

Moreover he was now engaged, among other things, in organising military schools all over the Satsuma province. These schools were flourishing apace and were numbering many thousand scholars. Among them treason was rife against the new Government and the disaffected Samurais easily enlisted these bellicose youths in formidable numbers. Then Saigo himself was induced to head this movement which afterwards became known to history as the Satsuma rebellion. In February, 1877, he marched from Satsuma at the head of 14,000 good troops straight for Tokyo, in the expectation of raising his strength to 30,000 men before reaching the capital, an expectation quite possible of realisation inasmuch as there were still the slumbering fires, the smouldering embers of Samurai discontent all over the country including the new Imperial capital itself. Had he marched straight on Tokyo before the defensive forces were organised he might have dictated terms to the Emperor there and reversed the new Constitution of Japan. But unfortunately for him there stood an Imperial castle as a lion in his path. He might have left it behind him as its garrison was slender; however he resolved to take it if he could. But it was resolutely defended, and he spent several weeks in a vain siege. In that precious interval the Imperial Government at Tokyo organised a large force and sent it against Saigo. It encountered him with success while he was still besieging the castle. He retreated

hotly pursued, and fighting several desperate actions. At length he retired to a hill overlooking Kagoshima Bay (in Satsuma) with a few followers faithful unto death, one of whom he induced to perform for him the friendly office of decapitation. Thus ended the last attempt made to disturb the new Constitution. It was, however, shortly followed at Tokyo by the assassination of Okubo, then the Minister of the Interior, a Satsuma clansman, but still a patriotic promoter of the new order of things. He had been the man who first recommended publicly the removal of the Emperor and his Court from Kyoto to Tokyo.

The new Government being now established beyond power of dispute, the progressive party be-
thought itself of developing the Constitution. The first deliberative assembly, consisting of nominees, had proved nothing but a makeshift. As a preliminary step there was the organisation of local councils for each borough (*fu*) and each district (*ken*) for accustoming the people to choose representatives and to be responsible for their own self-government.

Then in 1889 the Emperor promulgated a full Constitution for his people, and in the presence of his Court and his Ministers he took the oath to govern according to its powers and its limitations. It consisted of seven chapters embodying the headings which have usually been adopted in those Western States where the Constitution has not, as in Britain, grown up through the centuries. Its foremost provision was the formation of what has been trans-

lated from the Japanese as "an Imperial Diet." Besides this cardinal article there were provisions for the rights and duties of subjects, and the due administration of justice. Even yet the fanatical spirit was not extinct, and on the very day of the promulgation, Mori Arinori, one of the foremost statesmen of the new school and formerly Minister plenipotentiary at the Court of St. James, was assassinated. This was the third political murder committed in the eastern capital during this generation by feudal fanatics. In each instance a prominent patriot was struck down in his mid career. The Diet was assembled in 1890 and the Constitution took full effect from the date of its assembling. Thus Japan was safely launched on a course of constitutional monarchy, as it would be called in Britain. By an Imperial House Law the Imperial successor must be a male.

Accordingly the Emperor had all the power possessed by a Constitutional Sovereign in the British sense of the term, in regard to legislation, taxation, finance, and with the same limitations. He had the right to choose his own Ministers, and he had a Privy Council with whom he could, at his own option, deliberate on matters of importance. He had a fixed civil list or income, settled liberally at three millions of yen or half a million sterling annually. He had the sole authority of declaring war, making peace and concluding treaties. He was to convoke, to open, to prorogue, to close, to dissolve the Sessions of the

Diet. His sanction was required to the laws passed by Parliament. He must convoke the Diet once in every year. He was to have the supreme command of the Army.

The Diet was to consist of two Houses, the House of Peers and the House of Representatives. The relations between them were to be much the same as those which prevail between the Lords and the Commons in England.

The House of Peers was of a somewhat composite character and consisted firstly of three permanent elements, namely Princes of the Imperial Blood, holders of titles which in England have been translated as prince and marquis, persons who may be nominated for national services; then secondly of a certain proportion of titled classes, possessing titles translated as Counts, Viscounts and Barons, who might be elected by their respective orders; and thirdly, a certain number who might be chosen as the wealthiest in the boroughs (*Fu*) and the districts (*Ken*). Regulations were made for keeping the total numbers of Members of the House of Peers at about 300. The first three of the above-mentioned classes were to hold their seats for life; the two last-mentioned were to sit for seven years.

The House of Representatives was to consist of about 300 Members to be elected for each electoral district. Thus the number of these districts did not differ much from that of the old Daimiates. But as the population amounts to 43 millions the aver-

age number of persons to each Member is found to be about 143,000. In other words the Japanese constituencies would be considered large according to the British standard of comparison. There was some provision for qualifications to entitle a man to exercise a parliamentary franchise, such as one year's residence and the payment of a certain sum in taxation annually. Each member was allowed a small salary besides travelling expenses and he was not permitted to refuse that allowance. For the office of President or Speaker, three candidates were chosen by the House, and from these one is nominated by the Emperor. On the whole the Constitution was formed not exactly after the model afforded by any particular country in Europe, but after the general example of Europe, with special modifications or adaptations suitable to Japan.

The Imperial Diet was to have control over the Finances, that is the taxation and the main branches of expenditure. In practice it would necessarily be that the House of Representatives would have the initiative and consequently the virtual control, though the concurrence of the House of Peers would have to be obtained.

Absolute freedom of religious belief and practice was secured so long as it should not be prejudicial to peace and order. There was to be no State religion, and no State support to any religion, but still the principal temples of the two Native religions, Shintoism and Booddhism, did obtain some maintenance

from the local authorities. This religious freedom was as a consequence secured to Christianity.

One Chapter of the Constitution related to what was termed Judicature. Accordingly a complete establishment of independent judges irremovable except for proved misconduct was formed for the whole country and for both departments, civil and criminal. Thus in the towns and in the districts, and in all degrees, village courts, town tribunals, courts of first instance and of appeal with a central appellate court at the capital were appointed, superseding all other courts regular or irregular which may have existed in the feudal times. A few of the judges of the highest rank were appointed by the Emperor direct, the remainder were accepted by him on the nomination of the Minister of Justice.

Such are the main points embraced in the seven Chapters of the Constitution, which was promulgated in 1890, was accepted by all classes of the Japanese, and at the end of the first decade which coincides with the end of the century, is understood to be in working order. It may be remembered that as the abolition of Feudalism dated from 1869, the preparation for, and the incubation of, the new and complete Constitution had to take only twenty-one years. This space of time is relatively short for so elaborate and far-reaching an operation as this. Indeed the achievement indicates an amazing adaptability in the Japanese people, under conditions novel to them and indeed opposed in several respects to the ideas

and traditions cherished by them through many centuries.

Outside the Constitution, but really flowing from it, there were some administrative branches of much importance to the national safety and progress.

A department of State Education and Public Instruction was organised for the whole country from the University in the Capital, to High Schools, technical classes and elementary schools, entirely after the Western model; with the assistance of European and American advisers. These institutions were for the most part to be supported by the State but also by local rates. The attendance in Elementary schools was rendered compulsory by law.

The relief of the extremely poor, the helpless and the friendless was largely centralised. The Government reserved a large capital sum for this purpose, and granted relief out of the interest derivable from this fund.

In Japan as in other Oriental countries the principal item in the State receipts is the Land revenue, which is obtained from the land owners who may be described almost entirely as peasant proprietors. The next largest item is that arising from intoxicating liquors and the like. There is a tax on and a monopoly of tobacco. The customs revenue is not considerable. The regulation dues are noteworthy and the revenue from Forests indicates that the Government is prudently alive to the importance of Forest Con-

servancy. The budgets are framed by the Ministry of Finance and submitted to the Diet much after the manner which prevails with the Western nations.

In the place of all the old feudal forces, a new army was raised on a uniform plan and with a centralised organisation and on the basis of conscription. All males of the age of twenty were liable by law to serve in the army for seven years, of which three must be spent on active service and four in the reserve. After quitting the reserve the soldier must form part of a force of which the name is translated as "landwehr," for another five years, and then up to forty years of age he must belong to a national reserve called by name translated as "landsturm," with an obligation to serve in event of emergency. The infantry consisted of the Imperial Guard and the line. For the Cavalry and Artillery there were about 29,000 horses employed, a very large number to be bred or collected in such a country as Japan. Institutions of every sort for military education were instituted, that is to say, a staff college, military college, cadet college, military school, gunnery school. The firearms, ordnance and ammunition were manufactured in the arsenals of Tokyo and Osaka. The rifles used were the Murata, invented in Japan.

For the fleet, battle-ships and armoured or protected cruisers of several classes, with a torpedo flotilla, were obtained mostly from Britain. The Officers and men were trained in the navies of Europe; their total strength amounted to nearly 14,000. It has

been truly said that this development of the Japanese Navy is one of the most notable elements in the politics of the Far East. Special care was taken to have vessels of the highest speed obtainable at the time and to practise the art of manœuvring in battle. The coasts of Japan were divided into five maritime districts, having arsenals and dockyards at their several headquarters. Thus everything was done on the best and newest European models for the reorganisation of the Imperial forces by sea and land. These measures had been adopted and promoted before the promulgation of the Constitution in 1890, and were prosecuted with even greater energy after that event.*

Within five years after 1890 the worth and efficiency of these measures were destined to be brought to a test. In 1894 war broke out between Japan and China on the question of Korea.

The course of this war will be described in Part III. of this work, relating to China. But some account is here required on the Japanese side of these events. It has been seen from various passages in this work that Korea had been first ruined by a Japanese invasion, and had since been in a state of chronic anarchy, that she had in her distress often appealed both to China and Japan, that she had owned a dual relationship and suzerainty in reference to them both. This had naturally led to disputes between China and Japan which had for a

* See the *Statesman's Yearbook* for several years up to 1890.

time been settled soon after 1877 by an agreement that neither Power should send forces into Korea without first informing the other, and that when the Korean affair, whatever it might be at the time, had been settled, both Powers should withdraw. This was no doubt a specific agreement and clearly was binding. Nevertheless on an appeal from Korea in 1893, China sent a force there, without informing Japan. Thereon Japan sent a corresponding force, but the two forces though face to face did not come to blows. China appears to have used haughty language regarding Korea which Japan endured, but added that any further despatch of Chinese troops into Korea *contrary to the agreement* would be regarded by her as an act of war. Evidently China meant to reassert her exclusive control over Korea irrespective of the agreement. Immediately afterwards a Japanese squadron in the Pechihlee Gulf came upon a Chinese force in a troopship escorted by war vessels on the way to Korea. An action followed, the Chinese warships were defeated by the Japanese and the troopship was sunk. Hostilities were now inevitable, so the Japanese soon cleared Korea of the Chinese after a little, but only a little, real fighting. A severe naval action was fought between a fine Japanese squadron, and the best ships (also of European build) in the Chinese Navy under Admiral Ting off the coast of the Korea near the mouth of the Yalu river, ending in the defeat of the Chinese. It appears that the Japanese owed their

victory to the superior speed of their vessels which enabled them to out-manceuvre their enemy, also to their vastly superior organisation. Thereon the Japanese army overran the Liaotung Peninsula, north of the Pechihlee Gulf, without opposition, and took Port Arthur, a Chinese naval and military position of the first rank, without trouble. So far the Japanese had shown excellent power of moving troops over long distances in the depth of winter with disciplined endurance, but had seen very little of real fighting. Then they attacked by sea and land Weihai-Wei on the opposite side of the Gulf in the main continent of China. This was the most important position in the Chinese Empire, but after a brief defence it was taken, and the squadron in the harbour, locked in there by the Japanese warships, had to surrender. Then China, sorely stricken in two vital points and awakened to the fact that her army could not fight and that her navy was gone, had to sue for peace and to send a plenipotentiary, Li Hung Chang, to Japan to conclude it. This was concluded at Shimonoseki.

By it China renounced all her claims on Korea, and in the Formosa islands, ceded the Liaotung Peninsula with Port Arthur to Japan, and agreed to pay a full war indemnity to Japan. The Emperor of China ratified this treaty, but then Russia interposed, partly no doubt at China's instance, but partly perhaps of her own accord. Her object was to prevent the Liaotung Peninsula passing permanent-

ly into the hands of Japan. She was supported by France in virtue of the general alliance between them. She appeared also to be receiving support from Germany, to the surprise of Britain at least. But Britain herself did not join in asking Japan to forego any of the advantages won by her arms. Nevertheless Japan, yielding to the combined pressure of the other Powers, consented to give back Liaotung and Port Arthur to China, and to content herself with being rid of Chinese interference in Korea, with the acquisition of Formosa and other islands, and with the payment of the indemnity. She retained among other things the ports and harbour of Wei-hai-Wei till the indemnity should be paid in full. For this payment China raised a loan under a joint arrangement by Britain and Germany. When the Japanese claim had thus been satisfied, Wei-hai-Wei was made over by Japan to Britain with the consent of China in the spring of 1898. Thus ended a war which must be considered as glorious to the young army and navy of Japan.

The Emperor's thanks to his forces by sea and land were appreciated by the whole nation. "In December of that year, 1898, by a unanimous vote the Diet expressed its gratitude for the Emperor's direction of the naval and military operations against China by including in the Imperial Estates a sum of twenty millions of yen from the indemnity obtained in consequence of the country's victories." *

* *Statesman's Yearbook*, 1899.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE STATE OF JAPAN IN 1899.

IN order to portray the change which has within one generation come over the land and the people, that is between 1868 and 1899, and to exemplify the process which has been outlined in the preceding Chapter, contemporary writers have coined a phrase, namely the rapid "Europeanisation" of Japan.

In reference to this, some passages may be cited from an able review by the late Bishop Bickersteth of Tokyo addressed in 1895 to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; as he was a most competent witness writing, too, on the spot.

"The success of Japan has been due to her own good qualities, to the honesty which during twenty years of preparation duly expended the national revenue on the public service, to the quick-witted intelligence which not only adapted but learned during the same period how to use the inventions and discoveries of the West, and to the patriotism which burns in all Japanese hearts alike, only more intensely since the Revolution of 1868, and which united all who speak the Japanese language under one sovereign and one political administration. In these regards Japan is alone among Eastern nations. It

is not too much to say that an honest administration of public funds on a large scale has, till now, been unknown in any Eastern country. . . . Devotion to their Emperor and country is an instinctive feeling in the hearts of Japanese men and women alike. . . . As a matter of fact the Japanese islands proper lie a long way to the north of the tropic of Cancer, and its people have none of the characteristics of the inhabitants of tropical lands. They are, to take one instance, lacking in the meditative religiousness and philosophical acumen which mark the peoples of India. On the other hand they possess the activity of body and mind which is the endowment of the people of temperate climes. . . . Still less are they to be considered an uncivilised Eastern race with a mere veneer of Western manners and culture. . . . They have a civilisation of their own. . . . It is, in its own way, as real as our own. It has its own standards and canons of thought and taste and feeling, its own manners and customs, its own ideals and hopes. Greatly as it may be indebted now and in the future to Western literature and education, and eagerly as it adopts the inventions of Western science, these will not radically change it. . . . The result will not be a Western nation in the Orient, but an Eastern nation or rather Japan; for this country is alone among the nations of the East, with certain new means and methods at her disposal, but in pith and fibre the same people with the same

national characteristics and like mental endowments and modes of thought and life as to-day or yesterday."

After this emphatic and valuable testimony regarding the national characteristics of Japan as they are under the new order of things, some attempt may be made to explain the religious condition of the people as it now is. It has been already mentioned in the second Chapter of this Part, that there have always been two observances in Japan, one Shintoism, which may or may not be, strictly speaking, a religion, the other Booddh-ism, which, even in its most debased forms, is a religion if it is anything. In the Report for 1898 by the Church Missionary Society, whose business it is to watch the native religions, there occurs the following passage:

"The position of both Booddh-ism and Shinto-ism has been seriously affected by the revolution of 1868 and the changes consequent upon it. The cause of Booddh-ism had been for centuries identified with that of the Shoguns (feudal), and the revolution was a severe blow to its power and prestige, as it was then deprived of State patronage and support. On the other hand Shinto-ism, so closely connected with the semi-divine person of the Mikado (Emperor) and the basis of his authority, gained a triumph. Under the new régime both religions remained under the control of the Government. In 1877 the Department of Religion was abolished as a separate office, and made a branch of the Home Office. At

the same time the Shinto priests, in lieu of such of their revenues as were derived from the State, were awarded pensions to cease after twenty years. A few of them commuted and went into trade, but the bulk continued to exercise the priestly office. The changes prepared the way for the more decided step taken in 1884 when the connection of both Booddhism and Shinto-ism with a department of State was severed, and each sect was enjoined to make provision for the internal government and administration. But although disestablished and deprived of State support, both religions continue to exist, and under the new order of things Booddh-ism especially has manifested fresh energy."

The following anecdote in the Church Missionary Society's report for 1898 is probably characteristic of the former mental state of some Japanese respecting religion. The witness writes: "I was talking one day to an Officer's wife, a lady of good family, and was telling her that before the One true God we are all sinners. She listened politely, and then covering her face with her hands she burst into a peal of quiet laughter. 'I do beg your pardon,' she said, 'but I a sinner! the idea is too ridiculous.' It is firmly believed in many cases, among men and women too, that other nations may need a Saviour, but not Japan—for Japan is a country of the gods, the Japanese the children of the gods, and therefore they cannot sin." This would indicate a self-sufficiency rarely equalled in any nation. But it probably is only a

remnant of the childlike superstition of an age which is almost past and has given way to the new age that has risen with a living sunshine on Japan.

There may be some difficulty in giving any consistent account of Shinto-ism because many educated Japanese will say that it is not a religion at all, but merely a code of ceremonial observances. Further it has been stated by one of the best European observers that "the united verdict given by native scholars was that Shinto is not a religion; it is a system of government regulations, very good to keep alive the patriotism among the people." Again it is said that "Shinto has no moral code. . . . it lays down no precepts, teaches no morals or doctrines, prescribes no ritual."

As a further illustration of the Japanese self-sufficiency (which perhaps is passing away) it may be added that the newest Shinto teacher explained that "morals were invented by other nations because they were immoral, but in Japan there was no necessity for any system of morals, as every Japanese acted aright if he only consulted his own heart." In justice to the Japanese, however, the Church Missionary Society in 1898 testify that "however imperfect the conception of sin may be, the recognition of national and individual guilt, with a view to deliverance from divine judgment, is a marked feature of Shinto-ism. Twice every year, in the sixth and twelfth months, festivals are held which are supposed to purify the nation from the sins of the previous half year."

Notwithstanding its want of definiteness, Shintoism seems to be intertwined with all the brightest thoughts of the Japanese, the national origin, the mythical rulers, the quasi-divine Emperor, and with everything that would make Japan feel proud of herself.

The same authority states that "although Shinto is the religion of the Government, the religion of the people is Booddh-ism." This Booddhistic religion is declared to have "an elaborate array of ceremonial and priestcraft, monks and nuns, shrines and relics, images and altars, vestments and candles, fastings and indulgences, pilgrimages and hermits." Further it appears that the Japanese Booddhists are divided into some fourteen sects. The method of prayer may be illustrated thus from the same evidence. "Listen as I do sometimes by the hour together to the monotonous tap-tap of the Booddhist drum which a Japanese explained to me was the accompaniment of prayer. 'If they are in trouble,' said he, 'they will stand and beat that drum all day, saying over and over again the same words.'"

As regards the prospects of Booddh-ism the following words of the Reverend G. H. Pole may be cited from a publication of 1898: "Christianity has never yet in any serious way met in hand to hand combat, at close quarters, that most powerful of all heathen religions Booddhism. And in all human probability the battle will have to be fought out in Japan. . . . For whether we regard it from its doctrinal,

its philosophical, its ethical, its practical or its ceremonial aspects, no one acquainted with the facts can deny that Booddhism as developed and modified by its contact with and assimilation of principles and practices from Romanism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shintoism is, notwithstanding its many errors, and grossly superstitious observances, an antagonist of intense moral and religious force."

Meanwhile according to the best authority "Booddhist priests, monks and nuns of all grades abound in Japan. . . . Booddhist temples are numerous in all parts of the country. In most large towns there is a street of temples which is called *Tera-machi*, answering to our 'Church Street.'"

Irrespective of authority on the spot, and of actual evidence, it is probably known to Europeans who are acquainted with educated Japanese that some certainly, and probably very many, of this class no longer believe in Booddhism at all; though they retain Shintoism, not as a religion, but as an ancestral and ceremonial system with which the Imperial dynasty is still bound up, though the old idolatrous veneration for the Emperor is hardly maintained. With such persons the faith and hope of a destiny for mankind, the idea of a future life, apparently are but one great blank. This melancholy condition has sprung up since the great political change of 1868. The same authority, as cited already, writes of them: "They have a national aptitude for analytical and scientific criticism. These

tendencies lead to a general indifference towards supernatural religion and religious verities and to an acceptance of atheistic and materialistic systems of philosophy; and these in their turn develop into agnosticism or open scepticism as to the necessity or desirableness of any religion whatever."

It is sad to reflect that many of the best Japanese should, under the influence of the new civilisation, be drifting into this position. As already seen in the last Chapter of Part I. of this work, this very same process has been, and still is, going on in India, but up to a certain point only. There the men of Western education no longer believe in the modern Hinduism, or Brahmanism, as they more correctly call it. But they do not abandon religion altogether. They either fall back on the early Hindu faith which is called Vedic, or they form on that basis a new creed which is called Brahmoism, or that of the Brahmos—there being in their eyes a vital difference between Brahmo and Brahmin or Brahman. Now according to all appearances nothing of this sort is happening in Japan. The Japanese who abandon Buddhism as a religion, and adhere to Shintoism merely as a ceremonial system, take up no creed whatever, and seem at present to be without any religious belief. Whatever be the number of these at this moment, and it is likely to grow larger rather than otherwise day by day, they do not become Christian, though it is to be devoutly hoped that they may.

Meanwhile Christianity in Japan, since its com-

plete allowance and toleration by the Government, had made what would be called good and rapid progress according to any standard of comparison which may be set up from experience in any other Eastern country. The total number of Japanese Christians may be taken at about 85,000. Of these a goodly portion, that is 44,000 or rather more than half, are Roman Catholics, as may be expected in reference to the famous associations which the Jesuits left behind them in the Middle Ages, and which to this day are not forgotten by the people, especially in some of the southern districts. Again, as might be expected, the Protestant Japanese belong to several sections. The following summary is taken from the Church Missionary Society's Report for 1898. According to that, in the beginning of 1896, the total number of Missionaries at that time was 656, including wives—belonging to the American Board Congregationalist, the various Presbyterian Boards, the Episcopal Methodists, the Baptists and the Churches of the Anglican Communion, English, Canadian and American—but of the 39,000 Native Christians, over 11,000 belonged to the Presbyterian Churches, about the same number to the Congregational bodies, nearly 8,000 to the Methodists, about 2,500 to the Baptists and 5,600 to the Episcopal Church. The Report goes on to say: "Thus American Missionaries, who were first to enter Japan in 1859 and who were doing useful pioneer work nearly ten years before the arrival of the first British Missionary, still take the

lead." A still later return would bring the total to about 41,000.

For Public Instruction, it has already been seen that Education is a department of the Government, and is organised after Western models. The attendance at Elementary Schools is compulsory, and it may appear strange, though such is the fact, that this constitutes a distinct advance beyond anything that has as yet been deemed feasible in British India. Perhaps the Japanese Government has been right in giving effect gradually and leniently to this compulsion. The number of children of a school-going age is over $7\frac{1}{2}$ millions. Of these only 4 millions, perhaps somewhat less, are actually at school. But even this number of scholars is creditable, indeed honourable, to Japan, considering the shortness of time during which the system has been at work. The schools are of all sorts and grades, as in the West, from the Kindergarten up to the University. There is also technical instruction of all sorts afforded, that is to say, in Science, in Medicine, in Engineering, in Agriculture. The higher Schools are mainly supported by the State, and so are the Elementary Schools in part, the remainder of the expenses being defrayed by local rates.

Together with this education much literary activity has sprung up, as might be expected, inasmuch as there is always a tendency among the Japanese in this direction. According to the *Statesman's Yearbook* for 1899, there were in 1895 some 25 public

libraries in Japan, with nearly half a million of volumes. In that year more than 26,000 books in Japanese, and 753 periodicals, monthly, weekly, and daily, were published. Of the periodicals more than 409 millions of copies were issued, representing a very large circulation. Whether with this literature any works of genius have been written, indicating the new phases of the national character under the new order of things, is a question which it would be premature to attempt to answer. Under such circumstances the weight of books, packets and letters carried by the Post-Office must be enormous. The number of all these together entrusted to the Postal Service has risen from 321 millions in 1893-4 to 506 millions in 1896-7. Taken at the very least, these statistics indicate a remarkable buoyancy of spirits and elasticity of mind in the young nation.

For the general Government the Constitution, of which an outline was given in the preceding Chapter, is apparently being carried out. As it had been deliberately planned, no early modifications were found necessary. Even if some details may have been added or altered, the system is in 1899 as it was on its promulgation in 1890. So far as can be gathered in England, it appears that the civil administration is conducted much in the same manner as that of British India. There are codes of law, civil and criminal, an independent judiciary, magistrates for the various districts, and superior officers for the groups of districts and organised

police; with a civil governor for every province. There is a general freedom of the Press, subject however to censorship in the event of political or constitutional matters being touched upon. All persons, including all the servants of the Government, are equal before the law, nominally and on the principle at least; but for a nation so recently emerged from feudalism as the Japanese there must as yet be doubt whether such equality is fully observed in practice. The relations between the Emperor and the two bodies which form the Diet are being gradually formed after the European model in general, but not exactly according to the example of any one European nation in particular. The Emperor is a constitutional Sovereign; the executive Government, the supreme command of the Army and Navy, the declaring of war, the making of peace, are all vested in him. He has much property belonging to his Crown, but for money supplies to maintain the administration in war and peace he is really dependent on the Lower Chamber of the Diet, consisting of the elected representatives of the people. He appoints his Ministers in all Departments, not exactly as the Sovereign in the United Kingdom does, but more after the manner which is practised by the Emperor of Germany. He chooses his men personally, but it is understood that he must have regard to the sentiments of certain sets of men about his throne, who are something like an unacknowledged Privy Council. Manifestly he must take men who would be acceptable

to the Diet, of which they may be members, though not necessarily so. With his Councillors and Ministers the present Emperor is understood to have weight from his long experience of the new system, which generally exceeds theirs. But he is much secluded and is surrounded by etiquette. He speaks no European language, and cannot learn anything for himself from the outside. So his real character and influence cannot be measured. The loyal view taken by the Diet of his conduct during the war with China has been already mentioned. There has been some revision of the aristocracy, based doubtless on the old order of things. The titles are translated into English as Marquis, Count, Viscount and Baron. The Upper House of Peers consists partly of members in some degree elected by the Orders of aristocracy to which they belong, and partly appointed by the Emperor; the total number is about three hundred. The Lower House of elected representatives consists also of three hundred Members, who all receive a certain allowance which they are not allowed to decline. The Presidents of both Houses are appointed by the Emperor from among the Members. The Diet must be assembled once a year. It is a part of the Emperor's prerogative to dissolve the House of Representatives. In the electoral districts the parliamentary franchise is not like universal suffrage, but is based on moderate and reasonable qualifications.

Hereupon there arise two classes of questions

which are familiar enough to the Western mind, but which cannot be answered for a Parliamentary Government like the Japanese, which is not yet ten years old. The first relates to the elections; whether the candidates are popular ones or the nominees of grandees, whether the elections are free or manipulated by the civil authorities under the Government of the day, whether there are the disputes of the day to be argued by rival candidates on platforms, and whether the electors take sufficient interest in the elections to induce them to attend at the poll in large numbers. The second relates to the Lower or Commons House of the Diet. That it does vote supplies of money for each Session and can thus exercise influence, is clear enough. But there may be doubt whether it can or cannot be overawed by the Ministers of the Emperor, whether it has or has not a real initiative in legislation, whether it has or has not real control over the executive, and whether any private member or group of Members could be influenced by the Government. Englishmen who know their own parliamentary history will be cautious in answering such questions regarding an infant Constitution, respecting which there is only the scantiest information. It is to be apprehended, however, that while some have not even surrendered the old exclusiveness, yet whole classes of people who up to the living generation were in tight subjection and now find themselves in full citizenship, have enough spirit to refuse retrogression towards a

régime which has been abolished. If that be at all the case the new Imperial rule must be rendered in some degree popular. But although there is in form and appearance much of democracy in the Constitution, yet there is evidently hanging about it an aristocratic and monarchical air. The only thing certain, and that will be good, is the patriotism which animates all the intelligent classes of the people from the Emperor downwards.

The internal communication is still in the main by roads, many of which are doubtless well maintained, though probably many of what have been called "the unbeaten tracks of Japan" still remain. From the nature of the country there can be no water communications of any consequence. The railways were begun only in the last quarter of the century, and were at first carried out slowly in the districts adjacent to Tokyo, Yokohama and Kyoto. During the most recent years a marked progress has been made, for the main ridge has been crossed which runs in the midst of the main island, and so there is a railway across the island from the east to the west shore. Again from Tokyo a line has been taken northwards to the upper extremity of the island. Thus there are now 631 miles of railway belonging to the State and 1,873 miles belonging to private companies, twenty-eight in number, of whom three only have any guarantee from the State. That so much private enterprise should have been shown in this matter is creditable to a young nation like the

Japanese. It seems likely to be rewarded, for already the system is carrying $6\frac{1}{2}$ millions of tons and 42 millions of passengers annually. And this has been attained despite the difficulties from repeated seismic disturbances, which may at any moment cause widespread disorganisation in the lines, the bridges and the stock.

The foreign ocean-borne trade has nearly trebled within the last few years as regards imports, and has nearly doubled as regards exports. But still the exports are equal to only two-thirds of the imports, and so there remains a considerable balance of trade against Japan. This circumstance is attracting the serious attention of the Japanese authorities, as will be presently seen. Hitherto this trade has been carried on at six "open ports," that is, open by Treaty to foreigners, and thirteen others. The restriction of foreigners to certain ports was, as has been shown in the foregoing Chapters, due partly to that barbaric jealousy in olden times of which the modern and enlightened time would naturally be ashamed. Accordingly this restriction after long consideration has just been removed. All ports are now free and foreigners are unrestricted as regards residence in the interior, subject doubtless to passport regulations. In justice to Japan, however, it must be said that in recent times the restriction was due to the claims made by Foreign Governments for jurisdiction over their own subjects residing in the country, and has been withdrawn now that Japan has been placed in a position of full jurisdiction.

In 1898 the Associated Chambers of Commerce in England deputed Admiral Lord Charles Beresford to enquire into all matters in China affecting the Chambers. This Mission, though really a private one, was regarded as important by the people of the Far East, whether European or Asiatic. It was extended to Japan, regarding which a Chapter is included in the Report presented by Lord Charles in the spring of 1899, and published shortly afterwards. This Chapter contains some of the most recent evidence regarding the country, and several quotations from it may with advantage be made just in the order in which they come. At Nagasaki Lord Charles finds two mercantile steamers building, of a very superior kind. They will be built at a loss which will be borne "by two rich Japanese gentlemen in support of the patriotic idea of starting shipbuilding in Japan." He remarks that the "Japanese are making strenuous efforts to convey all their water-borne commerce in Japanese vessels. . . . A large amount of machinery in Japan is of British manufacture." At Osaka he visited the Military Arsenal. "It was chiefly employed making a new quick-firing gun. The principle was certainly second to none. They were also making a magazine-gun of Japanese patent, quite perfect in design and construction." He visited the largest of the seventeen cotton mills at Osaka, and found the machinery to be British. He adds: "In Japan there are seventy cotton mills altogether." He went over some very busy iron and steel works.

They "belonged to an Englishman, but were registered as a Japanese company." He was invited to attend a meeting at which the Mayor, the Members of the Chambers of Commerce and all representative citizens were present. This illustrates the manner in which the new municipal institutions are working. He proceeded to Kyoto, and there finds "a system of electric batteries, one of the most remarkable examples of municipal progress, energy and enterprise to be seen in Japan, or perhaps in any country." On the Lake Biwa, near Kyoto, he finds "a further interesting example of municipal enterprise." He adds that there is no country which he has visited where electricity as a motive-power has been taken advantage of to the same extent as in Japan. . . . Telephones and telegraphs abound in every street, in nearly every town, and a very large and increasing number of manufactures are worked by electric power. At Tokyo he met the great officials, and was informed among other things that "the reorganisation of the Chinese Army was occupying the earnest attention of those in authority in Japan, and with the object of helping China forward in this direction the Japanese Government had consented to receive thirty Chinese students into the Military College at Tokyo. Besides fifty-seven Chinese recruits arrived from China to be trained as non-commissioned officers;" and this indicates a *rapprochement* between the two nations after the recent war. At the Central Military School he writes that

nothing could be more perfect than the system of teaching and training. At a parade near Tokyo he states that "Artillery, cavalry and infantry were each quite excellent in organisation, appearance and discipline." He was invited by the Chamber of Commerce at Tokyo to address a public meeting there which was most influentially attended. Among other things he was informed that "if Britain would only lead in a definite policy in China, then Japan would most certainly follow." From Yokohama to Yokoska he is conveyed in an Elswick built cruiser and finds her to be in as good a condition as a man-of-war could be. He went over the naval barracks, "which were in the same complete state of efficiency that I found in all naval and military establishments in Japan."

For trade the Japanese evidently recommend the policy of the "open door" in China, meaning thereby that all ports which are opened at all shall be open to all nations alike. Lord Charles writes that the future well-being of Japan depends much more largely on the maintenance of "the open door" in China than is generally known in Britain. "The population of Japan is increasing rapidly. Only one-twelfth of the whole Empire can be cultivated. Food will have to be imported. . . . In order to pay for this import Japan must have an export. China is the nearest market, and Japan requires that her export shall not be hampered by adverse tariffs on arrival in China." He considers that "the naval and military forces of Japan will have to be reckoned

with, when solving the problems connected with the future development of trade and commerce in the Far East."

These observations, made by Lord Charles Beresford while he was acting in a high capacity, serve to explain many points in the state of Japan in 1899.

The Army of Japan is set down statistically at the high number of 284,700 men of all sorts. But a large part consists of the territorial army, or "land-sturm." The regular army with the colours, however, really consists of the Imperial Guard, 11,200, and the six divisions, 76,300 men. But there is a reserve of 83,000 men. It is noteworthy that there are 20,000 horses of Japanese breed from foreign sires. In the Navy there are twenty-one ships of good types, mostly built in Europe.

The annual Receipts and the Expenditures have been rising fast since 1893, and surpluses used to be generally maintained. For 1896-7 the Receipts were shown at 153 millions of yen and the Expenditure at 165 millions—for 1897-8, the Receipts appear at 238 millions of yen and the Expenditure at 249 millions. In the latter year there seem to be some abnormal credits and debits which swell the totals, in connection with the indemnity for the late war. In the Revenues proper the two main items are the land tax, levied mostly from the peasant proprietors, and the tax on malt and spirits. The expenses of the army appear to be 29 millions, of the navy 10 millions of yen. The public debt stands

at 410 millions, and the debt annual charges at 6 millions of yen. The silver yen or dollar has a nominal value of 4s. and an actual value of 3s. 4d. The standard of value since October, 1897, is gold; the unit will be the gold yen.*

Regarding the aspect of Japan in 1899, one of the best authorities is the *Guidebook* by Chamberlain and Mason, published in 1894. After remarking that in every sphere of activity the old order has given way to the new, they write: "But even Japan, great as is the power of imitation and assimilation possessed by her people, has not been able completely to transform her whole material mental and social being within the limits of a single lifetime. Fortunately for the curious observer she continues in a state of transition—less Japanese and more European day by day, it is true, but still retaining characteristics of her own, especially in the dress, manners and beliefs of the lower classes. . . . As for what is called seeing Japanese life, the best plan is to avoid the foreign settlements in the Open Ports. You will see theatres, wrestling, dancing girls, and the new Japan of European uniforms, political lectures, clubs, colleges, hospitals and chapels in the big cities. The old peasant life still continues almost unchanged in the districts not opened up by the railways." Further, in reference to the temples the *Guidebook*, after adverting to the reform whereby the Shinto and Booddhist re-

* The figures in this paragraph are taken from the *Statesman's Yearbook* for 1899.

ligions were separated, goes on to state that "the Booddhist priests were expelled from the Shinto temples. . . . All buildings such as pagodas, belfries and richly-decorated shrines, that did not properly belong to the Shinto establishment were removed, many precious structures being thus destroyed by 'purifying' zeal. In consequence of all this the modern visitor to Japan loses much that delighted the eyes of those who came twenty years ago. . . . On the other hand he has better opportunities for familiarising himself with the style of 'pure Shinto,' which, if severely simple, is at least unique in the world."

Whether Japan will preserve her unrivalled renown in certain branches of industrial art, as already set forth in the Second Chapter of this Part, is a question which can hardly as yet be answered. But some sidelight may be thrown upon it by the following extracts from the *Guidebook*:

"Though now sometimes sold in large stores, Japanese objects of art are not produced in large workshops. In old days, when the best pieces were made, few masters employed as many as half a dozen workmen in addition to the members of their own family, and *chefs-d'œuvre* often originated in humble dwellings, where perhaps a single artisan laboured in the most primitive style assisted by one or two children. At the present day, foreign influence is causing the spread of Western business methods, extensive manufactures, and splendidly decked-out windows, but

as yet in only two or three of the larger towns. Even there, the best things must often be sought in narrow lanes."

In conclusion, it is clear that Japan is arming steadily and determinedly, and that some immediate trouble is expected by her. That trouble in great part relates to the actual extinction of the Chinese Empire, in all Imperial respects, and the probable dismemberment of China herself as a country and a dominion; to be followed by a virtual partition, in some sort, between the European Powers, with a consequent establishment of what are now known as "spheres of influence," in lieu of the existing policy of "the open door" with ports free to all and unrestricted trade; all which will be explained in the ensuing Part III. on China. Now if anything of this kind were to happen, Japan will tremble for her export markets, which are nearest and best for her in China, and which she seems to think essential to her prosperity. Nevertheless she fears that the Chinese army and police are incorrigibly bad, being unable to preserve order, that the existing disorder, if prolonged, will cause the European Powers to forcibly interfere for the protection of their trade and traders, and that this will be the beginning of the end for China. If "spheres of influence" were thereupon to be created, then Japan apprehends that most of them would ere long be shut against her, excepting the British sphere; in which case the only consolation for her must consist in the thought that the

British sphere will be far the richest and largest. At the best, those who study the realities of China will perceive that the decline and fall of the Chinese Empire must have been only a question of time. But then Japan by the war of 1895-6 certainly precipitated the crisis, broke the back of China, brought in all the diverse European distractions, and produced the very state of things which is now deprecated as perilous to Japanese interests. It is probable that the most thoughtful Japanese statesmen regretfully reflect on that war, glorious as it was for them. However, they sowed the wind, and must be prepared to bear their share in reaping the whirlwind. All this may account for the friendly understanding which Japan now appears to be cultivating with China, probably in the hope of helping to reorganise the Chinese army and police for the sake of internal order and of the "open" door, and with a just and reasonable expectation of security therein through the co-operation of Britain.

On the other hand, that war gave to Japan a place among the nations that she could hardly have attained, and certainly not in the present generation, by any degree of cultivation of the arts of peace. Indeed, in all arts, whether of war or peace, the keynote of the present Japanese character appears to be a strenuous patience.

PART THREE.

CHINA.

CHAPTER XXII.

INTRODUCTION.

I AM now going to sketch the progress of China during the nineteenth century. For the sake of uniformity in expression, the term progress is employed, but it should rather be termed the momentous change which has been coming over the Chinese dominion, which is still proceeding, and may ere long lead to national disaster.

The Chinese Empire covers the vast area of four millions of square miles, with a population of which the total is not exactly known and has been variously estimated, but may be taken at 350 millions of souls, or possibly 400 millions. Of this area about two-thirds, or $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions out of the 4 millions of square miles, consists of the mighty Plateau of Tibet, Tartary and Mongolia, one of the most elevated regions in the world. This Plateau is

mostly desert, but has in parts a scanty and scattered population, amounting perhaps to 15 millions of souls at the most, or one-thirtieth of the whole population as above set forth. In former centuries the movements from this Plateau have transformed the face of China, erected and overturned its dynasties, altered, for better for worse, the destiny of its people. But during the nineteenth century the Plateau has played little part in the history of China, and will now claim but slight notice.

That part of the Chinese Empire which the Chinese inhabit lies between the mountains which form the eastern flank of this mighty Plateau on the one hand, and the Yellow Sea and the China Sea which are really parts of the Pacific Ocean on the other hand. This portion contains about a million and a half of square miles with the population of 350 million above mentioned, perhaps a little more or perhaps even a little less after recent misfortunes. In reference to its fertility, its means of inland navigation, its various resources, its teeming population, it is one of the finest dominions in the world.

Without attempting any geographical description, it is necessary to touch upon the main features of the land in order that the narrative of progress, or at least of change, may be properly understood.

Firstly, towards the north of China, the observer will perceive a very remarkable indentation on the eastern coast which has the dimensions of a gulf, and

is indeed called the Pechihlee Gulf. This has a northern branch on its western end called the Liao Tung Gulf. To the north of these Gulfs lie the Liao Tung peninsula, well known in recent history, and Manchuria, reaching up to the Russian confines of Siberia. From the eastern part of Manchuria there runs southwards a long tongue of territory facing the seaward end of the Pechihlee Gulf, and, as it were, covering the Gulf. This is Korea, the fate of which has been much mixed up with that of China as will be seen hereafter.

The eastern coast line of China may be reckoned at about sixteen hundred miles facing the Pacific Ocean. Consequently the Chinese waters are very extensive. But of all these waters the most important is the Pechihlee Gulf, because at a short distance from the western end of it is situated Peking, the capital of the Empire. Thus the capital is situated in what must be regarded by most Chinese people as a remote corner of the Empire. This may, however, be convenient to the present line of sovereigns, who are Manchus from Manchuria close by. At a comparatively short distance behind Peking rises one of the mountain chains which form the flank of the great Plateau already mentioned. It is along the ridge of this range that there runs the famed Chinese Wall, erected to prevent incursions by the Mongol tribes.

From any examination of this north-west frontier it will be apparent that China is conterminous with

the Russian dominions for many hundreds of miles; and that is a grave consideration.

Amidst these mountains rises the Hoang Ho or Yellow River, the greatest but one of the Chinese rivers. After an extraordinarily tortuous course, it used to discharge itself into the Gulf of Pechihlee, but in recent times it has changed its course and now joins the sea below, or south of the mouth of that Gulf. There are, however, rumours of its returning to its old mouth. This famous river has had no place in the political arrangements of recent times. But it has played an important part in the economic history of China, and in its winding basin has risen the flower of the Chinese population. It was in its upper and middle valleys that the Mongol invaders in the thirteenth century met the stiffest resistance they ever encountered, and that their terribly notorious leader Genghiz Khan fought his last battle.

Besides its proximity to the Capital and to the basin of the Hoang Ho, the Pechihlee Gulf has yet further claims on the notice of statesmen. On the north side of it is situated the new Russian naval station of Port Arthur. On the opposite or southern side of it is the new British naval station of Weihai-Wei. At the south-eastern or outer end of the Gulf is the wide promontory of Shantung, near the end of which is the new German naval station of Kiao Chow.

Southwards of the basin of the Hoang Ho there

are ranges of hills running generally from west to east, and approaching the coast. These form the upper boundary of the valley of the Yang-tsze-Kiang, or blue, River, the greatest of Chinese rivers, and one of the great rivers of the world. It rises far away among the eastern flanks of the mighty Plateau already mentioned. After running for some distance from its imperfectly explored source it bears for several hundreds of miles the name of "the river of the golden sand." Then passing through the upland province of Szechuan, a region of some political importance, it reaches the last of its hilly barriers. It breaks through them with tremendous rapids and emerges finally on the plains. It then pursues a long course through a broad valley and enters the Yellow Sea, a part of the Pacific Ocean. Near the end of this valley is the historic city of Nanking. Just south of the mouth of the Yang-tsze-Kiang is the British commercial station of Shanghai. The position of Shanghai is of the utmost consequence from its proximity to the deltaic mouth of the river. Any naval force placed there virtually commands the mouth of the Water-System and the entrance of the Yang-tsze valley. From its expansiveness, its fertility and resources, its teeming population, its facilities for water-communication, this valley always has been, and still is, by far the finest part of China, and is indeed one of the finest parts of all Asia. As it contains the national and popular capital, namely Nanking, it will prob-

ably be regarded as the truly imperial section of China.

South of this basin there rise hills which form the northern boundary of the Canton River. Near the mouth of that river stands the British island of Hong Kong, a fortified naval base, a coaling station of the first rank, and a centre of commerce.

Again, south of this rise hills which form the northern boundary of the Tongking or Tonkin River system, running into a bay on the coast, where is the French station established some years ago. Near the mouth of this Bay is situate the large island of Hai-nan.

Here ends the Chinese dominion and the kingdom of Siam begins. From this point the Chinese boundary turns north-westward, adjoining the upper valley of the river Mekhong, which flows down south to Cambodia and the French settlement at Saigon, and which is fast rising in political importance. In this quarter lies the province of Yunnan which borders on Burma in the Empire of India, and is the point of contact between the Indian and the Chinese dominions.

Those who judge the fighting power of China merely by the astonishing misconduct of the Chinese troops in quite recent times, would be struck by the undoubted records of Chinese heroism and endurance in former centuries. Their friends believe that in these days with system and discipline they would be just as good and brave soldiers as their forefathers

ever were. They were the last to yield to the Mongols, who by their devastating invasions had overrun everything from the European waters of the Danube and the Volga right across Central Asia to the Pacific shores. Indeed the stiffest resistance which the Mongols encountered among all the nationalities who became their victims was that which the Chinese offered. Had the Chinese happily been at that time united, the Mongols would never have subdued China. But unfortunately there were then two Chinese kingdoms—the northern, that of the Kin with its capital at Peking, the southern, that of the Sung with its capital at Nanking. Even then the Mongols were occupied for many years in subduing the northern kingdom. Indeed they would hardly have subdued it had not the southern kingdom, foreseeing the doom of their northern brethren, made terms with the conquerors. But soon a breach occurred between the Mongols and the southern or Sung kingdom. Thereupon a desperate and bloody contest raged all along the Yang-tsze, the home of the Sung. At last the southern kingdom was beaten down, and Mongol rule was established for a time throughout China under Kublai, one of the few men of genius that the Mongol race ever produced. After him the Mongol rulers, dwelling in the soft climate of China, lost the hardihood bred in the Plateau, the home of their race, and in due course succumbed before a Chinese patriot who founded the Ming dynasty. After the lapse of a few centuries the Ming dynasty

was displaced by the Tartar Manchus, under circumstances most discreditable to the Chinese. It was from Moukden, a valley in the heart of Manchuria already mentioned, that the Manchus came, who still sit on the throne at Peking. It appears now that they too have degenerated, losing the martial and political qualities whereby their ancestors rose to power.

The Chinese dominion proper has long been divided into eighteen provinces which appear to be almost devoutly regarded by the Chinese as their national patrimony. These need be here mentioned only in connection with the geographical sketch just presented. Beginning from the north the provinces of Pechihlee and Shantung adjoin the Gulf as already mentioned; they are partly deltaic or alluvial, and one, Kiangsu, is almost entirely so, being at the mouth of the Hoang Ho, just below, or south of, the Shantung promontory. Then three—namely, Chekiang (just below the mouth of the Yang-tsze-Kiang), Fuhkien, and Kwantung (containing Canton)—are littoral, lying along the shore of the Pacific Ocean. Three—namely, Ganhwey, Hupi, and Honan—are rich inland provinces, partly in the basin of the Yang-tsze-Kiang. One—namely, Hunan, near the Hoang Ho—is rich and fertile. Three—namely, Kiangsi, Kwangsi and Kweichow—are of lesser though considerable richness. Four—namely, Shansi, Shensi, Kansu, and Yunnan—are frontier provinces near the eastern flank of the great Plateau

and are in part hilly. Lastly, one—namely, Szechuan—is partly rich and partly mountainous. Thus is made up the number of the eighteen Provinces.

It will be observed that Manchuria does not fall within this number, though it is equally dear to the present dynasty as being their home. Thus Manchuria must be placed among the dependencies of China. In the same category is the vast Plateau on the West already mentioned, which comprises many well-known regions, notably such as Tibet, there bringing the Chinese Empire in contact with the British in the Eastern Himalayas, such also as Yarkand-Kashgaria in contact with the Russian dominions. Among the dependencies was to be counted Annam in the south, which in recent years has become virtually French. In that quarter China is contiguous to the French dominion in Cochin China. In former times China loved to reckon Korea among her dependencies; but of late she has been forced to abandon that claim.

Adjacent to so large a continent as that of China there would naturally be islands over which the Chinese continental power would have dominion. Among these islands are in the south Hainan, then northwards Formosa (now ceded to Japan) and a string of lesser islands leading towards Japan itself, the small but important islands of Hong Kong ceded to the British (near Macao, which has long been a Portuguese possession), and Chusan, an island which plays some part in the history which is to fol-

low. It seems that the Chinese have never cared so much for their islands as for their provinces above mentioned, which alone are regarded by them as the component parts of their fatherland.

CHAPTER XXIII.

STATE OF CHINA IN 1800.

As a foundation for the narrative of progress or of change in the nineteenth century, it is necessary to portray briefly the condition of China about the year 1800.

In 1793 the Emperor Chienlung of Manchu race had abdicated on completing a reign of sixty years, and on attaining an advanced age. Three years later, in 1796, he died, becoming in courtly phrase "a guest in heaven." This reign had been really magnificent, though its magnificence has been recognised by the learned only and not by the European public, because China itself was but little known in those days. One of the latest authorities is Professor Douglas, who writes: "The native historians state with justice that during the sixty years of his reign the Empire reached its acme of greatness. From the northern steppes of Mongolia to Cochin China and from Formosa (the island) to Nepal, the Chinese armies had fought and conquered. Upwards of four hundred million of the human race had obeyed the commands of the great Emperor." *

* See *Story of the Nations: China*, 1899, by Professor R. Douglas, of the British Museum, whose opinions on the re-

Soon after the beginning of the century but referring to this time Mr. Ellis wrote: "It is impossible to travel through his (the Emperor's) dominions without feeling that he has the finest country within an imperial ring-fence in the world." Thus about the year 1800 all the countries mentioned in the preceding Chapter, the great Plateau, the rich regions between it and the Pacific Ocean, were under an united Empire. The mandates from the Imperial Court at Peking ran without question everywhere. Moreover each and all of the frontier tribes had been made to feel the Emperor's power, the Tartars in Mongolia, the Moslems of Central Asia, the mountaineers of the Himalayas, even the Gurkhas of Nepal, the Burmese, and the men of Cochin China. Externally there reigned a great peace beyond doubt. Internally there seemed to be order and system, but how far these blessings really existed will be seen hereafter. Apparently at least the aspect of affairs was smiling. In many respects the Emperor had shown himself a most capable ruler; whether he had done so in all respects will be considered presently. At all events few mortals ever went to their end with more veneration from a greater number of their fellow-men than he. Though he was by no means the first, he will probably prove to be the last of the great Chinese Emperors. China has never since

cent history up to 1899 I shall frequently follow, and whose orthography of names I adopt.

been in as good a position as that in which he left it. He lived long enough to cause the first day of the nineteenth century to be ushered in for his Empire with a superb and cloudless dawn. But this dawn, as often happens with dawns of that glory, soon began to be clouded over.

Moreover this Imperial success had not been the work of the one reign just concluded, long as its duration of sixty years had been. It had been preceded by a strong and consistent reign of thirteen years. This, again, had followed a grand reign of over sixty years, that of Kanghsi, who was the real builder, if not the founder, of the Manchu dynasty. Thus the eighteenth century closed for China after an unbroken course of Imperial success extending over about 140 years.

It was to this inheritance that Chiaching fully succeeded on the death of his father Chienlung in 1796. Accordingly he was on the throne in 1800, and whatever he did afterwards, he had not up to that date done anything to lower his Empire, the condition of which at that epoch is now to be considered.

The first question relates to the religion of the Chinese at that time. It was then as it had been for some centuries, and as it still is, of a composite character. It may without exaggeration be described as quadruple; this may at first sight appear strange and unprecedented, but such is the fact. For example, there are in India three religions—the abo-

riginal, the Hindu and the Moslem. Every person belongs to one or other of the three, and to no other at the same time. Ere long we hope that Christianity to a large extent will be added to this list. There are indeed some aborigines partly converted to Hinduism, who retain aboriginal rites, but if questioned they would declare themselves Hindus. Similarly there are vast numbers of Moslems of Hindu extraction who retain Hindu customs; still, if tested, they would acknowledge Islam as their religion. But such does not appear to be the case in China. A good Chinaman is in some respects an adherent of the aboriginal faith by modern scientists called "animistic," which with him includes the worship of ancestors. He may also reverence the primeval God Shang Ti.* To some extent he is Confucian, and regards the records of Confucius with reverence. Then he is probably to a larger extent a believer in Taoism, a system not founded on Confucianism but worked out by Lao Tsze, a contemporary of Confucius. Added to all this he accepts Booddhism in some degree at least, will occasionally attend Booddhist ceremonies, may even take part in some worship at Booddhist temples. Thus if asked, a Chinaman could not say offhand to what religion he belonged, inasmuch as he has some share simultaneously in all of the four religions above mentioned. It is understood that the Emperor as head of Church and State has to take part in the rites and cere-

* See Legge's *Religions of China*, Lecture I.

monies of Shang Ti and Confucius only. Europeans cannot have anything like the knowledge of the Chinese which they, for example, have of the Indians. But if the feelings of a good Chinaman could be tested his heart would be found to be with the ancient faith, with its reverence for ancestors, its heaven from which Chinese sovereigns are descended, and its dragon-throne,* more than with anything else. He would have extreme reverence for Confucius as the national sage, prophet and patriotic moralist. But he would doubtless have a vain, worldly and superstitious regard for the pleasant externals with which Taoism has encrusted the purer faith which was handed down to it. Then he would wish to remain on good terms with Booddhism, admiring some of its fancies and observances, without having any idea of the deep principles on which it was originally founded. This tolerant and comprehensive spirit of the Chinese is rare and perhaps unique among the nations. This indicates, too, that the Chinese would be easily accessible to Christianity were it not for the adverse influence of the learned classes who will be mentioned hereafter.

In reference to religion it is impossible to leave without notice the remarkable progress and the rising political influence of Christianity in China, then its retrocession, and, notwithstanding that, the vitality of its missions, and lastly, the persecutions followed

* See Ball's *Things Chinese*, 1893, article "Dragon."

by the depression under which it lay in 1800. After the coming of the famous Matthew Ricci in 1582 the Jesuits introduced their holy faith with consummate skill, with much learning and with the help of scientific knowledge, to which were added, despite all faults, devoted piety and religious fervour. But in China, as in other countries, they tried to adapt Christianity to the ideas, the beliefs, the ceremonies and customs which they found among the people. They seemed to think that some of these thoughts and imaginations contained certain elements of divine truth which might be assimilated to Christianity. They apparently held that some practices called religious were really social or ceremonial only, not amounting to actual worship, and so might be allowed together with the services of the Christian worship, or at least might be continued by the Chinese Christians without derogation of their Christian status. Prominent among these practices was the veneration formally paid to ancestors, which was regarded by the Chinese as one of the first of their duties. By some observers at the time, and by some subsequent writers, all European, it was almost believed that if the Christian Missionaries would interpret all these points of thought and of practice favourably to the Chinese, there might be a conversion of the people in masses, and a wave of Christianity might spread over the country. Doubts, however, arose among some of the Missionaries as to whether this extreme degree of toleration was right

or consistent with the Christian profession. References were made to the Pope, who declared against it. Men from other religious Orders besides the Order of the Jesuits arrived in China, and disputes on this subject ran high. The Pope sent a delegate to China to settle the questions on the spot. Then the Chinese Emperor took umbrage at a Papal delegate being sent to China, and thus became hostile to Christianity. Moreover many of the Missionaries had engaged in lucrative trade, and that was severely reprobated by Papal authority. Thus by the end of the Ming dynasty, about 1600, the fair hopes of the propagation of the Gospel had been blighted.

In his entertaining book on *Historic China*, published in 1882, Mr. Giles has this remarkable passage: "Had the Jesuits, the Franciscans and the Dominicans been able to resist quarrelling among themselves, and had they rather united to persuade papal infallibility to permit the incorporation of ancestor worship with the rites and ceremonies of the Romish church—China would at this moment be a Catholic country and Booddhism, Taoism and Confucianism would long since have receded into the past" (p. 103).

If any such dream were dreamt at that time, the sixteenth century, it would not enter into the head of any one during the nineteenth. For meanwhile, that is before 1800, Christianity had become regarded as the harbinger of European domination, and therefore all the most inveterate predilections of

the Chinese rulers and people had been arrayed against it.

But the withered hopes of the sixteenth century revived, and once more rose high in the eighteenth under the Manchu dynasty and during the long reign of the Emperor Kanghsi. His attitude towards Christianity was so favourable that men thought he was almost inclined to become a Christian. Under him the Jesuits were some of the most important men in the Empire, in civil as well as in religious affairs. They had their churches and congregations in almost every district. They supplied medicine to the sick, especially to the Emperor himself, becoming almost his body physicians; they taught mathematics, and by practical mechanics they made themselves useful in many directions. They held year by year an increasing number of lucrative civil positions.

It may be doubted whether the Jesuits ever could, at the best, have overcome the blank indifference of the Chinese who regarded Christianity as a harmless amusement, or have warded off the hostility of the *literati*, or educated classes, who included the officials or the Mandarins. As it was, they aroused extreme jealousy among the latter class, and were regarded as foreign intruders into civil spheres which ought to be reserved for native-born Chinese. About that time, too, trade with the West was beginning, and foreign vessels were seen with growing numbers in Chinese waters. Then that anxious fear regard-

ing all Western people and things arose in the minds of Chinamen from the Emperor downwards; a feeling which has ever since dominated China, and which may possibly bring her to ruin. Thus towards the end of Kanghsi's reign in 1735, the influence of the Jesuits had become much restricted. His successor, Yungcheng, had a strong prejudice against the Christians; some persecutions even were instituted, and the entry of missionary recruits into the country was prohibited, with the intention that the Missions should cease as the Missionaries in the course of nature died out.

At the outset of his reign this Emperor received a deputation of Jesuits and made them a speech which is given *in extenso* by Boulger in his history, and from which some brief extracts may be noted here, as they illustrate Chinese opinion in the middle of the eighteenth century. The Emperor said: "You tell me that your law is not a false one. I believe you; if I thought that it was false what would prevent me from destroying your churches and driving you out of the country? . . . Ricci came to China in the first year of (the Emperor) Wanleh (in or about 1600). But then you were very few in number and you had not your people and churches in every province. It was only in my father's reign that these churches were raised on all sides and that your doctrines spread with rapidity. . . . You wish that all Chinese should become Christians, and indeed your creed demands it. I am well aware of