



OUTLOOK OF THE COMING CENTURY.

BY PROFESSOR BICKERTON, F.C.S.,

Author of "Romance of the Earth," "New Story of the Stars," etc.



THE opening of the present century was one that seemed rich in possibilities, and full of promises which have, and have not, been fulfilled. When the century opened, Napoleon loomed large in the political horizon, and, before

the first year was out, had overcome England's only ally, Austria. Every effort was made to impede England's commerce by closing Continental ports against her, and in those ports smuggling was savagely punished—men even suspected of this were shot on the slightest pretext; whilst illicit licenses were issued by every Government. Napoleon alone made more than sixteen millions sterling in this way.

When the century opened, England's commercial supremacy was unsuspected, but the seed was sown. We had learned from India how to make calico, from Venice glass, from France paper, and our vast coal beds and iron seams had been opened. On the Continent, thrones and kings were falling; Napoleon's unbounded ambition was disturbing everything. Society was in one vast ferment. All thought of recovering our supremacy in the United States had been cast into the shade by the alarming progress of Napoleon in Europe; though our glorious hero Nelson had, by Lady Hamilton's queen-like liberality, enabled England to still hold her maritime supremacy. So that, although England was on the alert, there were none of the dire effects of war on her shores.

At New Larnach, Owen was inaugurating his marvellous factory reform, attracting the favorable attention of all the rulers of the Caucasian race. He had not yet grown to see that he was only tinkering; nor had he then become unpopular by his radical suggestion of a human brotherhood, for which, even when he made it, the time was not then ripe. He, however, sowed the seed, the fertile seed that is now ripening to a glorious harvest.

In the scientific world, Watt's wonderful engines had been established, and promised to revolutionise labour. Water-power spinning and weaving machinery already competed with hand-work, and was taking these industries into all sorts of out-of-the-way nooks, the water-power of the streams making little hillside hamlets into prosperous towns, soon to fall back to their pristine obscurity when the great steam factories of the populous towns replaced these little mills.

Fulton was busy with his idea of the steam-boat, and seven years later, on the Hudson River, steam navigation commenced its wondrous career. Years before, on the Continent, men had been imprisoned and executed for making the experiment of the steam-boat; and Solomon de Caus, for making the first steam engine, has been cast into a lunatic asylum. Those were not the days when inventors thrived. Yet before this century had attained its majority, the numerous applications of the power of steam in mining, in manufacture, and on water, were established realities; though not for