

all have the peculiar characteristics of their special individuality. A politician may presume to sit in judgment upon Savonarola, and call him a clumsy and incapable prophet, because he did not practise the intrigues of politics. Again, a mystic, a religious fanatic, constitutes himself his judge, and brands him as an ambitious tribune, because he blended the cloister with the political arena, the pulpit with the rostrum; because he worshipped both religion and democracy; because he made himself the champion of the Gospel and the Republic. To satisfy the desires of so many souls, to fulfil the testaments of the last canonical councils, to restore Christian thought to the mind, and then to bring down conscience, regenerated and remoulded, into the bosom of society—this was his herculean task, his historic mission.

"Savonarola, like Livy, came from Padua. These Venetian cities have been marvellously fertile in illustrious children. Padua in point of antiquity surpasses Venice, which dates later than the fall of Rome and the irruptions of the barbarians. And as its antiquity is greater than that of Venice, so it has a German-Latin character not to be found in the former city, which was exclusively occupied in receiving the fugitives who escaped the fire and sword of the barbarians. Here upon these plains, where the poplars are interlaced with the vines, where we look upon the Lagoon of St. Mark, where the waters sparkle that flow from the dazzling Adriatic, as our thoughts wander through these great cities peopled with the spirits of bygone generations, it becomes manifest to us that their inhabitants could not surrender themselves to the effeminacy and luxury of modern Venice.

"Padua, rising up at the entrance of the envied Venetian Lake, had to be well sentinelled, and to engage in constant warfare. The man of Padua of old distinguished himself by his energy, developing great powers in all athletic exercises, as became one reared on the cross-ways of so many military roads, and amid such numerous and terrible wars. Savonarola had somewhat of this native energy, having assimilated the tone of the race, the family, the city, and the generation to which he belonged. Padua, given over body and soul to the League of the Guelphic cities, fell afterwards into the hands of the greatest Ghibelline tyrant that was ever known in the history of Italy; at some times trodden under foot by Imperial troops, at others by those of the Pope, finally at the commencement of the fifteenth century she yielded to the power of her most terrible rival, the abhorred Venice. Savonarola's ancestors must have acquired amid these tragedies, so well calculated to steel the soul, much of the energy and fortitude which they transmitted to their immortal descendant: a constant combatant in the bloodless warfare of mind. Savonarola's family was attached to the University of Padua. As we can at this day form no great idea of what cathedrals were in the Middle Ages, so no more can we conceive the universities of those times, which savoured somewhat of the State, and somewhat of the court of justice. Their professors were of the severe patrician class, who paid external obedience to the law, to the Church, and even to the State, as they were enabled to do by the natural power of their ideas, and by the special character of their duties; at the same time, even in democratic Italy, they were contemptuous of manual labour, as it was associated with arts and sciences, and the office of a medical man was inferior to that of a lawyer or a theologian. It is necessary that this be remarked upon, for it was Savonarola's misfortune to belong to a family which practised medicine, and this settled his fate, and brought about his seclusion in a cloister.

"The person who most powerfully influenced the destiny of Girolamo Savonarola was his paternal grandfather Michaele, the celebrated physician. Michaele Savonarola yearned with inexpressible tenderness over the boy, and did all he could to secure for his grandchild, who should bear his name, a scientific education. It was his desire to be personally reproduced in his grandchild, and to this end he destined him to follow the medical career in order to make him what he had been himself, an ornament of courts, and a benefactor of the sick poor. Savonarola's education commenced with the physical sciences—a course alien to his natural disposition, and contrary to his mental vocation. Fortunately, medicine was not at that time so much separated from arts and letters as it is at present. Michaele Savonarola, however, died ere he could complete the education of Girolamo, which was then taken up by his father Nicholas Savonarola, a man better versed in the evil ways of courts than in the secret marvels of science. He restricted the training of his son to the science of the period—that is to say, to a certain acquaintance with the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, which, as is well known, represented the philosophy of Catholic dogma.

"The intellectual influences which moulded Savonarola being thus ascertained, we have now to find the moral influences whose inspirations gave warmth and life to his feeling. Savonarola found a great teacher in his mother, who combined elevation of mind with sweetness and gentleness of character. Her name was Elena; she belonged to the illustrious family of the Buonacorsi, of Mantua. Married to the vulgar Nicholas Savonarola, she found in the love of her children, and in the cultivation of their minds, the satisfaction which she could not find in courtship or marriage. Elena had two sons older than Girolamo, but in neither did she find the reflection of her own soul. The eldest embraced the profession of arms, the second devoted himself to the administration of finance. Girolamo alone, in spite of his unprepossessing exterior, attracted her love by the lofty qualities which distinguished him from infancy, by his wealth of ideas, his depth of thought and fluency of speech, all foreshadowing his mysterious future vocation.

"There was another woman also who was to exercise a sovereign influence over Savonarola; this was a daughter of the representative of the patrician Florentine family of Strozzi, a girl wondrously beautiful and extraordinarily intelligent. Savonarola fell in love with her, and set his heart upon her possession. When the family finally rejected him, partly

on account of his medical profession, and partly on account of his person he believed that it was death that had come upon him, when in truth it was immortality. He did not summon suicide to his aid as a Greek or a Roman under similar circumstances would have done; he put on as a shroud the coarse garb of the Dominican; he converted the cloister into a vast Pantheon, and buried himself in it as a corpse in a sepulchre; he thought of no other bride than the Church, nor other posterity than his works, nor of any for his family save those whose sufferings were like his own and who had loved as he had loved. He was attracted to the Order of Preachers by the inward stirrings of eloquence, and by the professions of the ideas of that wonderful sage, St. Thomas Aquinas. On a certain morning in April, the trees being fully in leaf, all the birds singing, the sky resplendent with luminous clouds, he took his leave of those whom he loved best and of the objects he held dearest. It was on the 24th April, 1475, when the city of Ferrara glowed with joyous demonstrations, for that day was the feast of its patron saint, St. George, that amidst the merry peals of bells, the strains of music, the clamour of multitudes and the festivities of dancing and carousing, Savonarola came to his final resolution. At length he reached the monastery he had selected. He knocked at the door, he asked for shelter, he entered within its walls like a shade into a vault, and there he found the sanctuary of his religious vocation and the place of penitential scourges to discipline his distressed conscience. Thus contemplating him with his face hidden under the dark folds of his cowl, his body mantled in a coarse serge shroud, his eyes brilliant with the light of a superhuman inspiration, pale as death, tragic as despair, abstracted and withdrawn from the world, he was but a pure spirit, a miraculous shade either proceeding from earth to immortality or come down from heaven to earth."

A TOUR IN JAPAN.

SINCE the Japanese Court at South Kensington and the "Mikado" have popularised that portion of the Asiatic Empire formerly so little known or appreciated by the world in general, some further information on the island at large, extracted from an interesting article in the *Fortnightly*, may not be unacceptable, especially in view of its approaching connection with the Dominion through the Canadian Pacific Railway.

The author, Captain Brinkley, R.A., accompanied Sir George Bowen, the Governor of Hong Kong, on his visit to Japan, which was performed as is necessary under official auspices; the party being welcomed everywhere with that hospitality for which the Japanese are famous. Japan is emphatically, says the traveller, an interesting country; interesting not only because of the wonderful social and political changes through which she has recently passed, but because, as the pioneer of Western civilisation in the Orient, she is destined, with her numerous population, large resources, and hereditary martial spirit, to become, one day, a powerful ally or a formidable enemy of any European State seeking to pursue a vigorous policy in the East. As events are shaping themselves at present, it appears reasonable to predict that Great Britain and Japan will, ere long, find themselves ranged side by side to check Russia's advance towards the Korea.

The population of the Island Empire is now about 37,000,000, and its public revenue approaches £16,000,000 sterling. Its foreign trade (including exports and imports) amounts to £12,000,000 sterling. There are already three hundred and thirty miles of railway completed, and lines are being steadily pushed forward so as to open out the entire country. The army is effective with peace and war establishments of 82,000 and 100,000 men, respectively, thoroughly trained and equipped in European style; and the navy consists of some twenty-five ships, of all sizes, including seven ironclads. Complete systems of telegraphs, post-offices, police, savings banks, gaols, universities, schools, colleges, light-houses, meteorological observatories, etc., exist, all on the best European or American models. These immense innovations have been accomplished within the short space of fifteen years, and so economically, that the whole national debt amounts only to about one year's revenue.

The political state of this remarkable nation has also undergone wonderful developments, the feudal despotism, so long borne with impatience, was abolished by a revolution in 1878, and a revived aristocracy of more than five hundred families formed, with the Mikado in his ancient authority as its head. Japan has now her princes, dukes, marquises, counts, and barons, who will form the Second Chamber of National Legislature which it is proposed to convoke for the first time in 1890. There will also be an elected Chamber of Representatives of the people. At present, the Imperial Government is carried on by a Ministry named by, and responsible to, the Mikado. Japan has fully entered the family of nations, and maintains ambassadors at the chief capitals of the world. Her statesmen have shown that they are well able to hold their own with even the most powerful representatives.

Thus much premised, we may set out on our travels with the Governor of Hong Kong to Kyoto, the Moscow, as Tokiyo is the St. Petersburg, of Japan. The principal inn at Kyoto commands a prospect such as few hotels in the world can boast. It is a handsome, spacious building, with a charming garden and a very tolerable *cuisine*; it is also accessible by railway. *Va-anie*, as this delightful resort was called, was not patronised by Sir George Bowen, the Gehin-kwan, a club supported by the private subscriptions of Japanese noblemen, being placed at his disposal. Originally the summer residence of some well-known aristocrat, it presents all the most refined features of Japanese domestic architecture; while, from its southern and eastern aspects, one looks out upon a beautiful plain reaching to the foot of hills with soft contours and richly wooded nooks. The