

lutely to do Thy bidding, and, armed with Thine authority and moved by a love like Thine, serve our own generation by the will of God, with untiring zeal, unceasing prayer, self-denying giving, and whole-hearted devotion, bearing the tidings of salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth! Amen.

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## THE YEAR 1896 IN JAPAN.

BY REV. GEORGE WILLIAM KNOX, D.D., RYE, N. Y.

The year in Japan has been full of interest. If the world has not followed the story with the keen attention given to the year of war, it is not because the events have been less momentous, but because peace seems commonplace and prosaic after the glamour and poetry of international combat.

*Politics.*—The Government remains master of the political situation. We have followed in the years past the slow development of constitutional and parliamentary government. At first it was the dream of a little group of reformers. Against them were arrayed all the forces of the empire—police, army, official, judiciary, a subsidized press, the great banks, the educational forces as maintained by the Government. But the reformers dreamed on, nothing daunted. They organized a political society. Its head was Mr. (now Count) Itagaki. The society grew, and gained in influence. Its leaders, excepting Itagaki, were imprisoned, fined, persecuted. But the society none the less became a power. It finally was organized as the Liberal Party, and its first great end was attained when a constitution was given the empire and a diet promised. Some of the party leaders went direct from prison to leadership in the Diet, and from this party the Government met an opposition which it could not overcome.

The "Liberals" were termed "Radicals" by their opponents, and every destructive and anarchistic purpose was ascribed to them. The charges were never true. Count Itagaki and the men associated with him were moderate Liberals, whose ideal was the British Constitution. They fought the Government in the Diet session after session, and the result was a deadlock. Diet and Government opposed, neither could accomplish anything of value. The Liberals were determined to force capitulation to compel the Government to admit the majority of the Diet to a responsible share in the Imperial Cabinet. The Government was equally resolved to maintain its position, it being an oligarchy appointed nominally by the emperor and quite independent of the Diet. The position became impossible, and three years ago there were indications of an approaching agreement between Liberals and Government.

The war hastened this development. All parties united in the support of the Government, vying with each other in loyalty. And after peace the alliance between Government and Liberals was proclaimed. With a na-