

When Commodore Perry emptied on shore his ship-load of presents, and among them the miniature railroad train, in their delight the people would straddle across the cars and sit down on them, crazy to get a ride on the train, where they could not get in, along the little track. There came a craze for everything foreign; they called for teachers from America and Europe; they sent their young men and young women by the scores to be educated here, and did not stop in affright as China did after making the same beginning. It is amazing what a revolution has been made in the whole habit of the thoughts of the people in a generation. It is enough to give serious thought to people that make so much of the influence of heredity on habits of thought.

"In a few years we have seen old prejudices dissolved, old civilization utterly discarded, and a Christian civilization adopted in its place. Japan has a constitutional monarch, with a parliament and representative ministry like Great Britain. It has as large a railroad system in proportion to its territory as the United States; it has quite as good a school system, reaching from the kindergarten to the university; its post-office department is admirably conducted, and everybody now knows that its military affairs are managed with great wisdom and patriotism and honesty. If ever there was a nation enthusiastically patriotic it is Japan. It has the Red Cross attachment to its military service under the Geneva rules and under the sanction of the laws of the Empire—something that we cannot boast of in the United States. Its students of philosophy and science and medicine rank with the best, and we see all the enthusiasm and devotion which belong to the birth of a new nation.

"But not a Christian nation. Ten years ago our missionaries were saying that it looked as if Japan

would become Christian before the end of the century. But there came a chilling frost; and for the last two or three years there has been very little advance in the number of converts. They have done well that they have held their own. There has grown up with the patriotism a feeling of pride, not to say vanity, which has made the Japanese say that now they have learned all the West has to teach, and that they will develop hereafter along their own lines; that if they can they will reform the old Buddhism of their common people or the Confucianism or Shintoism of the upper classes, making of it a purer and a better faith which shall absorb all the ethical teachings of Christianity, very much as the Brahmo-Somaj has attempted to reform the old Brahminism of India.

"What the result will be we cannot yet tell, except that we believe that our Christian faith has the Spirit of God with it and will prevail. But, meanwhile, for some years to come we shall see the great experiment tried of a great nation which does not profess to be Christian, whose religion is becoming simply a system of ethics. We shall learn how thoroughly a Christian civilization can be ingrafted on a non-Christian or a pagan faith. And if, as now seems probable, China shall feel the impulse which Japan has given to her, and shall herself speedily accept the Christian civilization of the West, there may be two such powers a generation hence.

"We believe that our Christian missionaries have for the most part acted very wisely in Japan in that they have taken pains not to antagonize the Japanese national feeling; and it may even be a question now, or very soon, whether in the interests of Christianity itself the foreign missionary force there should not be reduced. It is greatly to be hoped that Japan, which has thus