

XXVI.

IYÉYASŪ, THE FOUNDER OF YEDO.

THE last of struggles of rival military factions for the possession of power is now to be narrated, and the weary record of war and strife closed. Since 1159, when the Taira and Minamoto came to blows in the capital, and the imperial palace fell into the hands of armed men, and the domination of the military families began, until the opening of the seventeenth century the history of Japan is but that of civil war and slaughter. The history of two centuries and a half that followed the triumphs of Iyéyasū is that of profound peace. Few nations in the world have enjoyed peace so long.

The man who now stood foremost among men, who was a legislator as well as warrior, who could win a victory and garner the fruits of it, was Tokugawa Iyéyasū, the hero of Sékigahara, the most decisive battle in Japanese history, the creator of the perfected dual system and of feudalism, and the founder of Yedo.

Yedo is not an ancient city. Its site becomes historic when Yamato Daké, in the second century of our era, marched to conquer the Eastern tribes. In later times, the Minamoto chieftains subdued the plains of the Kuantō. Until the twelfth century, the region around the Bay of Yedo was wild, uncivilized, and sparsely populated, and the inhabitants were called by the polished Kiōto people "Adzuma Ebisū," or Eastern boors.

In the fifteenth century, a small castle was built on the rising ground within the western circuit of the present stronghold, and near Kōji machi (Yeast Street), where now stands the British Legation. East of the castle was a small relay village, Ō Temma Chō, near the modern site of the prison, at which officials or travelers, on their way to Kamakura or Kiōto, *via* the Tōkaidō, might stop for rest and refreshment, or to obtain fresh *kagos* (palanquins), bearers, and baggage-carriers. The name of the commander of the castle, Ōta Dokuan, a retainer of the shōgun at Kamakura, and a doughty warrior, is still preserved in the memories of the people, and in poetry, song,

art, and local lore. A hill in the north of the city, a delightful picnic resort, bears his name, and the neighborhood of Shiba was his favorite drill-ground and rendezvous before setting out on forays or campaigns.

One romantic incident, in which a maiden of equal wit and beauty bore chief part, has made him immortal, though the name of the fair one has been forgotten. One day, while out hawking near Yedo, a heavy shower of rain fell. Dismounting from his horse, he, with his attendant, approached a house, and in very polite terms begged the loan of a grass rain-coat (*mino*). A pretty girl, daughter of the man of the house, came out, listened, blushing, to the request, but, answering not a word, ran to the garden, plucked a flower, handed it, with mischief in her eyes, to the hero, and then coquettishly ran away. Ōta, chagrined and vexed at such apparently frivolous manners and boorish inhospitality, and the seeming slight put upon his rank, returned in wrath, and through the rain, to his castle, inwardly cursing the "Adzuma Ebisū," who did not know how to treat a gentleman. It happened that, shortly after, some court nobles from Kiōto were present, sharing the hospitalities of the castle at Yedo, to whom he related the incident. To his own astonishment, the guests were delighted. "Here," said they, "in the wilderness, and among the 'Adzuma Ebisū,' is a gentle girl, who is not only versed in classic poetry, but had the wit and maidenly grace to apply it in felicitous style." Ōta had asked for a rain-coat (*mino*); the little coquette was too polite to acknowledge she had none. How could she say "no" to such a gallant? Rather, to disguise her negative, she had handed him a mountain camellia; and of this flower the poet of Yamato had, centuries ago, sung: "Although the mountain camellia has seven or eight petals, yet I grieve to say it has no seed" (*mino*).

After the death of Ōta, no name of any great note is attached to the unimportant village or fortress; but in 1590, at the siege of Odawara, Hidéyoshi suggested to his general, Iyéyasū, Yedo as the best site for the capital of the Kwantō. After the overthrow of the "later Hōjō" clan, and the capture of their castle at Odawara, Iyéyasū went to Yedo and began to found a city. He set up his court, and watched his chances.

Iyéyasū was born at Okasaki, in Mikawa, in 1542; he served with Nobunaga and with Hidéyoshi; again fought with the latter, and again made terms with him. His first possessions were Mikawa and Suruga. In the latter province he built a fine castle at Sumpu (now

called Shidzūōka), and made it his residence for many years. He seems to have had little to do with the Korean expedition. While busy in building Yedo in 1598, he received news of the taikō's sickness, attended his death-bed, and was urged to swear to protect the interests of Hidéyori, then six years old. He evasively declined.

The prospects of the boy were not very fine. In the first place, few people believed him to be the son of the taikō. In the second place, the high-spirited lords and nobles, who prided themselves on their blood and lineage, detested Hidéyoshi as an upstart, and had been kept in curb only by his indomitable will and genius. They were still more incensed at the idea of his son Hidéyori, even if a true son, succeeding. Again: Hidénobu, the nephew of Nobunaga, was living, and put in a claim for power. His professed conversion to Christianity gave him a show of support among the Christian malcontents. As for Iyéyasū, he was suspected of wishing to seize the military power of the whole empire. The strong hand of the taikō was no longer felt. The abandonment of the Korean invasion brought back a host of men and leaders, flushed with victory and ambition. Differences sprung up among the five governors. With such elements at work—thousands of men, idle, to whom war was pastime and delight, princes eager for a fray in which land was the spoil, more than one man aspiring to fill the dead master's place—only a spark was needed to kindle the blaze of war.

The governors suspected Iyéyasū. They began to raise an army. Iyéyasū was not to be surprised. He followed the example of his rivals, and watched. I shall not tax the patience of the reader to follow through the mazes of the intricate quarrels which preceded the final appeal to arms. Suffice to say, that after the seizure and reseizure of the citadel of Ōzaka and the burning of the taikō's splendid palace in Fushimi, the army of the league and the army of Iyéyasū met at Sékigahara (plain of the barrier), in Ōmi, near Lake Biwa.

By this battle were decided the condition of Japan for over two centuries, the extinction of the claims of the line of Nobunaga and Hidéyoshi, the settlement of the Tokugawa family in hereditary succession to the shōgunate, the fate of Christianity, the isolation of Japan from the world, the fixing into permanency of the dual system and of feudalism, the glory and greatness of Yedo, and peace in Japan for two hundred and sixty-eight years.

In the army of the league were the five governors appointed by the taikō, and the lords and vassals of Hidéyoshi, and most of the generals

and soldiers who had served in the Korean campaigns. Among them were the clans of Satsuma, Chōshiu, Uyésugi, and Ukita, with the famous Christian generals, Konishi and Ishida. This army, one hundred and eighty thousand strong, was a heterogeneous mass of veterans, acting under various leaders, and animated by various interests. As the leaders lacked unity of purpose, so the army was made the victim of discordant counsels and orders. On the other hand, the army of one man, Iyéyasū, had one soul, one discipline, and one purpose. The Castle of Gifu, in Mino, was captured by one of his captains. On the 1st of October, 1600, Iyéyasū marched from Yedo over the Tōkaidō with a re-enforcement of thirty thousand troops. His standard was a golden fan and a white flag embroidered with hollyhocks. The diviners had declared "the road to the West was shut." Iyéyasū answered, "Then I shall open it by knocking." On the thirteenth day he arrived at Gifu, where he effected a junction with his main body. Some one offered him a persimmon (*ōgaki*). He said, as it fell in his hand, "*Ōgaki waga te ni otsuru*" ("*Ōgaki has fallen into my hand*"). He threw it down, and allowed his attendants to eat the good-omened and luscious pieces.

The battle-field at Sēkigahara is an open, rolling space of ground, lying just inside the eastern slope of hills on the west wall of Lake Biwa, and part of the populous plain drained by the Kiso gawa, a branch of which crosses the field and winds round the hill, on which, at that time, stood a residence of the Portuguese missionaries. The Nakasendō,* one of the main roads between Yedo and Kiōto, enters from Ōmi, and bisects the field from west to east, while from the north-west, near the village of Sēkigahara, the road enters from Echizen. By

* The Nakasendō (Central Mountain Road) is three hundred and eighty-one miles long. It begins at the Bridge of Sanjo, over the river at Kiōto, and ends at Nihon Bridge in Tōkiō. It was used, in part, as early as the second century, but was more fully opened in the early part of the eighth century. It passes through Ōmi, Mino, Shinano, Kōdzuké, terminating in Musashi. It can be easily traversed in fourteen days; but the tourist who can understand and appreciate all he sees would be reluctant to perform the tour, if for pleasure, in less than a month. There are on the route nine *togé* (mountain passes). It carries the traveler through the splendid scenery of Shinano, which averages twenty-five hundred feet above the sea-level, along Lake Biwa, and nearly its whole length is classic ground. The Nakasendō is sometimes called the Kisokaidō. An excellent guide-book, in seven volumes, full of good engravings, published in 1805, called *Kisoji Meishō Dzuyé* ("Collection of Pictures of Famous Places on the Nakasendō"), furnishes the information that makes a sight of the famous places very enjoyable. The heights of the *togé* are as follows: 620, 2150, 3060, 4340, 3680, 5590, 3240, and 4130 feet, respectively.

this road the writer, in 1872, came to reach the classic site and study the spot around which cluster so many stirring memories. The leaders of the army of the league, having arranged their plans, marched out from the Castle of Ōgaki at early morn on the fifteenth day of the Ninth month. They built a fire on a hill overlooking the narrow path, to guide them as they walked without keeping step. It was raining, and the armor and clothes of the soldiers were very wet. At five o'clock they reached the field, the Satsuma clan taking up their position at the foot of a hill facing east. Konishi, the Christian hero of Corea, commanded the left centre, Ishida the extreme left. Four famous commanders formed, with their corps, the right wing. Reserves were stationed on and about the hills facing north. The cavalry and infantry, according to the *Guai Shi* figures, numbered one hundred and twenty-eight thousand.

At early morn of the same day one of the pickets of Iyéyasū's outposts hastened to the tent of his general and reported that all the enemy had left the Castle of Ōgaki. Other pickets, from other points, announced the same reports simultaneously. Iyéyasū, in high glee, exclaimed, "The enemy has indeed fallen into my hand." He ordered his generals to advance and take positions on the field, himself leading the centre. His force numbered seventy-five thousand.

This was the supreme moment of Iyéyasū's life. The picture as given us by native artist and tradition is that of a medium-sized and rotund man, of full, round, and merry face, who loved mirth at the right time and place, and even when others could not relish or see its appropriateness. Of indomitable will and energy, and having a genius for understanding men's natures, he astonished his enemies by celerity of movement and the promptitude with which he followed up his advantages. Nevertheless, he was fond of whims. One of these was to take a hot bath before beginning a battle; another was to issue ambiguous orders purposely when he wished to leave a subordinate to act according to his own judgment. On the present occasion, his whim was to go into battle with armor donned, but with no helmet on, knotting his handkerchief over his bare forehead. A dense fog hung like a pall over the battle-field, so that one could not see farther than a few feet.

The two armies, invisible, stood facing each other. However, Iyéyasū sent an officer with a body of men with white flags, who advanced six hundred feet in front of the main army, to prevent surprise. At eight o'clock the fog lifted and rolled away, and the two hosts de-

scared each other. After a few moments' waiting, the drums and conchs of the centre of each army sounded, and a sharp fire of matchlocks and a shower of arrows opened the battle. The easterners at first wavered, and till noon the issue was doubtful. Cannon were used during the battle, but the bloodiest work was done with the sword and spear. One of the corps in the army of the league deserted and joined the side of Iyéyasū. At noon, the discipline and unity of the eastern army and the prowess and skill of Iyéyasū triumphed. Ordering his conch-blowers and drummers to beat a final charge, and the reserves having joined the main body, a charge was made along the whole line. The enemy, routed, broke and fled. Nearly all the wounded, and hundreds of unscathed on the battle-field, committed *hara-kiri* in order not to survive the disgrace. The pursuers cut off the heads of all overtaken, and the butchery was frightful. The grass was dyed red, and the moor became literally, not only an Acelanda, but a Golgotha. According to the *Guai Shi's* exaggerated figures, forty thousand heads were cut off. Of the Eastern army four thousand were slain, but no general was killed. The soldiers assembled, according to custom, after the battle in the centre of the field, to show their captives and heads. On this spot now stands a memorial mound of granite masonry within a raised earthen embankment, surrounded and approached from the road by rows of pine-trees. On the Kiōto side of the village, near the shrine of Hachiman, may be seen a *kubidzuka* (barrow, or pile of heads), the monument of this awful slaughter, and one of the many such evidences of former wars which careful travelers in Japan so often notice.

Iyéyasū went into the fight bare-headed. After the battle he sat down upon his camp-stool, and ordered his helmet to be brought. All wondered at this. Donning it with a smile, and fastening it securely, he said, quoting the old proverb, "After victory, knot the cords of your helmet." The hint was taken and acted upon. Neither rest nor negligence was allowed.

The Castle of Hikoné, on Lake Biwa, was immediately invested and captured. Ōzaka was entered in great triumph. Fushimi and Kiōto were held; Chōshiu and Satsuma yielded. Konishi and Mitsuda were executed on the execution-ground in Kiōto. The final and speedy result was that all Japan submitted to the hero who, after victory, had knotted the cords of his helmet.