

the transformation of Japan. Commerce has done much, and the government and people have until now seemed almost eager to learn the ways of our Western civilization, including education. But the missionary work has contributed that best of all elements, the ethical and the domestic. It has changed especially the whole status and outlook of Japanese womanhood, and that includes also the outlook of the future state.

But there is another lesson which the statistics of Mr. Loomis present. There has been evidently some reaction. There has not been as large a growth in 1889 as in other recent years. We were prepared for this, for all sources of information have revealed the fact of political jealousy connected with the question of the revision of treaties. There has sprung up a party which is opposed to foreigners and foreign influence. It embraces many of the young and vigorous elements of Japanese society. There has in consequence been less readiness to listen to the gospel, and the religious movement generally has felt the influence. Missionaries are consequently filled with no little anxiety, though generally they are hoping that the reaction is only temporary.

It is a fitting opportunity, now that the work has slackened speed, to review the whole situation. What is the religious condition of Japan today? What remaining strength have the old faiths? Are they likely to abide, or will the future conflict lie between Christianity and some new form of belief or unbelief? Really there are four religions still contending for supremacy—Sintoism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity, to say nothing of those new types of thought which are the result of conflict or compromise, and which generally savor of general dissent and negation.

SINTOISM.

A moment's consideration of the old faiths and their present status is

in place here as we contemplate the general situation. It has been too common, though on slight grounds, to consider Sintoism* as dead and out of the question. But intelligent Japanese, even some of those most friendly to Christian progress, look upon Sintoism as constituting a greater obstacle to Christianity than Buddhism, though its influence is less conspicuous and obstructive. Sintoism is the old national religion; it is a development of that nature worship which has been so common in the early experience of many races.

Sintoism recognizes one Supreme God, who is unknown to men, but from whom all things have sprung. From him eight subordinate divinities emanated, of whom the most important were *Isenami* and *Isenangi*, male and female, the progenitors of mankind.

These related deities, standing on the ramparts of heaven, reached down to earth with a long spear and stirred the depths of the ocean, and as they withdrew the spear there dripped from its point a peculiar substance from which grew the islands of Japan, and which had in it "the prophecy and potency of all life," animal and vegetable. It was Huxley's protoplasm turned to practical account. From the two deities sprang a beautiful daughter, the goddess of the sun, and she became the mother of the Mikados.

It is claimed that there has never been a break in this royal and divine succession, and that for 2600 years it can be clearly traced. Many important results have sprung from this sun myth. It has conduced greatly to the loyalty of the Japanese toward their sovereign. Only in three unsuccessful instances have attempts ever been made to dethrone a Mikado, though changes in the dynasties of the Shoguns, or temporal rulers, have

* Some writers use the simple term Sinto, but Sintoism is employed by some native writers.