

THE NEW POLITICAL EUROPE.

Announcement of the issuing of a Turkish loan of \$30,000,000, draws attention afresh to the extraordinary changes which the past year has wrought in the historic idea of the European equilibrium. The intention of this putting of the Turkish Treasury in funds is to enable the new régime to consolidate its power. Old debts are to be paid off, indemnities taken care of, the current budget made to balance, and the various departments of government reorganized. This of itself is sufficiently novel, but the really striking aspect of the matter is the emergence of financial Turkey from her old tutelage. We are told no more of a Concert of Powers dictating the terms of the loan and presiding over the details of its administration. There is not even the rush of different nations to force money upon Turkey, as upon China, in order to obtain an equitable lien upon the national property. It is but one sign more of the break-up of the century-long theory of the balance of power in Europe—what Kinglake called the "Usage."

Bismarck once said that the problem of the Near East had an awkward habit of becoming acute at intervals of about twenty-one years. The Crimean war in the 50s was followed by the great Balkan explosion which ended in the Berlin Congress of 1878. But since then the unsettled question has disturbed the repose of nations at shorter periods. There has been no violent outbreak of hostilities, except the abortive war between Greece and Turkey, but the unrest in the Balkan states has been chronic, massacres in Armenia and Macedonia have not permitted European diplomacy to sleep, one "programme" after another has been adopted, like that of Müzzsteg in 1903, only to fail of enforcement, and then came the events of 1908 to make a complete finish of the old *status quo*. The doctrine to which the statesmen of Europe have outwardly subscribed for two generations is now an empty form. A moral revolution has swept its substance away. No radical change in territorial alignment has been brought about, except the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by the Austrian Empire—and that was little more than the recognition of an accomplished fact—but the entire atmosphere is different. The Chancellors and Foreign Secretaries of an earlier day would not know how to

breathe in the new air which envelops European diplomacy, to-day, in the presence of the questions of the Near East.

The man to whom the historians will doubtless give the credit, or discredit, of precipitating the new order of things is the Austrian Minister, Baron von Aehrenthal. His cool announcement last October, that Austria would thereafter regard Bosnia and Herzegovina as her own territory, really sounded the death-knell of the Concert of Europe, as formerly understood and observed. Preceded, as this was, only two days before, by Bulgaria's declaration of independence, it gave a shock to the old arrangements from which recovery has since been impossible. All the king's horses and all the king's men cannot put Humpty Dumpty back again. Baron von Aehrenthal's audacity has been crowned by the event. The outbursts of protest which it at once provoked have died away. England took firm ground, and held a high tone. There had been a breach of the Treaty of Berlin, and the guardians of the public law of Europe could not allow it to be sanctioned. Sir Edward Grey put this before Parliament and before the Cabinets of the Powers in the most emphatic way. At the very least, there must be another international conference to pass upon the bold initiative of Austria, and, if her act was not repudiated and disallowed, to make the usual "compensation" to the other Powers. There were the most confident predictions of a Congress of Europe to be held this past summer. Plans had gone so far that place and time and agenda had been discussed. But nothing has come of it all. The talk of a congress has faded out. Germany's firm backing of Austria, together with what was practically her ultimatum to Russia, made it certain that Austria's position at any meeting of the Powers would be unassailable. So the whole scheme appears to have been dropped indefinitely. But the work had been done. Old things had passed away in Europe, even if all things had not become new. As a well-informed writer in the *London Times* puts it:

The restoration of the Turkish Constitution, the proclamation of Bulgarian independence, the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the dethronement of Abdul Hamid, and the withdrawal of the international contingents from Crete, mark the close of the period that began with the Berlin treaty, and state in altered terms the problem of the Near East.

The necessary readjustments will take time and patience. Baron von Aehrenthal has been acclaimed as the new Bismarck. He is at least like that statesman in displaying moderation after a great triumph. Holding fast to what he has won, the Austrian Minister has been prudent and conciliatory in meeting the new situation. From anything like a war policy, he has shrunk, being confirmed in that course, doubtless, by the aged Emperor Francis Joseph, who has had bitter experience of the truth that any war may easily prove a blunder and calamity, both politically and financially. But there is no denying that Germany and Austria have become the centre of diplomatic interest in all that relates to the Eastern question. That again is proof of the remarkable change which has come over the face of European politics. It may not be necessary to speak of rolling up the map of Europe, but though territorial possessions and names may long remain unchanged, the moral dislocation of the great Usage is undoubted.

A NOTABLE QUINQUENNium.

Five years, almost to a day, before Peary came out of the Arctic wilderness and began the now famous Battle of the Explorers, another battle was fought and finished on the other side of the world. It was actual conflict. Japan had just beaten the Russian army at Liao-Yang in the first pitched battle of a war whose vast historical consequences we have not yet fully realized. Between two such surprisingly dramatic events as the triumph of Asia over Europe and the discovery of the North Pole, lies a short stretch of years packed close with notable achievements. The balancing of age against age and century against century, is rather a profitless occupation, recalling the favorite topic of debate on backwoods platforms, "Resolved, that Greece did more for civilization than Rome." There are some who, like Professor Walsh, believe that the age of faith, which many of us call the Dark Ages, marked the apex of human attainment. The thirteenth century is to that authority the "greatest of centuries," and he has written a book to prove it. Others have plumped for the eighteenth century because it contained in itself the seed of which the nineteenth witnessed the fruition. But this

doctrine of the seed may lead one too far away. It has led Dr. Walsh back into the Middle Ages; it might take us to the time of all beginnings.

But reduce the comparison to five-year periods, and the game grows more absorbing. A half-decade largely excludes movements, tendencies, and seeds, and deals with a certain number of concrete facts, which are easy enough to compare. Or, if origins and causes are eligible for the contest, these cannot be so many in number or so badly intertangled as not to be amenable to comparative treatment. There are not many five-year periods that begin sharply and yet yield transcendent historical events. The first that suggests itself is the five years of French history from 1789 to 1794. This calls up immediately the five years of American history from 1776 to 1781. And so we may go on pushing back our quinquennial indicator like the slide on a vernier, till it covers a significant period or single significant event—1688 in England, 1538 in England, 1492, Charlemagne's crowning in 800, the five years after the battle of Actium, the five years from the crossing of the Rubicon to the tragedy at the base of Pompey's statue, or the five years after Salamis. The present is at heart usually a humble age. For all its loud complacencies, the passing day is always deferential to the past, and awed before the future. Even the most hardened of spread-eagle orators will hesitate to assert that the years 1904-1909 will mean more in the history of civilization than the age of the discovery of America, or the age of American liberation, or the age that witnessed the death of feudal Europe.

And yet what a magnificent record of progress is included between the February day of five years ago, when the Japanese torpedo-boats threw themselves at the Port Arthur fleet, and the February day when Peary set out on his final dash for the Pole. The political and social results of the great war in the East have not yet been fully reaped. But already we can enumerate the admission of Japan into the family of great Powers, the establishment of constitutional government in Russia, a Constitution in Persia, a Constitution in Turkey, the promise of a Constitution in China, and the beginnings of self-government for India. In other words, within five years nine hundred million

souls have taken a highly critical step forward in their political evolution. The complacency of Christendom received a setback when, after pagan Japan, Mohammedan Turkey and Persia demonstrated the compatibility between a non-Christian faith and political progress. On a somewhat lower plane of importance, we have the introduction of universal suffrage in Austria and in Sweden; the dissolution of a partnership nearly a century old between Sweden and Norway, and of a still older partnership, between the Church and the State, in France; the appearance of the British Labor party in Parliament, with important consequent changes in the British government system; the introduction of woman's suffrage in Finland. In the birth of a great British commonwealth in South Africa we touch once more on a matter of capital importance.

And then, of course, there is Science's record. The discovery of the North Pole may be of no prime scientific value, but simply as the successful conclusion of a three hundred years' effort, the event is enough to signalize its age. It is only two years since land first spoke to land across the Atlantic without visible medium, but already we are habituated to the miracle of the wireless. The "conquest of the air" is still fresh to us, but how much longer it will remain so we dare not predict. If it comes to balancing results, who shall say that the beginning of human flight will bring less important consequences to civilization than the establishment of the American republic, or the birth of European democracy? At bottom, we repeat, the present is always humble towards the past and the future. But who shall begrudge a little outburst of vanity now and then to an age that can count, within the space of an infant's life, conquests so great and changes so immeasurable?

THE TARIFF COMMISSION.

The appointments to the new tariff commission, made public on Saturday, are of a sort to argue that President Taft and Secretary MacVeagh mean business. They would not have sought the services of such men, unless they had intended the work to be worth while; nor could they have secured them for a merely ornamental or dead-and-alive

function. Prof. H. C. Emery of Yale, named as chairman, is an economist of recognized training and acuteness. He has kept his scientific knowledge closely in touch with actual affairs. With him will be associated Mr. Reynolds—not the great Reynolds, but an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury—and Mr. Sanders of Chicago, who represents the practical agricultural interests of the West. Thus we have a board, or commission, or whatever it is to be called, which has at once a good balance and promise of efficiency.

There has been a vast amount of words regarding the scope of this commission's activities. It is well known that the full plan for a scientific tariff commission did not find favor with Congress. Speaker Cannon would have none of it. To his lofty mind, it was abhorrent to think of a body of experts inquiring into the exact facts regarding cost of production in this country, and discovering the needlessness of given tariff rates, except to make profits inordinate. Even the truncated form of a provision for a tariff commission, reported in the Aldrich bill, was further cut down in conference between the two houses. As the President's authority stands in the law enacted, it reads thus:

To secure information to assist the President in the discharge of the duties imposed upon him by this section, and the officers of the government in the administration of the customs laws, the President is hereby authorized to employ such persons as may be required.

Now, "this section," of course, was section 2 of the Payne-Aldrich bill, dealing with the maximum and minimum tariff, and with reprisals against foreign countries. Senator Hale openly contended in the Senate that it tied the President's hands, and prevented him from investigating, in an independent and thorough way, the domestic workings of any tariff schedule. On the other hand, Senator Aldrich maintained that the clause, as accepted at last, gave the President ample power. Mr. Taft himself declared, at the time, that he was satisfied with the outcome, since the language of the law, when "properly construed," would admit of all the inquiries that were contemplated under the original scheme of a tariff commission. That the President is still of that mind, was shown on Saturday at Beverly, when he said that he did not care what the new body was called, so long