

The Sun

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Nineteen Hundred and Six.

Although the year beginning with this morning differs from its forerunner in respect of the world's present freedom from international warfare, civil war is raging in the Czar's dominions, and until Russia shall regain the military strength which made her a valuable ally the moves on the European chessboard will be watched with some anxiety. Latin America, if we overlook the trivial troubles of Santo Domingo, seems to have a fair prospect of tranquillity, while citizens of the United States, assured of peace at home and abroad, should find their interests and their energies absorbed in the era of exceptional prosperity which now is well advanced and doubtless may be relied upon to last for at least another twelvemonth.

From a political viewpoint the New Year promises to be noteworthy in the record of the Roosevelt Administration. At the great assize held next November the people will register their verdict as to the use made by the President of the tremendous opportunity for wise and beneficent achievement afforded by his extraordinary triumph in 1904, when he obtained a majority of almost 200 votes in the electoral colleges, and a plurality of more than two and a half millions at the ballot box. What he does, or tries earnestly to do, during the next ten months will determine whether the political party with which he is identified shall forfeit or retain the vast preponderance which at present it possesses in Congress, to wit, a majority of 114 in the House of Representatives and of 26 in a full Senate. We know of no practical way in which the voters can distinguish between Mr. ROOSEVELT and his party, and, indeed, they will be justified in deeming it a statesman's business so to adjust his personal relations and so to adapt his policies as to work harmoniously and efficiently with his legislative coadjutors. It may be that the historian, reviewing the positive accomplishments and the shortcomings of Mr. ROOSEVELT's second term, will apportion their respective shares of praise and blame to the Executive and the Legislature; but the people will not thus discriminate; and if they disapprove of the Administration's record during the next ten months they will vote against Republican nominees. That is why the middle year in a Presidential term has habitually proved a critical conjuncture. Mr. KENTLEY survived it; but CLEVELAND did not in 1884; nor HARRISON in 1890; nor ANTHONY in 1882. In each of the three last named cases the opposition captured the House of Representatives. We presume that Mr. ROOSEVELT will be more fortunate, because, in the present disorganized and discouraged condition of the Democracy, we can scarcely conceive of its obtaining a majority of the lower house in the Sixtieth Congress. Nevertheless, if his strength in either chamber should undergo a serious, even though not fatal, shrinkage, Mr. ROOSEVELT would have to bear a large part of the responsibility for the change.

The year now begins is likely to be memorable in the eyes of constitutional lawyers and political economists if Congress shall sanction the experiment of government rate making for railways which Mr. ROOSEVELT advocates. It is true that more than once the United States Supreme Court has reversed a decision, but it will require phenomenal ingenuity to reconcile with its declarations that executive, judicial and legislative powers cannot constitutionally be united in the same person or group of persons by the bestowal on the Interstate Commerce Commission, or on any other administrative body, of functions which certainly seem to be judicial and legislative. Admitting such reconciliation to be possible, we must still watch with profound misgiving the making of rates for transportation by a board some of whose members will be unqualified by experience to transact such a complicated and difficult business. From the standpoint of expediency, indeed, the experiment desired by the President is almost universally condemned by experts, but it looks as if it might have to be tried, in view of the support given to the President's project by a great majority of the House of Representatives and a large part of the Senate, and also of the acquiescent attitude reluctantly adopted of late by the Pennsylvania Railroad and some other railway systems. The worst feature of a law sanctioning so grave an innovation is that once inscribed upon the statute book it cannot be expunged easily by legislative fiat, however disappointing and obnoxious may be its practical results. For that reason the best hope of those who fear that Government rate making may have not only perturbing but disastrous consequences lies in the supreme Federal tribunal.

During this year, or, for that matter, during the life of the present Congress, there seems to be not the faintest chance of a revision of the tariff, beyond the admission of Philippine products to our ports on terms materially lower than those levied by the Dingley law. In his fifth annual message the President indicated that he did not regard the necessity of any general revision of the tariff at this time as proved, and that he should consider a premature agitation of the subject inexpedient, in view of its well known dislocating effect on industry and business. This is an eminently important conclusion, and Speaker CANNON has helped to uphold it, for, by organizing all the principal committees in the in-

terest of the "stand-patters," he has rendered difficult, if not impossible, any move in the direction of sweeping revision by the House of Representatives. Nobody, however, who recognizes our tutelary duties to our more or less untrusting wards in the Philippines can fail to wish success to the bill providing that all the products of those islands shall be admitted to our ports free of duty, except their sugar and tobacco, and that the customs dues on these commodities shall be forthwith cut down to a quarter of the Dingley rates until 1909, after which they shall be abolished altogether. We may take for granted, nevertheless, that even this act of justice will meet with sturdy resistance in some quarters, and we regard as somewhat uncertain of success at this time the President's suggestion that the threatened tariff war with Germany might be averted by the enactment of maximum and minimum instead of uniform rates, the minimum duties being conceded, of course, to those countries that grant us equivalent privileges. The objection to this proposal is that it would bring the whole subject of the tariff to the front, an objection which, in view of the prevalent wish not to perturb the prevailing prosperity of American industries, seems likely to prove insuperable.

There is reason to think that in return for certain administrative concessions within the scope of the authority of the Secretary of the Treasury, Germany may be induced to refrain from imposing the maximum duties designated by her tariff upon imports from the United States after March 1, the date when the existing *modus vivendi* expires. The concessions to which we refer would aim to meet the complaint of German importers that the Dingley tariff has been enforced at our custom houses in such a way as always to impose the very highest values on their goods, without regard to the certificates issued by American consuls in Germany. It is said that Secretary ROOT and Secretary SHAW have entered into an understanding that, on the one hand, our State Department shall instruct consuls abroad, when determining the values of exports to the United States, to inquire of the Chambers of Commerce in the places where these exports are produced as to their market values, and that, on the other hand, the Treasury Department shall require appraisers at our ports of entry to give more weight than has hitherto been given to consular invoices in establishing the rate of duty that should be paid. We are further informed that the whole Administration will use its influence with Congress to procure an amendment of the Dingley law which shall exempt undervalued imports from the penalty now imposed, provided it can be shown that the undervaluation was made by mistake and does not exceed 10 per cent. When this proposal was originally mooted the impression prevailed that the administrative concessions would be made to Germany alone. Such a discrimination would plainly have been inadmissible; France, Great Britain and other countries would have protested against it as a flagrant violation of the "most favored nation" clause in their commercial treaties. This objection falls to the ground in view of the intention to apply the concessions to all imports, whatever their place of origin. The fear has been expressed that whatever relief may be afforded by the suggested arrangement to European exporters, our own customs revenue will be reduced in a corresponding proportion. The apprehension fails to take note of the possibility that if our customs regulations are relaxed or liberalized our imports may increase considerably in volume.

During the year which has now opened we can foresee that our foreign relations will be invested with considerable interest in more than one quarter of the globe. At the second Hague Conference, which may be expected to take place as soon as Russia's internal disorders shall have been allayed and her transition from an autocratic system to a constitutional monarchy shall be well under way, our Government, which first proposed the meeting, will no doubt take a conspicuous and an earnest part. Mr. ROOSEVELT indicated in his last message to Congress the specific and practicable aims which our envoys at The Hague will be instructed to keep in view. They will not be directed to advocate visionary proposals, such as the immediate and drastic reduction of all military and naval armaments, much less a futile proclamation of universal peace. They will be told, however, to spare no effort to prevail upon the Conference to devise some way of making a resort to arbitration the customary mode of settling international disputes in all except a few classes of cases which may be alleged to involve a nation's honor or vital interests, but which themselves should be defined as sharply as the present political and social development of mankind will permit. Among minor objects our envoys will be urged to bring about a precise international definition of contraband of war, and an agreement by which neutral rights and property at sea shall be protected hereafter no less thoroughly than they are now protected on land. This may not be a dazzling programme, but it is feasible, and it would prove beneficial.

Although our present commercial interests in Northwest Africa may be almost negligible, our Government has accepted an invitation to take part in the Morocco Conference which is expected presently to meet in Spain, and it may turn out that circumstances will give our voice there greater weight than we should ourselves assert for it. The fundamental question to be answered there is whether the right claimed by France to maintain order on the western frontier of Algeria would not tend to the procurement of political ascendancy in the Sultan's dominions, and prove in the end irreconcilable with the equality of commercial privileges for all nations in Morocco. France, of course, desires to magnify the scope of her police authority on the border, and Germany, on her part, wishes to minimize it. It is taken for granted that France will be backed by Great Britain and Russia, and that Germany, owing to the Triple Alliance, will have the zealous cooperation of Austria

and the reluctant support of Italy. The question will then arise: Which side will be taken by Spain and the United States? As regards the former Power, the signs are that, although the Queen-mother is an Austrian, the young King, who is about to marry a British princess, will incline to favor Britain's friend, the French Republic, and that his Ministers will take a similar position, although they have made a perfunctory declaration of resolve to uphold Spanish interests on the Atlantic as well as the Mediterranean coasts of Morocco, a declaration scarcely conciliable with the ultimate absorption of Northwest Africa by France. In that event it would become of obvious moment to Germany to secure the United States as a coadjutant, but we deem it much more probable that our Government would range itself on the side of France and Great Britain, with which countries we have contracted during the last year or two peculiarly sympathetic relations.

We shall see before the year is far advanced whether our Federal Government is able to extricate itself from the Santo Domingo muddle without any loss of dignity or prestige. On the face of things, undoubtedly, there is something grotesque in the predicament of our State Department, which is inviting the Senate to ratify a treaty concluded with an Executive who has voluntarily become a fugitive from his capital, and as to whom our Minister to the Dominican Republic is obliged to report *Non est inventus*. As a matter of fact, however, the Dominican Constitution provides that in the event of the death, resignation, absence or disability of the President the Vice-President shall succeed, and we are informed that not only Vice-President CACERES but all the members of the Cabinet, who in Santo Domingo as in Switzerland share with the President the Executive power, are strongly in favor of the treaty, by which the United States Government is empowered to collect the Santo Domingo customs revenue and to apportion it partly for running expenses and partly for the republic's creditors. The disappearance, therefore, of President MORELES, whom Mr. ROOSEVELT in his last message seemed inclined to acclaim as a savior of his country, though laughable, is unimportant. Senators are left just where they were last spring, to wit, confronted by the question whether they deem it expedient for the United States to go into the debt collecting business, either in the specific case of Santo Domingo or in that of Latin American republics generally, in pursuance of what has come to be known as the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. So far as we can learn, the debt collecting function is more or less repugnant to Mr. ROOSEVELT himself, and if he reluctantly assumed it it is because of his clear perception of the larger aspects of the question and the unpleasant consequences possible if another course is followed.

The United States Government itself has never extorted by force the payment of debts arising out of contract; nor has Great Britain, except in the case of Egypt; while Latin American politicians and writers on international law are unanimous in holding that in the case of contractual obligations the maxim *contractus est in bonis* is applicable. That is to say, foreign creditors, provided, of course, they cannot show they are the victims of a tort, should be relegated to the tribunals of the debtor commonwealth, and if they cannot secure redress there, must go without it. This may seem a hard doctrine to some people, but we repeat that it is one which our own Government has uniformly compelled American creditors of Latin American republics to swallow. Neither, before the blockade of Venezuelan seaports in 1902, had we ever in our national history countenanced the forcible collection by European Powers from an American commonwealth of debts arising out of contract. What, then, would Senators have the country do? Shall we recede from the position taken in 1902, thereby confessing that our State Department was ill advised in assuming it, and inform Great Britain, Germany, France and other European countries that henceforth they must look exclusively to the courts of Latin American States for the recoupment of moneys advanced to their governments or citizens under contract; or shall we acquiesce in their enforcement of contractual obligations by the confiscation of a part or of the whole of an indebted republic's customs revenue for an indefinite period, which plainly would affect their destiny; or shall we adopt Mr. ROOSEVELT's plan of undertaking to assure the payment of contractual obligations, pronounced just by an impartial tribunal, through interposition between the foreign creditors and the American debtors, an interposition made effective by our assumption of a revenue collecting and distributing function? One of these three courses we shall have to pursue, and the Senate must soon decide between them.

For the United Kingdom no year since 1900 has been fraught with more political interest than this which begins today. For the first time since 1805 a Liberal Ministry is governing the British Empire, and not many weeks are likely to pass before a new general election shall determine the extent and duration of its power. If the Liberals have their way, the contest will pivot solely on the question whether the traditional British policy of free trade shall be superseded by Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN's project of a protective tariff framed for the purpose of affording a preference to the colonies. Unfortunately for the new Premier's hope of obtaining in the next House of Commons a considerable majority over all opponents combined, he may fail to receive the support of Unionist Free Traders at the ballot box, owing to the fear of the latter that the Liberals mean to give Ireland home rule under one guise or another, and either by instalment or in block. It cannot be denied that the latest speeches of Sir HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN offer some ground for such an apprehension. With the Irish Nationalists on one side and the Unionist Free Traders on the other, the Liberal Prime Minister found himself between the devil and the deep sea, and

he deserves respect for taking the course commended by consistency and principle. He has said frankly that he shall stand precisely where he stood twelve years ago, and that soon or late he means to secure for Ireland the largest possible powers of self-government that are compatible with the unity of the Kingdom. This is tantamount to saying that his maximum concession will be substantially identical with that embodied in Mr. GLADSTONE's second Home Rule bill. The Irish Nationalists will be hard to please if they are not satisfied with such a demonstration of good faith; but the Premier's pledge threatens to alienate those Unionists who abhor Home Rule more than they love free trade.

It will not be easy, either, to keep in abeyance the irreconcilable differences between the Nonconformist and the Anglican factions in the Liberal camp, with reference to the Education act, by which the late Government forced dissenters, already taxed for the maintenance of the non-sectarian national or board schools, to contribute also to the support of schools conducted in the interest of the Church of England. On the other hand, a strenuous and apparently successful effort has been made to induce organized labor to vote for Liberal candidates in districts where it has little, if any, chance of electing nominees of its own. The principal leader of the Labor Union, Mr. JOHN BURNS, has been made a member of the Cabinet, and Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN has promised to amend the law relating to combinations, which, as interpreted by the courts, is deemed by employees far from satisfactory. With the cordial support of the labor unions and of the numerous Irish voters in British electoral districts, the Liberals are doubtless sure of obtaining in Great Britain a considerable plurality over the friends of Mr. BALFOUR and Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN; but without the aid of the Unionist Free Traders, which, as we have said, seems doubtful, they may be forced to depend in the next Parliament, as they were in 1892-5, on the cooperation of the Irish Nationalists. They will then lack the moral ascendancy which might enable them to drive through the House of Lords such unwelcome measures as a repeal of the last Education act, or an act disestablishing the Anglican Church in Wales, or, above all, an act bestowing a large measure of self-government on Ireland.

It is known already that the colonial policy of the new Government will differ materially from that of its predecessor, not only as regards the proposal to give a tariff preference to the transmarine dependencies, but also with relation to the treatment of the conquered Boer commonwealths. The promise made at the time when a treaty of peace was signed that the former South African Republic and former Orange Free State should eventually have an elective Legislature has not yet been carried out, but the new Ministers have announced that the fulfillment will be postponed no longer. Meanwhile the importation of Chinese to work in the mines of the Rand has been stopped, and the final settlement of the question whether such a solution of the labor problem shall be sanctioned has been remitted to the representatives of the people. There seems to be no doubt that although English speaking residents will under certain conditions have the right to vote, the nominees of the Boers will constitute a working majority of the new assembly. It was this prospect which caused the late British Government to shrink from authorizing an elective Legislature, some of its members predicting that the separatist tendencies of the Afrikaners were only dormant, and that if these were permitted to revive the whole work of conquering South Africa might have to be done over again. Faithful, nevertheless, to the worthiest traditions of the Liberal party, Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN has determined to deal with the Boers as Lord DURHAM dealt with the Canadians, in the belief that the outcome of an act of generosity and justice will again be satisfactory.

In British India the New Year will witness a sharp departure from the position taken by Mr. BALFOUR with reference to the quarrel between Lord CURZON and Lord KITCHENER. It will be recalled that the Commander-in-Chief of the Anglo-Indian army insisted that if he were to be held responsible for the defence of the peninsula his authority must be unimpeded; that, in other words, his plans must not be subject to interference on the part of the military member of the Viceroy's council at Calcutta. As his demand was pronounced reasonable by the late Government, the Viceroy resigned, but the new Premier declares that Lord CURZON was right in upholding the principle that military authority must be subordinate to civil in British India. Professional soldiers who know that important orders issued at headquarters have sometimes been held up for six months at Calcutta will not be at all surprised should Lord KITCHENER express a desire to be relieved of his command. To outsiders the question seems just now academic rather than practical, because for some time to come the Russians will have too much work on their hands at home to dream of invading India, even if the permanent conquest of the peninsula by England's new alliance with Japan. There are many Englishmen, however, who concur with Lord KITCHENER in thinking that their country ought to fight her own battles, and that her appeal to Japanese auxiliaries would be fatal to the moral influence of England on the Indian mind.

It is interesting to hear from Sir CHARLES DILKE, who, although not Foreign Secretary, is sure to be listened to with deference in any discussion of England's foreign relations, that under the new Administration, as under the last, the foreign policy of the United Kingdom will pivot on the cordial understanding established with France and the United States. In other words, no effort will be spared to further the attainment of the end contemplated by Lord LANSLOWNE, a union of interest and sentiment between the three countries named, which would go far to prove a guarantee of the peace and progress of mankind. There is, indeed, good reason to believe that just as the Anglo-Jap-

anese alliance promises to assure tranquillity to Asia, so the *entente cordiale* brought about between England and France, supplemented as this is by the warm sympathy of the United States, will check hereafter, as it is believed to have checked in the past year, any aggressive designs that Russia's effacement may have tended to encourage in the mind of the German Emperor.

Before the month of January is over M. LOUBET's term of office will have expired, and the French Chambers, meeting in joint session at Versailles, will have chosen a President of the Republic. The ostensible nominee of the *bloc*, as the group of factions now dominant in the Chamber of Deputies is called, is M. FALLIERES, President of the Senate, and he would doubtless be successful if the voting at Versailles were to be *stricto iure*. As the balloting is to be secret, however, the friends of M. DOUVEIGNE, who gained so much distinction as Governor-General of Tonquin, and who is now one of the most influential members of the Chamber of Deputies, have by no means lost heart. It is possible that ex-Premier BRISSON and ex-Premier BOURGEOIS will each get a good many votes from Radicals and Socialists, and should there be no choice on the first ballot M. DOUVEIGNE may be put forward as a compromise candidate. There is, of course, no constitutional reason why M. LOUBET should not, like M. GRÉVY, be reelected, but the former has said repeatedly and emphatically that he would not accept a second term. Of much more importance than the choice of a President, who in France may almost be described as a figurehead, will be the general election for the Chamber of Deputies, which will take place in the spring. No material change in the relative strength of parties is expected. It is much too early for the abolition of the Concordat to have any political effect, for, as under the law the State continues to pay stipends to the existing episcopate and priesthood, the peasantry have not begun to feel the burden that will fall upon them ultimately when new bishops are consecrated and new priests ordained. From an economical viewpoint, the new year opens doubtfully for France, for although its exports exhibit a notable increase and all its industries are flourishing, public confidence in the future is shaken by the grave doubt cast upon the safety of the stupendous sum invested by Frenchmen in Russian bonds and other Russian securities, a sum which has been computed at two billions of dollars, or double the amount of the war indemnity paid to Germany. For the moment, however, the apprehension of a default in the payment of interest on Russia's foreign debt is less acute than it was some weeks ago.

In the German Empire no remarkable incident is looked for, so far as internal politics are concerned. No immediate change is probable in the distribution of seats in the Reichstag, which are apportioned among electoral districts that originally (except in the smallest States) had a hundred thousand inhabitants apiece. The old apportionment has become grossly inequitable in the case of Berlin, which, instead of about six hundred thousand, now has some two million inhabitants, but as on the basis of universal suffrage that city elects Socialists or Radicals, the Imperial Government has no desire to strengthen a troublesome Opposition. The landed proprietors will no doubt continue to control revenue legislation so far as the tariff is concerned, and the augmentation of the navy will go on with unabated vigor. In the coming year, as for many a year past, the attention of onlookers will be concentrated on the growth of the two forces characteristic of contemporary Germany; on the one hand the belief in military monarchy, which even among scholars receives no little support; on the other hand, the spirit of discontent which has made tremendous headway among the lower classes and has caused Socialism to absorb most of the rank and file of the old Liberal parties. In forecasting, moreover, the possible expansion of German Socialism we should not overlook the fact that the masses of the supporters of the so-called Centrist party are much more strongly attracted by class interest and sympathy to the Socialists than to the Conservatives. The reaction from the Liberal ideas, to which his father was a convert, is personified in the Emperor WILLIAM II., and in considering the advice which he is doubtless giving to the Czar we should keep in view his public declaration that students ought to be taught that the French Revolution was an unmitigated crime against God and man. He is an avowed and ardent believer in the theory of government which decries universal suffrage and proclaims a military monarchy the best possible type of polity. Under a ruler who acts on such convictions there is but little prospect of any drastic amendment of the existing cumbrous, indirect and flagrantly unjust method of choosing members of the Chamber of Deputies in Prussia, where a few rich men return as many intermediate electors as do the great mass of laborers.

Although the tension between Germany and France occasioned by the Morocco incident has been relaxed by the conciliatory attitude of M. ROUVIER, Emperor WILLIAM has caused some to watch with vigilance, not to say misgiving, the movement of events in another direction, to wit, on his western and southwestern frontiers. Next to FRANCIS JOSEPH himself, he is most keenly interested in the outcome of the experiment which the Hapsburg Kaiser has decided to make during the twelvemonth now beginning, both in the Cisleithan Kingdom and in Hungary. We refer, of course, to the substitution of universal suffrage for the existing complicated and inequitable electoral systems, a change which is expected to prove fatal to the dominance of the Magyars in Hungary and of the Germans in Austria. The Magyars may fight sooner than submit to subordination to their quondam vassals in the Parliament at Budapest, and the German speaking subjects of FRANCIS JOSEPH, finding themselves reduced to a weak minority in the Vienna Reichsrath, may be more strongly impelled than ever toward fusion with the German Empire. It is,

especially, however, on the state of things in Russian Poland, and in the Czar's Baltic provinces, that the German Emperor's attention will be fixed. As not only Courland but Livonia and Estonia once belonged to the Teutonic knights, and have been for centuries controlled by German landowners, their ultimate reunion with Prussia has always been looked upon at Berlin as possible, though the hope, of course, has seldom been avowed; and it must have been noted with chagrin that a probable outcome of the present Lettish uprising will be to transfer agrarian social and economical ascendancy in those provinces from German to Russian subjects of the Czar. It is obvious, also, that Emperor WILLIAM must be profoundly concerned in the status which will be assigned to Russian Poland when, if ever, the transition of Russia from an autocracy to a constitutional monarchy shall have been accomplished. The German sovereign, of course, desires that the Czar's Polish subjects shall be treated precisely like other inhabitants of European Russia as regards representation in the national assembly, for the process of Russification would thus be furthered, but he cannot wish them to have a legislature of their own, which would foster their native language and institutions, and inevitably encourage their fellow Poles in the Prussian province of Posen to demand a similar concession. It is hard enough as it is to Germanize the Poles of Posen, who enjoy the large measure of local autonomy enjoyed by their compatriots under Austrian rule in Galicia.

No one who has watched the rapid and startling succession of events in Russia since the Peace of Portsmouth was signed would think of attempting to predict the outcome of 1906 in that convulsed and blood drenched country. It is true that as we go to press the uprising of the proletariat in Moscow—phenomenal as it has been in respect of dimensions, duration and ferocity—seems to have collapsed. It is probable enough that the temporary restoration of order in Russia's ancient capital will be followed by an intermission of disturbances in Warsaw, Odessa, Kharkoff and other provincial cities. Throughout the last ten days St. Petersburg has remained comparatively quiet under the heel of the garrison, which has shown itself faithful to the Czar. A revival of confidence in Government and commercial circles is attested by a material advance in the market price of the imperial 4 per cent. bonds. What assurance can we have, however, that the revolutionists have abandoned their effort to overthrow the dynasty of the ROMANOFFS and to substitute a republican régime? As we write come rumors of a determination to inaugurate another general strike, accompanied with widespread insurrection, on Russia's Christmas Day, January 6, or on January 22, the anniversary of last year's massacre. In any event, many weeks, if not months, are likely to elapse after so tremendous an upheaval of subterranean forces before the ground swell of discontent subsides. Even if Moderate Liberals should shortly attain ascendancy in European Russia, and the promised introduction of representative institutions should begin, the Baltic provinces and the region of the Trans-Caucasus will have to be reconquered, and sufficient troops for the purpose can scarcely be secured unless recourse is made to the Manchurian army, the fidelity of which is suspected. If Count WITTE's hopes are fulfilled, however, and the State Duma or national assembly, the mode of electing which has been fixed, shall convene presently and be permitted to frame a Constitution, it is quite possible, if not probable, that the transformation of the Government from an absolute into a limited monarchy may be effected without much further wrenching of the social structure, owing to the fact that the vast majority of Russia's population is agricultural and at heart loyal to the sovereign. Their loyalty might even be wrought to irresistible fervor if the measures already taken to relieve them from arrears of taxes should be supplemented by the gratuitous distribution of a large section of the Crown's extensive domains.

That events will take so fortunate a course is not believed by pessimistic observers, who assert that the only practicable alternative to a quick lapse into anarchy and chaos is a violent and implacable reaction which shall dismiss Count WITTE and repudiate all projects of reform. Intimations more or less credible reach us from Tsarskoe-Selo that although the Prime Minister has thus far managed to hold his own, men of a merciless temper like TRILPOFF and DUBNOVO are rapidly gaining the Czar's ear. Before the present twelvemonth is far advanced the fate of Russia is likely to be settled for many a year to come.

If we turn to the Orient we must recognize that the agreement reached with regard to the Macedonian finances has deferred for a time the expulsion of the Turks from Europe and the determination of the ownership of Constantinople. To that imperial heritage, for which Russia and Austria used to be the only aspirants, there is now in prospect a third claimant, namely, a South Slavic commonwealth which quite conceivably might be created through a fusion of Bulgaria and Servia. Meanwhile, the question of practical moment connected with the Ottoman dominions in 1906 will be concerned with the economical exploitation of Anatolia and Mesopotamia, through the construction of a railway which shall have its southern terminus on the Persian Gulf. Now that the British Foreign Office is controlled by a statesman more disposed to conciliate the Emperor WILLIAM II. than was his predecessor, it should not be impossible to accommodate the hitherto conflicting interests of Germany, Great Britain and Russia with regard to the Euphrates Valley.

In the Far East during the coming twelvemonth the Mikado's empire will devote itself to the recuperation needed after the exhausting efforts imposed by a titanic war, and to the utilization of the opportunities of peaceful expansion gained in Corea, in the Laotian peninsula and along the lines of the Manchu-

rian railway, which before long will be linked by a branch running to the Yalu River with the Korean system. The fact that by the commercial treaty which she has just concluded at Peking Japan has procured the opening of a large additional number of Manchurian towns to foreign traffic will be accepted as a guarantee of her fidelity to the policy of the "open door." This assurance that her sympathies are enlisted on the side of Europe and the United States should conjure once for all the "Yellow Peril," and convince us that the Western World has nothing to fear from the awakening of China.

And nothing is but what is not. An application of which paradox may be found in the opinion of the Court in the Maine case of the State against FREDERICKSON. The defendant, a Portland restaurant keeper, was indicted for keeping also a common nuisance. He kept and sold "for tipping purposes" unfermented sweet cider. A seller of unfermented sweet cider for tipping purposes would seem to be guilty of getting money on false pretences. At any rate, unfermented cider is not known to be intoxicating. The defendant's counsel appealed. His argument was that unfermented cider was not intoxicating within the meaning of the prohibition law; and that the law was unconstitutional if it declared such cider intoxicating. Appeal overruled. Court says that if the State declares a beverage intoxicating such beverage is intoxicating, and that the State has the constitutional right to make such a law. Therefore, the prohibition law is not unconstitutional, and the defendant's appeal is overruled. Water is an intoxicant, if the Maine Legislature chooses to say so.

This case shows that the Maine Constitution and the Maine Legislature can afford to be above common sense.

Cowardice Non-Racial.
To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: Negro troops offered to fight in the Philippines depended on, take fright at the first fire and will become panicstricken in the most unreasonable manner.

On the other hand, negro soldiers under the command of white officers (including non-coms) and watched closely by their officers are good enough for any army. Really, however, this is a fruitless discussion. Forty years, twenty in the army, fifteen on the frontier, I know of no white vast majority of men, white, black, yellow, red and brown, are white livered cowards. JASPER L. STUBBENDALE. BAY SHORE, Dec. 29.

New Street Car Swindle.
To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: The following may be a new plan of petty swindle. It was practiced on the New York street car line this week. This was a word of caution for women patronizing the line.

A woman boarded the car at the North River end of the line. Next to her was seated a white woman, who as the conductor approached, fumbled in her reticule for change, then addressed a lady sitting alongside: "Beg pardon, madam, may I ask you to pay my fare? I have some difficulty in finding my change and will pay you as soon as I find it." The woman spoken to paid. In a few moments the party rummaging passed over a five-cent piece which the lady deposited in her pocketbook. After a block of riding the accommodated woman said: "Please give me the change." "What change?" "Why, I gave you five cents." "Oh, I was five cents. I looked at it." Then a few more words were exchanged, when the aggrieved one began to talk about in tones of grief, causing the woman addressed constantly to disclose her face. Finding she was becoming the centre of observation, rather than be further disconcerted she gave the woman five cents. The latter left the car almost immediately after receiving the 20 cents. When the lady had recovered her composure she remarked to a lady on her right: "That woman is a swindler," and every one in the vicinity agreed, asserting it was no new dodge. NEW YORK, Dec. 29.

Pennsylvania Black Walnut.
Morton correspondence Philadelphia Record. Lumbering in Delaware county, after many years, has started in afresh. The lumber dealers have taken advantage of the large quantity of black walnut, which is more plentiful throughout the State, especially in Delaware county, than many persons know. An estimate on the woods in Delaware county already has netted the lumbermen about 75,000 feet, while the number of feet of this particular wood expected soon to be cut down in Pennsylvania, roughly estimating, will aggregate about 750,000 feet. From one local depot in the last month a shipment of 20,000 feet was made, its destination being Hamburg, Germany, where it is used for the making of gun stocks. The Delaware county black walnut trees average in size from 30 to 60 inches in diameter.

Russia and the Prophets.
To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: Yesterday you drew attention to the fact that Turpin's prophecy regarding Russia is being fulfilled by current events. Turpin truly foresaw what was coming, and besides his prophecy another one made by St. Peter's apostles, taught me a lesson. St. Peter's prophecy is worthy of being repeated by you: "Fly, Judas, and cover while there is time to thy Cheriah while thy terror shortens breath: Not as his traitorous feet, but as his just judgment, but slain by judgment thou shalt die." Compare the above with the two prophecies from whom so much was expected. One, the sick, smug, "curiously seeking" Monte Carlo, Gapon, and the other the bulldozing diplomat of Portsmouth, Witte. CHARLES H. SCHOTT. BROOKLYN, Dec. 29.

Providence and the Pump.
To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: I notice in the Providence Evening Telegram of to-day some remarks of W. S. Devery regarding the appointment of Gen. Hingham as Police Commissioner of Greater New York. Mr. Devery's English is so poor that I consider it utterly out of place for any decent paper to issue any remarks upon such a paper. FRANCIS R. D. TALBOT. P. S.—Put in on your first page and give decent government a chance. E. D. T.

Irish and English.
To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: What is all this talk about Ireland and the English? Here in America all the English people I know give Irish servants, and plenty will get along together. And I know a staunch Irishman who has an English servant, and he would not part with him for a farm. C. D. L. NEW YORK, Dec. 29.

Its Life.
Johnny—Pa, what is a nine days wonder? Pa—A diary.
Some Predictions.
There'll be a lot of chicks.
Farmers hatch a lot of chicks.
Girls will flirt with Toms and Dicks in 1905.
Grumblers all will make their kicks.
Conservatives will get a lot of kicks.
Cupids may a lot of tricks.
In 1906.
Panama will see some picks.
Watchers make a lot of ticks.
Charon navigate the Styx in 1906.
Gruffers little games will fix.
Roosevelt get in some links.
There are all the rhymes that mix with 1906.
McLARDENBURGH WILSON.

The Way to Fix It.
As compromise we here suggest
A way to settle the dispute
Which settles letters for a while,
Date 1905 + 1.
New Year.
Now is connection made:
Nobody kicks;
Central has given us
One nine o' six.