

natives there, and his eminent services in bringing to a close the recent notable rebellion will, no doubt, be recognized in his restoration to a post of trust, by his country.

More happily, if possible, has ended the controversy between England and Venezuela, or rather, between England and the United States. After much diplomatic manœuvring, the terms of a treaty have been agreed upon, by which the question is to be submitted to arbitration, with a proviso that a fifty years' occupation shall constitute a right of possession—a most sensible arrangement everyone thinks, except the people of Venezuela, who regard it with suspicion. The Venezuelan Cabinet have, however, accepted the arbitration treaty, and it is likely that, when they refer the matter to their Assembly, that body will confirm the action of its leaders.

Memorable in another way, was that first day of January, 1896. Another of those brutal massacres that have heated the blood of peoples, though apparently not of politicians, to the boiling point, occurred in hapless Armenia. Would that I were able to record, as I have of the two former issues, a happy outcome. Nothing, at least that is comprehensible to us who are not politicians or diplomats, has yet been done to put a stop to those unnameable horrors. Have we indeed emerged from the savage state? Is this the year of grace 1896? One is tempted gravely to doubt the fact, and to wonder if the clock of time has not been turned back. Week after week, throughout the year, our newspapers have cheerfully chronicled gruesome details of repeated butcheries, but, though just at present the Great Assassin stays his hand—I have not read of a massacre for a fortnight or more—no one can tell how soon he may be at his horrible work again. Mr. Gladstone—grandest of "Grand Old Men" that he is—lifted up his voice in behalf of hapless Armenia in that great Liverpool meeting of last September; but Mr. Gladstone is now helpless. His words, in fact, had a result that probably surprised him, for they brought about the resignation of the man whom he had recommended as his successor in the leadership of the Liberal party—Lord Rosebery, and this added to the already sufficiently sad disorganization of that once united and formidable phalanx. Meantime, nothing has been done for Armenia, and in President Cleveland's message to Congress on Monday last, he deplored the "still hideous aspect of Asiatic Turkey." The sonnet which the impassioned young poet, Mr. William Watson, composed last Christmas Day—"A Birthday"—is likely to be as applicable to the coming Christmas:

It is the birthday of the Prince of Peace :
 Full long ago He lay with steeds in stall,
 And universal nature knew through all
 Her borders that the reign of Pan must cease.
 The fatness of the land, the earth's increase,
 Cumbers the board ; the holly hangs in hall ;
 Somewhat of her abundance wealth lets fall ;
 It is the birthday of the Prince of Peace.
 The dead rot by the wayside ; the unblest
 Who live, in caves and desert mountains lurk,
 Trembling ; this foldless flock, shorn of their fleece.
 Women in travail, babes that suck the breast
 Are spared not. Famine hurries to her work.
 It is the birthday of the Prince of Peace.

But I must hurry over other issues of the year. It has not only been marked by rumors of wars which did not materialize, but of wars real enough. Italy has had her struggle with Abyssinia, and has been most emphatically beaten by Menelik, proud descendant of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Italy's struggle brought about the English expedition to Dongola—an expedition where success means the further English advance upon Khar-

toum. For it was only the other day we read that Commander Kitchener had received orders from the British war office to prepare for the greater exploit. Just a week ago England paid over cheerfully the £500,000 into the Egyptian treasury demanded by the Court of Appeal. The world seemed at first to regard the Court's decision as adverse to England, but John Bull is quite complacent over the matter. "It is all right," he chuckles, "those who pay the piper call the time." In the plainer language of the *St. James Gazette*: "The judgment has thrown Egypt into our arms; we can never go now."

Still another war must be referred to—nearer home, and more interesting to us—as a struggle not for accession of territory, but for liberty. The knell of Spain's greatness has been long ringing. The beginning of the end was the memorable week's fight in the English channel when Elizabeth of England said to Philip of Spain in a way so plain and impressive as to be understood even by the slow-going Philip, "Thus far, no farther." Since then Spain has seen her empire slowly but surely fall to pieces. At the last she has become desperate, and the Spanish people, with a patriotism worthy of a better cause, are paying over \$1,000,000 a week for keeping sufficient forces in Cuba. Sufficient, did I say? Scarcely. For though, according to the reports of the Spanish commander, the rebels are always surrounded, the end seems no nearer than before. Early in the year the more humane Campos was recalled, but the brutal ferocity of his successor seems no more successful. This week's reports have contained accounts, verified two or three times, of the death of the insurgent leader, Maceo, and great has been the rejoicing in Madrid thereat. Yesterday's newspapers had heavy headlines "Maceo Still Alive!" and great, in Canada and the United States, has been the rejoicing thereat. Among the many details which from time to time have come to us of that heroic struggle, one incident should, I think, be especially interesting to a society like this. You know, of course, that many Cuban women have been fighting in the ranks, and in spite of traditions to the contrary, they are apparently good shots. One of these women the Spanish were trying to capture, and they did finally secure her, but not until she had shot down 17 Spaniards who attempted to seize her. She died with the words "Libre Cuba," on her lips.

I have not time to speak of other issues of the year: or the British expedition to Ashantee, successful of course; of the usual turmoil in French politics, though this year has been calmer than usual; of the change of leadership in the Irish party consequent on the resignation of Mr. McCarty; of the big Dublin convention; of the passing away of great men, such as Leighton, Millais and Morris; of the Nicaraguan rebellion; of the re-election of that most remarkable man, President Diaz, of Mexico, of the triumph of sound money and McKinleyism in the United States; nor even of the exciting events of the year in Canada. The year has seen three Premiers in office; has witnessed the most exciting—I believe, an unprecedented—session of the Canadian House of Commons, when for a whole week, night and day, the House was in continuous session, and engaged in the discussion of the clauses of the Remedial Bill—may it rest in peace! Startling discoveries of gold and other less precious metals have been made, and the boom is gloriously high just now. Canada's outlook is brighter, as is the outlook of the whole empire. And in striking contrast to the condition of Spain, the last of whose colonies are slipping from her, Britain is making closer and stronger the bonds which connect her great trans Atlantic and trans-Pacific colonies to her. Schemes of federation are being discussed with a seriousness that never before marked them; the plan is no longer considered Utopian, but eminently practical, and the arrangement for