or if the modification of the franchise by the adoption of the principle "one man, one vote," is as necessary as a redistribution of seats which will make the average voting power in one community as great as that in another. It may be that before the Manhood Suffrage bill is introduced and carried that the suffragette will have won out. If persistence counts for anything she will. If woman will always show up as well as she did in the last state which