

secular world, while the military tyranny under which they so long had groaned was irremediably annulled.

Such was the first great step in the political revolution of Japan. It was followed by another and still greater one, an act without a parallel in the history of autocratic governments. This was the voluntary relinquishment of absolutism by the emperor, the calling together of a parliament, and the adoption of a representative government on the types of those of the West. In all history we can recall no similar event. All preceding parliaments came into existence through revolution or gradual growth, in no other instance through the voluntary abdication of autocratic power and the adoption of parliamentary rule by an emperor moved alone by a desire for the good of his people and the reform of the system of government.

Japan had learned the lesson of civilization swiftly and well, her ablest sons devoting themselves to the task of bringing their country to the level of the foremost nations of the earth. Young men in numbers were sent abroad to observe the ways of the civilized world, to become familiar with its industries, and to study in its universities, and these on their return were placed at the head of affairs, industrial, educational, and political. No branch of modern art and science was neglected, the best to be had from every nation being intelligently studied by the inquisitive and quick-witted island youth.

The war with China first revealed to the world the marvellous progress of Japan in the military art.