

there could be no signs of the times ; but because to-morrow is folded within to-day, because human nature and its development are under laws which remain constant from age to age, because, as Carlyle says, "The centuries are all lineal children of one another," and bound by the law of heredity like other offspring, it becomes possible, in measure, to forecast coming events, to draw from the study of past experiences and present conditions reasonable inferences concerning the future.

Let us glance hastily at some of the more significant changes which have taken place during the past century and note their meaning.

1. Changes which may be called physical. There is nothing more fundamental touching the circumstances which affect all human beings than time and space. They condition all human activities and relationships, and hence to change them is to affect all human activities and relationships. This is the reason that steam and electricity have had so profound an influence on modern civilization. They have materially changed these two great factors that enter into all lives. It is as if the earth had been, in two or three generations, reduced to a much smaller scale and set spinning on its axis at a far greater speed. As a result, men have been brought into much closer relations and the world's rate of progress has been wonderfully quickened. Time-saving methods and appliances now crowd into a day business which a generation ago would have occupied a week or more. The passage of the Atlantic, which once required weeks, is now a matter of days. It is possible to be in the United States one week, and before the close of the next in Asia. A little time suffices to compass great events as well as great distances. We read of the "Thirty Years' War" in the seventeenth century ; the Franco-Prussian War, which destroyed one empire and created another, was begun and *practically* ended in thirty days. By reason of the increased ease of communication new ideas are more speedily popularized, public opinion more quickly formed and more readily expressed ; both thought and action are stimulated ; reforms are sooner accomplished, and great changes of every sort are crowded into as many years as once they would have required generations or even centuries.

And it must be remembered that these quickening processes are not yet completed or their results fully apparent. Science is daily making easier the conquest of space ; and there is reason to believe that the victories of electricity are only well begun.

Thus these changing physical conditions will continue to render the isolation of any people increasingly difficult—a fact of the utmost importance to the world's progress, for isolation results in stagnation, and we accordingly find that the *civilization of all peoples is inversely as their isolation*. The conformation of Europe and the exceeding irregularity of her coast line are favorable to the inter-course of her various nations with each other and the world, and Europe has developed the highest civilization. Moreover, those of her peoples who are most favorably located for inter-