

Patriots to the depths of their being, they have supported progress, and have been ready for the greatest personal sacrifices. The overthrow of the feudal system, accomplished by themselves, deprived them of their hereditary rights and privileges, and mingled them indiscriminately with the mass of the people. A certain number found employment in the government, for the police and the officers of the naval, military and civil services are, almost without exception, Samurai. But, after all, only a small fraction could be thus employed, and the great majority were left to make their own way. As the legacy of feudalism, they retained a high sense of their own dignity and position, a lofty patriotism, an infinite desire for education, and total ignorance of the arts of money making and of practical life. In most trying circumstances they have succeeded nobly. They are still the dependence of Japan. As editors, lawyers, politicians, and, we may add, clergymen, they maintain their old position as the leaders of the people. But, in such a transformation, in so keen a struggle for existence, only the fittest survive. Some of the Samurai have disappeared in the mass of the commons. They are crooks, petty merchants, farmers, and pullers of jin-riki-sha. Another fraction still struggle against increasing odds. Their money is almost gone—of practical ability they show little. They are without guides, political or moral. The Confucian ethics that sufficed for their fathers have lost all power, and there is nothing in their stead. The old loyalty that had its well-understood code, is gone, and the new patriotism has not yet found its moral foundation. The old, narrow education is replaced with a smattering of misunderstood western learning. In Tokyo are scores of schools, with thousands of young men in attendance, that are a constant source of danger. The schools are for the sake of providing their proprietors with an income. The course of study is meagre; the teaching of the poorest; discipline is conspicuous by its absence. Here young men congregate, get a smattering of Spencer and Mill, talk politics, and impress each other with their mutual importance. From these immature politicians come the Soshi. The Soshi are violent young men, for the most part extreme radicals, who openly advocate the use of physical force in the maintenance of their political views. They assault their opponents, break up public meetings, advocate assassination, and are ready to go to all extremes. Such men compelled the disbanding of the great liberal party some years ago, since they would not submit to the leaders, but by their violence brought discredit on the whole movement. There have been many such men in the years past, but only in 1889 did they make themselves felt as an open faction. The Soshi profess differing political opinions, but are in all cases the advocates of the free use of physical force.

*The Agitation.*—As noted above, they first interfered in the question of the treaties by threatening the English with violence if “they