A history of the nineteenth century, year by year

Emerson Edwin
A History of
The Nineteenth Century
Year by Year

BY
EDWIN EMERSON, JR.

Member of the American Historical Association, New York
Historical Society, Franklin Institute of Philadelphia,
Honorary Member of the Royal Philo-
Historical Society of Bavaria, etc., etc.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
GEORG GOTTFRIED GERVINUS

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AND TWO MAPS

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EARLY in the year, Archduke Maximilian had granted a general amnesty to all political offenders in northern Italy. Sharp objections to this were raised at Vienna. The growing national spirit of the Italians gave grounds for apprehension. Secretly encouraged by Cavour, the Sardinian press assailed Austria with great freedom. The revolutionary societies, subsidized by the Sardinian Government, agitated for another national uprising. The Austrian Government, informed of this by its spies, lodged a formal protest with the Sardinian Government. Cavour ignored the protest. The relations between the two countries grew strained. Presently diplomatic intercourse between Austria and Sardinia was severed. Cavour first made overtures to England for armed support, but his efforts proved unavailing. Thereupon he ingratiated himself with Louis Napoleon by supporting the French contentions throughout the diplomatic controversies concerning the Danubian principalities.

Meanwhile, in Germany, it had become an open secret that King Frederick William of Prussia was mentally unsound. Presently his brother, Prince William, the hated foe of Liberalism in Prussia,
was appointed Regent. For some time still he retained the Ministry of Manteuffel in office, but from the first he showed himself opposed to his brother's semi-liberal tendencies.

 Commodore Perry's second visit to Japan resulted in serious consequences for that country. The Mikado, having first refused to accede to the conclusion of a treaty of commerce with the United States of America, was finally persuaded by his old Minister, the Taikio, to let his commissioners sign the treaty at Kanagawa. Townsend Harris, on behalf of the United States, signed the treaty on June 17. The reasons for this violation of Japanese traditions were thus explained in an official circular of the Shogun:

"The Mikado having been consulted by the Shogun's Government about the making of treaties with foreigners, he answered that the conclusion of that matter would distress him very much. Thereupon the Shogun requested all the Daimios to send their written opinion upon the subject. Only a short time was required to gather every one's opinion; but, in the meantime, some Russian and American men-of-war came here, bringing the news that in a short time English and French men-of-war would arrive here; that these two nations had fought and won many battles in China; that they would come here in the same warlike spirit, and it would be difficult for us to negotiate with them. The American Ambassador offered to us, that if we would make a temporary treaty with him, as soon as we should have signed and given him that treaty he would act as mediator between us and the French and English, and could save us from all difficulties."
After the ratification of the treaty of Kanagawa, similar treaties were concluded with Holland, Russia, Great Britain and France. The Shogun’s explanations did not satisfy the Daimios. A popular remonstrance to the Mikado was issued in Miako:

"Great changes are being made in our holy country in respect to foreigners. However, it is not for us ignorant people to judge, and for that reason we lately wrote twice to the Mikado. We hoped that he would consider the subject.

"We write to him once more. Since the time of Tensio Dai Jin the country has been to the present time sublime and flourishing; but friendship with foreigners will be a stain upon it, and an insult to the first Mikado (Zinmu). It will be an everlasting disgrace for the country to be afraid of those foreigners, and for us to bear patiently their arbitrary and rough manners; and the time will come when we shall be subservient to them. This is the fault of the dynasty of the Shogun. If foreigners come to our country they will loudly proclaim the mutual benefits that trade will produce; but when we shall refuse to comply with all their wishes, they will threaten us with their artillery and warships. The Shogun thus disturbs peace."

Late in the year an imperial edict appeared, which was later declared to be a forgery. It was directed against the Shogun, thus:

"Your duty is to act as Shogun; and yet you, who have been appointed as Commander-in-Chief to quell the barbarians, do not perform your duties. You should know what the duties of your office are, and yet you are unable to punish our foreign ene-"