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A VISIT TO THE INSURGENT CHIEF AT SOOCHOW.

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 (Ping wang), they reached the 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 Hongkong to join the rebellion, they stated that he is now second in command, with the title of Kan 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 Hongkong, 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 Tai ping 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 Tai pings 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 Hangeheu, 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 Tan 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 the 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 eight, 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 gong-beating 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 lanthorns 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, Hū, 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 Hongkong, 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 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 an offered present 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 Shanghai, 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

* Rev. I. J. Roberts. T'ai-p'ing-wang requested when the army left Nanking that information might be sought respecting this missionary.

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 Kiangsu, Sü-yeu-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 Shanghai, the army was proceeding along the towing path. They walk or ride in single file, and several boats containing from 20 to 30 men, were also with them. We had heard that a large force was about to arrive from C'hang-cheu, *en route* to Nantsin and Huchou. 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 those 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 use-

ful 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 lantern and a long pike, while a very few have matchlocks. This 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 the 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 tens, 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-wei, 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 in Chehkiang, we cannot expect that they will for a considerable time cease to be our neighbours, even should the chances 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 Manchús, and the conquest of the empire. In opposition to the pantheistic notions of the philosophers of the Súng 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 provi-

dence. 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 error. 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 Húng 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 interests of trade. The opening up 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 imperialists 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 in this there has been much exaggeration and misrepresentation. 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 Súng 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 to be 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 general moral character, we are scarcely able to give an opinion. Probably, taking them *en masse*, they are not much superior to their fellow countrymen in this respect. Though the use of opium is legally forbidden, yet we know that it is largely consumed by them. Both the common soldiers and many of the chiefs partake of it freely. We were grieved to hear one of the chiefs (though not himself an opium smoker) mentioning opium first in the list of articles he would like to be supplied with. Continual applications were made for opium and fire arms. It cannot be reasonably expected that, the moral character of men placed in such circumstances would be very high.

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 breast 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 Sî-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 a 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.

FURTHER NOTES ON THE INSURGENTS.

THE iconoclastic tendencies of the T'ai P'ings are still in full vigour. Nowhere, apparently, do they leave the idols untouched. At Bingbong, near the residence of the chief in command, a temple was noticed which has been entirely cleared of its images. A table is placed instead of the incense-stand, and on it

are three tea-cups covered. The Insurgents said that they were intended for use in offerings to the Heavenly Father. When asked what else they present, the reply was, that all articles of food are made use of. When the inquiry was made, what was the object of these sacrifices? They answered to express reverence for God.

In other temples the idols are simply mutilated or destroyed, without being removed. It is common to see the nose, chin, and hands cut off. The floors of these buildings are bestrewn with the relics of helpless gods, Buddhist and Taoist, male and female. Some are cast into the canals, and are found floating down the stream mingled with the debris of rifled houses, and the remains of the dead.

They do nothing to bury the dead. At Soochow some remarks were made to the chiefs on the danger that must arise from this neglect. They said it was an employment in which their "young brethren" were excessively reluctant to engage. It must be supposed that the active life of the insurgents helps to keep them in health, but the atmosphere they breathe, as well as the water they drink, cannot but be exceedingly injurious.

It was pleasant to see little boats with a flag marked Chung shan kung t'ang, passing along some parts of the canal to carry away floating bodies for interment. They are manned by the villagers, who are paid for this act of charity by the native institution named on the flag, "The public hall for all the virtues." Those engaged in such a benevolent occupation are not of course assaulted or impeded by the T'ai P'ings when they pass. Yet they do not venture to towns where the rebels are posted in force.

The Grand Canal, though completely in the possession of the rebels, is crossed at many points by the boats of the country people engaged in trade or in removing families and furniture. Some villages on its banks are uninjured. At Pa-ch'ih, to the north of Bingbong, the temple only has been attacked. The houses on the other side have not been touched. On the walls of the temple, was a proclamation exhorting the inhabitants to desert bad superstition, and

worship the Heavenly Father, also to bring tribute to the ruler of the new dynasty. If they act in this way they will be well treated, otherwise they must expect punishment. They sometimes send forward a single long-haired messenger with a proclamation to post at towns a few miles distant, knowing that the prevailing terror which has seized on the people will be his protection. The T'ai P'ings are a fearless race. One, two, or three, will travel for several miles alone, from one rendezvous to another, and this with long hair. When shaven they come to Shanghai and other public places, returning when their business is accomplished. Rebels of ten years' standing may be met with whose hair is short, through their having been absent recently in disguise. They all wear queues at present pinned on the crown of the head, with the front hair combed back to plait with the queue. After the new dynasty is inaugurated, a change is to be made in this respect.

Among their adherents, perhaps the Canton men are the most sensible of the value of foreign trade, but they are less impregnated with the religious views of T'ien wang. Both the religious earnestness of the Kwang-si men, and the instinct for commerce of their companions from Canton will, it is to be hoped, promote friendliness to foreign nations.

They speak confidently of the existence and good health of their celebrated chief T'ai P'ing Wang, more commonly known among them as Tien Wang, the name given long ago to the Cheu emperors. It is remarkable that there should have been any doubt of his existence. The insurgents at Bingbong speak of having seen him personally on several occasions. He appears in public about once or twice in a month and performs a special act of worship to the Heavenly Father. Probably he is in better health now than formerly. His eldest son, a youth of fifteen, already writes well-composed public documents. The son of the Eastern King, who died several years since, is eighteen, and will assume his father's rank. The Western king has also a successor, a nephew of the same name. Their usual name for Nanking is T'ien-king, *heavenly capital*, for their dynasty T'ien-c'hau,

heavenly dynasty, and for themselves, "brethren," "old and new," or T'ien-ping, heavenly soldiers. That Hung-sieu t'siuen should have lived through all the vicissitudes of the last ten years, and still continue to be the real head of the revolutionary movement is a notable fact. He is an extraordinary man, one of those men whose career is marked out by a superior destiny, and who usually achieve that which they undertake. Who will venture to predict what he will not yet accomplish? The return of Hung-jen, his pious and amiable relative (now the "shield king" Kan-wang,) after years spent under missionary teaching,* to impart as we may hope clear and scriptural views on christianity to T'ien-wang and his court, is another circumstance full of promise. It is fervently to be desired that he will not be prevented from effecting a pre-eminently useful work by becoming intoxicated with the giddy dignity to which he has been raised. †

Comparing the present religious state of the revolutionists with what they were at Nanking and Chen-kiang eight years ago, there appears to be little difference. They have free prayer on week-days, and they burn a written prayer on the Sabbath, something after the mode adopted by the Confucianists at the spring and autumn sacrifices. They have a solemn act of worship at midnight, when offerings are presented to the Heavenly Father. The subjects of their prayers are, in the case of those who possess a coarser mould of mind, victory in battle, and the speedy subjugation of "the hills and rivers." The more thoughtful pray for forgiveness of sin, and the salvation of the soul. They do not read much. What they know they learn by rote. Books would be an encumbrance in travelling, proceeding as they do from one city to another on horseback or on foot. At Soochow they

stated, that they were expecting books in a few days from Nanking. They have now, they said, upwards of fifty authorized works. In their almanac for 1858 only twenty-four are mentioned. Probably then many new books have been published since the Kan-wang arrived.

Sympathy with the religious views of the insurgents, so far as they agree with scripture, does not involve an approval of plunder and bloodshed. There are doubtless many among them who are no better than robbers. Their actions prove them to be so. But such an appellation ought not to be applied to the leading men and the better class among them. The people make a clear distinction between the "true long-haired men," and those who have joined them to enrich themselves by rapine. They are often heard saying to one another that the true long-haired men would not be guilty of such and such crimes which have occurred within their knowledge. The imperialists are wrong in calling the leaders of the insurrection "thieves," and the T'ai-p'ings are wrong in denominating the imperialist soldiers "demons and imps." Too many gross crimes have in all ages been committed by those who made profession of virtue and piety, for us to wonder that when the Kwangsi men had embarked in this struggle, a crowd of hypocritical and unprincipled men should soon have joined their ranks. These men will oppress the people whenever they have opportunity. It is they, we believe, that kill well-dressed persons, who plead that they have no silver, and ill-treat the women of the towns they take. The impression among the people is that when leaders of rank arrive at newly captured places these outrages are prevented, and their commission is punished with death. Should they establish their dynasty there can be no doubt that they would set on foot a far more rigid and vigorous morality than that to which the Chinese have long been accustomed. Our knowledge of their past history, and of their books, requires that we should expect this. But at present they are encumbered with a motley multitude of men, who have nothing better than the common Chinese conscience, with the slightest possible knowledge of the T'ai P'ing religion,

* Hung-jen parted from Sieu-tsiuen in 1851, was baptized by Rev. Theodore Hamberg at Hongkong, in November 1853, with three of his companions from the cradle of the T'ai P'ing movement, left Shanghai in the spring of 1855, and reached Nanking in the summer of 1858 from Canton.

† He is styled Kien-ts'ien-sui "nine thousand years." The Chung-wang, at Soochow is "six thousand years." Till recently he was "four thousand years." The address "ten thousand years" is limited to the T'ien-wang.

system. A large number of these have joined them by compulsion, and are therefore destitute of the principles which animate those who compose the original nucleus of the movement.

J. E.

THE policy which we should adopt in reference to this movement, is strict neutrality. To oppose it, would be censurable in principle, subversive of the kindly feeling which the leaders of it cherish towards foreigners, and pernicious to the best interests of trade. They only ask to be left alone to fight their own battle; and to allow them this, is the least thing we can do. They don't seek our assistance. They feel perfect confidence in themselves. The demolition of idolatry, and the downfall of the Tartar dynasty within the boundaries of the eighteen provinces, they regard as unalterably fixed by an inviolable decree. And further, they have a deep and unmistakable conviction, that they are the instruments divinely appointed to secure this end, and that time is all they need to accomplish their task *single-handed*. They are now, not only in possession of some of the fairest portions of this empire; but also, are looking forward with glowing anticipation to many a speedy and brilliant victory. Should they be able to take Hangchow and Chinkiang (as they hope to do shortly) and hold what they have in their possession, then, the day is not far distant, when our safety in travelling, for both Missionary and Commercial purposes, together with the very existence of one of the most important branches of trade, will depend upon them. They are now our friends, and nothing could justify the step that would convert them into our foes. We have nothing to do with the question—whether the movement is right or wrong. The Chinese must decide this for themselves. Revolutions have been common in China, and more than one of the revolutionary chiefs have been canonized as Saints. Should the present chief succeed in his attempt to establish a native dynasty, based upon righteous principles, his name, though now greatly maligned, will be transmitted to posterity with applause, and he himself will be ranked among the greatest of

China's sons. The interests of religion, commerce, and civilization, point out *neutrality* as the only legitimate ground for western nations to take. As Christians let us watch this struggle intelligently, wait patiently the evolution of events, and pray that he who is the God of battles as well as the God of peace, would graciously bring harmony out of the present discord, and order out of the present confusion.

G. J.

THE INSURGENTS.

To the Editor of the

NORTH-CHINA HERALD.

SIR,—A thorough acquaintance with the character of this people among whom we live, is highly important. Our feelings and actions correspond to, and are shaped by, our ideas. We feel as we think, and act as we feel. In the present crisis of this Empire, it is of the last moment that all our actions be under the guidance of an enlightened and unbiased judgment. An ill-judged act on the part of the representatives of foreign powers in China, would be fraught with incalculable mischief to foreign as well as native interests. The struggle which has been going on in the heart of this country for the last ten years, and is now assuming such gigantic proportions, is strictly one of principles. The Insurgent chief has fixed and definite aims, which are pursued with supreme earnestness. A knowledge of these principles, aims, and the means employed, are absolutely necessary to help us in forming a right estimate of the whole movement, and in directing our conduct in respect to it. Much has been done by Dr. Medhurst, Mr. Meadows, and others, towards enlightening the public on these points, for which, they deserve our most hearty thanks. Much, however, remains to be done, ere a correct opinion can be formed on many very important points; hence the duty of those who may have had opportunities to obtain new facts, and receive correct impressions, to make such facts and impressions known. We make no pretensions to infallibility in anything we may have to say in respect to the Insurgents. Probably, other facts, of which we are ignorant, were they made known unto us, would greatly modify our judgment. Neither a careful reading of their books, nor a hasty visit to their camp, is sufficient to enable one to form such a clear and correct judgment, as would justify the least dogmatism in the statement of opinion. A residence of a month in the Heavenly Capital (Nanking), where their religious, political, and social machinery is in full operation, seems to be highly desirable. What we are about to communicate is based upon our own limited experience, illumined by the pages of the principal works of the Insurgents that have reached us.

The most important facts ascertained by the parties who have recently visited the rebel territory are the following:—Húng Siú-tsien is

still living—Húng Jen has arrived safely at Nanking, and has been promoted to the rank of King—The establishment of the Christian religion throughout the Empire, continues to be one of their principal objects—They are well disposed towards foreigners, and are apparently anxious to cultivate friendship with them. For some years a report has been current that the insurgent chief is dead, which has been generally believed in. We hardly know how it could have sprung up, as there does not seem to be the slightest foundation for it in fact. We put the question to several of the chiefs, who, without a single exception, told us that he is not only living, but moreover, *hale and stout*. His eldest son is spoken of as being very promising. A servant of one of the chiefs at Ping-Bong told us, that he had seen the Heavenly King a short time before they left Nanking. While we were waiting for the King at Sú-cheu, the prime minister came in for the express purpose of making enquiries about The Rev. Mr. Roberts (the Heavenly King's old teacher), stating at the same time that the Heavenly King was anxious to learn of his welfare. But the most convincing proof, is the promotion of Húng Jen to the rank of King. Had he been dead, it is not at all probable that this man would have been promoted immediately to the very highest position. This proves that Húng Siú-tsüen still lives and reigns. But this is an important fact. No one can read the early history of this movement, without feeling that this man, whatever may have been his defects, was truly earnest and deeply conscientious. The narrative of his own conversion, of his efforts to convert his relatives, of his evangelistic labours in Kwang-si, and of his attempts, in spite of dangers and difficulties, to carry the gospel among the independent tribes of Miao-tsi, is thrilling with the deepest interest. The books written by himself before and after the capture of Nanking, all go to show that, at the time they were issued, he continued to hold those truths precious, for the dissemination of which, he had laboured so hard in the days of his trials. The religious element will not perish as long as this man stands at the head of the movement; we may reasonably suppose that it will continue to take a deeper root.

The advent of Húng Jen is also fraught with interest. He was one of Húng Siú-tsüen's first converts. According to his own account, as given by Mr. Hamberg, Fung Yun-san (afterwards called the Southern King) and himself were baptized by Siú-tsüen in a school where Fung Yun-san was teacher; but afterwards, all three went down to a rivulet in the neighbourhood to have a complete cleansing. After this Húng Jen was employed in various ways—sometimes in teaching a small school of his own, and sometimes in travelling about with Siú-tsüen and Yun-san, in preaching the gospel, as they understood it. At the time of the outbreak of the revolution, he was absent. He made several unsuccessful attempts to rejoin his old friends. At length, after passing through many a scene of trial and danger, he arrived at Hongkong in the end of April 1852. Here he met Mr Hamberg, who writing of him says—"I was astonished to hear a person from the interior of China speak with such interest of, and display so much acquaintance with, the

Christian religion." About the end of 1853 he visited Mr. Hamberg again, and was shortly afterwards baptized by him. "Húng Jun," writes Mr. Hamberg, "with three of his friends from Clear-far, have since been baptized, and are still studying the Holy Scriptures, with the hope in the providence of God, hereafter to be enabled to instruct their countrymen in the way of salvation." From the time of his baptism till about two years ago, he was employed to a certain extent as a native evangelist. His knowledge of Christianity, foreigners, and foreign affairs, must be far more extensive and correct, than that of his august relative. His promotion shows, that he is regarded by the latter with respect and affection. His position will enable him to do something towards correcting his errors; and of shedding a salutary christian influence on many around him. We were told by Liú, one of the chiefs at Sú-cheu, that several books have recently been published. We shall, possibly, find, that some of these evince a deeper insight into, and a more comprehensive view of, Christian truth.

It is not necessary to repeat what we have already stated respecting the religion of the Insurgents. None, who are at all acquainted with the facts of the case, will deny that at *one time*, the religious element was very strong in the movement. There are not a few, however, who seem to think that it has perished long ere this. Others, while they allow that it continues to exist, denounce it as altogether spurious, and unworthy of the respect and sympathy of orthodox Christians. Now, though these errors are neither few nor small, still there are some points of vital importance, which they understand clearly and cherish heartily—points, which form the very basis of our religion, and without which, Christianity itself would be null. To Christianity alone are they indebted for the correct idea they have of God, his unity, personality, eternity, government,—of universal depravity,—of the necessity of divine power in the work of regeneration,—of sin as transgression of the law of a living God and a loving Father,—of Christ as the Saviour of the world from sin and Hell,—of forgiveness through the merits of Christ,—and of the future state being one of rewards and punishments. Men who print such sentiments as the following have surely some claim to respect and sympathy. "Who has ever lived in this world without offending against the commands of Heaven? but until this time no one has known how to obtain deliverance from sin: now, however, the Great God has made gracious communication to man, and from henceforth whoever repents of his sins in the presence of the great God, and avoids worshipping depraved spirits, practising perverse things, or transgressing the divine commands, may ascend to heaven and enjoy happiness, for thousands and myriads of years, in pleasure and delight, with dignity and honour; world without end." Again, "I also earnestly pray thee, the great God our heavenly Father constantly to bestow on me thy Holy Spirit, and change my wicked heart; never more allow me to be deceived by malignant demons, but perpetually regarding me with favour, for ever deliver me from the evil one; and every day bestowing upon me food and clothing, exempt me

from calamity and woe, granting me tranquillity in the present world, and the enjoyment of endless happiness in heaven. Through the merits of our saviour and heavenly brother the Lord Jesus, who redeemed us from sin." Once more, "But the great God, out of pity to mankind, sent his first-born son, to come down into the world. His name is Jesus, the Lord and Saviour of men, who redeems them from sin, by the endurance of extreme misery. Upon the cross, they nailed his body, where he shed his precious blood to save all mankind. Three days after his death, he rose from the dead, and during forty days, he discoursed on heavenly things. When he was about to ascend, he commanded his disciples to communicate his Gospel and proclaim his revealed will. Those who believe will be saved, and ascend up to heaven; but those who do not believe, will be the first to be condemned."

The truths contained in the above passages seem quite familiar to the chiefs at least, as in answer to our questions, we have heard them repeatedly. Is it not something worth thanking God for, that there is a large body of earnest men in the very heart of this country, who believe in and teach these vital truths? It must be remembered that Christianity is the weakness as well as the strength of their cause. From it they have been hitherto deriving their inspiration, and thus for it has been an element of strength. But, on the other hand, the religious aspect of the movement, is the most repulsive to the proud, self-righteous Confucianist, the interested priesthood, and the superstitious multitude. Doubtless the cause would be far more popular were religion discarded altogether. Ignore or suspend your religious principles; such is the suggestion of worldly policy. They have not listened to such specious arguments; but have been going on demolishing the idols, and calling upon the people to repent and believe, in spite of the imprecations of the priests, and the rage of the people. What but strong faith in the *unseen* could have induced them to act so? The chiefs are either sincere or mad; because their policy is the very reverse of that which human wisdom would dictate. The fact that they have not renounced Christianity altogether is, to our mind, a very strong proof that they have a great deal of it.

Then, touching the errors of the insurgents, we find that, on closer examination, many of them assume a much milder form. Far be it from us to say a word which would lead any one to suppose that we regard their real errors lightly. On the contrary, we deem correct views on those points of vital importance. We simply state that, some of the errors into which they have fallen, are not so aggravated as has been supposed by many; and that real ignorance, and not wilful blindness or something worse, is the source whence they have sprung. The chief has been charged with blasphemy, for speaking of himself as the son of God, and the second brother of Jesus. Now, if his notions of the person of Christ are correct, his pretensions are decidedly blasphemous—he being man making himself God. But are they correct on this point? It strikes us they are not. In "The imperial declaration of T'ai P'ing" we read,—“Even the Saviour Jesus, the first-born,

son of God, is only called Our Lord. In heaven, above and earth beneath, as well as among men, none can be considered greater than Jesus; and yet Jesus was not called God 帝 Te; who then

is he that dares to assume the designation of God 帝 Te." Again, in "The Book of Celestial Decrees, and Declarations of the Imperial Will" we read,—“Our Heavenly Father, the Great God and Supreme Lord, is one true God; besides our heavenly Father, the great God and supreme Lord, there is no spirit. There is not an individual who is not produced and nourished by him. He is *Shang*, Supreme. He is *Te*, Ruler. Besides the great God, our Heavenly Father and Supreme Lord, there is no one who can be called *Shang*, and no one who can be called *Te*." These two passages are conclusive on the point; and nothing occurred during our intercourse with them, to lead us to form a different opinion. This is a grievous error, but it is one that may be corrected; and I trust will be, when a clearer light dawns upon the mind of the Chief. Christ is, in his view, the greatest of God's messengers, and as such, the Son of God. He himself is inferior only to Christ as a messenger from God, and as such styles himself the brother of Christ, and God's son. Thus, he does not make himself God—on the contrary, he denies it in more passages than one; he simply fails to understand the true and exalted character of Christ.

As to the Holy Spirit it is doubtful whether the insurgents have any idea of his personality. It is true that in the doxology, distinct praise is ascribed to each of the three persons in the Trinity.*

But the doxology is evidently of Christian origin—the production of some foreign missionary, and not understood by them. Though they pray for the Holy Spirit, it does not seem that they mean anything further by it, than the bestowment of divine and spiritual influences by the Father. In their most popular books no distinct mention is made of the Holy Spirit and his office, while much is said about the attributes of the Father, and the works of Christ. At Ping Bong, as well as other places, we made enquiries on this point, and found, that, though the chiefs could speak eloquently of the Heavenly Father and the Heavenly Elder Brother, they had little or nothing to say of the Holy Spirit. The scriptural doctrine of the Spirit they do not understand. It would be wrong to say that they deny it.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper they do not seem to observe. We made several enquiries on this point; but could not learn that the ordinance is even known among them. When we mentioned the wine as one of the elements in the ordinance, they looked somewhat surprised, and said that wine is not used by them in any of their religious rites. Dr. Medhurst, writing on this

* We praise God, our holy and Heavenly Father.

We praise Jesus, the holy Lord and Saviour of the world.

We praise the Holy Spirit, the Sacred Intelligence.

We praise the three persons, who united constitute one true God.

point, says,—“There does not appear to be the slightest reference to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper in any of the insurgents' books.”

Regarding the heart as the seat of moral depravity, they perform the rite of baptism by washing the chest. After baptism, the neophyte is lead to worship the Heavenly Father. Now he is looked upon as having passed from the kingdom of Satan and the Manchús, to that of Christ and Tai-ping-wang, and is called “brother.” The ceremony, we were told, is not repeated.

Much has been said about their heathenish practices in presenting animals, tea, and rice, as offerings to God. In “The Book of Religious Precepts of the T'ai-Ping Dynasty” we read that “On occasions of birth-days, thanksgiving of women after child-birth, bringing home a wife, or marrying out a daughter, with all such fortunate occurrences, presentations of animals, wine,† tea, and rice should be offered to the Great God accompanied by the following prayer.” Dr. Taylor, who visited the Insurgents many years ago at Chung Kiang-fú, saw tables placed with bowls of various kinds of food, as offerings to the Supreme Being; among which were three bowls of tea, one for each person of the Trinity. In a temple at Ping Bong, which had been cleared of all its idols, we saw *three* cups of tea, but were not told that they were intended for each person of the Trinity. It is difficult to say what are the precise ideas they attach to these rites and ceremonies. Probably, the articles are intended *principally* if not exclusively, as thanks-offerings. As they are offerings to the true God, they cannot be called exactly *heathenish*. We would rather call them Jewish than pagan, as doubtless they would take them from the former rather than from the latter. Their utter abhorrence of idolatry and all that pertains to it, would effectually keep them from borrowing anything directly from it. These “car-

nal” rites, as well as the burning of written prayers, spring from an imperfect acquaintance with the *spiritual* nature of Christianity.

The most objectionable feature in the whole movement, is the pretensions of certain parties to divine inspiration, and heavenly visions. Nothing can be more disgusting than the lengthened accounts given of the descent of the “Heavenly Father” on various occasions. The abominable twaddle they put in the mouth of the infinite God, is almost blasphemous. In this we discover not ignorance, but the very blackest passions of our corrupt nature manifesting themselves. But we must remember that *Yang*, the eastern Prince, had the principal hand in these extravagancies; and that he has been dead for some time. We trust that this, the most hideous feature of their cause, has passed away with him. Though the impression left upon our minds by the conversation we had with one of the chiefs is, that Hung siú-tüen is regarded by them as holding a very close and sacred communion with heaven; still nothing was said to lead us to suppose, that he is now making any pretensions to visions and special inspiration. Liú, one of the chiefs at Su Cheu, spoke of his visions; but those were the visions of 1837 and 1848, when the mysteries of heaven were revealed to him, and authority given him by the heavenly Father to reform the world. The nature of these visions we are at a loss to divine. Dr. Medhurst supposed they were the result of a very heated imagination, which the perilous circumstances in which he was placed tended in no small degree to influence.

Such then are our *present* impressions of this revolution in a religious point of view. Its defects and errors are numerous and glaring. The truths, however, which the Insurgents understand and cherish, are neither few nor unimportant. May the former perish for ever, and the latter continue to live and give life.

G. J.

† We were told that this article is never used now in any of their religious rites.

