

lands composing the empire of Japan are situate in the north-western part of the Pacific Ocean. They are part of the long line of volcanic islands stretching from the peninsula of Kamptschatka on the north to Formosa (the islands) on the south. The direction in which they lie is north-east and south-west, and in a general way they are parallel to the Continent" (of Asia).*

The isles and islets around the main portion of Japan are so numerous, being not only hundreds but thousands in number, as to be styled the Japanese archipelago. But the Japan, as known to Europeans, consists of four adjacent islands. Of this the first and the northernmost is called Yezo. It is mountainous, cold and sparsely inhabited by aboriginal races. It may be interesting to the traveller, the geologist and the ethnologist, but it is of little account, politically or commercially, at present. Near its southern extremity lie the port and town of Hakodate which is rising in importance.

To the south of this, and separated only by a narrow strait, is the main island, which has no distinctive appellation. It used to be called Nippon, but incorrectly, for that name applies, as already seen, not to this island only but to the whole empire. Dr. Murray writes: "Among the Japanese this island has no separate name. It is often called by them

* *Japan*, "Story of the Nations" series, by David Murray, Ph. D., whose orthograghy I adopt, and whose authority I shall cite for the latest version of many events.

Hondo, which may be translated Main Island. By this translated name this principal island will here be designated." From its northern extremity this island runs mainly south to Tokyo, the modern capital close to the modern port of Yokohama, both places being now very well known to Europeans, a distance of about 590 miles. Thence it runs in a south-westerly direction for about 340 miles, to Shimonoseki, on a strait, also notorious in recent times as the place where the treaty of peace was concluded between China and Japan after the recent war. The total length of the island may thus be stated at 1,130 miles. But as the island is very long so also is it narrow; the width is nowhere greater than 200 miles, and in many places is not more than 100 miles. Down the middle of it, in general terms there runs a range of mountains, largely volcanic, frequently rising to 4,000 feet above sea level or more, and at one point, standing at 12,500 feet. This point is Fuji-san, generally known to Europeans as Fuji-yama; it is an almost perfect volcanic cone, snow-clad for some ten months in the year; it is about sixty miles from Tokyo the capital, and is the pride of the Japanese. Amidst this dividing range, and north of Tokyo, is Nikko now famous among travellers as the seat of much that is most sacred and picturesque in Japan. This range divides the island into two very long and narrow parts, the eastern and the western; and it determines the natural drainage of the country, the rivers hardly

deserving the name, and the streams with fertile valleys; the territory becomes richer and more open as it advances southwards. On the eastern side the climate is milder and softer, owing to various oceanic influences, on the western side it is colder and harder, facing the Asiatic Continent. On the east side is Tokyo, once the capital of the Shoguns of the feudal system, as known to Europeans in the beginning of the nineteenth century, but now the capital and residence of the Emperor, and the political centre of the Empire; also near it on the south is Yokohama, the principal seaport whose celebrity is chiefly modern. On the west side is situate Kyoto, until quite recent times the Imperial capital and the residence of the Emperor, though perhaps yielding to Tokyo in political consequence. It is now deserted by its august residents, but is still highly regarded as a place replete with memories. Near it is lake Biwa, so called from its resemblance to a certain musical instrument, and greatly admired by those who visit it. On the southern shore of this Main Island is Osaka, the second largest city in Japan, and in the very heart of the country. Near it is Kobè where modern travellers often land.

South of the Main Island are the two islands Shikoku and Kyushu, making the third and fourth of the island group. Between them and the Main Island is the celebrated sheet of salt water named "The Inland Sea." It is about 240 miles long and is studded with innumerable islets, several hundreds

in number, but it is not likely that they can ever have been really counted. Mr. Chamberlain says that the Japanese poets have never raved over this lovely portion of their native country. To the European traveller, however, it has become a household word, and by many geographers it will probably be regarded as one of the most beautiful expanses of water in the world.

Of the two southern islands, the easternmost or Shikoku has no memorable place. But the westernmost or Kyushu has been one of the most important and distinguished parts of the Empire. On the west side facing the Asiatic Continent is Nagasaki, long a main centre of European trade and still a place where European travellers land. Near it is Deshima the old Dutch settlement. Near the southern extremity of the island is the district of Satsuma, on the whole the most famous district in all Japan, both as regards feudal organisation, achievements in war, prowess of chieftains and ceramic art. Its history may be known only to the student, but its art is admired by all cultured persons everywhere.

The total area of this Island-Empire may be stated at 160,000 square miles, including Formosa and the islets recently ceded. The population was stated at the census by calculations based on enumeration, at $42\frac{1}{4}$ millions in 1895; it must now be more than 45 millions inasmuch as the yearly returns show a constant excess of births over deaths. It stood at $40\frac{1}{2}$ millions in 1890, when its present constitution was promulgated.

Respecting religion, the Japanese would be reckoned by statisticians among the total of Buddhists in the world. The question of the religion, or religions, in Japan, will be considered in the succeeding Chapters.

As the Empire of Japan embraces ten or eleven degrees of latitude there will be some difference of climate, as for example between Satsuma in the south and Yezo in the north. The general character of the climate is thus described by Mr. Chamberlain: "Roughly speaking the Japanese summer is hot and occasionally wet; September and the first half of October much wetter; the late autumn and early winter cool, comparatively dry and delightful; February and March disagreeable with snow occasionally . . . the late spring rainy and windy with beautiful days interspersed." * The early summer is the time for seeing the varied display of flowers for which Japan is renowned.

* *Guidebook to Japan*, 1894.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE STATE OF JAPAN IN 1800.

As a starting-point for the story of the progress of Japan during the nineteenth century, some account must be given of the land and the people as they were about the year 1800.

In the first place the Constitution* and the actual Administration of that day must be set forth accurately, though briefly, if the wondrous changes which afterwards came about are to be understood. This Constitution was then, as it had been from a remote antiquity, Imperial in its foundation. The Emperor, or in Japanese the Mikado, was in the eyes of the Japanese heaven-born, was hedged in by a sort of divinity and was the head of the national religion, or of the creeds which made up that composite religion. But if in a certain sense he was the spiritual head of the State, he was the temporal head also. He might delegate, either voluntarily or by the compulsion of circumstances, the governing power to others and himself live in a quasi sacred seclusion. Still the government would be carried on in his name, and for him avowedly. Revolution and civil war might upset great potentates in the country but would

never touch its Imperial position; and so he was above and beyond the chance of overthrow.

Next, the unit of administration even of the government itself was and always has been, the Daimyo. He was exactly like the feudal lord of Europe in the middle ages, or the chief of a Scottish Highland clan up to the middle of the eighteenth century. He had a certain district greater or smaller according to local circumstances. There were nearly three hundred of these jurisdictions, and they have by Europeans been styled Daimiates. In his jurisdiction the Daimyo was secular in all respects, on the time-honoured conditions that he answered the requirements of the Imperial service, and furnished contingents to its armies in event of war. Under each Daimyo was a military class, styled Samurai, the upper grades of whom were like the knights of the feudal system in Europe. Their status, traditions and privileges were as old as those of the Daimyos themselves. •In some respects they resembled the Cossacks of the Don. They were so distinct from the rest of their countrymen that they resembled a caste as it is understood in India. In their beginning they were like the fighting caste of the early Hindus. Each of them had the right to carry two swords, one longer the other shorter. But in later times they took the lead in matters other than warlike. Dr. Murray gives in their favour a testimony so emphatic that it deserves citation: "In the large cities . . . the arrogance and overbearing pride of the

Samurai made them an intolerable nuisance. Nevertheless it must be allowed that nearly all that was good and high-minded and scholarly in Japan was to be found among the ranks of the feudal retainers. . . . They were the students who went out into the world to learn what Western science had to teach them. . . . To them Japan owes its ancient as well as its modern system of education."

At this time, that is 1800, their purely civil virtues had not attained full development, and they afterwards did many other important things as will be seen hereafter.

In ancient times, and generally up to about the year 1150 of our era, the Daimyos took orders direct from the Emperor, or his Ministers in the Court attached to his person. There were governors over provinces containing several Daimiates, who would be civilian statesmen taken from the noble families around the Court. Still everything was under the Emperor without any intermediary. At this epoch, that is the end of the twelfth century, there was a potent and ambitious chief of a clan, a great Daimyo by name Yoritomo, the leading figure in Japanese history. After desperate fighting by land and water, he got the power of the State into his mailed hand, though he never dreamt of deposing the Emperor. He waited on His Imperial Majesty at Kyoto, but seeing that place too priest ridden, and too effeminate for effective government, he moved his puissance to the other side of the island and set up his establish-

ment, but not a royal court, at Kamakura not far from the modern Yokohama. What followed thereon is a turning point in Japanese history, and shall be given in Dr. Murray's words: "He (Yoritomo) was authorised to send into each province a military man who was to reside there and aid the civil Governor in military affairs. Naturally the military man, being more active, gradually absorbed much of the power formerly exercised by the governor. These military men were under the authority of Yoritomo, and formed the beginning of that feudal system which was destined to prevail so long in Japan. He also received from the Court, shortly after his visit to Kyoto, the title of '*Sei, i tai shogun*,' which was the highest military title that had ever been bestowed on a subject. This is the title which down to 1868 was borne by the real rulers of Japan."

The military head of the feudal system, which was then founded and which became well known to Europeans in later days, naturally intended that his position should be hereditary. And so it was, while the possessor was strong enough to hold his own. But the clan of Yoritomo was not the only powerful one in Japan. After him there were several changes in the line of succession, brought about by rival Daimyos often with extreme violence. In 1596 Taiko Hideyoshi, whose name is highly celebrated in Japanese history, but who was not a Daimyo at all, being only a soldier of fortune and of humble origin, overturned by force the then Shogun, though he did

not himself reach the Shogunate. After his death Ieyasu, also a soldier of fortune, defeated his rivals in a bloody battle at Seki-ga-hara in 1600. Dr. Murray writes: "This battle must always stand . . . as one of the decisive battles in the history of Japan. By it was settled the fate of the country for two hundred and fifty years,"—that is from 1600 to 1850. He was appointed Shogun by the Emperor in 1603, not in virtue of birth but as having the actual power. He then founded the Tokugawa line of Shoguns, and moved the headquarters of the Shogunate to Yedo at the head of the Yokohama Gulf as it is now known, and there he built his castle which is still to be seen. It was this Tokugawa dynasty which sat, not on the throne, but on the seat of power, in the year 1800.

Though Ieyasu was an excellent soldier in the field, and may also be said to have waded through blood to his position, yet he was a capital manager of foreign affairs and proved himself to be a good organiser in civil affairs. Dr. Murray writes: "The common conception of Ieyasu is not that of a great commander like Hideyoshi, but rather an organiser and lawmaker, who . . . constructed a firm and abiding State." He was considerate, indeed conciliatory, in his management of the turbulent Daimyos. He re-classified them with a view to bettering the feudal administration; and the total number of their five sections was fixed at 263. He divided the people into four classes, first the Samu-

rai or feudal retainers already mentioned, to whom he assigned a status over the other three classes, namely the farmers second, as a feudal system is based on land, then thirdly the artisans whom he greatly esteemed especially for their sword-making, then fourthly merchants, and his placing them last indicated what indeed proved to be the case for many generations, that Japan was not awake to a glimmer of perception regarding the importance of trade. This division of his bears some resemblance to the castes of India. From his division however he excludes the priestly class, for whom he does not venture to prescribe anything. He was deferential to the old Shinto system or faith if it could be called so, and to the later Booddhism, which had by his time been accepted more or less by most of the people. He wished to tolerate all religious sects except the Christian which he described as "a false and corrupt school." He was a diligent patron of learning and especially favoured the introduction of the philosophy of Confucius from China, apparently because that sage inculcated the doctrine of obedience in all grades, a doctrine which was conducive to the permanence of a feudal system.

Though this Chapter does not embrace any parts of Japanese history save those which bear upon the conditions existing in 1800, yet some notice must be given to the policy of Ieyasu in respect to Christianity—and this will be reserved for a separate Chapter. It is enough here to say that the extirpation of

Christianity by force left Booddhism in triumphant possession of the field. This naturally leads to a brief consideration of what was the religion, or the religions of Japan about the year 1800. In Japan, as in China, it could not be said that one religion prevailed with certain classes or in certain places, and another religion with, or in, others. Indeed there were two observances prevalent throughout Japan, and with all Japanese, one, that of the Shinto and the other that of Booddha. with all its modern accessories and additions.

The Shinto is the original faith of the Japanese or "animistic" according to the present phraseology. Its origin need not here be traced; sufficient now to say that out of much grotesque mythology there was evolved a sun-goddess from whom sprang the line of Mikados or Emperors which still exists. Hence that divine character of the imperial race and lineage, in the eyes of the people, which will be seen hereafter to have such potent effect on Japanese politics. There was a chain of ceremonial observances, chiefly ancestral, lasting through many centuries. There were no articles of faith properly so called, no images nor visible gods. But there were temples everywhere in town and country, on plain and hill, extreme simplicity being their characteristic. Whether Shintoism ever was a religion properly so called has always been doubted. It probably approached more nearly to a religion in the year 1800 than it does now. Then the Emperor, in his Court at Kyoto, was the

visible head and centre of the national idea, that is the Shinto; he was the descendant of the Sun-goddess, and his surroundings were sacred. His personal observances were all Shinto, and his spiritual claims were all derived therefrom. It was this position which caused some observers to suppose erroneously that he was only the spiritual head of Japan, while the Shogun was the temporal head. He was both spiritual and temporal head, while the Shogun was his deputy only in temporalities.

But while the Emperor was in the strictest sense the spiritual head of the Shinto, he also recognised the Booddhist religion. Whether he was equally head of that also in Japan may be doubted, still he was looked up to by the Booddhists as their head upon earth if there was any. He had Booddhist priests and temples about him.

In the sixth century of our era Booddhism, then at least a thousand years old, had been introduced into Japan. For a while it advanced only among the nobles. Later on some preachers, who had been in China, taught that Booddha was the great spirit from whom the Shinto myths, heroes, goddesses and emperors had sprung. This combination caused Booddhism to be popular. In the thirteenth century two famous preachers appeared, since which time Booddhism has been the real religion of Japan. But it became overlaid with superstitions and manifold abuses. It is from the followers of one of these teachers, Nichiren, that the fanatics of Japan have

always come. On the other hand there arose a reforming party named Shin-Shins who introduced a far purer faith with much persuasive effect.

Such then were the two religions firmly established and richly endowed throughout Japan. The account of them can here be given in the most general terms only. The determination of many indefinite points regarding them would involve much discussion without any practical effect. Suffice it here to state that they received universal acceptance, popular devotion and the utmost support from the temporal power.

The civil government in the interior under the Daimyos was not ill-conducted or oppressive. It was doubtless rough and ready but not unpopular; was seldom resisted with violence and therefore rarely resorted to severity. The Samurai might be overbearing, sometimes also the Booddhist priests; otherwise there was no particular grievance. The land was held by peasant-proprietors who paid the land-revenue to the Daimyos. The labourers were industrious and cheerful. Though there were crimes and criminals, still the people generally were well behaved and temperate, but in some domestic respects were supposed to be wanting in strictness. They felt themselves to be brave and enduring, though their self-confidence arose from the memory of times long past and not from any trial in recent generations. Owing to the established policy of the State, there was an utter want of enterprise and an

entire ignorance of everything beyond their own shores. But in the industrial arts they generally possessed an accuracy of sight, a fineness of perception, an exquisite power of handiwork for the embodiment of the most refined ideas—which indicated nervous force and determined thought.

As the peninsula of Korea lies just opposite Japan, with only a breadth of about a hundred miles of sea between them, it has ever been and will be a point of high interest to the Japanese. It is indeed naturally regarded by them as nearly concerning their national independence, as it is an offshoot of Manchuria, which is an integral part of the Chinese Empire. As that Empire seemed in former days to overshadow Japan, the Japanese feared lest Chinese dominion should be established in Korea. At one time, that is just before the establishment of the Tokugawa line of Shoguns, Japan had attempted under the usurper Hideyoshi to conquer Korea, and had failed after a fearful effusion of blood both Korean and Japanese. It succeeded indeed only in ruining the country irreparably. In this cruel invasion one of the Japanese leaders was the Daimyo of Satsuma. When returning from this war to his native Satsuma, he brought with him seventeen families of Korean potters and settled them in his province. They have lived there ever since and retain the marks of their nationality. It is to them that the Satsuma *faience* owes its exquisite beauty and its world-wide reputation. Afterwards the Tokugawa

Shogun, namely Ieyasu, made a formal peace between Korea and Japan, which endured for two centuries and a half, that is until the growing disorder in Korea itself caused questions to arise between China and Japan which led to the war that towards the close of the nineteenth century vitally affected both of these empires. This war, however, was due to troubles which may be traced back to the Japanese invasion of 1591. It was then that Korea was so weakened and so wounded inwardly that it became unable to maintain order internally. The state of Korea about that time, 1607, is seen from this melancholy passage in Dr. Murray's work:

"The ruinous effects of this invasion were never overcome in Korea itself. Her cities had been destroyed, her industries blotted out, and her fertile fields rendered desolate. Once she had been the fruitful tree from which Japan was glad to gather her arts and civilisation, but now she was only a branchless trunk which the fires of war had charred and left standing."

Still from that time, 1607 to 1800, peace reigned between Korea and Japan. Indeed the policy of the Japanese resulted in an exclusiveness whereby they shut themselves out from all foreign intercourse, permitting no foreign trade except at one spot in their south-eastern extremity, hugging their own notions, feeding on their own ideas, preserving their own customs, arrangements and even armament, how-

ever antiquated they might be. Her soldiers were clad in grotesque armour, with mediæval weapons; her warships were only junks, her armaments were decaying from disuse. Thus in 1800 Japan was in peace at home and abroad, with a feudal system answering for internal order, with feudal chiefs or princes, as Daimyos, popular, influential and potent in their several districts, with a feudal head or governor, the Shogun at Yedo, and an Emperor reputed to be divine, dreaming his placid days away at Kyoto.

As the cultured classes in all countries have seen for several centuries, the Japanese are endowed with high artistic talent in many respects. The whole land being, in 1800, governed by wealthy families, proud of their belongings and surroundings, there arose a great demand for beautiful products of refined loveliness, in harmony with the climatic condition which, though not enervating, were generally soft. Thus Japan had long been, and still was in 1800 a fit nurse for artistic, if not poetic, children. Though the most famous sculptors and painters lived before 1650, yet from that date to 1800, there glided on the golden time for the acme and zenith of Japanese art. The like of it in the sum total of achievement had never been seen before and probably will not be so afterwards. In variety and extent it may be surpassed in India, in richness of colouring and in brilliancy of effect it may be exceeded in

China. But for artistic quality of colouring, for appropriateness of effect, for originality of design, for observation of natural objects, for perfection of handiwork in metal, in wood, in ivory, in lacquer, it remains as yet unequalled in the world.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE JESUITS AND CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN.

THE subject of Roman Catholic Christianity in Japan is too sad and too sacred to be combined with the ordinary history of the Tokugawa Shoguns, and had best be treated of in a Chapter by itself.

In the year 1800 there were edicts of the Shoguns still published by placards against these Christians as among the standing orders of the Government. These were continuations of edicts which had been repeatedly issued from time to time during the past two centuries. There was still in Yedo an official styled the Christian Inquisitor with a staff of assistants for the extinguishing any spark of Christianity.* It may seem strange that such steps should be persevered in when the Government had long ago boasted of the complete extinction of what they called "the corrupt sect." But they knew that, despite all their precautions, some scattered communities were still existing who followed the observances of their faith secretly, and whose members could not be individually identified, and who were never betrayed either by renegades or by neighbours. These circumstances were thought to be dangerous to the Japanese polity, especially as there was ever a lurk-

ing dread of support being afforded to the Christians from European sources.

This form of Christianity had been introduced into Japan early in the sixteenth century by Jesuit fathers, among whom was St. Francis Xavier. Starting from Nagasaki they met with conclusive success throughout the island of Kyushu. Daimyos and princes, their followers and retainers, their people, all joined the Missionaries. They built churches and colleges, with a Portuguese and Spanish hierarchy. They crossed the Inland Sea, settled themselves happily at Osaka on its shores and passed on to the Imperial City at Kyoto. Hereabouts Booddhism was particularly strong; but just then a leader, in the civil war then going on, had a contest with the Booddhists, and that induced him to favour the Christians, who thus grew in strength all around Kyoto. Then Christian Daimyos with Christian Samurais took part in the civil war, and so the Christians offered a considerable native contingent to the Japanese commander whose side they espoused. About this time it was computed that the Christians numbered not less than six hundred thousand persons, including men of wealth, status, landed power and influence. This was a goodly portion of the population as it then was during the latter part of the sixteenth century in the finest part of Japan. They sent two Japanese Christian Princes under Jesuit guidance to Southern Europe who were received with the greatest

pomp in Portugal, in Spain and at the Vatican by Gregory XIII. This step of theirs was surely dangerous, unless they were quite sure of their position, for thereby the suspicions of the Japanese Government might be aroused lest foreign support was being indirectly sought.

In the latter part of the 16th century such suspicion actually arose in the mind of Hideyoshi, the famous leader already mentioned. He apprehended that, with Christian help among the Japanese, either Spain or Portugal, or both, designed to carve out European States in Japan. He thought he had some evidence to this effect; it was feeble and slender, still he believed. At that time Spain was hardly capable of such a design, but Portugal might have become so. The Jesuit fathers were by the rules of their Order precluded from any such policy. But jealous Franciscans and Dominicans had arrived in Japan, and they may have spread mischievous rumours. Dutch traders, too, came, naturally smarting under Spanish oppression in the Low Countries, and doubtless they said their very worst against the Jesuits. Be the process of belief what it may, Hideyoshi came to believe that Jesuit Christianity was striking at the very root of Japanese independence. But he did not live to take any decisive measure. After him the civil war resulted in the re-establishment of the Feudal Shogunate under Ieyasu. Then the same belief against the Christians grew in the mind of the Shogun Ieyasu, and it caused a persecution that left

a black and ineffaceable stain on the history of the Tokugawa Shogunate.

In the last Chapter mention has been made, in reference to Roman Catholic Christianity, of Ieyasu's parting fulmination, for such indeed it proved to be. In the last year of his government a terrific persecution of these Christians began. It was continued by his son and completed by his grandson, both considered good Shoguns politically, and the latter great as well as good. Its horrors were too dreadful for description, indeed they are not exceeded and rarely equalled in the grim records of persecution in any time or country. Dr. Murray writes thus, after much examination of evidence: "It has never been surpassed for cruelty and brutality on the part of the persecutors or for courage and constancy on the part of those who suffered. . . . The tortures inflicted are almost beyond belief." * The horrors raged from about Kyoto and Osaka on the mainland to the southern extremity of the island of Kyushu. The Christians of all ranks and classes, from the Prince to the peasant, stood by one another, without the least thought of surrendering their faith to the armed force of their own countrymen. Hecatombs of slaughter, fiendish tortures, produced no effect at all. No effort, however diabolical, was spared to

* From my own inquiries I understand that enlightened Japanese do not deny the severity of the persecution; they only urge in extenuation the strength of what they regard as the patriotic motive.

obtain recantation; here and there a victim, European or Japanese, frenzied out of his senses by torture, may have made a feeble sign which was interpreted by their tormentors as retractation; but nothing more than this most pitiful result was obtained. * For some time the repressive efforts were conducted by the provincial authorities, and the Christians, though very numerous, were scattered, and thus were able to endure only but not resist. At length a mass of surviving Christians resolved to resist. They appointed a leader, occupied a vacant castle near Nagasaki, collected stores, and with the help of Christian Samurais inured to warfare, organised a defence. The provincial authorities, unable to take the place, applied to the Shogun at Yedo for aid, who sent a large body of troops. These troops together with the provincial levies made up a besieging force of 160,000 † men wherewith to breach and storm the last stronghold of Japanese Christianity. The Dutch from their trading settlement in the neighbouring island lent some slight aid to the Shogun against those who were their co-religionists, even though belonging to a different Church, a circumstance disgraceful to them, which they vainly strove to palliate. The stronghold being captured at last, every Christian, man, woman and child, in it was executed by orders from Yedo. As

* For one ordinary form of the prescribed recantation see Chamberlain's *Guidebook*, p. 107.

† This number is given on the authority of Dr. Murray.

might be expected, a religion thus extirpated was cherished in secret; the memory of Francis Xavier is revered, and on lowly Jesuit tombs fresh flowers are periodically placed by unknown hands which the authorities with all their inquisition never discover.

These remarkable events have been freely discussed by Christian writers belonging to Churches other than the Church of the Jesuits. Some of these seem to think that the Jesuit movement was, at bottom, political rather than religious, and that these Japanese Christians had embraced the Religion with little more than an adaptation of their own ceremonies, rites and idols to its service and ordinances, and without any heartfelt acceptance of its real teaching or its holy doctrines. To all this it may be replied that beyond doubt Ieyasu and his successors had a lively belief in the political danger to be apprehended from these Christians, but that no tangible ground was ever found for this belief. Unless their belief had been positive they would not have acted as they did. They happened to be mild, prudent and conciliatory men; not likely to be roused to murderous passion, save by some overmastering fear for the fate of their own country. Again it may be admitted that the Jesuits did unduly endeavour to adapt their teachings of the One true Faith to the prejudices of their Japanese hearers, and did but too often assimilate the externals of their services to the insignia of the native religions, thus making in their zeal for conversion some compromise or sacrifice of

Christian principle. But here their error ceased. They must have inculcated with undying forcefulness much of what is most striking, touching, elevating and inspiring in Christianity. Otherwise their Japanese martyrs and heroes, of both sexes, of all ages and classes, could never have endured as they did to the hardest of ends. Every worldly motive, love of fatherland and of fellow countrymen, every political advantage, personal safety for selves and families, impelled them towards a broad and easy road. They chose the short and rugged path leading to physical agony and to execution, with a constancy and fortitude that showed how love of Faith can be as strong as death, and how jealousy for the truth can be as bitter as the grave. A monument ought to be raised in the memories of European Christendom to their Japanese fellow Christians who suffered and perished in the early part of the seventeenth century.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SHOGUNATE OR FEUDAL SYSTEM FROM 1800
TO 1853.

It has been shown how at the beginning of the nineteenth century the Tokugawa Shogunate, or Feudal system, stood at the height of ascendancy in the government of Japan. The progress of this government has now to be traced to the middle of the nineteenth century, when circumstances began to prepare the way for change. Until that time, that is from 1800 to 1850, the course of this government ran with a smoothness rarely to be paralleled in any other civilised country for so long a space as half a century. There was no trouble of any consequence either at home or abroad, and there reigned a peace which, though not unknown in the seventeenth and eighteenth century for Japan, was wholly different from anything that had been known in the preceding centuries. For the first half of the nineteenth century Japan afforded a typical instance of a nation being happy that has no history.

Dr. Murray gives an instructive summary of the dates, the reigns, the ends of the several series of Shoguns, from Yoritomo in the year 1192. Yori-

tomo indeed died a natural death, but his next two successors, son and grandson, were murdered. The next series of rulers were called "the shadow Shoguns," because they were always minors under the leading strings of chieftains, and their several fates can readily be imagined. After that, for a century and more, the Shogun of the day was usually dethroned or murdered, occasionally was he allowed to die in peace. Next came a strong series of Shoguns (Ashikaga) which lasted for more than two centuries, beginning with long reigns and peaceful deaths, but ending in bloodshed and civil war. Thus we reach the year 1573. Then began a time styled that of the usurpation, which lasted till 1602. In this quarter of a century the Japan Commanders, among whom was Hideyoshi, already mentioned, and the Japanese troops displayed many of the best military qualities, if only they had been fighting with a foreign foe instead of with each other. Then Ieyasu in 1602 established the Tokugawa Shogunate as already seen. So there began a happy series of Shoguns, with long reigns and quiet deathbeds, till 1787, with one exception only when in 1709 the Shogun was killed by his wife. In 1787, then, the Shogun Ienari assumed at Yedo the Shogunate which he occupied at the opening of the nineteenth century and held till 1836, a long tenure of fifty-nine years. He then resigned in favour of his son and died five years later. It was a sort of custom in this series of Shoguns for the Shogun to retire in favour

of his son. So Ienari the Shogun was succeeded by his son Ieyoshi.

There is nothing to be recorded for all this time regarding the Emperors, who reigned only and did not take any part in State affairs. But it is to be remarked that in two long reigns Empresses were in sole occupation of the Imperial throne; one Empress (Myosho) reigning from 1630 to 1696; the other (Go-Sackuramachi) reigning from 1763 to 1813. The latter consequently was on the throne at Kyoto when the nineteenth century opened.

The constitution of the Shogunate under the Tokugawa has been described briefly in the previous Chapter. It was fully maintained under the Shogun Ienari, who was in the seat of power at Yedo in 1800. During several generations his predecessors had acquired possession of fiefs and castles in various parts of the country so as to overawe any Daimyos who might possibly prove troublesome. All the Daimyos were obliged to have residences at Yedo under the eye of the Shogun, and to live there for a part of the year. Still the administration in each district, subject always to the supervision of the Shogun's lieutenants, was left to the feudal Daimyos who indeed understood their people thoroughly. Meanwhile the impression grew that owing to the extraordinarily long peace of two centuries, to the quietude and isolation of the country, to the internal prosperity which seemed to grow apace without much political exertion on the part of any one, the Sho-

guns had lost to a great extent their original character and were still further losing it during the tenure of each succeeding reign. Originally it was held that the Mikado or Emperor at Kyoto being effeminate and effete the Shogun at Yedo must be active and ever to the front in defensive and warlike preparation, and in personal supervision. But at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and indeed some time before that era, effeminacy had begun to creep over Yedo as well, and love of ease had impaired the vigour of the Shoguns. Dr. Murray writes of them: "On the whole they were content to fill the office of Shogun in a perfunctory manner and to leave to subordinates the duty of governing." Thus the Shogun, though still as grand and powerful as ever in external appearance, was yet suffering from a gradual loss of political repute and official prestige. This circumstance is noteworthy here, because it was one of the causes which sapped the foundations of the Shogunate and led to the catastrophe in which it was afterwards involved.

The national success in industrial art, though not permitted to bring to Japan that satisfaction which comes from the admiration of other nations, did yet delight an appreciative nation like the Japanese and make them feel proud of themselves. Their artistic taste was fostered by the scenery (in Mr. Chamberlain's words), "with the symmetrical outline of its volcanoes, with its fantastic rocks, its magnificent timber which somehow, even when growing naturally,

produces the impression of having been planted for artistic effect. . . . Every variety of scenery, from the gracefully lovely to the ruggedly grand, is to be found . . . in this beautiful land, a fitting abode for the most æsthetic of modern peoples."

The acme of Japan's ancient greatness had been reached. It was like a bloom that had been some time at its best and was now about to fall. The arts were still in their prime. Dr. Murray mentions "the arts which had given her (Japan) such a deservedly high rank, attained their greatest perfection. Keramics and lacquer, which are her most exquisite arts, achieved a degree of excellence to which we can now only look back with hopeless admiration. Metal-work, as shown in the manufacture of bronze and in the forging and mounting of swords, was scarcely less notable."

At this time the Shoguns Government did its utmost to keep all these beautiful things to itself, its land, its people. Its darling ambition was to receive nothing from other nations and so to render nothing in return. Since the growth of the political fears which induced them to extirpate Christianity, as already explained, the Shoguns, the Daimyos and the Japanese generally, resolved to have nothing to do with European nations. All ports were closed against Europeans generally, none of them were allowed to trade except the Dutch, and that at one port only, Nagasaki, and there, too, at a fixed locality and to a limited extent. All this time Europe

was almost entirely dependent on the Dutch for news and information relating to Japan. This prejudice, so strongly felt by the Chinese as to cause grievous detriment and ultimately disaster, was equally felt by the Japanese at this time. Later on this feeling was expressed racily by a Daimyo of the old school, as may be seen from Dr. Murray's *Japan*. "What! trade our gold, silver, copper, iron and sundry useful materials for wool, glass and similar trashy little articles? Even the limited barter of the Dutch factory ought to have been stopped."

As might be expected under a feudal system the civil administration in the districts, or Daimiates, was entirely under the Daimyos. Still there were codes, laws, precedents, of a somewhat full, even elaborate character, which must more or less have been under the supervision of the Government. There is every reason to believe that the people were prosperous and contented. If the Samurai class, already mentioned, did hold their heads high, yet their superiority was admitted.

There was something like education; it doubtless resembled that which was well known in China, though not pushed to similar extremes. The progress in science was by no means equal to that made in the arts.

Thus the government of Ienari the Shogun pursued its course like a meandering river, in the popular, but vain, belief that by folding herself up in a robe of exclusiveness and ignoring the outer world

Japan was working out her own destiny in her own way.

The only circumstances that disturbed this even tenor were occasional attempts by European Powers or by their representatives to gain admission within the charmed circle of Japan. These were, however, all staved off or brushed away. The most persistent were the Russians, they being of course the nearest and almost conterminous, and their efforts did not cease until the imprisonment of Captain Galotin in 1811.

Thus Ienari, the Shogun, having long passed his jubilee of government, resigned in 1836, in favour of his son Ieyoshi and died, a few years afterwards, in 1841. Perhaps he little thought that he was to be the last of the long line of Shoguns to lay down his power in peace and quietude.

In 1837 Ieyoshi, the new Shogun, began to rule, probably imagining that his time of government would be as undisturbed as that of his father and of his ancestors had been. But almost immediately there began the trouble with European or Western Powers, who knocked at the door of Japan for the admission of commerce. This trouble was destined to grow and grow till, within one generation from 1837, it upset the mediæval government of Japan and entirely altered the condition of the country and the people. The first effort was made by the American brig Morrison in 1837, but in vain. This was however followed up with increasing persistency by

the British surveying ship *Samarang* in 1845, by Captain Cooper in the same year, by Commodore Biddle in 1848, by Admiral Cecille in the same year, by Commodore Glynn in 1849, and by Commander Matheson in the same year. All these Officers made efforts to communicate with the Shogun's Government, but were rebuffed. They do not seem to have ever got further than Nagasaki. Seeing all this the Dutch traders at Nagasaki must doubtless have made some representations to their own Government, for in 1844 a letter was received by the Shogun from the King of Holland, asking for further commercial facilities. But the request was refused under cover of the well-worn excuses. The Shogun Ieyoshi, though thankful that these dreaded foreigners had not succeeded in coming anywhere within sight of his capital and had never with their ships ploughed the inner waters of Japan, yet he must have felt anxious on account of the frequent repetitions of the attempts. He must have heard of their novel armaments indicating a progress scientifically irresistible as against the worn-out armaments of older days. Even if he felt any confidence, because his rebuffs and refusals had been so far tolerated, still he must have asked himself the question, What if some day the foreigners with their superior armaments were to apply force? He could not have been ignorant of the obsolete and inefficient state of his own national defences. As was said shortly afterwards by one of the best among his Daimyos, "peace and prosperity

of long duration have enervated the spirit, rusted the armour and blunted the swords of our men." Further the Shogun must have heard reports, vague perhaps, but disquieting, that a more important expedition than any as yet known was on its way from America towards Japan. It must have been with troubled thoughts and gloomy forebodings, not knowing what to do, that Ieyoshi the Shogun fell sick unto death in 1853. With his death the old order of things was to pass away, and Japan was to learn the oft-inculcated lesson that for national safety there is but vanity in art without science, in popular spirit without organisation, in bravery without discipline, in armament without progress, in veneration for the past without regard for the future. At that time in Japan there were able leaders, gallant soldiers, a loyal and patriotic people. But there was no warship of modern construction, no fort that would stand against artillery, no arms of any precision, no guns that would carry any distance, no equipment or accoutrement fit for the warfare of the time.

At this moment of the national existence, on the 8th July, 1853, the most important day that had ever yet dawned on Japan, the American squadron of four vessels under Commodore Perry, entered Yedo bay. It is not likely that the Shogun was able personally to give much attention to this momentous occurrence with which his perplexed Ministers and agitated Daimyos had to deal. As he

died in the following month, August 25th (1853), he may be allowed to quit the historic stage at this juncture. Inasmuch as Commodore Perry's arrival led to a long course of critical events, it will be well to take them all in due sequence one after the other in the following Chapter. Ieyoshi the Shogun was on his death succeeded by his son Iesada.

If his father, Ieyoshi, had been the last of the Shoguns to die in quietude, so he, Iesada, was the last of the Shoguns to die amidst the fidelity of the Japanese to the old Feudal system of which he was the head. From the beginning of the century the moral foundation of the Shogun's authority had been growing weaker and weaker; perhaps by this time, that is the middle of the century, it had become almost undermined. A dual government of the Emperor at Kyoto and the Shogun at Yedo could be justified in the eyes of the Japanese only by the Shogunate being always strong and effective. Now for some generations the Shoguns had shown themselves destitute of personal force, had been delegating their work of governance to their Ministers, had been sinking by degrees into a condition of inertia and effeminacy. All this constituted the very reproach which had in older days been levelled against the Emperors at Kyoto, and in reference to which the Feudal Shoguns had been established at Yedo. If then the Shoguns were to be held blameable and unworthy of rule in the same respect as that wherein the Emperors of old had been blamed, and if under

the modern Shoguns the government was to be left to the Ministers as it had been under the Emperors of old, then patriotic Japanese began to ask themselves whether there were any use in keeping up the Shogunate, and whether it were not better to revert to the Imperial rule directly without any intermediate authority like the Shogun. It is to be remembered that in these days as in olden days there had been, and still were, many patriots among the Samurais, the most influential class in Japan as shown in a previous Chapter. Moreover many Daimyos who had submitted to the Shogun of the day because he was necessary as being effective, ceased to care for him as he became personally non-effective, and in that case preferred serving directly under the Emperor. The popular reverence for the Emperor as semi-divine, notwithstanding his seclusion and obscurity in Kyoto, was still a factor in Japanese politics. Even before the pressure from Foreign Powers had been severely felt, the careful observer of the Japanese could probably perceive that the Shogunate, though externally grand, was from inner canker too weak to withstand any hard shock which might come from without. And it was a shock of this very kind that was about to occur; for an American squadron under Commodore Perry had entered the Yedo waters.

CHAPTER XIX.

FALL OF THE FEUDAL SYSTEM FROM 1853 TO 1868.

IN September, 1853, Iesada succeeded his late father (Ieyoshi) as the thirteenth Shogun of the Tokugawa line of the Shogunate. His accession made no difference in the conduct of affairs, and he had but a brief tenure of four years, for he died in 1857. In that short time he saw the old policy of his predecessors, two centuries and a half old, quite reversed, with a new policy introduced and virtually settled, though amidst much national discontent, which made the continued existence of the Shogunate almost impossible.

Meanwhile Commodore Perry and his squadron of four warships had come and gone. Despite warnings conveyed by the Dutch at Nagasaki, among others, the arrival of the Americans in Yedo bay caused intense excitement and utter surprise among the Japanese that were like the men in the proverb who, after they have constantly heard that the wolf is coming, are astonished when he does come at last. The Commodore placed his vessels clearly within sight of spectators from Yedo, that all might view the blue-jackets and the guns pointed right and left. In the first moments of their agony the Japanese

officials tried to persuade him to turn back, leave the bay, and proceed to Nagasaki, there to make such representations as he might desire. This attempt of theirs was evidently futile, as he had entered the bay and appeared within sight of Yêdo for the express purpose of impressing the Shogun's Government with the gravity of the demand which was to be made for some treaty to facilitate trade between Japan and the United States. He naturally replied that he had a friendly letter from the President of the United States to be delivered to the Shogun, and that until this had been done, he would not quit his anchorage. After that an officer of suitable rank was sent from the Shogun to receive the letter. Thereon the Commodore and his squadron departed on 17th July with an intimation that he would soon call again to ask for the answer.

The first scene of the drama being over, the Shogun's Government was left in dire perplexity. It felt sure that Commodore Perry would ere long return in force. It knew that as the Officer of a civilised government he would not use such force merely to extort a treaty, but that if, owing to the hostility of the populace, any violent act were committed then he would retaliate, and so war would begin, while the antiquated defences of the country would offer no protection against modern ordnance. It was conscious of latent disaffection against the Shogunate which would swell and grow apace if the Shogun, yielding to foreign pressure, should be in-

strumental in breaking down the old barriers of Japanese exclusiveness. So the Government adopted a characteristic preliminary, by sending a circular letter to all the Daimyos asking their opinion on the crisis. Most of them counselled resistance, using sonorous language quite beside the truth of the situation, and showing ignorance of the national weakness in any contest with Western power. Still they were hearty and patriotic, melted down the beautiful bells of their monasteries, sent their Samurais in multitudes to Yedo to take lessons in European small arms and artillery. The Government well knew how useless these brave preparations would be if a conflict with Western warships should arise, and awaited in calm despair the next move that the Americans might make.

Attention was for a moment diverted by another event, namely the arrival of a Russian Admiral at Nagasaki to arrange the delimitation of the boundary of Russia and Japan in the North Pacific across the island of Saghalien.

Then early in the following year, 1854, Commodore Perry returned to the bay of Yedo. On this his second visit he had with him ten vessels of war. At a little village, close to the site of what has since become the seaport of Yokohama, the Shogun signed a treaty with the American Government, which was big with the fate of the existing Government in Japan. The Shogun with his Ministers well knew that by thus signing they would become involved in a strug-

gle with their own countrymen. On the other hand he feared that by refusing to sign they would have to face hostilities with the American squadron. So as a choice of evils he decided, though with infinite regret and hesitation, to sign. This he did in March, 1854, and thus was promulgated the first Treaty ever made by Japan with a foreign power. It was not fully a commercial treaty but a preliminary arrangement with a view to commerce. It was followed by a similar arrangement with Britain, in October of the same year, with Russia early in the following year, 1855, and with the Netherlands in 1856. As predicted by the Japanese objectors, Japan having made the concession to the United States, had to make the same to the several European Powers. Each Power obtained permission to enter two ports, but the same two ports were not chosen always by each Power. The ports ultimately opened for foreign access were Nagasaki in the south western extremity of the island of Kyushu, Hakodate on the strait between the northern island of Yezo and the main island, and Shimoda at the mouth of the bay of Yedo, or as it would now be called of Yokohama.

As the hapless Shogun must have foreseen, these Treaties caused intense discontent and excitement throughout Japan. Immediately two political parties arose with party names, one comparatively feeble in favour of opening the country, the other and far stronger demanding the expulsion of the barbarians as the phrase ran. At the head of the anti-foreign

party was the popular Daimyo of Mito and his redoubtable Samurais. The Americans, however, through their consul, represented that the Treaty did not go far enough and asked for a full commercial treaty. But the Shogun, in view of the rising discontent in Japan, hesitated. He heard however that the British were coming with their ships to make a similar request, and so he gave way. Then with the several Powers were signed Commercial Treaties in 1858. It was under these Treaties that the foreign trade has been conducted up to the most recent time. Osaka and Yedo were opened to foreign trade in addition to the places already mentioned; also Nügata on the western coast and Hyogo; further, Yokohama was substituted for Shimoda. A consular jurisdiction was also provided in all cases where foreigners should be either complainants or defendants, and this must have been grievous to the national pride of Japan. The Powers had their diplomatic representatives and their legations at Yedo. This second set of Treaties fanned the flames of discontent which had been rising since the promulgation of the first set.

In the midst of this seething trouble the Shogun died in 1857, and his successor was Iemochi, then a boy. The regent then appointed was Ii Naosuke, better known as Ii Kamon-no-Kami, a resolute and unflinching man. He held that the Treaties having been made and foreign representatives having been admitted, the chance of resistance was gone and that

any attempt in that direction would only involve Japan in ruin. So he strove to repress peacefully the rising discontent. In the midst of these efforts he was assassinated early in 1861, and this murder was the signal for many outrages, generally committed by Samurais who had quitted the allegiance of their respective Daimyos, and were called "ronins," a name which had long been known but which became ominous in these days. The sudden loss of the energetic Regent left the Shogunate without a Minister competent to deal with the emergencies which were now to arise.

The discontented among the upper classes spread abroad the opinion that the Treaties, being made with the Shogun only, were not valid because the Emperor's consent had never been obtained. This objection was not entertained for a moment by the foreigners. Still it had weight with the people, and stiffened their attitude of resistance against what they disliked otherwise.

The "ronins," or unattached Samurais, who were soldiers of fortune and almost ruffians, directed their attacks on foreign representatives, first the American, and then more especially the British. The Shogun's Ministers, in reply to remonstrances, declared themselves unable to prevent these outrages. The British legation had to be protected first by blue-jackets from Hong Kong. Then an Englishman was killed near Yedo by a Samurai in the train of the Daimyo who was proceeding thence towards Satsu-

ma. The victim had been very imprudent in his movements, still the killing of him was unjustifiable and was such as could not be passed over by the British representative. As no satisfaction could be obtained, a British squadron proceeded to Satsuma and destroyed the town of Kagoshima in 1863. About the same time the Daimyo of Choshu, a mountainous district on the north side of the narrow strait of Shimonoseki, undertook the foolhardy enterprise of stopping with his feeble ordnance this strait, the gate of the Inland Sea and the approach to Yedo, against all foreign vessels whatever whether of war or of commerce. Accordingly his warships and batteries fired at different times on an American, a Dutch, and a French vessel. These flagrant acts in a time of nominal peace provoked immediate reprisals. But as the disturbances in the country increased and as the Yedo Government was becoming paralysed, the Western Representatives in concert resolved to prevent the strait of Shimonoseki from being closed again, and to read to the Japanese a lesson which must have a permanent effect. So in 1864 a naval expedition, headed by a large British squadron, and partly consisting of other foreign ships, proceeded to the strait and destroyed whatever offensive or defensive preparations could be found there. A heavy fine was at the same time exacted from the Yedo Government.

Even this hard experience failed to convince the soldiery, that is the Samurais attached, and the

“ronins” unattached. They and their leaders disregarded more and more the effete Government at Yedo, and resorted more and more to Kyoto, in the desperate hope that the semi-divine Emperor might yet save the country by expelling the foreigners. While the naval expedition to Shimonoseki was being prepared by the Representatives of the Powers, the Emperor at Kyoto went through the farce of issuing an edict for their expulsion, entrusting it to the Shogun for execution. The hapless Shogun had come in State from Yedo to Kyoto to explain matters and among other things declared that he had no means whatever of resisting the foreigners. The Emperor’s Court was at that time beset by a violent and senseless soldiery who fancied that they might save their country by threatening all round. Bloody street fights in the Imperial Capital were going on just when the coasts were being bombarded by foreign warships. The Shogun was now at his castle near Osaka on the Inland Sea; the foreign Representatives were at the neighbouring harbour of Hyogo with an imposing array of allied squadrons. Thence they waited on the Shogun and urged him to obtain the consent of the Emperor to the Treaties. He sent a memorial to the Emperor to the effect that embarrassment had been felt for some time owing to the supposed opposition of His Majesty to these Treaties, and asked for the Imperial consent, which was accordingly given. Soon afterwards this Shogun, Iemochi, died without heir, after a brief

and almost nominal tenure of his high office. Then a few months later the Emperor Komei died and was succeeded by his son Mutsuhito, who is still reigning. The angry people regarded Komei's death as a sign that the divine nature had left him in consequence of his consenting to the Treaties; and it is noticeable that such an idea existed in this year, that is so late as 1867. Still the popular vengeance was directed against the Shogunate which had in the first instance agreed to the Treaties. That first step was the decisive step which ought never, as the people thought, to have been taken. Its subsequent ratification by the Emperor perhaps was inevitable, but they resolved that the Shogun, as the original offender, should be dismissed forever. Thus the party of violence, now surrounding the new Emperor at Kyoto, ceased to agitate against the Treaties, but occupied themselves in arranging the transfer of the Executive power from the Shogunate at Yedo to the Emperor at Kyoto.

Meanwhile the Emperor himself appointed Hitotsubashi to be Shogun, a man who was willing to act up to the Treaties and who had been guardian to the late Shogun. He accepted the office with reluctance, being doubtful whether due support would be accorded to him. Both he and many Daimyos felt that the end of the Shogunate and of Feudalism was at hand. Soon, that is in October, 1867, he received a memorial from one of the Daimyos, which set forth frankly that "the cause (of our trouble) lies in the

fact that the administration proceeds from two centres causing the Empire's eyes and ears to be turned in two opposite directions." Thereon he informed all the Daimyos by a circular letter of his intention to resign, and in the following month, November, he sent in his resignation to the Emperor, by whom it was accepted. There were powerful Daimyos about the Imperial Court who had long been jealous of the Shogunate and hoped to succeed it in the formation of a new Government. They did not foresee that the Shogunate, which they had laboured to destroy, would in its destruction drag them down with it. From this month, November, 1867, must the date be taken for the end of the Shogunate which had lasted for over six hundred and fifty years.

Meanwhile the Daimyos at Kyoto were around the Emperor in force there, and the Ex-Shogun, as he must now be called, was in his castle at Osaka also with troops around him. Though he had of his own will resigned, yet when he had to actually surrender his power, his heart failed him. Then he was summoned to attend the Emperor, and this led to a conflict between his troops and the Imperial troops. The rebels were defeated and the Ex-Shogun retired to Yedo. Thither he was followed by Imperial troops, and terms were dictated to him under which he was to leave his castle at Yedo, surrender all armaments and warships in his possession and retire into the interior of the country. He acted, so far as he was able, according to these terms, and

so the executive power passed fully into the hands of the Emperor. But many of his followers kept up an unavailing contest on land, and more blood had to be shed before they were subdued. When the warships in Yedo bay came to be given up their commander objected. He left the bay, and proceeded northwards followed by the Imperial ships. The rebel ships reached Hakodate in Yezo island. After a contest which lasted till July, 1869, they finally surrendered. Thus in a strange manner the Shogunate died hard—and thus this famous Office with its several long lines of hereditary Officers vanished from history.

But though the Feudal head was thus gone, Feudalism still remained to last for a brief while only, as will presently be seen.

This great change may have been sometimes termed a revolution, but quite wrongly, for it was not that at all, in the proper sense. By it indeed the original constitution of Japan was preserved. The Emperors had delegated their executive power to the Shoguns. The Emperor now resumed it; the change however important went no further than that. The successive lines of Shoguns have sometimes been styled dynasties, though erroneously, for they were never sovereigns but only the hereditary executive of the Sovereign; and the Emperor always possessed the right of displacing them though he had not for some centuries exercised it.

For the fall of the celebrated Shogunate there were

three causes, two minor and one major. The minor causes were the growing weakness of the Shoguns, and the rising jealousy of several Daimyos, especially those of the West and South-West. The major and the decisive cause was the anger of the nation at the Treaties, at the presence of foreign Representatives on Japanese soil, at the foreign trade, at the presence of foreign warships in Japanese waters.

The views of the men and of the classes who brought about this change were diverse. Some Daimyos, bitter against the Shogunate for its conduct of foreign relations, thus hoped to remove the Shogun, surround the Emperor with their feudal troops, and to form a new Government. Then in the simplicity of their minds they thought of thus stopping the tide of foreign invasion commercial and political. In this they were disappointed, finding that the Emperor, on resuming the executive function, entered into relations with the foreigners. Though they had their revenge on the Shogun, still many of them had a rankling grief in their hearts. Notable among these was Saigo of Satsuma, the best soldier and the most popular man of modern Japan, whose end will be mentioned hereafter. At first all men were unanimously for exclusiveness, and against the influx of foreigners, the Western influence, the new civilisation. But at this time, that is from 1860 to 1868, they separated into two parties, the one clinging to the old beliefs, the other adopting the new ideas. The former though powerful became less

and less, though their extinction was long delayed. The latter fast increased, owing to the hard experience of these years, and they greatly helped in bringing about this change. They were drawn from several classes in the community, and their conduct in adapting themselves with amazing readiness and intelligence to the new order of things in practical affairs, while retaining many among their old beliefs and ancient modes of thought, is a phenomenon unique in modern Asia and a remarkable episode in Asiatic history.

CHAPTER XX.

THE REIGN OF THE EMPEROR MUTSUHITO, 1868-1899.

It was in February, 1868, that the Emperor began to govern as well as to reign. His name was Mutsuhito and he was the one hundred and twenty first Emperor of Japan, and of his line in one continuous dynasty, representing an extraordinary length of descent and succession.* He was still at Kyoto surrounded by associations which in the eyes of his people were divine. One of his first acts was to request the several Foreign Representatives, who had moved temporarily from Yedo to Hyogo on the Inland Sea, to inform their respective Governments, that hereafter the administration of both internal and external affairs would be conducted by him. In token of this he invited them all to visit him in his Imperial palace at Kyoto on March 23, 1868, which they accordingly did, thereby creating

* The Imperial line begins B. C. 660 with fabulously long reigns, and is regarded as mythical till about 500 A. D., up to which time there had been twenty-five Emperors. Even with this deduction Mutsuhito would be the ninety-sixth Emperor. Since the last named date many of the reigns have been short. The line has not always been maintained by direct descent but has not unfrequently been recruited by adoption from certain families when the Emperor has failed to leave an heir of his own blood.

a precedent of almost incredible novelty to the Japanese. As a sign of the new era, Dr. Murray writes of it thus: "The significance of this event can scarcely now be conceived. Never before in the history of the Empire had its divine head deigned to admit to his presence the despised foreigner, or to put himself on an equality with the sovereign of the foreigner. The event created in the ancient capital the utmost excitement" All went well with the august host and his foreign guests on the day of the reception, with one wondrous exception. As the British envoy, Sir Harry Parkes, was proceeding duly escorted to the Palace, two fanatical Samurais rushed on his procession and wounded nine of the escort before they could be stopped, one of the two being killed and the other severely wounded. The next day Sir Harry persevered in his visit and was duly received without further incident. He was doubtless selected for attack because of the superior importance of his legation. The Emperor then issued an edict to the effect that as the foreign treaties had now been sanctioned by him, the protection of foreigners was henceforth his particular care.

A provisional constitution was then framed, setting forth the various departments of the Government and the duties of the officers in each. The Japanese statesmen of the new school recommended that the Emperor should move his Court and his Government from Kyoto, which, however venerable and sacred, had yet associations that in

their eyes were both effeminate and politically degrading. The place was also geographically disadvantageous. So the Emperor proceeded to Yedo, and took up his abode in the old castle of the Shoguns there, in order to emphasise the fact that the executive and the Imperial authority were now in the same hands. In 1869 the name of Yedo was changed to that of Tokyo, meaning the eastern capital, by which name the Capital of Japan has since been known.

Strangely enough, the first thing done by the Emperor's Government was a reiteration of the long standing prohibition, almost proscription, against the Japanese Christians. Despite all the persecutions mentioned in a previous Chapter, descendants of that devoted Sect still were found near Nagasaki. Now, in 1868 not only was an edict of the Emperor from Tokyo issued against them, in severe, well-nigh opprobrious, terms, but also in June of that year those who would not recant, and apparently none of them did so, were deported and scattered among various districts. The Representatives of the European Powers remonstrated, the Japanese took the remonstrances ill, as savouring of interference in domestic concerns of Japan; but they so far yielded to pressure as to remove these restrictions by 1872.

As a constitutional beginning in 1869 the Emperor, in the presence of his Court and of the assembled Daimyos, took what has been called the Charter Oath. Indeed it was a wondrous sign of the time that this Sovereign, of heaven-born lineage and

hedged in with divinity, should take such an oath at all. The Oath itself was in five articles, of which two were specific providing for the convening of a deliberative assembly, and for the abolition of all the usages of former time which might at this time be regarded as absurd. The other articles were in terms so general as to be almost academic. But they indicated that there was to be a political treatment even and equitable for all classes, a regard for modern conditions both social and economic, and a due attention to public opinion. In the same year the deliberative assembly was convened, consisting of members for the various daimiates nominated by the Daimyos, much as in former times some Members of the English House of Commons were nominated by great noblemen. It proved however to be little more than a debating society, and so far as it acted at all its action was for the retention of the most absurd usages of former times. It was nothing more than the first hesitating step in the direction which was afterwards taken with breadth and vigour of conception.

The next step was really of a root and branch character; being nothing less than the abolition of the feudal system which had lasted near nine hundred years. The Daimyos must have felt that their position had crumbled away from beneath their feet. So the leading men among them, the Daimyo of Satsuma at their head, formally surrendered their fiefs, their possessions and their retainers to the Em-

peror. This example was speedily followed by the lesser Daimyos. All this was done on the general understanding that there would be compensation given to all concerned. This condition was fulfilled by the Emperor's Government at some sacrifice and even some embarrassment to the Treasury. The old daimiate divisions territorially were abolished and new districts called "ken" were substituted. The peaceful completion of this momentous measure proved the feebleness into which most of the Daimyos had sunk, and the strength of the patriotic tide which was setting in. This grave, though bloodless, change bears date from the eventful year 1869.

Shortly afterwards the disqualifications, social and other, which had from ages affected certain among the humblest classes of the people, were removed, and all men were made equal before the law.

Very soon the Emperor's Government had to test its capabilities in foreign affairs. Some humble vassals of Japan had been shipwrecked on the island of Formosa over which China claimed a supremacy. Nevertheless a Japanese commander named Saigo was sent to vindicate humanity, which he did. China accepted his service and gave compensation for the expense incurred. The relations which Japan thus established in Formosa bore fruit as will be seen hereafter. The Koreans attacked a Japanese steamer that was seeking hospitality. Thereon Japan sent a naval expedition to Korea whereby a commercial treaty was concluded. This was in

1876, and it is to be borne in mind that the claims of suzerainty advanced by China over Korea and the dual relationship thus set up there between China and Japan were the things which afterwards led to war. The long standing dispute between Russia and Japan in the frigid northern regions was settled by the Saghalien island being taken by Russia and the Kurile group of islands by Japan.

Then inside Japan there arose a series of movements which wore a perilously threatening character. Although the Daimyos generally and their Samurais had sincerely accepted the revolution which swept away the old Feudalism, yet in the south-western daimiates there were still reactionary parties who had never really bowed the knee to the new Government, who were inured to arms and minded to strike some blows for the old régime. Thus troubles arose in the districts round the Shimonoseki strait which were put down by force. Then in the daimiate of Satsuma, the most formidable of all the daimiates, though the Daimyo and a party of his Samurais had patriotically led the peaceful revolution, there was yet another party of the Samurai who had never forgiven this proceeding. They still hoped by their superior prowess over the rest of their countrymen to effect a counter-revolution and restore something of the old Feudalism. Among them the most popular man was Saigo, the very commander who had just been employed by the Government in the reduction of Formosa, and he was a typical Satsuma man.