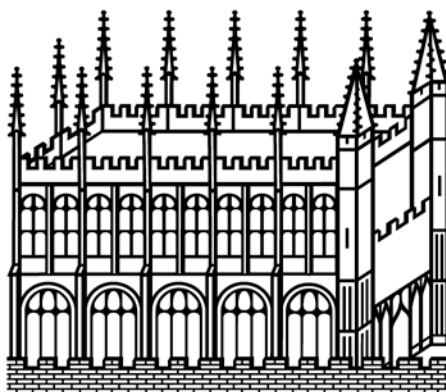




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BRITISH POLICY IN CHINA.

IS OUR WAR WITH THE TARTARS

OR

THE CHINESE?



BY JOHN SCARTH,

**AUTHOR OF "TWELVE YEARS IN CHINA: THE PEOPLE, THE REBELS,
AND THE MANDARINS."**

"It will be a sad day for China, and for the whole world, when the Great Rebellion here so sneered at, and so little understood, is put down. Hundreds of thousands have fallen in the cause, but thousands and myriads have stepped forward to supply their place; and it may be that, in spite of foreign opposition and the diabolical cruelties of the mandarins, the cause of freedom will triumph, and the Tartars be driven from the land they have scourged so long. We trust it may be so. Meantime, let Englishmen open their eyes to what is going on, and see that the proud name of this country be not tarnished by upholding a despotism which even such support cannot long prevent from crumbling into dust."—*Athenæum*.

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M.DCCC.LX.



INTRODUCTION.

A LONG residence in China, and an earnest study of the political relations of that empire, give me a right to express my opinions with some hopes that they may lead to a good result. I have received many letters of thanks for what I have already written, and have been requested to continue to advocate the cause I have undertaken.

Missionaries, and others well acquainted with the subject, apparently refrain from entering into political discussion regarding China; but I shall not hesitate to expose the evils which may arise from errors that are being committed.

There is scarcely any one in this country who knows much about China, though we have 20,000 men there, engaged in a war which must cost many millions of money. The following pages will give some little information about the state of affairs, and show what difficulties surround the proceedings of the British Ambassador in China, whether the war be brought to a speedy termi-

nation, or we have a lengthened campaign against the Tartar Emperor.

During the last session of Parliament the China question was never fully discussed, because the Ministry could throw back upon the Opposition some of the blame arising from appointments and instructions which emanated from the latter. And as Lord Elgin was a member of that Ministry, it is natural that support was given to Mr. Bruce, his brother. The time of one of the principal debates was chiefly taken up by members vindicating the conduct of Mr. Bruce and the gallantry of Admiral Hope, whose gallantry no one would ever question.

JOHN SCARTH.

Manderston, Berwickshire,

October, 1860.

BRITISH POLICY IN CHINA.

RETROSPECTIVE.

It was rather difficult for some time to decide whether or not we were at war with China. No one appeared to desire the war, though many were anxious that the Chinese should suffer for the Takoo affair: some wished to avenge the distressing disaster, and punish what was called "the perfidy" of the Chinese.

There is no doubt that Mr. Bruce had little confidence in being received favourably at Peking. He was accompanied by a large armed force in case he should be opposed. He found his entrance by Tientsin disputed, and the passage had to be forced. This was supposed to be a matter of no difficulty. Unfortunately, the Allies were defeated. The courage displayed on their reverse will never be forgotten; but it will always be a matter of wonder to those who have seen fighting in China, why Admiral Hope brought his men so close under the Chinese guns when he had guns that would carry three times the distance, and shell with which to clear the forts of their garrisons, preparatory to his forcing a passage through the booms. At all events, it was not because we were not prepared to fight, that the disaster occurred. After fighting four hours, the British lost twenty-five men killed

and ninety-three wounded, the gallant admiral being among the latter. An attempt was afterwards made in the evening to take the forts by storm, and then the greatest loss took place. A good deal has been said about the Chinese having received assistance from Russians, that Russian faces were seen, Russian shot used;—all of which may be put down to the same fertile imagination which describes so minutely how the lanyards for the mantlets were fixed to the guns, while telling us, at the same time, that it “required sharp eyes to detect which of the enemy’s embrasures was firing and ought to be silenced next.” As for the guns being Russian, they are quite as likely to have been British, French or American; for a large trade had been carried on in the sale of guns and arms to the Chinese: vessels arrived ballasted with guns.

However, the result of the second attempt to go to Tientsin was a defeat. The first mistake was in Lord Elgin not having kept it an open port when he was there. Though the nearest port to Peking, it was not chosen to be one of the new ports for foreign trade; the force left it, and no sooner was the last gunboat safe out of the Pei-ho river, than the forts were repaired, booms fixed, and every preparation made to keep out the barbarians more effectually than before. The fact is this: the Treaty of Tientsin was signed under compulsion, and was never intended to be kept by the Tartar Emperor; if even he was ever made thoroughly acquainted with its contents. Lord Elgin’s secretary tells us “that after several pretty stormy discussions between the Commissioners and Mr. Bruce and Messrs. Wade and Lay, who were acting on behalf of Lord Elgin, a general agreement had been arrived at as to the terms of the British treaty;” and again, after some of the most important points had been disputed by the Imperial

Commissioners, he says,—“The decided tone held by Mr. Bruce having convinced the Commissioners of the hopelessness of further resistance upon these points, it was arranged that the treaty should be signed at the hour originally named.”* The Commissioners subsequently wrote, soliciting modifications (some of which were partly agreed to), and stating that “there was the pressure of an armed force, a state of excitement and alarm, and the treaty had to be signed at once, without a moment’s delay. Deliberation was out of the question; the Commissioners had no alternative but to accept the conditions *forced* upon them. Among these were some of real injury to China, to waive which would have been of no disadvantage to your Excellency’s Government; but, in the hurry of the moment, the Commissioners had no opportunity of offering your Excellency a frank explanation of these.”† Whether the Commissioners were right or wrong in signing what they considered themselves forced to sign, is a matter of opinion: at any rate, we have good evidence that the treaty was forced upon them; and the subsequent events show pretty clearly that the Tartar Government only intended to keep it so far as it was convenient. Even before Lord Elgin’s departure from China, this intention on the part of the Emperor and his officers was made manifest in many different ways: our ambassador had to petition for the removal of officers, and had to call attention to the abusive terms applied to the British in proclamations. Moreover, the *Pekin Gazettes* stated that the allied forces had left Tientsin at the *command* of the Imperial Commissioners: this was just one month after the treaty was negotiated.

The new war is to enforce the acceptance of the conditions of the Treaty of Tientsin upon an unwilling

* “Elgin Mission,” vol. i. p. 417. † “Blue Book,” p. 409.

Government. Lord Elgin, in his despatch of 22nd of October, 1858, writes to Lord Malmesbury :—"It may, however, be worthy of consideration, whether or not these advantages can be secured without resorting to a measure, which, in the opinion of the Chinese, would shake the stability of the empire, by impairing the Emperor's prestige."* Mr. Bruce attempted to force a passage to Tientsin; but British, rather than the Emperor's prestige, was impaired on the occasion. Now, the largest force that has ever been employed by the British Government in China, is engaged in forcing the acceptance of the treaty imposed upon the Tartar Emperor. Suppose that the success which is so earnestly wished for the expedition, should impair the prestige of the reigning dynasty; or that the Emperor, thinking that discretion is the better part of valour, should leave Pekin before a definite agreement is arrived at: what advantages would have been derived from the extraordinary line of policy lately pursued in China? Had that policy been successful enough to avert another war, and led the Emperor, by force of argument and in real friendship, to accept the treaty which has now to be enforced by arms, it might have been better understood; but while the whole line of policy was in action, the British Government was taking such steps, by diverting an enormous armament to the China seas, as clearly demonstrated that little hopes of success were entertained for the policy which had been adopted by our officials in China; or that the Tartar Emperor would be persuaded to act with cordiality, instead of with hatred and contempt, towards us.

Lord Elgin did not ask much more than might have been readily granted by any friendly Power, and the chief danger to the Emperor's prestige would arise from

* "Blue Book," p. 405.

his having to make concessions of points which had always been refused to foreigners because they were despised. "The Imperial precinct of the Celestial dynasty is sacred ground: how could the outer barbarians be suffered to profane it with their presence." *

THE POLICY ADOPTED BY BRITISH OFFICIALS IN CHINA.

To understand what the nature of British policy in China has been, it is necessary, in the first instance, to state that all extension of trade and foreign intercourse with the Chinese has only been obtained by force. The Tartar Government of China, jealous of foreign interference and influence, has invariably opposed the extension of foreign relations, has repelled all peaceful overtures, and even prohibited direct and personal communications with its court. Even when treaty engagements have been entered into, it has endeavoured to evade those stipulations which might have brought foreigners into closer connection with its high officials.

The Tartar, or Mantchoo, power in China, established by right of conquest after a sanguinary war of many years' duration, was indebted for its ascendancy to the troubled state of the country, the disunited opinions of the people of different provinces, and doubtless also to the prowess of its practised warriors, and the terror their acts impressed upon the Chinese. In the middle of the seventeenth century the Mantchoo power was dominant, though some parts of the empire were not subjugated. The inhabitants of these parts have never yet taken upon themselves the Tartar yoke,

* Memorial to the Emperor: "Elgin Mission Blue Book," p. 285.

nor submitted to the rule enforced, that all the subjects of the Emperor should adopt the Tartar costume, and conform to their habit of shaving the head with the exception of that part of the crown from which the long hair is permitted to grow for the "tail," which we now consider the characteristic appendage of the Chinese. So few in number were the original Mantchoo conquerors in comparison to the Chinese whom they had overcome, that this plan prevented the Chinese having the insignificant number of Tartars prominently before their notice; and the submission to adopt the custom was a proof to all that the new power was in force. The Mantchoos did not disturb the ancient system of government of the country, and even admitted Chinese into official positions. Considerable garrisons of Tartars, however, were placed in various parts of the country, and in the principal cities. These had a separate language, distinct quarters, and intercourse for the most part chiefly with their own people. Soldiers of the State, and sometimes for generations without active service, these Tartars have degenerated fast. I have seen the garrisons of Foochow, Canton, and Chapoo, and can bear witness to their generally idle, slipshod, and dissolute appearance; their houses, being under the protection of the State, seemed to be approaching to decay quite as fast as the dynasty itself. Naturally, the Mantchoo power began to lose ground. For many years it has been unable to cope with the pirates on the coast: in fact, so powerless were the Mantchoos at sea, even when they had first conquered the land, that as an only resource against their foes on the coast, an edict was issued by which all the inhabitants of the seaboard were commanded to move themselves and their effects into the interior to the distance of at least 12 miles from the shore, under penalty of death! All the islands were to be aban-

doned, and external commerce was utterly to cease. This actually occurred as commanded, and the coast of China was as a desert for seven years, till the order was revoked.

As late as 1806 the pirates were very strong on the south coast of China. When our first war with China commenced, the victories of the little "Nemesis," under the command of the gallant Captain Hall, gave proof of the weakness of the naval power of the empire, which had to protect about 2,000 miles of coast. The Mantchoo power and prestige met with a heavy blow when the continued successes of the British force resulted in the forced treaty of Nankin. But even before this there were many secret societies established among the Chinese, for the subversion of their foreign rulers. The Government officials became more and more corrupt, the weakness and poverty of the Government led to the sale of appointments, and when insurrections eventually broke out, the attempt to wipe out the stain of rebellion by the unlimited shedding of blood and reckless destruction of property in disaffected districts, merely gave temporary peace, while it made the spirit of rebellion rise higher in men's hearts; and the opportunity will not be missed to call it into action. Of the Tartar garrisons in the country, the Allies hold the place of that at Canton, the Tai-ping revolutionists have in the course of their progress taken several even more important, and others are likely soon to fall into their hands.

It has been remarked that the Chinese officials under the Tartar dynasty have generally been the most obstinate in negotiations with foreigners; and the Tartar officials, when once forced to know the danger in which they are placed, are most ready to accede to the terms proposed, or imposed, by the foreigners. This does not arise from any desire on their part to be friendly, but from being aware of their own weakness and the danger to

the Tartar power : continued defeat would be their ruin. With rebellion rampant in many provinces, the best cities and districts in the hands of either insurgents or foreigners, one of the principal imperial armies, after being thoroughly defeated, turned into a band of plunderers rushing to the richest city in the empire, murdering the officials, and then sacking the place, we have a striking picture of what Tartar power now is in China. The colouring might be heightened, if we take into consideration that every general they have had in the field, with one single exception, has either been degraded, executed, or committed suicide, and their posts sometimes filled with deserters bought over from the insurgents. The civil officers have not been more fortunate, and the laxity of some and cupidity of others in the customs department, not only led to the general import of opium and prohibited articles, but became such an injustice to the foreign merchant, that it was deemed advisable to establish foreign inspectors to insure the proper payment of duties, that all might be put on an equal footing. As the customs returns thus became public, the grasping propensities of the officials were diverted into another channel, and heavy imposts were placed on produce and goods in transit through the country ; an evil which could not be checked, as the indifference of the British officials had left *blank* the amount legally chargeable according to the Treaty of Nankin. This is remedied by the Treaty of Tientsin ; but, pending the ratification of that treaty, the Tartar Government and officials are reaping a rich harvest, for not only are full customs dues collected by the foreign inspectors at ports open to trade, but the inland transit dues appear to increase month by month. On tea they may be considered as nearly cent. per cent. on the original cost.

With the above introduction to show in what position the Tartar Government now is, and quite leaving out of the question that since October, 1856, we have been engaged more or less in hostilities with it—hostilities arising from the frequent and general non-observance on its part of some of the treaty obligations entered into at Nankin nearly twenty years ago—does it not appear strange that the efforts of British diplomacy have been directed to uphold the present Tartar dynasty of China !

That there may be no doubt upon the subject, it need only be said that the acts of the British Government have clearly proved that such was the policy intended ; unless the Government chooses to repudiate the acts of its own representatives. Take, for instance, the Tartar power, or rather want of power, on the coast of China. As the Mantchoos were incapable of keeping the seaboard in order, fleet after fleet, and thousands upon thousands of Chinese (whether pirates or rebels little trouble was taken to inquire) were destroyed by the British cruizers ; in a few cases accompanied by imperial junks, and in two of the most notable instances working in concert with a steamer that had been purchased by Chinese from foreigners. The assistance thus rendered was little tempered with mercy, and it cannot always be said to have been rendered for the protection of British or foreign trade, for one of the principal fleets was destroyed far beyond the limit appointed by treaty for the carrying on of foreign trade in China. Much of this assistance was rendered during the existence of a civil war, in which the British Government had declared and proclaimed neutrality ; yet in many instances, acting upon the information of the mandarins, fleets declared to be rebel were attacked and destroyed, British ships hunted these fleets out of the coast, and utterly destroyed their power, whether it was piratical or rebel. At any

rate, blockades were established by these men; upon certain payments they undertook to convoy Chinese vessels on the coast, and the only instances known of their attacking vessels under a foreign flag were when these vessels were employed in convoying native junks. Further than all this, not only was it rare that prisoners were taken—for death and destruction appeared to be our motto—but even when some of these men surrendered, though dressed as rebels and bearing all the signs of being such, nay, even classed in the prison records of Hong Kong as “rebels,” they were, without the benefit of a trial, handed over to the imperial authorities of Canton (while we were at war with them). Though it was well known that about 100,000 people had been executed in cold blood by these authorities, yet we added victims to the vengeance of a power which at the time was offering rewards for our heads, and attempting assassination by the most diabolical means!

When Canton was blockaded by the rebel fleet, and the city invested by the rebel bands, provisions cut off and rice at famine prices, their blockade was resisted, and their attempts frustrated, by the acts of the British authorities. This was at a time when nearly every city in the province had been taken by the insurgents. However, it appeared to be the desire of the British authorities that these men should not have any political *status* granted them; and eventually, as these rebels were not able, or not permitted, to take Canton, they lost power, and retreated to the western part of the province, where they have never been subdued. I do not wish to advocate the cause of these insurgents, though the very atrocities of the mandarins justified their insurrection; but facts show, as clearly as it is possible to demonstrate, that the neutrality enjoined was not adhered to,—that assistance was given to the

Imperial Government, and opposition shown to the insurgents of Kwang-tung. It is true that at the same time another insurrection against the Tartar Government existed; and if strict neutrality had been maintained towards these insurgents, perhaps some excuse might have been discovered for the mode of action at Canton, even though the assistance rendered to the Tartar cause in one quarter no doubt helped it in another: but this point shall be discussed in another chapter.

Before concluding the mention of instances where assistance was given to the Tartar power, it may be noted that when Shanghai was taken by insurgents in some way connected with the Canton and Fokien rebels, the custom-house destroyed and the Imperial officials killed or expelled by them, the foreign consuls very properly undertook that the duties which would otherwise be leviable should be declared upon exports and imports, and promissory notes given by the merchants for the amounts due: these promissory notes eventually aggregated a very large sum (about 500,000*l.*, I believe). This was an amount which, in these critical times of rebellion, might be very useful to the impoverished Imperial treasury; and, knowing this, besides being anxious to get a *quid pro quo*, the British and American Plenipotentiaries proceeded to Ta-koo, there to endeavour to negotiate some advantages: for not only was the time propitious, as they thought that the Emperor, so harassed by the rebels, would make little resistance to their demands; but they had this sop in the pan to offer, or rather to bring to his notice, hoping that he would express some anxiety for the money, and that they would thus be able to "work the oracle" in a satisfactory manner.* However, the Emperor and his officers, not understanding the details of a duty question

* "Elgin Mission Blue Book," p. 282.

at Shanghai, could not, or did not, take the bait, and no advantage was gained by the joint expedition. The merchants, however, saved greater part of these duties, though the British authorities retained the promissory notes for a long time afterwards.

An attempt had been made by the British to obtain the consent of the rebels in Shanghai to be removed elsewhere (these men were in no way connected with the Tai-ping rebellion); and the Imperial authorities, not clearly comprehending the spirit in which this offer had been made, felt some apprehension with regard to the intercourse of foreigners with the insurgents. This was further strengthened by an injudicious application, just when the Tai-ping rebels were in power on the Yang-tsze-kiang, that we should be permitted to trade up that river. The intention on our part apparently being to gain admission to trade, if a positive request was made that we should assist in the suppression of the insurrection. No such request was tendered, and the proclamation regarding neutrality was more than once issued by the British Government.

From official papers seized in Canton when that city was captured, we may learn the feeling entertained by the Tartar Government towards the English and other foreigners. Some of these papers were marked "confidential," and it could never have been anticipated that they would come to our knowledge. Whether the opinions expressed were the real feelings of the officers, or whether they were merely written knowing that they would please the Emperor, it matters little; however, that my readers may judge for themselves, I give a few of the remarks made:—"The nature of the barbarians is malicious and crafty." "The falsehoods and clamorous bluster of the barbarians are transparent enough." "The English barbarians are, however, full of insidious

schemes, uncontrollably fierce and imperious." "So crafty and slippery is their disposition, it is hard to set the right before them." "The propositions in the draft of modifications presented by these barbarians are outrageous and impertinent in the extreme, and must be rejected as improper, article by article, that their insatiable cravings may be put an end to." "The paper of propositions presented by the barbarians is, further to be thrown back to them."* These two last extracts are from the Emperor's own decree, and all are written *when we were at peace*.

It is true that, while in many ways assisting the Imperial power, the atrocious acts of its soldiers at Shanghai at one time called into existence hostilities; when, for the safety of the foreign settlement, some of their camps were destroyed. At Canton, too, the obstinacy of the Imperial Commissioner, Yeh, forced upon the British a war which is not yet ended. But notwithstanding this war, and the subsequent repulse of the British Ambassador at Takoo, every care has been taken to prevent hostilities in other quarters; and during the whole time, until now, the Chinese Customs revenue was collected by officers (chiefly British) for the benefit of the Imperial treasury. This system, commenced at Shanghai, was extended by Lord Elgin to Canton and other ports; and though by the Treaty of Tientsin it was stipulated that a certain amount of indemnity should be paid by the Imperial Government for expenses of the war, and losses incurred by British subjects from the burning of the factories at Canton, these duties are still so collected and paid to the Government with which we are at war! At first it was supposed that this source of revenue would be useful to the Emperor in suppressing the revolution; but latterly, when it could be em-

* "Blue Book," pages 290-92.

ployed to resist us, this scheme (which was extended partly in hopes of showing the Emperor how much benefit he might derive from foreign trade) has failed to be of benefit, even if it has not positively been of disadvantage, to British interests. The United States authorities arranged that their citizens should be paid for their losses out of these duties, by a certain deduction being made on all duties payable by them. The French authorities, it is stated, have already received large payments from the same source; but the only British subjects who have reaped any advantage from the whole scheme, are those gentlemen who were appointed to the very lucrative situations which thus came under Lord Elgin's and Mr. Bruce's control. Mr. Lay, one of Lord Elgin's interpreters, receives 6,000*l.* a year from the Imperial Government, as chief foreign superintendent of customs; and Mr. Fitzroy, another of Lord Elgin's *attachés*, is an inspector at Shanghai, receiving about 2,000*l.* a year from the same source. The inspectors at Shanghai arrogated to themselves such powers, that a remonstrance was made last year to the British consul by the Chamber of Commerce. This has led to a long correspondence, and eventually to such slanderous abuse, directed at the Consul by the inspectors, that notice of an action for slander has been given by Mr. Meadows, the much-respected Consul.

The worst evil of this foreign Customs establishment in China has been the direct interest it gave to some British officials in the stability of the existing dynasty. Let it be clearly understood that I do not mean *pecuniary* advantage; though these officers certainly did obtain a very large increase of salary by transferring their services to the Tartar Government. What I mean is this—and it must be plain to any one who takes the trouble to peruse this and the following chapters—those

British officers who joined the Imperial service, not only naturally took an interest in the Government they served, but being thus placed in frequent communication with native Imperial officers, derived most of their information from Imperial sources. Besides these, the two gentlemen to whom I allude, being students and proficient in the Chinese language, were well stocked with information derived from their teachers; and Chinese teachers, it has been proved, and is notorious, are generally Government spies. Now, taking it for granted that the British Parliament and people believed in a strict neutrality being observed during the civil war in China, is it likely that such neutrality would long continue, when the appointment of Chinese secretary to the Plenipotentiary, and, in fact, his political adviser regarding Chinese affairs, was filled by the gentleman who had first held the chief appointment in the Chinese customs? Mr. Wade became Chinese secretary to Sir John Bowring; he also was at considerable pains frequently to communicate articles to public prints, chiefly excerpts from the Peking Government Gazettes. Though for a long period he had to record frequent disasters, eventually the accounts became more and more in favour of the Imperial Government; and as the rebellion appeared to become less successful, the insurgents were freely abused, and, if we were to judge from Imperial accounts, were almost annihilated. Mr. Wade's appointment in the Chinese service was filled by Mr. Lay, who had been a consular interpreter and vice-consul. Both these gentlemen, it is but just to say, were at Shanghai when that city was held by the rebel bands, and their experience of Chinese rebels, thus gained, could not be favourable. These rebels had no connection with the Tai-ping movement, but they no doubt prejudiced that cause in the opinion of many. This may account in some measure for the support Messrs.

Wade and Lay were anxious should be given to the Tartar dynasty. I shall not here enter into details of what these gentlemen did or what I did at Shanghai; but while my object was to save life, Mr. Lay's efforts were directed in such a way that his object seemed to be quite the contrary.

However, to show how British diplomatists were guided, it is necessary merely to state that Lord Elgin, on his arrival in China, received Mr. Wade as his interpreter and adviser. It will be remembered that his lordship proceeded to Calcutta, after arriving at Hong Kong, and returned to China from India. Mr. Wade accompanied Lord Elgin on this trip, for the purpose of giving full information about Chinese affairs. Additional interpreting assistance was required by the Ambassador, and Mr. Lay was requested to take the appointment of under-secretary; he thereupon joined his lordship's suite, though without retiring from his post in the Imperial employ. When his services were ended with Lord Elgin, he was rewarded by the appointment which I have alluded to above. I do not hesitate to say that there is scarcely another Englishman in China whose opinions coincide with those of Lord Elgin's two principal advisers. Allowing all credit to Messrs. Wade and Lay as proficient in Chinese, and believing that they are honourably impressed with the opinions they enunciate, I submit that their minds could not altogether be unbiassed.

No wonder, then, that we have heard so much against the insurgents, and that the British Government was anxious that the Tartar power should not, under the existing state of China, be suffered to fall; but it must be taken into account who the British principal advisers were, and that their minds were naturally biassed against those Chinese who rebelled against the Imperial dynasty which these gentlemen served.

THE REBELLION.

There were two principal insurrections in China, and some petty revolts that were subsidiary. The first, and by far the most important, was that now known as the revolution under Tai-ping-wang. It originated in an attempt of the Imperial Government to suppress a religious sect, the leaders of which were men of the Kwang-tung province. The nature of this revolution is well described in an official proclamation, a translation of which has been published in the *North China Herald*. With regard to the rebels it says: "The line they have taken to delude and unsettle the people has been to style their doctrine that of the Lord of Heaven, to pretend that he is their Heavenly Father. They declare that, though Jesus suffered death as a malefactor, he became the Lord of Heaven, and though he came down (to earth) alive a thousand and some hundred years ago, he is yet the Father of rebels (robbers or criminals). Can you fancy that any one would make himself Lord of Heaven, which is greater than any? and what creature was this Jesus, that, though dead, he should be invested with the lordship of Heaven? It is the greatest of blasphemy against Heaven. It is the most outrageous rebellion against Heaven," &c. &c. I refrain going further with the document. It is dated October, 1859, and shows pretty clearly what Imperial officers thought of the insurgents and their doctrine: at any rate, there is no doubt that propagation of the Christian religion, overthrow of idolatry, and expulsion of the Tartars, became the prevailing ideas of the chiefs of the new revolution.

There was little known of the real nature of the

insurrection until the insurgents had marched through four provinces, taken many principal cities, and established themselves in Nankin, the old *Chinese* capital of the empire. This point they reached in March, 1853. The movement now became important, and a panic among the trading classes caused commerce to be greatly interfered with. The British Plenipotentiary, Sir George Bonham, desirous to obtain information regarding the movement, sanctioned the attempt made by Mr. Thomas Taylor Meadows (then an interpreter in the service of the British Government) to reach Nankin by an inland route. The attempt led to such intelligence being ascertained, that the Plenipotentiary thought it would be right to proceed to Ching-kiang-foo, which city was held by the insurgents, and there ascertain certain information regarding them. The account of this expedition, and a visit to the chiefs at Nankin, has been published by Mr. Meadows,* in a work which enters very fully into the history of the rebellion of Tai-ping-wang. Suffice it here to state, that the insurrection proved to be not merely a rebellion against the Tartar dynasty, but a revolution in the most extended sense of that word. For not only did the Chief aim at the re-establishment of a purely Chinese dynasty, and the expulsion of the Mantchoos, but, at the same time, he undertook to overthrow idolatry, and proclaimed the worship of the one true God, and salvation by Jesus Christ. The Holy Scriptures, so far as obtained by him, was the text-book, and the Ten Commandments were the laws.

The revolution began thus. The leader, having become impressed with the truth of the Christian religion through the medium of a missionary tract, sought further information from a Protestant missionary at Canton, an American of the name of Roberts. Perhaps,

* "The Chinese and their Rebellions." Smith, Elder and Co.

in the eyes of the foreign residents in China, no missionary in China held so humble a position, and not the least strange part of the history of the revolution is, that he should have been made one of the chief instruments of Providence in commencing this marvellous movement. The leader, who had been but a poor teacher in a small city in the neighbourhood of Canton, appeared to be much struck with the amount of good he might do among his countrymen if he preached the doctrine, the character of which had so much surprised him : he became, indeed, fanatical on the point, and in a severe sickness which befel him, his mind wandered upon the subject most at his heart, and probably in his delirium he saw visions, which may in part account for the errors and extravagances of some of his statements. He has proclaimed that he was specially appointed by God to carry out the work he has undertaken. He proceeded with some fellow-converts to the adjoining province of Kwang-si, there preached the Gospel he had been taught, and eventually numbered many Chinese among his congregation of God-worshippers. This sect aroused the jealousy of the mandarins, and an attempt was made to suppress it. As the province was in a disturbed state, the Government found some difficulty in doing this. The God-worshippers, armed to resist the authorities, and being joined by other bands of discontented persons of all classes, were not only successful in their resistance, but they were forced, in self-defence, to commence actual rebellion. They defeated the Government forces ; the leader took upon himself the title of Emperor, and marched with his forces to make the attempt to overthrow the Tartar dynasty and establish Christianity in the land. Passing over the march through the central provinces, and the frequent defeat of the Imperial troops, we find the revolutionists esta-

blished at Nankin. They sent an expedition against Peking; but, though successful in its march northwards, it failed in its object, and had to retreat. It must be noted, however, that these men marched from the south to the north of China, through the very heart of the empire; that, though they have lost some cities, others they have held, notwithstanding most vigorous sieges. All this time they had no assistance from foreign power: they never depended upon other help than their own right hands, but trusted to the righteousness of their cause to gain their object. As one of the chiefs at Nankin told Mr. Meadows, nearly eight years ago—"If it be the will of God that our Tai-ping prince shall be the Sovereign of China, he will be the Sovereign of China; if not, then we will die here!"

All this time the Imperialists had foreign aid: arms, and even steamers and vessels for war purposes, were procured by them from foreigners. The whole coast of China was guarded by British men-of-war: they destroyed all enemies of the Tartar Government, whether rebels or pirates; so that it was practicable that the whole naval power of China could be used against these revolutionists. Added to all this, the Emperor had a vast source of revenue from the foreign duties and inland exactions on foreign trade, to provide funds to suppress the insurrection.

However, as the revolution did not meet with immediate success, the interest it might have created died away; and eventually British officials appeared to be those who were most anxious for its suppression, notwithstanding the neutrality which had been proclaimed. The mercantile community were anxious for peace, their trade being much interfered with by the troubled state of the country; for other insurgents also disturbed the empire, and their position caused even greater inconvenience to

commerce than that of the Tai-ping revolutionists. All information that told against the rebels was eagerly listened to, their Christianity was doubted, and their destruction hoped for. As the chief information regarding them was obtained from Imperial sources it may be readily imagined how soon the rebels fell into disrepute. The erroneous views of the Chiefs, their presumption and unmerciful destruction of all who opposed them, were weak points easily attacked; their iconoclastic propensities, and the religion they risked their lives for, were taken into less consideration. Much was made of their Chiefs, like other Chinese Emperors, keeping hareems; and men, who daily address the Almighty as *our* Father, cavilled at the Chief styling Christ an elder brother. Every error was exaggerated against them, and eventually their religion was either styled blasphemous, or denied altogether, as having faded away.* Their downfall was looked upon as certain; their leader was believed to be dead, and, notwithstanding many false reports of the capture of Nankin by the Imperial forces, the final overthrow of the Tai-ping power there was considered imminent. Lord Elgin proceeded up the Yang-tsze-kiang, not recognizing their blockade, and in his passage up the river with a powerful force, sought for, rather than evaded, hostilities: he took occasion to destroy some of their forts, to fire into their cities, and even send shot and shell into unresisting masses; as Mr. Oliphant says, "just to give them some idea of our armament." When Lord Elgin returned down the river with only a gunboat for protection or aggression, he *then* thought fit to send in a small boat with an interpreter to explain that his inten-

* Mr. Wade even stretched points in translation to make the chief style Christ as his "uterine elder brother." No other interpreter gave it the same forced interpretation in actual translation.

tions were not hostile, and thus passed without any interruption from the insurgents; who expressed the most friendly feelings towards foreigners, or, as they styled them, "our Christian brethren." The interpreters to Lord Elgin's expedition being Mr. Wade and Mr. Lay, to whom I have already alluded, we need not be surprised that little favourable to the rebels was told, or that only a "quarter of an hour" could be spared at Nankin to endeavour to learn more of their religious principles; though books, &c., were promised if they would wait another day.

The results of the expedition prove, according to Lord Elgin's secretaries' statements, that the greatest destruction of property was visible in those cities which had been recaptured from the insurgents, and that those in which the rebel power was still dominant were in better case. An instance is related where the country people were flying into the rebel city for protection from the Imperial troops, the mark of whose scourge was visible in the burning villages in the neighbourhood.

But for a climax to all these statements. In the spring of this year the important city of Hang-chow was attacked by a band of the Tai-ping revolutionists, apparently for the purpose of drawing off part of the besieging force at Nankin. There was great consternation throughout the province, and the authorities of the city of Soochow, the chief place of trade in China, and situated only sixty miles from Shanghai, fearful of an attack there, destroyed the extensive suburbs by fire, and put the place in a state of defence. The object of the revolutionists was gained. Some of the Imperial force before Nankin was withdrawn to Hang-chow, the insurgents attacked and routed the besiegers, and raised the siege! The Imperial troops fled and made for the

city of Soochow, forced an entrance, murdered the authorities, and sacked the place! The revolutionists speedily followed, captured the city, and, by last accounts, were endeavouring to restore order.

They have again been visited by foreigners, towards whom they express the same friendly feelings formerly manifested. They still destroy all idols, and proclaim the worship of the Holy Trinity. That I may not be mistaken, I give copies of translations of documents received from them :—

“Praise to Shang-ti (God) who is the heavenly holy Father.

“Praise to Jesus, who is the Holy Saviour.

“Praise to the Holy Spiritual wind, which is the Holy Ghost.

“Praise to the three Persons, who are the one true God.”

Abstract.—“Is the true doctrine like the doctrines of the world? It saves the soul of man that he may enjoy everlasting happiness. Those who are wise will diligently perform it (*i.e.* conform to its teachings), and blessed are they who receive it. If a man search his heart and perceive his own sinfulness, the road to heaven is open to him. The mercy of our heavenly Father is boundless. He spared not his first-born Son, but sent him down to the world to give up his life as a ransom that He might forgive the sins of men. If a man know this doctrine, repent, and depart from evil, his soul shall ascend to heaven.”

Morning and Evening Prayer.—“We —— little ones bow down upon the earth to pray our heavenly Father, the great Shang-ti, to grant grace, to pity, to save, to preserve us. Give Thou continually to us the

holy Breath (or Spirit) of God to change our wicked hearts. Never let the Devil deceive us, but evermore strengthen us. Never let the Devil persecute us. We trust in the redeeming merits of the holy Saviour, the ancient Teacher, who is our elder brother in heaven. We trust also in the merits of the learned teacher of later day, the eastern King who redeems us from disease, that they may in our stead pray our heavenly Father the great Shang-ti that his will may be perfectly done on earth as it is in heaven. Look down upon us and answer our prayer. In our hearts we truly wish these things."

Blessing before a Meal.—"Heavenly Father the great Shang-ti, bless us little ones. Give us day by day clothes to wear and food to eat. Deliver us from evil and calamity and receive our souls into heaven."

Here is an extract from the letter of the Rev. J. B. Hartwell, who visited them:—

"We have come home with our minds much more favourably impressed in regard to the whole movement than they have ever been before. These men seem to feel an interest in what they do. They feel, however improperly, that they are called of God to put an end to idolatry, and to the Tartar dynasty. When they are about to destroy a temple they stand around it, and their leader cries out: 'In the name of Shang-ti the holy Father, and by the authority of Jesus his son, we demolish this temple;' and then the work begins. Unless God interposes, and by his own might puts them down, what power can crush a people infatuated with such an idea?"

Mr. Edkins and four others also visited the chiefs at Soochow: the account of this visit will be found in the Appendix. It more than confirms the above statement. By it, it appears that the second in com-

mand is a Chinese who had studied Christianity under British missionaries at Hong Kong and Shanghai, and was known as a serious and sincere Christian; and it proves beyond doubt that the chief aim of the revolutionists is to establish Christianity among their countrymen.

Whatever the errors of the revolutionists may be, the acts of these men must be judged by a Chinese and not a European standard. We have had means of knowing their good points as well as their bad; but no effort has been made to confirm the one or change the other. I say, with the most perfect deliberation, and with a knowledge of facts, that the acts of British officials in China have aimed at the overthrow of this revolution, rather than in any way to correct its errors. The policy adopted has been intended to foster the Tartar dynasty, though it has always proved inimical to the extension of foreign intercourse. This tottering power—which did all it could to prohibit foreign commerce, proclaimed us barbarian devils with the hearts of dogs and minds of foxes, made assassination its system of war, and made poison its weapon—we were anxious to maintain, though its very weakness has caused unbounded misery in China! A Chinese patriot was looked upon as an impossibility, and native Christians as rogues. Even the term rebel was translated, to suit the views of some pro-Imperialists, into the words thief, bandit, and ruffian. Though all our commerce was conducted through *Chinese*—and they formed fully ninety-nine hundredths of the population—we are to carry on negotiations, nay, even conduct our war, in such a manner that, if possible, we prevent the *Tartar* dynasty from being overthrown and sunk into the “rags and rottenness of its waning civilization.” We are not to press it for payments due, in case its exchequer is

weakened; we are even to aid in the collection of its revenue! Her Majesty is even petitioned not to press for the exaction of articles agreed to in our treaty, lest they should injure the prestige of this precious dynasty! It is not the stoppage of commerce that is feared, but the diminution of revenue to the Tartar Government; and for the sake of tea duties we are to blind ourselves to the fact that we are now carrying on a war which *rested upon the mere tender of an apology* for the infraction of treaty right, and the loss of some four hundred men. The British Government desired the apology, and did not even stipulate for the expenses of the expedition; and it was only because the French Plenipotentiary stipulated for the latter condition that the British Minister added it in excess of his instructions. I do not blame the British Government for its willingness to let bygones be bygones, if an apology was made, for no one would wish for more wars in China; but I cannot help believing that the *reason* the condition was made so simple, was that, in the present state of China, it was feared that another war might overthrow the Tartar dynasty.

I know that the opinion of Lord Elgin and his immediate advisers is opposed to the revolutionists; that when he left this country the insurgent cause was thought to be worthless, and consequently his instructions were not likely to regard it; that by last accounts (July, 1860) Shanghai was a refuge for the Imperial authorities; that it was protected against the approach of the revolutionists by the allied troops; that Chinese proclamations had been issued by the British Minister, in which the insurgents were alluded to in terms by no means consistent with neutrality; that it was even permitted the Imperialists to seize, bring in, and execute insurgents in a city which is under allied protection.

Knowing all this, we must also be aware that a change must take place in Lord Elgin's opinions and policy before real justice is done to the Tai-ping revolutionists.

But it is not only Lord Elgin's opinions that must be changed; the public press in China, being so much dependent on Imperial sources for information, has for some time past abused the insurgents in set terms, and it may be some time till it changes its tone. Even in giving the fortnightly news of the mail, as little notice as possible is taken of the insurrection, and known successes are half doubted. Though publishing the stirring letters of those who visited the chief at Soochow, in some cases this is done in small print; no notice whatever being taken in the leading articles, and no remarks made about the Christianity. The editor of one of the Hong papers (the *China Mail*), from which most of the English journals republish the Chinese intelligence, has lately issued a work in which he condemns the present war, and endeavours to show that it may lead to the overthrow of the Tartar dynasty—an event he would deplore. He is not likely, therefore, to take cause with the revolutionists until forced by their success to do so.* *The Times* is not unprejudiced, deriving, as it does, much of its information about China from its late correspondent, Mr. Wingrove Cooke, who has also published views opposed to the revolution, and who derived much of his information, and took his cue, from Mr. Wade, with whom he resided. He was also constantly with members of Lord Elgin's staff, to whom, of course, Messrs. Wade and Lay were advisers-in-chief; so that even *The Times*

* In justice to the editor of the *China Mail*, I must state that he has since utterly condemned the policy adopted by the British authorities. (*China Mail*, July 5th, 1860.) Indeed, all the foreign newspapers in China have now entirely changed their opinions, and now write in favour of the revolutionists!

has either to take new views, or wait until public opinion leads it to express different ones.

Take all the tyranny that was ever perpetrated in Naples, and all the misgovernment of Rome, they would not show a tithe of the oppression to which the Chinese people have had to submit under their Tartar rulers. Why, then, should not the Chinese rebel? Is it only Italians that are to have our sympathy?

Suppose, for a moment, that the revolutionists in China are as bad as their worst enemies paint them—mere plunderers, without any right to political status, and everything that is bad—let me ask, is it likely, if they were so bad as their enemies would wish us to believe, that they could have kept in power so long? Is it likely that the people would fly to their cities for protection if the Imperial troops were not worse than them?

I published my views last February,* when the late success of the revolutionists could not be foreseen. I felt it my duty to show how the British authorities had been acting in China; subsequent events have proved the correctness of my views, and how entirely wrong Lord Elgin's advisers have been. I put this forward as no boast, for I only believed in what was *right*, and thought that rectitude should guide our acts; whereas their acts were guided by what appeared to be *expedient*. I do not think that Lord Elgin or the Ministry are to blame; they have been misled by men whose position naturally had led them to entertain the views they held, and which views events have proved to be erroneous. If I did not think that they also had been misled, I would say that the policy they initiated was positively wicked.

* "Twelve Years in China. The People, the Rebels, and the Mandarins."

FUTURE DANGER.

When Missionary enterprise was first directed by Protestants to China, the chief difficulty was the language. Time and experience have overcome many of the difficulties; but though the translation of the Bible into Chinese has been completed, there is still room for much improvement. However, the Bible has been translated, tracts published, sermons preached, and converts taught; certain defined terms being used to express in Chinese such words as the Almighty, God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Not only have the Tai-ping insurgents adopted the terms employed by the Protestant Missionaries, but they actually teach and proclaim the same Christian Religion. They did this from the first, and the latest accounts prove that they do so still.

Now here is the difficulty. Suppose the British Government supports the Tartar dynasty, or that in any way this revolution is checked, and the purpose of the leaders defeated, how are we to overcome this dilemma: wherever our missionaries go in China to preach the gospel, it could be cast in their teeth by the people, saying, "Ah! this is the same story the long-haired rebels told us; these are rebel doctrines; all the rebels have been executed; you had better take care! Some of your books are the same as the rebel books; we dare not look at them."

By following a dangerous policy, and trying political experiments to see how little injury we could do to the prestige of a dynasty with which we were at war, we have brought about most serious complication. To please the notions of experimental politicians in China,

who once being permitted to sound the notes of the law of nations, drum away at the tune because it accords with their ideas of political harmony, we practise these laws to the same tune in a country where such political music is not understood. When it suits our experimentalists, the law of nations—which, in fact, is not very clearly defined at the best—is carried out with great force: they say, “while we have a treaty with the Government, no communication can be had with revolutionists.” But when it suits them, the law of nations is so far forgotten, that we carry on war and blockades in one part of the empire, while we trade at another in perfect amity; nay, we even furnish funds for the enemy to carry on war against us! It would not suit our exchequer to lose the duty on teas coming from China, so we keep peace at certain ports, carry on the war bit by bit, protract the misery war entails, and in the end it probably costs more than the duty which has been obtained. Yet we speak of the law of nations. Yes! we construe it as we like when our enemy is weak; connive at illegal imports being taken in; or force their admission under a paltry subterfuge. We capture one city, and hold it as material guarantee in one part of the country, and employ our troops at another city to protect it, and the Imperial officers of the province, from the revolutionists who hold almost every other city in that province. Law of nations, forsooth! the Tartars are ignorant of it, and our acts would show that our knowledge of it is not very accurate. But when it suits our diplomatists to take up one bit of this law, because it speaks of non-intervention, when they do not wish to intervene, they shield their acts behind this flimsy veil, which they stab through or cast aside as may be most convenient.

There is this fact apparent, that in China, since 1853, there has been a revolution going on founded on Christianity. No attempt was made to promote its advancement; no attempt was made to correct the errors which could be the only objectionable part of it. Intercourse with the revolutionists was prohibited, and these men were left to grope in the dark for the best lights of Christianity, with no one to guide them either in the way of truth or the way of mercy. We even begin to believe that the whole revolution will vanish; and yet, because of this law of nations, we are to forget the law of God, raise no hand to promote His glory, and lose the chance of seeing the vast empire of China become a Christian realm. Besides this, our blind and dangerous policy has frustrated the good that might have been done; how much anarchy might have been avoided, how much misery averted, if we had had the boldness to guide the revolutionist leader by counsel, though we did not assist him by force! All his expressions of friendship made from his first communication with foreigners were repelled, and our officials, puffed up with the pomp of diplomacy, have forgotten what their duty was as Christians—they would neither promote truth nor correct error. In fact, all minor errors were sought for and exaggerated, and the plain matters of Christian doctrine taught by the revolutionary leaders were scouted as the wily craftiness of men whose ignorance and presumption were classed as blasphemy.

Our interpreting force in China is numerically so small, that it would be far more suitably employed in assisting at the Council Chamber than attached to an army, or attempting to carry on the Provisional Government of cities which that army is forced to take. In fact, so limited is our means of interpreting the Chinese

language, that we have no right to go to war with China at all; for circumstances may arise by which the local power is overthrown, and we could not always dispense justice, or even communicate our wishes. Each place we take is plundered by the rabble, not necessarily with violence, but by simple appropriation of the property of others. These difficulties would be overcome, and our own position greatly exalted, if, instead of being constantly opposed by the ruling powers, and so frequently brought into hostility with them because of their ill-will to foreigners, we were working in concert with those who were more friendly disposed, and who would be anxious to follow good advice, especially if, by doing so, they had hopes of securing more tangible aid. If our unwilling acts result, through the present war, in driving the imperial power from Tientsin and Peking, and we still shun the chiefs of the revolution, we are merely extending the disastrous anarchy which at present exists in so many parts of the empire, and which will continue to exist as long as the Government is weak and the revolutionist strength not sufficiently matured.

My object in writing is not to advocate that armed assistance be given to the revolutionists at present, though *unwillingly* such aid is being indirectly given; but I would point out the danger of our interfering *against* them in any way. That there is the probability of such interference there can be no doubt; for if our demands are complied with by the Court of Peking, to evade part of the troubles with which it is surrounded, I much fear that some effort would be made to tranquillize the country by introducing our troops to aid in the suppression of the rebellion. But an all-ruling Power, which has made us unwillingly collect a large army to carry on a war that we wish to avoid, may

yet direct that army to aid the very force which the British representatives wish to overthrow.

There is one more difficulty which we may have to encounter, and that is, the determined iconoclastic tendencies of the revolutionists, which are reported to have led them not only to destroy Chinese idols, but even to attack the images of saints, &c. in Roman Catholic chapels. As the French are our allies in China, this may lead to very undesirable results. How numerous are the difficulties which surround the British Plenipotentiary, on account of a wrong policy having been pursued before we were trammelled with allies at all !

A P P E N D I X.

A VISIT TO THE INSURGENT CHIEF AT SOOCHOW.

Shanghai, 5th July, 1860.

A PARTY of five, consisting principally of English missionaries, returned yesterday morning from Soochow. They went with the desire of gaining information respecting the opinions and feelings of the insurgents, now in possession of that city, and also of communicating, as occasion should arise, information on Christianity.

The reception they met with was remarkably friendly. Proceeding towards Bing Bong (Pingwang), they reached territory now under the insurgents, at a village three miles to the southward, called Wang-kia-chi. A body of about a hundred horse and foot, were proceeding in single file towards Bing Bong, on their way from Kiahing. They stopped on seeing foreigners, and entered into friendly conversation, showing their confidence by freely partaking of cake and tea. They are many of them strong in muscle, free and bold in manner, and open in countenance, and appear to communicate their thoughts unreservedly. In answer to a question respecting a relative of Tien-wang, who had gone from Hong Kong to join the rebellion, they stated that he is now second in command, with the title of Kang-wang. About five years ago he spent several months in the London Mission at Shanghai, and was taught by Dr. Medhurst. Subsequently he proceeded to Hong Kong, and after some time, expressing an anxious wish to go to Nanking, Dr. Legge considered it best to allow him to proceed there. He was Mr. Hamberg's informant in preparing a pamphlet on the early history of the T'ai-p'ing movement, and bore the character of

a serious and consistent Christian. He arrived at Nanking two years since, and was promoted to the rank of Wang, king, with the prefix of Kan, one of his names.

Bing Bong, an unwallled town, is defended by several thousand long-haired people, and is strongly defended by earthworks and small bamboo stakes. The officers at this place supplied their foreign visitors with passports to Soochow, and also to Wukiang, a city on the way to it. Provided with these they went forward along the Grand Canal, noticing in many parts that the people were in the fields working, although this is one of the lines by which the T'ai-p'ings pass in large and small bodies between Soochow and Kiahing. When they appear, the villagers withdraw.

Considerable resistance was offered at Bing Bong, and it was only after a week that complete possession of it was gained. It now presents a painful spectacle. The parts which it is not worth while to defend, have been burnt, or are burning still, while the bodies of those killed, to the number of sixty or seventy, float down the canal, and are met on the approach to the town. The position of this place is important, because the water-routes from Soochow, by the Grand Canal to Hucheu and Hangcheu, separate here. It was therefore stoutly defended by the Imperialists, and is now strongly fortified by the T'ai-p'ings.

At Wukiang, more state was observed in the appearance of the chief in command, it being a walled city, and the rank of the chief being that of "i," *right*, in the rebel nobility. This title stands immediately after that of Wang (king). But the gay show here made of yellow and red banners before the residence of the chief, and his stately robe and turban of yellow, were far surpassed by the display witnessed at Soochow in the palace of the Chung-wang. This chief is the conqueror of Chang-kwoh-liang at Tang-yang, and the subjugator of Ch'ang-chow, Soochow, and Kia-hing. In addition to his remarkable military successes, he has the character of a good man, opposing the excesses of the troops, and protecting the suffering people, who are victims of this civil war, from injury and insult. To his English visitors he behaved in the most friendly manner. They were allowed, on stating their objection to kneeling, to dispense with that ceremony, and appear with simply a bow, and uncovered. They had, however, to wait an hour and a half for the interview. This was accounted for by a visit the same

evening, while they were waiting in another apartment, from the Ying-wang (flourishing king), who arrived from Nanking two days before. When he was gone it was about 8 P.M. The foreign party of four were then conducted to the entrance hall, where they stood for some minutes at the end of the long train of officers and servants, nearly a hundred in number, who stood facing each other in two rows. In the far interior was the Chung-wang himself. After a salute of six, fired with Chinese petards, with music and gongbeating to a most deafening extent, the visitors were marshalled up the long and gorgeous vista, through which they had stolen a few glances of curiosity. After bowing and standing before the chief for a minute, they were conducted to his right, where they stood during the interview. The hall of audience was carpeted with red. Large lanterns were held between the officers, who stood on each side. They all wore robes and caps of red and yellow silk. The only person seated was the Chung-wang himself. He is a man of small keen features, wears spectacles, and appears in a rich yellow robe and gold-embroidered hat after some ancient model.

Conversation then commenced. The king was informed, in answer to his inquiries, that his visitors had asked an interview as followers of the religion of Jesus, and worshippers of God the Heavenly Father. The king then enumerated several leading points in Christian doctrine, and was satisfied to find that they are believed also by foreign nations. He asked what days in the cycle of twenty-eight we keep for worship, and when told that they are Fang, Hui, Mau, Sing, he observed that they are the same with theirs.

When told that Kan-wang, whom the T'ai-p'ings speak of as having unlimited power and influence, had been protected by foreign missionaries at Shanghai and Hong Kong, he expressed his thanks, and was pleased to learn that Lo-hiau-t'siuen,* the former friend of T'ien-wang (the celestial king), is still in southern China.

When he asked if the foreign visitors had any other subject to bring forward, he was informed that they had friends and countrymen engaged in trade. It would be highly satisfactory if the silk trade should not be altogether obstructed by the presence of the insurgents at Kiahing and Nantsin. If by some arrangement it could continue, both natives and foreigners would

* Rev. I. J. Roberts. Tai-ping-wang requested, when the army left Nanking, that information might be sought respecting this missionary.

find it beneficial. He replied that the Celestial dynasty desires this, and if trade continue, the Celestial king will levy customs accordingly.

He willingly accepted, and offered presents of bibles and other books, and invited the party to remain for two or three days in quarters to be provided for them. They were then after the same salute as on entrance, conducted on horses to the residence of Lieu, a high officer of amiable disposition, who entertained them hospitably enough, for the rest of the evening. On their expressing a wish to return at once to Shanghae, they were escorted on horses to their boats.

The suburbs of the city are now destroyed, and the number of suicides has been enormous. The gates having been opened by the soldiers in charge, when the T'ai-p'ings arrived, there could not have been many killed, and we need not discredit the account of the conquerors which states that an overwhelming majority of those who died were suicides. In the city not a few of the population remain, but of course all shops are deserted, and their contents rifled or previously removed. Nothing was seen of burning. Most of the houses in the better parts of the city have been little injured. Between the moat and the wall small sharp bamboo stakes have been driven in, and along the top of the wall, defences are also provided in the form of sharp spikes on a wooden frame. There cannot be less than 30,000 insurgents in the city, and perhaps the truth was told when they themselves stated that there were many more. Indeed they appear to have overpowering force throughout the region from hence to Nanking. When the city was captured no use was made of the large earthworks which had been formed by the Imperialists outside the wall, on the southwest corner of the city. The present occupants make no use of these fortifications just now, but limit themselves to the space within the walls. The governor of Kiang-su, Süyen-jen, was reported on the testimony of several credible informants to have fled with the other officers in the city on the arrival of the T'ai-p'ing troops. Chang Kweh-liang it was stated swallowed gold at Tan-yang after his defeat.

Many proofs offered themselves of the activity and vigour of the revolutionists. Large bodies of them move daily between the cities in their occupation. They have the energy which their religious principles and an active life induce. That they

possess far greater physical and moral vigour than the Imperialists seems to account fairly for their great advance this year in power and numbers. One of their detachments, probably numbering several thousands, was proceeding from Soochow, when our party left that city. At one in the morning they issued from the gates, and while the boats were slowly sculling or sailing on their return to Shanghae, the army was proceeding along the towing-path. They walk or ride in single file, and several boats containing from twenty to thirty men, were also with them. We had heard that a large force was about to arrive from Ch'angcheu, *en route* to Nantsin and Hecheu. This was probably the destination of these troops. They were to be joined by a part of the force at Bing Bong, and advance at once upon these important towns. Nantsin, therefore, so well known in the silk trade, is now most likely in the hands of the insurgents.

The country people offer an ineffectual resistance to these large bodies of men. Their bands for self-protection, hastily organized, and consisting of agricultural labourers unpractised in war, cannot make head against the tried warriors of the T'ai-p'ing party. Yet they are useful in beating the bounds of the villages at night. They encourage the people and keep away local banditti. The sight of these bands at night is very picturesque. Each person carries a lanthorn and a long pike, while a very few have matchlocks. The institution is called Min-twan.

The measures for defence adopted by the mandarins in many places are no more efficient than those of the villagers. At Sungkiang the two *chi hiens* came out at the head of only about 500 militia to meet an invading army of 3,000 and upwards. They were also ill supplied with powder and ball. Forced to retreat, they abandoned the city and took refuge in the villages, where they remain concealed.

Visitors to such scenes as those of which a brief description is now given, cannot fail to have witnessed much that shocks the sensibilities and grieves the heart. Many unburied dead lie near the captured cities, here in tons, and there in hundreds. Burning suburbs, deserted streets, fields of corn uncut left to perish, here and there an abandoned infant—these are sad sights. But such are the common accompaniments of war, or almost all war. It touches the heart to see the misery to which those not engaged in the great revolutionary struggle are exposed. Yet

there is a providence in all this, and we believe that God will cause the result of the war to further His wise designs, and in the end to promote the real happiness of the Chinese nation.

The rebel chiefs are most of them open and communicative. They made no secret of their intention to come to Shanghai. But they wish to maintain amity with their "brethren of the western ocean." Some detachments already despatched to the region east of Soochow, have been ordered to capture Shanghai, but prudence has not allowed the officers in command to attempt it. This they say is nothing but a temporary postponement of what is an essential point in their plan of conquest. They have at present few boats, and it is most likely that they will come by land. Should foreign soldiers happen to be posted at Zi-ka-wie, or any other spot beyond the limits of the foreign settlement, when they arrive, it is most sincerely to be hoped that the laws of neutrality will not be violated, nor any hostile act on our part be allowed to chill the friendly feeling that they now undoubtedly entertain. It would be no less imprudent than unjust to treat as our enemies these vigorous and independent bands of men, who have during the present year wrested from the emperor the richest of his provinces. They have it in their power to ruin the foreign trade at Shanghai, and they also have it in their power to form, with the representatives here of foreign powers, provisional regulations, by which, in existing circumstances, the destruction of that trade may be prevented. We believe for example that it would not be impossible to arrange temporarily with their chiefs a system by which boats with proper passports, laden with silk from the producing districts, might pass their lines at Bing Bong and other points, on payment of a transit duty to the T'ien-wang. Knowing their power and the present weakness of the Tartar government, here and at Chehkiang, we cannot expect that they will for a considerable time cease to be our neighbours, even should the chance of war at length force them to retire.

From the above it will appear evident that the religious element enters very powerfully into this great revolutionary movement. Nothing can be more erroneous than the supposition that it is a purely political one, and that religion occupies but a subordinate place in it. So far is this from being the case, that, on the contrary, it is the basis upon which the former rests, and is its life-perpetuating source. The downfall of idolatry, and

the establishment of the worship of the true God, are objects aimed at by them, with as much sincerity and devotion, as the expulsion of the Manchus, and the conquest of the empire. In opposition to the pantheistic notions of the philosophers of the Sung dynasty, they hold the doctrine of the personality of the Deity; in opposition to the popular polytheistic notions, they have the clearest conception of the unity of God; and in opposition to the fatalism of philosophical Buddhism, they believe in and teach the doctrine of an all-superintending providence. This appears on the very surface, and no one can be among them for any length of time without being impressed with it. They feel that they have a work to accomplish, and the deep conviction that they are guided by an unerring finger, and supported by an omnipotent arm in its execution, is their inspiration. Success they ascribe to the goodness of the Heavenly Father, and defeat to his chastisements. The Deity is with them, not an abstract notion, nor a stern, implacable sovereign, but a loving Father, who watches tenderly over their affairs, and leads them by the hand. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are their standard of faith now, as they were at the commencement of the movement. This is a very important fact. As long as they receive them as the word of God, we have reasonable grounds to hope that their errors will gradually be corrected. The missionary can always refer to these, and they cannot consistently object. They often speak of the death of Christ as atoning for the sins of the whole world, though they do not seem to have a clear notion of the *divinity* of his person. They regard him as the greatest human being that has ever appeared in this world, and as *especially* the God-sent; and this will account for the revolutionary chief styling himself the *brother* of Christ. He does not suppose that he himself is divine; his idea, probably, is that the Saviour is the greatest of God's messengers, and he himself the second. On this point, as well as on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, he needs enlightenment. Could he be convinced that Christ is divine as well as human, he would immediately see, and perhaps renounce, his errors. That errors have crept in, is not surprising; on the contrary, it would be one of the greatest miracles on record were it otherwise. The amount of religious knowledge diffused among the people is necessarily limited; that of the chiefs, though not very profound, is more extensive. It is in the *Kwangsi* men that the religious element

runs wide and deep, whence it spreads over the surrounding mass. The latter are expected only to learn and chant their hymns of praise. The ability to do this, together with baptism, constitutes them brethren. We may expect that the advent of Hung Jen, who has been promoted to the highest rank, will have a salutary effect upon the movement in a religious point of view.

The feeling which they entertain towards foreigners is apparently of the most friendly nature; they are always addressed as "our foreign brethren; we worship the same heavenly Father, and believe in the same elder Brother; why should we be at variance?" They seem to be anxious for intercourse with foreigners, and desirous to promote the interest of trade.

The opening of the eighteen provinces to trade, they say, would be most pleasing to them. Some would say that policy would make them talk in this way—suppose it did; how is it that policy, or something akin, does not make the Imperialist speak in the same way? They say that foreigners will be respected whenever they pass through their territory; and the respectful attention they have paid to those who have visited them is a sufficient proof of their sincerity.

A great deal has been said about the cruelty of the "long-haired rebels," but this is a false accusation. In no instance have we witnessed any traces of wilful destruction. It is true they kill, but it is because they must do so or submit to be killed. They burn, but so far as our observation went, it is invariably in self-defence. Much of the burning is done by the Imperialists before the arrival of the rebels, and the cases of suicide are far more numerous than those of murder. The fact that all the women have been allowed to leave Sung Kiang, and that they are known, in many cases, to have made attempts to save men and women who had plunged themselves into the canals and rivers, is a proof that they are not the cruel, relentless marauders that they have been represented by many. They are revolutionists, in the strictest sense of the term; both the work of slaughter and of plunder are carried on only so far as is necessary to secure the end. These are evils which necessarily accompany such a movement, and are justifiable or otherwise in so far as the movement itself is so.

As to their future success we can say nothing. One of the chiefs made the remark, that, judging from the present aspect of affairs, two years would be ample time to accomplish their

task. A flame has been kindled in their breasts by their recent victory at Tanyang, which will take many a defeat to quench. Kwangsi is, they say, in their possession, and Shih Ta-kai, with a large army, is reducing Si-chwan to subjection. This province is virtually in their hands. From Kiahing up to Tantu they have swept the country clean (as they express themselves) of all the "imps," so that small bands of ten, twenty, and thirty men, pass to and fro from one point to the other along the banks of the Grand Canal without the least interruption. They seem now to be taking hold of this empire with an iron grasp, and treading it like conquerors. The impression which an interview with them leaves upon the mind is that they look back upon the past thankfully, and to the future with buoyant and confident hope.—*From the North China Herald, July 7.*

THE END.

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