

of a nation," a voice would say. I pity the man who persuades himself to believe that a few admonitory words could have saved France from relinquishing its resplendent days of Louis XIV., which to us, at this distance of time, seem sufficiently romantic, picturesque, and refreshing, and the fact of their being gone forever, appears even regretful.

But to come back to Japan. In looking back to the event of twenty-seven years ago which consummated, as by one stroke, Restoration, Reformation and Revolution, does not its very magnitude alone suggest that a mere national aptitude for mimicking could not have been its sole cause?

These are the reasons for the event:

1—Japan could not have avoided the changes; 2—and those changes could not but have been radical, 3—and also progressive.

Let us briefly go over these reasons. As a matter of fact, Tokugawa Shogunate had given Japan a peace and rest of over two hundred years, an unusually long period of prosperity for feudalism, which could not but be a temporary form of government, from a sociological point of view.

Now it will be extremely difficult for Americans to realize in imagination feudalism as it was, but if they can exercise their patience, and deny, for the time being, the existence of one Grover Cleveland, and suppose that fifty years hence Tammanyism has become the governing principle of the mighty Republic, then they would have a somewhat true idea of the past feudal system of Japan, for the latter, in time of peace, was only a little better than that felonious tigerism.

Baneful as feudalism was, Japan endured its evils patiently, more than anything else out of a sense of gratitude towards the Tokugawa family, who in the beginning had brought to her the much desired peace after a long period of war and misery. And in those days literature and art, such as would please the rich and leisure

some, had indeed kept on advancing, but the time-honored national motto, "Government is for the people," had gradually been lost sight of, in the midst of such absurdities as Kirisutegomen, or pardonable killing, which, with many other atrocities, grew up into a right by which a Samurai could butcher common people with impunity for almost any act, even an act of mere discourtesy.

Thus towards its closing days, in spite of its courtly manners, refined tastes, and flourishing arts, such as a church would affect in the most hypocritical period of its history, feudalism had gone down into the abyss of degradation. A change had become necessary for Japan. Nor were lacking men of learning, thought and patriotism, who studied, planned and paved the way to such an end.

But it was evident to these men that the desired change, in order to bring about the desired results, should be not less than the total overthrow of feudalism, and the introduction of a new order of things, and therefore a radical change. Of course each man had his own views, but all were disgusted with the then existing state of things, which led to laxity of morals, and, among and above all other results, enslaved the people. They all agreed that the change must be prompt, and thorough, and strike to the root of feudalism, which had grown up to be a system of oppression and corruption. Here then was the reason why the changes could not but have been radical.

Perhaps it may be urged that those who had actually most to do in effecting the downfall of the Tokugawa Shogunate had, many of them, a secret design in their own minds to instate themselves in the position thus vacated, and continue feudalism according to their own fashion. But the events that followed proved that the real cause was other than such individual ambition, that the change was a case of evolution, or