

The Japan Daily Mail.

YOKOHAMA, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1907.

JAPAN'S FOREIGN POLICY.

It is very interesting and reassuring to observe that two journals like the *Mainichi Shimbun* and the *Nippon* agree in urging the vital importance of an extremely circumspect policy on Japan's part towards foreign nations at present. The mood of the West towards her during the past fifteen years may be synthesized into three phases. At first it was one of tolerance not unmixed with contempt. This was succeeded, after the war with China, by a slight abatement of the contempt and an increase of the tolerance, but it can not be said that there was any radical change of the general disposition. Such a change took place ten years later when Japan crossed swords with Russia. The world was then astounded, and agreed to regard this Far Eastern prodigy with respect and even with admiration. But after the entrancingly interesting pageant had passed, the nations paused to reckon up the situation and, arguing unconsciously from the temper they would probably themselves have displayed had they been in Japan's position, they began to look at her with eyes of misgiving and to suspect that she would not rest content with the achievements, however great, that stood already to her credit. Thus at present the feeling of Europe and America towards Japan is largely tinged with doubt and even resentment. People are watching her every movement with almost peevish vigilance, and are prepared to read into her smallest action a significance born of their own suspicions. In these circumstances, however large may be the element of injustice that they embody and however indignant Japan may feel at being arraigned before such a captious tribunal, it must be evident to her best statesmen that if she had successfully established her reputation for military prowess, her next and not less pressing duty to her own interests is to establish a reputation for national self-restraint. China is the immediate stage upon which she is required to make this essay, and it happens to be a particularly effective stage. For, in the first place, so far as outsiders can judge, right seems to be essentially on Japan's side in the various problems now pending between her and China; and in the second place, with all deference to China's undeveloped potentialities, it may safely be said that to roll up her huge neighbour would be for Japan as easy a task as the lifting

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of one hand. Thus forbearance is rendered doubly difficult by a sense of injustice, and of strength, and an ordeal is constituted from which Japan may emerge with a thoroughly vindicated character, whereas, on the other hand her exit may be such as to justify the Occident's suspicions. There is another consideration also in this particular case. It is that her "friendly" critics have openly and with agreeable candour attributed to her time and again the design of picking a quarrel with the Middle Kingdom, in order to recover from the latter the indemnity which could not be extracted from Russian coffers. Thus an additional reason exists for treating China with the utmost leniency and circumspection. Strength can always be peremptory; its difficulty is to be tolerant. Future historians will be obliged to admit that if there be a Power which interests itself in mundane affairs, it took Japan under its wing 50 years ago, and ever since that time has been supplying her with opportunities which, in every day speech, may be described as remarkably lucky. As to the ability she has shown in utilizing those opportunities, nothing need be said except that she has profited by them remarkably. Her good fortune continues at present, for we consider it essentially fortunate, paradoxical as the statement may seem, that her path towards an understanding with her neighbour is for the moment strown with many embarrassments. It is fortunate because this situation represents another opportunity so timely as to be really remarkable. If Japan uses it by treating China with the utmost gentleness and by refraining from all hectoring or harshness, she will complete in her own best interests the drama that commenced in Manchuria three and a half years ago. It is with the greatest pleasure that we find the usually chauvinistic *Nippon* taking this moderate view of the situation, for we are thus led to hope that Japanese statesmen will have a free hand to exercise all the tact and circumspection which the occasion demands.