and liberty-loving. The Japanese finally became tired of this regime, and it is a marvel how they could have lived tranquilly and submissively for two centuries and a half. During all this time, the real sovereign, the emperor, had, as it were, completely disappeared from the world. The Shogun, with the greatest demonstrations of respect, affected to honor him as a god and imbued the nation at large with the same feeling toward his person as too holy and too elevated to meddle with the things of this world. At the same time, and, of course, from the same motive, he had him guarded as a captive in his palace at Kyoto, watched over his conduct, controlled all his intercourse, and let him feel the want of commodities and even of the necessaries of life. Throughout the country, those who knew the state of things became indignant. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, a few men, bolder than the rest, dared to think and express in writing that the empire belongs first of all to the emperor.

During the fifty or sixty years that followed, the power of the Shogun declined by degrees. The corruption of the government officials, although carefully concealed, was too great to escape notice, and the number of the malcontented increased. The feeling of uneasiness soon spread. However strictly guarded, the country was not completely cut off from all the news of the outside world. The most intelligent among the Japanese felt that the world had progressed without them. The old watch-word, "Out with the barbarians!" was no longer sufficient to reassure them. There were no more barbarians in Japan; but there was another question to be answered: "Should their country be invaded by foreigners, how would they be able to defend it? And this invasion was looked upon by many as near at hand and inevitable.

Such was the state of things when, in 1854, a small American squadron under the command of Commodore Perry, appeared for the first time in Japanese waters. The effect this sight produced upon the minds of the Japanese people was incalculable. It was seen that an attack on the part of other countries was possible, and whatever the Japanese might have thought of their own superiority and courage at the time, they were forced to acknowledge at least that they were not sufficiently armed to defend themselves.

"At that time," says Count Okuma, "we had only arrows and spears. A boat laden with dry grass, with a little powder to burn the enemy's ships, was the acme of our naval strategy. It was, as we all understand, quite inadequate against the foreign war ships. . . . We were convinced (not without pain, for it cost us a great effort) that to be able to resist the powers of Europe and America, it was necessary to master their sciences. At first we studied medicine, which in our own country was then limited to empirical processes and to healing powers of herbs and barks. Then, while studying English and French, we found that, so long as we had not a powerful army, the hope of repelling the barbarians would never be anything but an idle dream. Along with the science of warfare it was necessary to learn the art of casting cannons and making guns, of constructing battleships, etc. But for all these enterprises, money was required; the vile metal that the samurai of old Japan had affected to despise, became precious, and the study of economical sciences and financial industries was imposed upon us.

"Thus, in proportion as we came in contact with foreigners, those who before seemed to be barbarians, and whom we compared to the very animals, finally appeared to us as men, having also a country, and whose power was even formidable. We then became conscious that we were courageous, indeed, but lacked the means of showing our courage and maintaining its high standard. For that reason, those who led the others in crying, 'Out with the barbarians!' became gradually less strenuous in the demand. In fact we began to say, 'Let us beware of becoming imprudent, lest we have good reason to repent.'

"The imitation of foreign countries became then the order of the day. A return from Europe or America was universally celebrated. Any one, even an ignoramus, who had gone to England or America, had a right to speak out boldly his opinion, and he was listened to. The saying, 'That is a European,' was a magic word before which everybody bowed.

"We were also occupied in sending plenipotentiaries to Europe. . . . We sent them by the dozens. The object of their mission was, in reality, to study the constitution, civilization, customs, commerce and industry of the different nations. For two years they travelled through more than sixteen countries. . . Although many of them were old men, they all again became students, and brought back with them to Japan the lessons they had learned abroad. All the rights which the common people in European countries had obtained from their sovereigns by force, were then freely granted to the Japanese people by the emperor.

"However, the preoccupation to defend ourselves against foreigners never ceased to be a fixed idea. And, moreover, what we have seen in Europe has increased our feeling of envy; and it is with a sort of vexation that we decided to take foreigners as models in everything." (Ex-Tokyo, July, 1904.)

In fact, if there was anything distressing and painful for the Japanese as they were then, it was to go to school to, and to put themselves under the influence of, these same foreigners, whom they had so long and so deeply despised and hated. To let the soil which their gods had inhabited be trod upon by barbarians, to acknowledge that their country was three centuries behind time, and to have recourse to enemies of three hundred years' standing, to learn from them the very art of defending themselves, are sacrifices which, never since Japan existed, have been imposed upon the inhabitants. Nevertheless, they resigned themselves to these sacrifices. In order to be inferior to none, they seemed ready to sacrifice everything for a time,—ideas, prejudices, customs, traditions, even national pride itself.

(To be continued)

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