

JAPANESE BARBARISM

MANY people, especially in Germany and France, who stand under the influence of a philo-Russian press, assert that European civilisation is to Japan only a weapon for war, an instrument for developing her wealth, and an outward veneer; that she is savage at heart, revengeful, bloodthirsty, cruel; that she possesses adaptive talent and artistic genius, but no real civilisation.

Those who hold the view that Japan is a barbarian nation, which has adopted only the outward signs and trappings of civilisation in order to be admitted into what is technically called "the comity of nations" and to be considered as an equal of civilised countries, point with some apparent justification to the various atrocities which Japan has committed in the past. Therefore it is worth while to look somewhat closely into those deeds of cruelty with which Japan is so frequently charged by some, and which cannot be gainsaid though they can be explained and perhaps even justified.

Those who assert that Japan is barbarian at heart point to the pitiless war of extermination which she waged against Christianity in Japan, during which several hundred thousand native converts were killed for the sake of their religion, and not a few of the missionaries were tortured; they recall the time when Japan was closed to the world, and when those who landed on the Japanese coast were punished with death; they dwell on the number of inoffensive foreigners who in the 'sixties