

ART. XII.—THE MONTH.—THE CHURCH CONGRESS.

IN Foreign Affairs, the outlook is, perhaps, more bright. King Cetewayo is a prisoner in Capetown, and Zululand is quiet; but Sir Garnet Wolseley has still much to do. The home speeches of distinguished soldiers tend, to a great extent, to clear Sir Bartle Frere. The English flag waves over Cabul; the mountaineers and rebel regiments have been routed; and Yakooob Khan, whose conduct seems mysterious, has resigned. As to Cabul, the Indian Viceroy has now to solve the question of Lord Lytton's novel, "What will he do with it?" The warnings of that sagacious statesman, Lord Lawrence, in regard to Afghanistan, it is impossible not to recall at the present moment.

The increased friendliness between Germany and Austria has caused, of late, considerable comment. Turkey seems unhappily inclined to refuse reforms; but even in the face of a Mahometan *non possumus* Russia will not be allowed to carry out its long cherished designs on Constantinople. According to Dr. Busch's recent *résumé* of Prince Bismarck's views, Germany and Austro-Hungary are banded together "to secure a general peace."

Sir William Harcourt's brilliant rhetoric has, to some extent, possibly, served the interests of the Liberal party; but the reported change in the attitude of Lord Derby will seem to the Conservatives of Lancashire a serious matter. The Marquis of Salisbury, however, has been received in Manchester with remarkable enthusiasm. A complaint of the Vicar of Hughenden's Ritualism was recently addressed to the Premier on the part of Lancashire working men, who announced that though Conservatives they would show their dislike to Ritualism at the next election, if they believed that Lord Beaconsfield was a supporter of the Ritualists.

The Home Secretary's action in regard to the Brighton Aquarium has called forth many protests from supporters of the Government. Mr. Cross may consider that he has brought about a satisfactory compromise; but a door has unquestionably been opened for a quasi-continental Sunday. An admirable circular on this subject has been issued by the Lord's Day Observance Society.

In regard to metropolitan intemperance, it may be mentioned that "The Public and Coffee House Auxiliary" of the London City Mission is doing good service.

The corner-stone of Ridley Hall, Cambridge, was laid a fortnight ago by Bishop Perry. Interesting speeches were made by the Master of Corpus, Canon Ryle, Mr. Marten, M.P., Prebendary

Wright, Mr. Sydney Gedge, and others. Ridley Hall, as is well known, will occupy at Cambridge a position similar to that of the recently opened Wycliffe Hall at Oxford. Protestant and Evangelical, these Halls will avoid, it is hoped, the narrowness characteristic of certain Theological Colleges.

At the opening of the Congregational Union for England and Wales, a fortnight ago, at Cardiff, the President protested against "any yielding on the part of British politicians to the arrogant demands" of the Papacy:—

That the Papacy absolutely controls the largest section of the Irish vote within and without the House of Commons is manifest to all, and how that acts upon political adventurers and the mere party politician is, alas, growing more apparent every day.

Several Diocesan Conferences have been held. At the Carlisle Conference the venerated Dean made some admirable remarks upon Family Prayer.

Two movements in regard to Convocation Reform have recently excited some attention. Bishop Alford has obtained several influential signatures, clerical and lay, to a memorial on representation of the Laity. "In view of the efforts now being made to give to the Convocation of the Church of England an authority it has long been denied, the Memorialists assure the head of Her Majesty's Government that, in their opinion, no scheme of Reform can be satisfactory that excludes the consideration of a just representation of the Laity as well as of the Clergy." To another Memorial, on increased representation of the Clergy, signatures of representative men are being obtained. This Memorial opens thus:—

We, the undersigned clergy of the province of Canterbury, beg respectfully and earnestly to state to your Grace and Lordships that we believe it has now become very necessary that the number of Proctors in Convocation for the parochial clergy in the province of Canterbury should be considerably increased.

A speech made not long ago by the Right Hon. H. C. E. Childers, M.P., at the opening of a church in Knottingley, deserves to be considered in reference to this matter. Mr. Childers inquired whether the National Church—a body of immense wealth and influence—had done its duty in taking full advantage of that organisation of which it was capable:—

He had been in parts of the world where the good old Church of England flourished with great vigour, both in America and in the colonies. It had struck him that whereas in England we scrambled on, making little reforms in one direction, in improving little bits of machinery and oiling some of the old-fashioned wheels, in other parts of the world the Church of England had established a very efficient machinery for the general management of her affairs, and in which the

bishops and clergy, and, above all, the laity, took their respective shares. The result was the removal to a very great extent of many of those evils which prevailed in the Church at home; the rubbing off of those extreme views, for instance, which gave us so much trouble on certain occasions; the improvement of questions connected with parochial and diocesan organisation; and a great deal more interest taken by the laity in matters with which they had, and ought to have, a very active interest, one and generally. Did they not think that the time had come when their different dioceses—under the lead of such prelates as their greatly esteemed Archbishop of York, for instance—whether, instead of giving to Convocation, as was at present proposed, additional powers to do certain matters, they could not acquire such a constitution for their Church as would relieve Parliament of a certain sort of responsibility which she was supposed to possess as representing the laity. He did not see why the Church of England, connected with the State, should not manage its own internal affairs just as well as the Established Church of Scotland managed its internal affairs—and managed them efficiently, and without scandal, and, from a business point of view, extremely well.

Such suggestions, at the present moment, from a Liberal statesman, a staunch Churchman, are most timely. The Convocation proposals made in the Draft Bill for the Revision of the Rubrics naturally call attention to Convocation Reform.¹ Many who have found it difficult to agree with Archdeacon Denison in any ecclesiastical movements whatever will be at one with him in believing that under present circumstances the Prayer Book had better be left alone.

Canon Bright lately complained of the shipwreck of the Convocation *concordat* concerning the Ornaments Rubric; and made some pointed references to the Bishop of Gloucester. In reply, Bishop Ellicott stated:—"I am no party to any understanding relative to the Ornaments Rubric, no such understanding having been adopted, suggested, or, so far as I remember, even alluded to in the House to which I belong."

Canon Trevor has written as follows:—

The Lower House of Canterbury is the standing opprobrium of Convocation; its turbulence brought down the temporary suppressions by Royal Prerogative under William III., Queen Anne, and George I. Its timidity or apathy encouraged succeeding Archbishops to make the suppression permanent. When the movement for revival began this House was still the dead weight on our hands. Convocation itself was confounded with this pretentious and distorted member, representing nobody that had a right to be represented. It was the jest of our opponents, and the difficulty of our friends. We had to

¹ *Convocation of Canterbury. Report on the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer presented to Her Majesty the Queen, in obedience to Royal Letters of Business, on July 31, 1879.* London: Published by W. Wells Gardner, 2, Paternoster Buildings, E.C.

set the monster on his legs to get Convocation at all. But nobody meant it to last; the very first reform was to be a real representation of the clergy.

Concerning the late Bishop Baring, interesting testimonies have been recently published on the part of Archdeacon Prest, Canon Tristram, the Rev. G. T. Fox, and other personal friends.

Of the Church Congress we can only touch upon a few points which present themselves in the reports of the proceedings.

The discussion on Parochial Organisation appears to have been decidedly practical. Prebendary Cadman opened his address with a note of thankfulness. The good hand of our God has been upon us as a Church :—

The time has passed when a clergyman who sought to win souls to Christ by unwonted services and faithful preaching in cottages and school-rooms, and by the wayside, was complained of for bringing Dissenters to Church, and stigmatised as a Low Churchman, or no Churchman; and, stranger still, when one starting forth on his hoped-for ministry with a desire to be a good minister of Jesus Christ, with no extravagant notions or zeal, would be thus cautioned by the Bishop who ordained him :—“Take care, young man, that you are not too enthusiastic in the discharge of your ecclesiastical duties.” Activity and earnestness and evangelical zeal are not now suspected and distrusted, but imitated and encouraged.

What we want, continued Mr. Cadman, is the Spirit of Life; more of true spiritual force in the wheels of our machinery. Men quickened to holiness—active, prayerful, are needed. For such men prayer should be offered :—

I press this duty of prayer because the Lord alone can raise up and send forth true and successful preachers of the everlasting Gospel, and these are the men we want for efficient parish work in the exigencies of the present day both in preaching, catechising, visiting, and organising. Spiritual work must be done by spiritual men. Men must be converted themselves, spiritually-minded themselves, walking much in fellowship with Jesus themselves, conscious of the need of the Holy Spirit's influence upon themselves, before they can testify of these blessings to others. And without some experience of them in a parish what real moral or spiritual improvement, after all, can go on? “As well,” said one, “attempt to bind the tiger of the East with a cobweb, or stop Niagara with a straw, as change the nature of man without the Holy Spirit.”

Again, as to spiritually-minded parishioners :—

A living Bishop wisely says, “Were I asked to advise a clergyman about to be appointed to a laborious, and, may be, neglected parish, what he should do first, even to the neglect of other things, my counsel would be unhesitatingly and emphatically this: ‘Find out your godly people; visit them, stir them up, specially teach them, gather them for prayer, win for yourself their personal friendship, do your best to bring them into a close and more intimate rela-

tionship with the Lord Jesus, and then, when they have got their hearts warmed towards Him, they will be in more vital sympathy with His purpose and feeling toward the souls he died for." No better advice could be given.

Within the lines of our own Church, added Mr. Cadman, "Catholic, Reformed, Protestant, Evangelical—for call it what you will, it is all these—there is grace enough to be found, and work enough to be done. I prefer an organisation within these lines, and have no longing for practices that savour either of superstition or laxity."

The Rev. R. C. Billing, who spoke as having under his pastoral care about 20,000, the majority of whom were the poorest of the poor, followed up Prebendary Cadman's remarks on the value of prayer. More notice, Mr. Billing thought, should be taken of the Ember seasons. Probationers for Holy Orders should live and work for a time in large town parishes and "learn their business."

The President, Bishop Thorold, closed a quiet, earnest, and really useful meeting by some weighty words on Christians being drawn together by work and prayer.

In his Paper on Diocesan Synods and Conferences, the Dean of Lichfield said:—

Now it is of the utmost importance that both Convocation and Parliament should know the deliberate and carefully formed opinions of the intelligent and well-educated members of our Church, both clergy and laity; and the diocesan conferences, in which the laity have a legitimate place, are just the instrumentality through which the laity may make their influence felt; and when each diocese shall have its diocesan conference in active operation, and the conclusions of these various conferences shall come to be systematically gathered up and transmitted, year by year, to Convocation, we shall then have such an expression of the real mind of the Church of England as must have its influence not only upon Convocation but upon Parliament—such an expression as must tend powerfully to preserve to us, without any loss or weakening of her spiritual rights, that union of the Church with the State which has helped to make our country so great throughout the world. It is quite a mistake to suppose that Parliament, as a body, is unfriendly to the Church. Parliament will never, I believe, be indisposed to assist the Church in obtaining what is reasonable and practicable. *But Parliament can hardly be expected to listen to proposals of Church reform unless those proposals express the deliberate judgment of the faithful laity as well as of the clergy of our Church.*

In the words which we have emphasised we thoroughly agree with the learned Dean; but, although Prolocutor, he seems to forget, for a moment, the recent "proposals" of an unreformed Lower House.

Great interest was excited by the subject of "Ecclesiastical Courts and Final Court of Appeal." The Bishop of Oxford's

Paper was, undoubtedly, from his Lordship's standpoint, a success ; it is ably written, and it has an interest of its own. Mr. R. L. Valpy, according to the special report of the *Guardian* :—

Spoke apparently without premeditation, but he knew the subject and handled it ably and pertinently, carrying with him a large part of the audience, though, as might be expected, very many also differed from him and indicated their disapproval from time to time by rather noisy demonstrations. He pointed out with great force—what is in truth the weak point—that Dr. Phillimore and Mr. Berdmore Compton had found much fault with the existing Courts, and especially with the Final Court, but had utterly failed to indicate clearly what they proposed to substitute for it. He urged with great force that any Court which was to act in that capacity in ecclesiastical causes must be one that commanded the respect of the laity. He concluded by saying that if the Judicial Committee, assisted by the Bishops as their assessors, were incompetent to administer the law (as stated by Dr. Phillimore), he wished to know who was capable.

Canon Ryle concluded the sitting, according to the *Guardian* report, by “one of his straightforward and warm-hearted speeches.” Where, asked Mr. Ryle, could a Court of Final Appeal be found which would give satisfaction to every one? The clergy had not a judicial mind. A better Court could not be obtained than that which existed at present. He commended to the attention of the Congress the declaration of the Thirty-seventh Article.

Canon Gregory, who has taken a leading part in the preparation and advocacy of the Report of the Lower House of Canterbury, ably argued on the lines of Chancellor Espin's Paper. Mr. Billing, however, thought that “if Canon Gregory's suggestions were adopted there would be constant complaints. He knew of many schools that were never looked after, and there were many sick persons who were never visited by the clergyman. They would never be able to secure the performance of these duties by the Bishop's Court.”

The subject of “Lay Work in the Church” was introduced by Canon Garbett. Having spoken of the practical heathenism around us, he said :—

Where should they find the workers? To increase the clergy was hopeless. They had neither the men nor the means. Were they then to sit down in apathy when all the vast force in the Church itself was allowed to run to waste, when the godly laity were unemployed? This great force should be utilised, and the wisest mode of using it appeared to him to be the establishment of a perpetual diaconate.

On Hymn Books, Bishop Alexander, who remarked that he spoke “for the minority—those who had never made, and never intended to make, a collection of hymns,” made a suggestive speech, polished as usual ; and the Rev. Dawson Campbell read an interesting Paper.

In the discussion on Unity, Canon Garbett remarked on the fundamental or essential divisions among Churchmen; and Mr. Valpy warned the Congress against the error of sacrificing truth for unity. The Bishop of Winchester, however, replied that although in "small schools of thought" fundamental differences might exist, yet with regard to "the large schools" there were no such differences.

A brilliant, vigorous, and singularly suggestive Paper by Professor Pritchard, on "Science and Religion," was, in the opinion of many, one chief feature of the Swansea Congress.

At the final gathering, the Bishop of St. David's, who appears to have made a remarkably good President, gave his opinion concerning the Congress. His lordship wrote:—

I look back on the devotional meeting of this morning as my own final experience of the much-to-be-remembered Congress of 1879. I cannot imagine anything more complete of its kind; and when we consider the amount of critical and expository learning, the real piety, the eloquence of the readers and speakers, their substantial unity in the most essential matters of doctrine, which was visible in spite of considerable theological divergence, apparent on the very face of some, at least, of the papers and addresses, I cannot but record my thankfulness to that good Spirit which has blessed the Church of England with a Ministry capable of producing such teaching as that which was addressed to us this morning. But even more impressive to me than anything which was spoken or read was the rapt attention and the reverent demeanour of the great assembly.

In referring to the splendid hospitality of Swansea, the Bishop remarked:—

While I hope and believe that nothing has been said or done during this meeting, the tendency of which would be to place our Dissenting brethren at a greater distance from ourselves, I think a good deal has been said the effect of which will be to quicken our kindly feelings towards them.

For ourselves, we are ready to hope and believe what "was said and done" at the Swansea Congress, viewing it as a whole, may tend to draw the Nonconformists into closer Christian unity with the Churchmen of the Principality.

The Congress appears, on the whole, considering the numbers present, the quality of the papers and speeches, and the prevailing tone and temper, to have been a success. "It went off much better," said many, "than was expected." One point, we think, is especially worthy of note. The representative ultra-Churchmen were, in the main, apologetic; and the great mass of the members, judging from such signs and tokens as seemed significant, were truly and thoroughly loyal to the principles of the Reformation. A kindly, brotherly spirit prevailed throughout.