

(should I say ?) the course of nature, or rather the effect of the long suppressed desire, of the country at large, utilizing the selfish action of a few men for its own purpose. So the change was effected. Now it was the very nature of the new *régime* thus brought about to determine which course it would follow.

The Damio-hood and Samurai-hood abolished, the Japanese, with the hitherto recognized distinctions of ranks and privileges no longer existent, stood for the first time on equal terms of manhood. Naturally the Kuazoku and Shizoku, or the Damio and Samurai of former days, readily saw that it was now the era of personal merit, not of inheritance, and that they must exert themselves accordingly, while the Heimin, or the former unprivileged class, seeing the new field for honor and aspiration wide open before them, lost no time in adapting themselves to the privileges of newly liberated souls. To add to this, the doors of the western world had just opened on fresh ideas and thoughts. Thus the change that followed could not but be progressive.

Brief and incomplete as these remarks are, I hope they will sufficiently show how utterly ludicrous is the idea that Japanese progress is a mere flower of curiosity, and may to-morrow fall off in a gust of wind. All progress, as the term is now understood, is essentially democratic, but Japan, without the democratic condition which she has so far attained, could not have achieved her recent progress. That

democratic condition was not, however, the outcome of mimicry, but the necessary consequence of the radical change which in course of her national existence Japan could not have avoided. It is true that the fact of foreign intercourse, beginning at the time it did, to a greater or less extent had an influence in determining somewhat the manner of her progress, and possibly, also, in leading the change that was coming over her to be more democratic than otherwise in its tendencies. And it is quite natural that this should have been so, for intellectually and materially, no nation or generation has alone scaled the height of civilization the Occidentals of this century have attained. But it will be unjust to deny to Japan the purely national impulse which brought about and determined the courses of her own changes. In other words, the Japanese progress could not have been a mere accident, nor a miracle of mimicry. It was an unavoidable step in a national evolution.

We have now a firm ground to stand upon and discuss the future of Japan. But I have tried the patience of the reader already to a painful degree, and I must stop. Besides, the subject to be of much value must be dealt with from a sociological, or rather scientific, point of view, and would require deeper learning and an abler hand than mine.

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