

謹啓

益田壯健奉還智候、「國民讀本御生版」由新書之出版奉慶  
賀し、同四年英文評判より定めて出版せられたる書に於て、  
生の教科書と云ふ人考の甚しきもの、昔四史字書の高宮様書を  
「アメリカンヒストリカルレビュー」より批評発表せられたるもの、別紙の如き批評  
本送りの一事、これを批評を許しは例少きもの、貴著を重要視する  
故也と云ふ、此批評は、七月號に掲載せられたるもの、或は十月號と云ふ  
か計りは、生版より本を許し置上するもの也  
兼て生版の四史人物傳化本編を、此印進捗の進刊を伺ふ

次、前年東徳以代封建制を研究する、就中民政の部分の結論が、  
生版中、生版(英文)より、  
中、他類其他正確なる資料を得る方法を、本館より、  
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Count Okuma's name is closely connected with almost every important phase of the modern activities of the Japanese nation, — politics and diplomacy, finance and industry, social reforms, literature and journalism, and education. Through Waseda University, of which he is Chancellor, and its allied schools, he exerts great influence on the life and thought of the nation; his recently published National Reader will serve to impress on the mind of the rising generation the historic character of the Japanese people and the need of their vigorous progress along the definite lines ~~that he points out.~~ <sup>he indicates</sup> Now in addition to his marvellous record of versatility, he establishes his distinction as a literary enterpriser by the successful compilation of this most comprehensive and authoritative work of its kind that has ever seen light.

This work has been compiled with a double purpose "to preserve an authentic account of the development of the Empire of Japan during the fifty years that have elapsed since the ratification of its first treaties with the outside world", and "to make the present condition of the country more widely known and understood, both at home and abroad." To this the Count adds another underlying aim, namely, "to call the attention of the nation to the imperative need of striving for an even greater advance and higher development [than it has achieved in the past], by pointing out its manifold deficiencies." The work being thus

intended for circulation both in Japan and in other countries, substantially the same contents have been published in Japanese, Chinese, and English editions.

The English edition contains fifty-six chapters by fifty-four of the best authorities on the subjects they discuss, (of whom six have since died, and one, Prince Ito, has been <sup>assassinated</sup> murdered). The translation having been done by many hands, it is not free from little departures

5-2

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The fifty-six chapters cover, with varying success, all the features of national life in the past fifty years. It would not be practicable in this limited space to comment even briefly on all of the chapters. Count Okuma's own summary of the history of Japan from its beginning to date (vol. I, chap. 1) shows, in a manner extremely suggestive and stimulating to the initiated student, how steadily throughout the ages a clarifying process of the national character has been going on, endowing the people with remarkable receptiveness and great power of assimila-

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tion. In his concluding chapter (vol. II, chap. xxix), he further amplifies the argument, and proceeds to point out with frankness the weaknesses of his countrymen in their legal, intellectual, economic, and social usages, counselling ever more active intercourse with foreign countries and higher and nobler aspirations along the same lines that have marked the progress of Japan through the historic ages, namely, lines of open and judicious

chapters. Count Ōkuma's own summary of the history of Japan from its beginning to date (vol. I, chap. 1) shows, in a manner extremely suggestive and stimulating to the initiated student, how steadily throughout the ages a clarifying process of the national character has been going on, endowing the people with remarkable receptiveness and great power of assimila-

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Dr. Nitobe develops much the same theme in different language (II, xxiv), in so far as the modern life of Japan is concerned. Indeed, all the other chapters may be regarded as unconscious demonstrations of many of the Count's ideas by specific examples. The interview with the ex-Shogun Prince Yoshinobu (Keiki) reveals some of the political motives, hitherto little known, of his illustrious ancestor Iyeyasu and of himself, the one the founder and the other the last suzerain of the Tokugawa system of feudalism (I, ii). Japan's foreign relations and

5-4

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The second volume contains, besides those already mentioned, discussions of social changes (II,xxiii), not very incisive, and of socialism(xxvi); of charity and the Red Cross Society(vi,xxvii); and of education(xii-xi). Mr.Naruse's <sup>ideas</sup> views on the education of women may be taken to represent one, not the only, point of view. Next come chapters (xii-xvi) on the study of philosophy and sciences; Dr.Miyake's chapter on philosophy as usual shows his independent thinking and penetration. The chapter on journalism(xxix) is clear, and that on the language (i) is judicious. The illuminating chapter on Christianity (v) is preceded by those on Shintō, Buddhism Confucianism and (ii,iii,iv); of the latter, Professor Kume's account of Shinto is brilliant and refreshingly free, and Professor Inouye's Confucianism in Japan embodies his special studies in this field and challenges careful reading. The chapters on fine arts and music (xviii, xix) are comprehensive but perhaps too brief to leave any clear impression on the mind of the foreign reader; that

on drama (xx) presents critical as well as descriptive views on the subject. Japan's colonial activity in Hokkaidō and Formosa also receives notice (xxvii, xxviii). Baron Taudzuki's chapter on the social intercourse between Japanese and Occidentals (xxv) is perhaps the only one in the two volumes that may be characterized as light.

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