

were sent to the Island of Formosa to rust away there.

Soon another outbreak occurred in Korea, wherein China and Japan after their peculiar manner interfered simultaneously, without, however, coming to blows. It was after this affair that a secret report was made to the principal Chinese Minister, then Li Hung Chang, warning him, in reference to the growing organisation of the Japanese army and navy, that it was "the duty of our Empire to check in time the threatening evil from Japan and to establish definitely the supremacy over its neighbour." Li Hung Chang acknowledged the expediency of strengthening all the Chinese defences, but deprecated any attempt to trouble Japan.

Meanwhile some warlike affairs had been proceeding on the Western extremities of the Great Plateau beyond the Chinese mountains, namely, Yarkand and Kashgaria. All this region had belonged to the Empire in the great days of old, but had for some time been in the independent possession of Moslem chiefs who seemed to be so far settled in their position, that the British Government had sent from India a European Envoy to treat with them. In 1871 the adjoining province of Ili, with its capital at Kuldja, also within the Chinese dominion, but conterminous with the Russian dominions, had become so disturbed that the Czar's Government in 1871 had temporarily occupied it with Russian troops. But from the beginning of the young Em-

peror Kwanghsu's reign the Regency, that is, the two Dowager Empresses and Prince Kung, resolved to recover their own in this quarter. So forces composed of really brave and enduring soldiers, under able and enterprising officers, with arms not wholly primitive, with artillery capable of breaching fortifications, were sent from China across the mountains into Mongolia. Thus they crossed deserts with oases at rare intervals, ascended and descended the stiff ranges which diversify the great uplands. They braved many severe vicissitudes of climate, enduring extreme cold with frost and snow for many weeks consecutively. Their campaigns were protracted from season to season for several years. They must have suffered often hunger as well as hardship from want of supplies in districts most thinly inhabited, and that too by a hostile population. But they found oases or comparatively fertile valleys and other cultivable spots. So, then, soldiers became cultivators for the nonce, sowed seed in the autumn, tided somehow through the winter, reaped the crops in the returning spring or summer, and then marched on with the fresh supplies thus obtained. These peculiar operations were prosecuted through two years, and certainly redound to the honour of the Chinese forces then employed. The Chinese wreaked a not unnatural revenge on tribes who had slaughtered their countrymen some years previously in Ili. They met with considerable resistance from these tribes, who were brave as well

as cruel. Their narratives abound in striking episodes and stirring adventures. Whether they had much of real warfare or not, they had some fighting. Their artillery was repeatedly brought into play and made several broad breaches in mountain forts. They stormed these breaches on several occasions with at least some loss of life. Sometimes they were repulsed, at other times they were beaten away from positions they had gained. At all events they made good their advance over vast distances in an inhospitable country, not only with sturdy infantry but with armament and munitions, and with considerable bodies of Tartar cavalry (somewhat resembling Cossacks), notwithstanding the difficulty there must have been in finding forage. Thus leaving no tribe unsubdued behind them, they went straight for those whom they regarded as the Moslem rebels in Yarkand and Kashgaria. The resistance they met with was never really serious and sometimes little more than nominal, much less than might have been expected from the Moslem chief, Yakoob Beg, who met his death in some way never known for certain. Having re-established Chinese authority to the western extremity of the old Empire, the Commanders turned their thoughts to the recovery of Ili, then in Russian occupation.

With this view a Chinese Minister Plenipotentiary was for the first time in history sent to St. Petersburg. He, after due negotiation, had to be content with a partial retrocession of the Ili territory. But the Regency

at Peking refused to ratify this, and sent another Minister to St. Petersburg, who succeeded in recovering almost the whole. The treaty by which this remarkable transaction was concluded runs thus, 'Article I.: "His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias consents to the re-establishment of the Chinese Government in the country of Ili which has been temporarily occupied since 1871 by the Russian forces. Russia remains in possession of the western part of that country within the limits indicated by Article VII. of the present treaty."

Afterwards there follows the Article VII. in this wise: "The western part of Ili is incorporated with Russia to serve as a place for the establishment of the inhabitants of that country who adopt Russian nationality." By a Protocol referring to Article VI. of the Treaty the Chinese Government agreed to pay the equivalent of 9,000,000 roubles in pounds sterling, viz., £1,431,664, to bankers in London for the Czar, to meet the expenses of the occupation of Ili by Russian troops since 1871. It is noteworthy that the preamble to the Treaty begins thus: "His Majesty the Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias and His Majesty the Emperor of China, being desirous of settling certain frontier questions concerning the interests of both Empires, and of drawing closer the friendly relations between the two countries, have named their Plenipotentiaries in order to arrive at an understanding on these questions."

These proceedings, together with the attitude of Russia, and the titles accorded to the Chinese Emperor, prove the consideration which China still possessed in 1881. It is to be remembered that they followed upon arduous campaigns conducted against Mongolian regions and extended over several years, in a manner reflecting honour on Chinese Generals, Officers and soldiers.

These events are the only rays, perhaps they may prove to be the parting gleams, of sunshine that have been shed over the fortunes of China in recent times.

The foregoing Chapters have comprised so continuous a narrative of failure and decline, that it may be well at this point to pause for a moment to note what can be said in favour of China. With this view some quotations may be made from the History by Demetrius Boulger, whose tone is always generous and sympathetic towards the Chinese Empire.

Referring to the events just mentioned, he writes: "It is not without an obvious appropriateness that the close of the great work successfully accomplished during two minorities should be followed by the disappearance of the most important of the personages who had taken the leading part throughout these twenty years of constant war and diplomatic excitement. Before the Peking world knew of her illness, it heard of the death of the Dowager Empress Tsi An, who as Hsienfeng's widow had enjoyed the premier place in the Government. . . . She was

only forty-five, and evidently a woman of firm character and frugal habits. The death of the Eastern Empress, as she was called, did not make any apparent change in the government of the Empire. Her colleague Tsi Hsi remained in power with Prince Kung as chief adviser. . . . She (that is Tsi An), before her death, had witnessed the accomplishment of everything declared to be necessary when she first assumed the responsibility of government. She had restored the credit and the power of a sinking Empire, and when she quitted this mortal scene she left China as great, as famous and as prosperous as it had ever been before."

Opinions may indeed differ whether the Empress or the Empire, or the peculiar kind of Regency, or the administrative results, at all deserve this encomium. The unrefuted suspicions which in one grave case attached to both these Imperial ladies ought not to be overlooked. Still, after all our dispraise, it is well to hear the praise which is given by so well-informed a historian as Mr. Boulger.

Again, when concluding his History in 1884, he writes: "We leave China and her people at a critical moment in their existence. They have accomplished many remarkable triumphs. They have survived the storms of a protracted foreign war and an ignominious treaty of peace. They have put down civil rebellion throughout the land, and the triumph of authority was achieved only when the province had been made utterly desolate. . . . They

have reconquered their most remote dependencies. . . . Agriculture is fast absorbing the spots left barren by war and pestilence. . . . The highways are gradually being repaired. . . . When Kwanghsu assumes the reins of Government in the winter of 1887-8, it is probable that he will acquire the possession of a throne which is the most ancient in the world, and which is firmly established in the hearts and affections of a people who are the most self-contained, the most retentive of their possessions, and the most intensely national and patriotic of whom history preserveth the record."

It is indeed easy to read between these lines of the historian, generous and appreciative as they are. Doubtless some proof would be adduced for every word in them. Nevertheless the Empire had done so many things amiss, had left so many needful things undone, as to neutralise the effect of all this hopeful commendation. With the historian the glamour of a wondrous past may easily affect his imagination regarding the present. The spell of the historic ages is upon him to make the immediate future appear as a bright mirage. Even if all these favourable points were accepted, still there were other tendencies pointing in an opposite direction, and there was really reason for the gravest foreboding. Yet in justice to China, these quotations are made here in order that her waning reputation may have the benefit of them. On the other hand, there must have been even at that time, 1884, some or many well-

informed persons who would say that despite the remains of external magnificence the Chinese polity was unsound to the very core.

If the campaigns on the Great Plateau may be regarded as sunshine bursting through the clouds late in the afternoon, then fresh clouds began immediately to rise from the horizon and obscure the sunset.

France had long established herself at Saigon on the delta of the river Mekhong in what may be called the Peninsula of Cochin China. Some years before this time, 1861 to 1884, the French had seized the idea of a colonial empire in that quarter. Adjoining their position on the lower Mekhong, though separated by ranges of hills, was the Native State of Annam, a feudatory of China, and lying along the Gulf of Tonking (Tonquin) close to the southern frontier of China proper. The French encroached on the Chief of Annam, who thereon appealed to his Suzerain the Emperor at Peking. To avoid a conflict the Chinese Government agreed to cede to France a slice of Annam and certain forts therein, also to withdraw their Chinese forces from both Annam and Tonking. In return for this large concession the French merely agreed to respect and protect the southern frontier of China, that is, the southern border of the Chinese province of Kwantung. Owing to a misunderstanding about the dates on which the forts were to be given up, the Chinese troops resisted effectually the incoming French troops, and thus war began all round. The hostili-

ties resulted in Annam and Tonking with the best part of the Gulf being added to the French Empire. In this war there was a most melancholy episode. The Island of Formosa, then Chinese, is not far from the Tonking Gulf. The French naval force attacked this island in vain, and then steamed across the strait to the opposite mainland of China, which is the province of Fuhkien, and took up a position at Foochow near the mouth of the Min River. Here lay a fleet of Chinese warships, and they were required to surrender. They not unnaturally refused, though they ought to have known that resistance was hopeless. On their refusal they were nearly all sunk within a few minutes by the French fire, and their sailors were either drowning or swimming about. Now these sailors were men of Kwantung, there was a feud between the provinces of Kwantung and Fuhkien, and this was a Fuhkien shore. So the swimming sailors were either stopped by their Chinese fellow-countrymen from landing or were killed if they did get a footing on the shore. This story sheds a strange light on the allegations often made regarding Chinese patriotism and national cohesion.

Then in 1887 the young Emperor Kwanghsu received charge of the State nominally from the remaining Dowager Empress Tzashi, or Tsi Hsi, but remained under her guidance till 1889. He was enthroned and married with a pompous ceremony suitable enough for the golden age of his august

predecessors, but out of keeping with his own altered circumstances. He began his reign with exemplary industry and frugality, but none can say whether he exercised any influence. All the old difficulties about the reception of European Ministers and Envoys were now swept away and he received them handsomely.

But as his minority had begun badly, so did his active reign, for Christian Missionaries were once more atrociously maltreated in several parts of China. This fresh outbreak is attributed by some to the establishment of a mathematical college at Peking, a measure hateful to the Chinese *literati*. Be the origin what it may, a crusade of infamous libel against the Christians was undertaken, charges incredibly monstrous were circulated by illustrated placards, an infuriated mob wrecked Churches and Missionary establishments, killing some Europeans also. The conduct of the Chinese Government when called to account was utterly evasive. Some pecuniary compensation was granted, but the man who issued the placards and stirred the mobs was well known, was convicted on enquiry, and was left unpunished. The trouble was stayed only by a well-worded Edict from the Emperor himself. Later on, however, in 1895, a still worse onslaught was made on the English Missionaries in Fuhkien by a local body calling themselves Vegetarians.

All through the reign right up to the time which we have reached, 1895, the external defences of the

Empire had received attention, the earnestness of which was attested by largeness of expenditure; but it was directed with irregularity and without any competent intelligence. A Board of Admiralty under an Imperial Prince was established, and for a while a British naval Officer was employed. European-made battleships and cruisers were purchased, and some really good Chinamen were employed. But the iron-protected fleet was not kept up to date in respect of speed, a failure which afterwards proved fatal. The defensive arrangements were mainly and rightly concentrated on the Pechihlee Gulf, namely, the Chinese waters leading up towards Peking. Two great naval stations were here set up, and duly fortified; of which more will be said hereafter. The condition of the Army was investigated, and found to be ludicrously antiquated with an inefficiency baffling description. But nothing was done to improve, much less to reform it. Brave and enduring soldiers still remained to the Empire, but they were mostly stationed on the remote frontiers in Mongolian regions.

Thus we approach the catastrophe to be described in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WAR BETWEEN CHINA AND JAPAN, 1894-1896.

IN the foregoing Chapters there has been presented a retrospect of the course of the Chinese Empire from the first to the last decade of the nineteenth century. During that time the huge, cumbrous and disjointed fabric somehow has hung together despite grievous wounds from without, desperate disorders within, incompetency in the Imperial power, corruption in the whole administration, opposition to all reform, utter neglect of the forces by sea and land. The battered constitution, after suffering nearly all imaginable evils, has been spared only one, namely, a disputed succession. But now some special notice must be given to a series of events which will probably prove to have been the beginning of the end for the Chinese Empire. If this be so, then they are invested with supreme importance respecting the fate of the Far East. These events are comprised in the War with Japan in 1894 and 1895.

This war related to Korea, a large promontory and an offshoot from the province of Manchuria, which province is a very integral part of the Chinese Empire, especially under a Manchu dynasty.

Thus Korea might be considered geographically as an outlying part of China. In settling the bounds of their vast Empire, the Emperors in their palmy days might naturally enough have included Korea, a comparatively small State, with an area of 82,000 square miles, and a population of about ten millions of souls. In fact, however, Korea generally if not quite always remained independent, that is, having internal autonomy. But feeling itself unable to stand quite alone, and being situate between two neighbours, Japan on the east, and China on the west, it sought the favour of both in an opportunist way. It had declared itself a feudatory sometimes of the one and sometimes of the other, sometimes also of both together. It had on several occasions been the subject of contention between China and Japan, and had been partially occupied by the troops of both Powers. Manifestly China had a territorial interest in Korea as an arm outstretched from the Manchu mainland, and lying on the Pechihlee waters which run right up to the shores of the Peking territory. It is not clear that Japan had any equal interest in Korea, which was separated by a strait of sea from the Japanese islands. Had China been a growing and formidable Power or had there been any outlet for Japanese trade in that direction, then Japan might have had a vital objection to a Chinese occupation of Korea. But China was, as compared with the newly organised Japan, a contemptible power, and the mercantile interests of Japan in

Korea were slight. But whether Japan had or had not in Korea any interests worth fighting for, she had many old associations with that country, also various political relations and obligations with it, and she would not, or thought she could not, brook any exclusive control by China in that quarter. It should also have been remembered that the weakness of Korea was due to the really wicked incursions of Japan in the sixteenth century.

Under this condition of affairs Korea had more than once in quite recent times behaved in a manner calculated to draw the two rival protecting Powers into conflict. In 1882 domestic troubles in that country had brought both Chinese and Japanese forces into the field, and a contest for supremacy was with some difficulty staved off. In 1884 still graver troubles arose with the same question as between Japan and China. A conflict was, however, averted and a convention signed, of which one clause ran thus: "In case of any disturbance of a grave nature occurring in Korea which may oblige the respective countries or either of them to send troops to Korea, it is hereby understood that they shall give each to the other previous notice in writing of their intention so to do, and after the matter is settled they shall withdraw their troops and not further station them in the country." This convention seemed simple enough, but it was big with the fate of China. Previous to this the Chinese had taken alarm at the military system which was being intro-

duced into Japan, and were becoming at last conscious of their own shortcomings. Professor Douglas alludes to "the miserable figure which the Chinese forces cut in their late encounter with Japan. . . . For years the Japanese had been organising their army on the European model, and had armed their troops with the newest weapons invented at Elswick and by Krupp; while the Chinese, with the exception of a small body enlisted by Li, were still trusting in their bows and arrows and in the scarcely more effective gingalls." As her hopeless inferiority to Japan in the quality of the forces and of the armaments was fully appreciated in China, the rashness of the Chinese Emperor, or of his Government, was extreme in provoking a war which might have easily been avoided, and in almost staking the Empire itself on the issue of the perilous game.

In 1894 a body of rebels in Korea rose, first against the Roman Catholic Missionaries, and then against the King, who thereon appealed to Peking for help. The Chinese Government landed troops in Korea without giving notice to Japan as provided by the convention cited above. The Japanese Government, affirming this to be a breach of international agreement, at once sent an army corps to Korea. The two forces, however, remained facing each other without fighting. The Chinese insisted that any future reforms in Korean administration should be left to them. To these and some other demands the Japanese gave compliant or conciliatory

answers, but warned the Chinese that any further importation of their troops, contrary to the convention, would be treated as an act of war. To this the Chinese gave some apparently satisfactory replies. The Japanese diplomatically regarded these as sufficient assurances; and had China been so minded, this critical affair might well have ended there.

It so fell out, however, that the Japanese Government sent three cruisers to the Pechihlee Gulf to make sure whether the Chinese were, in accordance with the convention and with their assurances, abstaining from the despatch of troops to Korea. The cruisers then found that, so far from abstaining, the Chinese were at that moment sending a transport ship full of troops escorted by two cruisers straight for the Korean coast. The Chinese were thus caught in the very act of breaking faith. A naval action at once ensued; one of the Chinese cruisers was disabled and the other escaped, while the transport was sunk with nearly all on board of her. With this act then, due entirely to the utter fault of the Chinese, the war began.

Herein the conduct of China as a civilised power may seem at first sight unintelligible. In fact China in these respects was not a civilised power. British experience has shown that she regarded Treaties as the merest of temporary expedients, and sometimes signed them with the intention of breaking them forthwith.

Both sides poured troops into Korea, and the

Chinese massed much force round Pingyang, a strong position which might, if bravely held, have baffled the Japanese. But the Chinese Generals proved to be cowards and ignorant of war. So they marched away on the Japanese approach. There was one brave and competent commander on the Chinese side named Tso, and he died together with some picked troops at the post of duty. The Japanese pursued the flying Chinese, thus clearing Korea as far as the river Yalu which separates that country from Manchuria.

The Yalu runs into the Pechihlee Gulf. At its mouth there arrived a strong Chinese force escorted by twelve warships under the command of Admiral Ting, the best man, probably one of the few good men, in the Chinese navy. Just then a Japanese squadron, also of twelve ships, hove in sight. In the engagement which ensued both sides fought well; but the Chinese were outmanœuvred, as the Japanese had a clear advantage in speed. Five of the Chinese ships were sunk, and the remaining seven being beaten, escaped, as the Japanese, though victorious, were so battered as to be unfit for pursuit.

The Japanese General was now free to overrun southern Manchuria. In that quarter a promontory runs out into the Pechihlee Gulf named the Liaotung Peninsula. On the south-west extremity of that there were the fortified naval station of Port Arthur and the commercial port of Talienwan, near each other. The Japanese made straight for these,

taking some lesser places on the way without any difficulty whatever. The season was wintry, the ground frost-bound or snow-clad, and the roadway very steep towards the end, but they proceeded circumspectly with excellent arrangements for transport and supply. At Port Arthur, if anywhere, the Chinese were bound to make a resolute stand. Though not the first place in importance of their whole Empire, it was clearly the second. It faced the mouth of the Peiho River and commanded the approach from the Pechihlee Gulf to the capital. It had been well fortified after the European model, and powerfully armed with guns of European manufacture. The Chinese Ministers hoped that it would prove impregnable, but they forgot that armament is valueless unless the gunners will fight their guns, and breastworks useless unless there are stout hearts behind them under commanders versed in modern warfare. The conduct of the garrison was dastardly, and the Japanese took the place, after the very minimum of resistance. This was quite a cutting blow even to impassive and insensitive China. The only chance for the Chinese Emperor was instantly to send a plenipotentiary to treat for peace before the victors should inflict some fresh loss on their foe. But instead of doing this the Emperor despatched some agents without full powers who were promptly sent back. This dilatory process, quite characteristic of Chinese policy, cost him dear. Having occupied Port Arthur, the Japanese with their fleet and trans-

ports crossed the Pechihlee Gulf, and made for the Shantung Peninsula, which forms the eastern extremity of the Gulf. On the north side of this peninsula was Wei-hai-Wei, commanding the entrance to the Gulf by sea. This was both a military position and a naval station of the first rank. There were a large harbour, a citadel and surrounding heights, all held by troops. Admiral Ting and the remnant of the navy were there. The place had been well fortified all round and with an armament like that of Port Arthur. It was the first and most important place in the Empire and the last stronghold. In Ting's presence it would not indeed be tamely or ineffectually defended. But it was soon lost in a manner characteristic of the Chinese. The citadel was indeed protected by the ships. But round the harbour were the heights, fortified and powerfully armed. Having by this time fully perceived that his countrymen would not fight on land, Ting foresaw that these heights would be stormed by the Japanese easily enough, and that then the heavy guns belonging to these very heights would be turned with every advantage against the ships and the citadel. He then proposed to the commanders of the land forces that these heights should be dismantled and disarmed, so that they should not be made to serve as vantage-grounds to the enemy for assailing and capturing the harbour. The commanders refused, and very soon events occurred exactly as Ting had foreseen. Capturing the heights, the enemy turned the Chinese

guns on the Chinese ships. Ting made such fight as he could against impossible odds, and as he could not break away in the face of the Japanese fleet, he obtained terms securing the lives and freedom of his sailors, surrendered the post, and then, together with his two principal officers, committed suicide, leaving behind him a memory respected by Europeans, a circumstance rare in Chinese history.

The cup of disaster was now full for the Chinese, owing to their own cowardice and incapacity. The position of the Emperor was desperate, for there was nothing to prevent the Japanese from marching on Peking, just as the Anglo-French force had done in 1860. He presumably would have fled to the hunting palace in the Mongolian hills, as his Imperial ancestor had done at that time. The Japanese commander might then have made himself comfortable in the Chinese capital, governing unopposed the surrounding country and awaiting the dismemberment of the Chinese Empire.

It is by comparison only that the proportions of these calamities can be appreciated. The loss of Port Arthur and Wei-hai-Wei was to China what the loss of Portsmouth and Chatham would be to England, of Cherbourg and Toulon to France, of Kiel and Wilhelmshafen to Germany.

Thus the Emperor was obliged to sue for peace without delay, and to send a plenipotentiary to Japan for arranging the terms, and Li Hung Chang was selected for this duty. Even then, however, a

slight delay occurred from a cause which must be noticed. The Emperor naturally foresaw that the Japanese would make demands for cession of territory. If such demands should be confined to some of the Chinese islands they could be endured, but they might include the Liaotung Peninsula and a part of Manchuria, and then they would be unendurable to Chinese pride. This territory was not indeed a part of the eighteen historic provinces of China, but it was the home of the Manchu dynasty, then sovereigns in China, and it was in proximity to Peking the capital. In order to avert this misfortune as yet unprecedented, the Emperor with his advisers resorted to a perilous device. He appealed in some confidential way to Europe, or at least he sounded some of the European Powers to support him in resisting any Japanese demand for the cession of the Liaotung Peninsula. There is no need now to consider which of the European Powers was thus appealed to; but happily it could not have been Britain. No such support was, however, obtained at that time. So Li Hung Chang proceeded on his mission to Japan. In due course the terms were agreed to, including a large indemnity, the cession not only of Formosa and other islands, but also of the Liaotung Peninsula with Port Arthur, Japan being then in full military possession of the Peninsula and of the Port. The Emperor, with the most bitter regret no doubt, ratified these terms, which, though humiliating, were not worse than what might

be expected from the disgraceful circumstances into which China had fallen.

Despite this ratification, however, the Emperor again appealed to some of the European Powers to help him in voiding his engagement to cede the Liaotung Peninsula, and this time with real success. Russia gave a favourable ear to the appeal; indeed, she was disposed even without such appeal to interpose. France, who had entered into a Russian alliance,—for reasons far remote from China!—supported Russia. To the surprise and disappointment of the British, it was seen that Germany joined the other two Powers. But Britain held herself honourably aloof from this affair. The British thought that Japan, having fought and conquered fairly and squarely, was entitled to make her own terms without European interference, which might be the reverse of disinterested. In consequence of the triple pressure from Russia, France and Germany, the Japanese Government agreed to restore its conquest in Liaotung to the Chinese, but held Wei-hai-Wei temporarily in security for the payment of the indemnity.

The war which ended thus was most unfortunate for China in three cardinal respects. It ruined the reputation of China in the eyes of all European Powers, or rather it destroyed whatever remnant of that reputation might be still existing. It showed how China, untrained and undisciplined, with a population of three hundred and fifty millions, was

beaten down to the very dust in a campaign of a few months by Japan, with a population of only forty-two millions, or one-ninth of the Chinese total, but with training and discipline. For China indeed this was a sorry spectacle to be exhibited before the civilised world. History in all parts of the world and at all times has shown the disadvantage suffered by any nation who, when pressed by foes, invites within its own borders another Power for help, especially if that Power be a superior one. Yet this is what China now did on the largest scale. She had always before her own people spoken of Europeans with a hatred probably sincere, and with a contempt probably more feigned than real. Yet she had often enough accepted the aid of Europeans in moments of difficulty. But that aid had always come from individual Europeans, especially British acting either as individuals, or else in some separate capacity. It had never come, nor had it been invited, from any European Government as such. But now in the strangest contrast with her past policy and her ancient ideas, she obtained aid, in an affair of vital importance, not only from one European Power, but from three European Governments in combination. It were needless now to speculate as to whether she could have foreseen the consequences which must surely ensue from such proceedings, and which will be mentioned in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER XXX.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE JAPANESE WAR, 1896-1898.

HERETOFORE the acts of the Chinese Government have been mentioned as those of the Emperor on the assumption that he was personally governing in the same manner as his Imperial predecessors had governed. But since the conclusion of the war with Japan there have been doubts whether he is really governing. It has been sometimes reported that he is in low health, and is immured in solitude within the precincts of his Palace, while the Imperial authority is exercised by the Dowager Empress, the same of whom mention has been made in the preceding Chapters. It is difficult for Europeans at a distance to know the truth in these matters; but at all events the Emperor does not show the individuality which his Imperial ancestors showed. All the relations of China with the European Powers are conducted with the Council styled Tsung-li-Yamen, previously mentioned, which is really the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Since 1896, that is, since the war with Japan, the historic Empire of China has descended into darkness. It may have internal autonomy, but for external affairs, for foreign relations, for all those

things which *par excellence* are the signs of Imperial authority, it has lost even the shreds of self-assertion, even the shadow of self-action. It is near going whither the Empires of Persia and of the Great Mogul have gone before it, and whither the Ottoman Empire is gradually tending. This may sound melancholy to those who picture to themselves what the Empire of China was just before the beginning of the nineteenth century. But it were vain to attempt disguising how sadly the century is ending for that great Imperial Institution.

But this decadence, this sickness unto death, affects only the Empire as an Institution. The territorial dominion, though shorn of some among its most important positions, still remains in its huge mass, however weak may be the bonds that hold its parts together. The vast population, homogeneous in most respects, and having more of homogeneity than any other people of equal size in the world, still survives, however much it may have been thinned by famine and rebellion. The agricultural and the trading activity, the industrial arts, are still prosecuted despite frequent and ravaging desolation in many districts, and corrupt oppression almost everywhere. Though the Chinese Empire has fallen, China and its people have not, and as we hope never will.

In 1896, when the Emperor invoked the aid of some European Powers to obtain from Japan the restoration of the Liaotung Peninsula, he may perhaps

have surmised that if he did not call them in, they might come in of their own accord with some ulterior views of their own. At all events by thus acting he precipitated the crisis for his own Empire. He gained his momentary end without counting what the cost would be in the immediate future. After the conclusion of peace France demanded that the Chinese Government should make a line to meet the French railway from Tonking. This was not of pressing consequence on China, as it related to an engagement the fulfilment of which at the best would be dilatory. Germany said little at the moment, for she, as it afterwards turned out, was preparing for a spring ! But Russia lost no time in making proposals of much consequence to the Chinese Empire and to the Manchu dynasty. She was then planning the construction of a railway from the west right through to eastern Siberia, below which point lies her naval harbour of Vladivostok. She asked leave to carry her line straight to Vladivostok through a part of Manchuria. Why she laid stress on Vladivostok is not clear, because that port has been depreciated as being ice-bound half the year and as gradually silting up. It was probably made a stalking-horse by her for more important demands. She asked leave to carry branches from the Siberian line into Manchuria, first to Moukden, the old Manchu capital, and on to Port Arthur itself or at least to Talienwan, the commercial port close by. The Chinese Government was powerless to resist these

menacing demands. The prospect of Russia thus coming into contact with the Pechihlee Gulf, right opposite to the Peking territory, naturally aroused the vigilance of other European Powers, especially Britain.

Shortly afterwards Germany took a forward step which, unfortunately for China, was casually provoked by Chinese people. As previously stated the Shantung Peninsula forms the south-eastern extremity of the Pechihlee Gulf. Round its corner and on the coast just to the south lies the harbour of Kiaochow, capable of being made a naval base. In the country just behind this place a German Christian Mission had been established. Just at this time two German Missionaries were murdered by the Chinese. Germany demanded instant reparation; and as a German squadron was close by it steamed into the harbour, and without giving the Chinese Government time to make reparation, demanded a lease of the place, a demand which China was powerless to refuse. This was the most offhand and strong-fisted proceeding that had ever been taken by any European Power in Asia. It soon afterwards appeared that Germany had all along been casting ambitious eyes on this place, and was only awaiting the opportunity, which the murder of the Missionaries afforded, and of which she availed herself with such striking promptitude. The folly of the Chinese local authorities in allowing such a murder as this at such a time is characteristic of China, for

it is understood that such acts are never committed without the encouragement or at least the permission of the local officials. All Europe looked on this act by Germany at first with surprise, and then with anxious anticipation, lest it should be followed by similar acts on the part of European Powers.

These proceedings on the part of Russia and Germany caused anxiety in Britain lest foreign Powers by occupying or leasing Chinese ports should hamper or interfere with those rights of trade which had been guaranteed to British merchants by several Treaties. Britain declared that she would maintain these rights of hers with all her might, observing, too, that they were not for herself alone but for all other nations equally. Her policy was named by the phrase of "the open door," which has since become proverbial. She kept her fleet in Chinese waters with a strength equal to all contingencies.

Meanwhile the Chinese Government, notwithstanding all the wealth of China, could not find the money wherewith to pay the war indemnity to Japan, in security for which Wei-hai-Wei was still held by Japanese forces. So it applied to the British Government for a loan, which was agreed to. Hearing of this, the Russian Government addressed such remonstrances to Peking that the Chinese Government withdrew its application to Britain for the loan. At the same moment Russia herself tendered a loan, evidently meaning that she was to control Chinese finances and not Britain. But China de-

clined that also, and this double refusal is characteristic of the Chinese. Soon afterwards, however, Britain arranged this loan in conjunction with Germany; and China acted thereon, notwithstanding the displeasure of Russia.

Soon afterwards it was announced that Russia had obtained a lease of Port Arthur, and this was intended by her to be a decisive step. Her friends in Europe hailed it as rendering her the mistress of the Gulf whose waters led to Peking, and as giving her the naval supremacy of the northern Pacific. So Britain at once protested at St. Petersburg, and the Russian Minister replied that Britain was the only one of the Powers who objected to the Russian policy.* It then remained to be seen what Britain would do; all men everywhere thought that something would be done, though none could guess what. But Britain remained silent for some days, possibly bearing some reproach on that account. In reality she was rapidly collecting a fleet for the Pechihlee Gulf to be an overwhelming display of force in that quarter. This done, it was announced that she had obtained a lease of Wei-hai-Wei, and would occupy the place as soon as it should be evacuated by the Japanese on the payment of the war indemnity due to them. At the same time her powerful squadron anchored at Chefoo close at hand. It was easy for

* See Blue Book of that date, 1897, relating to the interview between the British Ambassador and the Russian Foreign Minister.

Britain to arrange for the settlement of the unpaid balance of the indemnity. The Japanese Commander made over his charge to the British Admiral, and the place forthwith was reckoned a British station of the first rank. Thus Britain, and not Russia, became the mistress of the Pechihleo Gulf and of the North Pacific.

Then France from her base at Tonking, seized a bay close by on the Lienchow peninsula of the Kwantung province.

Next Britain, considering her island position at Hong Kong to be possibly assailable from the mainland opposite, decided to occupy a strip on the coast called the Kowloon extension, regarding which she already had some Treaty rights.

The gravity of these steps, taken first by one Great Power and then by another, caused much discussion as to the future of Chinese commerce. It was seen that each Power was gaining exclusive political influence in one quarter or another of the Chinese Empire. Doubt arose whether any of them would allow free play to the policy of "the open door," as already explained. Then arose the alternative phrase of "the sphere of influence." It was evident that if such spheres were to be recognised, Manchuria would be the Russian sphere, the Shantung Peninsula the German sphere, the neighbourhood of Tonking the French sphere. The question remained as to what would be the British sphere. All well-informed Britons at once answered the Yang-tsze-Kiang

valley and basin. The British trading centre at Shanghai is near the mouth of the Yang-tsze River, British influence already prevails in the deltaic region, British gunboats can at certain seasons run up the great river for a long distance. Still farther inland on the plateau of Szechuan are stations of British trade. On the other side the Indian Government are constructing a railway from Mandalay in upper Burma to the Chinese frontier in Yunnan, with the view of ultimately tapping the upper basin of the Yang-tsze-Kiang. This, then, is to be the British sphere, if hereafter the Chinese Empire is to be portioned out into spheres. Meanwhile Britain holds fast to the policy and principle of "the open door," is maintaining that entirely as yet, and hopes to maintain it for an indefinite time. Herein she is supported by the unanimous opinion of all her merchants trading in China. But she takes her own precautions in the event of that hope failing. As the first of such precautions she obtained an understanding from China that on no conditions should the valley of the Yang-tsze be alienated to any foreign Power.

Further she arranged with China that so long as British trade is predominant in China the head of the Imperial Chinese Maritime Customs, now Sir Robert Hart, shall be a British-born subject. Hereon Professor Douglas writes: "It is difficult to overestimate the importance of this condition. It is a blow at that corruption which has hitherto made

progress in China next to impossible, which has prevented the construction of railways, which has hindered the trade of the country, and which has made the army and navy of the Empire the laughing-stock of the world."

Then came what may be termed the era of railway concessions, and Peking became the theatre of international rivalry in this respect, the Tsung-li-Yamen being beset by formidable or influential applicants.

Russia had less trouble than any other European Powers, because she had already settled her railway lines in Manchuria. But there arose a severe controversy between her and Britain respecting the joint control of the line between Peking or Tientsin and the Manchurian system. Then there was a concession to an Anglo-Italian syndicate for working some extensive coal-fields which might, it was supposed, some day prove useful to Wei-hai-Wei. From Peking a proposed line was to run to Hankow, a most important place on the border of the lower valley of the Yang-tsze. For this much of the surveying and some even of the work have been undertaken. The concession was understood to have been granted to a Franco-Belgian company. If there should be a French element in this project, that would be distasteful to Britain. But there would be no objection if the enterprise be simply a Belgian one. There was fear at one time lest Russia should have a hand in this affair, but that has been allayed. Doubtless Britain will have influence enough at Pe-

king to prevent any arrangement being made detrimentally to her just interests. Germany will doubtless obtain concessions relating to some line or lines in the "*hinterland*" of Kiaochow. The British project is to carry a line from the mainland opposite Hong Kong and close to Canton right northwards to Shanghai inland, leaving the coast at some distance on its right, that is, to the east, with branches to certain points on the coast. The northern end of this line would reach not only Shanghai, but also Nanking and other trade centres in the lower valley of the Yang-tsze. The French will doubtless be bringing out a project in the south, but their pretensions in that quarter are large and have not advanced much beyond the primary stages of discussion. For many of these various projects no real advance has been effected. For some projects, even the concessions have not been settled, owing to the habits of Chinese delay, the worst of all delays. In many cases the manner whereby the capital may be raised is not known, and thus any discussion is precluded.

The latest statistics of Chinese railways may be taken from the Report of Lord Charles Beresford to the Associated Chambers of Commerce in London in May, 1899. He writes:

"The summary of the railways in the Chinese Empire is as follows:

| | Miles. |
|------------------------|--------|
| Built—all Chinese..... | 817 |

440 PROGRESS OF INDIA, JAPAN AND CHINA.

| Building— | Miles. |
|---|---------|
| Chinese..... | 170 |
| Belgian..... | 700 |
| Russian (that is, from East Siberia through Manchuria)..... | 1,400 |
| Total building..... | 2,270 |
| <i>Projected</i> —surveyed or being surveyed— | |
| Chinese..... | 97 |
| German..... | 430 |
| British..... | 730 |
| Anglo-American..... | 700 |
| Russo-Chinese..... | 130 |
| French..... | 420 |
| Total under survey..... | 2,507 |
| <i>Projected</i> —unsurveyed— | |
| Anglo-German..... | 600 |
| British..... | 470 |
| Total unsurveyed..... | 1,070 |
| Total projected. | 3,577." |

Thus the apparent total of railways for China would be $317+2,270+3,577=6,164$ miles. This total would represent but a meagre beginning for so huge an Empire as China. But in fact China herself is not taking the lead; on the contrary she is acting as a drag on the railway-system. She regards this system as an area on which the European Powers are to exercise their rival forces for mastery here, there, or everywhere. She dreads lest the opening of railways should, so to speak, "Europeanise" the interior of the country. Otherwise according to the best accounts, the railways, if economically constructed, that is, if money be not wasted in initial

proceedings such as contests between conflicting syndicates, and so forth, are likely to be used immensely both for passengers and goods, and therefore to prove remunerative.

But although with most of the lines the progress is as slow as Chinese inertia can make it, yet in one quarter there is marked activity, and that is in the region between Peking and Manchuria. It will be remembered that what may be called geographically the Pechihlee Gulf, and politically the Peking water, has a head to it. That consists of a subordinate gulf running northwards from Port Arthur and called the Liao gulf. Into the northern end of this runs the River Liao from Manchuria, near the mouth of which stands the Treaty Port of Newchwang. It will be observed that this bay which is on the western side of the Liaotung or Port Arthur peninsula has the disadvantage of being frozen over during a part of the winter, whereas the waters on the eastern side, including the port of Talienwan, are not frozen in winter. Nevertheless Newchwang is a port of great interest to British commercial enterprise which has alone, so to speak, tapped Manchuria, while Russian enterprise has been confined to building railways and to placing troops. Now it is to Newchwang that the British are striving with much success to establishing railway communication from Peking or Tientsin by Shanhaikwan and Kinchau, both on the Liao gulf, partly by English engineers under the Chinese Government, or by

English capital with Chinese sanction. There has been diplomatic strife between Britain and Russia, but the result seems to be that a British-Chinese line from Tientsin will at Newchwang meet the Russian line from Siberia as it runs through Manchuria. This arrangement would be satisfactory enough to Britain, as her line near the coast and the port of Newchwang are under the protection of her paramount sea-power. But Russia, though as yet not able to prevent this, appears to be far from content. She is understood to be attempting some arrangement with China whereby some line of her own may be taken from her Manchurian line straight to Peking. But as China is resisting, so far as resistance may be possible, and as the intentions of Britain are not known, the question cannot be carried further. Moreover, the British merchants at Newchwang have industrial as well as commercial interests inside Manchuria, and will press their claims as against the military domination of Russia in this piece of Chinese territory. They are also saying that an Open Door at the Treaty Port would be neutralised if the country behind were to be closed by Russian trade-cordons. Hence it is clear that in this corner of China the seeds of dissension between Britain and Russia exist, and that controversies of an acute kind may come on any day.

Meanwhile an important agreement has been signed between Britain and Russia to the effect that the former shall not interfere, and shall do its best

to prevent its subjects from interfering, with any railway-making in Manchuria, and that the latter shall itself abstain, and cause its subjects to abstain, from railway-making in the whole basin of the Yang-tsze River. Each of the high contracting Powers has handed in a copy of the agreement to the Tsung-li-Yamen at Peking. This agreement touches railways only, but then railway-making is the all-important thing of the immediate future in China. So the affair may prove to be of far-reaching importance, and is hailed by the friends of peace as a happy augury. It is thought by some to foreshadow the coming of spheres of influence, though Britain is still faithful to the principle of "the open door."

These transactions have been summarised, not for the recounting of European prowess and enterprise, but for illustrating the prostrate condition of the Chinese Empire at the close of the nineteenth century. Though there may be regret and sorrow for the Imperial downfall in China, and even sympathy for the Chinese people as distinct from their officials, still it is well for them all from the highest to the lowest that the truth should be told regarding the political conduct of their nation. It is this truth against which they have all, with the fewest exceptions, perversely and stubbornly shut their eyes and closed their ears for some centuries, but in no century so inexcusably as in the nineteenth. In the troublesome waves of this modern world China had been steering or drifting into courses likely to lead

on to reefs and breakers. At last the end came from the war with Japan, which gave what may be truly called a *coup de grâce*. No big Empire could incur such a disgrace as that and live. Accordingly the Chinese Empire has not lived, and to-day it lies at the disposal of four European Powers—Britain, Russia, France and Germany. Perhaps the United States should be added as a fifth Power, since their acquisition of a position in the Philippine Islands. China has nothing to do but to obey the behests of one or other of the four Powers in each case as it arises. If more than one claim her obedience she will consider which is the strongest, or whether she can play off one against the other. In any event the sole question for her to consider is the form and manner of her acquiescence; for acquiesce she must with some one about something, and no option at all is open to her.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE STATE OF CHINA IN 1899.

HAVING now arrived at the conclusion of the narrative, the reader will judge whether the course pursued by China during the nineteenth century can be called progress in the proper sense, or whether it should not rather be called a steady advance in the wrong direction. Of the ten decades indeed she has, during the last seven, that is, from 1830 onwards, been taking step after step almost like giant strides on the road to ruin. In fact the historic Empire of China is in a state of suspended animation, if it be not actually dead. There are no signs of its possible revival or recovery; though none now living can anticipate what the next few years may see. China exists up to the time of writing, say August, 1899, and no writer will venture to state more. So to speak, no political Insurance Office would insure the life of the Chinese Empire for even the shortest time. The only hope springs from the thought that "a sick man politically sometimes lives long."

Up to the end of this century the vast dominion is held together, however weak the links of the administration may be. The people of China proper form

the largest nationality of common race, of homogeneous character, of uniformity in language, of unity in faith, however composite that religion may be, now to be found in the world, and this too after making deductions for outlying nationalities in the Empire, Mongolians, Manchus, Moslems and others. If the other large nationalities of the world be considered they will each one of them be found to be less in number than the Chinese of China proper. The English-speaking race in the British Isles, the United States and the Colonies may have 130 millions of souls; the Russian race 106 millions (exclusive of Moslems) all speaking Russian; the Hindu people of over 200 millions have a common faith indeed, but have at least three races and speak at least six languages. None of these several masses or aggregates of mankind will bear comparison in multitude with the total of the Chinese of China proper all speaking Chinese, which cannot be less than 300 millions of souls, and may be 350 millions or even more; after deducting all those who live in the outlying regions. These Chinese maintain their old character for industry, both as regards agriculture, industrial productiveness and trade. They have full recuperative capacity for repairing losses of life and property whether from internal disturbances or from calamities such as pestilence and famine. No statistics of population are available, notwithstanding the statistical machinery which has long been supposed to exist. Still the people is believed

to be prolific, with a tendency to increase on the whole despite all losses. Every European will heartily wish them well, but he will wonder whether so vastly numerous a population as this can be held together much longer by the internal governance of an Empire which has lost all external power, all control over those foreign affairs which cannot but concern vitally the interests of its subjects. No attempt will be here made to answer this large question which cannot indeed be answered by any one. Moreover there may be doubts whether the character of the Chinese is, or can be, fully known to Europeans. For example, the character of the Natives of India may be almost fully known to many Britons. But Britain has governed them for several generations, everything relating to them has been fully disclosed, and many of their most important concerns have been dealt with by British administrators. But the events of the Sepoy Mutinies in 1857 showed that, even with all these unparalleled advantages, the British had up to that date failed to appreciate fully Native sentiment and aspiration. By this analogy it would seem vain to suppose that the British can have any complete understanding of the Chinese character as it now is at the end of the nineteenth century. They have studied the long and complex history, including all recent events; they have enquired into many customs, habits and institutions with most praiseworthy diligence. They have come in contact with the people at many points of prac-

tical dealing. They have written many books full of observation and erudition, till the works form quite a literature relating to China. But they themselves would not claim a full appreciation of the mental and moral attitude of this vast population, and of its possible movements even in the immediate future. They may have some acquaintance with, often even a painful knowledge of the official classes styled Mandarins. But they can hardly have an insight into the springs which move this civil machinery that is spread like a net encompassing the whole country. Still, there are certain propositions regarding which the authorities of to-day would mostly be agreed.

It may be apprehended that the Chinese for the most part have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. They keep their gaze ever fixed on the venerated past and never turned forwards. They retain their habits and customs, their elaborate culture, their faiths and creeds, according to the standard which has prevailed through ages. What they were in 1800 that they will be in 1900, and the intermediate events which have weakened their body politic, and almost destroyed their polity, will be found to have left their social disposition and their national temper unchanged. To them such occurrences, grave as they may be in the sight of other people, are but superficial. Happen what may in foreign affairs or in the concerns of China with foreigners, the Chinese, they probably think, will remain the same. Such is understood to be their dream from which they

must ere long be aroused, though none can tell how soon the awakening may come.

The manner in which their culture and their State education, formed and elaborated many centuries ago, has continued with little or no change, is wonderful indeed. It has raised up a class of *literati*, some employed in the public service and others not; that is, the officials who are called Mandarins and the non-officials who are styled *literati* simply. The former have actual power; the latter have influence. These seem to fill in China the place which is filled by the priesthood in many countries. They are themselves intellectual athletes within their limits. They force their mental exercises on the more intelligent portions of their countrymen. They are cramped and confined in their ideas; their knowledge relates to a bygone time, and is often quite defective for the requirements of the present. These men, scattered throughout the country, and influential everywhere, set themselves, as might be expected, resolutely against anything like a new education, and not only oppose but prevent the influx of Western knowledge. While they remain in the seat of virtual power it is hard to see how the people can learn anything that pertains to modern progress.

The slowness with which information of political events, even any kind of public news, percolates into the interior of China, has often been remarked. Things happen of the utmost moment in one part of the Empire which ought to move the other parts of

the Empire with anxiety. But they do not make this impression because they are not heard of for weeks, or months, or even years, or perhaps never become known at all. The excessive delay deadens the effect, and renders the people apathetic or unimpressible.

Among the qualities vaguely attributed to these people there will probably be patriotism; they have indeed been spoken of as intensely patriotic. But patriotism may perhaps be a term used in more senses than one. If by patriotism is meant the feeling which a German has for the fatherland, or a Frenchman for *la patrie*, or a Briton for Queen and country, then by all accounts, and to all appearances, the Chinese have it not at all. If they ever had it in former centuries under famous Chinese dynasties of pure blood, like the Sungs and the Mings, they have never evinced it in the nineteenth century. On the contrary at least two typical instances tending in an opposite direction have been mentioned in the course of this narrative. But even if the masses and the classes be wanting in what Europeans would regard as patriotism, still there do seem to be some individual Chinamen who are truly patriotic. If, however, by patriotism is meant a close adherence to long established custom, a devout regard for tradition, a sense of exclusive superiority as against all other nations, then the Chinese are indeed patriotic, and no nationality at any time or place has surpassed them in this respect.

It may be said that in so widely scattered a population as the Chinese, with so much difficulty of intercommunication, a patriotism in the European sense could hardly be expected. But in the flagrant instances of unpatriotic conduct above mentioned, distance and unacquaintance did not enter into these cases at all. On the contrary, the misconduct in each instance was on the part of one community towards a neighbouring community.

In reference to the religions, faith and practice of the Chinese, some Europeans will be enquiring what are the prospects of Christianity spreading in China. The remarkable history of the Roman Catholic Missions in previous centuries and of their shrinkage at the beginning of the nineteenth century, has been already set forth in the second Chapter of this Part. These missions have been maintained with devoted perseverance throughout this century, and will by degrees expand, very much in proportion with the several Protestant Missions, which have a much later beginning. With the fewest exceptions China was barred against the entrance of foreign Missions, Roman Catholic and Protestant alike, till 1844, when Hong Kong was ceded to England and certain Treaty Ports were opened. But it was not till a long time after this date that the Missionaries were allowed to travel or dwell beyond the Treaty Ports at their own risk; and unhappy events have often shown how great this risk actually was. The following extract from Mr. Eugene Stock's short

history of the Church Missionary Society in 1899 gives the most cheery and sanguine view of the case that can fairly be expected. He writes: "Then we go on to China. We remember how, when Victoria became Queen, the Chinese Empire was closed against all Western intruders, and how in the trading settlement at Canton alone were Morrison and his fellow-translators of the Bible able to live, And now? We sail from port to port; at each one we disembark and plunge hundreds of miles inland; and then we steam up the mighty Yang-tsze, and by-and-by reach even the far western provinces. Scarcely a province is without bands of Christian Missionaries and none without the Scripture in the vernacular; and although every province is so vast and so teeming with population that we find scores of towns and cities as yet unvisited, yet wherever the Gospel has gone we see its fruits, incongregations of Chinese believers who have had to bear, and are still bearing, reproach and often persecution for their Saviour's sake. China is not like India: we do not find the Church of England in the forefront; English non-episcopal missions, and some from America, are far stronger. Still, we gladly visit four dioceses, three of them closely associated with the Church Missionary Society; and in these we rejoice to see our brethren and sisters bravely at work. In the Fuh-Kiang and Che-Kiang Provinces especially, we journey for weeks, on foot or in sedan-chair, visiting village after village and not a few large towns,

where Chinese Christians come out to meet us with their pleasant greeting. We note particularly the love and confidence that our Missionary ladies inspire in the women, and the blessed work done by the Medical Missions. We do not forget the violent deaths that some have had to face; but we see how, since they died, the people have been more ready than ever to hear of the Lord in whose cause their lives were laid down."

It may well be believed that the Christian Chinese, who must now be numbering many tens of thousands, are sincere in their faith and good in their conduct. The educational efforts made by the Missionaries in India and the vast numbers attending their schools are not at all paralleled in China, owing doubtless to all the circumstances of the State education under the Chinese Government. Those who have a general acquaintance with the East would hope that the Chinese masses if left to themselves might be converted to Christianity without much difficulty, especially as they have no priesthood and no religious bigots worth mentioning. Nevertheless the Chinese masses are not left to themselves in this matter; for the Mandarin officials and the *literati* are against Christianity, not because of its principles, which are manifestly good, but because of its professors, who carry with them that civilisation which lets light into all the corners of China. Their hatred has sometimes been called fanatical, but the fanaticism is social and political rather than religious. No

experienced European would doubt that every European Missionary in China would at once be murdered, and every Missionary establishment razed to the ground, were it not for the fear of the European Powers on the sea-coast. Notwithstanding this fear the outrages, often murderous, on the Missionaries, women as well as men, are of chronic occurrence. Sometimes they have given to European Powers a handle, the very handle which the Chinese, if wise, should have avoided giving, for political interference. Advantage has not, however, been always taken in this way; one honourable instance to the contrary and of recent occurrence may be cited. After narrating the Ku-cheng massacre in 1895, when a Missionary, his wife, two children and their nurse, four ladies from London, and two from Australia, were killed, Mr. Eugene Stock, in his short History, writes: "A cry for vengeance arose, but not from the Missionaries or the Committee, who, while feeling bound not to interfere with the due course of justice, declined to appeal for the protection of British troops or to accept compensation from the Chinese Government. Instead of that a meeting was held in Exeter Hall (London), filled with sympathising friends, not to hear inflammatory speeches, but to praise the Lord for the dear ones departed in his faith and fear and to pray for China."

As often happens in such case, this tragedy gave a potent impulse to the Mission in the neighbourhood of Ku-cheng.

Now if the Chinese people are so good-tempered and quiet as they seem to be, with minds more open and receptive to truth from without than is usually the case with Oriental nationalities, it may well be asked how these tragedies are to be accounted for. If dates be examined and compared, it will be found that in a particular year there has been an outburst, then for a while a lull, then a recrudescence, and so forth. The events have covered fully half a century, and in the outbreaks and the peaceful intervals a sort of periodicity has been established. This consideration gives renewed interest to the question as to the causation. There is one and only one cause, namely, the enmity of the official Mandarins and the *literati*, an enmity which is as bitter as the grave. When such instigators are in movement, there are always ruffians among the social dregs in China as in other countries who will fulfil the deadly behests. For every group of outrages let the political circumstances of that time be regarded and the same with the intervals of quiet. It will be found that these circumstances, from the Mandarins' point of view, favoured the commission of violence or else pointed to the expediency of keeping the peace. It is morally certain that every Missionary, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, who has within the latter half of the nineteenth century been either maltreated or killed might have been kept in safety or comfort had the local Mandarins willed it. Indeed he would never have been attacked at all if the Man-

darins had not directly or indirectly ordered the proceedings.

Respecting the condition of China to-day, the book by Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, bearing the ominous title of *The Break-up of China*, claims prominent notice. He was deputed by the Associated Chambers of Commerce in England in 1898 to enquire into the question "whether the organisation of the Chinese civil and military administration is sufficiently complete to insure adequate protection to commercial ventures," and also "into any other subjects which could be of interest and advantage to the Associated Chambers." Accordingly he visited during the autumn of 1898 and the winter of 1898-99 all the European trading communities of China, and conversed with many of the principal people, political, military and naval, of the Chinese Empire, besides many commercial Chinese. In the spring of 1899 his Report was submitted to the Associated Chambers in London, and was soon afterwards published in the shape of the book above mentioned. This book, then, contains, besides the remarkably well-informed opinions of the writer, a mass of the best and latest evidence regarding the condition of China in 1899. Some brief summary at least of this evidence, then, must here be made. The maintenance of the Chinese Empire in anything like imperial integrity and dignity, being probably abandoned as impossible, it may yet be possible to hold the fabric together for a while, so that some policy,