

1905: *Annus Minacior*.¹

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THE events of 1904 were reviewed in the CHURCHMAN of last January, and we marked our sense of their importance by describing that period as a *spectabilis annus*, a year of wonders and astonishment, which would lead necessarily to even greater changes. The absorbing and overwhelming event in it was the outbreak of the war between Japan and Russia. There was little doubt as to its ultimate issue, even from the beginning, among competent and impartial judges, though, until that small doubt became a certainty, the other nations, remembering our alliance with Japan, watched the Titanic strife with varying and more or less correct neutrality, but with an enforced and a vigilant quietude so far as their foreign policies and their relations with one another were concerned. If the Forum and the Senate must give place to arms, in Cicero's phrase, and are silenced in the face of armies, so, too, is diplomacy. The diplomatists were silent during the months of war, whatever they may have been pondering and plotting; but the certainty that Japan must win, followed by the security of peace, has made them free to speak and act. The year which has gone over us has witnessed a flight of treaties, arguments, friendships, readjustments, as well as a few calculated and Machiavellian disturbances. The balance of power has been disarranged by the war and its momentous consequences. The centre of gravity in diplomatic and international relationships has moved. Old ambitions have had to be renounced or modified; old crimes and follies are working out their inevitable retribution; older hopes, and some national aspirations which seemed almost hopeless, are reviving. If we could believe that a just and stable equilibrium had been attained, we might christen 1905 as *annus diplomaticus*; but, for

* The author's opinions on current events are not necessarily those of the CHURCHMAN.

ominous and minatory reasons, which we cannot ignore, unless we wish to be deceived, we are afraid the past year must be described by a much more alarming title, and we name it *annus minacior*, hoping that our comparative degree may not have to be transformed into the superlative.

When we were writing last year, the war itself was more than half over in time, though the greatest victories of our allies were still to be achieved. The surrender of Port Arthur, the great victory on the Sha-ho, the greater victory of Mukden, established the Japanese in South Manchuria, and drove the Russian bases farther inland towards Harbin. The Baltic fleet lagged on its unskillful and tedious journey and collected its dribbling units, only to have them utterly annihilated in the Sea of Japan. At length even the Russian Government, so deaf and blind to facts, saw that the time for negotiation had come. Delegates from both sides met and discussed at Portsmouth, in the United States, and eventually settled the terms of peace. Japan's material gains have been enormous. Russia has lost Port Arthur, Dalny, and all her sea-power in the Far East. Japan has stepped into her place, gaining, in addition, the management of Korea, a free hand in South Manchuria, the railways, the harbours, and the water communications of those wealthy provinces, besides a preponderating influence over the whole Chinese Empire and the leadership of the Asiatic world. Her moral gains are even greater and more stimulating. She has been equally magnificent in peace and war. Congratulations upon such achievements are an impertinence; but we may congratulate ourselves upon having such an ally, and upon having extended the scope and period of our alliance.

"Whatever the final issue of the war," as we wrote last January, "we hope it may cause the reformation, or the ending, of the Tsar's despotism both in Church and State." That hope is being realized abundantly; but whether the inevitable revolution will follow a benignant course, or be forced through the crimson waves of tragedy, is uncertain.

To all the terrors and possibilities of revolution we must add

the very real dangers of bankruptcy and repudiation, unless the existing crisis and paralysis be mended or ended quickly. Meanwhile the country is weltering in impotent disorders. The whole world has been horrified by the shameful massacre of Jews, a crime to which the populace is too easily inclined, and to which they have certainly been incited by Government officials, who are agents of the reactionary party. The horrors and extent of this atrocity go beyond anything we have known within our own experience, and they take us back to the worst records of Jewish slaughter in the Middle Ages and the Roman Empire. The latter, at least, had some provocation, but the Russian Government has none. Atrocities are always atrocious, whoever commits them. The rights of humanity are superior to creed and nationality and party. It is discreditable to one section of our political press, and still more discreditable to another section of our so-called religious press, that balances so scandalously unequal should be applied to outrages committed by Mohammedans and by orthodox Russians. We hold that Christianity makes the crime even more heinous in itself, as it certainly is in extent and savagery.

We must leave the course of Russian freedom to time and to those who can prophesy. For our own part, judging by former revolutions and by the various factors of this, we think the prospect is dark and lowering. Affairs will probably have to grow worse before anything reconstructive can emerge. At any rate, the example of Russia has stirred Vienna to demand universal suffrage, and one more element of unrest has been added to the turmoils and troubles of the dual monarchy. If social quarrels be added to the insuperable differences of races, politics, and creeds in that discordant empire, the coming year will be even more anxious than the last for the venerable Emperor.

It is with the deepest interest that we shall watch the effect of Russian movements upon Germany. If Russian peasants and artisans can free themselves, it is not likely that the Prussian working classes will submit for long to the most reactionary and

the only autocratic form of government in Europe outside Turkey.

We hear much from German sources of English hatred to Germany, of "attacks" upon it in our press, of designs against it in our diplomacy, of despair and jealousy among our traders, of premeditated and treacherous raids by our Admiralty, even of interventions and invasions by an army which does not exist. This last absurdity is the best measure of the others. Let us, however, examine these Germanic legends calmly; for the effects of them may be very serious, on one side at least, and they may lead to the gravest consequences. There is, we may assert, no English dislike to Germany in the abstract, or in the nature of things, but quite the contrary. We are sensible of old alliances, of dangers and battles shared together, of immemorial peace. We are mindful of our kinship; though we suspect we are more Scandinavian than Teutonic, and we know that modern Germany contains Mongolian and Slavonic elements which our own ancestors escaped by emigration. We are proud of Alaric and his race, but we have no relationship with Attila. We love the old romantic and liberal Germany, to which we owe so much in poetry, theology, philosophy, scholarship, music; but we cannot help seeing and feeling that Prussian militarism has impoverished that old inheritance by which all Europe was enriched. Germany has had to pay dearly for the aggrandizement of Prussia, and German socialism is a tangible evidence of the price exacted. Nevertheless, we admire a great many achievements of the German Empire. We recognise the discipline and sacrifices by which it was founded, though we resent and abhor some of the methods used in its foundation, which will bring their inevitable retribution in due course. We not only admire, but we envy, the scientific principles, the patient foresight, the triumphant efficiency, which are applied to education, to the army and navy, to every department of administration, of mercantile affairs, and of municipal life. If the Germans are going to beat us in trade and government, by fair competition, through harder work and superior methods, we shall regret our own

degeneration, but we shall not resent their well-earned victory. It is not these things, galling and perturbing as they are, which have roused our English susceptibilities. It is the literature of the Pan-Germanic organizations, the tone and methods of the German semi-official press, and our memory of the attacks on Austria and France, which fill us with mistrust. After all, our navies, immense as they are, are not out of proportion to our shipping interests, to the geographical condition of our Empire, to the possessions which we have to safeguard. Our navy is not more than adequate for the defence. It is wholly inadequate for adventures and aggressions.

Of the other European countries there is little to be recorded. Our neighbour and best friend, the French Republic, has drawn even more closely to us. London and Paris have exchanged municipal courtesies with every sign of genuine affection.

Italy has experienced a terrible and devastating earthquake. Otherwise, she has proceeded quietly in the way of prosperity and progress. We have heard less of the Pope and the Papacy during the last twelve months than in almost any preceding year. The effect of French disestablishment on the policy and revenues of the Papal court will be interesting to watch; and there are many indications that the position of the Vatican towards Italy is being reconsidered. English Romanism, too, has been unusually quiet. The Archbishop of Westminster, unlike his predecessors, is not a Cardinal. The number of conventual establishments increases; but, serious though the increase may be, the chief burden of it must fall upon the Roman Catholic community. Liberal opinions are making their way among the Romanist clergy, as they are, too, in France. Modern standards of education and scientific methods of study are bound to affect the seminaries, as they affect our own theological colleges. Sacerdotalism in all its forms is incompatible with sound history.

Norway and Sweden have separated into two kingdoms, and have known how to arrange their differences with dignity and wisdom. We wish all prosperity to our Scandinavian brethren;

and we are pleased that an English Princess should be the first Queen of that ancient monarchy which has been revived.

At home, too, we have had an uneventful year, except in the barren region of party politics. In these affairs we desire to be patriots and in no sense partisans. The interests of England are very precious to us. For the interests of politicians and parties we care nothing. Parties may be necessary, but we regard them frankly as a necessary evil. We also regard our existing party names and divisions as artificial and misleading. No Conservatives in these days are unprogressive or arbitrary. No Liberals have any monopoly of progress and freedom. The seals of office have now changed hands, and few changes of Ministry have been effected with so little public interest. We are glad that our Foreign and Colonial affairs have been committed to capable hands. So long as they be conducted efficiently, it matter nothing whether the Ministers who preside over them bear one label or another in domestic and parochial politics. The Irish appointments and the recent language of the Prime Minister fill many people with anxiety. The Irish Party has not increased our confidence by its words and actions during the Boer War. The two European examples of Home Rule, which were set up as our models, have failed disastrously. In Ireland itself clerical influence and sectarian animosity have increased since 1886. We fail to see how the Irish Party and the conscientious objectors are likely to agree over the Education Act ; or, again, how zealous teetotalers and Irish members are likely to agree over temperance legislation. We have heard the cry " Protestantism before politics " ; but we do not see as yet how Protestantism is likely to be helped by the ascendancy of Irish clericals either in their own country or in the Imperial Government.

The fiscal question still divides our parties, teases our politicians, and throws our political organizations into chaos. Even in this matter we are not partisans. Neither are we theorizers. We desire to see things as they really are, to be guided by facts, and to judge by past and present experience.

The task of statesmanship at present is to co-ordinate and

consolidate the various interests of the Empire; to give it a more concrete sense of unity, of interdependence between its members, of common efforts and sacrifices for defence, of mutual advantages in trade, agriculture, and industrial legislation. We are at the parting of the ways. A policy of drift must lead to disruption through economical pressure and the want of tangible cohesion. A policy of reconstruction on scientific and enlightened principles may realize the prophetic vision of Harrington's "Oceana" and the more practical conceptions of Seeley. We believe that our colonial statesmen, who are more in touch with realities than our own politicians, see these necessities clearly, and recognise that we have reached a period of crisis, when our irrevocable decision, one way or the other, must be taken. We do not venture to prescribe any remedy as infallible; but we maintain that consideration is necessary, and that some change is imperative.

In ecclesiastical matters we have little to record. The Dean of Canterbury's appeal should make us recur to the first principles both of our Reformers and of the early Church. Those first principles, we hope, will not be forgotten when our representative Church councils are constituted. We remember that there were times before the Sacrament of the Eucharist was made into a test of Church membership or Christian citizenship, and also times before the present sharp distinction was drawn between laity and clergy. In these matters, as in all others, we beg medievalists to study and to copy the earlier and healthier ages of Christianity.

Finally, we give thanks for a year of many blessings: for peace maintained, for friendships extended, for glorious and heroic memories revived. We pray for guidance and strength as we look forward into a year of uncertainties; of a changed administration; of a new Parliament, with all its chances and mischances; of various developments and uncertainties in ecclesiastical affairs; of revolution over so large a surface of Europe and Asia; of unrest and war in the German colonies of Africa, which may be fraught with danger to our own possessions; of rumours and threats of war against ourselves and our closest friends.

We may also encourage ourselves by the mottoes of Oxford and of London. Our ancient City has often of old times been our guide in political bewilderment and vacillation, as she has been more than once the palladium of our threatened liberties and of our hardly-pressed country. However menacing the unknown year may seem, we can proclaim with Oxford, *Dominus, illuminatio mea*; and we can pray with London, *Domine, dirige nos*.



Christianity and the Supernatural.—I.

BY THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF CLOGHER.

FROM the beginning Christianity presented itself to the world as a religion filled with the supernatural. The first Christian writings that we possess—those nearest to the events to which they refer—contain, if possible, more of this element than the later. St. Mark's Gospel, confessedly the earliest, records a far greater number of miracles than St. John's. St. Paul's Epistles of the first and second groups dwell with far greater insistence on the fact of the Resurrection of our Lord than the later Epistles. Compare the first Epistle to the Corinthians with that to the Ephesians. If we had to judge of St. Paul's presentation of Christianity from the latter alone, we might, with some show of reason, regard him as a great spiritual philosopher, to whom the Resurrection stood for a metaphysical conception rather than a historical fact. But the earlier Epistles set the Apostle before us as a teacher to whom the historical fact and the evidence for it were matters of primary importance, whose whole life and labour depended on their truth and accuracy.

Here the order is exactly the reverse of what our modern rationalizing theories require. Instead of finding that, as time goes on, miraculous details accumulate more and more round a saintly life and a noble doctrine, we find the life of Christ and