

One Hundred Years Hence.

BY P. J. O'REGAN.



ALTHOUGH the public is wont to regard predictions with an amount of scepticism, which is natural under the circumstances, there is absolutely no reason to doubt the accuracy of that foreknowledge which comes from reading the past and the trend of current events aright. Progress cannot be denied, and there is no difficulty in predicting what will happen in the next century if we consider the logical issue of many movements now going on quietly, almost imperceptibly, but none the less surely.

It is certain that our descendants a century hence will look back on a period of marvellous development. We sometimes wonder at the achievements of the present century; but they will pale into insignificance when compared, one hundred years hence, with the realities of the twentieth century. Then will have been achieved universal peace—peace between nations as the complement of domestic and national peace. Armies and navies will have become things of history, and the emblems of war in connection with great functions will be meaningless to those whose memories do not go back to the days of legalised murder. People will wonder why professing Christians so long tolerated war. Just now, when England is in the throes of a bloody fight in South Africa, this may seem a wild impracticable dream. Nevertheless the tendency of the times is all for peace. But in order to realise this clearly we must take a survey of the past. We shall then realise that war will go the way of gladiatorial combats, of duelling, of slavery, and many

other customs once believed to be as unchangeable as the hills. Time was when war was deemed the chief aim of nations. Even virtue was construed to mean prowess on the battlefield. Then trade and industry were considered the baser callings. The "first gentlemen" were those who revelled in military glory. That time has passed forever. Trade is now the road to the highest and most honourable positions, and no form of honest labour is so proscribed that he who follows it may not rise to positions of trust and of high respect. The growth of trade—"the harbinger of peace"—will be marvellous within the next century; indeed, it will be one of its greatest wonders. The international exhibitions and trade congresses will eclipse anything yet attempted. The number of ocean-going vessels will increase beyond the limits of imagination. Ships will be propelled solely by electricity; indeed, steam, as a motive power, whether on sea or land, will be almost obsolete. Fares will be merely nominal, and people who do not travel will be the exception. Of course the result of all this will be to break the barriers of nationality; in fact, it will be difficult to discriminate national origin, at any rate among English-speaking people, a century hence. All this necessarily must promote a cordial feeling of kinship among nations, and it will, therefore, be readily understood with what aversion war will be regarded.

The dream of Isaac Pitman will be so near realisation that complete phonetic spelling will be considered on all sides only a matter of time. This will conduce marvellously to the spread of the English language, and the people of the twentieth century will agree