

EDITOR'S PAGE

WESTERN AND FAR-EASTERN IDEALS

The suicide of the great Japanese general and his wife has naturally impressed the public mind and caused much comment in the press. The daily papers of Vancouver have had noteworthy and suggestive editorials on the subject. To the western mind the feeling of repulsion and revolt, especially at a Japanese method of self-murder, is, in this case, associated with a great measure of admiration for the spirit of heroic, though mis-applied, loyalty and devotion to a fellow mortal which leads a man to leave uninvited this sphere of training and discipline.

Various writers comment on the seemingly fathomless differences in the civilizations represented by the East and West, and, in effect, remind us that "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet."

It seems to us that there is only one method by which the apparently irreconcilable difference between the races of the Eastern and Western world can ever be obliterated; and that is by influences acting upon their ideals. During the past generation Japan has made marvellous progress in what is now reckoned the world over as the methods and conditions of modern civilization, and China is now making big efforts in the same direction. But much of the rapid change in Japan has been from without—not from within—and all who have the higher welfare of the world and the human race at heart will hope and pray that within the next generation Japan and the other great nations of the East may make as great progress towards assimilating the unexcelled Christian ideal.

As they do so, the spirit of loyalty and devotion which led General Nogi and his wife to follow their Emperor into the spirit world need not be less alive or less national; only it will be otherwise directed, for it will be subordinate to a higher spirit which recognizes that all earthly kings and potentates are only fellow mortals, under heaven-ordained discipline, too; whereas over all is the Alone-Enduring-One, Whom Jesus Christ revealed to our world as the All-loving Father.

The Christian ideal inspires the belief that, notwithstanding the ways in which man may abuse life, or theories he may form or experiment with, as to its basis, beginning, or development in any one sphere, LIFE is the gift of God; and as such is to be valued, and if need be, endured with heroic patience till the summons comes to pass hence.

The western mind reckons that the person taking his own life often (where mental derangement does not explain all) acts a selfish and cowardly part. Considering the grief and trouble that usually follow to relatives and friends left behind, this may be held to be a fair and reasonable position—leaving religion out of the question. But even if our years and experience in this world have not led us beyond the attitude which holds life itself the Great Enigma, man, we believe, shows a spirit more heroic and godlier when he follows the example of the immortalized Roman soldier at Pompeii who, amid what may have seemed and sounded like "the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds" did not desert his post.

At the same time, too, while we yield