

had become entirely impossible. He secured "the ultimate unification of the empire now split up into numerous petty kingdoms" which, all of them, recognized the sovereignty of the Mikado in theory, only to deny it in practice.²⁹⁰ He defeated the ruling Shôgun in a civil war in which the ecclesiastical powers again took part. The huge fortified monastery of Hieizan was destroyed by the most agnostic condottiere who was not in the least awed by the sanctity of the location. The same fate hit the still more imposing cloister-fortress of the Shin-sect in Osaka. Nobunaga and his two generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Jeyasu Tokugawa, are genuine figures of the renaissance, quite like the great contemporaneous condottieri of western Europe, the Pescara, Colleoni, Frundsberg, Wallenstein, Rohan, etc. They are distinguished like them through military genius, diplomatic astuteness, inflexible will—and a conscience that was not to be disquieted.

Nobunaga perished by the treason of one of his generals, whom he had rendered, so we are informed, his mortal enemy by a "practical joke." The question is permissible whether it was not an ecclesiastical intrigue which brought about the end of this enemy of the clergy. Hideyoshi defeated and killed the traitor and took over, first as regent, later as "Taiko" (great prince), the government of the State which he quickly united through decisive victories over the great territorial princes. He ruled with wisdom and moderation, the first soldier in Japan's history who was at the same time a statesman. He knew how to spare the vanquished adversaries instead of slaughtering them. After his death in 1598, Jeyasu took over the government, defeated a coalition and had himself nominated Shogûn (1603). He was the founder of the Tokugawa dynasty.

It is nearly superfluous to mention that Hideyoshi had the children "eliminated,"²⁹¹ and that Jeyasu did the same in regard to the progeny of Hideyoshi.²⁹²

²⁹⁰ Longford, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

²⁹¹ Gowen, *op. cit.*, pp. 209 ff.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 242.

(Continued)