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Contributors

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THE
HISTORY OF CHINA.



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[Frontispiece, Vol. I.]

C. G. Gordon.

Major-General Charles G. Gordon, R.E., C.B.

THE
HISTORY OF CHINA.

BY

DEMETRIUS CHARLES BOULGER,

AUTHOR OF

"THE LIFE OF GORDON," "THE LIFE OF SIR STAMFORD RAFFLES," ETC. ETC.

NEW AND REVISED EDITION, WITH PORTRAITS
AND MAPS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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O. Top. Room

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PREFACE.

FOURTEEN years have elapsed since the publication of the third and concluding volume of this History. In that period the subject of the Chinese Empire and people has become of greater interest and more direct moment, not only to the English reader, but to the world.

It is gratifying to feel that the anticipations expressed on this head in the earlier work have been realized within so brief a period, while the more compact and convenient form in which the present revised edition makes its appearance will perhaps bring this full record of a most ancient and still-existing Empire within the reach of all who are concerned in the Far East.

DEMETRIUS C. BOULGER.

April 27, 1898.

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THE HISTORY OF CHINA.

CHAPTER I.

THE EARLY AGES.

THE origin of all great peoples and empires is to be discovered amid the mists of a more or less remote antiquity, made tangible alone for us by the preservation of myths and legends, which afford in their similarity a proof of the affinity of all the races on the earth. The Chinese, like the Jews and the ancient Egyptians alone, claim to trace back their national existence to a period centuries before Solomon erected his Temple, or Homer collected the ballads relating to the Trojan War, and turned them into his immortal epic. From a date anterior to that accepted for the occurrence of the Flood of Noah, the people of China possess a history which preserves the names of kings and conquerors, and describes remarkable events with an appearance of exactitude that would almost compel credence. In comparison with their institutions those of Ancient Egypt and Assyria have only moderate claims to antiquity, and the states of Greece and Rome were but the creation of yesterday. The observer might well stand aghast if he were called upon to follow the exact details in the history of a people and an empire, which were great and definite in form nearly five thousand years ago. It would be not less weak than impossible to demand of the human faculty so severe a strain. The subject would soon become monotonous, as each succeeding cycle of prosperity and military vigour or of depression and decay, following the other with unvarying regularity, was described. But the extreme age of the institutions is one key to the history of the Empire, and the

student, fully impregnated with the spirit of that fact, will have done much towards mastering the rest of the subject. To such a one the later course of the history will present few difficulties. It will be almost as an open book.

If the reader wishes to know what conception Chinese historians had of their duties, the following story will throw some light upon the subject:—"In the reign of the Emperor Ling Wang of the Chow dynasty, B.C. 548, Changkong, Prince of Tsi, became enamoured of the wife of Tsouichow, a general, who resented the affront and killed the prince. The historians attached to the household of the prince recorded the facts, and named Tsouichow as the murderer. On learning this the general caused the principal historian to be arrested and slain, and appointed another in his place. But as soon as the new historian entered upon his office he recorded the exact facts of the whole occurrence, including the death of his predecessor and the cause of his death. Tsouichow was so much enraged at this that he ordered all the members of the Tribunal of History to be executed. But at once the whole literary class in the principality of Tsi set to work exposing and denouncing the conduct of Tsouichow, who soon perceived that his wiser plan would be to reconstitute the Tribunal and to allow it to follow its own devices." What could be finer, too, than the following reply, given fifteen centuries later, by the President of the Tribunal of History of the Empire to the Tang Emperor Taitsong, who asked if he might be permitted to see what was written about himself in the State memoirs? "Prince," said the President, "the Historians of the Tribunal write down the good and the bad actions of princes, their praiseworthy and also their reprehensible words, and everything that they have done, good or bad, in their administration. We are exact and irreproachable on this point, and none of us dare be wanting in this respect. This impartial severity ought to be the essential attribute of history, if it is wished that she should be a curb upon princes and the great, and that she should prevent them committing faults. But I do not know that any Emperor up to the present has ever seen what was written about him." To this the Emperor said, "But supposing I did nothing

good, or that I happened to commit some bad action, is it you, President, who would write it down?" "Prince, I should be overwhelmed with grief; but, being entrusted with a charge so important as that of presiding over the Tribunal of the Empire, could I dare to be wanting in my duty?" These two stories may suffice to show the spirit in which the earlier Chinese historians undertook their work.

The earliest ancestors of the Chinese are supposed to have been a nomad people in the province of Shensi. Among these there appeared several leaders, endowed with high abilities and aspirations, who induced their kinsmen to settle in villages, and to follow the pursuits of trade and agriculture. The germ of the Chinese race and government was, we may assume, to be found among these rude tribes wandering over the province of Shensi. Among them, increasing both in numbers and in power, the necessities of the government of a community produced several rulers, whose lineaments the Chinese historians have depicted for us as being similar to those of animals and other unnatural combinations, until at last there came Fohi, the first great Chinese Emperor. He also to a great extent belongs to the mythical period, being represented as having the body of a dragon and the head of an ox. Still Confucius in his history accepted him as one of the early rulers of the country, and he is generally credited with having instituted the rite of marriage, and numerous other social and moral reforms. His reign (B.C. 2953-2838 ?) is described as having been a succession of benefits to the people. Among his chief exploits may be mentioned the fact that he carried his influence to the Eastern Sea, and he selected as his capital the town of Chintou, which is identified with the modern Chinchow in Honan. To him succeeded Chinnong, who carried on the great work Fohi had commenced, but in a few years he changed the capital from Chintou to Kiofoo, a town in Shantung. According to Mailla, he was succeeded by the celebrated Hwangti, according to other authorities, by several rulers whose names have been almost forgotten; but in any case it is incontestable that the individuality of Hwangti is much more tangible than that of any of his predecessors.

Hwangti was no sooner raised to the supreme place than he was called upon to compete with several rivals. He triumphed over them in battle, and rendered his success the more decisive by the remarkable moderation he evinced when the contest had been concluded in his favour. Recognizing with rare foresight that a beneficent prince has no public enemy among his own people, he carried on his wars not with the misled soldiers, but with their leaders, inspired either by envy at his success, or by the ambition to emulate it. In one of these wars he made prisoner the chief among his adversaries, as well as a large portion of his army. He disarmed the latter, and leading his rival to the top of a hill in full view of his own and the defeated army, executed him with his own hand. That act consolidated the authority of Hwangti, and restored peace and tranquillity to the Empire. Having accomplished the first portion of his task, he devoted his attention in the next place to the reform of the internal administration. He divided his territory into ten provinces, or *Chow*, each of which was subdivided into ten departments, or *Tse*, and these again into ten districts, or *Tou*, each of which contained ten towns, or *Ye*. He rearranged the weights and measures also on the decimal system, and the reforms attributed to him still form part of the existing order of things in China. It is unnecessary to mention all the inventions with which this great monarch has been credited by his grateful countrymen. Prominent among them was the regulation of the calendar—the Chinese dividing the lapse of time into cycles of sixty years ; and the first of these commences from a date that corresponds with the year 2637 before our era. One of Hwangti's principal objects was the promotion of commerce, and, for that purpose, he constructed roads and built vessels to navigate the great rivers and the open sea. His fame was spread throughout Asia, and embassies visited his court, whilst artificers and skilled workmen came from foreign lands to settle within his borders. The extent of the dominions of this ruler may be taken to have been from the vicinity of Shachow on the west to the sea on the east, and from Pechihli on the north to the river Yangtse-kiang on the south. Regarded as the founder of a great Empire Hwangti

appears, even at this interval of time, to have been worthy of the position accorded him ; and to his inspiration and example much of the subsequent greatness of China may be attributed. It is not difficult, therefore, to understand that Chinese annalists declare that no reign has been either more glorious or more auspicious than his, and that he was in every way worthy of the assumption of the imperial and semi-deified title of *Ti*,* or Emperor.

The sceptre of Hwangti passed to his son Chaohow, who reigned long and peaceably, but who died without having acquired much glory. The one achievement of his life was the division of the officials and public administrators into classes, by means of distinctive dresses or uniforms—a task which, if not of the most distinguished, had its difficulties, and required a man of taste. On Chaohow's death his nephew Chwenhio became Emperor. He extended the Empire to the frontiers of Tonquin on the south and of Manchuria on the north, and earned “the glorious title of restorer or even founder of true astronomy.” His descendants continued to possess the imperial dignity, and his great-grandson Yao was a ruler of striking ability and considerable reputation. To him the Chinese still look back with veneration, and it is by comparison with his conduct that the native historians often gauge the capacity of his successors. The most extraordinary occurrence of his reign was the overflowing of the Hoangho, which flooded a large extent of country, and caused enormous damage.† The best years of Yao's life were spent in coping with this danger, and in repairing the mischief that had been wrought by it. In this he was only partially successful. His idea of his duty towards his subjects was based upon a high standard ; and he always acted on the principle that what he wanted done well he should do himself. He is reported to have often said, “Are the people cold? then it is I who am the cause. Are they hungry? it is my fault. Do they

* Before his reign the sovereigns of China were called Wangs, or kings. The name of the King of Heaven, or God, was Changti, Supreme Emperor, or sovereign. Hwangti means the Yellow Emperor.

† By some this was considered identical with the flood of Noah. Excellent reasons exist for disbelieving this assertion.

commit any crime? I ought to consider myself the culprit." It is not very surprising to find that the people mourned for such a ruler after his death during three years, and that they lamented his loss as "children do that of their father or mother."

Another great and wise ruler followed the Emperor Yao. His name was Chun, and for twenty-eight years previous to his accession he had been associated with the Emperor Yao in the administration of the state. Of comparatively humble origin Chun was the architect of his own fortunes. His zeal, assiduity, and integrity in the public service attracted the notice of the Emperor Yao, who had long been seeking a man capable of aiding him in the task of ruling the vast territories under his sway, and one worthy also of succeeding him in the supreme authority. Chun's excellent conduct in the offices entrusted to him pointed him out as the man for the occasion, and the result amply justified the selection. At first Chun wished Yao's son, Tanchu, to be chosen Emperor, and retired to his country residence to avoid the importunities of his admirers. But the notables of the realm saw that Chun was the fittest man for the office, and they refused to make the interests of the Empire subservient to the personal feelings of a family. Chun was proclaimed Emperor; but also feeling the weight of ruling so large a country more than one man could bear, he selected Yu, the Minister of Public Works, to help him in the task. Yu became associated with Chun in the same manner as the latter had been with Yao; and the glory of the period when the nation was ruled by this triumvirate has been dwelt upon in fervid language by the Chinese historians. In many respects the patriarchal sway of those remote rulers represents the brightest and the most prosperous age in the whole history of the Empire.

It is not surprising to find that the basis on which the authority of these Emperors rested was implicit obedience to the law. "A prince who wishes to fulfil his obligations, and to long preserve his people in the ways of peace, ought to watch without ceasing that the laws are observed with exactitude." That sentence forms the keynote of the policy of these rulers, and the wise princes who came after them have

never hesitated to adopt it for themselves. When Chun died, in the year B.C. 2208, Yu, after some hesitation, allowed himself to be proclaimed Emperor. His reign was brief, as he ruled alone for no more than seven years. It may be stated that one of the last of his public acts was to denounce the inventor of an intoxicating drink extracted from rice as an enemy to the state. With prophetic sight he exclaimed on tasting it, "Ah, how many evils this drink will, I foresee, cause China! Let the man who invented it be exiled beyond our frontier, and let him never be permitted to return." With Yu's death this prosperous period reached its close.

It is impossible to pass on from this period without quoting the following remarkable passage from the "Choukin" (the Chinese history, translated by Gaubil), which gives an instructive lesson in the art of governing as taught in China in these early ages. "What Heaven hears and sees manifest themselves by the things which the people see and hear. What the people judge worthy of reward and what of punishment, indicate what Heaven wishes to punish and to reward. There is an intimate communication between Heaven and the people; let those who govern the people be watchful and cautious!" To this the comparatively modern *Vox populi, vox Dei* adds nothing.

Up to this point the Empire had gone to its worthiest servant without distinction of birth, and Yu, on his death-bed, left the succession to the President of the Council, who had been associated with himself in the task of government. But the times were changing. Whether it sprang from a feeling of gratitude to a public benefactor, or whether the sons resented losing the prize which the ability of their sires had secured, is not ascertained; but the fact is clear that on the death of Yu there was a decided revulsion in popular sentiment in favour of his son Tiki. Both the causes mentioned probably operated to produce this result, and the custom of selecting the ablest and most experienced minister was displaced by the son's right to hereditary succession. So it happened that Tiki, the son of Yu, was the founder of the first Chinese dynasty, known in history as the Hia dynasty, from the name of the province over

which Yu had first been placed. There were in all seventeen Emperors of the Hia dynasty, and their rule continued down to the year B.C. 1776. It is unnecessary to dwell on the events of these four centuries. The descendants of Yu, who owed their reputation to his splendid achievements, became, in the course of time, tyrants and seekers of pleasure. Their palaces were the scenes of debaucheries carried out on a scale equalling those of either Nero or Vitellius. They themselves became the object of the hatred, instead of the love, of their subjects. The great feudatories and the public officers combined against Kia, the last of the Emperors of this family, and at their head they placed Ching Tang, the prince of Chang.

This chief was the founder of the second dynasty, called after the name of his principality the Chang. Twenty-eight Emperors of this House succeeded one another, and it remained in possession of the Imperial throne until the year B.C. 1122. Chang Tang was worthy of being the founder of a dynasty. In his wars with the Hias, whom he expelled from the kingdom, he showed not less skill than moderation ; and his subsequent conduct amply justified the choice which had made him the leader of the popular movement. His reign was marked by a great dearth, which either his prayers or his measures at length removed, and, curiously enough, this was coincident with the famine in Egypt in the days of Pharaoh and Joseph. He appears to have had, like our Cromwell, many doubts and qualms of conscience as to whether he had acted as became a good and wise prince as well as a dutiful subject in deposing the Hias, and declared that it was "in spite of himself that he had taken up arms to deliver the Empire from the tyranny of Kia."

He had the personal satisfaction of leaving to his grandson, Taikia, the possessions which he had wrested from the Hias, and, although not placed on the same footing as the three great Emperors who immediately preceded the establishment of the first dynasty, Confucius speaks of him in terms of respect. Among his successors, Taivou, who commenced to reign in the year B.C. 1637, may be mentioned

as receiving numerous embassies from the states lying beyond his western border. These are stated to have numbered seventy-six, and some writers have striven to prove that the arrival of so many envoys at the same moment may be taken as showing that there must have been some great disturbance in Western Asia. Chinese history is invoked to confirm the truth of the reported invasion of India by Sesostriis about that time. It is to be feared that the Court language of the Chinese has misled several historians on this point, as the seventy-six embassies probably came not from "kingdoms" or "states," but from petty districts and clans in the countries which are now known to us as Kokonor, Tibet, and Burmah.

In the reign of Pankeng (B.C. 1401-1374) the vagaries of the Hoangho led to two changes in the place of the capital or court residence, and on one occasion a site was selected near the modern Pekin. Pankeng was almost the last of the virtuous kings of the Chang dynasty. Some of his precepts, preserved in the "Choukin," are admirable, and might be perused with profit at the present day. After Pankeng came a long line of princes weak in their mind and dissolute in their habits, and the courtiers imitated only too perfectly the examples of their masters. The story is told that Vouting, the one exception to this rule, was compelled to have recourse to an ordinary labourer as the only honest man he could discover for the dignified office of his chief minister. The name of this minister was Fouyue, and he seems to have made it his object to emulate the praiseworthy conduct of the earlier rulers and ministers of China. With the death of these two men the Chang dynasty produced no other ruler, and the nation no other minister capable of maintaining the ruling House on the throne. In the twelfth century (B.C.) the crimes of the Emperors reached their culminating point in the person of Chousin, and the punishment of Providence was at last meted out by one of the great nobles, Wou Wang, prince of Chow. Wou Wang (Warrior King) crossed the Hoangho at the head of a large army, and routed the forces of Chousin on the plain of Mouye in Honan. The Emperor retired to his palace, where

he committed suicide, and the Chang dynasty expired with him.

The accession of Wou Wang as the first ruler of the third dynasty was followed by those reforms in the administration which the crimes and apathy of the Changs had rendered absolutely necessary. The acts of the new Emperor were marked by vigour and moderation, and the confidence of the nation was soon enlisted in his favour. The general satisfaction was enhanced in its effect by the obstinacy of two ministers of the Emperor Chousin, who, sooner than eat the bread of the usurper, starved themselves to death. Wou Wang publicly expressed his admiration of their fidelity and his regret at their death. Similar acts of magnanimity are frequently recorded of Chinese rulers, and were always rewarded by an increase of reputation in their people's opinion. Wou Wang's instincts were those of a soldier, and the simple habits which he introduced into the life of the court led to fresh vigour in the national existence. His immediate successors followed his prudent example, and thus the Chow dynasty became firmly established on the throne. He received various embassies, notably one from Kitse, king of Corea, who came in person to congratulate the new Emperor, thus commencing the connection between China and Corea which has subsisted to our time. His son Ching Wang was, during the first few years of his reign, obliged to carry on military operations against several of his relations; but these speedily terminating in his favour, left him strong both within and without his frontier. Mention is made of an embassy arriving from a country which can only be identified with Siam, and the reason given for its despatch was that it had been visited by several years of unusual prosperity, which the seers declared to be due to the throne of China being occupied by a wise prince.

One of the ablest of the Chow rulers was Mou Wang, or "the magnificent king," son of a prince named Chao Wang, who had been drowned in the river Han, through the treachery of some of his subjects. Mou Wang ascended the throne about the year B.C. 1000, and continued to rule until B.C. 952. Waging several wars beyond the limits of

China proper, he inflicted severe defeats upon the wild tribes whose country was held in later days by the Mongols. Nor were his journeys beyond the frontier confined to warlike expeditions. On one occasion he made a peaceful tour to the west of his possessions into Tibet, reaching a point in the vicinity of the Kuenlun mountains—probably Khoten. This simple fact has given rise to exaggerated rumours as to his having travelled as far west as Persia or Syria. In those remote ages the western world of China was of much too limited extent to include those distant countries. Still there remains the fact that this Emperor undertook a memorable journey in unknown regions beyond his frontier. He was also widely famed as a builder of palaces and other public works. In one year he erected a summer palace, and in another he laid out a fortress. China had never been famed for its horses, and before the importation of the hardy steeds of Mongolia and Manchuria they were scarcely to be found out of the royal stables. One of the early Emperors speaks of horses and dogs as “animals foreign to China,” and the chronicles tell us of the eight proud coursers which Mou Wang sent to “an isle in the Eastern Sea” to be nourished. Fed on “dragon grass,” we are informed that they became capable of performing a journey of one thousand li in the course of a single day. The remaining events of this reign are comprised under the head of “Wars with the Barbarians.”

Mou Wang's successors continued to reign, much after the same fashion, without any event calling for notice, until the time of Li Wang, B.C. 873, who is described as “a prince not wanting in ability, but whose insufferable pride, suspicious nature, and cruelty, absolutely effaced the good qualities which he would otherwise have possessed.” This prince soon forfeited the affections of his subjects, and his senseless tyranny called down upon him the vengeance of popular indignation. There was no dynastic crisis such as had taken place in the time of the Changs, for it was plain to the common intelligence that the crimes committed were those of an individual, and not of a family. The nation rose up and exposed the criminality of Li Wang, and the poets gave forcible expression to the nation's mind. There was neither

occasion nor inducement for a heaven-sent champion to appear in the arena. The constitutional methods ready to the hand sufficed to curb the wrong-doing sovereign, and they were employed with efficacy and address. Li Wang was driven from the throne, and compelled to flee the country. He survived his fall fourteen years; but time secured no oblivion for his faults in the eyes of the people. In that sense the nation proved as inexorable as the laws of the Empire. Li Wang died in exile, and during his absence China was governed by a regency composed of two ministers. When Li Wang died, the regents proclaimed his son, Siuen Wang, Emperor, thus giving a fresh lease of life to the Chow dynasty. Brilliant victories over the barbarians, who had grown more daring in their encroachments, marked the beginning of his reign; but something of the effect of this successful defence of the Empire was removed by a great blight which visited the country. The blame for this national calamity was laid at the door of the sovereign, because he had neglected to perform in person a ceremony the origin of which was traced back to the ancient days of Chinese annals; and the penalty of such neglect was pronounced by the highest authority to be "the wrath of the Master of all things (Changti), and desolation throughout the Empire." What the famine began, the valour of the barbarians completed. Siuen Wang's army was routed on the field of battle, and although ultimately retrieving his lost fortune, he never completely recovered the popularity which had accompanied his earlier years, when he was in every respect "a much-beloved king."

His son Yeou Wang was heir not only to his throne, but also to his misfortunes. Floods, earthquakes, and other calamities struck terror to the heart of the people; the ruler alone proved callous to them. While his subjects were daily raising loud complaints to the throne, he passed his time in idle pleasure in his palace. The general distress made the reduction of taxation a matter of ordinary prudence; he doubled the imposts to gratify the wishes of his mistress. The Chinese have never been silent under tyranny. They have sometimes, but rarely, produced a Brutus, or a Harmodius; but they have never failed to find satirists, whose bitter

words have exposed the shortcomings of the Emperor, even though endowed in the common parlance with many of the attributes of God. Yeou Wang became the butt of the learned; his crimes were denounced in the Tribunal of History, and his amours formed the theme of daily conversation. "The Royal House was approaching its fall," wrote the great historian of the day. Meanwhile the heir apparent had fled the palace, and sought with his mother refuge among the Tartar tribes of the West. These wild people looked upon the cities of China as their lawful prey, and though often beaten back with loss, it cost them little or nothing to resume an enterprise that might result in the attainment of a great prize. Never did the prospect appear more seductive to them than during the years when Yeou Wang's conduct had alienated his people, and the dynasty of Chow seemed tottering on the verge of ruin. The Tartars poured over the frontier, ravaging the country as they advanced; and Yeou Wang marched with several armies to oppose them. The victory should have gone to him, but the column under his command was attacked and overwhelmed by numbers, Yeou Wang himself perishing on the field.

His son Ping Wang was then placed upon the throne by the great vassal princes, but the danger from the Tartars, elated by their success over his father, continued to be so great that the Chinese were kept in a state of constant alarm. Ping Wang had to resort to the dangerous expedient of making one of the great nobles the custodian of his frontier. He abandoned his Western capital to this noble, Siangkong, Prince of Tsin, and retired to the Eastern capital, named Loyang, in Honan. The task entrusted to the prince named was difficult, but it enabled him to consolidate a power within the state independent of that of the Emperor. "The Tartars," said Ping Wang in his decree to the prince, "are constantly making their inroads into my provinces of Ki and Fong. You alone can put a stop to their onslaughts and marauding. Take, then, all this country, I yield it to you willingly, on the simple condition that you turn it into a barrier against them." In this decree, as engraved on a vase in Shensi, Ping Wang styled himself "the King of Heaven." Little did he think

when doing so that the descendants of the Prince of Tsin would drive him in ignominy from the throne. Centuries were to pass away before the fall came, but the abnegation of the duty of defending the frontier could only lead, sooner or later, to the loss of Imperial power and station.

The other great vassals were not slow to follow the example set them by the powerful Prince of Tsin. If Siangkong was the only one to assume regal honours by offering sacrifice on the tortoise, his peers were not backward in claiming the substance of authority in their own territories. During Ping Wang's reign, it was said, "the ancient religion perished, the sciences, learning, zeal for the public good were cast aside; and men of talent, having lost their career, scattered themselves over the face of the country." The public mind was so much disturbed by the disunion in the Empire, and the incompetence of the prince, that fresh evidence of the imminent ruin of the dynasty was seen in the most trifling circumstances. The "Chiking"—a wonderful collection of national ballads, translated by that admirable man and sinologue, the late Dr. Legge—is full of the complaints that rose at this time from the midst of the people to the foot of the throne; and one high official reported as a momentous fact that "the ancestral burial-place of the House of Chow was in ruins, and that only a few sad relics remained as evidence of its having existed!" Ping Wang died in B.C. 720, after a reign of more than fifty years. Between that time and the year B.C. 606, seven Emperors of the dynasty of Chow succeeded each other. Their names were Hing Wang, Chang Wang, Li Wang, Hoei Wang, Siang Wang, King Wang, and Kwang Wang.

A few years after the death of the last-named ruler, Laoutse, the first religious and social reformer, was born. With him commenced a new era in the history of China. The period of one hundred and twenty years thus covered was taken up with innumerable petty wars between the principal vassals of the crown. The Tartars of the West and of the North afforded permanent occupation for those on the frontier, and although the Chinese triumphed by dint of numbers and superior skill, they never ventured to wage more than a defensive war. The seven Emperors last named succeeded

in maintaining their position in Honan, and for a short distance in the surrounding region on account of the prevailing dissension ; but their authority was but a faint semblance of what it once had been, and still claimed to be. Like the later Cæsars, the less able they became to wield the sword against the enemy, and to resist the arrogance of the proud, the closer they wrapt the purple round them, and sought in the pleasures of the palace to forget the duties of the council chamber. So far as the record of notable events or the exercise of Imperial power is concerned, the annals of the Chow rulers might be already closed ; but the ability and virtues of Laoutse, and the genius of Confucius, gave a lustre to the last three centuries of their rule not unworthy of its earlier fame.

Before passing on to the consideration of the important epoch which we have now reached, and which forms the commencement of the regular history of China, it will be advisable to glance back for a moment at the vast space of time which has been traversed in the few preceding pages.* Originally a nomad people, following the free and untrammelled existence of the hunter and the shepherd, the necessities produced by increasing numbers compelled the Chinese to become agriculturists, and to settle in towns. They had their mythical ancestors, in common with the rest of mankind, who taught

* This is the more necessary as the antiquity of Chinese history has been challenged by several writers. There can be no question of its substantial accuracy from the time of Confucius, but that is *only* two thousand four hundred years ago. The balance of evidence is wholly in favour of the account given in these pages, but the remarks of so intelligent a critic as M. de Guignes may here be inserted and studied with profit. It is permissible to believe that his critical faculty has proved too strong for his judgment of facts. "One of the causes which have led the Chinese into great errors with regard to the antiquity of their country is that they have given to the ancient characters the meaning which they acquired in much more recent times. The characters now translated by the words *emperor*, *province*, *city*, and *palace* meant no more in former times than chief of tribe, district, camp, and house. These simple meanings did no flatter their vanity sufficiently, and they therefore preferred employing terms which would represent their ancestors as rich and powerful, and their Empire as vast and flourishing in a durable manner before the year B.C. 529."

them the use of fire and of clothes, and who raised them gradually from the brute life which they were leading into a higher and nobler one. Then appeared the first conqueror Hwangti, to be followed by those three perfect, and probably ideal Emperors, Yao, Chun, and Yu, who left an example that none of their successors could hope to emulate. With the death of Yu the first stage in Chinese history closes. The principle that the ruler of the country should be the very best and ablest man in the community, carried out during four brilliant reigns, was set aside partly by the national sense of gratitude, partly because the progress of the age had led to the supersession of the purely public spirit of the patriarchal rulers, by the personal ambition of their descendants. The death of Yu was followed by the establishment of the first dynasty in the person of his son. After six centuries that dynasty was destroyed, to be succeeded by a second, which, when it had ruled for four centuries, was displaced by a third, still reigning at the period we have reached.

With the establishment of a distinct line of succession the country expanded its limits, and assumed all the proportions of an Empire. Its existence was acknowledged by the surrounding nations. It became an object of terror or of solicitude to its neighbours. Foreign embassies flocked to the capital; the princes of the desert, the rulers of the Jongs of the Amour, the kings of the Indo-Chinese peninsula, admitted that the countenance of the great Ti was the light which illumined Eastern Asia. And then, as all things human decline and fall—if they even arise with renewed strength like Antæus—there came a long period of decadence. Prince succeeded prince only to find the extent of his territory more limited, of his authority more circumscribed. The weakness of one ruler had led to the transfer of supreme power from the hands of the sovereign to those of the nobles, already too formidable, and it was not until the ranks of the nobles produced a man, in the third century before our era, capable of subduing his peers that the Emperor reacquired the old supremacy, which had belonged to him in days that may well be styled prehistoric. It was at this period that the feudal system was in most vigorous condition, although

under the later dynasties it was to show greater and more remarkable energy. This system had at least in its favour that the nobles were of the same race as the people of the soil, and that in their provincial capitals they set themselves to imitate not the vices and folly of the ruling Emperor, but the wisdom and irreproachable conduct of those earlier and wise princes who are held up as the pattern of every kingly virtue. By these means China, though under the sway of tyrants and incapable princes during the last five hundred years of the Chow dynasty, was well governed on the whole, and the people remained fairly contented. To this circumstance the ruling House undoubtedly owed its preservation. It had become contemptible in the eyes of the nation, but contempt is not hatred, and it was suffered to maintain a station which, by its own act, had been deprived of practical significance. Not until personal ambition was called into play, and the overthrow of the Emperor had become the special desire and object of a single noble, did the Chows receive the blow which destroyed them. It is the one instance in Chinese history of a dynasty surviving by several centuries the period of its utility—a proof, in its way, of the fact that the grandeur of the Empire as a fixed unit has been created since that time.*

* Something may be said here of the origin of the name of China, which is at present wrapt in some doubt. It is probable that the root whence this name came is lost in a very remote antiquity, although the Chinese themselves are unaware of it, and apparently puzzled at the name being applied to their country, which they speak of by the title of the reigning family. It may be possible that the Sinim of Isaiah was identical with China; but "in the laws of Manu and in the Mahabharata" the country of Chinas or Shinas bears a closer resemblance, and it has been pointed out that they were probably a tribe in the country west of Cashmere, now known as Dardistan. The Romans spoke of the people of a far eastern country—the most remote in the world, and consequently beyond the India of Alexander—as Seres Sinenses, rich in silk and gold, and great traders. Later philologists have traced the name back to the Tsins (Tsina, Tchín, Tchína, China), and many other curious explanations have been given of its origin. In fact, every writer has had a theory to ventilate, and the reader may be referred to the works already quoted, and especially to the admirable article on China from the pen of Professor R. K. Douglas, in the ninth edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica." The late Sir Henry Yule, in a note on p. 210 of vol. ii. of "Marco Polo,"

says, "We get the exact form 'China'—which is also used in Japanese—from the Malay." This ought to be decisive, and remove all necessity for further speculation. The fact may be noted that whereas this vast Empire became known as China to those who approached it by sea, or derived their information by intercourse from the south, Cathay, or Khitay (the Russian name), was the name given by those coming overland from the north.

CHAPTER II.

THE DECLINE OF THE CHOW DYNASTY.

THE earliest religion of the Chinese consisted in the worship of a Supreme Being, who was the sovereign both of the heavens and of the earth. The people recognized with shrewd practical judgment that the power which could not be divided on earth without suffering in extent could not be divided in a sphere of assumed perfection. It may be doubted whether any nation possessed and described, with anything approaching the same degree of beautiful conception, the idea of that moral and spiritual pre-eminence which among all the peoples of the world has taken form in the creation of a great and supreme God. Originally, and in its essence, the religion of the Chinese was as far removed from materialism as can be conceived. The great moral teaching of Christianity had been learnt and taken to heart at least seven centuries before the birth of Christ, and among the traditions of the Chinese, in the days of the great philosophers, were that "God ultimately rewards the good, and punishes the wicked ; but his punishment is awarded without hatred and without anger," and "however wicked a man may be, if he repent of his sins, he may offer sacrifices." China, like Rome, was hospitable to all the gods, and when foreign nations came, as recorded in the chronicles, they brought with them their rites, if not a distinct religion. It is impossible to estimate how much or how little influence exterior considerations exercised on the religious life of the Chinese, but we know by the history of the human race that a religion composed solely of the worship of a single Supreme Being has never sufficed to meet the wants

of a people. The cult has in every case been extended so as to include a mediator, or to permit of an elaborate ritual being grafted on what were the simple and original impressions of the earliest of mankind. China could be no exception to the rule, and when the great philosophers of the sixth century B.C. appeared, the grand truths of the single-minded worship of the Chinese had lost their efficacy, and the nation was plunged in a condition of moral indifference which was on a par with the prevailing corruption among the officials, and with the decline in the authority and power of the king.

The appearance of Laoutse, the first and perhaps the greatest of the Chinese philosophers, was therefore doubly opportune; of him it may be said that the times produced the man, although his individuality has been most difficult to grasp. In fact, some have doubted his existence, and believed that many of the most cherished of the objects of the Chinese rested upon a myth. A brief sketch of his career may best serve to explain the ambiguity as to his existence, and to throw light on the achievements of the great reformer. Laoutse was born in the year B.C. 604, of humble parents. A village in the province of Honan is identified with the place where he was born, which bore the doubtless apocryphal name of Keuhjin, or "oppressed benevolence." Of his youth and early manhood we know nothing more than that he obtained a small official post in one of the departments of the province of Chow. The probability is that this was the Department of the Archives, of which, in the course of time, he became the chief keeper. When he was at the advanced age of more than one hundred years he was visited by Confucius, but the interview was not of a satisfactory character. Confucius, full of the wrongs of his country, importuned the aged philosopher with his description of the remedies for prevailing evils, and something in his impetuosity, and the very sanguineness of his expectations, chafed the old man's spirit. In his concluding address, which was the reverse of complimentary to Confucius, he said, "Put away, sir, your haughty airs and many desires, your flashy manner and extravagant will; these are all unprofitable to you." In this it is easy to discern the disappointment of one

who had aspired to be the founder of a new state religion, and who saw in the ambitious Confucius a rival, and one likely to prove more successful than himself.

Shortly after this interview, Laoutse resigned his office, and led a life of retirement, giving himself up to "the cultivation of Taou and Virtue." The disorders in the state compelled him to seek a safer abode, and he accordingly left Chow by the Hankoo pass, for the western countries. To the guardian of this pass he gave a book containing five thousand characters which represented the meditations of his life. This book was called the Taoutihking, and is the Bible of Taouism. After this act Laoutse continued his journey and disappeared from history. We are told that thenceforth all trace of him was lost; but according to one version he announced his intention of visiting and returning from India, Cabul, Rome, and other kingdoms of the West. Of the exact significance of his teaching it is difficult to speak with any degree of confidence, for, as M. de Remusat said in his *Memoir on Laoutse*, "the text is so full of obscurity, we have so few means of acquiring a perfect understanding of it, so little knowledge of the circumstances to which the author makes allusion, we are, in a word, so distant in all respects from the ideas under the influence of which he wrote, that it would be temerity to pretend to reproduce exactly the sense which he had in view, when that sense is beyond our grasp." Laoutse's great object was to define the method of attaining true virtue and religion. Taou, which has been defined as meaning "reason" and other significations, was simply the "way;" and Laoutse, in explaining what in his eyes Taou was, rejected the old beliefs and trusted solely to his own inspiration. His work was therefore entirely original, and the writer quoted compares him to Pythagoras. Three centuries after his disappearance, there was what may be called a revival of Taouism, under the short-lived dynasty of the Tsins, and the precepts of the philosopher have become grafted in the national religion, of which it has been truly and graphically said by a French writer that it is "practically one religion, of which the doctrine belongs to Confucius, the objects of the cult to Laoutse, and the precepts to Buddha."

The example set by Laoutse was carried out in a still more striking and successful manner by Confucius, whose veneration for the past gave him greater claims upon the goodwill of his countrymen than the strict moral and logical rectitude of the Chinese iconoclast. Devoting himself to the study and observance of the ancient rites, his earnestness, combined with simple eloquence, gathered round him a band of disciples, whose numbers steadily increased with the course of years. But the times were unfavourable for men of peace. The reigning princes were at feud with each other and defiant towards their liege lord; and the petty barons and chiefs in their turn paid but scant attention to the behests of their suzerains. The Duke of Loo was compelled by three turbulent vassals to flee from his estates, and with him went Confucius, who held a small post at his court. On the road we are told of the following incident which afforded the philosopher the opportunity of giving expression to a forcible comment on the condition of the country. A woman was found sitting beside the highway weeping, and on being asked the cause of her grief, replied that a tiger had slain her husband, father-in-law, and lastly her son. "Why, then, do you not remove to another place?" "Because," she replied, "here there is no oppressive government." The philosopher's comment was to the point. "My children, remember this, oppressive government is fiercer than a tiger." At the court of the Duke of Tse, Confucius was accorded an honourable reception; but this proved of short duration, because he incurred the enmity of the chief minister, who soon turned his master against the new-comer. The Duke brought matters to a conclusion by declaring that he was too old to adopt the doctrines of the philosopher.

Of the later career of Confucius at the courts of Loo, Ting, and other nobles, it is unnecessary to say anything here. Both his teachings and his literary labours exercised little influence on contemporary affairs. A later generation had to come before either were appreciated at their just value. The very basis of his philosophy rested on the respect due from the subject to the Emperor, as the representative of the wisdom of the ancients; and this was extremely distasteful to

great personages living in open indifference to that authority, and secretly desirous of substituting their own in its place. Confucius became, therefore, a wanderer from one court to another; and while he preached an ideal government the rulers of the land were engaged in the pursuit of their own pleasure, regardless alike of the national welfare and of the dictates of the morality which Laoutse and Confucius had defined for them with all the force of intellect, the one as a moral obligation, the other as an article of faith and obedience. Confucius strove repeatedly to induce some of the reigning princes to entrust him with responsible posts in their administrations, and on several occasions he succeeded in obtaining his wish. But it was never for any length of time. He always became the object of the hostility of the courtiers, and his fall generally happened very soon after his rise to power. At last Confucius began to despair of success in finding a ruler after his own heart; and, discouraged by years of disappointment, it was with a presentiment of the coming end that he said, "No intelligent monarch arises, there is not one in the Empire who will make me his master. My time is come to die." That very day the event happened which he had foreseen. Such was the end of the career of Confucius, who, if enthusiastic in his advocacy of a model of government that was probably antiquated, was at least earnest in his desire to promote the interests of his country. His example lived after him, and bore better fruit at a later period than it had borne at any time during his life.¹

The reign of Kwang Wang closed in B.C. 606, and his brother Ting Wang became Emperor in his place. At this time a contemporary writer exclaimed that, although the dynasty of the Chows had lost much of its ancient lustre, Heaven had not yet rejected it; but even the court chroniclers were constrained to admit that the events happening in the provinces were of greater interest than those occurring at the capital. Ting Wang desired to assert his authority more vigorously than had been done by any of his immediate predecessors, and commissioned one of his ministers, Prince Chantse, to visit the capitals of the great nobles and to report to him on the manner in which the feudatories governed their

states. The object was laudable, but, destitute of the means to carry any reforms into execution, the Emperor had really sent Chantse on a fool's errand. Two of the chiefs received him with a decent show of honour for his master, and of respect for his mission ; but Lingkong, the powerful prince of Chin, refused to put on the semblance of sentiments he did not feel. Instead of proceeding to the frontier, as etiquette required, to meet the delegate of the Emperor, Lingkong remained in his capital. Neither guard of honour nor royal lodging was provided for Chantse, who was left to find his way as best he could to the presence of this indifferent potentate. Chantse on his return reported these things to Ting Wang, and recommended vigorous action ; but the latter, naturally of a peaceful disposition, was doubly inclined to peace by the want of power. He concealed whatever resentment he felt ; and rather than provoke a contest acquiesced in the insult to his person, and the scarcely veiled repudiation of his authority. This conduct may have borne testimony to the goodness of his heart, but it reflected little credit on his character as a ruler, and in the end this abnegation of the privileges and rights of power led to the ruin of his family.

One event alone gave Ting Wang's authority the semblance of being over a united country, and this was a war with the Tartars of the desert. For this purpose he came to a temporary understanding with the Prince of Tsin, himself engaged in an incessant border struggle with these tribes. A small army, sent by the Emperor, co-operated with the local forces. The Prince of Tsin thought the proper solution of the difficulty was to utilize this military demonstration for the conclusion of an advantageous peace ; but to Ting Wang's general, Lieoukangkong, the occasion appeared too favourable to be neglected for obtaining a cheap renown. He refused to follow the sensible advice of his ally, and commenced active hostilities against the Tartars. Inexperienced in the mode of warfare necessary for coping successfully with their irregular forces, Lieoukangkong was defeated with heavy loss, and it would have gone hard with the Imperial army but for the timely succour of the Prince of Tsin and the local levies. This disaster dispelled whatever hopes had been indulged of a

permanent peace, and the state of affairs on the extreme frontier resumed its normal condition of an armed truce. The remaining years of Ting Wang's reign were peaceful, and his son Kien Wang succeeded him without opposition (B.C. 585).

Like his father, Kien Wang was inclined to peace, and left his vassals to follow their own will both in the administration of their territories and also in the settlement of the difficulties which frequently arose amongst them. In his eyes, the sole duty remaining to the Emperor had become the setting of an example which the misfortunes of his family left him incapable of enforcing. He has been awarded the credit of bearing the weight of the crown with the appearance of dignity which titularly it required. What energy there was left to this scion of an ancient race might have been devoted with profit to practical politics, but it was directed instead to the settlement of domestic questions, and to the exposure or the persecution of two religious schismatics.

At this period China did not extend beyond the great river Yangtse-kiang. The region of the barbarians then included all the provinces lying south of that stream. Several centuries before this period an adventurous Chinese prince had penetrated into this country, and founded in the eastern portion of the province of Kiangnan a kingdom known by the name of Wou. It was not for many years afterwards that this independent state was brought into contact with the rest of the Empire, and then only because a disappointed Chinese noble, Ouchin, took refuge there. Ouchin trained the native soldiers on the Chinese principle, and then inflamed the mind of the king by stories of the weakness of his neighbours. The king turned a ready ear to the promptings of his new counsellor. A campaign ensued with the Prince of Chow, and concluded with the conquest of several districts by the Wou army. The general condition of the country corresponded with this incident, and verged on a state of anarchy.

On the death of Kien Wang (B.C. 571), his son Ling Wang succeeded him ; and one of the first events of his reign was a campaign entered upon by the Chow ruler for the reconquest from Wou of the territory he had lost. In this he failed

with disaster. Several leagues between the great vassals were then formed for the purpose of restoring tranquillity to the Empire; but the laudable object sufficed only to make the prevailing disunion more palpable. The Prince of Wou, on one of these occasions, was formally admitted to be a member of the Empire. Under the auspices of the Emperor, a general pacification of the realm was agreed to by more than twelve of the great princes; but the hostility, ambition, and indifference of the few who remained recalcitrant more than sufficed to disturb the harmony of the arrangement. The Prince of Wou was the next breaker of the national peace; but while examining a fort, to which he was laying siege during the invasion of a neighbour's territory, he met with his death from the hand of a skilful archer. Soon afterwards (B.C. 545) the Emperor himself died, leaving behind him the remembrance of a man whose amiability of character and private virtues had done much towards retarding the fall, if not towards re-establishing the fortunes, of his dynasty. In the words of his own historian, the epitaph might be inscribed on his monument, "His good qualities merited a happier day."

His son, King Wang the Second, succeeded him as ruler. If he had followed in the footsteps of his sire, he might have had the satisfaction of winning back to their allegiance some of the rebellious vassals whose hearts had been touched by Ling Wang's virtuous life. But King Wang wished to follow his own inclination, unfettered by the sense of having to play a consistent part in the eyes of the world. He neglected the small quantity of official work which he was still required to perform, and, shutting himself up in his palace, never thought to glance abroad, in order to learn what was happening among his neighbours, to whom he was, by his position, an object of dislike and envy the instant he ceased to be protected by their fears and respect. The feuds among his nominal subjects continued to rage with unabated fury; and the chronic warfare in the country produced a corresponding thirst for blood among the aspirants to authority in the different principalities. Assassinations, intrigues, and revolutions became the order of the day; and, if the capital of the country enjoyed an exceptional tranquillity, it was because

the tyranny was more complete, and also because there was less to tempt the envy of the ambitious. King Wang's reign closed after eighteen years, without any event having happened to give it either interest or importance. His death proved the signal for further disturbances, which seemed likely to produce a general war ; but fortunately one faction proved more powerful than its rival, and King Wang the Third succeeded his brother of the same name.

Confucius flourished during the long reign of this Emperor, and whenever entrusted with office, succeeded in introducing good order and a spirit of impartial justice among his fellows. But, as we have before said, these gleams of a happier time were of but brief duration. The elements were too unfavourable even for Confucius ; how much more so were they for weaker men ! The second prince of the Wou family, whose power had been steadily increasing during the last half century, was worsted with heavy loss in a war with another potentate, and lost his life in battle. Two minor dynasties—those of Tsao and Chin—were extinguished during this reign, and their states seized by more powerful neighbours, thus affording the first proof of the inevitable termination of these internecine wars. It only remained for time to show which of the feudatories was to become sufficiently strong to absorb his neighbours and depose the ruling House.

CHAPTER III.

THE FALL OF THE CHOW DYNASTY.

WHEN Confucius was on his death-bed, in the year B.C. 478, the reign of King Wang, the third of the name, was drawing to a close. For forty years that prince had striven to avert the collapse that threatened the dynasty, and to retain in his hands some portion of the authority of his ancestors. To a certain extent, his object had been attained ; the evil day had at least been staved off, and his son Yuen began his reign under fairer auspices than attended his father's assumption of power. If, however, the circumstances of the period are critically examined, it will be seen that this respite was nothing more than sufferance. The central authority was only the shadow of a name ; and if the amiability or personal virtue of the sovereign shone by contrast with his contemporaries, and obtained some faint semblance of a forgotten respect, it had no more practical significance than a single rift in a stormy sky. The prince passed away, and his virtues were forgotten. The clouds remained lowering over a House which all the tenderer virtues could not save.

Yuen's early acts showed that the teaching of Confucius had found him a willing student. He re-enforced the ancient ceremonies, and proclaimed the re-establishment of the reign of justice and of right. Several of the vassal princes took, with all the old formalities, the oath of fealty ; and had Yuen possessed the martial qualities necessary to solve the question by waging war on the recalcitrant nobles, he might have made his reign a turning-point in the history of his country. With his respect for the past he had borrowed

none of the political sagacity of Confucius; and he was essentially a man of peace. The wars between the tributary princes went on, and when one had achieved a great victory over his neighbour, the farce was gone through of soliciting by letter, couched in the terms of a superior and not a suppliant, the Emperor's sanction of a revolution within his dominions, which had doubled the territory of a powerful noble, and brought a victorious army to within a week's march of the capital. So it happened that the Prince of Yue overthrew several of his neighbours, and joined their lands to his. Prominent among these was the State of Wou, which, as we have seen, had obtained many triumphs in Chinese territory, and which had enjoyed a line of kings of its own during six centuries and a half. The members of the vanquished family fled, so the story is narrated, to Japan, whither their great progenitor Taipe himself had retired in the twelfth century before our era. They were destined to found there another ruling house of greater fame, as the Emperors of Japan claim these princes as their progenitors. This great success added much to the reputation of Yue, whose prince was named chief of the great vassals, thus provoking the jealousy of the powerful and ambitious Tsins.

Kowtsin, the Prince of Yue, appears to have been a man of exceptional capacity and vigour. Forming a league with the princes disposed to support him, he proceeded to wage war on the Tsins because they refused to pay tribute to him; and such were his activity and skill that they found it prudent to submit to a temporary indignity sooner than continue a contest which might terminate with serious loss. Kowtsin retained to his death possession of the territories won by the sword, and rejoiced in semi-regal privileges. We are told of how he sent to one of the nobles of his country, who had been sentenced to death, a sword with instructions to kill himself, thus anticipating by many centuries the practice of Harikari in Japan. With the death of Kowtsin the predominance of the Yues passed away, and the Tsins then profited by the prudence of their chief in not provoking a premature contest. During the progress

of this strife Yuen Wang died, and was succeeded by his son Ching Ting Wang, who followed very closely in the footsteps of his predecessor.

The Court chroniclers affirm that under the rule of this prince the Empire recovered nearly all its lost splendour, and certainly the private character of the sovereign benefited by comparison with his predecessors. But the disintegrating causes so long at work still remained in force, and the absorption of the smaller principalities by the greater continued. Happy in his life, Ching Ting Wang was unfortunate only in the events which immediately followed his death. Three sons were left to profit by and to emulate the example of a father who had given fresh lustre to virtues long foreign to the purple; but in their anxiety to obtain the supreme place they forgot the more honourable rivalry that should have been theirs in propping up a dynasty which depended upon the energy and ability of its members to save it from the untoward fate whither it was apparently tending so fast. The eldest son Gan Wang succeeded his father as Emperor; but in three months, before the Imperial mourning had been laid aside, he fell by the hand of his next brother Sou, who was in his turn slain by his younger brother Kao Wang, after enjoying the pageantry of supreme ruler during the brief space of five months.

Kao Wang's reign, though commencing with a crime, venial it must be allowed in the history of his House, was not fortunate in its character. The nobles scoffed at the authority of the Emperor, and refused homage to one whose strength was fully occupied with domestic brawls. He became little more than a puppet in the hands of another brother, who gradually acquired the reins of power, and ultimately secured for his descendant the Imperial title to which he had himself aspired. After reigning fifteen years, Kao Wang died, and was succeeded by his son Weili Wang in those nominal functions which still appertained to the Emperor.

The troubles were now thickening on all sides. Looking back to this period, the Chinese chroniclers have styled it "the warlike epoch," and although we pass over this portion

of Chinese history with as few details as possible, the title was well applied. This unfortunate Emperor, divested of the last shadow of authority, remained, it is true, in the palace; but the day of his fall was only postponed until one of the great nobles should gain a position that would justify him in standing forward as the claimant for the throne. The brightest topic in the history of China at this period was furnished by the great deeds of Ouki, a general and a statesman of singular force of character. Originally an officer fighting for his paternal state of Loo, his most brilliant successes were obtained in the service of the Prince of Wei. His guiding precept was that "the strength and greatness of a state depended upon the virtues and application of the ruler." Fortunate in the field, he rendered his master as valuable service in the cabinet by showing him that military triumphs are only justifiable as a means towards an end. The jealousy of those small minds, to which true merit is intolerable, as barring the avenue to the promotion they covet, turned the favour of the Prince of Wei from Ouki, who for a second time was obliged to become an exile. The ability of the man triumphed over the outrages of fortune, and the numerous victories which he obtained in the service now of one prince and again of another would have sufficed, if achieved over a foreign foe or in the interest of the Chows, to give stability to the Empire. In the end, however, he fell a victim to the base schemes of his opponents, for he appears to have treated their threats with scorn, and to have neglected all precautions for defending his own person. He paid the penalty of his fortitude or his rashness, being found murdered in his palace one morning, with no trace left of the assassins. The name and achievements of Ouki lend a lustre to the reigns of Weili Wang and his successor, Gang Wang, which they would otherwise lack.

The latter of these rulers was succeeded (B.C. 375) by his son Li Wang, whose brief reign would call for no comment, were it not for the growing power of the principality of Tsi, the ruler of which, Wei Wang, was the first among the feudatories to take to himself the title of king. Although there was much in this step to shock the sentiments of a people

like the Chinese, the high personal character and strict morals of Wei Wang shielded him from the censure which would otherwise have been bestowed upon him. Wei Wang seems to have acted on the sound principle of looking after his own affairs, for the story is still preserved of how he rewarded the services of an honest and capable governor, although all the court gossips were engaged in vilifying him because he refused to bribe them, and of how on the other hand he punished an incompetent governor whose praises were sung by all the courtiers, whom he paid heavily for their good word. Within seven years Li Wang's inglorious reign closed, and his brother Hien Wang ruled in his place. No change occurred in the character of the times. The reign of the latter, although Emperor for nearly half a century, was remarkable neither for the personal ability of the prince, nor for the acts carried out under his direction.

The most, indeed the only, remarkable event of this period was the steadily increasing power and military vigour of the Prince of Tsin, who on several occasions overthrew large armies sent by his neighbours to harass his borders. Three princes eventually combined their forces against him, but at the battle of Chemen, where sixty thousand men are stated to have been slain, they had to confess a more skilful general and a braver army. Shortly after this great victory the Prince of Tsin died, but his son and successor, Hiaokong, proved himself well able to take care of the interests committed to his charge. At a general council, summoned early in his reign, he announced to his followers that it would be his first object to raise the glory of his House to a still higher pitch than ever before, and to assist his purpose he proclaimed his want of the services of the most enlightened minister of the day. He obtained his wish in the person of Kongsunyang, who, banished from his own state, took service under him and devoted his best talents to the advancement of the Tsins. He drew up, and his master enforced, principles of government and a code of administration which, in the course of a short time, made Tsin the most powerful and best-governed kingdom in the country. The consequences of the reforms he introduced were, we are told, that thefts and

assaults were no longer to be met with, that idleness vanished from amongst the people, and cowardice from the ranks of the soldiery, at the same time that the officials cast aside their former avarice and negligence.

Among those who beheld the steadily increasing power of the Tsins with feelings the reverse of those of pleasure was the Prince of Tsi, who considered the foremost place in the country to be his right; and the further progress of the Empire resolved itself into the rivalry of these two families. An interval of peace followed, but it was recognized on all sides that it was only the precursor of the inevitable struggle. Each potentate was actively engaged in developing his resources and in training his army for the day of battle. A change had in the meanwhile taken place in the affairs of Tsin, where, owing to the death of Hiaokong, the able minister Kongsunyang had lost his influence. His rivals supplanted him in the council of the new prince, and he himself found it prudent to seek safety in flight. Failing in his attempt he was brought back to the capital, and neither the long years of past service nor the promise of future assistance could save him and his family from death and disgrace. If his career had been marked by an unscrupulous zeal for the advancement of the interests of the Tsins, as evinced by his treacherous conduct towards his old teacher Kongtse Niang, there was nothing in it to justify the ungrateful and foolish manner in which the new Prince Hwei Wen Wang treated him. The reforms which he had carried out survived his death to the benefit of the family for which he had toiled so long and with such striking assiduity.

During this reign flourished Mencius, the third great original Chinese thinker. Of noble birth, being closely connected with the princes of Loo, he had from an early age devoted himself to the study of virtue and morals. An ardent follower of Confucian doctrine, he had arrived at the conclusion that good government was not only in itself the first of public virtues, but also the most pressing want of China. When he visited the Court of Wei, he was asked whether he would not toil zealously for the interests of that prince. His reply was, "How comes it that you speak of

interests? It is only necessary to think of virtue and to practise it." It is scarcely necessary to add that such unworldly wisdom as this was not very palatable to the ambitious ruler of Wei. Mencius continued advocating measures which had a sound moral basis, but little attention was paid to him during his lifetime.

Another philosopher, Soutsin by name, whose proffer of service had been rejected by the Prince of Tsin, took a different course. Finding that devotion to pure ethics only led to his being treated with contumely, he entered the arena of politics, and, travelling from one court to another, devoted all his energy to the forming of a league among the princes of the Empire against the Prince of Tsin, who had received his overtures with expressions of scorn. The last years of Hien Wang's reign witnessed these schemes for the overthrow of one of the feudatories, but even if success had attended them there could have been no change in the relative position of the Emperor. Hien Wang's long reign closed at last, and he left to his son the unmeaning legacy which he had himself inherited from his father (B.C. 320). Of that son Chin Tsin Wang, whose brief reign extended over no more than six years, little need be said. The only change in the country—and it was one affecting its future much more nearly than the mere record of the daily events at the capital—was the steadily growing power of the Tsins, whose authority was extending eastwards and southwards into the heart of the Empire. Neither the league of princes, nor the military prowess of their neighbours appeared able to retard their progress. One of their statesmen asserted at this time that "their country was not sufficiently large, and its people not rich enough" for their ambition.

Nan Wang, the next and, strictly speaking, the last of the Chow Emperors, succeeded his father in B.C. 314; and the death of Mencius occurred in the earlier years of his reign. But the most important circumstance attending the accession of the new ruler was that the Prince of Tsin then perceived that the time had arrived for putting into effect the ulterior schemes which had so long slumbered in the background. The heritage of the Chows was ripe for division among the

numerous claimants; but, if he could overthrow all these candidates, he would be in the position of its sole heir. The first year of Nan Wang's reign saw the Prince of Tsin victorious over his neighbours, laughing to scorn the threats of a league no sooner brought together than dissolved, and mustering larger armies than at any previous time for the execution of his military enterprises. Nor was the policy he pursued for the purpose of advancing the object he had in view less astute than the means he possessed for enforcing it were formidable. Setting one prince against another by promises lavish to excess, but which could be either broken or left unfulfilled as most convenient, he was always able to bring a preponderance of force into the field. He employed against his neighbours and fellow-princes the very weapons which a wise Emperor would have used against himself, and in the end their efficacy was shown by complete success.

The natural consequence of this aggressive policy, carried out in an able and uncompromising manner, was that many ruling families, which had been in possession of their territories for centuries, were deposed, and in many instances also exterminated. About this time the Prince of Tsin, Hwei Wen Wang, died, and his son Wou Wang only ruled for a few months, when another son, the celebrated Chow Siang Wang, became the leader of the fortunes of this kingdom. In his hands the family policy acquired still greater force than before, and, casting aside all reserve, he offered sacrifice to the Lord of Heaven, with those formalities which were the peculiar privilege of the Emperor. The minister of a neighbouring potentate gave expression to the prevalent opinion when he said that the Prince of Tsin was "like a wolf or a tiger who wished to draw all the other princes into his claws that he might devour them." The struggle between the two states of Tsin and Tsi continued with varying fortune during most of the years of the long reign of Nan Wang; but in this instance, as in every other, final victory rested with the former.

For more than fifty years Nan Wang had remained a passive witness of the progress of these events, when suddenly, without any apparent reason, urged by some demon of unrest, he in his old age issued invitations for a league against the

Tsins. On this reaching the ears of Chow Siang Wang, he at once marched an army against the capital. Nan Wang, incapable of offering any resistance, surrendered himself without a blow, and became the dependent of his conqueror. After enjoying the glorious title of Emperor of China during fifty-nine years, he sank into the insignificant position of a vassal of the King of Tsin—a sphere which appears to have been the more suited to his talents. The facts are so expressive in themselves that it is unnecessary to add, as the Chinese historians do, that he died covered with ignominy.

Thus came to the end, which had been so long foreseen, the third dynasty established in China. The virtues and the great qualities which had made its first Emperors the benefactors of their race had departed before the House had reached its manhood. The dislike of the people to break with associations intimately connected with the dawn of their political history, and, in a much stronger degree, the fact that the Empire had split up imperceptibly into principalities or kingdoms, practically independent, and each responsible to its subjects without any intervention on the part of a central authority, sufficed to put off the fall of a dynasty, which as a participator in practical affairs had long ceased to exist. The course of the history of China during three centuries would have been barren of profitable inquiry, but that they witnessed the feudal system at its height, the labours and writings of Laoutse, Confucius, and Mencius, and the steady growth of the military power of the Tsins, who were the first, of whom we have tangible knowledge, to discover and carry out a great idea in establishing a supreme and dominant administration over the inhabited portion of Eastern Asia. Brief as was their rule comparatively with the eight centuries and a half during which the Chows bore sway, they left behind them clear and creditable evidence of their capacity for government, whereas to impartial observers it must seem that the Chows accomplished very little indeed. It was their misfortune to have lived too long, and their apparently interminable old age brought to the record of their history many vices and weaknesses with scarcely a redeeming virtue.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TSIN DYNASTY.

DISTRACTED as the country had been for so many generations by civil war, and by the rivalry of the great nobles, the conclusive triumph of the Prince of Tsin furnished the people with some reason for hoping that a period of greater prosperity might now ensue. The more sanguine indulged speculations as to the extension of the Empire, and the scope for brilliant achievements under rulers who had, during centuries, guarded the Western marches against the Tartars; but the mass of the nation were the more satisfied because they anticipated rest. There were, however, solid grounds for supposing that the warlike Tsins, who, from their watch-towers in Shensi and Kansuh, had been the witnesses of many of the troubles which had swept the western and central portions of the continent, would be inclined to employ the forces of the Empire in settling the local questions with which they had long grappled on their single resources. There were not wanting signs, therefore, that the Tsins would not only wield the sceptre with a vigour unknown for many reigns, but that their policy would be conceived in a larger, if also in a more grasping, spirit than that of any of their predecessors. Before them the Chinese rulers had been content to control a single people, and their authority had never ceased to bear a close resemblance to that of the patriarchs; but the Tsins aspired to higher rank. In their eyes nothing less than the dominant position in Eastern Asia was the right of the peoples of the fertile provinces watered by the three great rivers that constituted China Proper; and they imagined it to be their task

to accomplish this design. The imperial policy of China originated in this way, and the later dynasties did but expand the original plan of Hwangti, the great ruler of the Tsins.

Chow Siang, the victorious prince of the Tsins, did not live long enough to enjoy the fruits of his triumph; and, as his son Hiao Wang died in the same year, the leadership of the family, and the charge of its destiny, passed to his grandson Chwang Siang Wang. This prince, while fully aware of, and not less anxious to realize the great prize at which Chow Siang had aimed, does not appear to have perceived that, when raised to the throne as the first Emperor of the Fourth Dynasty, the game was little more than half won. The Tsins were indeed the most powerful, warlike, and ambitious of the principalities; but, after all, they were only one among many. The Chows had fallen, and fallen by their prowess; but each of the feudatories saw in that event only the removal of the obstacle to the supreme height of his ambition. The long line of the Chows had at length reached its termination, and the last descendant of the great Wou Wang had met with the ignominious fate which his own crimes and those of his predecessors had brought upon his head. But the final settlement had yet to be attained.

The first act of Chwang Siang Wang was to order the invasion of the territories of his neighbour the Prince of Wei; and his generals defeating the enemy in the field captured the two principal cities of that state. This striking success, enhanced by minor victories elsewhere, defeated the main object of the Emperor by creating a panic among the other great nobles, for the sense of a common danger led to the forming of a coalition amongst them too formidable for him to cope with. Moreover, they secured the services of Ouki, the best general of the age, and under his leading the tide of war was rolled back from the land of Wei into the territories of Tsin. The campaign closed with complete success for the confederates, and Chwang Siang Wang died a few months later, after a brief reign of three years. It thus seemed as if, before they had fairly commenced their occupation of the throne, the Tsins were to be swept from their pride of place,

and relegated to the insignificant position from which they had sprung.

The title of Emperor, divested of all but nominal meaning by this disastrous war, passed to Chwang Siang's reputed son, the celebrated Tsin Chi Hwangti. Of his origin various stories are told by the Chinese chroniclers, who unite in denying that he was the late Emperor's son; but as none of them explain how it was that a boy of thirteen years, known to be a substituted child, should have been unanimously selected as the leader of the Tsins at this crisis, their stories can only be received with reserve. If Hwangti was not really born in the purple, he speedily showed that he was equal to the cares of government. His first object was to break up the coalition of the princes who, having removed the immediate danger which threatened them, fancied that there was no longer any necessity for keeping their forces in the field. While several of them disbanded their armies, the two most powerful quarrelled and declared war upon each other. These dissensions afforded the new Emperor a breathing space, which he turned to the best account.

His prime object was to detach the general Ouki from the service of the Prince of Wei, and in this the practices prevailing at the courts of Chinese feudatories greatly assisted him. Bribing a functionary of that prince to poison his master's ear against the faithful Ouki, Hwangti had the satisfaction of seeing the one general he feared in disgrace and driven into retirement. The object of his dread being removed, he gradually seized several of the strong cities belonging to his neighbours, and when an attempt was made to revive the coalition he defeated his unskilful opponents in battle. The success of his arms, and the reputation he was acquiring by the ability evinced in his administration, were steadily winning public opinion round to his side. The cities which he wrested from his foes remained in his possession, and, while every other province was shrinking, his was extending on all sides. It was practically the conquest of China upon which he had embarked, and the vigour with which he commenced the enterprise afforded good promise of ultimate success.

A single instance may be given of the larger views which dictated his policy. On the western and northern borders the Tartar* tribes had long been troublesome, and prominent among these were the Hiongnou, identified with the Huns of a later age. Hwangti set the example, and several of the other princes followed him, of taking precautions against their inroads by the construction of walls, a system of defence which he ultimately expanded into the Great Wall. At this period (B.C. 238) his attention was diverted from affairs of state to domestic troubles which broke out in the palace. These internal brawls are invested with historical importance, because they led to the passing of an edict against foreigners in the following year, which would have become law, but for the able and eloquent pleading of a man who, more than any other, assisted the Emperor in carrying out his great design of making China a united country. Lisseh, such was his name, held a high office at the Court, when the edict threatened him, as the native of another province, with ruin; but on the eve of departure he sent the Emperor a statement of how much previous rulers had benefited by the ability of aliens, winding up with the following appeal, not less forcible than eloquent, to his better judgment: "I do not pause to examine if it may on the present occasion be expedient for private reasons to banish foreigners from your service or to retain them; all that I insist upon is that in banishing them you are not only depriving yourself of useful supporters, but you are handing them over to other princes, jealous of your glory and your power. By offering this insult to these foreigners, you make them your enemies; you put a weapon in their hands against yourself; you inspire them with the desire to serve their princes against your interests. My zeal for your service and your honour compels me, Prince, to make these representations to you, and to entreat you to give them your most serious attention." The Emperor perceived from this address that Lisseh was a

* At this point it will be advisable to state that in these pages the term Tartar is retained and used in its commonly accepted sense; that is, it is applied generally to all the tribes in North-Eastern Asia, although many of these were of the Turkish stock.

man after his own heart, and at once gave orders for the withdrawal of the edict. Lisseh was restored to his post, and taken into the confidence of the ruler. At this moment Hwangti's domestic troubles were smoothed down by the death of Lieou Pou Wei, who had wished to pass himself off as the Emperor's father. In B.C. 235, his hands being thus freed, Hwangti resumed military operations against his neighbours; and assisted and encouraged in his main object by the able Lisseh, he resumed the task of subduing China. The unity of the Empire became the watchword of these two men.

It was at this time that Hwangti adopted the custom of sitting on the throne with a naked sword in his hand—a fit emblem of the means by which he would have to attain undisputed supremacy, and also of the severity which he intended to employ. For many years wars and military operations monopolized his attention; and it was not until his reign was drawing to a close that he found it possible to return the sword to the scabbard. His first campaign after this lull was against the Prince of Chow—not to be confounded with the dynasty—whom he at first defeated; but the skill of General Limou turned the scale against him. Reinforcements were sent from the capital, and the year closed with the capture of several important cities by Hwangti's troops. Almost simultaneously with this doubtful war the ruler of Han—who had seen the triumphs of the Tsins with some apprehension, and thought to secure better terms by a timely surrender—was deposed from his seat, and compelled to retire into private life in the dominions of his conqueror. This easy success paved the way towards an effectual settlement of the complication with Chow, whose victorious general, Limou, still kept the field in defiance of Tsin. But Hwangti, too cautious to risk a campaign against a general superior to any in his service, had recourse to the same arts as were successfully employed in the case of Ouki. A courtier was bribed to malign the absent general, and to turn the mind of the Prince of Chow against his sole supporter. The intrigue was more successful than it deserved to be. Limou was recalled from his charge, and, on his refusing to obey the summons, assassinated by hirelings sent from the palace.

Its last bulwark thus removed, Hwangti's army overran the province of Chow. The capital Hantan was sacked, and the prince with his family became prisoners only to experience the severity of their foe. Before the year B.C. 228 closed, the large and once powerful kingdom of Chow had become a province of the fast-rising Chinese Empire. Hwangti had now the opportunity to turn his attention to another quarter. Residing at his court was Prince Tan, heir of the ruler of Yen, whom, "either out of settled policy or from whim," Hwangti flagrantly insulted. Tan, burning with revenge, fled the court, and proceeded to instruct an assassin who was instigated to murder Hwangti, by the hope of thus meriting the title of "liberator of the Empire." The plot nearly succeeded. The assassin was admitted into the presence, and was on the point of drawing his poniard, when the movement caught the quick eye of the king. In the scuffle Hwangti got the better of his assailant, and with one blow of his sabre severed his leg from his body. Tan's plot thus failed, but it was a narrow escape. The details of this plot afford proof of the terrible earnestness and resolution of the Chinese character. Kinkou the assassin, perceiving the difficulty of obtaining an audience with the Emperor, induced Fanyuki, on whose head Hwangti had placed a price, to commit suicide so that he might the better disarm any suspicion. Fanyuki, believing that Kinkou would thereby be able to play the part of his avenger, slew himself. There are few instances in history of a spirit of revenge having inspired so desperate an act without the possibility of any personal gratification.

Hwangti soon discovered that Tan was at the bottom of this plot, and thereupon gave orders to his general, Wang Pen, to overrun and subdue the territories of Yen—orders which were faithfully carried out. The ruler of that state, in order to avert the coming storm, executed his son Tan, and sent his head to Hwangti, while he himself fled into the wilds of Leaoutung. The same year witnessed the not less decided triumph of his arms over the forces of Wei, the capital of which was stormed, and the unfortunate ruler sent to Hienyang for execution. Thus did the work proceed briskly of uniting the Chinese under a single will. The times needed a policy

of blood and iron, and they had produced the man. Of the great principalities there now only remained Choo, but the task of subduing it was more formidable than any yet attempted. It had to be undertaken, however, if the design was to be completed. Extensive preparations were made for this war, and the Emperor applied to his generals for their opinion as to the number of troops necessary to employ against Choo. One general, named Lisin, anxious at the same time to distinguish himself and to say what he thought would be agreeable to his master, offered to undertake the enterprise if two hundred thousand men were placed at his orders. Wang Tsien, on the other hand, the Nestor of Chinese commanders at this period, and the father of Wang Pen already mentioned, said that not fewer than six hundred thousand men would suffice.

The opinion of the former pleased Hwangti better than that of the latter, and, reproaching Wang Tsien as a dotard, he entrusted Lisin with an army of the strength he had specified. Lisin and his lieutenant, Moungtien, at once invaded the province, and overcame the first line of resistance in the border cities; but their adversary was not less skilful than they were, and, attacking them by surprise, inflicted a severe defeat upon them. More than forty thousand men are said to have perished during the battle and the pursuit; and the splendid army of the Tsins was driven in utter confusion back into its own country. History does not preserve any record of the fate of Lisin; but it may be assumed that, if he did not fall in the battle, he never dared to appear afterwards in the presence of the enraged Hwangti.

Lisin's promises had for the moment been more agreeable, but they had been falsified. It remained only to have recourse to the experience and more sober judgment of the veteran general Wang Tsien. Appealed to by the sovereign who, only a few months before, had called him a dotard, Wang Tsien, despite his infirmities and years, consented to take the command on the condition that an army of not less than six hundred thousand men was collected and placed at his disposal. This vast host having been assembled by the energy of the Emperor, ably assisted

by the minister Lisseh, the doubt very intelligibly suggested itself to the mind of the general whence the supplies necessary for it were to come. Wang Tsien addressed himself to Hwangti on the subject, and the latter's reply is noteworthy: "Do not let that disquiet you, I have provided for everything. I promise you that provisions shall rather be wanting in my own palace than in your camp."

The general proved himself to be as skilful in leading his troops as the Emperor had shown himself in collecting them and in providing for their wants. In a great battle, which shortly ensued between the rival hosts, we are told that Wang Tsien, availing himself of a false movement made by the enemy, threw their army into confusion and drove it from the field. After this victory, the principality was subjected by Wang Tsien, who placed garrisons in the strong cities. The members of the ruling family were sent to Hienyang, where they shared the fate of many of their peers. The complete subjugation of Choo was followed by the annexation of Yen, and also of the smaller provinces of Tai and Tsi. In this latter task Wang Pen assisted his father.

These later triumphs completed the task which Hwangti had set himself. The independent kingdoms into which the Chinese Empire had been parcelled out were destroyed, their dynasties were exterminated, and their territories became the possession of the Tsins. Over and above all, the leading idea of the unity of the Empire had been realized. It only remained for Hwangti to reap the reward of his valour, prudence, and good fortune, and by some formal act place the seal to his great achievement.

His first measure was to change his name and style from his patronymic Ching Wang to Tsin Chi Hwangti, which signifies the first sovereign Emperor of the Tsins. Not free from the personal vanity of mortals, he sought, by this high-sounding title, to perpetuate the memory of his reign, which an impartial observer will always admit could afford to stand on its own merits; but the Court chroniclers of his own country were the more indignant with him because he strove thereby to put himself on a pedestal apart from, if not superior to, that occupied by the semi-mythical patriarchs

and heroes of the first two dynasties. For this assumption of superiority, as well as for the indifference he showed to established etiquette, Hwangti incurred the hostility of the lettered classes, and his subsequent acts embittered rather than mollified their feelings. During his lifetime they could not refrain from expressing how much their sentiments were shocked by his acts, and after his death their rage was indulged uncontrolled. Nevertheless, Hwangti had accomplished his wish. He ruled a united China, and the people had peace.

Like most Chinese rulers, he patronized astronomy and revised the calendar. Undeterred by opposition, he abolished many useless ceremonies, striving to attain the practical in all things with the least possible outlay—these measures being intensely unpopular among the officials, accustomed to attend to the minutest forms, and to act on every occasion in obedience to precedent. The embellishment of his capital should not be lost sight of among his other undertakings. One of his first edicts was to the effect that, as the people had no longer any apprehension on the score of civil war—"peace under his reign being universal"—all weapons should be sent to Hienyang, where was stationed the *elite* of his army as well as the national arsenal. It was written, and it is not difficult to understand why such was the case, that "the skilful disarming of the provinces added daily to the wealth and prosperity of the capital." The Hall of Audience in the palace was ornamented with twelve statues, made from the spoil of his numerous campaigns, and each of these weighed twelve thousand pounds. Outside the city he constructed another palace, on a vast scale, or rather a series of palaces, with magnificent gardens attached, and this became known as the Palace of Delight. The character of the Emperor revealed itself more clearly in the fact that ten thousand men could be drawn up in order of battle in one of its courts.

Hwangti at once divided the Empire into thirty-six provinces, and, when the preliminary arrangements had been completed, he made preparations for visiting the possessions which, the first time for centuries, recognized a common

master under his sway. One of his ministers suggested that he should divide the provinces among his children and blood relations by bestowing fiefs upon them. The suggestion did not find favour in the eyes of the Emperor, and showed that the man who made it had but very faintly perceived the significance of his master's policy. Lisseh had little difficulty in exposing the evils of such a course, and in an eloquent address described the troubles the people had to endure from a divided country. The Emperor put the question in a nutshell when he said, "Good government is impossible under a multiplicity of masters." Governors and sub-governors were then appointed in each of the provinces, and the organization thus drawn up exists, with very few modifications, at the present time, a work alone sufficient to stamp Hwangti as a great ruler.

During the Emperor's journeys throughout his dominions the main features of the country and the condition of the people came under his eye. Recognizing that one of the best ways to increase the prosperity of his people was to improve the means of communication between one part of his Empire and another, the Emperor gave orders that high-roads should be laid down in all directions. His attention was the more drawn to the matter because in the East it is the custom when a great man visits a district to repair all the roads in it, and Hwangti, while enjoying the benefit of this rule, knew that, outside his line of march, the roads were of a very different description from those which had been hastily prepared for his arrival. Wishing to see with his own eyes, he may even have diverged from his route for the purpose of observing the naked reality. His own words sum up the situation: "These roads have been made expressly for me, and I am indeed well satisfied. It is not just that I personally should benefit by a convenience of which my subjects have more need than I can have, and one also which I can procure for them. Therefore I decree that roads shall be made in all directions through the Empire." The autocrat's orders were carried out, and the grand roads still remain, often, indeed, in ruins, but two thousand years after his death, to testify to the splendour of his genius.

It was at this period (B.C. 219-218) that the collision which had been long imminent between Hwangti and the literati occurred. In those days it was customary for the kings of China to ascend lofty mountains, for the purpose of offering sacrifices on their summits; and the learned classes were not unnaturally anxious that this should be done in accordance with form. Their representation of what the early Emperors had done became tedious by repetition, and their admonitions roused the ire rather than inspired the devotion of the impatient Hwangti. These discussions he cut short by saying that, "You vaunt the simplicity of the ancients; but I act after a still simpler fashion than they did." The Chinese literati have always been noted for the obstinate courage they have shown in expressing their opinions at all hazards; but in Hwangti they encountered an opponent too powerful, and too free from prejudice and superstition, to be vanquished by the stock weapons in their armoury.

The contest had not yet reached its crisis. The resentment of the king against his enemies was slumbering, and the literati were only biding their time for a favourable opportunity to reassert the rights of which they considered they had been wrongfully deprived. The occasion offered itself five years later (B.C. 213), when Hwangti had summoned to his capital all the governors and principal officials for a General Council of the Empire. The scene, we may well imagine, was imposing. The men who had made China a single Empire by their valour and ability, assembled in the magnificent palace, erected from the spoils of kingdoms, to do honour to the Emperor who had inspired their efforts; and side by side with these representatives of practical politics a small body of theoretical observers, wedded to their own beliefs and traditions, containing all the book-learning of the country in their ranks, defiant and hostile, holding Hwangti to be a dangerous and unscrupulous innovator, and not refraining from expressing their opinion in words. It was only in consonance with human nature that the long pent-up hostility of the two classes, the practical man of affairs, and the theoretical student, who was nothing if not the devotee of antiquity, reduced to a focus within the walls of this

palace, should reveal itself in acts. Hwangti may be credited with sufficient knowledge of men to have anticipated what took place; and he shrewdly suspected that the literati would be unable to curb their feelings. His anticipations were fulfilled, and his opponents put themselves forward as the aggressors.

Hwangti called upon those present to express their candid opinion of his government, and of the new legislation which he had inaugurated. Upon this a courtier rose, and delivered a panegyric on what he had accomplished. "Truly you have surpassed the very greatest of your predecessors, even at the most remote period." This eulogium brought matters to a climax. The literati, unable to tolerate this last insult to their heroes, broke into murmurs, and one, more courageous than the rest, gave vent to his disapproval. He began by styling the former speaker "a vile flatterer, unworthy of the high position which he occupied," and, proceeding to heap praise on the earlier rulers, he concluded a speech not less remarkable for its bad taste than for its weakness in argument, by advocating the division of the Empire into principalities. Hwangti cut short the admonitions of this no doubt highly respectable individual by reminding him that that point had been already discussed and decided. But as the point was one of the first importance, he called upon Lisseh to state over again the reasons which rendered the maintenance of the unity of the Empire advisable.

Lisseh's speech is very remarkable, both as an exposition of policy and as a defence of the reasons which dictated the burning of the books. The following is the substance of this great speech:—"It must be admitted," he said, "after what we have just heard, that men of letters are, as a rule, very little acquainted with what concerns the government of a country—not that government of pure speculation, which is nothing more than a phantom, vanishing the nearer we approach to it, but the practical government which consists in keeping men within the sphere of their proper duties. With all their pretence of knowledge, they are, in this matter, only ignorant. They can tell you by heart everything which has happened in the past, back to the most remote period,

but they are, or seem to be, ignorant of what is being done in these later days, of what is passing under their eyes. . . . Incapable of discerning that the thing which was formerly suitable would be wholly out of place to-day, that that which was useful, perhaps necessary, in the past would be positively injurious in the time in which we live, they would have everything arranged in exact imitation of what they find written in their books." Lisseh then went on to denounce the learned classes as enemies of the public weal, and as a class apart and uninfluenced by the national feeling. "Now is the time or never," he concluded, "to close the mouths of these secret enemies, to place a curb upon their audacity."

The Emperor expressed his entire approval of Lisseh's remarks, and ordered him to lose no time in carrying out his propositions. All books were proscribed, and the authorities burnt every work except those treating of medicine, agriculture, etc. By these violent measures Hwangti hoped to root out from the memory of his people the names of the early Emperors. Before condemning this as an inexcusable act of Vandalism, the hostility of the literati to every act from the commencement of his tenure of power must be taken into consideration. Nor can it be truthfully said that this was a struggle between "light" and "darkness," "knowledge" and "ignorance," in which brute force gained the upper hand. For if the situation is thoroughly grasped, if we make allowance for the antipathies of the rival classes, surely it will be admitted that the "light" and the "knowledge" were on the side of Hwangti and his ministers, and not of Chunyuyue and the chroniclers. While the former perceived the necessities and true wants of the nation, the latter were foolishly clamouring for the observance of idle forms with the same breath that they advocated measures inevitably entailing the dismemberment of the Empire. Hwangti's extreme remedy of destroying the written record of his predecessors' virtues was one that cannot be expected to receive the approval of civilized people. On the other hand, there was much to justify such a course in the eyes of Hwangti and his ministers, and although all subsequent generations of Chinese historians have piled obloquy on their heads, they have failed to obscure

the greatness of this Emperor, who founded the political entity known as China.

The peace which had been established within the country by a long series of successes only inspired Hwangti with the desire to render the stability of his triumph the more assured by making his power felt beyond his extreme borders. Strong at home, he would be respected abroad. Drawing his troops from classes peculiarly suitable for a military life—"from those who were without any fixed profession, and those among the ranks of the people possessed of exceptional physical strength"—he found himself the master of a regular army which was capable of extending his dominions in whatever direction he desired. During these later years his principal successes were obtained in the south, where, after annexing the states of Tonquin and Cochin China, the terror of his arms went before him, it is said, into the kingdoms of Ava and Bengal. His general, Moungtien, about the same time carried on operations against the tribes beyond Kansuh, and there is some reason for believing that the town of Hami, many hundreds of miles distant from Kansuh, fell into his hands, and thus became for the first time a watch-tower for China in the direction of Central Asia, a position which it has often since held.

These victories in the field were the precursors of the great defensive work on the northern frontier, which had been conceived early in the reign, and which has become immortalized as the Great Wall. Hwangti, with the practical good sense which was characteristic of him, perceived that extension of dominion over the barbarian tribes of the north would be attended by quite as many disadvantages as advantages. Having chastised his old foes, he withdrew therefore his forces from their solitudes, and employed his soldiers, and a large number of the male population as well, in constructing a fortified wall from the seacoast to the extremity of Kansuh. He lived long enough to see this gigantic undertaking finished ; and, whether this rampart effected everything its originator expected or not, Hwangti had the satisfaction of knowing that he had done everything in his power for the protection of the people whom he had united. In another respect he

had put the seal to his own greatness. The educated might continue to sneer at his shortcomings from their standard, and brand him as a reckless destroyer; but in the Great Wall,* which exists now, two thousand years after his death, he left a monument to his own greatness, and one which would impress later ages, better than any words, with a true sense of what manner of man he was.

Hwangti did not long survive these great and crowning acts of his career. Seized with some malady (B.C. 210) which is not specified, he neglected the simplest precautions, and paid the penalty of his rashness. The death of this great ruler roused all the passions dormant during his life, and among the people the belief spread that after his death his estates would be divided among many claimants. In this the popular fancy proved too true. With Hwangti were buried many of his wives, and large quantities of treasure—a custom peculiar to the Huns, and, among Chinese rulers, to the chiefs of Tsin. The striking achievements which illustrated his reign are the best evidence of his personal character. Loving splendour, he yet repudiated idle form; magnificent in his ideas, he left as the record of his reign great public works to testify to the pureness of his taste as well as to his care for his people; and, abstemious in his personal habits, he set an example of simplicity in the midst of the luxury of his court. His favourite exercise was walking, and this alone would mark him out as apart from other Chinese rulers. As a soldier he was not particularly distinguished, but he knew how to select good generals; and as an administrator he was not too self-confident to despise the aid of a minister such as Lisseh. He left an example which the greatest of his successors might seek to follow, and while, in a personal sense, the least Chinese of all the Emperors, he was undoubtedly the first to give form to the national will on what may be called Imperial questions. In that sense none of his successors, down to the present dynasty, were more ardent supporters of Chinese dignity than he was.

* For a description of this work, see Pauthier, pp. 10-13. Du Halde and numerous other writers (including several English travellers, Bell, Fleming, Michie, Williamson, James, and Younghusband) may also be consulted for details of various portions of it.

The death of Hwangti proved the signal for the outbreak of disturbances throughout the realm. Within a few months five princes had founded as many kingdoms, each hoping, if not to become supreme, at least to remain independent. Moungtien, beloved by the army, and at the head, as he tells us in his own words, of three hundred thousand soldiers, might have been the arbiter of the Empire; but a weak feeling of respect for the Imperial authority induced him to obey an order sent by Eulchi, Hwangti's son and successor, commanding him "to drink the waters of eternal life." Eulchi's brief reign of three years was a succession of misfortunes. The reins of office were held by the eunuch Chowkow, who first murdered the minister Lisseh and then Eulchi himself. Ing Wang, a grandson of Hwangti, was the next and last of the Tsin Emperors. Oncoming to power, he at once caused Chowkow, whose crimes had been discovered, to be arrested and executed. This vigorous commencement proved transitory, for when he had enjoyed nominal authority during six weeks, Ing Wang's troops, after a reverse in the field, went over in a body to Lieou Pang, the leader of a rebel force. Ing Wang put an end to his existence, thus terminating, in a manner not less ignominious than any of its predecessors, the dynasty of the Tsins, which Hwangti had hoped to place permanently on the throne of China, and to which his genius gave a lustre far surpassing that of many other families that had enjoyed the same privilege during a much longer period.

CHAPTER V.

RISE OF THE HANS.

THIS crisis in the history of the country had afforded one of those great men, who rise periodically from the ranks of the people to give law to nations, the opportunity for advancing his personal interests at the same time that he made them appear to be identical with the public weal. Of such geniuses, if the test applied be the work accomplished, there have been few with higher claims to respectful and admiring consideration than Lieou Pang, who after the fall of the Tsins became the founder of the Han dynasty under the style of Kaotsou. Originally the governor of a small town, he had, soon after the death of Hwangti, gathered round him the nucleus of a formidable army ; and, while nominally serving under one of the greater princes, he scarcely affected to conceal that he was fighting for his own interest. On the other hand, he was no mere soldier of fortune, and the moderation which he showed after victory enhanced his reputation as a general. Emulating Hwangti in his great qualities, he sought to put himself in a more favourable light before the people by showing respect to men of letters, and by using every effort in his power to save and collect the few books which had been rescued from the sweeping decree of the Tsin Emperor. His task was, however, only half begun when the Tsins were deposed, for there was, besides his own, a second large army in the field under a rival general, not less ambitious than Lieou Pang, but, as the event proved, less equal to the occasion. His rival was Pawang, a sort of brainless Goliath. Their antagonistic ambitions encountered in mortal strife, and

after a desperate struggle the tactics or the good fortune of Lieou Pang prevailed. The path to the throne being thus cleared of the last obstacle, the successful general became Emperor.

His first act was to proclaim an amnesty to all those who had borne arms against him. In a public proclamation he expressed his regret at the sufferings of the people "from the evils which follow in the train of war," and his desire that all should enjoy under his rule the advantages of peace abroad and tranquillity at home. This act, at once of discretion and clemency, confirmed public opinion in favour of one who had already shown himself to be a successful soldier and a shrewd statesman, and did more to consolidate his position than his assumption of the glowing title of Lofty and August Emperor. During the earlier years of his reign he chose the city of Loyang as his capital—now the flourishing and populous town of Honan—but at a later period he removed it to Singanfoo, in the western province of Shensi. His dynasty became known by the name of the small state where he was born, and which had fallen, early in his career, into his hands. Varied as were the incidents of his reign, none was of more permanent importance than the consolidation of the Imperial power under the Hans. Kaotsou, imitating in his policy his great predecessor, the Tsin Emperor, sanctioned or personally undertook various important public works, which in many places still exist, to testify to the greatness of his character. Chinese historians declare that much of the credit for these great enterprises was due to his general and minister, Chang-liang, but all history can do is to associate his name with undertakings which tended to increase the brilliance of the reign.

Prominent among these works must be placed the bridges constructed along the great roads in Western China. The city of Singanfoo was in those days difficult to approach, by reason of the mountainous country which surrounded it on most sides. Long detours were necessary in order to reach it from the south, and while its position possessed apparent advantages for the capital of the Empire, it was imperative that something should be done to render it more accessible.

One hundred thousand workmen were consequently engaged to construct roads across these mountains, and, where required, to cut through them. Valleys were filled up with the mass of the mountains which had towered above them, and where this did not suffice, bridges supported on pillars were thrown across from one side to the other. In other places bridges were suspended in air, and these, protected on each side by balustrades, admitted four horses to travel abreast. One of the most remarkable of these "flying bridges," as the Chinese call them, measured one hundred and fifty yards in length, and was at an altitude of more than five hundred feet above the valley. It is believed to be still in perfect condition. The Chinese may fairly take great credit to themselves for these wonderful engineering feats, which were achieved nearly two thousand years before suspension bridges were included in the category of European engineers. By these means Singanfoo became easy of access to the Chinese and all their tributaries, who could reach it by some of the grandest high-roads in the world. Not content with laying down these roads, post-houses, travellers' rests, and caravanserais were constructed at short intervals along the chief routes, so that travelling over the vast distances of the Empire was made as much a task of pleasure as possible, and no excuse was left for the subject not repairing to the capital whenever his presence was required. The effect produced on trade by these increased facilities for locomotion must also have been very beneficial, and no act of Kaotsou's reign places him higher in the scale of sovereigns than the improvement of the roads and the construction of these remarkable bridges.

Although Kaotsou commenced his reign by evincing a moderation towards his opponents which, while it was prudent, was certainly rare in the annals of the country, it was long before he could be pronounced to be safe from the machinations of his enemies; and in his later years the danger to his family was increased by, in some cases, the discontent, and in others, the disappointed ambition of his generals, who had in earlier days been his comrades, and had assisted to make him Emperor. In all his actions the presence of magnanimity is to be traced, and he appears to

have been always peculiarly susceptible to generous impulses. One officer, a devoted follower of his opponent Pawang, had been fined a large sum of money for having spoken treason against the Emperor. Unable to raise the amount, he sold his family into slavery, and took service himself with a silversmith, in order to satisfy the demands of the Emperor. Fortunately, his friends interceded for him, and Kaotsou, struck by the singular harshness of the gallant soldier's misfortunes, not only pardoned and released him and his family, but also gave him a post of honour at his own Court. Kipou proved a devoted minister, and his faithful services amply recompensed the clemency of the sovereign.

Notwithstanding that Kaotsou had won his way to supreme authority by the sword, it would appear that contemporary opinion denied him any claim to be considered a great general. He himself frequently declared that he owed his success to his capacity for selecting the best commanders and administrators, and although this affectation of modesty often appeared to be only intended as a studied compliment to his followers, there was perhaps more truth in it than might be supposed. Such, at least, was the opinion of Hansin, one of the first generals of the time, who, in the following conversation, showed that he was the first man in history to draw a distinction between the now admitted radical difference of the ordinary general and the great commander. The Emperor asked him how many men he thought he could lead efficiently in the field ; to which Hansin replied, "Sire! you can lead an army of a hundred thousand men very well, *but that is all.*" "And you?" said the Emperor. "The more numerous my soldiers, the better I shall lead them," replied the confident general. So far back as this remote period, this conversation would show that the truth of the modern colloquial phrase of there being "generals and generals" was recognized in China.

Another instance of the estimation in which military skill rather than brute courage was held at this period is afforded by the high honours and awards which were conferred on Siaoho, who, without engaging in the active bustle of battle, had planned and drawn up all the Emperor's campaigns.

Great discontent was caused by the preferment of Siaoho, of whose distinguished services very little was known by the army at large, and on these murmurings reaching Kaotsou's ears, he summoned his principal officers, whom he addressed in the following speech : " You find, I hear, reason for complaint in that I have rewarded Siaoho above his fellows. Tell me, at the chase who are they who pursue and capture the prey ? The dogs. But who direct and urge on the dogs ? Are they not the hunters ? All you present have indeed worked hard for me ; you have pursued your prey with vigour, and you at last overthrew and captured it. In all this you deserve the same merit as the dogs of the chase. But Siaoho has conducted the whole of the war. It was he who regulated everything, he who ordered you to attack the enemy at the opportune moment, he who by his tactics made you the master of the cities and provinces which you have conquered ; and on this account he deserves all the credit of the hunter, which is the more worthy of reward."

But while showing special marks of favour to Siaoho, he left none of his followers without reward, thus giving a stability to his *régime* greater than was possessed by any of his immediate predecessors. Alone among his supporters, he overlooked the claims of his father. This was probably due to inadvertence, and we are told that no one was more surprised at the apparent neglect than the father himself. However, he took prompt steps to remind his son that in the distribution of rewards he had as yet received nothing. Dressed in his most costly garments, he presented himself before Kaotsou, protesting in a speech of studied humility that he was the least and most obedient of his subjects. Kaotsou understood the reproach contained in his father's action, and at once called a council of his ministers for the purpose of proclaiming him "the lesser Emperor." Taking him by the hand, he seated him on a chair at the foot of the throne. By this deed Kaotsou appealed to and propitiated the best feelings of the Chinese, with whom filial respect and veneration rank as the first of duties and the greatest of virtues.

Kaotsou loved splendour, and sought to make his receptions

and banquets imposing by their brilliance. He drew up a special ceremonial, which must have proved a trying ordeal for his courtiers, and dire was the offence if it were infringed in the smallest particular. At the same time he hesitated to sanction the proposal of Siaoho for constructing at his new capital, Singanfoo, the magnificent palace which that general, not less skilful as a statesman and minister of public works than as the framer of a campaign, had planned for him. His hesitation was not removed until Siaoho observed that "Your Majesty should regard all the Empire as your family. If the grandeur of your palace does not correspond with that of your family, what idea will it give of its power?" For the first time in his reign Kaotsou tasted the sweets of power during the festivities which he kept up at Singanfoo during several weeks. On one of these occasions he exclaimed, "To-day I feel I am Emperor, and perceive all the difference between a subject and his master!"

Kaotsou's attention was rudely summoned away from these trivialities by the outbreak of revolts against his authority and by inroads on the part of the Tartars. The latter were the more serious. Already has frequent allusion been made to the incursions of the tribes holding possession of the deserts to the west and north-west of the country, and it has been seen that the Princes of Tsin and the Emperor Hwangti, grappling with the difficulty in a bold manner, had done much towards remedying the evil. The disturbances that followed Hwangti's death were a fresh inducement to these clans to again gather round a common head and prey upon the weakness of China, for Kaotsou's authority was not yet recognized in many of the tributary states which had been fain to admit the supremacy of the great Tsin Emperor. About this time the Hiongnou Tartars, probably the Huns, were governed by two chiefs in particular, one named Tonghou, the other Mehe. Of these the former appears to have been instigated by a reckless ambition or an overweening arrogance, and at first it seemed that the forbearance of Mehe, or Mete, would allow his pretensions to pass unchallenged. Mehe had become chief of his clan by murdering his father Teouman, who was on the point of ordering his

son's assassination when thus forestalled in his intention. Tonghou sent to demand from him a favourite horse, which Mehe sent him. His kinsmen advised him to refuse compliance, but he replied, "What! would you quarrel with your neighbours for a horse?" Shortly afterwards Tonghou sent to ask for one of the wives of the former chief. This also Mehe granted, saying, "Why should we undertake a war for the sake of a woman?" It was only when Tonghou menaced his possessions that Mehe took up arms. Then Mehe collected his followers, dispersed that prince's army, captured and executed his opponent, and took possession of his camps and pasture-grounds. Among the Hiongnou the authority of Mehe became generally recognized, and all the scattered clans followed his banner to the war.

Mehe's successes followed rapidly upon each other. Issuing from the desert, and marching in the direction of China, he wrested many fertile districts from the feeble hands of those who held them; and while establishing his personal authority on the banks of the Hoangho his lieutenants returned laden with plunder from expeditions into the rich provinces of Shensi and Szchuen. He won back all the territory lost by his ancestors to Hwangti and Moungtien, and he paved the way to greater success by the siege and capture of the city of Maye, thus obtaining possession of the key of the road to Tsinyang. Several of the border chiefs, and of the Emperor's lieutenants, dreading the punishment allotted in China to want of success, went over to the Tartars, and took service under Mehe.

The Emperor, fully aroused to the gravity of the danger, assembled his army, and placing himself at its head, marched against the Tartars. Encouraged by the result of several preliminary encounters, the Emperor was eager to engage Mehe's main army, and after some weeks' marching and manœuvring, the two forces halted in front of each other. Kaotsou, imagining that victory was within his grasp, and believing the stories brought to him by spies of the weakness of the Tartar army, resolved on an immediate attack. He turned a deaf ear to the cautious advice of one of his generals who warned him that "in war we should never despise an

enemy," and marched in person at the head of his advanced guard to find the Tartars. Mehe, who had been at all these pains to throw dust in the Emperor's eyes, and to conceal his true strength, no sooner saw how well his stratagem had succeeded, and that Kaotsou was rushing into the trap so elaborately laid for him, than by a skilful movement he cut off his communications with the main body of his army, and surrounding him with an overwhelming force, compelled him to take refuge in the city of Pingching in Shensi.

With a very short supply of provisions, and hopelessly outnumbered, it looked as if the Chinese Emperor could not possibly escape the grasp of the desert chief. In this strait one of his officers suggested as a last chance that the most beautiful virgin in the town should be discovered, and sent as a present to mollify the conqueror. Kaotsou seized at this suggestion, as the drowning man will catch at a straw, and the story is preserved, though her name has passed into oblivion, of how the young Chinese girl entered into the plan, and devoted all her wits to charming the Tartar conqueror. She succeeded as much as their fondest hopes could have led them to believe; and Mehe permitted Kaotsou, after signing an ignominious treaty, to leave his place of confinement and rejoin his army, glad to welcome the return of the Emperor, yet, without him, helpless to stir a hand to effect his release. Mehe retired to his own territory, well satisfied with the material results of the war and the rich booty which had been obtained in the sack of Chinese cities, while Kaotsou, like the ordinary type of an Oriental ruler, vented his discomfiture on his subordinates. The closing acts of the war were the lavishing of rewards on the head of the general to whose warnings he had paid no heed, and the execution of the scouts who had been misled by the wiles of Mehe.

The success which had attended this incursion and the spoil of war were potent inducements to the Tartars to repeat the invasion. While Kaotsou was meditating over the possibility of revenge, and considering schemes for the better protection of his frontier, the Tartars, disregarding the truce that had been concluded, retraced their steps, and

pillaged the border districts with impunity. In this year (B.C. 199) they were carrying everything before them, and the Emperor, either unnerved by recent disaster or appalled at the apparently irresistible energy of the followers of Mehe, remained apathetic in his palace. The representations of his ministers and generals failed to rouse him from his stupor, and the weapon to which he resorted was the abuse of his opponent, and not his prompt chastisement. Mehe was "a wicked and faithless man, who had risen to power by the murder of his father, and one with whom oaths and treaties carried no weight." In the meanwhile the Tartars were continuing their victorious career. The capital itself could not be pronounced safe from their assaults, or from the insult of their presence.

In this crisis counsels of craft and dissimulation alone found favour in the Emperor's cabinet. No voice was raised in support of the bold and only true course of going forth to meet the national enemy. The capitulation of Pingching had for the time destroyed the manhood of the race, and Kaotsou held in esteem the advice of men widely different from those who had placed him on the throne. Kaotsou opened fresh negotiations with Mehe, who concluded a treaty on the condition of the Emperor's daughter being given to him in marriage, and on the assumption that he was an independent ruler. With these terms Kaotsou felt obliged to comply, and thus for the first time this never-ceasing collision between the tribes of the desert and the agriculturists of the plains of China closed with the admitted triumph of the former. The contest was soon to be renewed with different results, but the triumph of Mehe was beyond question.

The weakness thus shown against a foreign foe brought its own punishment in domestic troubles. The palace became the scene of broils, plots, and counter-plots; and so badly did Kaotsou manage his affairs at this epoch that one of his favourite generals raised the standard of revolt against him through apparently a mere misunderstanding. In this instance Kaotsou easily put down the rising, but others followed which, if not pregnant with danger, were

at the least extremely troublesome. The murder, by order of the Empress, during a reception at the palace, of Hansin, to whose aid Kaotsou mainly owed his elevation to the throne, shook confidence still more in the ruler, and many of his followers were forced into open rebellion through dread of personal danger. What wonder that, as he has said, "the very name of revolt inspired Kaotsou with apprehension."

The southern provinces of China, which had been brought under the sway of Hwangti, were at this time welded into an independent state called Nanhai. The Hans had been unable to extend their authority over this region, and Kaotsou had no choice save to recognize the existence of an independent kingdom which it was extremely doubtful if he could overthrow. An envoy was sent by the Emperor to the capital of its prince, and his tact enabled him to obtain what the Chinese Emperor might flatter himself as being a recognition of his supreme authority. His ambassador on this occasion was a well-known man of letters named Loukia, and it was his representations which did most towards bringing his class into greater favour at court. Loukia, indeed, composed a work for the special purpose of bringing Kaotsou round to enlightened ideas, and this undoubtedly exercised considerable influence on his views. In B.C. 195 we find him going out of his way to visit the tomb of Confucius, to whom he offered homage in an elaborate ceremony. This, it is expressly stated, was only an act of policy. He left it for his successors to perform the same office to the great philosopher as a tribute of belief.

During the last campaign in which he was engaged—that against Kingpou, one of his old companions and supporters—he revisited his natal spot, where he gave a grand banquet to his army. After the feast, he took a musical instrument and sang in praise of the love of one's country. No truer meed has been rendered by Western poet to the necessity of patriotism than that contained in the impromptu tribute of this Chinese ruler. "Oh, my friends! how delicious the feeling we experience when after long absence we revisit our native land! The joy of battle, the charm of glory and of earthly grandeur, nay, even the title of Emperor or of

King, contains nothing so seductive ; they cannot, in a well-regulated mind, stifle the love of country. The land which first nourished us has sacred claims to our gratitude. My dear fatherland ! the cradle of my fortunes, it is my fondest wish that you shall possess me after my death, and that my tomb may attest how much I loved you."

Shortly after this event, it became evident that the Emperor, borne down by anxiety and disturbed at the feuds with his earlier friends, was approaching his end, and one of his favourite wives made great efforts and intrigued among the nobles in order that her son should be selected the heir. But fortunately for the Empire, Kaotsou was aware of the evils of a disputed succession, and turning a deaf ear to her entreaties, his eldest son Hiao Hoeiti was proclaimed heir-apparent. A few months before his death, Kaotsou had his first and only quarrel with the faithful Siaoho, whom on this occasion he cast into prison. Promptly advised of the injustice of his suspicions and the harshness of his treatment, he released and restored him to his former dignities, giving expression to the noteworthy sentiment that "there was nothing humiliating in the rendering of a merited act of justice."

The Emperor's indisposition had before this act of reparation assumed a grave character. The man who boasted that he "had conquered the Empire from his saddle," was lying sick to death, because he refused all mortal aid, saying that "If Heaven wish me to die or live, it will inspire me what to do." His last act was to name the best officer for carrying on the government, and to instruct the Empress Liuchi what was to be done after his death, showing in those arrangements all the ability and knowledge of men which were his chief characteristics ; while with his latest breath he revealed the weak side of his character by declaring that all remedies for himself were useless, and by forbidding any one to mention them to him. He died in the fifty-third year of his age, having reigned as Emperor during eight years.

The close of his reign did not bear out all the promise of its commencement ; and the extent of his authority was greatly curtailed by the disastrous results of the war with the

Tartars, and the subsequent revolts among his generals. Despite these reverses, there remains much in favour of his character, and, although his reign will not compare in its achievements with that of the greatest of the Tsins, it formed a not unfavourable commencement for the famous dynasty of the Hans. The following opinion expresses what seems to be a fair historical verdict upon his character :—

“Kaohwangti, the founder of the celebrated dynasty of the Hans, derived none of his knowledge from study ; but he supplied the want by a quickness of intellect and a power of penetration far from common. Prompt, impressionable, and impetuous, his eagerness often led him into faults ; but he generally knew how to repair them by deferring to the judgment of those better instructed than himself. Naturally of a good disposition, and affable in his bearing, he treated his soldiers with kindness. These manners gained him the affection of his subjects, whose happiness he always sought to promote. As soon as he found himself master of the Empire, he ordered Siaoho to draw up a code of laws for the better government of the country. To Hansin he deputed the task of writing a treatise on tactics,” and to other officials he gave different tasks for the benefit of the nation.

Kaotsou had performed his part in the consolidation of the Hans ; it remained for those who came after him to complete what he left half-finished.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HAN DYNASTY.

KAOTSOU was succeeded by his son Hiao Hoeiti, or Hoeiti, who, in face of formidable intrigues in the palace, made good his father's inheritance. There had been a plan on foot for securing for his half brother Chow Wang the proud position of Emperor, and that prince's mother, the Empress Tsi, had sought to make her influence with Kaotsou turn the scale in favour of the succession of her son. If there was at first some degree of uncertainty in Hoeiti's tenure of power it was soon removed by the energy and terrible measures of his mother, the Empress Liuchi. History has forgotten to mention the gravity of the dangers which may have threatened the position of the second ruler of the new dynasty, while it has presented in all their details the crimes or the stern preventive measures of Liuchi. We are told of the barbarous treatment which she meted out to the unfortunate Princess Tsi, and of how, having first murdered his faithful guardian, she sent the poisoned bowl to Chow Wang; but no similar light is shed on the ambitious schemes nursed by her victims, or on the consequences which would have attended a less resolute mode of dealing with persons who were rebels in thought if not yet in deed. The fact remains plain that, by Liuchi's vigour, Hoeiti was saved from danger, at the same time that the Han dynasty was again placed on a firm basis.

The young Emperor, while profiting by her deeds, repudiated all complicity in them; but while he reproved his mother for acts which certainly were cruel, it does not appear that either her personal influence with him, or her position at

court, suffered on that account. She remained the dominant influence round the young ruler, and when the great princes came to render personal homage to their Emperor they found the Empress-mother practically wielding the sceptre, and guiding the affairs of state. Among these was Tao Wang, Prince of Tsi, and when this potentate feasted with the Emperor, Liuchi not only insisted on being present, but also on being served first to wine—a double breach of etiquette unpardonable in the eyes of any well-educated citizen of China. The Prince of Tsi could not conceal the astonishment with which he beheld any one attempt to drink before the Emperor, and at once Liuchi marked him as her opponent and her prey. With a decision as terrible and relentless as that which characterized Lucretia Borgia, Liuchi dropped the ready poison into a goblet, and offered the Prince of Tsi to drink. Happily the Emperor perceived the act, and comprehended the situation at a glance. Taking the goblet, he was on the point of drinking the wine himself when his mother snatched it from him, thus at once confessing her crime, and revealing the danger from which the Prince of Tsi had so narrowly escaped.

Hoeiti did not long enjoy the possession of the throne, and the lustre of his brief reign was due rather to the ability and integrity of his minister Tsaotsan than to any action of his own. Tsaotsan showed his great qualities by endeavouring to restore order and a sense of public spirit among the official classes. In this he was fairly successful, and the remainder of this reign passed off in tranquil efforts at internal reform. The Tartar king Mehe sent an envoy to the capital; but either the form or the substance of his message enraged the Empress-mother, who ordered his execution. The two peoples were thus again brought to the brink of war, but eventually the difference was composed, and the Chinese chroniclers have represented that the satisfactory turn in the question was due to Mehe seeing the error of his ways. Four years after this episode, and two years after the death of the minister Tsaotsan, the throne of the Hans was again vacant.

The Empress Liuchi continued to exercise the supreme

power in the country, and showed no anxiety to find an heir or successor to the son whose early death she loudly deplored. Her previous plan had been to retain in her own hands as much of the governing power as possible ; but now that it had become a question of keeping the Imperial seat vacant, she strove to extend and consolidate her influence by placing her brothers and near relations in great posts throughout the country. But the scheme could not be carried on without a nominal Emperor, and therefore this daring woman, stopping at nothing to attain her ends, put forward a supposititious child as the heir of her dead son. It was only the natural consequence that she should cause herself to be proclaimed Regent during the minority of her grandson. However much the ministers of the late Emperor might deplore the turn of events which had placed the destiny of China in the hands of a woman, they were incapable of changing it ; and from the general content among the people it may be inferred that Liuchi governed the country without unduly stretching the supreme authority she had usurped. Years passed on, and the nominal Emperor, whose supposed mother had been murdered because she was not sufficiently compliant with Liuchi's will, was growing up to man's estate. He had given signs of the possession of ability, and there were reports of his having used threats of an intention to avenge his mother's death. These hasty words were duly carried to Liuchi, who, prompt as ever, caused the young ruler to be shut up in the palace prison. Without even the form of trial or an attempt at justification, the Empress got rid of this inconvenient puppet, and set about choosing a successor who would be a more elastic instrument in her hands.

There were not wanting signs, however, that this state of things could not long continue. The discontent among the official classes was widespread, and the indignation of the nobles at the elevation of Liuchi's family intense, and portentous of a coming storm. One great chief had even gone so far as to declare that "he recognized neither Emperor nor Empress," and the reviving courage of the family of the great Kaotsou gave consistency to the plan formed for the overthrow of Liuchi. Perils were gathering

round this resolute woman, but we know not whether she would have succumbed to them, when the whole question was settled by her sudden death. Walking in her palace one day meditating upon how she could best overcome her numerous opponents, she was suddenly confronted, the story goes, by the apparition of a hideous monster surrounded by the victims of her restless ambition, and died from the effects of the fright produced by a too-late consciousness of her crimes. Deprived of the commanding abilities of the Empress-mother, the faction of Liuchi did not at once abandon the ambitious dreams which they had cherished and partially realized by means of her energy. But they were fighting for a lost cause, and most of them perished vainly attempting to defend the palace against the army collected for their destruction by the leading princes of the Han family. With the death of the great Empress it may be said that they sank back into their former station, and that the Hans recovered the authority of which they had been temporarily deprived by the energy of a woman.

The successful princes had then to select from among themselves one to be put forward and acknowledged as Emperor, a task often the most difficult for a confederacy. In this instance the dangers of the situation were fortunately avoided, and although the Prince of Tsi had done most for the cause, the claims of the Prince of Tai, an illegitimate son of Kaotsou, were allowed to be superior to and more promising for the public weal than those of any other candidate. Tai took the name of Hiao Wenti on ascending the throne, and his first acts were to appoint able and honest ministers, and to exempt his subjects from one year's taxes. The country, having recently passed through a period of anxiety on the score of a disputed succession, was greatly desirous that all risk of the recurrence of a similar danger should be averted, and although Wenti wished to escape the responsibility, his ministers were firm on the point that he should name an heir. Nor would they agree to his proposition that either his uncle or his brother was the fittest man in the realm to be his successor; and then was waged in China the grand controversy, which has been carried on in every country

at some period of its history, as to whether a man's best heirs are his collateral representatives or his direct descendants—a question settled in favour of the latter in every state where there has been progress, not stagnation, and civilization and freedom instead of barbarousness and chains. And so it was finally settled in China on this occasion. Wenti's eldest son Lieouki was proclaimed heir-apparent, with all the formality due to the auspicious ceremony.

The new ruler soon had occasion to show address in his dealings with some of the greater of his vassals. The Prince of Nanyuei, in the south of China, had taken to himself a style and mode of life which showed that he aspired to be an independent potentate, and affairs reached such a pass that Wenti found it impossible to overlook them. He resolved to attain his ends, if possible, without resorting to force. He sent a special envoy charged with a letter of remonstrance to the Court of this prince, also bestowing favours on some of his relatives resident within the Chinese frontier. After pointing out to him the consequences of his unfriendly and defiant conduct, he asked what result could he expect were the Emperor to collect against him "all the forces of China?" In the paragraph following comes the enunciation of the threat—proved an infallible truth in so many subsequent campaigns by the Chinese soldiers—that few barriers are really insurmountable. "Know," wrote the Emperor, "that there are few insurmountable barriers, and that a prince is no longer invincible when he ceases to be guided by virtue." This diplomacy gained its object; the Prince of Nanyuei, admitting the faults with which he had been charged, returned to his allegiance, and abandoned those dreams of ambition which he had indulged while the Hans were engrossed in their struggle with the faction of Liuchi.

In all his arrangements Wenti proved himself a practical man, and one well qualified to carry on a great organization. He had originally shown himself diffident of his capacity to rule a great Empire, but having accepted the charge he devoted all his energy to the task, and summoned to his assistance the wisest ministers to be procured.

Under his auspices a great revival of letters took place, and it again became the proudest privilege of a Chinese subject to be ranked among the literati of the country. In nothing was the moderation of Wenti more clearly shown than by the edict which he issued abrogating the law which had been passed by the great Hwangti, forbidding any one to criticize the form of government. As Wenti very truly said in this "glorious edict," to maintain such a law was to deprive the sovereign of one of the most valuable sources of his information, and to keep him in ignorance of the true mind of his people. The significance of this act is but little enhanced by the fact, remarkable though it be, that at a later period he reprimanded his officials because in the public prayers they asked for his exclusive happiness rather than for that of his subjects. His efforts for the improvement of agriculture and for the reclamation of waste lands were equally strenuous, and crowned with the success they deserved. He gave no encouragement to any in his Empire to lead either an idle or a useless life, and he set an example which he expected the highest and the meanest of his officials to imitate. Among his other acts it only remains to say that he permitted throughout the Empire the coinage of money, which had hitherto been the monopoly of the capital, thus placing great facilities in the way of those engaged in commerce.

The manner in which justice was dispensed under his supervision would furnish a theme as much to his praise as any of his other acts. It was a maxim of his reign that punishment was awarded under laws common to both subject and prince, and that to vary them in deference to the power of the ruler would be to introduce confusion into the state, and to instigate many to violate them—a maxim worthy, it may be said, of our Chief Justice Gascoigne. At the same time Wenti was not wholly free from some of the severity of the national character, and when a culprit violated his father's tomb and was condemned to death, Wenti did not consider that the execution of the offender atoned for the wrong done to the family honour. He wished that his family should be destroyed; but on the remonstrance of a minister

he decreed that only the wrong-doer should receive punishment. At a later period he abolished mutilation, which had been the most common sentence in China's criminal code, and it was found that the execution of the laws was quite as effectual, although the punishments had been deprived of much of their terror. It was the peculiar boast of Wenti's life that, after he had been on the throne for a few years, there were not "four hundred criminals" in all the gaols of the realm.

The death of the Tartar king Mehe, who has already been mentioned as having had relations with the Chinese government, revived the questions connected with the far west. His son Lao Chang succeeded to his authority, and one of his first acts was to propose the renewal of the truce with China, and to ask for a Chinese princess in marriage. Wenti, ever desirous of treading the pleasant paths of peace, willingly complied, and for a brief space it seemed as if Lao Chang would prove as well-behaved a neighbour as Mehe had latterly been. But this anticipation was soon found to be a vain hope. The Tartars showed no inclination to conform with the terms of the truce, and began to renew their raids within the Chinese frontier. Even then Wenti was loth to declare war upon them, and it was only after the tribes of the desert had wrought much mischief that he could be induced to take up the sword for their chastisement. It would be a mistake to suppose from this that Wenti was a pusillanimous prince. He well knew the difficulty of conducting a war with the Tartars to a successful conclusion, and wished to avoid by all the means in his power a collision with a people whom he could not subdue, and yet whom, unsubdued, he knew would always remain a bitter and perhaps an irreclaimable foe. At length, however, the Tartars proceeded so far in their hostility that Wenti gave orders for an army to be sent against them.

At a grand council of war held for the purpose the various modes of carrying on operations against the Tartars were discussed, and prominent among them was a proposition—afterwards carried into practice—of raising a force from those Tartars who had become Chinese subjects for the special

service of protecting the western frontier. This scheme was found to answer admirably, and may be considered the first occasion on which the Chinese government incorporated in its army a military force composed of an alien race. Some few years after this decree (about the year B.C. 166) the Tartar king headed a great expedition into China. The invaders were computed to number nearly one hundred and fifty thousand horsemen, and for a considerable distance within the frontier they carried everything before them. On the approach of an army sent by the Emperor they adopted sound tactics and retreated with their booty. Eight years later they renewed the attempt, on two occasions, with equal success, but in the meantime Lao Chang, their chief, had died. He was succeeded by his son Kiunchin. The Chinese forces appear to have been ill-suited for coping with them and the Tartars harried the country almost to the gates of the capital.

The chagrin produced by these disasters told heavily on the health of an Emperor always desirous of his people's happiness and welfare. After ruling the Empire wisely and with beneficial results to his subjects during twenty-three years, Wenti died (B.C. 156) at the early age of forty-six, leaving to his son who succeeded him a brilliant example of a prince who set the public weal high above the gratification of his own personal pleasure. If there had been any doubt as to the triumph of the Hans proving permanent or ephemeral, the virtue of Wenti decided the point, and the later Emperors of his House following very much in his footsteps, the Han dynasty took its place as one of the most popular which ever ruled the Chinese nation.

Wenti's son on ascending the throne assumed the name of Hiaokingti, or Kingti, and in his first acts he closely imitated his father. Probably this must be attributed as much to the advice of his experienced ministers as to his own disposition. It is certain that while in the first days of his reign he remitted taxes, and extended the merciful consideration of new sovereigns to criminals undergoing the penalty of the laws, he very shortly afterwards imposed a fresh tax, and one, moreover, which had been waived by

Wenti. This caused some discontent; but, on the other hand, his moderation in the dispensation of the law, and the further alleviation of the penalty of flogging, which Wenti had substituted for mutilation, secured him the favourable opinion of the mass of his subjects. On the whole, Kingti proved himself a weak if an amiable prince. On one occasion, however, his irresolution cost the life of one of his most devoted and skilful ministers. A league of princes had been formed for the purpose of advancing private ends that need not be particularized, and Chaotsou, the wisest of the Emperor's ministers, had been selected as the special object of their enmity. It was said that, were Chaotsou executed, the rebels would disperse, and in a weak moment Kingti sacrificed Chaotsou, just as Charles the First abandoned Strafford. Of course the rebels were only encouraged by this unwise concession to their illegal action, and raised their demands because of this evidence of the weakness of the king.

Kingti then sent a large army against them, and attacked the forces of the rebel princes from three sides; and his commander succeeded by a series of skilful manœuvres in shutting them up in their camp. In the struggle which then took place craft met craft, and at length the rebels, fighting with all the courage of despair, strove to cut their way through the ring of enemies around them. At first their onset was successful, but the Chinese reserves coming up, the whole army was destroyed. All the princes, save one, were either slain or sent as prisoners to Changnan, where they were executed. The remaining years of Kingti's reign were uneventful. The Tartars did not greatly disturb the border, and when Kingti died (in B.C. 141) he left the record of sixteen more years of almost unvaried tranquillity to the history of the period. The Chinese nation had turned these years of peace to the best use, and were at this time in a high state of prosperity and material strength. By the successful intrigues of his mother, Lieouchi had been, some years before Kingti's death, proclaimed heir-apparent in preference to his elder brother, Lieouyong, and now on his father's decease he became Emperor by the name of Hanwouti, or Vouti.

When Vouti began his reign he was only sixteen years of age, but one of his first resolutions was to raise his country to a higher point of splendour than it had yet reached, and he took the opportunity of inviting the opinion of the ministers and other learned men as to the means to be employed for the attainment of his object. The gist of their observations may be taken as expressed in the line that "the principles of Government did not consist in fine words or studied speeches, but in actions." Vouti's efforts towards consolidating his government were retarded and thrown back by the intrigues of his mother, who was a patron and supporter of the Taouist sect, and several of his foremost ministers, having incurred her resentment, were either executed or dismissed the service of the state. Five years afterwards the Empress-mother died in consequence, it would appear, of injuries received during a great fire at the palace, and then Vouti reinstated some of these ministers in their former offices.

Vouti's first anxiety was caused by the outbreak of a war between two Chinese princes, and, when the weaker appealed to him for assistance against the aggressive neighbour, his ministers gave opposite counsel as to whether the request should be complied with or refused. One minister, dwelling on the well-known turbulence of the people of Yuei—the modern Fuhkien—insisted that it would be foolish for the Emperor to take part in a quarrel from which he could reap no advantage. Another, Chwangtsou, took, however, the opposite view, and pointed out that the Emperor could not be considered the father of his people if he turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of the weaker of his subjects. Convinced by this latter argument Vouti resolved to extend his protection to the afflicted, and entrusted the operation to Chwangtsou in person. On the approach of the Imperial troops the aggressors retired into the difficult country behind the marshes and lagoons of Fuhkien, where Chwangtsou conceived it to be prudent to leave them undisturbed. The campaign could only be considered in the light of a failure were it to conclude without securing permanent safety for those who had suffered from the incursions of the men of Yuei, and Chwangtsou accordingly obtained the sanction of the Emperor to their

transfer to a district further removed from the borders of Fuhkien. The subjection of Yuei was left for a later day.

The country had in the meantime been afflicted by a great catastrophe, bringing in its train a famine, and such suffering to millions, as is only known to the packed populations of China and India. The mighty river Hoangho, which is, or ought to be, to the provinces of Northern China what the Kiang is to the south and centre, burst its banks, and flooded for hundreds of miles the flat low-lying country of Shensi and Kansuh. In face of this appalling calamity the utmost effort of man could accomplish little, and when the waters had abated the population fell victims to the dearth which ensued. Since that time the overflowing of the Hoangho has been periodic, and from some cause, which has never been thoroughly ascertained, that splendid river has never performed the useful functions that might be expected from it. Its gigantic course is clearly traceable on the map, but in the reality of fact it lies across Northern China deprived of half its strength and all its utility.

The surrender of the Prince of Nanyuei, and his recognition of the Emperor's authority have been already described. He was in some way threatened at this time by the turbulent people of Yuei, whose raids have been referred to, but instead of at once taking up arms for their chastisement, he asked the Emperor for advice and assistance. The local governors were instructed to take the necessary steps to comply with this demand, and the Prince of Nanyuei was encouraged to proceed to extremities. There is some reason for taking the view that these measures were put into force as a cloak for the design Vouti had formed of incorporating Yuei with the Empire. His true mind seems reflected in the following sentence from a memorial of the day: "that although Yuei never has belonged, it beyond doubt should belong to the Chinese Empire." The doubts suggested in another very able memorial, "Is the conquest of these barbarians worth the loss of the many thousand faithful subjects, which it must inevitably entail?" were never seriously discussed, when the object before the government was the acquisition of a kingdom. The Prince of Nanyuei cast aside his inactivity the

instant he found that Vouti approved of his entering the field, and marched his troops into Yuei simultaneously with the advance of the Chinese generals. The war was brought to a speedy and a bloodless conclusion. The people of Yuei refused to oppose an invader who was resolved to crush all resistance regardless of loss, and the brother of the king, playing the part of the most devoted patriot, slew the ruler, and sent his head to the Chinese commanders. Peace then ensued, on the footing of Yuei becoming a tributary province, over which Yuchen, the fratricide, was placed in authority.

In the sixth year of Vouti's reign (B.C. 135) the Tartar king sent an envoy to ask for a Chinese princess in marriage, and to express a desire for the continuance of the truce between the peoples. These periodical missions had as often as otherwise proved the precursor of war; but whatever the result, the main object of their mission had generally been granted. But a new feeling was springing up among Chinese statesmen on the subject of the Tartars. Their experience had taught them that however much the desert chiefs might promise to keep the peace, they had not the power, and perhaps not the inclination, to restrain the impulse of their followers, and they were at last beginning to recognize that no useful purpose could be served by closing their eyes to their experience, and by assuming improbabilities because pleasing. So it was that in the Grand Council assembled by Vouti for the consideration of the request of the Tartar king, the party advocating the rejection of the demand, and the adoption of stringent measures against the Tartars, took up a bolder position; but the time had not yet come when their views were to prevail. The bold policy of Wang Kua, who had had personal experience of the state of affairs on the Western border, "of destroying them rather than to remain constantly exposed to their insults," was not yet to be accepted, and the Tartars were granted one more opportunity of shaping their action towards the Chinese on a friendly basis. The difficulties of a campaign in the wilds of Central Asia appeared to the peaceful Chinese to be insuperable, and as yet their experience had not afforded them any reason to believe that the subjection of the Hiongnou could be accomplished.

Wang Kua had no intention of abandoning what may be fairly styled his pet project, and he endeavoured to bring Vouti round to his way of thinking by his personal address, and by working on the esteem in which the Emperor held him. The defeat of Han Kaotsou, many years before, by the Tartars, was used as an argument in favour of their views by both parties ; while Vouti studiously abstained from expressing an opinion one way or the other. Another Grand Council was summoned, and Wang Kua's argument that the defeat at Pingching should be retrieved proved more convincing than the contrary theory that was advanced of Kaotsou having, by his subsequent inaction, admitted that the attempt should not be made because it could not possibly succeed. Vouti closed the conference by deciding that war was to be declared. A great army was collected for the purpose, and Wang Kua, with four lieutenants under him, assumed the chief command.

Wang Kua had thus attained his heart's desire, but he was doomed to disappointment. The policy which was good and sound enough on paper was to be made to appear unwise, if not ridiculous, by the hard logic of facts. In every country, and at all ages, a daring and a prescient policy can only be proved to be justifiable by attaining success. If its development is marred by disaster, its conclusion is shorn of its anticipated proportions ; the public voice will infallibly condemn it, and in most cases history agrees with the decision. There is much force in the argument that dangers that can be foreseen should be promptly grappled with and nipped in the bud, but the statesman must submit to the only test that will be applied to his measures—their success, or their failure. Such has been the case sometimes in the annals of European nations, so it was on the occasion we are discussing with Wang Kua, the Chinese statesman and general. The army, computed to number three hundred thousand men, was concentrated in the vicinity of the frontier, and Wang Kua resorted to a carefully devised stratagem for the purpose of enticing the Tartars within his reach. In this he failed. The Tartars eluded all his efforts to attack them, and the campaign closed ingloriously without result. When Vouti learnt

the failure of the project, he ordered the arrest of his ambitious but unlucky general, who, wisely accepting the inevitable, put an end to his existence. Thus perished Wang Kua, the originator of China's aggressive policy towards the West, and the first leader of an army charged with the task of subduing Central Asia. Unfortunate for himself, his great idea took root, and became, in course of time, incorporated with the national policy.

A short lull ensued in the Tartar war, and Vouti employed all his resources in extending his Empire towards the south. The brief campaign in Fuhkien had served to create a breach between the Empire and the ruler of Nanyuei, whose protestations of fidelity were received with more incredulity than good will. Chinese envoys were sent to explore his territories and to examine into the practices of his court, and these were in turn followed by Chinese generals instructed to subdue and annex the countries skirting, and, in a military sense, commanding the districts of Nanyuei. Having vanquished the resistance of the mountaineers of Western Szchuen, Vouti's lieutenants employed them in constructing roads through the most difficult parts of that region, and by this measure the greater portion of Szchuen was made a Chinese province, and Nanyuei became isolated and outflanked. The new possession was divided by Vouti into twelve departments, and took its place for the first time in history as an integral portion of the Chinese Empire. Similar events were occurring in other quarters of the country, and several princes, after being deposed, had to esteem themselves fortunate in the loss of nothing more than their states. Others, such as the King of Wei, anticipated the inevitable by a timely surrender, so that on all sides, and from a variety of causes, there was a tendency to promote the union of China.

The effect of the failure and disgrace of Wang Kua had been to inspire the Tartars with fresh courage and audacity. The war once begun they prosecuted it after their own fashion with the greatest vigour. Their raids became more incessant and more daring, and in the skirmishes which ensued with the Chinese forces they were more often

victorious than not. Six years (B.C. 127) after the death of Wang Kua, they entered Kansuh and Shensi for the third time since the accession of Vouti. It was then that Vouti had recourse to the slower and more extensive plan of forming military settlements in Shensi as a bulwark in that quarter, and of improving the roads from the interior to this extremity of the country.

The Hiongnou Tartars had during these years been prosecuting a war with a people to the south of their territory—a contest which, some time before Vouti made these strenuous preparations on his western borders, reached a conclusion, and one fraught with important consequences to the peoples of the neighbouring states. That tract of country, which on the modern map includes the north-western portion of Kansuh, Kokonor, and a considerable part of the southern half of Gobi, was then inhabited by a people called Yuchi or Yueti. Lanchefoo and Shachow were towns in their possession, and they acknowledged a king of their own race. Numerous and prosperous as they were, they were no match for the hardier Hiongnou, and in the year B.C. 165 they were not only defeated, but compelled to quit their homes, and to seek elsewhere the independence which they were unable to maintain. The Yuchi retreated along the Tian Shan range to the countries of Trans-Oxiana, where they coalesced with those other warlike tribes which a few centuries later overran the Roman Empire. When the tale of the discomfiture of this people was brought to Vouti, he loudly expressed his commiseration with their hard fate, and turning to his council he asked, in the spirit of Arthur proposing a quest to his knights, if there were any sufficiently adventurous to follow these wanderers and bring them back. With the promptitude of a Galahad, Chang Keen volunteered to make the attempt, and to track from one end of Asia to the other the relics of this unfortunate race.

Chang Keen set out on his adventurous journey accompanied by one hundred devoted companions, but on his entering the country of the Hiongnou they were all made prisoners. The story affirms that they were kept in a

state of confinement during ten years, and that they then managed to make good their escape, and to continue their journey in search of the Yuchi. After visiting many of the western countries, they reached that of the Yuchi, with whom they lived for one year. The Yuchi could not be induced to go back to China, and eventually, under the name of the Scythians, defeated the Parthians and destroyed the Greek kingdom of Bactria. Chang Keen then returned to China, bringing back a large stock of information concerning the peoples of the other Asiatic kingdoms, but of all Chang Keen's companions only two survived. Chang Keen drew up a memorial describing what he had seen, and throwing light on the geography of Asia. Among the most important of his observations is that insisting on the advantages of the short land route to India through Szchuen, which was, as we have seen, gradually falling into the hands of the Emperor. Vouti then sent several exploring parties in this direction, but they fared badly at the hands of the people beyond the frontier. One party succeeded in penetrating into Yunnan, but another was ignominiously turned back before it had passed the borders of Shensi.

Meanwhile the war with the Tartars was far from languishing. Encouraged by what they considered the weakness of the Chinese, they renewed their incursions and carried them further than before into the heart of the western provinces. Inflated by their success, the Tartars cast aside some of their habitual caution in war, and they were thus taken at a disadvantage by a general whom Vouti had sent with instructions to come to an engagement wherever he might find them. The Tartars fought with the courage of despair, and their king, with the greater number of his troops, cut a way through the Chinese forces. But he left his camp, baggage, wives, children, and more than fifteen thousand soldiers in the hands of Wei Tsing, the Chinese general. This great victory was the most effective blow which had yet been dealt by the Chinese in their long wars with the Hiongnou, and Wei Tsing became the hero of the age. Honours were showered upon him, and when he returned to the capital Vouti went out a day's journey to meet and welcome him. A few months

after this victory Wei Tsing again engaged the Tartar army, and, although the result remained doubtful, the general confirmed by his skill and intrepidity the good opinions he had already won.

The most important result of these successes was that the Chinese recovered the confidence which a succession of Tartar victories had impaired. Hitherto they had stood always on the defensive, but they felt it was now time to assume the offensive. Vouti's council approved of the proposal to carry the war into the enemy's country. An expedition was accordingly fitted out and the command entrusted to Hokiuping, an experienced officer. It consisted mostly of cavalry. The Tartars were taken completely by surprise when they found the Chinese adopting their own tactics, and offered but little resistance. Hokiuping carried everything before him, and having traversed an extensive portion of the Hiongnou territory returned to China, with a vast quantity of booty, including the golden images used by one of the Tartar princes in his religious ceremonies. Shortly after this adventure, Hokiuping repeated it with a larger force, and with increased success. He advanced as far as Sopouomo in the desert, and on his return boasted that "thirty thousand Tartars" had perished by the sword of his warriors. A great outcry arose among the Hiongnou that these disasters had fallen upon them through the incompetence of their princes, and the wish for, if not the intention to carry out, a rough justice for their demerits was loudly expressed. The two princes inculpated took alarm at these threats, and a large number of their followers made a voluntary surrender to Vouti. At first Vouti was disposed to receive them with great state, but being better advised by his ministers he ordered them to be disarmed on crossing the frontier, and to be dispersed in settlements throughout the border provinces.

The expeditions of Hokiuping were only intended as the forerunners of an invasion on a large scale of the Hiongnou country. A considerable army, divided into two columns, was collected, and the generals Wei Tsing and Hokiuping were each appointed to a command. Both advanced boldly

into the desert, and fought the Tartars in several engagements on its northern side. The Chinese appear to have been uniformly successful, and to have inflicted much loss on the Hiongnou ; but they did not return from their campaign in the desert without having themselves suffered some loss both in men and horses. The Tartars also were only cowed for the time, and not permanently overthrown. Shortly after this war, in which he had taken so prominent a part, Hokiuping died. He was the most popular of all the generals with the private soldiers, who marched with confidence under his orders, because he always vanquished the enemy. As his countrymen naively put it, his loss was the greater because he never suffered a check, and on that ground they claim for him a place among the great captains of his time.

Chang Keen, whose adventurous journey has been already mentioned, was entrusted about this time with a diplomatic mission to the court of the neighbouring kingdom of Ousun.* At one time this prince had been tributary to Hiongnou, but he had shaken off their yoke, and was now an independent king. Chang Keen was sanguine enough to expect that this prince, rejoicing in his new-found liberty, would raise no objection to becoming the vassal of Vouti ; but in this view he was disappointed. Chang Keen resided some time in Ousun, where he was honourably entertained, and from this place he sent explorers into the surrounding countries, both to the south and also to the north. Vouti, on learning that Chang Keen had failed in the main object of his mission, caused two fortified cities to be built on the Shensi frontier, thus affording protection to the traders who were beginning to carry on commercial relations with the peoples of this region, at the same time that he provided against possible contingencies in future wars with the Tartar tribes. By this step he cut off the communications between the Hiongnou and the peoples of the Kiang Valley. It was well that he did so, for his struggle with the former was on the point of being renewed. In the year B.C. 114 the Tartar king died, and his son Ouwei succeeded him ; but the contest was for

* Ousun was a state south of Kokonor.

a brief space postponed in consequence of the exhaustion of the Tartars, and of Vouti's attention being engaged by other matters which cannot be passed over without some notice.

The war with the people of Fuhkien, when the Prince of Nanyuei was relieved from his embarrassment, has already been described, and the relations of that principality with the Emperor remained fairly satisfactory during the lifetime of Prince Chowhow, but his son and successor indulged excesses which speedily led to his death. There then ensued a period of disturbance which finally broke into open war, and Vouti, seeing that the time had come to assert his authority, put forward his claims to the possession of Nanyuei. The Imperial troops entered the province from four sides, stamped out all resistance, and conquered the province which was thereupon divided into nine departments. The province of Fuhkien at last shared the same fate. Its inhabitants were carried away, and it was converted into a vast desert. These two wars occupied Vouti's attention during four years, but they left him much stronger within his frontier, and able to devote his full attention to foreign affairs.

It was, therefore, with increased confidence and strength that the Chinese commenced the new Tartar war (B.C. 110). For the first time Vouti took the field in person, although the active command was divided between twelve lieutenant-generals. Having assembled a large army of nearly two hundred thousand men in Shensi, Vouti sent an ambassador to the Tartar chief calling upon him to surrender all prisoners and plunder, and to recognize China as the dominant country in Eastern Asia. The Tartar's only reply was to imprison the ambassador, and to hurl his defiance at the head of the Emperor, who, for some reason that it is now impossible to discover, refrained from prosecuting the campaign on this occasion, making instead a grand tour through the northern and central districts of his dominions. One of the last acts of the year was the reincorporation of the northern province of Leaoutung, which, after the fall of the Tsins, had been permitted to acquire for a time its former independence. This result was not attained without some difficulty, but it was attained; and the difficulty and the loss counted even then

for little in the eyes of Chinese statesmen so long as the result was satisfactory.

At the same time that Vouti was engaged in the far north in reducing to his sway the country beyond the Peiho, his generals were prosecuting similar enterprises with ardour in the southern territory of Yunnan. There also the Chinese were completely successful. Yunnan was reduced to the condition of a Chinese province, and its king had the good sense to accept, with an appearance of grace, the smaller dignity of a Chinese governor. The Chinese then turned their arms against the small kingdom of Cherchen situated beyond the western mountains of Szchuen. The Chinese general on advancing with a small force to reconnoitre the capital was attacked by the king at the head of his army. The Chinese not only repulsed the attack, but pressing their advantage home entered the city simultaneously with the vanquished. The garrison then surrendered, and the king was sent prisoner to Changnan, the old name of Singan. The neighbouring states, awed by this brilliant success, voluntarily admitted their dependence upon China, and their liability to pay tribute. With one exception, in the case of the kingdom of Tawan, this result was attained without either loss or any untoward occurrence. This state, famous for its breed of horses, had in several ways evinced hostile sentiments, and its ruler had distinctly refused to hold any commercial relations with the Chinese. The murder of Chinese merchants brought on a crisis, and Vouti ordered up a small force under the command of one of his brothers-in-law to exact reparation. Unfortunately for the Chinese, this scion of the Imperial family proved a very incapable commander. Outmanœuvred by his more astute antagonist, he and his force, attenuated by famine and losses in the field, were obliged to retire into a fortified city where they hoped to make good their position until relief came. It was not for some time that Vouti was able to send any reinforcements, and when they arrived, although his relative Li Kwangli was relieved, and Tawan subjected, the difficult nature of the campaign was shown by the severe losses incurred by Vouti's army.

In the meanwhile everything was subservient in Vouti's

mind to the necessity of chastising the Tartars, and preparations for a final campaign were in active progress. The Hiongnou were far from being united among themselves, and at one moment a plan had been formed for a Tartar general to declare himself an ally of the Chinese on the appearance of their army. The dilatoriness of the Chinese commander gave time for the Tartar king to discover this arrangement, and while his lieutenant was meditating over his act of treachery, the order was given for his execution. Nor did the misfortunes of the campaign end here. Ousselou, the Tartar chief, promptly followed up this blow by attacking with overwhelming numbers the advanced guard of the Chinese army, which he destroyed to a man; and while the Chinese commander-in-chief remained inactive on another part of the frontier, Ousselou marched through Shensi, putting the inhabitants to the sword, and giving towns and hamlets to the flames. The Emperor was advised to leave these fierce and turbulent neighbours alone; but the advice was not palatable to him, and he continued his warlike preparations. The death of Ousselou, in the moment of his triumph, removed the pressing danger, and left Vouti time to perfect his arrangements.

In B.C. 101 Vouti announced his formal intention of attacking the Tartars in order to exact retribution for the insults offered to the national dignity, for, as he said, "chastisement does not become the less deserved because tardy." The new Tartar king showed some symptoms of a desire for a pacific settlement, and negotiations of a semi-formal character were begun between him and the Chinese. Neither party was remarkable for good faith, and, after some months passed in attempting to get the better of each other, the usual climax was reached. The Chinese envoys were placed in confinement, and a fresh rupture went to swell the long list of grievances that had already been accumulated. Vouti's arms were again destined to defeat, partly through the incompetence, a second time demonstrated, of Li Kwangli, who had been entrusted by the Emperor with the command. The Chinese army was virtually destroyed on this occasion after a brave resistance. It became of the greatest moment that

this disaster should be promptly retrieved, and Liling, Li Kwangli's grandson, volunteered to accomplish the task. He marched into the Tartar country with a small force, won one battle by the superior skill of his archers, fought a second with indecisive result, but was worsted in a third. Fighting valiantly he strove to make good his way back to China ; but harassed throughout his march, and surrounded by vastly superior numbers, he thought discretion the better part of valour, and laid down his arms. Not content with this, he came to the decision, by a line of argument difficult for one of our customs to appreciate, that it was more in consonance with his honour to take service with the victor than to return to the presence of his own prince as a vanquished general.

The very next enterprise which Vouti attempted against the Tartars fared as badly at their hands, and proof was afforded that Liling had done as much in his campaign as it was in human resolution and capacity to perform. In the year B.C. 90, when Vouti had been engaged for fifty years in constant war with the Tartars, Li Kwangli was sent on a fresh and, as it proved, a last mission of revenge. At first he carried everything before him, defeating the Tartars in several battles, and was on his road back to China when he was surprised by his crafty enemy and defeated. Li Kwangli laid down his arms and, like his grandson Liling, accepted the favours of the Tartar king. This was the last act in the foreign policy and military career of the great Emperor. The Tartar war which he had waged for more than fifty years had not closed in the decisive manner which he had anticipated ; but, although marked by many disasters after the death of the great generals Wei Tsing and Hokiuping, it left China stronger on her western frontiers, and with a greater reputation in Asia than she had ever before possessed.

Three years after the defeat of Li Kwangli, Vouti died in the seventy-first year of his age. He had been Emperor of China for the long space of fifty-four years. His later days had been rendered unhappy by quarrels in his own family, and the rivalry of his heirs provoked disturbances which, on one occasion, resulted in a short civil war. Ill-health and the

superstitious habits * which he had acquired tended to throw an increased gloom over his declining days. The anxiety produced by the Tartar war did not allow of its being mitigated, and when he found his end approaching there was as much of apprehension as to possible dangers, as of satisfaction at what he had accomplished in his survey of the great charge which he was about to leave to other hands. When Vouti's death was announced the Chinese and their neighbours felt that a great prince was no more, and that his death might be the signal for disturbance and change.

There can be no question of the great qualities of the Emperor Vouti. In Chinese history there stand out at intervals, generally far apart, the names and the deeds of rulers as great as any the world has ever seen. Of these we may claim for Vouti that he was, among Chinese monarchs, the second in point of time. The great Tsin ruler Hwangti may fairly be considered the first of these, as in some respects he proved himself to be the greatest prince that ever sat on the Dragon throne. Vouti appears to us to have been a less able ruler than the founder of the Tsins, but it must be remembered in his favour that his conquests proved more durable than those of his great predecessor. Fuhkien, Szchuen, Yunnan, became under his guidance Chinese provinces, and the independent kingdoms south of Kohonor were reduced to the condition of vassal states. In his own habits he was studiously moderate. His chief amusement in early days had been to hunt fierce animals unattended by the great escort customary with Chinese rulers. He was of robust build, and addicted to martial pursuits; but neither his passion for sport nor the desire for martial fame made him

* The Chinese historians have preserved several stories indicative of Vouti's superstition. Of these the following, which tells its own tale and carries its own moral, is perhaps the most striking: A would-be magician pretended that he had discovered an elixir of eternal life, and having obtained audience of the Emperor, was on the point of offering him a draught when one of the courtiers present stepped forward and quaffed it off. Vouti, enraged, turned upon his minister and ordered him to prepare for instant death. "Sire," replied the ready courtier, "how can I be executed since I have drunk the draught of immortality?" The quack was exposed, and Vouti admitted the folly of the whole proceeding.

blind to the true wants of his people. With the Tartars he saw there never could be any stable peace, and his anticipations proved more correct than even he could have imagined. He would have continued to the very end a war which had to partake of much of the character of one of extermination, and when he left it unfinished he impressed on his ministers the duty of continuing and concluding it. His deeds lived after him, the Han dynasty became established and consolidated under his influence, and his memory still survives among the Chinese, who are now, and probably will always be, proud to style themselves "the sons of Han."

CHAPTER VII.

THE HAN DYNASTY (*continued*).

ON Vouti's death, Chaoti, the only one of his sons who had taken no part in the civil disturbances referred to in the previous chapter, became Emperor ; but, as he was only eight years old, his share in the functions of government was at first small. The administration was entrusted to and carried on by the two ministers Tsiun-pou-y and Ho Kwang. As has often been the case in Eastern countries, the death of a strong ruler and the accession of a child to supreme power afforded the opportunity sought by the ambitious for the advancement of their private ends. So it was when Vouti died and Chaoti was proclaimed successor, for Lieoutan, one of Vouti's elder sons by a wife of inferior rank, openly raised the standard of revolt, and enjoyed for a brief space in his own principality the attributes of imperial power. But the movement did not receive popular support, and the measures taken by Chaoti's ministers were so effectual that within a few months of Lieoutan's first declaration his followers had been dispersed, and he himself was occupying a prison in the palace fortress at Changnan. The clemency of the new ruler was shown by his moderation towards the rebel, whose life he spared. Another attempt was made by an impostor, a sort of Perkin Warbeck, who gave himself out as Vouti's eldest son, but his career was cut short by Tsiun-pou-y arresting him with his own hands.

Although Lieoutan had experienced the generosity of his brother he had by no means laid aside his pretensions to the throne. Permitted to be at large in the palace, he turned his

liberty to account by joining in the intrigues of dissatisfied courtiers against both the minister Ho Kwang and Chaoti himself. He became the centre of these plots which had as their chief object the placing of himself upon the throne. Fortunately intelligence of these schemes reached Chaoti's ears before their preparations had been completed, and we are told that "he took up his red pencil, and signed the order for the arrest of the conspirators with the greatest possible calmness." The whole of the conspirators were publicly executed, with the exception of Lieoutan, who as a special favour was permitted to poison himself. This was the last of the plots formed against Chaoti, who throughout had borne himself in a becoming manner and had given promise of the possession of great qualities.

The relations with the Tartars were on the whole satisfactory, and Chaoti succeeded in effecting the release of Souou, a Chinese envoy, who had been kept in confinement by them for nineteen years. The fidelity of this minister, Souou, long formed a favourite theme with the ballad-makers of his country, who loved to draw a contrast between his fidelity and the falseness of Liling and Li Kwangli. While there was tranquillity on the western border the relations with some of the tributary populations were not equally satisfactory. A rising in Leaoutung had to be put down by the employment of a picked force of Chinese troops, and this happened on two different occasions. Similar events occurred in other parts of the Empire; but in no case did the risings assume serious proportions, and in all they were repressed without difficulty. It was just as all danger to his authority had been dissipated, and when his people were forming the most glowing expectations of his future rule, that the young Chaoti died in his thirty-first year. Beyond question his early death was a serious loss to his country and a grave blow to the prospects of a dynasty which was already undecided as to its legitimate head.

Some hesitation was shown in proclaiming any of his relations Emperor, as Chaoti had left no heir; but the claim of his uncle Lieouho was considered to be the strongest. Whatever hopes may have been formed as to his qualifications

were, however, soon dispelled. He developed low tastes, and his conduct brought contempt upon the Imperial dignity. He was speedily deposed, and retired without regret into private life where he could indulge, unobserved and without hindrance, the coarse amusements for which he showed so marked a preference.

It was the great minister Ho Kwang who assumed the conduct of the measures necessary for the deposition of Lieouho, and for the selection of a successor to the throne. The latter was a task not free from difficulty, and after some consideration the choice was made in favour of Siuenti, a prince who was at this time about seventeen years of age, and the eldest of the great-grandchildren of Vouti. Ho Kwang held towards him not only the delicate relations of a confidential minister, but also the more intimate position of an affectionate and solicitous guardian. Ho Kwang strove to make Siuenti the model prince which Chaoti had given promise of being, and the native record runs that "Ho Kwang gave all his care to perfecting the new Emperor in the science of government." Siuenti's early years had been passed in ignorance of his origin, and the official who had been entrusted by Vouti with the charge saw no reason in the troublous times prevailing to divulge the secret of which he became the sole depositary. It was only when Ho Kwang was in search of a prince that Pingki, the official in question, produced the right heir. The first acts of the new Emperor were marked by moderation and a sound appreciation of the wants of his subjects. They furnished the nation with good reason for looking forward to a reign of peace and internal progress and development. Nor were they to be disappointed.

Early in the new reign (B.C. 71) the Tartars, thwarted in their attempts to break through the Chinese frontier, turned their attack against the dependent kingdom of Ousun, which appealed for aid at Changnan. After the usual deliberation, and a fresh declaration of the views of Chinese statesmen on the subject of the Tartars, it was decided to comply with the request of the vassal Prince of Ousun, and to send a large army to his assistance. The generals were appointed, and the army set out in due course for its destination; but these

unwarlike generals had far different ideas in their heads than those connected with the hardships of campaigning and the dangers of battle. Their instructions were to drive the Tartars beyond the Gobi desert; but after passing a pleasant sojourn in the close neighbourhood of Shensi, they returned, giving out that they had won several victories and accomplished all the objects of the war. This deception could not remain long concealed, and when it was made known the generals were commanded to put an end to their existence. This order they showed no reluctance in obeying, and perhaps they may have consoled themselves with the reflection that, as victory would have been impossible to such as them, they were meeting the inevitable after a more pleasant experience than would have been that of the warlike qualities of the Tartars.

Meanwhile the Tartars were themselves not free from some of those disturbing elements which have been seen at work within the Chinese Empire. Civil strife and conflicting ambitions had set one tribe against another, and chief opposed to chief. Five kings had risen in their midst, and these warred with each other after the bitter fashion of their race. The struggle sapped their strength and exhausted their energy, and several of the chiefs turned towards China in the desire to obtain some guarantee for the preservation of the possessions that remained to them. One prince voluntarily surrendered to the border authorities, and another came in, after a formal arrangement had been drawn up, and was received with open arms by the Emperor. In accomplishing this satisfactory result the well-known character of the Emperor for justice and generosity towards his opponents exercised a great influence, and for the first time in history the Chinese troops became known among the peoples of Eastern Asia as "the troops of justice." They were the police, defending the weak against the turbulent and the strong. It was at this period that all the peoples from Shensi to the Caspian Sea acknowledged in some form, however vague and slight, the supremacy of China. Siuenti determined to celebrate this event by erecting a hall in which portraits of all the generals and statesmen who had helped

to attain this great result should be placed. This hall was named the Kilin or pavilion, and prominent among those whose images stood therein were Souou, Pingki, and, greatest of all, Ho Kwang. Thus terminated for this epoch, in an act of ceremony, the long Tartar wars (B.C. 51).

One circumstance, and one only, had marred the happiness of the young Emperor, and disturbed the tranquillity of his reign. The great minister Ho Kwang, who had done so much for his country, showed his true greatness of mind by the moderation of his conduct. He had played the part of king-maker with the necessary address and courage; but he had no evil intentions against either the constitution or the person of the Emperor. He was well content that the state should be governed by its legitimate head, and, very shortly after his elevation, Siuenti was practically left to rule the Empire in accordance with his own judgment. But if Ho Kwang was perfectly satisfied with being the chief adviser and minister of a constitutional sovereign, his family were not equally content with a subordinate position. To them it seemed that nothing short of supreme power could reward Ho Kwang's deserts, or satisfy their desires. Therefore while Ho Kwang was himself perfectly satisfied and devoted to his master, there was in the state a party, nearly allied by blood to himself and trading on his name, which was working to effect the overthrow of Siuenti.

At the bottom of this plot, which had for its object the raising of a member of Ho Kwang's family to the Imperial dignity, and which, if it failed, would be sure to have the effect of discrediting that minister, was a woman, goaded by an insatiable ambition, unrestrained by those dictates of generosity that often qualify the acts of the worst men. Hohien, Ho Kwang's wife, had obtained a footing on the threshold of the enterprise she had conceived by the marriage of her daughter with the Emperor; but, although both mother and daughter endeavoured to obtain the concession, Siuenti persistently refused to acknowledge as Empress any except his first wife Hiuchi. Hohien was not to be easily baulked in her desire. Hiuchi fell ill and died; and the physician, a creature in the pay of Hohien, was cast into prison, there

to await examination under torture. In this extremity Hohien made full confession to Ho Kwang, who, to save the family honour, ordered that torture should not be applied to the prisoner. The pressing danger of discovery thus staved off, Hohien's daughter was proclaimed Empress; while Hohien, still unsatisfied, turned again to dangerous plotting. Siuenti showered honours on this family, which Ho Kwang refused for himself, and unwillingly saw bestowed upon his relatives. But if Siuenti was thus anxious to show his appreciation of Ho Kwang's services, he was actuated as much as ever by a love of justice. Hohien's daughter had been recognized as Empress, but when an heir-apparent was proclaimed (B.C. 67) it was the eldest son of Hiuchi, the murdered wife. Soon after this event a design which Hohien formed for the poisoning of the young prince was discovered, and she and all the members of her family were either executed, or commanded "to drink the waters of eternal life." So was it that the crimes of a woman cast a shadow of opprobrium across the spotless name of Ho Kwang, one of the greatest statesmen China ever possessed.

Siuenti died in the year B.C. 49, at the early age of forty-two, having during his reign of twenty-five years evinced many great and estimable qualities. He had directed much of his attention to the laws which he had simplified, and his eulogist boasts that he had stripped them of everything which could serve as a subterfuge for the elusion of prompt and effectual justice—a statement which, remembering that Chinese intellect is as subtle and acute as any in the world, must be accepted with much reservation. Entitled to respect for what he himself accomplished, there is no doubt that his successful administration was also largely due to the wise acts of the great Vouti.

Yuenti, the son of the deceased Emperor, had the good fortune to ascend the throne at a more mature age than any of his immediate predecessors, but he appears to have been unable to benefit either himself or his people by the fact that he was competent to assume the task of government without any interregnum. His first acts were fairly prudent, and of a kind to make the person of the new prince popular;

but his reign of sixteen years affords little scope for detailed description. A great rising took place in the southern provinces, and a large army had to be sent against the rebels. At first too small a force was sent, and the rebels were successful; but then large reinforcements were despatched, and the rising was stamped out. The reputation won by this victory was enhanced by a great triumph over a chief of the Tartars. Chichi, one of the kings of the Hiongnou, had, in the disruption of the confederate power of his people, gathered to himself a formidable band of devoted followers. He assumed an attitude of semi-defiance towards the Chinese, who at first only regarded his movements with suspicion, and then came to the decision to put a stop to them before they could constitute a danger to their peace of mind. For this, however, the credit did not belong to Yuenti.

Chintang, the Chinese commander on the Shensi frontier, was one of those resolute and prescient soldiers who never hesitate when an emergency arises to act in independence of their official instructions. Holding joint command with himself was one of those men who, always respectable, adhere to the minutiae of their duty when the safety of the state is imperilled, and who postpone action until the favourable opportunity has passed away. On this occasion Chintang, taking all responsibility upon himself, resolved, in spite of the objections of his colleague, who wished to refer the matter to the capital, to attack Chichi before he was fully prepared for war. The boldness of his plan was equalled by the celerity with which he carried it into execution. By forced marches he approached and surrounded the chief camp of the Tartar king, and, although Chichi defended himself valiantly, the Chinese attack succeeded. Chichi died of his wounds, and his head was sent to Changnan. The effect produced by this great victory was felt along the whole of the frontier, and all the Tartar chiefs hastened to renew the expression of their dependence on the Emperor.

The expedition against Chichi was, indeed, the sole event of any importance which marked the reign of Yuenti. That prince proved timid, irresolute, and superstitious. An

eunuch swayed his council, and luxury and apathy prevailed in his palaces. The Empire was prosperous because it enjoyed peace, but the peace was not so much due to the vigilance of the sovereign as it was the natural consequence of previous events. Yuenti died in the sixteenth year of his reign, unmourned by the subjects who had welcomed his accession (B.C. 33).

His son Chingti became Emperor, and one of the first acts of the new reign was the disgrace and banishment of the eunuch who had injured the character of Yuenti's administration. But as he replaced him by distributing the higher offices indiscriminately among the relations of his mother, neither the public service nor those representing it benefited by the change. Chingti soon showed that he was not much impressed by the greatness of his position. He neglected the cares of government for the pleasures of the table, and his amours and carousings became the scandal of the well-ordered and decorous Chinese officials. Various calamities fell on the country during his reign. Floods and violent storms were of frequent occurrence; and on one occasion Changnan, the capital, was flooded, and the Emperor and his family had to seek safety in boats. These misfortunes were further aggravated by popular disturbances and by the decline in vigour of the central authority. As if to reflect on the conduct of this prince, the King of Kipin, or Samarcand, who had alone held aloof from China under the previous reigns, sent an embassy to Changnan, where it was honourably received. Chingti saw in this act a testimony to his own greatness, and not the result of the wisdom of his predecessors. Fortunately for China, Chingti died suddenly after he had been on the throne for twenty-six years. Unregretted, save by those who had shared his orgies, this prince has left the name of being one of the worst of Chinese monarchs, a kind of Chinese Vitellius. His death happened in the year B.C. 7.

Chingti was succeeded by his nephew Gaiti, who endeavoured to restore the sinking credit of his House. He had not been an indifferent spectator of the disorders in the palace during the reign of his uncle, and he strove to remove

the abuses and to generally reform the state administration. But his reign was all too short to afford scope for the amiability of his disposition and to allow of his reform taking root. He surrounded himself with men of his own age, and the nation anticipated that he would establish a new order of things. If time did not allow of any very remarkable achievement being performed, there was at least a return of vigour to the administration, and Gaiti's reign might have taken a high place among the Han Emperors had it been of longer duration. He died one year before the commencement of our era, having occupied the throne only six years.

Among the great officials who had been displaced by Gaiti was Wang Mang, who had taken a considerable part in affairs during the life of Chingti, but who, on the death of that prince, had thrown up his appointments and retired into private life. He had, however, far from given up the ambitious dreams which he had cherished from his youth, and his powerful influence at court brought him back into public life on Gaiti's death. One of his first acts was to disgrace and overwhelm with ruin the favourites and admirers of the deceased Emperor, when, having accomplished this to his own satisfaction, he entered into a pact with Gaiti's mother for the governing of the state. There was a short interregnum during which these events occurred, and then a young grandson of the Emperor Yuenti was placed by these allies on the throne. As he was only nine years of age, he was unable to assert his rights in matters of state, and the persons who put him forward gave him the name of Pingti or the peaceful Emperor. Pingti began his reign in the first year of our era, but as it closed within five years it need hardly be said that the transactions under his nominal guidance were carried out without either his cognizance or consent.

Beyond incurring blame for his insatiable ambition the administration of Wang Mang deserves praise rather than censure. He preserved the national credit in the necessary dealings with the neighbours of the state. The Tartars were compelled to comply with the letter of their treaties,

and the kingdoms of the south sent tribute and presents to the capital. In all his acts Wang Mang strove to obtain a popularity which would enable him to shake himself free, when the favourable opportunity should present itself for throwing aside the mask, from the few trammels upon his conduct left to such Imperial authority as remained.

The one element of embarrassment to him was the want of money ; and this compelled him to resort to the desperate expedient of stripping the tombs of the deceased princes of the Han family of the jewels and other valuables buried with them. This act was, no doubt, shocking to the higher orders, but by some skilful manipulation, which the records do not preserve, Wang Mang was able to commit this sacrilege without alienating the support of the people, although he was violating one of the most cherished of Chinese customs. Having gone to this length, Wang Mang did not hesitate to take the next step, and get rid of the Emperor. Wang Mang himself handed Pingti the poisoned cup, and when the unfortunate boy was lying in agony in the palace, Wang Mang had the presence of mind to loudly express his grief at the sad fate which had befallen his master.

A child named Jutse Yng was placed upon the throne for the sake of appearances, but Wang Mang was accorded all the prerogatives of supreme power. A party among the great men in the state was formed against him, but after some hesitation, Wang Mang grappled with and crushed them. Jutse Yng had then served his turn, and vanished from history. Wang Mang, after ten years' intriguing, discarded further concealment, and was proclaimed Emperor. He sought to give permanence to his dynasty by taking a fresh name and style. The Han Empire became by his decree that of the Sin, and for a short space disappeared from history ; but the later historians have agreed in expunging its name from their works.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REVIVAL AND FALL OF THE HANS.

HAVING cast aside the mask, and assumed supreme authority, Wang Mang hoped to strengthen his position by a policy of violent and sweeping innovation. He divided the Empire into principalities more in accordance with what he considered his interests demanded, and reduced the number of feudal princes by numerous depositions and arrests. The very boldness of his measures unnerved his enemies, and he carried matters with a high hand during the earlier years of his usurped authority. The success of his audacity was not to prove of long duration, and while his subjects were cowering under his implacable resentment, his neighbours saw in the disappearance of the Hans and the rise of an adventurer the opportunity of setting aside the arrangements which wiser rulers had concluded for the purpose of binding them to the Chinese alliance. The Tartars were the first to openly proclaim their resolution to concede no longer to the new ruler the outward marks of respect which they had yielded to his predecessors. They openly set Wang Mang at defiance, and, fostering the agitation among all the bordering tribes, carried their incursions into provinces which had become prosperous and wealthy by their absence during a whole generation. In the face of this irruption, Wang Mang showed the greatest irresolution and weakness. While his frontier garrisons were besieged or destroyed, he did nothing to assert his authority, and allowed the Tartars to continue their raids with impunity. The provinces of the north, which had flourished during thirty years of assured tranquillity, again suffered from the

depredations of the neighbouring hordes, and the wealth and prosperity which had come in the train of peace vanished from the land.

In comparison with other troubles, which speedily arose, that caused by the Tartars was slight. Wang Mang was threatened by dangers much more pressing and nearer home. Risings in the eastern provinces were soon succeeded by a serious rebellion in the south, where the districts beyond the Great River were but loosely knit to Chinese authority. Wherever Wang Mang turned, there were foes either declared, or only awaiting a favourable opportunity to reveal themselves. Wang Mang had displaced the Hans, and raised himself to a supreme position by a capacity for intrigue in the palace ; but it soon became clear that, unless he could make good his position by valour and ability in the field, the Chinese people would not long accept him as their ruler. The apathy which he showed in his movements against the Tartars, who were the first to put forward a proclamation demanding the restoration of the Hans, encouraged his other opponents, and when the prevailing sedition revealed itself Wang Mang failed to act with the necessary promptitude. It was only after the popular resentment had broken out on all sides that Wang Mang began to bestir himself. He had waited too long. The spell of inactivity had warped his strength, and when he appealed to the sword the foundations of his power had been sapped, and his enemies were on the high road to victory.

Sluggish in his movements, his new-found activity was scarcely more happy in its result. Having sent an overwhelming force against a small band of rebels in Szchuen, his general succeeded in enclosing them in a town where they were obliged to yield themselves up "on terms." Wang Mang refused to recognize the validity of the arrangement, and caused them all to be put to the sword. In this act of treachery and cruelty his other enemies saw proof that the struggle was to be one without mercy and to the death. The wave of popular feeling, strong in China with the strength of a free-thinking and self-opinionated people, set in against the usurper, and in favour of that line of kings whose merits were

remembered with regret while their faults and frailties were condoned.

So it happened that after this slight success which had thrown a gleam of brightness over the darkening fortunes of Wang Mang, the popular hostility became intensified, and the confidence of the leaders of the hostile parties rose higher and higher. The descendants of the Han princes came out of the seclusion into which they had been forced, and stood forward in the van of Wang Mang's opponents. Defeat followed defeat, and the circle of his foes drew in closer and closer to his capital; yet Wang Mang, diffident of his own courage, or unnerved in the presence of danger, refused to take the field in person. After twelve years of a war, marked by all the painful and cruel circumstances of civil strife, the usurper was besieged in his capital, which he failed to defend. When the victors had established themselves within the city, and were on the point of entering the palace, Wang Mang retired to one of the upper towers to put an end to his existence; but here his heart failed him, and he was slain by the soldiers of the Han princes. All he could exclaim was, "If Heaven had given me courage, what could the family of the Hans have done?" His body was hacked to pieces, and his limbs were scattered about to be trampled underfoot by the throng in the streets of Changnan. Fourteen years of independent authority, marked by a series of misfortunes and disasters, had failed to give Wang Mang any reward or consolation for the crimes which he had committed in obtaining a position that ceased to be of value as soon as it had been attained.*

* Among the most formidable of Wang Mang's enemies was Fanchong, leader of a band of rebels in the modern province of Shantung. Fanchong defeated all the troops sent against him, and became the most popular of the leaders in the war with Wang Mang. In the very crisis of the struggle he took a step which, perhaps, had a greater effect than any other circumstance in determining the course of the contest. He caused his soldiers to paint their eyebrows red, as expressive of their intention to fight with the last drop of their blood. He gave out as his proclamation, "If you meet the 'Crimson Eyebrows,' join yourselves to them: it is the sure road to safety. Wang Kwang (Wang Mang's general) can be opposed without danger; but those who wish for death

Lieou Hiouen, the elder of the Han princes, was placed upon the throne by the victorious soldiery; and one of his first steps was to remove the capital from Changnan to Loyang. The restoration of the Hans was hailed with general expressions of delight throughout the whole of China. The old men wept with joy, says the Chinese chronicler, when they again saw the banner of the Hans waving over the person of the Emperor. Lieou Hiouen afforded the people no solid reason for welcoming the change. He gave himself up to the indulgence of pleasure, and left to his cousin Lieou Sieou the task of restoring the family authority. Lieou Sieou set about his work in an energetic fashion, and, while the Emperor was engaged in court pleasures, this prince employed himself in the reconquest of lost provinces, and in the gradual formation of a party of his own.

The "Crimson Eyebrows" who had taken, under their chief Fanchong, so prominent a part in the delivery of the kingdom from Wang Mang, had now become a source of danger to the public tranquillity. Fanchong was ambitious, and his personal influence served to keep a large number of his followers under his flag. From patriots they became brigands, and the allies of the Hans developed into their most formidable enemies. After a stubbornly contested campaign, however, Lieou Sieou completely defeated them. They were not finally overthrown until some years later, and the Crimson Eyebrows were to again come prominently forward before they passed out of history. The incapacity of Lieou Hiouen, or Yang Wang, was by this time demonstrated beyond all dispute, and the same army which two years before had placed him on the throne, declared unanimously that Lieou Sieou was the only man fit to rule the Empire and to restore the Hans to their ancient splendour. Lieou Sieou, bred to a soldier's life, was proclaimed Emperor amid the clash of arms, under the style of Kwang Vouti.

The new ruler wished to treat the deposed prince with magnanimity, although he had murdered one of his brothers, may join that commander." The Crimson Eyebrows became not less celebrated in the China of their day than the Camisards were in France. —"Mailla," vol. iii. pp. 248, 249.

and sent him a guarantee of personal safety, with an offer at the same time of the principality of Hoai Yang. This proposal the deposed prince indignantly refused, placing himself instead in the hands of the Crimson Eyebrows. Fanchong broke the laws of hospitality, and, after a momentary hesitation, caused his guest to be put to death. Thus ended the short career of the first of the restored princes of the Hans.

The very year marked by the accession to power of the Emperor Kwang Vouti beheld the reappearance of Fanchong's bands as enemies of the public peace, and as fighting for their own hand. While the new ruler was establishing his position at Loyang, the Crimson Eyebrows had seized Changnan, which they pillaged. So long as there was enough to supply all their wants in the deserted capital and the surrounding district, they made it their head-quarters, and indeed it was not until they had reason to dread the approaching army of the Emperor that they withdrew from the city, which had been the scene of the overthrow of Wang Mang, and of the reinstallation of the Hans in power. Their excesses while there had marked them out as public enemies, and although their numbers were computed to exceed two hundred thousand men, they were none the less the objects of national execration.

An army smaller than their own was sent against them by Kwang Vouti as soon as he had succeeded in restoring order in the other districts of the realm; and the command was placed in the hands of Fongy, one of the best generals of the age. By a series of skilful manœuvres he made up for deficiency in numbers, and, having worsted the Crimson Eyebrows in numerous skirmishes, he accepted a general engagement, which resulted in a complete and brilliant victory. In the crisis of the battle Fongy turned the tide in his own favour by bringing up a reserve composed of prisoners he had captured in the previous encounters, who mingled themselves without being observed among their former comrades, when their sudden attack produced a panic, and Fanchong's army was driven in a shattered state from the field. Soon after this Fanchong accepted the terms

offered him. The Crimson Eyebrows disbanded, and Lieou Penti, a younger member of the Han family, whom they had put forward as Emperor, became a state prisoner. Fongy crowned the campaign by a brilliant success over a large army composed of the fragments of several rebel bands. With this victory, won two years after his accession to power, Kwang Vouti had crushed all his domestic opponents, and was able to turn his attention to affairs connected with the state, and its foreign relations.

Although thus far victorious, Kwang Vouti had still many troubles and difficulties before him; in fact, his whole life was spent in the task of overcoming them. A great war in the south was carried on with remarkable vigour and bitterness. It had many phases, and did not conclude until a much later period; but in the year 29 of our era a general named Keng Kang brought its first phase to a satisfactory conclusion by several victories obtained over superior numbers. The honour of these successes belonged exclusively to Keng Kang, who, although on the eve of being reinforced by the Emperor in person, seized a favourable opportunity for striking a decisive blow against his adversary. When one of his lieutenants recommended that he should defer his attack until the Emperor had come up with fresh troops, Keng Kang is reported to have made the following apposite reply: "The duty of a son and of a subject, when his father or his prince is expected, is to prepare the best wine and to kill the fattest calf for their reception, and to go forth to welcome them in advance; therefore since the Emperor is so close at hand we must give battle to-morrow, in order that we may appear before him as brave and faithful subjects." The victory was commensurate with the spirit in which it was fought on the side of the Imperial troops. The rebel leaders, indeed, escaped from the field, but discord followed in the train of defeat. Mutual recriminations ensued when one leader, seeing no hope save in recognizing the authority of the Emperor, murdered his comrade and accepted the terms offered him.

Another bitter war was fought with an ambitious prince named Weigao, in the difficult country between Shensi and

Szchuen, but during many years the result proved dubious. At last this chief died, and, although his son Weichun inherited both his position and his ambition, the Chinese generals then succeeded in bringing the war to a speedy termination. Weichun, having been taken prisoner, was placed in honourable confinement, but, breaking his parole, was recaptured and executed. Kwang Vouti had been twelve years on the throne when this event occurred, and, wearied of the long wars which he had been compelled to wage, he looked forward to peace and tranquillity during the remainder of his life. It is reported that, when his son asked him, about this time, how an army was placed in order of battle, he refused to reply, in the hope that, if an everlasting peace had not been reached, his wars, at least, were over. Events were to prove too strong for him. Desirous of being a man of peace, the necessities of the time made him a warrior. While professing his wish to devote his days to the study of the art of government, and to sheathe a sword he had wielded since his boyhood, the number of his opponents, the confidence of his neighbours that China was in a state of decrepitude, kept his attention directed to the field of active affairs, and prevented the sword of just authority being hidden in the scabbard. So to the end of his days Kwang Vouti remained a man of war.

Out of civil disturbance, fostered in some cases by restless neighbours, there arose foreign wars and expeditions against the states adjoining his own. From Leaoutung to Cochin China, on all the borders of the Empire, there was not an ambitious chieftain, or a marauding clan, which did not see a favourable opportunity for encroachment, if only for the purposes of rapine. It was Kwang Vouti's peculiar duty to show that this opinion was a mistaken one, and to restore the diminished splendour of the authority of the Chinese sovereign. Among the most notable of the wars thus occasioned was that with the state of Kaochi, the modern Tonquin and Cochin China. The subjection of a portion of this country will not have been forgotten; and during the crisis of these later years there stood forth in that region a daring woman, who aspired to be the deliverer of her native land. This

heroine, a princess of the native line, was called Chingtse, and, having stirred up her own people and those of the neighbouring states, she led her army to encounter the Chinese troops garrisoning the country. Her skill proved as conspicuous as the intrepidity she had previously shown, and the Chinese garrison was either destroyed or sought safety by making a timely retreat. Chingtse was proclaimed Queen of Kaochi, and for a time she ruled her native land with wisdom and without being disturbed.

Kwang Vouti could not acquiesce in so decisive a reverse at the hands of a woman. It was incumbent upon him to act vigorously for the retrieval of a defeat calculated to injure his reputation more seriously than other disasters of greater importance. A vast armament was collected both on land and on sea, the roads to Kaochi were repaired, and after months spent in preparations for carrying on war on a large scale, an immense army was collected in the southern portion of Kwantung for the invasion and reconquest of Kaochi. Mayuen, who ranked with Fongy and Keng Kang as the best generals of the age, was entrusted with the command.

Chingtse spared no effort to worthily oppose this host, and in the battle of the war the Chinese historians admit that, had her allies fought with the same resolution as her immediate followers, it might have gone hard with their own troops. In the result, however, Chingtse was completely defeated, and her country again became the vassal of China. No sooner had Mayuen brought this campaign to a successful conclusion, than he volunteered to lead another army against the Hiongnou, saying that it ill became a man of courage to die in his bed surrounded by his family, for a field of battle strewn with arrows, pikes, and swords, was in truth his only bier of honour. Mayuen, elated by previous success, was not completely victorious in this new enterprise, and years were passed in a desultory warfare which, although tending to consolidate the authority of the Emperor, was marked by no event of striking importance. Both the Hiongnou and other Tartar tribes in the west, and the Sienpi in the north were, after twenty years of constant warfare, less reluctant than they had been to accept the generous terms of the Emperor, and

Kwang Vouti's closing years were marked by, if not an assured peace, at least a respectful truce.

In the year A.D. 57 Kwang Vouti died, after a reign of thirty-three years, leaving behind him a reputation for ability, and for a desire to foster the interests of his people, scarcely inferior to that of any of his race. To his ability as a general much of the credit for the restoration of the Hans was due, and it was not the least meritorious feature of his reign that his moderation helped still more towards restoring the popularity of his family. He never pronounced a sentence of death without regret, and until his offers had been spurned, and his acts reciprocated with treachery, he never treated his adversaries with the sternness always meted out in Eastern countries to a foe. He strove above all things to restrain the ambition of the great, and to govern the country in accordance, not with the interests of the few, but with the necessities of the many. China has had greater rulers than Kwang Vouti, but she has never had one more popular with or better loved by his subjects.

Mingti, the fourth of his sons, was chosen to succeed this ruler (A.D. 57), and during his reign of eighteen years gave general satisfaction to his subjects by his wisdom and clemency. The clouds which had so thickly obscured the horizon had to a great extent cleared off, and although there were troubles in the neighbouring kingdoms, only the echo of them penetrated into China. The strength of the Hiongnou had greatly declined in consequence of divisions in their own camp, and a few successes obtained in the Kokonor region by a general named Panchow, who will play a prominent part in the history of the next reign, sufficed to bring the whole of the bordering tribes to their knees. With the exception of this war, in which the Chinese strength was only partly engaged, Mingti's reign was one of peace. Prominent among the great works to which he devoted his attention and surplus wealth, was that of regulating the course of the Hoangho, which had proved a perennial source of destruction to the adjoining provinces. Mingti caused a dyke thirty miles in length to be constructed for the relief of the superfluous waters, and so long as this great work was kept in

repair we hear no more of the overflowing of the Yellow river. Mingti, if not indulging in war, took steps to promote the efficiency of his troops. He restored the military exercise, and rendered it incumbent on all to practise the use of the national bow. Devoted to literature, he still spared time to impress on his generals the precepts of Mayuen, whose daughter Machi he had married. When Mingti died, in A.D. 75, the Hans were firmly reseated on the throne. All rebels had been either vanquished or brought into subjection, and from Corea to Cochin China, from Kokonor to the Eastern Sea, there were none but loyal subjects or contented vassals of the Emperor.

The most remarkable event in the reign of Mingti was certainly the official introduction into China of Buddhism, which, although often opposed by subsequent rulers, bitterly hated by all the followers of Confucius, and treated with dislike and indifference by the people as a foreign invention, made good its position in spite of every obstacle, and still remains inextricably entwined with the religious customs of the nation and the state. In consequence of a dream that appeared to Mingti, and interpreted to him as meaning that he had seen the supernatural being worshipped in the West, under the name of Fo or Buddha, the Emperor sent envoys into India, or Tianchow, to learn what they could about this new teacher, and if possible to bring back his law. In this they completely succeeded; and although some rumours of Buddhism, and of the teachings of Sakya Muni, appear to have penetrated into China at a much earlier period, it was not until the first century of our era was far advanced that, at the invitation of a Chinese ruler, Buddhism made its formal entry into the country, and took its place among the creeds in which it was held permissible for rational men to put their faith.

On Mingti's death his son Changti, not eighteen years old at the time, became Emperor, and his reign also was one of tranquillity scarcely disturbed by the noise of war. Neither civil brawl nor foreign strife marred the even tenour of his days. It is true that when he assumed authority the embers of a quarrel were still smouldering on the north-western

frontier, and that the occasion was afforded a Chinese commander to show resolution of no ordinary kind in defending the town entrusted to his charge against an overwhelming force of the Hiongnou. This satisfactory incident was the only exception to prove the rule. Changti, under the guidance of his adopted mother, Machi, the daughter of the great Mayuen, and one of the finest female characters in Chinese history, turned his attention to peaceful pursuits, and by reducing taxation and regulating the imposts, sought to advance the best interests of his people.

The only war in which China was concerned, even indirectly, during this reign, was one in the country west of Shensi. Panchow, reluctant to lose the fruits of previous success, solicited Changti's permission to continue his operations on his own resources, and his request was conceded. Panchow was joined in his enterprise by Siukan, a high official, who obtained permission to recruit an army for this service from pardoned criminals—a force for the first time used in these western wars, but to be frequently employed at later stages of history down to the present day. About this time the Hans were further afflicted by the growing power of the Sienpi, a people established in the western portion of Leaoutung. Between the Sienpi in the north, and Panchow in the south, it fared badly at this time with the Hiongnou ancestors of the Hun devastators of the Roman Empire. One of the last acts of Changti's short reign was to sanction the sending of the tribute from Cochin China by land instead of by sea, as had hitherto been the practice; and for this purpose one hundred thousand taels were expended in the construction of a road to that country. Changti died in the thirty-first year of his age, deeply lamented by a people whom he had governed with prudence and justice (A.D. 88).

Changti was followed by his son Hoti, a child of only ten years; and while his reign was on the whole peaceful, it witnessed one of the most remarkable campaigns ever engaged in by China, but which, occurring at a very great distance from the centre of her power, raised scarcely a ripple on the surface of Chinese affairs. Hoti's mother became Regent, but her brother attempted to wrest, and for a time succeeded

in doing so, the governing power out of her hands. As soon as the Emperor reached an age when he was capable of ruling for himself, he evinced qualities of greatness and of virtue that won for him his subjects' hearts. During his reign the eunuchs, who afterwards proved a still greater source of trouble and difficulty, asserted themselves in the administration, and obtained some of the highest offices in the state through the ability of their chief, Ching Chong. Hoti died, A.D. 105, after a reign of seventeen years, which would have been uneventful but for the deeds of Panchow, now to be described.

During the previous reigns Panchow had warred with unvaried success in the region west of China Proper. Some small kingdoms and numerous tribes had been brought into subjection, and Panchow had spread the terror of his name far beyond the limits of his actual conquests. Several years before Hoti ascended the throne, Panchow is stated to have conquered the city of Kashgar, and to have extended the Chinese Empire to as far west as the Pamir; but when Changti died and the youthful Hoti became ruler, Panchow, the veteran general and foremost of Chinese subjects, was able to order things more after the fashion of his own heart. With a largely increased army he made his position in Eastern Turkestan, or Little Bokhara, the stepping-stone for greater triumphs in the kingdoms beyond that state. It is said that in the course of this later campaign, which doubtless covered several years, he reduced fifteen kingdoms, and reached the Caspian, or Northern Sea, as the Chinese called it. This barrier, which he meditated crossing, was represented to him by the inhabitants to be so formidable and of such extent that he abandoned the design he had conceived of carrying his master's dominions beyond its borders. The difficulties which he and his army had overcome in their long march across burning deserts, lofty mountain ranges, and mighty rivers, and through innumerable enemies, afforded every reason for supposing that the Caspian could not retard a host whose progress had up to that been irresistible. The peoples on its borders were fully cognizant of this, and they invested it accordingly with terrors that it did not possess. Panchow's

army remained for some time encamped in this quarter, when commercial relations are believed to have been established with the Roman Empire, or the great Thsin, as it was called by the Chinese. It is instructive to know that the Parthians and their neighbours placed obstacles in the way of this intercourse through their country because they found that their own trade suffered in consequence. Panchow has always been represented as having undertaken these wars from mere love of military ambition, and it would be significant to learn that his object was of so practical a character as the coercion of the peoples of Western Asia for purposes of trade. In most cases the desire to advance personal interests is found to be a more potent motive-power than the mere love of fame. After concluding this brilliant expedition Panchow returned to China, where the veteran died in his eightieth year, trusted by his sovereign, and, in no extravagant sense, the popular idol.

Hoti was succeeded by his son Changti, only ten days old when his father died, but he expired within the same year.

Ganti, son of the Prince of Tsingho, a brother of Hoti, then became the choice of the people, or rather of the Palace, and was proclaimed Emperor in the year A.D. 106, when he was only thirteen years of age. Hoti's widow was named Regent during his minority, and wielded the executive power for almost the whole of his reign of nineteen years. Long after Ganti attained years of discretion the Empress-Regent evaded the representations made to her to surrender her position. No remarkable events occurred during this reign, which proved singularly barren of interest. The Regent, wisely recognizing that the borders of the Empire had been extended further than its strength could permanently sustain, contracted its limits, and relaxed the hold that had been obtained over numerous vassal princes. Internal peace was the better preserved, and the ravages of a pirate named Changpelou were checked and their perpetrator executed, after a career of successful impunity of more than five years. Famines and other grave visitations had brought suffering to the Chinese and anxiety to their rulers; but on the whole the Regent showed herself well able to provide for all the

wants of the people ; and when Ganti died, in A.D. 124, he left after him the name of an amiable and conscientious prince.

His son Chunti, who succeeded him, soon became engaged in several small wars, out of which he emerged successfully. The later years of his reign witnessed the outbreak of several rebellions, of which that headed by Mamien was the most formidable. Mamien, aspiring to play a great part, caused himself to be proclaimed Emperor ; but his career was speedily cut short, and, being taken prisoner, he suffered the extreme penalty of the law. The only other event of this reign of any importance was the passing of a law that no one should be raised to the magistracy who was less than forty years of age. The contests among men were matched by the conflicts of the elements. To famines there were added earthquakes and landslips on a large scale among the natural phenomena of the time, and Chunti died, it is said, of fright brought on by one of these catastrophes. Of the same age as his father, like him he reigned nineteen years.

To Chunti succeeded his infant son Chongti, and to Chongti another child Cheti, a descendant of the Emperor Changti. The former was always sickly, and died in a few months after Chunti. The latter held nominal authority during one year, when he was poisoned by Leangki, a noble whose ambition forms one of the episodes of the period, and of whom during the next reign more will be heard.

On Cheti's death, Houanti, the elder brother of that unhappy prince, was proclaimed Emperor by the exercise of unwarranted authority on the part of the murderer Leangki. Like most of the ambitious intriguers who have from time immemorial infested the palace of the Chinese ruler, Leangki was not a prince of the blood, but the brother of one of the Empresses. During the long minority which had followed among the Chinese sovereigns after the death of Hoti, the opportunity was afforded this personage of advancing his own interests at the expense of the state. In the palace his word became virtually supreme, and none ventured to question his commands. An incautious phrase on the part of the boy Cheti had cost him his life ; and now, under the nominal

authority of Houanti, Leangki sought to carry everything before him with a high hand. His intrigues and crimes constituted the gravest danger in the path of the new ruler. Having removed by foul means several of the ministers of whose influence he was most apprehensive, Leangki grew so confident that he ventured on one occasion into the presence of the Emperor with a sword by his side—an act punishable with death. He was at once charged with the offence, and would have suffered the penalty of the law if Houanti had not intervened, and spared his life in consideration of his having placed him on the throne. Leangki, far from feeling grateful for this generous treatment, intrigued against the Emperor, and sought to form a party of his own. His plots were discovered, but, when on the point of capture, he accepted the inevitable, and evaded his just sentence by taking poison.

Troubles of various kinds and in different quarters beset the Chinese during this period. The tribes on their borders, constantly stirred up by their own irrepressible energy, and by the spasmodic ambition of their chiefs, again became troublesome, and the consequences of their hostile movements assumed increased gravity because of a growing disposition among them to combine against China. The Sienpi, in Leaoutung, at first carried on hostilities against the Hiongnou, but this quarrel was arranged (apparently by the subjugation of the Huns, part of whom migrated to the West, arriving in Europe at a critical moment, while the rest coalesced with the Sienpi) when they turned their united armies against China. Owing to the skill of the general Twan Keng, and, at a later stage of the contest, of Toanyng and Hoangfoukoue, these tribes were defeated, and the authority of the Emperor was re-established on a firm basis. In the final battle of the war the balance of victory hung in doubt, until Twan Keng, rushing to the front of his army, exhorted his men to charge once more, with the following heroic speech: "Recall to your minds how often before you have beaten these same opponents, and teach them again to-day that in you they have their masters." Houanti's reign was, therefore, one of brilliant military achievement; and when he died, in A.D. 167, there was no symptom that the long term of the Han rule was

approaching its close. Never, indeed, did it appear more vigorously established than when, after a reign of more than twenty years, the fingers of Houanti relaxed the sceptre of his ancestors.

Houanti died without leaving an heir, and a young prince, one of the descendants of Changti, was placed on the throne under the name of Lingti. The eunuchs had, during the previous reigns, been extending their influence, and steadily acquiring the chief posts of authority. Under Lingti their activity increased, and, finding in the Emperor a weak and easily-guided instrument, they aimed at nothing short of a supreme position, when they would be free of all control. The very first act of his reign was to extend his protection to the eunuchs whom the other ministers endeavoured to crush; and it was under the encouragement of Imperial favour that they hatched the plot which made their position more assured than it had ever been. Turning their occupation of the palace to account, they gained possession of the Emperor's person, and while one of their number amused him with sword exercise, the rest, making use of his name, seized their rivals and had them promptly executed. After this bold move no one ventured, for some time, to challenge the authority of the eunuchs.

Lingti was engaged in a war of considerable difficulty and importance with the Sienpi, who had shown a fresh disposition to encroach on the Chinese dominions, and through the courage and ability of his commander, Chow Pow, the contest had a very satisfactory termination for him. By some means the family of this general had fallen into the power of the Sienpi, and when Chow Pow came face to face with the enemy they exhibited his mother outside their camp, threatening to slay her the instant he made any movement. There was a short struggle in the mind of Chow Pow, and then duty to his sovereign and his country triumphed over his affection for his mother. He attacked and defeated the Sienpi, who, however, carried their threat into execution. Chow Pow, infuriated at his loss, offered up hecatombs of warriors in expiation of the crime. It fared ill that day with any foe who crossed the path of a Chinese soldier, but

Chow Pow took his loss so much to heart that he died very shortly after his great victory. The war with the Sienpi was followed by an insurrection fomented by three brothers of the name of Chang, and called that of the Yellow Bonnets. This confederation, like that of the Crimson Eyebrows, did not carry out in practice the admirable precepts with which it started ; and after an ephemeral success, Lingti's generals succeeded in defeating its forces, capturing its leaders, and completely crushing the whole movement. Fortunate in those who acted for him, Lingti suffered none of the inconveniences which he fully incurred through his own negligence, and the confidence he reposed in his eunuch courtiers. He died in A.D. 189, after a reign of twenty-two years.

Lingti's death was followed by an interregnum of nearly two years' duration, which witnessed several events of considerable importance. It was during this period that symptoms of the approaching fall of the Hans became more clearly visible. Lingti left by the Empress Hochi a son named Lieou Pien or Pienti, and by the Empress Tongchi another, Lieou Hiei or Hienti. At first the latter found the more favour in his father's eyes, but owing to some shortcomings in his mother he was put into the background, and Hochi's son proclaimed heir-apparent. The eunuchs, and their chief Kien Chow in particular, favoured Hienti ; but Hochi, mainly by the support of her brother, General Hotsin, carried her point, and Pienti became nominal Emperor. Out of this intrigue there arose bitter enmity between the eunuchs and Hotsin, the latter vowing that he would ruin them. He took his measures with great skill, brought troops from the provinces, and undoubtedly had the people at his back ; but on the very day when the time had come to strike, his overconfidence gave the eunuchs a momentary advantage. He entered the palace alone, and was at once slain by them. His comrade Yuen Chow stormed the palace, slaughtered every eunuch on whom he could lay his hands, to the number of ten thousand, and took an ample revenge for the murder of Hotsin. The loss of Hotsin proved, however, irreparable to the cause he represented. An intriguing noble, Tongcho, brother of the Empress Tongchi, seized the reins of power.

Yuen Chow was compelled to flee. The Empress Hochi—who had previously got rid of her rival, Empress Tongchi—and her son Pienti were thrown into prison and poisoned. Hochi was powerless in the hands of Tongcho, and her only weapon was to exclaim, "Just Heaven will avenge us." Tongchi's son was proclaimed Emperor as Hienti, and the new reign began in the year A.D. 191.

During the thirty years that Hienti was nominally Emperor he was only a puppet in the hands now of one intriguing minister and again of another, while the country was distracted by the conflicting pretensions of several ambitious princes, each of whom aspired to found a dynasty in succession to the expiring one of the Hans. Prominent at first among these was Tongcho, who had placed Hienti on the throne; but his enjoyment of power proved shortlived. His ambition and love of display brought him many rivals, and when he issued, in the Emperor's name, an order that all those who went to court should doff their bonnets in his presence, he added fuel to the flame of growing resentment at his pretensions. Prominent among his opponents was Tsow Tsow, who in the end triumphed over him, and obtained the upper hand in the Imperial Council. Tsow Tsow, who to a capacity for intrigue added a knowledge of war, and a personal courage which marked him out as the ablest leader in the country, gradually collected in his hands all the administrative power, and Hienti found that in changing Tongcho for Tsow Tsow he had not become more independent, but had simply altered the name of his master.

If, however, the last of the Hans was powerless in the grasp of his minister, there were others reluctant to acquiesce in the supremacy of Tsow Tsow. Twenty years of constant warfare ensued from this cause, and Yuen Chow, Sunkiuen, and Lieoupi set up rival parties in different portions of the realm. The first-named had himself proclaimed Emperor, but his success fell short of his expectations. His overthrow by Tsow Tsow, and early death, left the three other princes to settle the Empire between them; and although Tsow Tsow was uniformly successful in the field, he had to content himself with one-third of the state. Each of these princes,

Tsow Tsow, Sunkiuen and Lieoupi, became at a later period the founder of a dynasty, and when Tsow Tsow died his position was inherited by his son Tsowpi. This event occurred in the year A.D. 220 ; whereupon Hienti, apprehensive of violence, abdicated in favour of Tsowpi. Hienti retired into private life as Prince of Chanyang, thus terminating the brilliant dynasty of the Hans which had ruled China for more than four hundred years with splendour and wisdom. Their triumphs in war, and the remarkable progress in material welfare made by China under their guidance, had raised the nation to the first rank among the peoples of the world. Chinese armies had marched under their banners across the continent of Asia, Yunnan had been made a Chinese province, Cochin China and Leaoutung vassal states ; while the face of the country had been covered with populous cities and great public works—roads, canals, bridges and aqueducts—which still remain to testify to the glory of the Hans.

CHAPTER IX.

TEMPORARY DIVISION OF THE EMPIRE.

THE fall of the power of the Hans, and the disappearance of the main line of their dynasty in the mass of the people, whence five centuries previously it had sprung, left China split up into three independent kingdoms known as the period of the Sankoue. This fact not proving palatable to subsequent native historians, the acts of these three states have been classed together, and treated as if relating to one kingdom under the heading of the sixth dynasty. There can be no question that during this period, which extended over less than half a century, there were three distinct governments in China; and, as many subsequent events were clearly attributable to the occurrences of this time, it is necessary to unravel as best we can the intricacies of the mutual relations and foreign policy of the three contemporary and rival rulers. The first of these was known as the Later Hans, and held possession of the modern province of Szchuen, with the capital at Chentu. Although exercising authority over a smaller extent of territory than either of the others, this family of the Later Hans, on account of its semi-royal descent, is the one which the court historians have since striven to alone recognize. The second, that of Wu, comprised five of the southern provinces, with a capital at Wuchangfoo at one period, and at Nankin at another, and maintained its independence down to a later date than the Hans. The third, the kingdom of Wei, far larger in extent and including the most populous districts in China, embraced all the central and northern provinces, with a capital at Loyang, the recognized metropolis of the Empire.

The first ruler of the Later Hans was Lieoupi, already mentioned, who took the name of Chow Lieti, and who was descended in a direct line from the Han Emperor Kingti; while the general Sunkiuen, and Tsowpi, the son of Tsow Tsow, were the founders respectively of the kingdoms of Wu and Wei. It will be seen that the more powerful state of Wei gradually asserted its authority over the rest of China, and that the triumph of the descendants of Tsow Tsow was only marred at the eleventh hour by the intrigue of a successful general.

The great advantage which Tsowpi enjoyed over his contemporaries was that of possessing the recognized capital. By this means he retained his hold upon the vassals and tributaries. The embassies from the princes of Central Asia, and, it cannot be doubted, the trade intercourse as well with the regions of the West, continued to proceed to Loyang, thus giving the Wei ruler a larger claim to general consideration. That claim, however, the court historians have persistently refused to admit.

Chow Lieti, first Emperor of the Later Hans, had no sooner assumed the style of an independent prince than he occupied his mind with thoughts of vengeance for the ruin brought to the House of which he was a scion. His neighbour Sunkiuen, the ruler of the Wu kingdom, was an object of his special resentment, and, although advised that he had more danger to apprehend from Wei, and that it would be better to league himself with Wu against the more formidable enemy, he permitted his personal resentment to get the better of a conviction of political necessities. Rushing blindly into a war without due forethought or preparation, there was no reason to suppose that the Fates would disentangle him from the consequences of his own blunders.

The gravity of the danger that threatened him forced Sunkiuen to accommodate his difficulties with Tsowpi. The latter was acknowledged as Emperor, and the former was confirmed in the possession of his dominions as Prince of Wu. Meanwhile the army of Chow Lieti had taken up a position on the frontier, menacing the existence of the

state, and threatening to force a way to its capital. Sunkiuen had the good fortune to possess a skilful general, Lousun, and the ability he displayed in defending the frontier proved a better ally than Tsowpi, who regarded both his neighbours with an eye of doubt. The campaign turned out a protracted one. Twelve months were passed with the two armies each waiting before venturing to attack the other for such favourable circumstances as never came. These Fabian tactics were mostly in favour of the force which was fighting on its own soil and with a friendly population at its back. When Chow Lieti's army was reduced by inaction, and dispirited by the failure to obtain any result, that of Lousun was still comparatively fresh and eager for the fray; and then Lousun resorted to all the strategy within his knowledge. A night attack in force, and at several points, carried everything before it. The best generals of Chow Lieti were either slain or taken prisoners; thousands of his soldiers fell on the field of battle, thousands more were captured, and all the baggage of the camp became the spoil of the victor. Chow Lieti himself barely escaped with his life from the scene of this crushing disaster, which in the stupefaction that fell upon him he could only attribute to the wrath of Heaven.

On the news of this victory Tsowpi at once increased his demands upon Sunkiuen, and the late opponents found in the pretensions of Wei a strong reason for forgetting their differences and combining together for mutual defence—the law of self-preservation again proving superior to every other. Chow Lieti never fully recovered the shock of his great defeat, and three years after his assumption of the Imperial title he died, leaving to his son pretensions greater than his actual power, and the legacy of a feud in which he must inevitably prove the weaker party. That son, Heouchow, began his reign in the year A.D. 223, when he was nearly seventeen years old. About the same time Tsowpi died, leaving his possessions to his brother Tsowjou, so that of the three rivals Sunkiuen was now the sole survivor that remained. The moment appeared to him to be auspicious for making an attack on his northern

neighbour's dominions. It never occurred to him that Tsowpi's lieutenants might prove more than a match for himself in the conduct of a campaign. From this fond delusion he was speedily awakened. Repulsed in two attempts to seize fortified towns, he was ignominiously defeated when he sought to retrieve his bad fortune in the open field.

And when the ruler of the Hans, or Chows, as they were called, with the aid of the great captain Chu-kwo-liang, strove to restore the balance of power, neither the advantage obtained by a sudden attack, nor the admitted superiority of the commander, availed to produce a different result. The generals of Wei triumphed, in the most decisive manner, over those of both Wu and of Chow. A desultory war ensued, in which the successes were mostly on the side of Tsowjoui, and, whether owing to mismanagement or to the hard decree of fortune, both Wu and Chow met with a long succession of reverses. In the north, too, Tsowjoui was not less successful. Kongsunyuen, King of Leaoutung, incurred his resentment, and a large army under the command of Ssemay was sent against him. Kongsunyuen defended himself with resolution, and obtained a slight success in the beginning of the struggle; but the ruler of Wei sending large reinforcements to his army in the field, Kongsunyuen was shut up in his capital and killed in an attempt to cut his way through the beleaguering lines. His capital was given over to the victorious soldiery to plunder, and the whole of Leaoutung became a province of the Wei kingdom. This decided and brilliant success gave Tsowjoui a more prominent place in the opinion of all his neighbours, but he did not live long to enjoy it. A few days after the return of the victorious general Ssemay, Tsowjoui died, leaving his throne to his nephew Tsowfang, a child eight years old. On his deathbed Tsowjoui exhorted Ssemay to be as faithful to his successor as he had always proved devoted to him (A.D. 239).

To Sunkiuen, who still survived as the last of the former rivals, the accession of this child appeared to be the long-sought opportunity for establishing his power on a supreme basis. The skilful arrangements of the general Ssemay foiled

his plans, and Sunkiuen retired baffled from the contest. Another war ensued from this with the ruler of Chow, but Heouchow was successful in beating back from his frontiers the danger which threatened him, and for a time the state of Wei was divided within itself by the intrigues of Tsowchwang, a minister who attempted to seize the governing power. When Ssemay had curbed his pretensions and restored order, other disturbances followed. Several of the possessions of Sunkiuen were wrested from him, and when he died in A.D. 252 it was clear that the days of the kingdom of Wu were already numbered. About the same time also died the brave general Ssemay, to be succeeded in his position by his son Ssemachi.

Sunleang, Sunkiuen's son and successor, rushed by the rash advice of his general Chu-kwo-ko into a war with Wei. Seven months were wasted before the walls of Sinching, a small fortified town held by a garrison of three thousand men, and then Chu-kwo-ko was obliged to beat a hurried retreat with the loss of half his army. At one time it had looked as if Sinching would have had to open its gates to the invader, and it was only the fortitude and presence of mind of its commandant Changte which averted that result. For ninety days the siege had gone on, and the ramparts of Sinching had been pierced in numerous places, and several breaches lay gaping to the foe. In short, Changte had done all that a good commander could, and, as no relieving force was near, there was nothing left for him save to die as a brave man. In this extremity he had recourse as a last chance to the following ruse. He sent word to Chu-kwo-ko that he was willing to surrender Sinching without further resistance, if the act of surrender were postponed until the hundredth day, as "it was a law among the princes of Wei that the governor of a place which held out for a hundred days, and then surrendered with no prospect of relief visible, should not be considered as guilty." Chu-kwo-ko, already wearied by the protracted defence, readily accepted this offer, but his astonishment may be imagined when a few days later he found the ramparts and forts of Sinching assuming their original appearance. All the breaches were repaired, new gates were

constructed, and fresh defensive works erected, and as these bulwarks appeared over the ruins of a three months' siege the spirits of the garrison under their bold commander rose in proportion. When Chu-kwo-ko sent to ask what was the meaning of these proceedings, and how they were to be reconciled with the terms of the agreement, Changte sent the bold reply, "I am preparing my tomb, and to bury myself under the ruins of Sinching." Of such resolute valour and indifference to death the military records of China contain many examples; but very seldom has any soldier shown such fertility of resource, and resolution not only to save personal honour, but also a charge of national importance, as did Changte on this occasion. The siege of Sinching brought honour to Changte, and security to his state; but to Chu-kwo-ko it signified disgrace and death as an unsuccessful and consequently a criminal general.

Meanwhile a series of events in the internal history of Wei had led to the deposition of Tsowfang by the general Ssemachi, and the elevation of Tsowmow, another of the nephews of Tsowjoui, in his place. Ssemachi died shortly after this occurrence, but his influence and dominant position in the state did not pass out of his family. To Ssemachi succeeded his brother Ssemachow, and the real governing power in the country remained in his hands. The war between Wei and its southern neighbours still lingered on; but in the year A.D. 257 it took a more decisive form. The army of Ssemachow under the command of Wangki won several battles in the south with comparatively small loss, and the capture of the important town of Chowchun, with its garrison of one hundred and fifty thousand rebels, struck a heavy blow in favour of the pre-eminence of Wei. Ssemachow took all the credit of this result to himself, and, in spite of the protests of Tsowmow, caused himself to be proclaimed governor of the Empire with the title of Prince of Tsin. Tsowmow was not destitute of courage, and he resolved to overthrow by prompt action this too-powerful soldier. Taking a few companions into his personal confidence, he proceeded to Ssemachow's palace with the intention of ridding the Empire of an ambitious subject. The project was a bold one,

but it miscarried. There was, in truth, to be a deed of blood that day, but Tsowmow himself was the victim, not Ssemachow.

Ssemachow, having got rid of Tsowmow, undertook the invasion of the kingdom of Chow, where Heouchow, the ruler of the Later Hans, still preserved the name and the dignity of the illustrious house from which he sprang. Tengai and the other Wei generals carried everything before them. A council of despair was held in the capital, and several propositions, some pusillanimous and others courageous, but all showing the desperate character of the situation, were placed before the Emperor. Heouchow accepted the suggestion of one of his ministers that the preferable alternative was to throw himself on the generosity of the Prince of Wei. His son Lieouchin, worthy heir of the characteristics of the great Vouti, declared that, "If we are without resources, and if there is no choice save to perish, we can at least die with honour. Let us march to meet the enemy with what may remain to us of brave men, and if our dynasty is on the point of extinction, let it finish only with our lives." To Heouchow, the timid, this advice was unpalatable, and he proceeded to grace the triumph of the victor by his own presence, while his son Lieouchin put an end to his existence with that of his family in the temple of his ancestors. It is in the act of Lieouchin rather than in the apathy of Heouchow, that the last scion of the great family of the Hans vanished from the gaze of his contemporaries, leaving a blank where once there had been the presence of a great name.

The war closed with the incorporation of the state of Chow with that of Wei. The general Tengai wrote from the captured city of Chentu to Ssemachow exhorting him to prosecute without further delay the war with Wu, so that his triumph might be made complete by the double conquest of the two southern kingdoms, because as Tengai wrote with a truth and pregnancy applicable to all times and circumstances, "An army which has the reputation of victory flies from one success to another." Ssemachow did not adopt this advice, and the conquest of Wu was put off for nearly twenty years. In A.D. 265 Ssemachow died, being

succeeded by his son Ssemayen, who at once deposed the nominal Emperor Yuenti, and had himself proclaimed in his stead. A new dynasty, that of the Tsins, was declared, and Ssemayen became the first ruler of the line under the name of Chitsou Vouti. The rivalry of the three princes and generals who had divided the Empire of the Hans thus terminated in favour of that founded by Tsowpi, the son of Tsow Tsow; but in the end it lost the fruits of its policy to the grandson of the general Ssemay who had contributed so much to its success. The Tsins won the Empire by the sword, and so long as they retained the capacity to assert their power they maintained an admitted supremacy throughout the whole of the country.

CHAPTER X.

THE DYNASTY OF THE LATER TSINS.

WHEN Ssemayen exalted himself on the Dragon Throne, and became the founder of the later Tsin dynasty, he took the title of Vouti, the warrior prince. It will be borne in mind that at this period numerous wars, the machinations of years, and the gradual growth of an ambitious family, had prevented the extension of the authority of the Wei ruler through more than two-thirds of the Empire. It became the one object of Vouti's life to incorporate the independent kingdom of Wu in his dominions ; but twenty years passed away before he compassed his purpose. The speedy conquest of Chow, and the fall of the representative of the Hans, created a great alarm in the bosom of Sunhow, Prince of Wu, and when Vouti seized the supreme power, Sunhow sent an embassy to Loyang to congratulate him, and to express a desire to become the vassal of the Tsins. Vouti received the ambassador with marked courtesy, but Sunhow was still hankering after the ambitious dreams of his father Sunkiuen. The supremacy of the Tsins was for the time incontestable ; but there was disaffection in the land, and their rule might not prove of long duration. So it happened that when the envoy who came "whispering words of humbleness and peace" returned south of the Great River, Sunhow began to plot not merely for the preservation of his independence, but even for the subversion of the Tsins. In Kiangsi and Hoonan, among the reedy marshes of Fuhkien and the woody glens of Kwantung, there was a furbishing of arms, and the grim expectation of coming battle disturbed the fishermen on Tunting, and the miners of Chowchow.

The strong positions held by the troops of Vouti, both on the northern banks of the Yangtsekiang, and also in the western province of Szchuen, inspired a prudent caution, and reckless as Sunhow was disposed to be, he long "let I dare not wait upon I would." As a precautionary measure, he removed his capital from Wuchang, in the plains of Houkwang, to Kiennie, in the maritime province of Chekiang. This prudent alteration had been made on the recommendation of the able Loukai ; but that wise minister did not live long to guide aright the policy of his master. His death, in A.D. 269, deprived Sunhow of his mainstay, and left Wu a divided and headless state at the mercy of its powerful neighbour.

Meanwhile, Vouti had been steadily drawing the toils tighter round Sunhow, whom he had marked as his prey. The insincerity of that prince's protestations of friendship had been made evident, and there was no valid reason why the task of uniting the Empire should be postponed in deference to a prince who was false and ambitious at the same time that he was cringing and destitute of courage. On all sides, therefore, Vouti's lieutenants were bestirring themselves, and preparing the legions that were to be launched across the Great River for the overthrow of a usurper and the annexation of his state. Along the upper course of the Kiang, Wangsiun was busily constructing a fleet of war junks, from the woods of Szchuen, to sweep down on the unsuspecting and over-confident admirals of Sunhow, while Yanghou, the greatest commander of the age, spared no effort to make the main attack successful. An attempt at a rising in Chow was suppressed in the summary manner that found favour in the eyes of Eastern despots, and a war, which calls for brief notice, with the Northern Sienpi was begun ; but the successful result in the latter case proved only temporary.

In A.D. 270 the Sienpi, under their king, Toufachukineng, invaded Chinese territory with a large force, and a general, Houliei, was sent to drive them back. A great battle ensued, in which the Chinese were victorious ; but the commanders on both sides were among the slain. A revolt in Leaoutung followed close on this incursion, of which the Sienpi were not

slow to avail themselves. They returned in greater force, and retrieved in a second encounter their recent defeat. Several years were occupied in desultory and irregular fighting, during which the Chinese admit that "an infinity of soldiers" were slain. Their frontier officials strove, and not in vain, to set one tribe against another, and by this means, although no decisive result was obtained, the borders were kept in a fair state of security. At a later period, A.D. 281, the Sienpi renewed their raids, and a clan occupying the modern Manchuria carried its arms to the shores of the Gulf of Pechihli. So that on the whole these tribes must be held to have had rather the best of the contest during the reign of the first Tsin Emperor.

One of the most remarkable occurrences of this reign was the bridging of the great river Hoangho, a task until then considered impossible. The difficulty, and positive danger at many seasons, of crossing this great stream had at all times occupied the grave consideration of the government; and many schemes had been suggested for improving the means of communication between the provinces north of the Hoangho and those south of it. But none had produced any result. At last, in A.D. 274, an adventurous individual named Touyu came forward and offered to construct a bridge across the Hoangho if the Emperor would support his scheme. The project was brought before the Imperial Council, and, after some discussion, rejected as impossible, because, as these "wise men" naively put it, if the thing were feasible it would have been done by their ancestors. So far as the collective wisdom of the ministers could prevent the carrying out of a great work of public utility, the project of Touyu failed to obtain official patronage and sanction; but the bold engineer was not discouraged, and his frequent memorials moved the heart of the Emperor to give him permission to make the attempt. In a very few months Touyu threw a bridge across the Hoangho at Mongtsin, thus connecting Honan with Shansi. This bridge no longer exists. The state of the Hoangho is the most serious reflection on the present Government of China. Vouti came in person to see the wonderful work, and inaugurated its opening for the use of his subjects by

ceremonies of an exceptional character. At this time Vouti is stated to have ruled his people with a prudence and moderation that gained him all hearts, and certainly this useful work should not be placed last among the benefits he conferred upon China.

In A.D. 272 Sunhow had been obliged to employ force in putting down a revolt within his dominions, and by rapid marching his general Loukang succeeded in overcoming all opposition before Vouti's general Yanghou, who had promised to afford the rebel assistance, could come up. A few years later Yanghou, having completed the scheme for the invasion of the states of Wu, died, to the great relief of all over whom he had exercised authority; and the master, whom he had served faithfully and for so many years, caused an eulogium, cut in letters of gold on stone, to be erected to his memory, reciting his numerous virtues—at once a reward to the minister and an exhortation to other officials to follow his example.

The year following Yanghou's death beheld the long-expected invasion of Wu on the eve of being put into practice. Five different corps from as many points were to attack Sunhow's dominions at the same time. One general carried everything before him between Henkiang and the Yangtsekiang; while Wangsiun, descending that river with his fleet, struck terror into the hearts of the people of Wu, who were quite unprepared for this unusual form of attack. In this emergency the only device they could think of was to throw chains across the river; but these Wangsiun forced with ease by using fire rafts. The whole military and naval strength of the Tsins was, therefore, converging on the very heart of the dominions of the King of Wu, and the nearer the approach of the danger the less able did Sunhow appear to be to defend himself. Touyu, the engineer of the Mongtsin bridge, had been entrusted by Vouti with the chief command, and while his lieutenants were obtaining successes in other quarters of the field, he won the great victory of the war near the city of Kianling, which fell to his arms without resistance. The effect of this was enhanced by a further battle won at Panpiao, in Kiangsu, when Changti, the most resolute of Sunhow's

remaining generals, met a soldier's death, fighting bravely at the head of his men.

After these disasters, unrelieved by the smallest ray of success, with his fleet destroyed and his armies shattered, Sunhow came to the resolution that it was time to abandon his dreams of ambition, and to make up his mind that the supremacy of the Tsins could no longer be disputed. He therefore gave himself up to Wangsiun, the general who, by constructing a fleet in the conquered province of Chow, had done so much towards deciding the fortune of this war. This event took place in the year A.D. 280, twenty years after the incorporation of Chow, and it added to the Tsin Empire a kingdom of vast dimensions. Wu at this time comprised four large provinces, sub-divided into forty-three departments, containing five hundred and twenty-three towns and villages, and a standing force of two hundred and thirty thousand men. This large territory was re-incorporated with the rest of China, and passed under the same laws as those which had been imposed elsewhere by the Tsins.

Having thus accomplished the object of his life, Vouti showed an inclination to pass the remainder of his days in peace. He reduced, against the advice of many of his ministers, his standing army to the lowest dimensions, and he also gave himself up to the indulgence of pleasures which, in his earlier days, he had regarded with stoical indifference. It almost seemed as if his mind, having been braced to a great effort, relaxed after the strain had been removed, and refused to recover the mastery over his mundane actions. Be that as it may, the last ten years of his life were passed in a different manner to his earlier ones. After the conquest of Wu, numerous customs were introduced which ill accorded with the sobriety of the northern races. A band of comedians, composed of five thousand females, who had been wont to amuse the leisure of Sunhow, was brought to the capital, and established in Vouti's palace. His principal pastime became to spend his time in their midst, and to drive in a car drawn by sheep through the gardens of the royal residence. There was much in this to shock the strict simplicity of Chinese life, and while his great qualities are

not ignored, the native historian visits with censure this weakness of the Emperor. The close of his reign was after a different fashion, therefore, to the commencement, and although the founder of the later Tsin dynasty, he was the first to exemplify the faults which entailed its ruin.

In A.D. 290, Vouti fell ill and died, having reigned over Wei and Chow for fifteen years, and over the whole Empire for ten. He was succeeded by his son Ssemachong, who was at this time about thirty years of age. On his deathbed, Vouti left the principal part in the administration to Yangsiun, an ambitious but weak-willed personage, more anxious to advance his own interests than those of the Tsins.

Ssemachong took the name, on mounting the throne, of Hweiti, and his first anxiety was caused by the ambition and intrigues of the minister Yangsiun; but these were of slight importance in comparison with the sinister intentions and criminal designs of his own wife, the Empress Kiachi. Resolved to avenge herself for slights which she conceived had been offered her during the reign of Vouti, Kiachi breathed vengeance against that ruler's widow, Yangchi, and the minister Yangsiun, nor did she rest content until her wrath had been gratified. The weakness and vacillation of Yangsiun, who could have averted the catastrophe by exhibiting ordinary courage and promptitude, played the game into the hands of Kiachi, whose partisans attacked the minister in his palace, and put him and his followers to the sword. The Empress Yangchi was deposed from her position, and relegated to the ranks of the people. Kiachi appointed other ministers, but these soon forgot the lessons of prudence, and thought their chief duty was to establish a party of their own. The fall of Yangsiun changed only the name of the dominant minister, and the Emperor, a miserable and harmless prince, became a mere puppet in the hands of a wicked wife and a designing statesman.

This state of things in the capital invited confusion throughout the realm, and rendered it impossible for the border lieutenants to resent with the necessary vigour the insults which the neighbouring peoples dared to offer the national dignity. Risings on a small scale took place, and remaining

unrepressed, speedily assumed larger proportions. The generals sent against them passed their time in quarrelling among themselves as to which should have precedence of the other ; and when, their troops disgusted and their supplies exhausted, they hurled themselves against the confident rebels, it was only to incur a defeat which had been rendered almost inevitable by their dissension and misconduct. More significant, though of less immediate import, some of the Tartar kings were extending their authority far to the west, over states nominally Chinese vassals, and all the court did was to say that these places were too remote for any interest to be taken in their fate. Yet the key of the whole situation lay in those northern and north-western provinces, whence conquerors of China have sometimes, and devastators of her fair plains have always, come in hordes prolific of hardy warriors. Before this Tsin dynasty had been fairly placed on the throne, it was made clear that the causes of its fall were already in operation. Its vitality had never been of the most vigorous kind, and the folly of Vouti's successors made it assume a stunted growth.

In the midst of a world of disunion, and at a time when the bonds of society are loosened, it often happens that a single human genius appears upon the scene, and by some brilliant act fully exposes the weaknesses and decline of the age, at the same time that he revives the memory of former vigour. The truth of this was exemplified in China at this time by the deeds of Mongkwan, a eunuch in the service of the Empress Kiachi. When all the leading generals had been defeated, and the court was reduced to despair, Mongkwan was entrusted with an army as a last resource. His acts more than justified the choice. Although in the depth of winter, he marched against one of the rebels, defeated him in several encounters, and finally crushed him in a great battle, when his whole army surrendered. Thus did the Chinese Narses restore in one district the waning authority of Hweiti. But Mongkwan could not act everywhere, and in all other quarters of the Empire it went hard with the representatives of the Tsins. Neither the tranquillity of the realm nor the interests of the dynasty were

promoted by the murder of the heir-apparent, who was poisoned at the order of Kiachi.

In the year A.D. 304 the Hiongnou were divided into five clans dependent on the Chinese government, and a number of them had been distributed throughout the Empire. Lieouyuen had been appointed chief over them, and he and his family, that of the Lieous, occupy a prominent place in the events which happened during the closing years of Hweiti's reign. Lieouyuen's son Lieousong had had all the advantages of a Chinese education, and in addition to the martial qualities of the Tartar, he possessed the scientific knowledge and other accomplishments of the Chinese. These Tartars had not forgotten the traditions of independent authority which still survived in their history, and seeing the disunion prevailing among the members of the royal family, they resolved to turn the opportunity to their own personal advantage. Skilfully concealing their plans, they claimed to be working for the common good, and identified themselves on the first occasion with the party of the Emperor. But after a show of friendship they withdrew to Leaoutung, where they established an independent authority, and Lieouyuen was proclaimed king. Not content with this, he laid claim to the Empire as the representative in the female line of the Hans, and assumed the title of King of Han.

The disorders in the Empire had now reached their height. Hweiti was compelled to flee from his capital, which was plundered and given to the flames; but the weak king did not even then make any effort to shake off the tyranny of those who, possessed of his person, ruled in his name, but only for their private ends. His death, in A.D. 306, was a happy release from a state which possessed no meaning, and a situation full of anxiety without any compensating advantages. His brother Ssemachi succeeded him as the Emperor Hwaiti, and at first promise was afforded of an improvement in the state of affairs. At the least, it could not become much worse.

Hwaiti began his reign with the best intentions, and with a resolve to personally attend to the cares of government

Unfortunately the situation was grave, and required acts, not intentions. Lieouyuen and his son Lieousong, with their pretensions to the Empire, and their established authority, were steadily encroaching towards the south, and their course was not be stayed by either the virtues or the promises of the Emperor. Lieouyuen and his generals advanced to a considerable distance south of Leaoutung before their career was momentarily arrested by Wangsiun, the general who thirty years before had constructed the fleet on the Yangtse for the conquest of Wu. But the same year which beheld this ray of hope for the Tsins also witnessed the appearance before the gates of Loyang of a large and victorious army under the King of Han. On this occasion indeed it was repulsed, but the wave was only checked, not rolled back. The next year Lieouyuen resumed the war, which he conducted with not less success than moderation. Several fortresses were taken, and one great victory ushered in the new campaign, which again closed with a repulse of the Han troops under the walls of the capital. The Tsin general on this occasion skilfully availed himself of the division of his opponent's army into two bodies by a river to crush one with superior numbers. But this was only a single success. Elsewhere the Han troops had been completely victorious, and they only withdrew for the purpose of making a more decisive advance on the next occasion.

Lieouyuen's death, and his desire to leave his throne to an elder son, threatened the newly-formed Han kingdom with serious trouble, for Lieousong, who had taken so prominent a part in the wars of the period, refused to forfeit what he held to be his right. Fortunately for the cohesion of his people he proved strong enough to make good his pretensions, and, having slain his two elder brothers and their chief partisans, he caused himself to be proclaimed King of Han. These changes occupied the greater portion of the year A.D. 310. In the following year he resumed the enterprise against Hwaiti, and marched his armies on Loyang. On this occasion the capital of the Tsins fell to its northern conqueror, and Hwaiti fled from his palace in disguise. He was discovered and brought back to grace the triumph of the victor. Having

pillaged Loyang, and executed Ssemachuen, the heir-apparent, Lieousong's general carried off Hwaiti to Pingyang in Shensi, his master's capital. There Hwaiti was placed under strict surveillance, and his distressed people chose as governor of the Empire during his absence his second son Ssematoan, and concentrated their shattered forces at Mongching in Kiangnan (Kiangsu and Anhui). These preparations, and the union which at last came in the face of disaster, did not deter the warriors of Han from prosecuting their incursions against the defenceless people of Tsin. The same year that beheld the surrender of Loyang and the carrying-off of Hwaiti to Pingyang, witnessed the capture and sack of Changnan, where several of the princes of the reigning House were taken and forthwith executed.

After two years' captivity, Lieousong resolved to rid himself of the presence of his prisoner Hwaiti, and he availed himself of the opportunity of a defeat inflicted upon his troops by a neighbouring Tartar chief, to offer the greatest insult in his power to this representative of fallen majesty, and then to crown the outrage with his murder. Dressed in black, the Tsin Emperor waited at table on his Tartar conqueror, and then on a flimsy charge, of which not a tissue of proof was afforded, he was led to execution. Upon the news reaching Changnan, the ministers proclaimed, A.D. 313, Ssemaye, Hwaiti's next brother, Emperor under the style of Mingti. The new monarch brought no change to the waning fortunes of the Tsins. During the four short years of his reign the troubles in the Empire became worse instead of better, and when he had been three years on the throne the Han generals again appeared before Changnan, which had partly risen from its ruins, and captured it after a show of resistance. Mingti was conveyed to Pingyang in the same manner as Hwaiti, and after a year's imprisonment, during which he was subjected to numerous indignities, he also was executed. For the second time in the course of a few years was the melancholy spectacle afforded of a Chinese Emperor being compelled to perform menial services for the amusement or glorification of a barbarian potentate.

To Mingti succeeded four Emperors, whose reigns,

extending over a period of twenty-eight years, call for no detailed description. Yuenti removed his capital from Changnan to Kienkang, the modern Nankin, thus obtaining a temporary immunity from insult. In the same year the Han king Lieousong died, leaving to his son Lieousan the dominions which had been won by his own intrepidity. Lieousong's great qualities are clearly shown by what he accomplished. He was the first of the foreign rulers to engage in a war with, and to defeat the Chinese with their own weapons.

His death, however, brought numerous troubles upon his people. Lieousan reigned only a few weeks, and an ambitious minister endeavoured to establish his personal authority. It was not until the next year that the general Lieouyao succeeded in restoring order, when he was proclaimed King of Han. In the confusion, the capital, Pingyang, had been sacked, and the seat of government was then transferred to Changnan. The unsettled state of the country during this period may be accurately inferred from the frequent changes in the place of the capitals. Shortly after his removal to Changnan, Lieouyao altered the name of his family from Han to Chow; and as if to proclaim his hostility to the Chinese he placed Mehe, the celebrated king of the Hiongnou, at the head of his ancestors. Fortunately for the Tsins this formidable northern Power split up into two parts, each hostile to the other, and thus afforded a brief breathing space to the Emperors who nominally governed China. Of this Mingti the Second strove to avail himself as best he could, but he only lived three years to give effect to a policy which aimed at restoring his authority through profiting by the weakness and disunion of his opponents.

Although not recognized as Chinese sovereigns, the Han kings of the north ruled over large districts of the Empire, and included among their subjects a majority of Chinese by race and associations. They copied as closely as they could the practices of the greater Emperors, and their palaces and court ceremonies were in exact imitation of what prevailed at the capital under the great Hans. In one palace we are told more than ten thousand persons resided, and in China in those days the palace was not only a barrack and a

fortress, but included a park and pleasure grounds as well. The most striking and original of their customs was the band of Amazons, who were specially attached to the person of the ruler. These were mounted on excellent Tartar horses, and dressed in the magnificent fashion that becomes the body-guard of a great ruler. These luxuries, and this imitation of Sardanapalus would have been more natural, and less exposed to censure, if there were not the unanswerable contemporary criticism recorded in history that the people were ground down under the oppression of their rulers, and that the poverty of the country formed a striking contrast to the luxury and dissipation of the court. Among all the rulers who divided China between them there was not one of any worth as regards public spirit. They were all adventurers in one sense of the word, enjoying the day and reckless of the morrow. The Chinese moralist in his disapprobation of a standard of living and of governing so far removed from his maxims has had to create a semi-mythical principedom of Ching, where at least the ancient virtues and sobriety of life were practised during these dark ages of Chinese history.

When the boy Kangti died, after having held possession of the throne for two years, his son, an infant named Moti, was elected his successor. During the life of this young ruler his mother held the reins of authority, and, as if in mockery of the rampant evils in the state, the chronicles contain nothing but the record of how much the qualities and virtues of this prince were in excess of his years. The trite observations of these sciolists did not add much to the removal of national evils, and the golden promise of the ruler's younger days afforded no remedy for a crisis pregnant with danger to the permanent interests of the nation.

The skill of a general named Hwan Wen shed lustre on the military annals of Moti's reign. He defeated in a pitched battle the army of the Prince of Han, who had in turn become the victim of the corruption of the age. Very soon the disintegrating causes at work in the region brought under a single sway by the ability of the Lieou family clearly revealed themselves, and the formidable military power which had been created in the north, and which threatened to destroy

the Tsins, was dissolving again into its component parts. The revival of military capacity among the lieutenants of the Emperor, and the skill of Hwan Wen in particular, enabled the Tsins to profit to a great extent from the disunion and strife prevalent among the chiefs of Han, who all wished to be first, and have precedence of the others. So it was that in A.D. 352 the proud edifice erected by Lieouyuen and his son Lieousong fell finally to the ground, and the great family which had contested on equal terms with the Tsins disappeared from its place among the rulers, and became practically extinguished. It must not be assumed that all the advantage of this change went to the Emperor, for two new principalities, those of Yen and Chin, rose on the ruins of the Han domination.

At the age of sixteen Moti began to reign for himself, and continued to do so during the three remaining years of his life. The successes of Hwan Wen continued, and tended to restore the fading reputation of the Emperor. Moti's death arrested the career of progress, and the short life of his successor, Gaiti, did not make the prospect of the Tsins any the brighter. When Gaiti died, after holding the sceptre during four short years, his brother Yti, or Tiyeh, succeeded him. The general Hwan Wen, whose abilities had been an element of strength to his predecessors, was seized by the demon ambition, and deposed Yti after he had occupied the throne for five years. In Yti's place Hwan Wen put Kien Venti, but he accepted the charge with hesitation. Fearful of the responsibility, and trembling at the prospect of danger, Kien Venti was out of his sphere on the Dragon Throne. It was indeed a happy release for him when he was removed from a world of care and uncertainty. There is no knowing what part Hwan Wen meditated playing in the regulation of the affairs of the state at this critical juncture ; but a greater power than his will intervened, and after a short illness he died from the effects of a prolonged debauch.

Kien Venti was followed, A.D. 373, by his son Ssemachangming, a boy of ten years old, who on his assumption of the supreme dignity took the proud name of Vouti. His reign showed a considerable revival of power, and when Foukien,

the principal of the northern rulers, threatened to overrun his territories, Vouti marched boldly to encounter him, and obtained a brilliant success over his opponent. After his defeat, Foukien's own partisans turned upon him and caused him to be strangled in his residence. Vouti appears to have thought that with this achievement he had done sufficient, and retiring to his palace gave himself up to an unbridled course of pleasure. Having offered a slight to one of his wives, she took summary vengeance for the wrong by smothering, under a bed, her lord and master whilst in a state of intoxication. So died the Emperor Vouti the Second after a reign of twenty-five years, which beheld one victory on a large scale that might have been made the stepping-stone to greater results.

The twenty-two years of his son Ganti's reign would have been devoid of interest and importance were it not for the first appearance of the man who was to regenerate the Empire and to raise China, if only for a brief space, from the abyss into which she had descended. In the north a new enemy showed themselves in the Gewgen Tartars, and in the south the daring expeditions of the pirate Sunghen spread terror and desolation along the banks of the great rivers which were the scene of his activity.

The Gewgen, or Juju, as they were sometimes called, occupied the same relative position to the Emperor that the Hiongnou and Sienpi had previously, and at this time their military vigour being at its height, they succeeded in establishing their own authority on the northern skirts of the Empire. Their chief, Chelun, assumed in A.D. 402 the higher title of Kohan, or Khakhan, a name which eight centuries later acquired terrible significance in the hands of the Mongols.

It was at this conjuncture that a man named Lieouyu, a child of the people, raised himself from the class in which he was born by evincing capacity of no common order. Deserted by his parent through poverty, he was brought up on the charity of others, and from his earliest years was remarkable for his quickness in learning. The necessity of making his livelihood compelled him for a time to follow the humble

trade of shoe-making, but he chafed at the monotony of his occupation. Feeling within him the instincts of a soldier, he seized the first opportunity to adopt the profession of arms, in which he showed such proficiency that he was at once entrusted with a small independent command. It was against the pirate Sunghen that he earned his first laurels. During three years he was constantly engaged in opposing, and sometimes in forestalling, the descents made by that leader. The credit of Sunghen's final overthrow does not indeed belong to Lieouyu, but it was he who first broke the reputation of the pirate, and shattered his power by repeated successes. After this introduction to military life, Lieouyu's promotion was rapid. He led the Emperor's armies on numerous occasions; and, having overthrown a formidable rebel named Hwanhiuen in a battle which was fought with a smaller force both on land and on water, Ganti could only manifest his sense of the high service rendered by nominating him commander-in-chief of all the forces of the Empire.

Lieouyu showed no falling-off in either ability or energy, because he had attained the summit of a soldier's ambition. Marching from one province to another, he repressed sedition and restored the blessings of a settled rule; and was fast giving reality to the theoretical claims of the Emperor to obedience. In the course of his expeditions he came into contact with Topa, Prince of Wei, a district north of the Hoangho. This prince having refused permission to Lieouyu's troops to march through his territory incurred his resentment. Lieouyu forced the passage of the Hoangho, routed the army of Wei, while one of his lieutenants marched on Changnan, the capital of the newly-formed principality of Chin. The expedition against Changnan was commanded by a resolute officer named Wangchinou, who, having conveyed his force as far towards its destination by water as was possible, caused his ships to be cast adrift. Addressing his soldiers, he said: "We have neither provisions nor supplies; and the current of the Weiho bears away from us the barks in which we came. But let us beat the enemy, and while covering ourselves with glory we shall regain a hundredfold everything we have lost. If on the other hand we are conquered, death for us all is

inevitable. To conquer or to die, that is our lot ; go and prepare yourselves to march against the enemy." The result of the campaign was in proportion to the fortitude of the commander. Changnan surrendered, and the Prince of Chin was executed as a rebel. Lieouyu arrived hard upon the heels of his victorious troops, and made preparations for extending still further his conquests. At this moment he was recalled to the capital, and his further advance was suspended. During his absence Changnan and all the recent conquests were lost, and a great reverse was inflicted on the arms of the Empire. In this year Lieouyu, dissatisfied with the conduct of Ganti, who had only raised him to the third rank among princes, as Prince of Song, caused the Emperor to be strangled, and named his brother successor under the style of Kongti (A.D. 418).

Kongti reigned less than two years, being then deposed by the man who had set him up. The change was effected in the most formal manner. Kongti resigned a position which he felt incapable of retaining, and the ambitious Lieouyu assumed what he had long coveted. In a field they erected a scaffold, and on it they placed a throne, from which Kongti descended to give place to the Prince of Song. Before the assembled thousands of Kienkang, and in the presence of the great officials, Kongti then paid homage to Lieouyu * ; and in this act the dynasty of the Tsins reached its consummation. Their rule had extended over one hundred and fifty-five years, and there had been fifteen Emperors of the name ; but on the whole no family with less pretensions to the right of government has ever lorded it over the docile people of China. The impression they leave on the mind is as vague and indistinct as the part they played in the history of their age (A.D. 420).

* The Emperors of China wore and still wear a cap or crown with twelve pendants. The assumption of this crown formed the principal portion of the coronation service. Its shape was peculiar. Round in the front, it was straight behind, and was ornamented with one hundred and forty-four precious stones. The pendants consisted of strings of pearls, four of which hung over the eyes for the purpose, it was said, of preventing the Emperor seeing those who were brought before him for trial. See "Mailla," vol. iv. p. 69.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SONG AND THE TSI RULERS.

WHEN Lieouyu assumed the Imperial dignity in the year A.D. 420, and proclaimed himself by the name of Kaotsou, the founder of the Song dynasty, China was still as a house divided against itself. Six kingdoms had been established within the borders of the northern provinces, and each aspired to bring its neighbour to its feet, and to figure as the regenerator of the Empire. As none of them were formidable, their weakness at least constituted an efficient defence against each other, and when all were decrepit there was safety in an incapacity for offence. The new ruler did not possess the means of giving reality to his pretensions of authority over these states, to which his own did but add a seventh competitor; and, although the fact is disguised as much as possible, the Songs were never more than one ruler among many, and their government always that of only a small section of the Chinese nation.

As the general of the later Tsins Kaotsou had shown great skill, and obtained many successes; but during his brief reign the opportunity did not present itself of following them up by any further triumph. The only event of any importance was the murder of the deposed Emperor Kongti, and this circumstance is chiefly invested with interest for the reason that Kongti refused "to drink the waters of eternal life," because suicide was opposed by the principles of his religion. This is the first, and indeed the only, instance in history of a Chinese ruler violating the custom of the nation by declining to acquiesce in the inevitable. Kongti was thereupon

murdered in his palace by the guard in whose custody he had been placed.

Kaotsou enjoyed possession of the throne for no more than three years. That he possessed many sterling qualities is not to be denied. His frugality and attention to his duties were most worthy of being commended; and the courage which he evinced on the field of battle was well calculated to have produced great results in an age more remarkable for the practice of chicane than for the manifestations of the qualities of a soldier. His kindness and devotion to the foster-mother who had nourished him, and who had lived long enough to see Kaotsou on the throne, were most exemplary, and received the eulogium of his countrymen. On the other hand, he was unfortunate in not coming to the front until well advanced in life, and the prudence obtained only with the experience of years made him loth to endanger what he possessed by striving to attain the wider authority with which, when a younger man, he would alone have rested satisfied.

The reign of the next Emperor Chowti, Kaotsou's eldest son, would not call for notice were it not for the deeds of the northern kingdom of Wei, the ruler of which saw in the death of Kaotsou a favourable opportunity for resuming the operations suspended through fear of the military skill of that prince. The glimpse that is obtained of Topasse, the king of Wei, shows him to have been a man of exceptional talent and energy. At the great council of war, which he held on the eve of the invasion of the Song territories, he propounded the question whether the enterprise should be begun by attacking some fortified place or by overrunning the open country. The former course was adopted mainly on the advice of Hikin, and under the command of this leading general of the period several successes were obtained by the Wei troops. It was not, indeed, until they appeared before the walls of Houlaou, a small fortress defended by a brave officer named Maotetso, that their career was in any degree arrested. Topasse sent his best troops to the assistance of Hikin, and came in person to encourage his army with his presence; but Maotetso relaxed in no degree the vigilance with which he defended his post. His skill and valour baffled the flower

of the army, and the most skilful of the generals, of Topasse during seven months, and when at length Houlao surrendered, the conquerors won nothing but a pile of ruins. Topasse died shortly afterwards from the hardships he had endured at, and the chagrin caused by, this siege ; but at all events he has secured a durable place in history by the magnanimity, not often met with in Asian annals, which he evinced in the honourable reception he accorded the gallant Maotetso.

This disastrous war was the only event which marked Chowti's reign of one year. From the first it had been plain that he possessed neither the capacity nor the desire to govern his people well. He gave himself up to amusement, and neglected all public business. The nobles and great officials thought that it would be better to check his course with as little delay as possible, and with Tantaotsi at their head they deposed him, putting his brother in his place. Knowing well that there was no safety for themselves or for the nation in a deposed prince who preserved the desire for power, they secretly caused Chowti to be put to death, thus relieving themselves from further apprehension on that score.

Although profiting by their deed, one of the first acts of Wenti, the new ruler, was to punish the murderers of his brother. In this has been seen an instance of fraternal affection ; but perhaps it might be taken with more truth as showing the fears of the ruler, who saw in the persons of these deponents and executors of a king the ever-present wardens of the people's rights. This act, which was viewed at the time as to be commended rather than condemned even by those who had applauded the fall of Chowti, so fickle a thing is the public mind, did not prevent Wenti's reign beginning under the fairest auspices. On his side there appears to have been the best intentions, and as to the people, their hopes led them to augur the things which they most desired.

Topasse, of Wei, had been succeeded by his son Topatao, a man not less capable or ambitious than his father. In A.D. 426 he resolved to attack and, if possible, conquer the dominions of Hia, which had just lost their ruler ; and with that object he despatched a large army across the Hoangho

under the command of Hikin, the same general who had conducted the siege of Houlao. At first the career of this army was unopposed. Town surrendered after town at the mere sight of the invader, and the troops of Hia never ventured to meet those of Hikin in the field. It was only when Hikin had advanced to a considerable distance from his base, and began to suffer from the want of provisions, that the Hia forces rallying took fresh courage, and ventured to engage the invaders of their country. Hikin was obliged to confine himself to his camp, which he fortified to the best of his military knowledge, and there he prepared to offer a stout resistance. The day arrived, however, when his stock of supplies was completely exhausted, and the soldiers had no alternative between surrender and cutting their way through the enemy. In these straits Hikin's fortitude did not shine with so bright a glow as that of Gankiai, who scouted all idea of surrender, and led a fierce attack upon the beleaguering army. In this battle the army of Wei was completely victorious, and Gankiai had the honour of taking the Prince of Hia prisoner with his own hand. Gankiai received all the credit of this victory, which irritated Hikin so much that he resolved at all hazards to perform some brilliant action which should eclipse the feat of his colleague whose name and deed were now on the tongues of all men. Partly no doubt by his own carelessness, and also through his tyrannical treatment of the soldiers in contravention of the regulations in force at all times in the Chinese army, which disgusted every one under his command, Hikin failed in his great design. Instead of surpassing Gankiai by a fresh victory, he demonstrated the marked superiority of that officer by incurring a defeat. He marched on Pingleang, the Hia capital, as a conqueror, but it was only as a prisoner that he could obtain admission.

The next year to that which witnessed this campaign against Hia saw the Wei troops engaged in an arduous war against the Gewgen Tartars. There was little fighting, as these tribes retired into the desert on the approach of the regular troops; but, such as it was, it was wholly in favour of Topatao, now the most powerful prince in China, and

a much greater personage than the Song Emperor himself. Indeed, so completely did he overshadow the nominal ruler of the Empire that a collision between them sooner or later was seen to be inevitable, and each had been long preparing himself for the struggle. It was Wenti who first threw down the glove, but Topatao showed no hesitation in picking it up.

The great province of Honan, lying south of the Hoangho, and to the north-west of the Song capital (Nankin), had been overrun and annexed by Wei in the course of the campaign in the reign of Chowti. Wenti resolved, in A.D. 430, to attempt its reconquest. For that purpose he assembled an army of fifty thousand men, and concluded a defensive and offensive alliance with Hia against the common foe. Before ordering the advance of his army, part of which was to be conveyed in boats up the Hoangho, Wenti sent an embassy to the court of Topatao, requesting him to hand over all that part of Honan which lies south of the Yellow River. Topatao's reply was dignified and to the point. "I was not out of my teens when I heard it said on all sides that Honan belonged to my family. Go and tell your master that if he comes to attack me or mine, I shall defend myself; and even if he succeed in seizing this province, I shall know how to retake it as soon as the waters of the Hoangho are frozen." The war forthwith commenced, but in accordance with sound strategy Topatao withdrew his garrison from southern Honan, and stationed his army on the northern banks of the Hoangho. The ostensible object of the war was therefore obtained without a blow. It only remained for Topatao to put his threat into execution with the advent of winter.

Taoyenchi, Wenti's general, made all the necessary preparations for the defence of the territory which he had so speedily subdued, and the need of fortified places was soon shown by the activity of Topatao's lieutenants. The valiant Gankiai, entrusted with the chief command in the field, sought an early opportunity of adding to his reputation. The occasion soon offered itself, for one of the Song generals ventured to pass over the Hoangho, when his detachment was attacked by Gankiai with a superior force, and cut to

pieces. Gankiai then crossed the river at an unguarded spot, and obtained several successes over the Song generals. The effect of these victories was enhanced by a severe defeat inflicted about the same time by Topatao in person on the army of the Prince of Hia. Very few months after the first declaration of war the formidable league against the kingdom of Wei had failed to achieve any permanent success. The victories of the war had been to the credit of Topatao, and Wenti could only console himself by making the most of the hold he had secured over southern Honan, which each day was slipping more completely out of his grasp.

In this emergency Wenti entrusted a fresh army to Tantaotsi, a general who had taken a foremost part in the deposition of his predecessor. Sent to repair the faults of the other Imperial generals, Tantaotsi was fortunate in finding an early opportunity of accomplishing his task. In the district watered by the Tsiho he fought no fewer than thirty combats with uniform success, and it was only the want of provisions that compelled him reluctantly to order the withdrawal of his troops. The army of Topatao hung constantly on his rear, and all the knowledge of the Imperial general was required to bring his outnumbered force scatheless from the ordeal. The Wei army then again crossed the Hoangho, and re-occupied Honan. Topatao had fulfilled his promise. Honan, momentarily lost, had been won back, and Wenti's great effort had had no other result than to exhaust his strength and waste his resources. Topatao was relatively the stronger by the overthrow of the military power of both Hia and the Songs; and, having annexed the greater portion of the former kingdom, his victorious army stood ready to meet any opponent and to give law to fresh regions. The reputation of this great success went abroad among the nations, and embassies came from distant parts of Asia to express to Topatao the foreign opinion of his achievement. There was at this time a prevailing impression that in the kingdom of Wei the ancient glories of China were about to revive.

At the court of Wenti the gloom was in proportion to the gravity of the situation. A war, in which many thousands of

lives and an infinity of treasure had been expended, closed without result. The enterprise had been commenced for the acquisition of a definite object, and the people looked forward to the rewards of victory with a full appreciation of their value. By as much as Wenti's policy had been granted popular support and approval on the assumption that it would prove successful, by not less was it condemned, and repudiated when it was seen to have resulted in hopeless failure. The national rejoicings had been turned into lamentations, and in place of garlands on the temples, the cypress and the myrtle decked the tombs in memory of those who had fallen beyond the Hoangho. Wenti assuredly felt the full bitterness of his experience, for to him, more than to either his generals or his subjects, it meant anxiety and danger. In several quarters of his dominions pretenders to his throne put themselves forward, and the significance of their act was increased by the circumstance that they all claimed to represent the family of the Tsins. And as if the dangers and anxieties of his position were not sufficient, Wenti, by his own rash and ill-judged act, aggravated them by executing Tantaotsi, the only man who had shown any skill or met with any success in the war with Topatao of Wei!

The martial instincts of the two peoples having been indulged, and no immediate inducement remaining for either to again tempt the fortune of war, both Wenti and Topatao devoted themselves, we are told, to the interests of science. The study of history was encouraged in the dominions of Wenti—of that history which was the most expressive commentary on his acts and their crushing condemnation. He also ordained that no magistrate should remain in the same office for a longer period than six years, a measure calculated to secure popular support, and to advance the interests of the people. Topatao was in no way behind Wenti in his endeavours to benefit his people, but he varied the monotony of domestic legislation by the exciting persecution of the Buddhists within his dominions. These had made many converts, and were permeating with their theories every class of society. Against them Topatao resolved to employ all the weapons in his power, and to exterminate them root and

branch. It was not difficult to give an aspect of treasonable practices to the ceremonies and observances of these Buddhists and their bonzes, who were in some respects violating the first principles of Chinese life, and Topatao availed himself of the justification thus afforded to adopt the most stringent measures against these enemies, as they were considered, of public morality. The commands of the prince were carried into execution. At a blow their temples crumbled to the dust, their holy books were given to the flames, and those who were unable to escape fell by the edge of the sword. In Wei, at least, the errors which had alone brought ruin to the proud dynasty of the Hans would not be tolerated—so ran the exact words of Topatao's edict.

The peace between Topatao and the Emperor did not prove of long duration. In A.D. 450 the former crossed the frontier at the head of one hundred thousand men with the intention of finally humbling the power of the Emperor, and he was the more encouraged to make the attempt because he had recently obtained several successes over the nomadic tribes on his northern frontier. Topatao was destined to disappointment, however, for his good fortune deserted him from the very commencement of this war. Being detained with his whole army for several months before a place of little importance, Topatao saw his own reputation for rapid success wane at the same moment that time was afforded the generals of Wenti to collect their forces. He was glad at length to withdraw his army; baffled indeed in his main object, but still without having suffered any serious discomfiture. The Emperor, encouraged by this sudden change in the complexion of his contest with Topatao, resolved to follow up his success by striking a blow in his turn. His army was ordered accordingly to march in pursuit of the retiring troops of Topatao, and a fresh campaign ensued within the dominions of the Prince of Wei. A sanguinary engagement was fought outside the walls of the town of Chenching, in which, at the close of a doubtful day, the advantage remained on the side of the Imperialists, principally because the Wei general had fallen early in the battle. In a second battle fought with similar result, both sides suffered so heavily that for some

time the armies stood face to face in enforced inactivity. Under the influence of this shock both sides endeavoured to come to terms, and the arrangements for the conclusion of peace had been almost concluded when the war broke out afresh, in a final effort to obtain a decisive result for one party or the other.

The only incident in this second campaign that has been preserved for us is the siege of Hiuy, defended by the valiant Tsangchi. Tsangchi defied Topatao to do his worst, and spurned the offers made to him to propitiate that conqueror by a graceful surrender. Tsangchi foiled all the attempts of Topatao to take the fort, and met each device of his opponent with some fresh counter-device of his own. Batteries and mines were freely employed in this celebrated siege, and when Topatao gave it up in despair he had lost twenty thousand of his best men by the sword, and a still greater number by disease. The disgrace was the more keenly felt in that he had publicly sworn to burn Tsangchi, and his retreat was an acknowledgment, patent to all, of his inability to execute his threat. Neither his reputation nor his power was benefited by the senseless and cruel outrages which he committed on the defenceless towns and inhabitants along his line of retreat. The following year Topatao was murdered by some dissatisfied courtiers, and the state of Wei was for several years entirely occupied with its own internal troubles, and forgot to prosecute those foreign enterprises which had once been its principal object.

Wenti's own life was also drawing to a close. His son Lieouchao had formed a party hostile to his father at court, and in A.D. 453 he attacked Wenti in his palace, and slew him with his own hand according to some, or, according to the majority, caused him to be slain before his eyes. The parricide did not long benefit by this deed of blood. Defeated on the field of battle by his brother Lieousiun, he was unable to make good his escape. Lieousiun caused him to be executed with his family, and ascended the throne as the Emperor Vouti. Wenti was only thirty-five years of age when he was murdered, during twenty of which he had been the ostensible ruler of China.

After the termination of the troubles caused by the violence of Lieouchao the Empire was at peace, and the government of Wei, occupied with its own affairs, showed no disposition to interfere with its neighbour. Among the men who had been most instrumental in putting Vouti on the throne was Lieoutan, a member of the Song family, and for several years there were cordial relations between the two; but at last Vouti saw in this young prince, whose great qualities had endeared him to the people, a possible rival, and one who had grown too powerful to be an obedient subject. He, therefore, dismissed him from the court, appointing him to a distant governorship; but Lieoutan was not the man to tamely submit to the slight offered him. He attempted to form a party in the state hostile to the Emperor, and might have succeeded had he been allowed time to complete his arrangements. An army of observation had been sent after him, and at the first sign of an intention to revolt he was attacked and overwhelmed. The defeat and death of Lieoutan secured peace for Vouti's last years. Being an excellent horseman and archer, he gave himself up to the indulgence of his taste for the chase, neglecting, it is to be feared, the important duties of his elevated position. He was also given to excessive eating and drinking, which brought on an attack of apoplexy. He died, after a reign of eleven years, at the early age of thirty-five, leaving to his descendants the troubles of which his own conduct had sown the seeds.

Lieoutsenie, known in history as the Emperor Fiti, or the deposed, succeeded his father at the age of sixteen. Although he reigned less than one year, he gave abundant cause for his brief reign to be remembered in Chinese annals. He began by a wholesale massacre of innocent persons, and throughout his life a minister had only to fall under his suspicions to be sentenced to death. By so reckless and untamed a savage no people in the world, and least of all the Chinese, would long submit to be governed. The enumeration of the atrocities he committed would cause a thrill of horror, but they met with their just requital before his career of infamy had more than commenced. He was murdered by one of the

eunuchs of the palace, and his uncle Mingti was appointed ruler in his stead.

Mingti was scarcely less of a barbarian than Fiti. One of his first acts was to murder fourteen of the sons of his brother Vouti, because he feared they might prove formidable rivals to his own branch of the family. But as he had no sons he adopted a child and put it forward as the heir-apparent. In China, where the right of adoption has never been recognized as in India, these supposititious princes have always been regarded with secret disfavour, and the public mind has ever been prone to expect no good from them. In order to give solidity to this scheme of leaving the crown to this boy, Mingti followed up the murder of his nephews by the execution of his brothers, and it is recorded that the inclination to crime left him only with life. He died in the year A.D. 472, and his loss was not lamented by the people.

His adopted son Lieouyu then became Emperor, under the name of Gou Wang, or Fiti the Second. He was not less wicked than either of his immediate predecessors, and his youth placed no restraint upon his criminal propensities. After four years he was murdered by order of Siaotaoching, a general of ability and reputation, and the founder of the next dynasty. Although requested to take the throne, Siaotaoching, whose plans were not ripe, ostentatiously refused, thus protesting the purity of his motives and his disinterestedness.

Lieou Chun, or Chunti, a third adopted son of Mingti, was placed on the throne by Siaotaoching, but in two years he was deposed. After his abdication, Siaotaoching consented to become the Emperor Kaoti, of the Tsi dynasty ; but apprehensive of danger from Chunti in the future, he completed his crimes by adding the murder of this child to that of the boy Fiti.

The history of the Tsi dynasty affords neither a more glorious nor a more interesting subject than that of the Songs. During the four years that Kaoti held possession of the throne not much progress was made towards that regeneration of the Empire which had been put so prominently forward in the programme of each military adventurer and aspiring ruler.

It is said of Kaoti that he was more favourably known after his accession for the support he accorded to science than for his military exploits. Beyond the sentiment that, if he were spared to rule the country for ten years, he would make gold as common as earth, history has preserved no record of his achievements as a domestic legislator or as a patron of the fine arts. In this, too, it will be seen that the future was scanned by the excellence of the intentions rather than on the basis of accomplished fact. A lingering war ensued with the King of Wei, and the successful defence of the towns of Chowyang and Kiuchan left the advantage in the hands of the generals of Kaoti. At the most favourable view this was, however, little more than a drawn contest. The Wei troops were foiled in their attempt, but Kaoti dared not follow them into their own territory. The eulogium on the character of Kaoti, who died in A.D. 482, reads exaggerated by the light of what he did, and by the insignificant display made by his successors.

His son Siaotse became the Emperor Vouti, the second ruler of the Tsi family. At this time the boast was made that China had the good fortune to be divided among princes who thought only of the welfare of their subjects. The native panegyrist must have referred to a very brief period, although there is no doubt that the division of the Empire had been followed by less serious consequences than might have been expected. The war with Wei broke out again during this reign, and continued to rage at fitful intervals; but on the whole the Tsis did not get the worst of the struggle. That it was not through their merit may be perceived from the fact that under this prince, the most respectable of the Tsis, it was publicly proclaimed that they had attained supreme power "not by merit, but by force," and that a dynasty based on that principle could not long maintain the position it had wrongfully acquired. One of the most notable acts of Vouti's reign was to prohibit marriage between families of the same name. This was the revival of an ancient law to that effect, framed no doubt at a time when the intermarriage of blood-relations had been attended with pernicious consequences. It is probable that a similar evil had arisen in this age through

the falling-off in the population of the districts which preserved the closest resemblance to the old system.

Vouti died in A.D. 493, and his infant grandson Siaochoa succeeded him for a short time. In the following year he was murdered by Siaolun, brother of Kaoti, the founder of the dynasty, and having paved the way to power by further atrocities Siaolun threw aside all hesitation, and ascended the throne under the name of Mingti. On the throne Mingti showed no transcendent ability, and, although his reign witnessed another abortive attempt on the part of the Wei ruler to extend his kingdom, the Tsis could not compare for power or for the enlightenment of their policy with their northern neighbours. About this time the Weis changed their capital from Pingching to Loyang, and their family name from Topa (Lord of the Earth) to Yen (Yellow), of whom more will be heard at a later period. Mingti's last years witnessed a revival of the cruel acts by which he had won his way to power, so that when he died, in A.D. 498, it was felt that there was more cause for rejoicing than for grief. His assassination of the general Siao-y, who had done most for the defence of the state against its northern assailants, was the culminating act of his career, and brought about eventually the fall and extirpation of his race.

Of the two last rulers of the Tsis little need be said. Paokwen, Mingti's son, ruled for two years under that name, or as Hwen Hu, and on his deposition and murder his brother Siaopaoyong enjoyed the titular rank of Emperor as Hoti for a few months. Neither possessed any real power, and, as both were mere youths, they could offer only a faint opposition to the astute general, who was urged on to effect their ruin partly by a desire for revenge and partly by the promptings of an insatiable ambition. This general's name was Siaoyen, and his one passion was to exact the most ample vengeance from the ruling family for the wrong done him by the barbarous murder of his brother Siao-y. The success of his operations, the crowds of soldiers who flocked to his banner, the general support accorded him by the people, all encouraged him to proceed to the bitter end with the enterprise he had begun. In the face of this semi-popular movement,

loyalty to the Tsis became a crime, and the punishment for fifty years of misgovernment and tyranny descended with irresistible force on the persons of two youths, who had hardly assumed the responsibility of government before they found that they and their race were condemned beyond the prospect of reprieve.

The dynasty which had, as we were significantly reminded, established itself by force and not by merit, reached the close of its brief career in the murder of Hoti in the year A.D. 502. They sent that unfortunate prince, whose life had been spared, a quantity of gold, and the irony of the present brought his altered circumstances home to him. "What need have I of gold after my death?" said he, "a few glasses of wine would be more valuable." So they brought him what he asked, bottles of the strong wine of the country, and he drank himself into a stupor, when he was strangled with the silken cord of his robe—an end not inappropriate for the last of a race which had shut its eyes to the necessities of the people, and which had always sought the shortest road to unscrupulous and uncontrolled authority.

CHAPTER XII.

THREE SMALL DYNASTIES.

The Leang ; the Chin ; and the Soui.

SIAOYEN was a cadet of the reigning family of Tsi, but, aspiring to mark out a distinct track for himself in history, he took the dynastic name of Leang, of which he was the founder, and the personal style of Vouti. He experienced no great difficulty in overcoming the opposition of several disappointed rivals, and his wise moderation disarmed the enmity of many who stood on the verge of pronounced hostility. Vouti then devoted most of his attention to the administration of public affairs rather than to the possibility of extending his authority over the neighbouring states. His action was not, perhaps, marked by as much prudence and knowledge of the world as might have been expected from one who had risen to a lofty eminence by his own talents. His abolition of capital punishment was attended, as may well be believed, by a great increase in the amount of crime, and Vouti was soon obliged to suspend his well-meant but very injudicious experiment. This and other steps tending in a similar direction were probably taken with the view of making his person popular, and although condemned by the Tribunal of History, they may have had the desired effect. Unsatisfactory and inglorious as the rule of the Tsis had been, there were still those who remembered the fallen House with regret. One minister, sooner than eat the bread of the new Emperor, starved himself to death, whereupon Vouti

with the stoicism of the philosopher concealing the chagrin of the new-comer, remarked, "Is it not from Heaven, and not from court notables, that I have received the crown? What reason, then, induced this miserable personage to commit suicide?" Loyalty to an old race or an expiring cause is in most cases unintelligible to the reformer who imports and represents the ideas of the new era.

The main interest of this period continues to centre in the fortunes of Wei rulers. This great northern state was immeasurably superior to that which held together round the Imperial authority at Kienkang (Nankin), and even when broken up into two divisions, each of the fragments was more vigorous than the united realm of the Leang rulers. Yet at the time when the Leangs were first established on the throne the causes which brought ruin to the Tartar family of the Topas or Yens were already in operation. It was not, however, until after the close of Vouti's first war that they revealed themselves in even a partial degree. Throughout Vouti's long reign, the ruler of Wei was practically the arbiter of China's destiny. It was to his court that foreign embassies went, and he regulated the relations with the Tartar and other tribes from Corea to Tibet.

In A.D. 503 the first collision in the long wars, which extended over nearly half a century, occurred between the troops of Wei and those of the new Emperor. In this, as in most cases afterwards, the successes were obtained by the former, although on one occasion the governor of one of Vouti's cities had the courage to leave the gates of his fort open in order to restore confidence by showing how little he feared the foe. But this was the sole exception to the otherwise unchequered good fortune of the great Northern Power. The campaign of the following year was chiefly remarkable for the brave defence of a strong place by the wife of its commandant. Chouyang had been entrusted to the charge of Ginching, one of the most skilful lieutenants of the Wei ruler; but during the temporary absence of that officer with a portion of the garrison, Vouti's generals, learning that Chouyang was denuded of

many of its defenders, seized the favourable opportunity and appeared before the walls at the head of a large army. So rapid were their movements that they succeeded in carrying all the outer defences without a blow. At this stage, when the place was almost in their grasp, Mongchi, the wife of Ginching, appeared upon the ramparts, and restored the sinking courage of the garrison. The progress of the Wei troops was checked, and Mongchi made all the necessary preparations for undergoing a siege in form. The inhabitants were armed and the defences of the gate strengthened, and by promise of reward as well as by the inspiration of her presence, Mongchi imbued every man in the garrison with her own resolute spirit. Her fortitude was duly rewarded by the sight of the withdrawal of the baffled army under the Imperial generals. Her husband Ginching had in the meanwhile won a great victory in the field, but had been compelled to abandon the siege of Chongli in consequence of the flooding of his camp by the overflow of the river Hoaiho. Elsewhere, too, the Wei generals were equally successful, and the campaign closed for the year with unrelieved disaster for the arms of Vouti.

During the ensuing winter internal troubles threatened a disruption of the Wei state, and it appeared doubly necessary for its prince to maintain his reputation by a successful foreign war. In the spring his troops resumed hostilities with the Imperialists, and in the numerous encounters which took place more than fifty thousand men were computed to be slain on the side of the latter. Vouti's generals lost all heart, and feared to come out of their positions. Their opponents composed in doggrel rhyme * a challenge, taunting them with being afraid to cross swords with them; but neither the sneers of the foe nor the desperate nature of their position could induce them to issue from their entrenchments and assume the offensive. The Imperialists were glad

* This challenge was : "They took the head of a dead person and decked it out in a widow's cap, and carried it round the camp chanting the following ditty : ' Neither the young Siao (Siaohong, the Imperial general) nor the old Liu (Liu Singchin, a minister) is to be feared ; no other was formidable, save the tiger of Hofei (Weijoui, the only successful Imperial general). ' "—" Mailla," vol. v. p. 225.

to make their escape during the night by availing themselves of a heavy fall of rain.

In A.D. 507 the struggle was renewed with increased fury. Vouti put an army of two hundred thousand men in the field, and entrusted the command to Weijoui, the only one of his generals with any name for success. Yuenyng, the Wei general, began operations by laying close siege to Chongli, which two years before had thwarted the efforts of Ginching. Chongli was a strong place, well fortified according to the ideas of those days, and protected on two sides by the Hoaiho. When Yuenyng sat down before it with an army of three hundred thousand men it was not considered probable that it could stand a long siege, and in order to precipitate its fall Yuenyng sent a portion of his army across the Hoaiho and surrounded it on all sides. The garrison held out bravely, and foiled the desperate attempts made to storm the place; and meanwhile Weijoui was approaching with rapid strides. Yuenyng began to entertain doubts of the result, but he trusted to the bridges he had thrown across the Hoaiho to enable him to come to the assistance of the corps south of the river, should Weijoui attempt to overwhelm it. So he still clung to his lines when the relieving force was announced to be close at hand.

Weijoui had taken in the situation at a glance. He saw the fatal weakness in the long line of circumvallation of his over-confident opponent, and that it was only necessary to destroy the bridges to entail the practical destruction of his force. He accordingly collected vessels, which he filled with combustibles, and sent them during the night up the river with the tide against the bridges upon which the safety of Yuenyng's army depended. The result answered his most sanguine expectations. The morning found the Wei army divided into two portions without any means of communication between them, and the southern division in the power of the overwhelmingly superior army of Weijoui. The Imperial army assaulted the lines with the greatest eagerness, and the whole of the southern division of the Wei army was either put to the sword or drowned in the waters of the

Hoaiho. Weijoui and his lieutenant, Tsaokingsong, followed up this brilliant feat by attacking the portion north of the river, and after a stubbornly contested battle, succeeded in driving it from the field. More than two hundred thousand men perished, and their standards and baggage became the spoil of the conqueror. This brilliant victory compensated for several years of disastrous warfare, and checked the successful career of the ambitious Prince of Wei. The credit for this triumph was due exclusively to Weijoui, who showed great skill and a profound knowledge of the art of war. Had Vouti followed his advice in other matters, the character of his reign might have been raised, and he might have given solidity to his rule.

Although implored by his general to follow up this advantage, Vouti determined to refrain from further action, and to rest upon his laurels. In order to obtain time for his religious devotions, Vouti refused to avail himself of the golden opportunity for advancing his own interests. Having shattered the military power of his chief adversary, he called off his troops, and permitted him to recover from a shock which, had it been followed up, would have been attended with fatal consequences. Several years of peace ensued after the battle of Chongli, and during these Vouti devoted some attention to the education and internal government of his subjects. At this period a statement showing the number of towns over which he ruled was published, and, according to this, there were twenty-three towns of the first rank, three hundred and fifty of the second, and one thousand and twenty-two of the third within his dominions.

At this time it is stated that Vouti distributed rewards among his generals, who had gained fresh laurels in a war with a rebel force, and endeavoured to promote the welfare of his people by studying their wants, and by mitigating the code of punishment in use. This may be considered the brightest period in Vouti's long reign, the time when he had not yet become the slave of a superstition, which was as violent in its expression and as ineradicable in its nature as that of Philip of Spain.*

* Like Charles V., Vouti retired to a monastery of Buddhists, and

Meanwhile, the internal affairs of the Wei kingdom had not been very tranquil or prosperous. Yuenkio had been succeeded in A.D. 515 by his son Yuenhiu as king of Wei; but the reality of power was held by his wife Houchi, an ambitious woman of considerable capacity. In a short time she went the length of absolutely setting her husband aside, and of ruling herself, in the name of an infant son. Houchi was an ardent devotee of Buddhism, and the new sect under her protection speedily regained the ground it had lost during the persecution of Topasse. One of her first acts was to declare war upon Vouti; but the result did not answer her expectations. Her principal army was defeated; and, had it not been for the brave defence of Tsetong by Lieouchi, the wife of the commandant, the war would have been marked by nothing but disaster. When the Imperialists appeared before the place, Lieouchi put herself at the head of the troops, and made all the preparations for defending it to the last extremity. After the siege had continued for some days, she discovered that one of her lieutenants was playing the traitor. She invited him to a general council of her officers, when she accused him of treason. On his admitting the justice of the charge, she severed his head from his body with a blow of her own sword. After this no one in the garrison of Tsetong entertained treasonable correspondence with the besiegers. Lieouchi showed not less judgment than courage in all her measures. Her garrison depended for water on a single well, which the enemy succeeded in cutting off. Lieouchi at once took steps to supply the want by collecting rain water in

bound himself to abide by their practices. When the magnates of the Court came to request him to return to his duties, the priests refused to permit his departure until a large sum of money was paid in the form of a fine. It was proposed to destroy the temple and put its inmates to the sword; but Vouti peremptorily forbade it, and ordered the payment of the money. Two years after this episode, in A.D. 529, Vouti again went into seclusion for the purpose of acquiring an intimate acquaintance, he said, with the doctrines of Buddha. He shaved off his hair and beard, and remained several days in a cell, and the earnest entreaties of his ministers barely availed to recall him to a sense of the weakness and imprudence of his conduct. He again had to pay a heavy fine to escape from the incarceration which he had voluntarily imposed upon himself.

vases, and by means of linen and the clothes of the soldiers, and these fortunately proved sufficient, as it was then the rainy season. Lieouchi* thus baffled all the efforts of Vouti's general; but Houchi had, on the whole, no reason to feel gratified with the result of her first war.

Houchi did not remain long in power after the conclusion of this war. She was deposed and placed in confinement, and Yueny, one of the Wei princes, became Regent. Another turn in the progress of events brought Houchi back to power, and the same wave of party intrigue, turning to its own advantage a phase in popular feeling, carried the dictator Yueny to the block. During these troubles, which were aggravated by a lingering war on the northern frontier with the Getæ and other Tartar tribes, the power of the Wei kingdom greatly declined, and Vouti seized what seemed a favourable opportunity for recovering some of the places which he had lost. The war, once it broke out, went on with fluctuating fortune for several years; but, on the whole, Vouti must be allowed to have enjoyed the greater success.† Several towns which he desired to possess surrendered to him, and at the close of the campaign he showed himself more anxious for its renewal than his opponent.

Meanwhile, the internal troubles of Wei were accumulating fresh force. Houchi's power was fast waning; but it did

* This might be called the brightest period for women in Chinese history. Three heroines in three different ways, Mongchi, Houchi, and Lieouchi, figure prominently in the record of these few years, a circumstance without parallel in the history of the country.

† A deed of heroism performed by Housiaohou, a Wei general, and in its main feature reminding us of the incident of D'Assis, deserves a niche in this history. Housiaohou had been sent with a fresh army to the succour of a beleaguered comrade. He failed, however, and was taken prisoner. Vouti's commander thought that it would be a favourable opportunity to show his remaining opponent how hopeless it would be to continue the struggle, and accordingly sent Housiaohou under guard to the outworks to communicate the news of his own defeat. When within hearing, he shouted to his own countrymen: "I was on the point of arriving for your relief when I allowed myself to be taken by the enemy, more numerous and better supplied than my army. Do not lose courage; defend yourselves like brave men, and I assure you that succour will very soon arrive." He was prevented saying any more by his escort, who slew him.

not appear so clear what was to supplant it. There were popular risings, and intriguing generals figuring in the foreground of rival parties. But the popular risings failed, and it long remained doubtful which of the generals would succeed in establishing his supremacy over the rest. The very disunion in the realm, and the confusion caused by rival claimants, gave a temporary stability to Houchi's position; and had she turned the situation to more skilful account, she might have foiled her opponents, and compelled them to recognize her as a promoter of, and not an obstacle to, the reforms necessary for the preservation of the state. In these straits, the only sure prospect of restoring order lay in the abilities of Erchu Jong, the commander-in-chief of the troops in six provinces; and the necessity for immediate action was brought home to his mind by Houchi's final act, which was to depose her son. Erchu Jong then marched on the capital, which he seized. Houchi became his prisoner, and ended her life and her crimes by being drowned in the waters of the Hoangho.

Erchu Jong appears to have been naturally a man of stern and unrelenting character. For the confusion in the realm he wished to exact a punishment adequate to the crimes of those who had produced it, and, having sentenced Houchi, he proceeded to inflict punishment on her abettors. He assembled two thousand of the notables in a group outside the city, and, having reproached them with their crime in neglecting the welfare of the state, he ordered his cavalry to slaughter them. He carried the same prompt severity into his action against some insurgents who ventured to question his authority; but on the remonstrance of his friends, who pointed out that, the heads being slain, it would be unwise to exasperate the mass of the people, he exhibited a clemency which was perhaps foreign to his nature. It would be tedious to describe in detail the petty wars and quarrels which ensued. Vouti thought the fall of Houchi afforded him a favourable opportunity for resuming the war with Wei, and even went so far as to set up a rival prince to the nominee of Erchu Jong. His general, Chingkingchi, obtained several successes, and made it a boast that he was victorious in forty-

seven combats. But when Erchu Jong took the field in person, Chingkingchi's fortune vanished, and he was compelled to beat a hasty retreat. All the towns that had surrendered were abandoned, and the results of the campaign completely lost. It was at this moment that Erchu Jong formed the ambitious scheme of reuniting the Empire. "Wait a little while," he said to his most trusted colleague, "and we shall assemble all the braves from out our western borders. We will then go and bring to reason the six departments of the north, and the following year we will cross the great Kiang, and place in chains Siaoyen, who calls himself Emperor." Such was the intention of Erchu Jong, the great hunter, and the best general within the bounds of China. There is no doubt that he would have carried out this ambitious and noble scheme had his life been spared ; but it was not to be. Erchu Jong had become too powerful a subject not to have bitter enemies at court, and these intrigued so successfully against him that they obtained the prince's sanction to his murder. Invited to the palace on a pretext, Erchu Jong was slain in the Hall of Audience. Thus passed away the man who had done more than any other of the age towards advancing the best interests of the country, which were represented by the one word—union.

The death of Erchu Jong was the signal for fresh strife in the dominions of the Wei ruler, and before it closed the proud kingdom founded by the Tartar family of the Topas was split up into two parts, each inveterately hostile to the other. At the head of one of these stood Kao Hwan, an ambitious and successful general, of whom it may be said that he desired, with less capacity, to emulate the deeds of Erchu Jong.

It was soon after these great changes in Wei that Vouti dreamt a dream which he was weak enough to accept as possessing a practical meaning. There appeared to him a vision of persons offering him the long-coveted province of Honan, and he at once ordered his troops to march into it for the purpose of taking what he believed a supernatural power decreed should be his. The result falsified the anticipations of his credulity. His army was defeated in the field and

driven back in confusion across the frontier. With the collapse of his military preparations the edifice of his schemes of extension of dominion fell to the ground. Frequent disaster left little or nothing of the Imperial dignity, and all his contemporaries saw in it was the spectacle of an aged prince, broken in power as in health, hastening to an inevitable fall.

The final blow was struck by Heou King, one of Vouti's vassals, who had shaken off the authority of his suzerain. In A.D. 549 he published an indictment of the ruler and appeared before the walls of the capital. The slight resistance offered by Vouti's body-guard was soon overcome, and the monarch was helpless in the hands of a turbulent soldiery and their leader. Borne down by the weight of more than eighty years, Vouti deplored his present weakness and the errors which had brought it to pass. "It was I who raised my family, and it is I who have destroyed it. I have no reason to complain," was his truthful comment on the ruin with which he saw that he and his were threatened. He did not long survive the closing catastrophe of his reign. During forty-seven years he had governed his portion of China with justice and a fair show of success; but the surrender of his capital and person to a successful soldier was the death-knell of all his hopes. The chagrin told on the shattered constitution of the octogenarian, and in a few days he found relief for all his troubles in "the eternal sleep." The Chinese historians descant on what Vouti might have been, but it seems to us that in this they leave themselves open to the charge of ingratitude. As the ruler of that part of China which they have identified with the Empire, Vouti appears to have been the greatest and most praiseworthy prince in those years of trouble and littleness which intervened between the disappearance of the Hans and the advent of the great Tang dynasty.

Vouti was more correct than perhaps he expected to be when he said that he had destroyed his family. His third son, Wenti, succeeded him, but he was only a cypher in the hands of Heou King. After a short reign of less than three years Wenti was murdered by his minister, who was in turn

attacked by his victim's brother Siaoy. Siaoy, assisted by Chinpasien, a semi-independent chief, drove Heou King from power, and, on his being taken prisoner, this dethroner of kings was executed, and his body exposed in the streets of Kienkang. Siaoy was placed on the throne as the Emperor Yuenti, but he was not more fortunate than his predecessors. After three years Chinpasien revolted, besieged his ruler in the capital, and bore down all opposition. Seeing further resistance to be hopeless, Yuenti surrendered to his enemy. Before doing so he broke his sword and burnt a library containing a hundred and forty thousand volumes, exclaiming, "All is over! All my skill in war and letters henceforth becomes useless to me." His intuition proved right. His surrender was the signal for his death, and his capital was given over to the victorious soldiery to plunder.

The last of the Leangs was Kingti, Yuenti's ninth son. He reigned only two years when he also was murdered by Chinpasien, Prince of Chin, who became Emperor, and the founder of the next dynasty. The Leangs held possession of the throne for in all fifty-six years, during forty-seven of which Vouti had been ruler. The same year which witnessed the fall of the Leangs also saw the extinction, without a blow, of the Topa family, which had produced the great princes Topasse and Topatao, and which had ruled over Wei during one hundred and fifty years.

Chinpasien gave his dynasty the name of Chin, from that of his principality, and took the usual name of Vouti. Chin Vouti did not long enjoy possession of the throne which he had won. He consolidated his success by suppressing several petty insurrections, and by according terms to one of their principal leaders. His lieutenant, Chowti, restored order for his master in some of the most disturbed districts, and the Chin dynasty appeared to have every prospect of an assured and tranquil existence, when the sudden death of Chinpasien, after a reign of less than three years, threw things again into confusion. Having no children, he had named Wenti, one of his nephews, his successor. This prince reigned eight years, but his life proved singularly uneventful. Several attempts were made to revive the Leangs, and Chowti, Chinpasien's

former lieutenant, rebelled against his prince. But all these rebels were defeated, and Chowti's previous services could not save him from the punishment due to one who had broken his oath to his lawful ruler. Wenti was an amiable prince, and, without performing any particularly brilliant act, he gained the affections of his subjects. When he died, in A.D. 567, his son, Petsong, or Ling Hai Wang, became Emperor, but only reigned two years. Petsong was deposed by his uncle.

Suenti, a nephew of Chinpasien, was the next ruler of the Chins. During his reign of fourteen years, the northern kingdom of Chow, which had been formed after the fall of the Topa family in Wei, was gradually extending its dominion over the whole of the country north of the Yangtse-kiang. The king of that state had found no difficulty in annexing the neighbouring kingdom of Tsi, the ruler of which was more given to the pleasures of the chase and the banquet than to the cares of government. He had great taste, we are informed, in the laying-out of ornamental gardens; but the preservation of his life and of his people's independence was a matter in which he showed less proficiency. When the Chow ruler died, his work was carried on by his son's minister, Yang Kien, Prince of Soui, whose reputation soon overshadowed that of the princes on the throne and spread throughout China. Before Suenti's death it was seen that Yang Kien was "the coming man," and Suenti adopted no measures to avert the peril threatening his family. His devotion to the fine arts and his skill as a musician were most commendable in their way; but the times were such as required sterner qualities for the preservation of existence, both by individuals and by states.

His son, Heouchu, or Chang Ching Kong, succeeded to the throne, but his evil disposition did not take long to reveal itself. He gave himself over to his appetites, and, although nominally sovereign during seven years, it was plain from the first that his power would crumble away at the slightest shock. When his excesses had sufficiently disgusted his subjects, Yang Kien, now become ruler of Northern China, came forward as the deliverer of the oppressed peoples of the

south. His troops crossed the great Yangtse-kiang, entered the capital, and subdued a country which welcomed its conqueror. Heouchu was deposed, and retired into private life, where he survived by twenty-four years the collapse of his own fortune and that of the family of the Chins. Thus terminated, in A.D. 589, the dynasty of the Chins, certainly the least notable of all the families which have ruled in China. In thirty-two years they gave five rulers to the state—none, with the exception of the first, worthy of his position. Undistinguished in themselves, their disappearance from history is remarkable as heralding the reunion of the great Empire, so long divided into independent and hostile states.

Yang Kien assumed the title of Kaotsou Wenti on the consummation of his earthly ambition, and during his reign of fifteen years over a reunited country he gave repeated proof of the possession of great qualities. Under his guidance the power of the Emperor was vested with fresh significance among the neighbouring peoples, and, although not yet restored to the full height it had enjoyed under Tsin Hwangti and Han Vouti, the ancient supremacy of China over all the countries of Eastern Asia may be considered to have been again asserted and established by the founder of the Soui dynasty. His generals on the one hand drove back the Toukinei—or Turks, successors of the Sienpi and Gewgen—behind the desert, and on the other engaged in a war with the King of Corea, who, trusting to the difficult mountain range which serves that country as a barrier, thought it safe to defy the Chinese ruler. Kaoyuen, the sovereign of that remote and little-known kingdom, which, although sometimes overrun by hostile armies, and often averting invasion by a timely surrender, preserved its independence and institutions down to the present age, refused to render to Wenti the tribute which that ruler considered to be his due. After a doubtful campaign, Kaoyuen found it prudent to abandon the position he had taken up, and to accord the Soui prince the compliment which he demanded.

Two of the most important of Wenti's acts in domestic legislation were the bringing of the southern districts of the kingdom under the same law as those of the north,

and the passing of an alteration in the accepted practice in state education. In the former case his well-meant effort failed, as the people would have nothing to do with the new regulations. Wenti had the good judgment to recognize the unpopularity of his attempted innovation, and to withdraw the obnoxious regulations. With regard to the second matter, it had been customary from the time of the Hans to have schools and colleges in all the principal towns established for the gratuitous education of the people. To Wenti, who was an unlettered man, the advantage of this scheme of national education appeared to be no equivalent for the great burden it cast upon the taxpayers; and despite the representations of all the learned classes, he ordered their abolition in the year A.D. 601. According to some, this decree applied to all, with the exception of the Imperial College at the capital; but there is authority for the view that it was to be enforced only in the cases of persons intended for commercial or mechanical pursuits. Regarded in the light in which it has been handed down to us, it can only be considered as a retrograde step; but it is quite possible that it was rendered imperative by financial considerations.

The death of Wenti took place in A.D. 604. There is reason to believe that his end was precipitated by his second son Yankwang, who aspired to be his successor. The suspicion is not weakened by the fact that Yankwang beyond doubt murdered his elder brother, whom Wenti had intended to be his heir. Of Wenti's personal character much might be said in the highest terms of praise, and even the faults with which he has been charged are those that appeal to our sympathy. Brave, and a skilful commander, he possessed the essentials to success in the dark age out of which he emerged like a meteor from a gloomy sky. His moderation gained him friends, and disarmed the hostility of his foes. The magnanimity of a sovereign who spared the life of the prince he had deposed, and who erected temples in honour of neglected dynasties that had immediately preceded his own, was such as appealed to the general understanding. With these great qualifications was combined

a practical wisdom that shone conspicuous in all his acts, and it is without surprise that we read the panegyric written by some Chinese student on the "unlettered" Wenti.

If Yankwang, or Yangti, seized the Empire by means that were brutal and unnatural, he soon showed that he possessed all the qualifications of a ruler of a great people. From the very beginning of his reign he devoted his attention to the construction of great public works, which have earned him a name more durable than that of the general who gives his energy and abilities to conquests that are destined to prove ephemeral. One of his first acts was to remove the capital to Loyang, which he desired to make the most magnificent city in the world. Two million men were employed upon his palace and other public buildings, and fifty thousand merchants were invited or commanded to come thither from other cities in the Empire. Of all his works the great canals,* which he caused to be cut out in every direction, were at once the most useful and the most splendid triumphs of man over the obstacles of nature. By his order, public granaries, to which, during years of plenty, the prosperous were compelled to contribute, were erected in all the provincial capitals in preparation for times of dearth. And when these grandiose schemes had been brought to completion, Yangti, accompanied by his court, the great officials of the state, and the chosen troops of his army, made a kind of Imperial progress through his dominions. Both in his works and in this tour through the realm, Yangti may be said to have resembled the Emperor Adrian.

His foreign wars were not as successful as those of his father had been; but he reduced the Loo Chow group of

* The most authentic account of these canals is that handed down to us in the "Chouihingkiukien," or History of the Control of Waters, of which the Père Amiot has left the following translation: "Yangti, of the Soui dynasty, who ascended the throne in A.D. 605, and only reigned thirteen years, began in the very first year of his reign to cause either new canals to be constructed or the ancient ones to be extended, so that ships could go from the Hoangho into the Kiang, and from those two great streams into the rivers of Tsi, Wei, Han, etc. Several of these great works still remain to testify to the greatness of Yangti."

islands to subjection, and seven hundred years later the first Ming Emperor based his claim to tribute on that fact. For many years later he was engaged in a domestic struggle with the people of Corea and their intrepid prince. The successes of this war remained entirely with the latter, who repulsed many invading armies, and in the end Yangti was fain to admit that the conquest of Corea would cost too much both in time and money to compensate for the attempt. Elsewhere fortune did not smile on Yangti's arms, although the triumph of the Souis brought to China envoys and merchants from the extremity of Asia. Fresh maps and an interesting description of the countries of Asia were obtained during this reign, and the Kuen Lun, or Mountains of Heaven, are first mentioned at this time. Neither his care for his people nor his devotion to science could save, however, his closing years from trouble and civil disturbance. The vast sums he had laid out on great works, and the extravagance which marked his ordinary expenditure, exhausted his exchequer, leaving him without the source of strength which, of all others, was most essential to the preservation of his position. He showed wisdom of a practical kind in forbidding his subjects to carry offensive weapons, and his successors down to the present day have studiously followed him in the path he marked out in this respect. He reversed much of his father's legislation in educational matters, and was the first to accord the degree of "Doctor" to those officials who had passed a fixed examination.

He tarnished his fame during the last few years of his life by giving himself up to the indulgence of pleasure, and his indifference to his duties brought upon him the vengeance of a fanatic named Haokie. This man, at the head of a party of discontented soldiers, surprised the Emperor while journeying through his dominions, and strangled him before aid could arrive. In this ignominious fashion closed the life and reign of Yangti, who at one time promised to be the most remarkable ruler of his House and period.

His son Kongti was placed on the throne by the assistance of Liyuen and his sons. Liyuen had been made Prince of

Tang some years before, and his intrigues and open sedition had been the cause of considerable anxiety during the last years of Yangti's reign. Kongti was placed on the throne only to abdicate. The same year beheld his rise and fall. The ruin of his fortunes, the collapse of his House, were rendered the more expressive by the destruction of the great and costly palace which Yangti had constructed. Liyuen's second son and acting commander is reported to have said that this splendid edifice was only useful "to soften the heart of a prince, and to foment his cupidity." Accordingly he gave it to the flames. The abdication of Kongti was followed by his murder, when Liyuen assumed the style of Emperor.

Thus passed away the Soui dynasty after twenty-nine years' tenure of power. It was the last of the five small dynasties which ruled China after the fall of the Hans. Of these it was the greatest, in that it ruled a united China, and left to its inheritor the legacy of a country which it had all the credit of having consolidated and of having restored to something approaching its former height as a great administrative and conquering Empire.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TANG DYNASTY.

Taitsong the Great.

LIYUEN is known in history as the Emperor Kaotsou, first ruler of a dynasty which restored the country to its legitimate place among the nations. His very first act proclaimed both the clemency of the man, and the self-confidence of the rising family. China had still to be conquered, the Tangs were only one set of competitors among many, there must have been some who looked back with feelings of attachment and regret to the days of Yangti; yet despite all these elements of danger and disunion Kaotsou's first act was to spare the members of the deposed House and to allot them pensions. He desired to govern in accordance with the dictates of his conscience, which forbade him to stretch his prerogative or violate the fundamental laws of justice and humanity. The long troubles through which China struggled were at length passing away, and, as they disappeared, they left the ruler strong enough to follow a policy which had as its principal object the welfare of the state, rather than the personal gratification of the ruler. It was the peculiar glory of the Tangs to lead the nation into a new path of greatness, which has proved durable, at the same time that they raised the tone of public life. If the institutions and political power of England first assumed form and took substance in the hands of the Plantagenets, the service rendered to China by the Tangs was neither less tangible nor practical.

The nine years during which Kaotsou occupied the throne were passed in wars, both beyond the frontier and within

the realm ; and, although in all his acts there was conspicuous a kingly capacity seldom surpassed, the fame of Kaotsou has assumed an attenuated form in comparison with that of his greater son. Indeed while he lived it was not very different. The annals of Kaotsou are chiefly of interest because they contain some of the noblest deeds of Lichimin, afterwards the great Taitsong. The wisdom of the father was eclipsed by the splendid qualities of the son, and it has been transmitted to us in only a reflected sense through the great achievements of the latter. Had Kaotsou lived at another period he would have been handed down to posterity as an able ruler whose successors should aspire to emulate him. As it is, the Chinese historian records as his most meritorious action the prudence which induced him after a nine years' reign to abdicate in favour of his son.

Kaotsou established his capital at Singan, the ancient Changnan, and his son Lichimin, on capturing Loyang, the metropolis of the Souis, caused Yangti's great palace to be destroyed. It was with the moral reflection—"so much pomp and pride could not long be sustained, and ought to entail the ruin of those who indulged them rather than attend to the wants of the people"—that Lichimin ordered this magnificent pile to be reduced to ashes ; but it would be a mistake to see in this measure only the act of a Vandal. The Souis had fallen, and the Tangs were rising upon the ruin of that family ; but some formal expression of the change was needed. Neither Kaotsou nor Lichimin would wreak their vengeance on the members of the fallen dynasty. The destruction of the building which typified the greatness of the Souis sufficed for all practical purposes, and leaves the reputation of the Tangs free from those moral stains which sully the shield of most Chinese rulers. The capture of Loyang was only one achievement among many. Wherever Lichimin marched victory went before him. His banners flaunted in the breezes of the northern states, and a great Turk confederacy beyond Shansi felt the weight of the military prowess of the young general. Within four years (A.D. 624) of his assisting in placing his father on the throne, Lichimin was able to announce that he had pacified the realm. Rebels

had been vanquished, and foreign foes compelled to sue for peace ; while the people rejoiced at having obtained a ruler capable of governing them without resorting to the arbitrary expedients of the despot.

Lichimin did not go without his reward for the brilliant successes he obtained in the field. His return to Singan recalls the description of the triumphs of the conquerors of ancient Rome. Dressed in costly armour, with a breast-plate of gold, Lichimin rode into his father's capital at the head of his victorious troops. Ten thousand picked horsemen formed his personal escort, and thirty thousand cuirassiers followed, in the middle of whom appeared a captive king of the Tartars. The spoils of numerous cities, accompanied by the generals who had failed to defend them, were there to grace the triumph of the conqueror. Just as Marcellus or one of the Scipios filed up the Sacred Way when bringing to the Imperial city the plunder of Gaul or of Carthage, did Lichimin proceed to the Hall of his Ancestors, where he apprised the shades of his progenitors of the success which had attended his arms. Having rewarded his principal officers, and accorded their lives to the defeated, Lichimin was feasted in presence of his army by the Emperor, who gave no stinted meed of praise to the son who had rendered such valiant and opportune service both to himself and to the country. The rejoicings of that eventful day, which beheld the popular ratification of the new government, closed with the proclamation of a general amnesty to all, and of a diminution in the taxes ; and it still stands out as one of the most remarkable turning-points in Chinese history.

Lichimin's brothers envied while they could not emulate his greatness. His elder brother, unable to appreciate the generosity of character which had impelled him to advise his father to proclaim him heir-apparent, intrigued against him, resolving in the first place to undermine his position at court, and in the next to take his life. Kaotsou's mind was warped by the wiles of this intriguer against his favourite son, who fell into disgrace, and at one time thought of leaving a court which was as little congenial to his tastes as it was full of danger to his person. The course of history might have

been changed, had Lichimin not discovered the quarter whence these hidden shafts were directed against his person and his reputation. His brothers, afraid of his influence with the people and the army, formed a plot for his murder, but their scheme was divulged. The blow which they had intended for Lichimin was turned upon themselves, and their death left this prince the incontestable heir to the throne. He demonstrated his worthiness for the position by the moderation he evinced towards those who had been the keenest partisans in his brothers' cause; and Wei Ching, the ablest of them all, lived to become in later years the most trusted adviser of the man whose death he had plotted.

The same year (A.D. 626) which witnessed these intrigues and the proclamation of Lichimin as heir-apparent, also beheld the retirement of Kaotsou from public life. It may well have been that it was something more than the alleged reason of weight of years that induced this prince to quit the throne at a time when there seemed to be nothing for him to do except to enjoy his hard-won triumph, and that the force of public opinion compelled him to resign the charge of the administration to his son. The transfer of authority was effected in the most regular manner, and with the necessary formalities. Kaotsou expressed his sovereign determination to seek the charm and relaxation of private life, and Lichimin refused to accept a charge for which he said his capacity was inadequate. But when these courtly phrases had served their turn, Lichimin felt constrained to obey the paternal command. Kaotsou descended from the throne, and Lichimin became Emperor under the style of Taitsong. The greater reputation had absorbed the less, and, having long wielded the executive power, Taitsong, by the voluntary retirement of his father, assumed the position to which his personal qualities gave him every right. Kaotsou lived nine years after his deposition, long enough to witness the most remarkable of his son's achievements, and the complete consolidation of his dynasty on the throne.

The first acts of the new ruler showed that he would rest satisfied with no partial degree of success in the task he had set himself to accomplish. It was his first and principal

object to give the Chinese the benefit of a government which was national in its sympathies and its aims. He had to revive the old sentiment that the Chinese were one people, and that the prosperity of the realm, and the stability of the ruling powers equally depended on the tranquillity and sense of security which should generally prevail. To him also it seemed a matter of the first importance to extend the influence of the Chinese among the neighbouring states, for he knew that by so doing he would alone succeed in preserving what had been won. The surrounding tribes from Corea to Kokonor, and from Tibet to Tonquin, were the inveterate enemies of the Chinese, and nothing but the vigilance of the frontier authorities, and the strength of the border garrisons, could avail to keep them at a respectful distance from the centres of Chinese prosperity. Constantly changing both in name, and perhaps sometimes in race, these nomads were at all times the same relatively to the Chinese. What in the history of this island the Picts and Scots were to the Romans, or the Welsh to the Normans and the first Plantagenets, that were the Huns and the other Turk and Tartar clans to the Celestials. Taitsonng fully grasped this fact, and during the whole of his reign he was engaged in a never-ceasing struggle with one or other of his restless neighbours. The result in each case may appear to have been small, and the balance of victory often doubtful; but on the whole the policy was successful. It gave peace to a vast region which for several centuries had been disturbed by all the horrors of war, and thus rendered desolate. Whereas the Great Wall of Tsin Hwangti had failed to secure a permanent result, the activity and foresight of Taitsonng accomplished the practical object more efficiently, and with more decisive consequences.

The very year of Taitsonng's accession hostilities with these turbulent neighbours broke out on a large scale. They had been vanquished in several encounters a few years before; but, like the snow of early winter, they had melted only to come together again. Scarcely seated on the throne, Taitsonng found himself called upon to repel the onslaught of a hundred thousand fierce and implacable assailants.

This horde, for it would be a mistake to apply the term "army" to most of the expeditions fitted out against China in the regions of Central Asia, carried everything before it on this occasion up to the neighbourhood of the capital ; and, although Taitson g haughtily refused to comply with the terms proposed by a Tartar envoy for an arrangement, it does not appear that he drove them back by force of arms. It is recorded that he advanced at the head of a few hundred horsemen to the outside of their encampment, and reproached their leaders with their duplicity and want of faith. The effect of his words is represented to have been electrical. Descending from their horses, the Tartar generals, struck by his majestic air, acknowledged their faults, and promised to amend their ways. A subsequent meeting took place on the Pienkiao bridge over the Weichoui River, where peace was concluded and the Tartars retired. On this occasion the vows of friendship and the other stipulations of the treaty were sworn over the body of a white horse offered up to the deity who presides over the relations of neighbouring states.

Having thus repelled or turned aside this hostile invasion, Taitson g devoted most of his attention to the organization of his army,* and to the improvement of the military knowledge of his officers. Many defects existed in the former, and the state of the latter was at a low ebb. Chinese armies had at the best, up to this point, been little more than a raw militia, and in their constant struggles with their Tartar neighbours it had always been an admitted fact that the Chinese soldier was the inferior of his opponent. Taitson g resolved to remedy this defect, and to make the Chinese soldier individually the match for any antagonist he would be likely to have to encounter. In this he had to first overcome the bitter opposition of the lettered classes, who

* The following description of Taitson g's army is extracted from Pauthier's work : "The military was drawn up after a new fashion. It was divided into 895 corps of the same name, but of three different ranks. Those of the superior rank consisted of 1200 men each, those of the intermediary of 1000 men each, and those of the inferior of 800 men each." This force gave an approximate total of 900,000 men ; 634 of these regiments were retained for service within the frontier, and to the 261 remaining was allotted the task of guarding the western frontiers.

thought the duties of a military commander derogatory to the dignity of the Emperor; but Taitson was not to be turned by their representations from the path of duty which he had marked out for himself. The foundation on which he based his policy was that, in order to enjoy peace, it was necessary to be prepared for war; and he therefore passed much of his time in drilling his troops and in accustoming them to the use of arms. Every day he was to be seen inspecting a few companies of his army on the parade-ground in front of his palace, and he rewarded after no stinted fashion those who showed superior skill in the use of the bow or the pike. It was his delight to surround himself with armed men, although this "impropriety" excited the disapproval of his grave courtiers. Undisturbed by either the remonstrances of the slaves of etiquette or the warnings of the over-cautious, Taitson steadily continued his military reforms, thus obtaining both for himself and his country an element of strength which previous rulers had not possessed.

Within a very few years the occasion offered for testing the efficiency of the machine which he had elaborated. The Turk tribes, who had sworn peace for a second time at the bridge of Pienkiao, were again in a state of agitation and commotion. The cow-tail banner of the Tartars had again been flaunted in the air, and it was evident that the long-standing quarrel between these irreconcilable foes was on the point of breaking out into a fresh flame. A Chinese army marched into the desert and compelled the dissolution of the confederacy that had been hastily formed. The newly organized army earned its first laurels in a bloodless campaign, and Taitson had the satisfaction of seeing in the incapacity of his old enemies to resist his arms the clearest proof of the use and value of his preparations. On this occasion Taitson incorporated with his title of Emperor of China the minor rank of Khan of the Tartars, and it was by the latter that he claimed to have a right to regulate the affairs of those peoples. Several of the most prominent of the Tartar khans submitted to him, and became his faithful and devoted followers. His actual conquests only extended

into the desert of Gobi, but his influence was spread over a much wider area. Embassies from distant kingdoms came to solicit at his hands the favour of his laws, and to study from a near view the principles of government which he successfully carried into practice. Within three years of his accession he had attained these great results, but it had been exclusively by means of the army to which he had devoted all his leisure and energy.

The necessity of establishing his authority on a firm basis was imperative, and every other consideration had to give place to it as of minor importance ; but Taitsong, amid the glitter and clash of arms, was far from forgetting that a great ruler is expected to show other qualities besides those of the soldier. If half the time he spent in the service of the state was devoted to the disciplining of his troops, the other half was passed not less actively in arranging and providing for the domestic administration of his people. Arbitrary taxes removed, and the finances adjusted on a sound foundation, proved his skill as a financier, while showing that he knew where best to assist his people in their efforts towards attaining a permanent and solid prosperity. Neither superstitious nor a fatalist, he was opposed on principle to the innovations of Buddhism, and strove to set his people an example rather of pure morality than of religious zeal. To Confucius he wished to pay exceptional honours, and was never tired of quoting his precepts as the acme of human wisdom. He once declared that they, and the expressions of other philosophers of the same school, were "for the Chinese what the water is for the fishes."

Taitsong was assisted in his labours by his wife, the Empress Changsunchi, a woman remarkable for her talent and good sense. Changsunchi was far from being the first great woman in her exalted position in the history of her country, but she certainly was among the very few, if not the foremost of them, not to abuse her position or the influence she obtained over the mind of her husband. By restricting herself to her proper sphere she continued to enjoy throughout her life the confidence of her husband and the affection of the people. The force of her example made itself felt

throughout the country, and the nation, proud of the court, sought to emulate it by cultivating the domestic virtues. The simplicity of life to which this great Empress endeavoured to accustom both her children, and those who surrounded her, was tersely expressed by her in the noble sentiment that "the practice of virtue conferred honour on men, especially on princes, and not the splendour of their appointments." During ten years, Changsunchi helped Taitsong in the government of the country, and on her death-bed, in A.D. 636, her last words were to counsel those around her to obey the Emperor in all things. Taitsong exclaimed when the sad news was brought to him that he had never sufficiently appreciated her merit, and in the fervour of his regret ordered her to receive the funeral honours accorded to the person of a deceased ruler. Changsunchi had taken a great part in the measures passed by Taitsong for the advancement of the education of the people. The great college and the Imperial Library, which adorned the capital, had come into existence as much under her auspices as under his; and when he added at a later period eighteen hundred rooms for additional students at the college, it was doubtless done in memory of the woman who had so greatly assisted him in the discharge of his various duties. After Changsunchi's death, Taitsong appears to have lost something of the happy spontaneity of the governing art. Certain it is that disasters, which, serious as they were, could not dim the splendour of his reign, occurred after he had lost the womanly counsel and shrewd judgment of Changsunchi.

In the year A.D. 634 envoys reached Singan for the first time from the kingdom of Toufan, Toupou, or Tibet. Up to the close of the sixth century of our era the vast plateau known by this name, and watered in its southern and less elevated portion by the great river Sanpu, had been inhabited by a number of tribes independent of each other, and ruled by their own chiefs. The natural consequence had ensued here as elsewhere in the world, and one of these chiefs had, at the time when the Souis were consolidating their position, subdued his neighbours, and founded a kingdom of considerable dimensions. This prince marched on one occasion

into Central India, and when he died he left his son an army computed to number one hundred thousand men. It was from this son, whose title was Sanpou, "the brave lord," that the envoys came, and after a brief residence at the Chinese capital they returned laden with presents to their country. Four years later a return Chinese mission was sent to Tibet, where it received a very honourable reception, and the Sanpou, wishing to draw tighter the bonds of amity with the Emperor, made a request that he should be sent a Chinese princess in marriage. This favour Tait song refused, and the Sanpou, disappointed at what he held to be a slight to his dignity, raised a large army and marched into the districts bordering on Szchuen. He announced that he had come to receive and escort back to his country the princess whom he had demanded from the Emperor. Tait song sent an army to defend the frontier, and, the Sanpou being worsted in the single engagement of the war, peace was concluded by a fresh recognition of China's supremacy. The Tibetan ruler acknowledged himself a Chinese vassal, paid a fine of five thousand ounces of gold, and returned with the Princess Wencheng, whom Tait song gave him to wife. The Tibetan king adopted Chinese customs, and gave up his native barbarism. He abolished, at the desire of his Chinese wife, the national practice of painting the face, and he built her a walled city "to proclaim his glory to after generations." Tait song's relations with his son-in-law continued throughout his reign to be those of friendship and alliance.

The same year, which was marked by the advance of the Tibetan ruler, witnessed a fresh triumph for Tait song's arms in the Gobi region. For the first time the region, now known as Eastern Turkestan or Kashgaria, was included in the actual administration of China. Divided into four districts it formed with the whole of Tangut the province of Loungsi, and effectually cut off all possibility of communication between the peoples on the western and northern frontiers, all naturally hostile to the Chinese. Kucha, Khoten, Karashar, and Kashgar then became for the first time the head-quarters of permanent officials of the Chinese Emperor. They had often before seen Chinese armies, and their native rulers

had been fain to admit the supremacy of the Emperor ; but Taitsong was the first to appoint his own deputies in those remote places. Hamil and Turfan became also the centres of separate governments. Taitsong did not carry out this policy without encountering great opposition from several of his ministers, and Wei Ching in particular protested against the unnecessary extension, as he termed it, of the Empire. Taitsong listened patiently to their remonstrances, but pursued nevertheless the even tenour of his way ; and having the good fortune to possess a capable general in Lichitsi, the Warden of the Western Marches, the gloomy anticipations of the timid were not realized.

Taitsong's personal courage brought him into several dangerous predicaments, but the greatest peril he had to encounter was caused by his own son. Lichingkien, the eldest of his sons, had been nominated heir-apparent early in the reign, and in A.D. 643, anxious to forestall his inheritance, he formed a plot, assisted by some of the discontented spirits always to be found at a court, with the object of deposing his father. Their secret was badly kept, and before the plot was fully ripe the whole scheme was revealed to Taitsong. The conspirators were promptly arrested, and the heir-apparent was dismissed from his high rank, while the humbler of his supporters were handed over to the public executioner. The efforts of the disaffected were thus foiled, and Taitsong's position became more firmly fixed in the affections of the people because a glimpse had been afforded of what might happen when a new ruler occupied his place.

The most critical event in Taitsong's reign—his war with Corea—has now to be described. The king of that country had never been a willing vassal of the Chinese Emperor, and shook off at any favourable opportunity the slight control claimed over his movements. The consolidation of the Empire under the Tangs had so far not been accompanied by any expression on the part of the King of Corea that he either desired, or held it incumbent upon him, to send tribute to, or maintain friendly relations with the Son of Heaven. In A.D. 643 he was accused of molesting the smaller ruler of Sinlo, who sent a mission to Changnan to solicit the aid

of Taitsong against the aggressor. In Corea, or Kaoli as it was then called, the governing power had about this time been seized by a great noble named Chuen Gaisoowun, who had murdered his sovereign, and when Taitsong's envoy arrived he was treated with contemptuous indifference, and sent back to Changnan without attaining any of the objects of his mission. A large Chinese army was despatched to the frontier and held in readiness to cross it, when Gaisoowun, appalled at the danger which threatened him, sent the required tribute, and promised to abstain from attacking any people under the Emperor's protection. It is evident from other circumstances that Taitsong was more resolved to administer to Gaisoowun a chastisement in accordance with his crimes, than to take him into alliance with the Empire. So it turned out that Gaisoowun's presents were not accepted, and that his envoys were sent back without being granted an audience. Both sides thereupon prepared for the war thus rendered inevitable.

Taitsong himself proceeded to the frontier and assumed the supreme control of the military operations; and Lichitsi was entrusted with the chief command under him. The total force numbered about one hundred thousand regular soldiers, besides auxiliaries, and a flotilla of five hundred vessels co-operated with the main attack from the sea. Taitsong issued a proclamation to the effect that he was coming to punish, not a people, whose interests he claimed to have at heart, but an individual. It was not upon the Coreans that he threatened to bring the plague of war, but simply against the regicide, Gaisoowun.

At first the Imperialists carried everything before them. The towns of Kaimow and Bisha surrendered to them after a show of resistance, and the Coreans saw their line of defence pierced by their more numerous and better prepared enemy. Outside the town of Leaoutung Lichitsi won a very considerable action, defeating a Korean army of forty thousand men, and then laid siege to the place itself. The town, defended by a large garrison, was beleaguered with greater vigour after the arrival of the Emperor, who took an active personal part in the operations. Indeed, it was under his

immediate supervision that the final assault was conducted, and his own suggestion of firing the gate proved the turning-point in the day. Under cover of the smoke, the Imperialists forced their way through the breach, and the city was at their mercy. Ten thousand Koreans were slain, and numbers were taken prisoners, while Taitson admitted a loss of twenty-five thousand men, the flower of his army. Such was the great siege of Leaoutung, the most obstinately contested struggle in which Taitson had been then engaged. A similar success, purchased at less cost, however, was obtained at Baiyen, and Taitson, continuing his march, sat down before the walls of Anshu. The crisis of the war was now reached.

The main body of the Koreans had long been gathering its strength together, and at this point in the campaign a hundred and fifty thousand men had been collected and sent across the Yaloo river to encounter the Chinese army, which had been reduced to less than fifty thousand men. But Taitson at once left his position and attacked the Korean army on three sides, driving it from the field with the loss of twenty thousand men, and of a vast quantity of plunder in the shape of spoils of war. Taitson then turned all his attention to the prosecution of the siege of Anshu, but the garrison resisted with the courage of despair. At one moment it was on the point of surrender, when a successful sortie deprived the Chinese of the advantage they had momentarily gained. After a siege of more than two months, Taitson found himself compelled, by the want of provisions and the approach of winter, to order a retreat, thus losing the fruits of an arduous campaign, which had, on the whole, been conducted with remarkable success. As the Imperialist army broke up from its quarters, the gallant commandant appeared upon the walls and wished the troops "a pleasant journey." But even after the failure of his schemes Taitson was too truly great to indulge any spirit of spite against the people who had so bravely opposed him. Fourteen thousand Koreans remained prisoners in his hands, and he was advised to distribute them as slaves among his soldiers. His heart revolted against the cruelty of treating brave men in this fashion, and he accordingly gave them their liberty, and allotted them

lands within the frontier. Tait song sent several smaller expeditions against Corea and its defiant Prince Gaisoowun during the last three years of his reign ; but, although he meditated renewing his former attack, his life closed without anything having been accomplished towards the punishment of the regicide. The Corean question was left for his successors to grapple with—the one difficulty which had proved more than the power and ability of Tait song could overcome.

Although as a feat of arms the campaign in Corea had been far from inglorious, its untoward conclusion made a great impression on the mind of Tait song, and after his return he suffered from ill-health and loss of spirit. He saw that his end was approaching, and passed his time in drawing up for the instruction of his son that great work on the art of government which bears the title of the Golden Mirror. His acts were still marked by the clemency and kindly feeling which were his principal characteristics ; but it was evident that what he most desired was rest. In A.D. 649, twenty-three years after he succeeded his father Kaotsou, his malady assumed a serious form, and the great Emperor disappeared from a scene on which he had played so prominent a part. He was mourned by his subjects with a grief, the sincerity of which cannot be impugned, and several of his generals were so attached to his person that it was with difficulty they were prevented from immolating themselves on his grave. A statue to his memory was placed outside the Northern Gate, or that of the warriors, by fourteen Tartar officers in his service. The envoys from foreign states in the capital put on mourning, and many demonstrated their grief by cutting their hair, or sprinkling the bier of the deceased prince with their blood.

Tait song well deserved these manifestations of his people's love. No ruler of any country has had sounder claims to the title of Great than this Chinese Emperor. His courage, military knowledge, and the genius which is alone given to great captains were of the highest order. He had passed thirty years of his life in the field, and with the exception of the repulse at Anshu had never known the meaning of a reverse. His soldiers, officers and men, loved him and

obeyed his slightest bidding, because they found him always studious of their comfort, and willing to incur as great inconvenience and danger as "the meanest peasant in his camp." Yet at the same time he was so far ahead of his age that he endeavoured to mitigate the terrors of war, and on one occasion—ten centuries, be it noted, before Tilly and Pappenheim—ransomed a captured city from his soldiers in order to save its inhabitants from the horrors of a sack. In his administration he legislated for the mass of the people, making his main object the attainment of the following results—the security of life and property, a high state of national prosperity by means of low taxes and the encouraging of commerce, and the spreading of a healthy and enlightened spirit among his subjects by a system of national education. To the end he showed himself as singularly free from the lust of power, as from the love of pomp and idle show. He repressed flatterers, slighted those backbiters who, conscious of their own defects, strive, both then and now, to destroy the merit of others by traducing their worth, and banished from his court the knave, the hypocrite, and the charlatan who had prospered under previous rulers by humouring the human weaknesses of the sovereign. Having given China the blessings of peace and settled government, he appears to have been actuated by the noble desire to bestow upon the neighbouring peoples the benefit of the same advantages, and all his conquests were justified by the motives which led him to undertake them. They were doubly justified by the results that followed. All this and more might be truly said of this great ruler; and it is surely enough to place Tait song in the same rank as Cæsar, and those other great rulers who were not merely soldiers and conquerors, but also legislators and administrators of the first rank. If we candidly consider the civilized and truly Christian spirit of Tait song it is difficult to find among the great men of the world one with a right to have precedence before him.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TANG DYNASTY (*continued*).*Kaotsong to Tetsong.*

KAOTSONG, Taitson's son and successor, mounted the throne without opposition, and during a reign of more than thirty years he maintained at its height the great Empire formed by his father. In a strict sense this was not due to his own exertions, for early in his reign he gave himself up to the enjoyment of his ease, and entrusted to other hands the task of governing his people. No evil ensued from this abnegation of authority, because it fortunately happened that his representatives proved singularly capable in the administration of public affairs.

When Kaotsong had been five years on the throne he resolved to marry the Princess Chang or Wou, one of the widows of his father Taitson. Princess Wou had retired into a Buddhist convent after the death of her first lord, and Kaotsong encountered the strenuous opposition of his ministers when he announced his intention of bringing her out for the purpose of making her his Empress. Kaotsong was fully determined to have his own way in this matter, and, in A.D. 655, his lawful Empress was deposed to give place to the Princess Wou. Her first acts showed the ascendancy she had already acquired over her lover, who soon became a mere tool in the hands of this ambitious woman. Distrusting the influence which the deposed Empress and another of the principal queens might still retain over the mind of Kaotsong, who had allotted these fallen stars apartments in the palace, Wou came to the conclusion

that it would be prudent to sweep them from her path while yet Kaotsong's passion was warm. At her command they cast these unhappy women into a vase filled with wine, having previously cut off their hands and feet. As it has been tersely put, the Empress Wou willed it, and Kaotsong could only obey.

The new Empress then turned all her attention to the thwarting of the plans formed for her overthrow by numerous enemies. Her son was proclaimed heir-apparent, and those among the magnates who were either hostile to, or lukewarm in, her interests were deposed from their positions and cast into prison, where the steel or the cup very soon freed Wou from apprehensions on their score. Her next object was to assume some of the functions of supreme authority. At first she put herself forward merely as assisting the Emperor in his great labours, and, being quick in comprehending the questions of state that were brought before the Council Board, and deft with her pencil in the cabinet, Kaotsong found her ready wit of great use in grappling with difficulties for which he was incapable of suggesting a remedy. Empress Wou showed no common tact in the skilful manner in which she led the Emperor on from one concession of authority to another, until at length Kaotsong virtually retired from the position of Emperor, preserving indeed the rank, but leaving in his wife's hands the reality of power. The Empress Wou continued absolute ruler of the Empire until her death, more than forty years after the time when Kaotsong resigned his power into her hands.

While such was the course of events at the capital, there had been much of interest and importance happening on the widely extended frontiers of the Empire. The foreign relations of the country resolved themselves under three heads, those with Tibet, with Corea, and with the Tartar tribes of Central Asia and the north-western frontier. The Sanpou who married the Princess Wencheng died the year after Tait-song, and, during Yaotsong's reign, his grandson was King of Tibet. The relations between the Chinese government and this tributary state were not as satisfactory as they had been in the time of Tait-song. The new Sanpou, a young

and warlike prince, carried on several wars with his northern and eastern neighbours who were also dependent on the Chinese. His measures were crowned with success, and the kingdom of Tibet was gradually extending its limits over a wide area, including several districts bordering on the frontier of China Proper. This was very distasteful to the Chinese, who wished all the country to the west of their territory to remain parcelled out among petty potentates, who should always be in a state of greater or less importance, and as often as possible knit by a common tie to the Chinese Emperor. The successes and warlike character of the Tibetan ruler threatened this state of things; and a correspondence of a recriminatory character was carried on between the Singan authorities and the Sanpou of Tibet. In A.D. 670 the dispute reached such a pass that a Chinese army was sent to inflict chastisement on the ambitious ruler who was fast uniting the Himalayan regions under his sway, but it fared badly at the hands of the mountaineers. Defeated in two battles on the Shensi frontier, Kaotsong's general was compelled to beat a hasty retreat into Szchuen. A truce appears to have been then arranged, for a Tibetan envoy is found the following year at Singan, whither he had brought presents or tribute from his master.

The truce proved short-lived. Encouraged, no doubt, by his success, the Sanpou resumed with greater vigour than before his inroads into the neighbouring states. In A.D. 678 a large army, computed to exceed one hundred and fifty thousand men, was directed to invade Tibet, but again the Tibetans were victorious. Only the relics of one division of this great force succeeded in regaining China, while the second had to fight its way back, making good its retreat by its own valour. After this reverse, the Chinese were only able to guard the frontier, and had to leave the Tibetans to their own devices. The Tibetans were repulsed in several attacks on the frontier posts, and the death of their ruler, who was succeeded by a child, predisposed them still more strongly in favour of peace.

The Imperial arms had been attended with better fortune in the direction of Corea, where the task left unfinished by

Taitsong was completed by the generals of his son. In A.D. 658, and again in A.D. 660, the Chinese won several battles over the Koreans, and an expedition sent by sea in the latter year effected the conquest of Baiji, the eastern portion of the peninsula. During the ten following years the Chinese carried on a bitter struggle with the inhabitants of Baiji and the patriotic King of Kaoli, who called in the Japanese to his assistance. The Empress Wou threw all her energy into the struggle, and fitting out fleets and fresh armies, concentrated the whole strength of the Empire in overcoming the opposition of the Koreans. The allied forces of the Japanese and the Koreans were defeated in four separate encounters, and the fleet in which the Japanese had crossed the sea was almost totally destroyed. The flames of four hundred of the best war junks of Yeddo lit up the Northern Sea, and it is doubtful if any of the expedition returned to Japan to tell the tale of their defeat. In A.D. 674 the King of Sinlo, having shown great pusillanimity in assisting the Chinese, who came as his allies, was deposed, and his territory was incorporated with the Empire; and from this time for a period of nearly sixty years little is heard of Corea. It remained a Chinese possession, and its people, not forgetting the tradition of their freedom, set themselves to the task of recovering the material prosperity which had been lost during a century of desperate strife. The Chinese government had accomplished its purpose at immense sacrifice, and it may be doubted whether it derived any adequate advantage from its costly victory.

In Central Asia the Chinese authority was maintained at its full height. Souting Fang obtained several decisive victories over the Turks in Western Asia, and in the commotion caused by the campaigns of the Arabs in the countries of the Oxus and the Jaxartes, the Chinese Viceroys in Kashgar adopted an observant attitude towards the belligerents. They claimed to be the arbiters of the question, but peace did not result from their arbitration. The ruler of Persia demanded at this period their assistance against the fanatical warriors issuing from Arabia with the Koran in one hand and the scimitar in the other; but Kaotsong was

compelled to reply that Persia was too far distant for him to send an army to her aid. A Persian prince, the son of Isdegard, King of Persia, was for some time resident at Singan, and Kaotsong caused him to be proclaimed king on his father's death. He was driven out of his country by the Arabs, who sent an embassy to Kaotsong about the year A.D. 655. At this epoch it is also recorded that no fewer than three embassies arrived at different periods from the Kings of India. From these facts it is sufficiently clear that the Chinese had the good sense not to throw themselves in the path of the advancing tide of Mahomedanism, but by nursing their strength they were able to maintain their authority undisturbed over their own provinces.

In A.D. 683 Kaotsong's death, after a nominal reign of thirty-three years, produced a break in the progress of affairs, and threatened the position of the Empress Wou. She showed herself equal to the occasion, and asserted herself in the administration of the country more emphatically after her husband's death than she had before.

Chongtsong, the eldest son of Kaotsong, was proclaimed Emperor in accordance with his father's will, but he reigned only a few days. The Empress Wou availed herself of a decree passed in favour of the family of the new Emperor's wife to take steps for his deposition, and, having quickly executed her purpose, she again assumed the supreme power surrendered only with reluctance. Having gone so far, and having banished Chongtsong and his family, she determined to carry matters with a high hand. She put forward, indeed, another prince as nominal Emperor, and ruled in his name, but he was only a shadow. The Empress transacted all public business, received petitions, and disposed of the chief offices in the Empire. She erected temples to her ancestors, wore the robes of state restricted to an Emperor, and offered sacrifice to the great God of all. Though a woman among a people who despised womankind as much as any race on earth, she seized all the attributes of power and authority handed down to a Chinese Emperor from immemorial antiquity, and, if she is to be judged by her acts, it must be allowed her that she triumphed manfully over her

difficulties, and maintained the dignity of the throne in a manner becoming a great prince.

There were many who resented her arbitrary act in deposing Chongtsong. They could have forgiven her much tyranny within the chambers of the palace, and it would not have grieved them greatly had Chongtsong proved as pliable an instrument in her hands as Kaotsong had been. But that the Empress Wou should stand forth in the light of day as the actual ruler of China, and dispense in her own name the gifts of Imperial favour, was in contradiction of all precedent, and more than many could bear. She did not consider it necessary to dispel the growing opposition to her by any attempt at concealing the objects of her policy. Indeed, she went out of her way to invite hostility by changing the name of the dynasty, and by distributing the great offices of state among the members of her own family. Several risings took place, and plots were formed for her assassination; but one and all failed. Her measures were too prompt for her opponents, and no matter how eminent the services or great the rank of the individual, she ordered him to the block the moment he incurred her suspicion. Her spies were abroad in all directions, but their very numbers soon tended to defeat her object, as so many false accusations were brought before her. To provide against this evil, she passed an edict punishing with death those who brought false accusations, and it happened one day that out of a thousand charges, eight hundred and fifty were found to be false, when their promoters were executed. Her favourite plan of punishment for great nobles or ministers was death by execution in the streets of Singan, and the inhabitants came to regard these events with feelings very like those of our ancestors at the similar spectacles to be witnessed on Tower Hill and at Tyburn Gate.

The Empress Wou did not neglect other plans for advancing her objects and strengthening her hold upon the people's mind. She ruled the country with wisdom, and spared no effort to maintain the dignity of the nation. Her neighbours showed the same respect for her power as they had for that of her predecessors, and in all essentials

the most exacting of her countrymen cannot but admit that she fulfilled every condition that may be demanded from a sovereign. While thus seeking to show her solid claims to the lofty position she had seized, she did not neglect any means of bringing home to the heart of the nation a sense of the great services she had rendered by her wise government. She caused books to be written about her public work and freely circulated, while the ministers of religion were instructed to descant on her numerous virtues, and to point out how indispensable she was to the welfare of the state. By means such as these she maintained her supremacy for more than twenty years after the death of Kaotsong. The one act of weakness committed during her long career was her infatuation for a Buddhist priest, if indeed this is not the invention of her enemies, who have spared no effort to blacken her character. However great may have been the degree of affection she felt towards him, she certainly did not suffer his influence to assert itself in the government of the state.

In A.D. 692 she sanctioned a scheme sent for her approval by the Governor of Sichow, the modern Turfan, for the reconquest of the districts seized by the Tibetans some years before. The scheme was approved, and the territory retaken after a sharp but decisive campaign. Four years afterwards war broke out afresh, and the balance of success was in favour of the Tibetans at first; but before long the superior skill and numbers of the Chinese told, when the results of the previous campaign were maintained. Early in the eighth century the Tibetans were visited by troubles of their own; their king was killed during an expedition into India, and they found more important matters to occupy their minds than unnecessary and unprofitable disputes with the Chinese.

A new enemy had risen up on the northern frontier in the person of the Khitans, a Tartar people in the region immediately to the north of the province of Shensi, and as these threatened to become very formidable, the Empress found it politic to form an alliance with a Turk chief named Metcho, to whom she sent the patent of a Khan. A treaty

was concluded in A.D. 697, but Metcho proved false to his engagements. He turned against the Chinese the arms he had received for their defence, and ravaged the border districts. On the approach of the Chinese army he retreated, having first put to the sword ten thousand captives taken during his expedition. These frontier wars will serve to show the numerous difficult questions which were constantly attracting the attention, and requiring the consideration of the Chinese ruler.

In the meantime the Empress Wou was suffering from the inevitable malady of humanity. The weight of eighty winters told its tale upon even her vigorous mind and ardent spirit. In A.D. 704 she was confined to her chamber with a serious illness, and her ministers were not admitted to her presence during several months. Her enemies seized the opportunity for which they had been long waiting, and, having slain the principal of her relations, they presented themselves in a body at the palace. Resistance was hopeless, and with a dignity which shines out through the grudging admission of the chronicler of the times, the Empress Wou handed to them the Imperial seal and the other insignia of royalty. She died the next year after what may be called her fall, leaving the mark of her influence clearly imprinted on the history of the period, and standing forth prominently in the eyes of posterity as the woman who ruled the Chinese with a strong hand during more than forty years.

The banished Emperor Chongtsong, who had been living in retirement for twenty years, was brought back and placed upon the throne. But the change of authority entailed no benefit for the people. Chongtsong gave himself up to his own pleasure, and left his wife as much of the task of government as he could. This negligence caused great discontent among those who had risked so much in opposing the Empress Wou with the intention of restoring the Tangs to their just authority. The new Empress and her favourite Sansu, the governor of the palace, ordered things as they chose, until at length the great officials, disgusted with the tyranny under which they suffered, resolved to rid the country of an Emperor and his minions who entertained so poor an

idea of the responsibilities of their station. While this plot was taking form the Empress herself was intriguing for the elevation of her son, and finding that Chongtsong was an impediment in her path, she sent him a poisoned loaf of a kind to which he was very partial. The death of the Emperor precipitated the crisis. The great nobles rose under Chongtsong's brother Prince Litan, and the Empress and her minions were put to death without distinction of sex or person. Litan was placed on the throne, and the people rejoiced in the final triumph of the Tangs over this second attempt to transfer the supreme power to a different family. These events marked the year A.D. 710.

Litan took the name of Jouï Song, but as he only reigned two years, his career calls for no detailed notice. The principal event of his life was the selection of a successor. His eldest son Lichingki was held to have incontestably the prior claim, but his next brother Lilongki had proved himself to be a good soldier and a capable general. Jouï Song's perplexity was removed by the voluntary abdication of his claims by Lichingki, who said that "in time of peace" the eldest should be allowed to enjoy his rights, but in "a season of great danger" the Empire should fall to the share of the one who was admittedly the abler of the two; so Lilongki was proclaimed heir-apparent, and on his father's abdication in A.D. 712 he became the Emperor Mingti or Hiuent song.

Mingti began his reign with the best intentions, and a full resolve to hand down his name to history as a second Tait-song. In fact, during his first years of power, he set himself to copy all the acts of that great prince, and never tired of quoting the maxims contained in the Golden Mirror. The reduction which he made in the expenses of the court, and the sumptuary laws which he passed and was the foremost in obeying, were both welcome to a people on whom the hands of the farmers of taxes had recently been heavily laid. He also endeavoured to improve the condition of his army, and by a series of reviews, which combined the character of an inspection with that of a meeting for military games, he encouraged that section of his subjects which contributed most to the maintenance of the Empire. Nor did he neglect the interests

of science. During his reign the study of astronomy, and the observation of natural phenomena, in the earliest ages peculiar to China and Egypt of all countries, were placed on a new and improved basis; while in recognition of his place in literature, quite as much as in his honour as a great religious teacher, Confucius was proclaimed a prince, and also awarded the title, which he would have prized more than the secular dignity, of King of Literature.

Notwithstanding these noble intentions, and the earnest which he gave during his first years of fulfilling them, the long reign of Mingti can only be considered a striking instance of how often acts falsify intentions and protestations. Mingti should have proved a second Taitson; he was, in fact, nothing more than an illustrious failure. He aspired to re-establish the authority of his family on a sound basis, and some have credited him with success. But the writing of history is, in his case, far too clear to support such a view, for the plain truth is that he brought both the Chinese Empire and the Tang dynasty to the verge of ruin. He appears to have been one of those men who raise their own difficulties, and who, when a simple and straightforward solution of a question presents itself, prefer to turn aside to follow a tortuous way of attaining their ends. It will also be seen that he failed to utilize his great power, and his adjustment of ways and means was neither skilful nor happy in its results.

Very early in his reign his attention was attracted to his relations with his neighbours. Both the Turk tribes and the people of Tibet were the cause of annoyance and danger to his subjects. Neither the one nor the other were inclined to forego their immemorial rights of encroaching on the settled districts, and of plundering the wealthy towns within the Chinese frontier whenever the supreme government seemed unable to act vigorously against them. Despite all Mingti's parade, there was not much apprehension at his power among his neighbours. The charm of the good fortune and invincibility of the Tangs was being dispelled, and the course of events threatened to break it altogether.

In the year A.D. 710 another Chinese princess, by name

Chincheng, had been sent to Tibet as wife to the Sanpou of that time ; but it had not brought the good understanding which might have been expected. The Tibetans saw in the weakness of the Chinese garrisons, and the apathy of their commanders a great opportunity, and it is not in human nature to suppose that the highest object of any race, whether it be mere greed of spoil or the promptings of a nobler ambition, can be suppressed by the flimsy considerations produced by a matrimonial alliance. Shortly after the marriage of this princess, the Tibetans obtained the surrender of a large and important district contiguous to the upper waters of the Hoangho, thus touching the Tang dominions on the north as well as on the east. Instead of availing themselves of this new possession for purposes of trade, and for prosecuting friendly relations with the Empire, they made it the base for attacking the Chinese villages and towns in the neighbourhood. Encouraged by success, they ventured to carry out an incursion on a large scale into Chinese territory, and inflicted an immense loss on the unoffending inhabitants of several districts. A Chinese army was promptly raised, succeeded in recovering a great portion of the booty, and drove the Tibetans into their own territory. This was but the beginning of a strife which continued as long as Mingti occupied the throne. The campaign in A.D. 727 was of exceptional bitterness, and varying fortune. The successes obtained in the field by the generals of Mingti were more than compensated for by the quicker movements of the Tibetans, who captured several towns, and generally deprived the Chinese of the reward of victory.

Risings on the part of the Turk tribes, and the pronounced hostility of the Khitan king in the north, further aggravated the situation, and prevented the Chinese devoting all their attention to the chastisement of the Tibetans, as they would have desired. The most fortunate of Mingti's generals was slain in a petty skirmish with a robber clan, and the successors appointed to his place proved deficient in all the qualities required for the situation. But up to the year A.D. 730 the Chinese more than held their own despite the disadvantage of having to attend to other matters, and the treaty concluded

in that year bound the Tibetans not to encroach beyond specified points. A proclamation was sent out on both sides to the effect that "the two nations are at peace, and there must be no plundering or oppression."

Confined on the east, the Tibetans turned towards the west to find a vent for their restless energy. The state of Poulin, or Little Tibet, seemed to offer itself an easy prey to their attack. The King of Poulin appealed to China for assistance, and Mingti forbade the Tibetans to attack him. But this interference was more than they could be expected to brook. Without paying any heed to the summons, the Sanpou invaded Poulin, deposed its king, and annexed the state to his dominions. Mingti was very indignant at the indifference shown to his request, and he was easily persuaded that the opportunity of attacking Tibet, when its garrisons on the eastern frontier had been weakened for the war against Poulin, was too favourable to be neglected. He, therefore, sent a large army to the borders of Szchuen and Shensi, and the Tibetans, surprised and outnumbered, were worsted in several encounters. For a few months Mingti indulged the hope that he had attained his object, but by that time the Tibetans had moved up fresh troops from the western districts, and were in readiness to resume the war. The Chinese commander was defeated with great loss in a pitched battle, when the advantage of a fortified position did not avail to turn the scale against the indignant impetuosity of the Tibetans. So far Mingti, therefore, reaped no solid advantage from his perfidy in breaking the treaty of A.D. 730. The death of the Princess Chincheng intensified the bitterness of the struggle, and Mingti abruptly refused to conclude a fresh peace when an envoy was sent to his court. In A.D. 749 the war reached its climax in the siege of Chepouching, which surrendered to the Chinese after a desperate defence of several weeks. It is admitted that the capture of this place cost the lives of more than thirty thousand men.

Against the Turks, the Khitans, and also in Yunnan, the Chinese arms were still more unfortunate. In A.D. 751 a Chinese army of thirty thousand men was destroyed to a man in the desert of Gobi, and throughout the whole of the reign

the Khitans and other Tartars on the northern frontier carried on a desultory warfare. In Yunnan, the neighbouring state of Nanchao had so long been the victim of the attacks of Chinese subjects that its king resolved to appeal to arms. Success attended his efforts, and the year A.D. 751 was marked by further disasters in this quarter. The local forces were defeated, and thirty-three towns, including Yunnanfoo, surrendered to the invader. Three years later another Chinese army met with a defeat, scarcely less serious, in this same quarter, and it is stated that the losses of the army during this reign alone were nearly two hundred thousand men.

These reverses in the field proved the precursors of domestic troubles. They were a distinct incentive to the ambitious spirits in the country to fight for their own hand. Prominent among these was a soldier named Ganlochan, a man of Khitan race, but one who had distinguished himself in wars against his own people. Being trusted with the government of a province, he at once set himself the task of making himself independent therein; and when Mingti strove to induce him to visit the capital, he received the mandate of his sovereign with indifference and contempt. It was shortly after this that he felt strong enough to throw the mask aside altogether, and to appear as a rebel at the head of an armed force. The people, "unaccustomed by the long peace to the use of arms," surrendered without resistance, and Ganlochan found that his enterprise was succeeding beyond the limit of his hopes. In A.D. 755 he had subdued the greater portion of the northern provinces, and Loyang, a former capital of the Empire, had surrendered to his arms. When the news of the subjection of all the country north of the Hoangho reached Mingti, he exclaimed, "Is it possible?" thus reminding us of another historical character who could only express surprise at the rapid progress of events.

Ganlochan, emboldened by success, was far from resting satisfied with triumphs north of the Hoangho. The very facility with which he had prospered up to this point was one of the strongest inducements to prosecute his undertaking to what might be considered its logical and legitimate conclusion. Ganlochan suffered one severe defeat in the following year;

but it could not arrest his career. He proceeded in person to the place of danger, and, having restored the balance of victory in his favour by the capture of the strong fortress Tunkwan, marched on the capital, which Mingti abandoned to its fate. Singan opened its gates to this would-be arbiter of the country's destiny, and suffered for some weeks from the exactions of a mercenary army, collected at the bidding of an adventurer who was far from being sure even of the objects he had in his own mind. Mingti, during his flight into Szchuen, abdicated the throne in favour of his son, who took the name of Soutsong. Mingti had reigned during a greater number of years than any other member of his House, but history has preserved the remembrance of no more solid achievement than that of the founding of the Hanlin College, which exists at the present day. Fond of flattery, and strongly imbued with a sense of his own ineffable wisdom, Mingti appears to have been a great ruler in the sense that our James I. was a wise prince. Whereas the penalty of James's conceit and obstinacy was paid by his son, Mingti lived long enough to suffer from similar defects in his own person. With that exception their characters seem to have been an exact counterpart.

Soutsong appears to have been a brave prince, and set himself resolutely to the task of restoring the authority of his family. While his father fled for safety to the province of Szchuen, he placed himself at the head of such troops as he could collect, and prepared to dispute his inheritance with the victorious Ganlochan. The rebels were detained several months in front of the town of Yongkiu by the valour of its commandant, and time was thus afforded Soutsong to gather round him all those who wished to uphold the authority of the Tangs. A general named Kwo Tsey stood forward conspicuously at this period as the champion of the reigning House, and very soon Soutsong found himself at the head of an army of fifty thousand men. It is said that auxiliaries came from far distant Bokhara and the fertile valleys of Ferghana to swell the ranks of the Imperial forces. In face of the gathering strength of the Imperialists, Ganlochan thought it prudent to abandon Singan, and to withdraw into

Honan, north of the Hoangho. He plundered the capital, and embellished his city of Loyang with its spoil. The exactions which he sanctioned disgusted the people, and his authority was based on the sword alone. Still it was sufficiently formidable in his own ability, and that of his generals; and China was practically divided at this period into two states hostile to each other. The rulers and states dependent upon China seized the opportunity to recover their independence; and it would have gone much harder with the Chinese at this crisis had not the attention of the Turk and Tartar tribes been called off by the successes of the Arabs in Western Asia.

In A.D. 757, Ganlochan's best lieutenant, Sseseming, laid siege to the fortress of Taiyuen, in Shansi, defended by a small but select garrison under the command of Likwangpi, Kwo Tsey's not unworthy comrade in arms. This siege is among the most celebrated in Chinese annals. Taiyuen is described as being then a place of some strength, surrounded with a wall of considerable thickness, and a good ditch. Likwangpi spared no exertion to improve its defences, and we are led to believe that he constructed another rampart inside the town wall. The most remarkable preparation he made was, however, to construct cannons, or catapults, capable of throwing a twelve-pound stone shot three hundred paces. When Sseseming appeared before the walls, therefore, he was well received; and during the thirty days that he remained in face of them, he failed to make any impression on the place. Likwangpi assumed a vigorous offensive as soon as he found the attack beginning to flag, and by means of his novel engines of war, as well as by constructing mines under the besiegers' positions, he inflicted tremendous losses on the assailants. Sseseming was obliged to beat a hasty retreat, leaving in his trenches sixty thousand men out of an army of one hundred thousand. This decisive success gave greater stability to Soutsong's authority, and restored the courage of all those who were the supporters of the Tangs.

Soutsong then felt strong enough to march on Singan, and he entrusted the command of his army to Kwo Tsey. A desperate battle was fought outside Singan, in which the

rebel forces were signally defeated, and the capital again fell into the possession of the Emperor. His victory on this occasion is attributed to the valour and steadiness of the Turk auxiliaries, who bore the brunt of the engagement. Meanwhile Ganlochan had been murdered at the command of his own son, who was in turn assassinated at a later period by Sseseming. These dissensions had greatly detracted from the strength of the rebellious faction; and a second victory, obtained by the skill of Kwo Tsey, and the valour of the foreign mercenaries, resulted in the surrender of Loyang, which was given over to the soldiers to pillage. In gratitude for the timely help he had afforded, Soutsong gave Chehou, the principal of their leaders, twenty thousand pieces of silk, and promised him a like quantity every year. Much of the fruit of these successes was lost by the impolicy of certain of Soutsong's acts; and Sseseming headed a fresh rising in the last years of his reign. Sseseming was successful in wresting Loyang and a considerable extent of country from the Emperor; but his assassination by his son cut short a career which promised to be both remarkable and successful. Soutsong's death occurred at this moment to give a fresh complexion to the struggle. He died in the early part of A.D. 762, a few months after the death of his father, the preceding Emperor Mingti.

Soutsong's son followed him as the Emperor Taitson the Second, and the first acts of his reign afforded promise of a brighter era. His first measure was to remove a too-powerful minister, and his next to take all the steps required for the suppression of the insurgents, who still remained defiant under Sse-chao-y, the son and murderer of Sseseming. In fact, that chief was extending the limits of his authority when Taitson turned his attention to the subject, and Likwangpi, the Imperial general, could barely hold his own against the rebels. In these straits Taitson made overtures to the Tartar and Turk tribes, who sent a large force to co-operate with his army against the rebel Sse-chao-y. Victory crowned the efforts of the allied forces, and the death of the rebel leader seemed to afford a prospect of peace and tranquillity. The country suffered greatly at the

hands of the foreign mercenaries, who, during their return march, burnt and pillaged in all directions. Nor did the Empire long enjoy the peace which these victories in the internal war seemed to promise. Its neighbours had not been indifferent witnesses of the discord prevailing in the state. The extremities to which the Emperor was reduced afforded them an opportunity for indulging their propensity to rapine, which none of them were slow to seize.

Foremost among them, both by reason of their military strength, and also for the warlike characteristics of the people, were the Tibetans, who, having originally entered into relations with China on the terms of friends, had now become her most inveterate foes. Early in A.D. 763 they began to threaten the border districts and fortresses of the Empire, and, meeting with success above their expectations, they followed up their attack by sending the bulk of their army into China. Having captured the principal fortresses in the west of Shensi, they resolved to march on Singan, which lay exposed to their attack. A panic seized the population, and Taitsong himself became infected with it, and the Court set the bad example to the people of being the first to seek safety in flight. The Tibetans entered the capital without resistance, and remained there fifteen days. Having collected their plunder, they slowly retreated towards their homes.

In this crisis, Kwo Tsey came prominently forward, and with the small force at his disposal manœuvred with such skill that the Tibetans were fain to beat a more hurried retreat. They retained several of the strong places they had captured, and it was not until A.D. 765 that, on the renewal of the war, they were expelled from them with heavy loss by Jihchin, one of Taitsong's lieutenants. Their defeat culminated in the attack made upon them by their allies, the Huiho, who were won over by Kwo Tsey. An attempt was made in A.D. 766 to close the struggle by a treaty of peace, but it proved abortive. The war lingered on, and each year witnessed fresh incursions on the part of the Tibetans. Seven years later they were, however, vanquished in a decisive battle by Kwo Tsey. If the details of these border wars

have left no deep impression upon the record of the age, their consequence is at least written clearly in the plain statement of the census held during this reign. Whereas under Mingti the population had exceeded fifty-two millions, under Taitson, in A.D. 764, it did not reach seventeen millions; and the national prosperity had declined in like proportion. In A.D. 779 Taitson died after a troubled reign of seventeen years, leaving to his son Tetsong the task of completing the pacification of a realm which it did not seem feasible to long hold together.

The first three years of Tetsong's reign were marked by the return of peace and prosperity to the realm, because Taitson had practically left the government in the hands of the aged Kwo Tsey, whose spirit and energy had not been weakened by the weight of years. Under his advice Tetsong administered a grave rebuke to those who were always endeavouring either to cast the horoscope of the Empire, or to flatter the idiosyncrasies of the prince by reporting, or more often inventing out of their own imagination, such abnormal circumstances as might appear susceptible of a hidden interpretation. Against these superstitions, and those who prospered by their propagation, the following proclamation, framed by Kwo Tsey, delivered a shrewd blow. "Peace and the general contentment of the people," so ran this edict, "the abundance of the harvest, skill and wisdom shown in the administration, these are prognostics which I hear of with pleasure; but 'extraordinary clouds,' 'rare animals,' 'plants before unknown,' 'monsters,' and other astonishing productions of nature, what good can any of these do men? I forbid such things to be brought to my notice in the future." This protest against prevailing superstition came opportunely at a time when, because the year happened to be that dedicated to the horse, it was forbidden to travel on that useful animal along the public roads. Well might Tetsong exclaim, "Is it possible that any one can make the lives of men depend on such dreams as these?" The return of prosperity was shown by the census taken in A.D. 780, when the population was found to have risen to nineteen millions. The revenue was placed at thirty-one millions of

taels in money,* and twenty millions of a measure of grain, computed at one hundred pounds in weight.

With the death of Kwo Tsey in A.D. 781, Tetsong lost the mainstay of his Empire. It was said of him that he had risen to the lofty and onerous position of commander-in-chief after passing through no fewer than twenty-four different grades, in each and all of which he distinguished himself by his capacity. But for his great military qualities, and the sterling integrity which he showed in its service, the Tang dynasty would, beyond doubt, have gone the way of its predecessors. There were those who advised Kwo Tsey to cast his allegiance to the winds and to place himself upon the throne, but his steadfast reply was that he was "a general of the Tangs." He remained constant in his trust until his death at the patriarchal age of eighty-five, setting to all an example of virtue and devotion to the public service that in that day found few imitators, and leaving behind him among his own people the same reputation that Belisarius left among the Romans of the later Empire. Kwo Tsey was the more fortunate in that he died as he lived, the object of his sovereign's gratitude and esteem.

The death of Kwo Tsey was the signal for the outbreak of disturbances within the realm. The previous Emperor had promised, at a time when he was hard pressed, some of the great governors that he would renew the ancient practice of making their dignities hereditary, a practice which had led to the origin of the great feudatories and the accumulation of power in their hands, a state of things which had repeatedly broken up the Empire during the earlier dynasties. As it happened, no case of any importance had arisen during the second Taitsong's life to show whether he meant to carry out his promises or not. The penalty of the weak act was reserved for his son and successor. Tetsong refused to ratify this arrangement, and when a case arose for his sanction he declined to make any concession, and nominated another official to the vacant post. The governors, greatly disappointed in the hopes they had entertained, leagued together, and determined to seize by force the supreme power

* About ten millions of our present money.

to which they aspired. Their successes at first surpassed their utmost hopes. The forces of the government were driven from the field, the Emperor had to abandon the capital, and seventy princes of the Tang family were executed to show with what object these subjects had appeared in arms. Chutse, the principal of the insurgent chiefs, took all the steps he considered necessary to place himself on the throne, and assumed all the pomp of royalty. But while he was engaged in the pleasant occupation of regulating the affairs of his own palace, the people were rallying to the side of Tetsong. A proclamation, containing at once a confession of faults and a promise of better government in the future, had been issued in his name, and all those who had taken up arms against their sovereign were promised pardon and forgiveness. It was not without a touch of dignity that Tetsong excluded from the royal clemency Chutse, the principal of all his foes, as the man who had murdered so many of his family, and who had desecrated the temples of his ancestors.

The effect of this proclamation was so great that Chutse found himself deserted by the bulk of his supporters, and although he showed valour in the field, he was compelled to seek safety by flight in the direction of Tibet. On the approach of a body of cavalry sent in pursuit, his officers slew him, and sent his head as a peace-offering to the Emperor. Tetsong evinced fresh wisdom in again issuing a general amnesty, and the rebels returned to their homes. Several victories obtained over the Tibetans in A.D. 791-2 added to the returning sense of security, and ten years later this success was repeated against the same foe.

A great many civil wars, and frequent disasters received at the hands of foreign foes, had marked the history of the Tangs for a long period. The benefits originally conferred by its earlier princes were beginning to be lost sight of, and the later rulers seemed to have forgotten the greatness of the mission with which they were entrusted. There could not be much doubt that the continuance of this state of things would be followed by the collapse of the dynasty. Well might the contemporaries of Tetsong declare that the glory of the Tangs

had departed, and that it was only a question of a few years when the unworthy descendants of the great Taitson should take their departure from the scene of history. Already had the eunuchs appeared in the palace, influencing the hand which guided the bark of state, and flooding the public service with their nominees ; and with their advent to power the days of the existing administration were numbered. Corruption in the service, distrust and rivalry in the cabinet and at the council board, were not less fatal to the well-being of the state than the timidity in action and irresolution in thought which characterized the acts of these beings, who possessed all the greed of power and of wealth without the capacity of turning them to their legitimate and honourable uses. In the year A.D. 800 Tetsong proclaimed that there were no longer any openly declared rebels, and that the country was pacified ; but the canker was eating at the core, for the eunuchs made all state appointments, even to the generals in the field and the governors in the provinces.

Tetsong died in the year A.D. 805, and his son Chuntsong succeeded him. Of this young prince the most favourable prognostications were made, but his ill-health and an incurable disease rendered his tenure of the throne of the shortest duration. He abdicated the same year as that of his accession to power.

CHAPTER XV.

THE DECLINE OF THE TANGS.

IT must not be supposed that, because the decline of the Tangs is dated from the accession of Hientsong, the son and successor of Chuntsong, he was in any degree worse than the princes who had immediately preceded him. The fact is that when he came to the throne the shortcomings of the race were commencing to bear fruit in a general complication of difficulties, and the public mind was beginning to grasp the notion that it might be necessary to replace the Tangs with another line of rulers. The reign of Hientsong offers, therefore, an appropriate starting-point in the description of the rapid decline and fall of the great family which had united China and restored its ancient splendour.

The state of the administration had been reduced to such a low pass by the irregularities of the eunuchs that the new Emperor found himself compelled to adopt a more circumspect line of conduct than was either politic or in accordance with his own wishes. The one element of strength in his government consisted in the attention which his chief general Weikiao paid to the interests of the army. The pay and the pensions to the widows and children of those who had fallen in the service of the country were always forthcoming, no matter to what straits the exchequer might be reduced ; and this prudent conduct ensured a stability to the Emperor's authority far in excess of its actual hold on either the affection or the respect of the people. The very first year of his reign witnessed an opportunity for showing how invaluable still was the possession of the strongest military force in the

country. Lieoupi, a refractory governor in the province of Szchuen, had exceeded the limits of the license necessarily accorded to the viceroys during a period when the Emperor felt very uncertain about the security of his own position. At first Hientsong had striven to keep him within the bounds of good humour by overlooking certain acts in his conduct which he might fairly have condemned, but the condescension of the Emperor only increased the arrogance of the rebellious subject. An army was then sent into Szchuen, and Lieoupi's ambition was summarily cut short. The wisdom of the general sent against him produced a great impression in that province, which again became firmly attached to the Empire.

Several insurrections on a small scale occurred to attract the attention and excite the anxiety of the government; but none of these, with the exception of that of Lissetao, were of sufficient importance to call for comment. This chief set up the standard of revolt in Shantung, where he maintained the semblance of independent authority for some time. Against him in due time an army was sent, and such was its reputation that Lissetao's followers refused to oppose it. Lissetao was taken from his palace to the public square, where he and his two sons were executed as rebels. Successful over the domestic enemy, the Imperialists were not less fortunate against the foreign foes they had to encounter in the Tibetans. The successful defence of the city of Yenchow against a numerous host of those persistent enemies of the Chinese is celebrated in the annals of the period, and their withdrawal, after a relieving force had made a demonstration on their line of retreat, crowned the results of the campaign.

Hientsong may be considered to have been a well-meaning prince of moderate abilities. His partiality for Buddhism was his predominant fault, and in the eunuchs he was too much disposed to see an injured caste. These latter obtained a strong hold over his conduct, and although often warned against these insidious advisers he never profited by the remonstrances frequently addressed to him. On several occasions he even interfered to protect them. Hientsong was also addicted to the superstitious practices then in vogue, and believed in the possibility of extending life to an

exceptional degree by drinking the elixirs prepared by the quack doctors of the age. On one occasion he suffered from having taken an overdose of the "wine of immortality," and in his exasperation he ordered many of the eunuchs to be executed. He spared a sufficient number, however, to leave avengers for their slaughtered comrades, and, persisting in his potations of the elixir, he found the only immortality in the poison which had been introduced into his draught by the eunuch Chin Hongtsi. This event took place in A.D. 820, when Hientsong had occupied the throne during fifteen years.

His son Moutsong succeeded him, but his indifference to the duties of his post was not concealed from the first day of his assumption of power. The neglect which he showed in taking steps for the detection and punishment of his father's murderers augured ill for the character of his reign; and his heedless manner, when remonstrated with, created a still more unfavourable impression. The etiquette of the court ordained that, for a deceased ruler, there should be mourning during three years, a regulation which was no doubt only religiously carried out in the case of some prince who had peculiarly distinguished himself. But within a few weeks of his father's murder Moutsong gave a fête on a large scale—an outrage on the ordinary decencies of life. His subjects could without difficulty infer from this conduct the character of their new ruler, and his later acts did not cause them to change their original opinion.

The only event of any importance of the reign was the conclusion of a "sworn peace" with Tibet in the year A.D. 821. The Sanpou of that day sent a special envoy to Singan to propose that by each country "weapons shall be put by." A treaty of peace was concluded on this basis, and proclaimed with every formality, and although small incursions continued to take place, now on one side, now on the other, for some years afterwards, the long struggle between the Tibetans and the Chinese then virtually reached its close. There was a feeling of respect on both sides; and when the intercourse was resumed at a later period, the government of Tibet remembered only the ties which bound it to China, and not the long and sanguinary wars of these two centuries.

In itself this was an event of sufficient importance to redeem Moutsong's memory from complete forgetfulness.

Moutsong was another believer in the virtues of the elixir of immortality, and in A.D. 824 he also paid the penalty of his credulity with his life.

His son Kingtsong, the next Emperor, was the exact counterpart of his father. Equally indifferent and good tempered, he followed his own inclinations, and treated all the remonstrances of his ministers with the lenience of one too well satisfied with himself to be angry. His ministers thought to bring him back to a sense of duty by presenting him with a very handsome screen of six wings, on each of which moral precepts peculiarly applicable to himself were inscribed. He is reported to have examined the gift with great care, to have read the sentences with attention, and to have observed that it was a very pretty ornament. He neither profited by the advice nor expressed any indignation at its being given. He was supremely indifferent to everything. His occupation of the throne was of only two years' duration, and when he absented himself from his council he lost the support of the thoughtful among his ministers. He also incurred the hostility of the eunuchs, who murdered him after a debauch. These attempted to set up a ruler of their own choice, but they failed in their attempt. They had to accept Kingtsong's brother, Prince Lihan, who was proclaimed his successor, and began his reign in A.D. 826 under the style of Wentsong.

Wentsong proved himself to be a man of considerable force of character. He owed his elevation to the support of the eunuchs, but he regarded them personally with ill-concealed aversion. It became the object of his life to shake off the authority which they claimed over him, and to drive them from the powerful position which they had quietly appropriated. He carried out several beneficent reforms, and his attention to public business was praiseworthy; but his whole energy was devoted to the struggle with the eunuchs. Not safe in the precincts of his own palace, he had to dissimulate his aversion to them, and his ministers were unfortunately destitute of the resolution required to grapple

with and dispel, once and for all, the danger to the welfare of the state. The officials in the country were more zealous than those in the town, and had less hesitation in naming the national enemies; but then they were remote from the scene, and were spectators rather than actors in the crisis. In A.D. 829 an edict was passed compelling the eunuchs to confine themselves to the palace and its surroundings; but this they viewed with indifference, as it was restricting them to the sphere of their ordinary duties.

Six years after the passing of this regulation, Wentsong entered into a plot with several of the principal of his ministers to get rid of the eunuchs. There were many who wished to have the credit of performing this patriotic work, and there were others glad to do the bidding of their prince. The secret was well kept, and up to the last the eunuchs had no idea of the impending danger. At the critical moment, however, the leaders lost their nerve, and the eunuchs, hastily collecting their followers, made good their position against their assailants. They had lost ten or twelve of their number, but it was now their turn to strike, and their blow went home. Sixteen hundred mandarins and one thousand of their supporters among the people fell in one day before the vengeance of these infuriated persons. Not content with slaughtering their opponents, they executed their relations in order to appease their revengeful instincts. Discouraged by the failure of this scheme, and unable to renew the attempt, Wentsong became a mere puppet in their hands. His later years were rendered miserable by the remembrance of this overthrow, and it was a happy release when, broken down in health, his life closed in A.D. 840, after a reign of fourteen years. He had measured himself against the power of the eunuchs, and he had been ignominiously beaten. After so severe a defeat, morally and physically, he had no alternative but to die.

Wentsong wished that one of his sons should succeed him, and, perhaps for no other reason than that he wished it, the eunuchs would accept neither. They chose Wentsong's brother, who took the name of Voutsong. Voutsong showed no scruple in forcing his way into power, like another

Richard, by the murder of his nephews; but having made good his position, he evinced qualities that went far towards redeeming his character in the eyes of his people. He protected the frontiers in a manner that had not been seen for some generations, and he granted a tribe from Western Asia sanctuary within his dominions. In the province of Shensi his lieutenants gained several successes over a turbulent tribe named Tanghiang; and Voutsong must be allowed to have been, on the whole, an able and vigorous ruler. He was a great huntsman, and much given to military exercises. The measures he sanctioned against the Buddhist priests are commendable, not because they were directed against the representatives of a strange religion, but because they aimed a blow at the drones of society. A bonze was an able-bodied man living a life of idleness, and often one also of immorality, on the credulity of his fellow-men, and it required neither peculiar merit in the creed nor any specially persuasive power in the arguments of its ministers to induce thousands of individuals to seek the retirement and the temporal enjoyments of a Buddhist monastery. It was but the inevitable consequence of this abuse that the government should pass edicts against it, and Voutsong, in A.D. 845, ordered the bonzes and the female devotees to quit their religious houses and return to their families.

Voutsong died the year following this remarkable event, leaving behind him the deserved regret that his reign had been of too brief duration.

Again did the eunuchs figure in the character of king-makers. It was their nominee, Suentsong, a grandson of Hientsong, that was proclaimed Emperor, and they selected him because he had always had the reputation of being half-witted. No sooner was he proclaimed than a remarkable change was observed in his character. Far from being a mere tool in the hands of the eunuchs, he showed a hostile disposition towards them, and on this point shared the opinions of his predecessor. His schemes for their punishment fell through, and he, like several of his predecessors, passed his last days in constant apprehension for his personal safety within the walls of his palace. During his reign, the

Kiei Kiasse, the tribe from Central Asia to which he had given shelter, did good service against the Hiuho, and the internal affairs of Tibet were in so distracted a state that the frontiers of Shensi and Szchuen remained undisturbed. The writers of the time record that Suentsong possessed that royal gift, a good memory for faces, which once seen were never forgotten. He also was unfortunately disposed to believe in the possibility of prolonging man's allotted term, and, in A.D. 859, his life was given as another sacrifice on the part of Chinese Emperors to this self-deluding superstition.

To the pride, extravagance, and superstition of the next Emperor, Ytsong, Suentsong's son, must in a great degree be attributed the confusion which fell more heavily upon the realm. In the first year of his reign a rising, headed by a discontented official, broke out in Chekiang. The local garrisons were defeated, and it required a great effort and the despatch of a large army from the capital to repress the insurrection. The rebel was taken prisoner and executed, but even this fate failed to deter others from copying his example. There was a restless spirit abroad that would not be allayed.

Ytsong's success was due as much to the insignificance of his opponent as to the efficacy of his measures. When required to face a more formidable antagonist in the Prince of Nanchao or Yunnan, the result was not in his favour. In A.D. 861 this potentate, who was not only a Chinese vassal, but one at whose court a Chinese officer resided as agent for the Emperor, conceived that a slight had been offered him, and, indignant at the tardy reparation, took up arms and cast off his allegiance. He succeeded beyond the summit of his expectations, plundered Tonquin and most of the surrounding districts, and set up an independent government in Yunnan. Several armies were sent against him, but they were one and all driven back without accomplishing their mission. The barbarians of Yunnan, as they were called, declared themselves free, and the Chinese government, after several abortive attempts to reassert its authority, was too weak to enter upon a protracted struggle with the rebels. At one time it looked as if the Prince of Yunnan would have

succeeded in adding Tonquin to his own state; and such might have proved the case but for the victories won in A.D. 866 by Ytsong's lieutenant, Kaopien, one of the most skilful generals of the age. The severance of Yunnan from the rest of the Empire was, however, complete and not to be disputed.

Ytsong was a fervent believer in Buddhism, in support of which he wrote treatises, and he granted large subsidies to the priests of that religion. In A.D. 872 he sent emissaries to India to obtain a bone of Buddha's body, and when remonstrated with he said he should die happy when he had procured his wish. On the return of the embassy with the object of its quest, he received it, surrounded by his court, on his knees. A general pardon and a week's festivities testified to the sincerity of the Emperor's feelings. Unfortunately they were feelings that should have been repressed, not indulged. Only a few weeks after this event, when he had held the sceptre for fourteen years, Ytsong died suddenly. His extravagance had greatly contributed to the aggravation of the evils from which the people had so long been suffering. His son, a boy of twelve years, succeeded him, taking the name of Hitsong.

It was particularly unfortunate that, at a time when the need both of the country and of the dynasty was the sorest, the governing power should rest in the hands of a boy. Hitsong gave himself up to the amusements of youth, and paid slight heed to the landscape darkening on every hand. His reign of fifteen years proved a succession of revolts, intrigues, and their usual termination in wholesale massacres and executions, over which, in a distracted country, there presided the mockery of a justice which was no longer pure or impartial.

Among the principal revolts was that in the southern portion of the country, headed by Hwang Chao, who won over a party by "his liberalities," and speedily made himself formidable to the Emperor by the capture of the important city of Canton. This success was followed by others. The principal cities of Houkwang and Kiangsi surrendered to him, and Loyan and Singan—the two court residences—

shared the same fate. The Emperor was compelled to seek safety in flight, and all the members of the Imperial family who were captured were executed. Having met with rapid success, Hwang Chao's fortunes as rapidly declined.

In this desperate situation, Hitsong found an unexpected friend and champion in Likeyong, the chief of a Turk tribe. Two years after Hwang Chao had established himself at Singan, and proclaimed a new dynasty, Likeyong, assembling a small but chosen army of his own Chato people, marched to the deliverance of his master. Forty thousand men followed his banner, all dressed in a black uniform, and these troops became known to the rebels as "the black crows." It became a common expression, "Unhappy are those who happen to fall under their talons." With these troops he defeated Hwang Chao, and wrested from him his recent conquests. The rebel fled into Honan, but Likeyong pressed him hard. In A.D. 884 he completely defeated him, and the success of the campaign was finally crowned by the death of Hwang Chao, who was murdered by one of his own followers. Hitsong was restored to his throne to enjoy four more years of nominal authority, but dissensions and strife remained around him on all sides. Likeyong himself had to take up the sword on one occasion against those who pretended to speak in the Emperor's name; but he appears to have been the only man actuated by unselfish motives. Even when in arms he deprecated the insinuation that he was opposing the legitimate authority of his sovereign. In the midst of these scenes of confusion, Hitsong's death occurred (A.D. 888).

The picture drawn of China at this period is a very distressing one. The country desolate, the towns ruined, the capital reduced to ashes. Not a province that had not been visited by the horrors of a civil war, not a fortified place which had not undergone a siege, and which might be esteemed fortunate if it had escaped a sack. With confusion in the administration, and the absence of all public spirit, it was not surprising that each governor should strive to make himself independent, and to fight for his own hand. There was little in such a spectacle as this to awaken joy in the heart of the heir of the Tangs.

Chaotsong, brother of Hitsong, succeeded as the nineteenth Emperor of his family, and he was not wanting in good parts. Indeed, if he had appeared earlier in the struggle, there is no saying but that his energy and courage might have restored the fortune of his House. He had, however, come too late, when no human power could have availed to have turned the bark of state from the course on which it was steadily bent. His accession marked the beginning of the end, and, as Likeyong truly said, "the ruin of the Tangs was not far distant." In view of the widespread disorganization of society, even the crimes of the eunuchs had ceased to attract the old attention. When the nation was split up into numerous hostile camps, it became a point of secondary importance whether an impotent Emperor permitted his proclamations to be dictated by his duly appointed ministers or by a cabal of intriguers within the walls of his palace. It mattered little one way or the other, for the whole proceeding was a farce, destitute of practical importance.

In A.D. 890 Likeyong appeared in arms, and issued a proclamation, announcing his intention to visit the Emperor and throw himself at his feet. His loyalty did not interfere with the measures he adopted against Chaotsong's representatives, whom he defeated with heavy loss when they sought to bar his way to the capital. He had taken up arms, he declared, for the removal of bad advisers. Chaotsong accepted his assurances of friendship, re-appointed him to his former offices, but forbade him to come to the capital. He was one of those friends whom princes prefer to keep at a distance, and as a subject he was too powerful to be an object of affection. Five years later, Likeyong again took the field, this time in support of the Emperor against three rebellious governors. His old success attended his operations. Chaotsong returned to Singan, whence he had fled, and Likeyong proposed a scheme for chastising all rebels throughout the country. But Chaotsong was satisfied with the result attained, and thoroughly distrusted the integrity of the man who had thus for a second time preserved the Empire. Likeyong was created Prince of Tsin, and requested to return to his government.

Chaotsong did not long preserve the decorous attitude which had marked his first days of power. His excesses roused a feeling of hostility towards himself that had hitherto been absent, and these reached their climax when, in an ebullition of temper, he slew several of his guard and of the ladies of the palace. This outrage, although committed by the Emperor, led to the forming of a plot against his person by the eunuchs, who resolved to depose a ruler who was in constant opposition to their views. The plot was carried out with great daring and success. The Emperor, the Empress, and the principal members of their suite, were confined in an inner apartment of the palace, where they were strictly guarded. Chaotsong's infant son was proclaimed in his stead, and the eunuch Lieou Kichou wielded the authority and dispensed the favours of the new government. This act of audacity was more than even the ministers and officers of a decaying dynasty would tolerate, and the eunuchs, afraid to get rid of the Emperor, were very soon in their turn overpowered and compelled to release their prisoner. Chaotsong's return to power was followed by the passing of severe edicts against the eunuchs, who were deprived of all their administrative functions. At the very moment, therefore, when they thought they held final success in their grasp, the eunuchs were nearest their fall. From this point they lost their importance as a factor in the crisis which may be considered to have gone on from the fall of the Tangs until the rise of the great Sung dynasty.

When Likeyong retired into his government in Shensi, he left the field clear for Chuwen, an ambitious general who had played a prominent part in all the disturbances since the rising of Hwang Chao. Originally a lieutenant of that able but unscrupulous leader, he had abandoned him to throw in his fortunes with those of the Emperor Hitsong as soon as he discovered that his success was not likely to prove more than transient. A keen rivalry had existed from the first between this personage and Likeyong, in whom Chuwen saw the principal obstacle to his attaining the supreme power which he coveted. On Likeyong's retreat, after effecting the relief of the Emperor, Chuwen commenced his preparations for the

final step on which he was resolved. Filling all the principal offices with his own creatures, he courted popularity, at the same time that he removed possible rivals by persecuting the eunuchs, whose extermination he ordered and carried out with such severity that "only thirty old men and children" were spared. Soon after this event Chuwen was created Prince of Leang.

In A.D. 904 Chuwen compelled Chaotsong to leave Singan and take up his residence at Loyang, where he felt more secure and better able to attain the objects he had before him. In view of his growing power Likeyong himself lost courage, and feared that his intervention would only provoke a greater catastrophe. Chaotsong entreated his former deliverer and other Chinese governors to come to his assistance ; but none ventured to stir in his behalf. This unhappy prince endeavoured also to free himself from the chains in which his tyrant had placed him, by offering him a poisoned drink, but Chuwen was too wary to be thus entrapped. When Chaotsong reached Loyang his doom was sealed. Treated with the outward form of respect, he was without power, and in the hands of a man who regarded him as an obstacle in the path of his ambition. For a few months he was suffered to live, and then he was brutally murdered by order of Chuwen. The excuse put forward was that some mutinous soldiers committed this act ; but, if Chuwen wished the tale to obtain credence, he took a very bad way—although he executed his own son as the murderer—to effect his object. He invited all the princes of the Tang family that were at Loyang to a grand banquet—held on the borders of a lake—and when he had feasted them, a body of soldiers appeared upon the scene, and threw all the guests into the water. Nor did his barbarity cease with this act. Because "there is no peace for the wicked," he deposed all the officials, and executed many of them, distrusting their fidelity, although they were nearly all of his own creation. He persecuted after a similar fashion the highest officers in the state, and on the advice of a minister, who told him that if any serious danger could come to him from any class it would be from them, he caused them to be condemned and led in chains to the banks of the

Hoangho, where they were drowned. Such acts as these show in the clearest light the probability of Chuwen's guilt in the case of Chaotsong's murder.

Chuwen put Chao Siuenti, one of the youngest sons of the deceased Emperor, on the throne ; but he, seeing that he must prove another victim to his unscrupulous ambition, resigned the hollow office after a nominal reign of two years' duration. During that brief period he was not responsible for the acts committed in his name. Chuwen's sole fear arose from the power of Likeyong, who maintained an observant attitude within his own dominions ; but in A.D. 906 that chief, on the recommendation of his son, placed an army in the field, and wrested the town of Loochow from him. Chuwen, alarmed at this reverse, returned to Loyang, where the closing events in the drama of the fortunes of the Tang family obscure, for the moment, the interest in the struggle between the two great rivals, Chuwen and Likeyong the Turk.

It was after this campaign that Chao Siuenti resigned the insignia of power to Chuwen. The transfer of authority was effected with all necessary ceremony. Chuwen accepted the will of the people, and Chao Siuenti recognized the force of circumstances and the decree of fate. The change came at a critical moment, for there were clouds on the horizon for the new ruler to dispel if he could. In the north-west there were defeats to avenge and retrieve, and in the interior much discontent and little confidence prevailed. Chuwen was accepting a great responsibility, and it was doubtful whether he possessed the strength necessary to meet it. His own attached followers saw no reason to confide in his friendship, and they did not support him with the staunch and implicit trust of those who know that the victory of the leader will be not more in proportion than the triumph of the men who follow and who make his fortune. Chuwen founded a dynasty, and took the great names of Taitsou Hwangti ; but in the very birth of the new power there were perceptible the seeds of an early decay.

Chao Siuenti did not long survive his abdication. It was no part of Chuwen's programme that he should remain a standing danger to his administration, and in the year following

his proclamation he caused him to be assassinated. Thus closed, with the extinction of the race, the career of the illustrious family of the Tangs. It had given twenty Emperors to China during a period of nearly three centuries, and some of these conferred benefits upon the country which endured long beyond the fall of their family. In the great Tait song* it may boast the greatest ruler, taken all in all, that ever guided the destinies of the Chinese race; and whether we consider the extent of the mission with which it was entrusted, or the manner in which its duties were performed, we can only hesitate before comparing any other reigning House with it. In Chinese history the part played by the Tangs is unique, unless the present reigning dynasty should equal or eclipse it; and, although their fall clearly shows how much the descendants of Kaotsou and Tait song had forgotten the art of government, the record of their prowess, of their conquests, and of the benefits of their domestic administration yet remains to excite our wonder and admiration. From Cochin China to Tokharistan, from Corea to the Persian frontier, there was not a people or a state which did not regard the Empire of the Tangs as the great military and civilized Power of Asia. India did not escape the influence of the spell, and the impetuous Arabs abstained from insulting the borders of a potentate whom they could not but respect. The tradition of China's power and wealth remained, but the richest legacy left by the early Tangs to those who occupied their seat in after times was that no ruler can be held to be great who is not just, and that, although his first duty is to his own people, his justice is imperfect if it does not also include other peoples and nations besides his own. Tait song saw and acted upon this truth, thus making it the brightest wreath in the laurels of the Tangs.

* We reluctantly give him precedence over Keen Lung, the fourth of the Manchu rulers, who must, in our opinion, be placed next. Tsin Hwangti, Han Vouti, Kublai Khan, Ming Tait sou or Hongwou, and Kanghi are all worthy of a place immediately following, but close to, these two Emperors.

CHAPTER XVI.

FIVE SMALL DYNASTIES.

The Later Leangs, Tangs, Tsins, Hans, and Chows.

IT very soon became evident that Taitsou had accepted a task for which he did not possess the necessary strength. His authority was not recognized outside a portion of Shantung and the whole of Honan, while his assumption of the Imperial title had made him an object of hatred to the other governors, who regarded him as a person defrauding them of their lawful right. Several went so far as to call themselves Emperors, and to adopt the ceremony held by custom to accompany that high dignity; but the greatest danger was threatened by Likeyong, who did nothing. His policy was to wait upon the course of events, and not to strike until he saw where the blow might be best delivered. The impetuosity of his son Litsun-hiu urged him to break this prudent resolve, and to adopt the advice that it would be better to strike before Taitsou could consolidate his position.

An alliance between Likeyong and Yeliu Apaoki, a powerful Tartar chieftain in Southern Mongolia, who had subdued many tribes and a large tract of country, threatened Taitsou with a danger which might have proved fatal. Fortunately for him, Yeliu Apaoki, although the first to propose it, was not sincere in his engagement with the Prince of Tsin, and made counter proposals to Taitsou. This double-dealing saved the new Emperor from a grave peril, while it enabled the Khitan Apaoki to consolidate his own

power, and some years later to assert his supremacy in the Empire. Encouraged by this diplomatic victory, Taitso came to the conclusion that his best plan would be to declare war upon the Prince of Tsin without giving him the time for forming fresh alliances. He despatched a force, therefore, to lay siege to the town of Loochow, taken from him only a few years before. This place was gallantly and, in the end, successfully defended against him ; but the most interesting event of the year was the death of Likeyong. Litsun-hiu was recognized as his successor, and the struggle for power was resumed with greater vigour and determination than ever.

Litsun-hiu resolved to give lustre to his name by effecting the relief of Loochow, being, as he said, not without a hope that Taitso might relax some of his attention to the war in consequence of Likeyong's death. This belief proved well founded, and Litsun-hiu effected the relief of this city by winning a brilliant victory over the Imperialist army besieging it. On receiving the disastrous news, Taitso exclaimed, "Likeyong is not dead ; he lives again in his son." The war continued during the remaining years of Taitso's life. In A.D. 911 Litsun-hiu won another battle on the banks of the Yeho, when he captured the enemy's camp, and a large quantity of his baggage.

This crushing blow produced an effect upon the mind of Taitso from which he never recovered, and the bitterness of defeat was intensified by the knowledge that he had no one to fight his battles save himself, or to carry on the work which he had barely commenced. On several occasions he showed the old distrust of his most intimate and confidential advisers, few as they were ; and to the end he remained isolated and apart from both the desires of the people and the ambitious objects of his own followers. His death was brought about by other causes than those of war and turmoil. His eldest son, whom he had provoked, slew him in a moment of passion, thus cutting short a career which had throughout its whole length been one of confusion and restlessness. The parricide did not long enjoy the fruits of his crime, for a brother, constituting himself the avenger of his sire, attacked

and slew him in turn. Having accomplished this act of stern justice, he ascended the throne as the Emperor Moti.

Meanwhile Litsun-hiu was pushing his advantages in the north-west. He had turned aside in his career against the Leangs to attack the Prince of Yen, who, after a feeble resistance, was made prisoner, and executed because he had refused to accept the terms previously offered him. Having protected his flank by this movement, Litsun-hiu resumed his operations against the Emperor. Moti put fresh forces in the field, and endeavoured to defend his dominions against the invader. His army was, however, ill able to engage in a serious struggle with the well-trained and hardy troops of the Prince of Tsin; and his general, Liusiun, recognizing this fact, wished to avoid a pitched battle. Moti disapproved of his tactics, and sent him an imperative order to engage the enemy without further delay, anxious, perhaps, that the agony of suspense as to his fate should be speedily removed.

Liusiun's better judgment urged him to continue his Fabian tactics, but his council of war was unanimous in favour of decisive action. The result proved the accuracy of his views, for he was beaten with heavy loss in a pitched battle, by one of Litsun-hiu's lieutenants. This battle was fought in the year A.D. 916, and it would have decided the contest had not Yeliu Apaoki, the Khitan king, entered the dominions of the Prince of Tsin at the head of a large army. He defeated Litsun-hiu's generals in several encounters, and captured some of his strongest cities; but before the close of this campaign the Tartar was compelled to retreat into his own territory. Litsun-hiu, whose attention was momentarily distracted by this incursion, again turned all his strength against Moti.

The winter of the year A.D. 917 was exceptionally severe, and the Hoangho was frozen over in sufficient strength to admit of the passage of an army. The Prince of Tsin crossed it without accident at the head of his infantry and cavalry, and carried by storm the small forts held by the Emperor in this quarter. In the following year he collected the largest army that had yet followed his banner, and proclaimed his intention of seizing the Empire. Moti made

strenuous preparations to defend his throne, and placed a large army in the field. But fortune was against him, and not to be propitiated. On the field of Houlieoupi, where twenty thousand of his best troops were slain, his army was routed mainly by the superior skill of Litsun-hiu, who, losing his best general early in the day, headed his men in person. In a second battle he followed up this success, when the result was not less favourable to his side. Making sure of the passage of the Hoangho by the construction of two forts, he advanced towards Moti's capital, driving the remnants of his beaten army before him, and receiving the surrender and congratulations of those who already saw in him their new ruler. His movements were again delayed for a short space by a fresh incursion on the part of the Khitan ruler; but he did not suffer these diversions to turn him from his main object. In A.D. 923 he laid siege to Moti's capital, and that prince, seeing that his ruin was inevitable, ordered one of his officers to put an end to his existence, thus terminating also the brief reign of the Later Leangs, who had only maintained the position seized by Chuwen for the short space of sixteen years. Some months before this event Litsun-hiu had proclaimed a new dynasty, and he gave it the name of the Tang because he declared it to be his ambition to renew the glories of that family. He took the name of Chwangtsong.

Chwangtsong's reign proved of short duration. After overthrowing the Leangs and setting the seal to their ruin by the desecration of their ancestral tombs the new ruler sent an expedition into Szchuen, which he subdued. He gratified his martial tastes by instituting military games and by resorting to a personal display not in accordance with the condition of the state. At the same time he proved to be avaricious, and parted reluctantly with his money for objects of public utility. Chwangtsong proved himself to be rather a splendid barbarian than a wise ruler. His most congenial element was the battlefield, and the camp of armed men. When engaged on any expedition he slept on the bare ground and shared his soldiers' fare; but in his new capital, surrounded by the unknown luxury and wealth of a southern court, his great qualities degenerated like those of Hannibal at Capua. For

the stern game of war he preferred the spectacle, for the camp the luxury and pleasant ease of the palace.

If their leader was forgetful of his former prowess, the fierce soldiers who followed his banner did not rest satisfied with what had been achieved. They panted for fresh triumphs, and thought the tranquillity of the life of citizens but a poor exchange for the excitement of the soldier's career. When some of his old energy returned to him, his soldiers were disaffected, and several of his rivals were preparing for a fresh outbreak in the struggle for power. It is probable that he would have triumphed over his difficulties even at this late stage, but that a desperate party among his soldiers resolved to precipitate the crisis. It was while he was in his palace at Loyang, whither he had led his army for the purpose of meeting one of his opponents, that the bad feeling among his soldiers broke out in a flame. The news was suddenly brought to him that a party of conspirators was forcing the gates. Buckling on his armour, he placed himself at the head of his immediate attendants, and hastened to defend the entrance, at the same time sending an order for the immediate despatch of his cavalry from outside the town. Its commander refused to obey, and Chwangtsong was left to his fate. No record has been preserved of that stubborn fight at the gate of the palace of Loyang, but we may safely imagine that it was worthy of the earlier reputation of Litsun-hiu. Deserted by his oldest officers he fought on with a mere handful of men, checking the rush of the hundreds of his assailants. The result remained doubtful, until an arrow struck the Emperor in the head, when he was carried into the interior of the palace by a faithful follower. The Empress sent him a cup of sour milk, which was no doubt poisoned, as Chwangtsong died immediately after taking it. Chwangtsong was only thirty-five years of age when this event occurred, and there cannot be a difference of opinion that a remarkable career was thus cut short. His old adversary, Yeliu Apaoki, the Khitan king, expressed great grief at his death. He himself died the same year, and was succeeded by his son.

Troubles broke out in several directions, and might have

assumed grave proportions but that Lisseiyuen, Chwangtsong's adopted brother and best general, took steps to remove them. He executed such of the rebels as he could seize, and banished the Empress, who was more than suspected of having poisoned her husband, and who was discovered in the act of plundering the palace. But he refused the dignity of Emperor which they wished to confer upon him, and while the troubles continued he styled himself simply Governor of the realm. Having restored some appearance of order, he retracted his refusal, and mounted the throne under the title of Mingsong (A.D. 926).

During the ten years of his tenure of power Mingsong was continually engaged in wars with either domestic or foreign enemies, but he managed to find time for the promotion of science and the encouragement of men of learning. The great art of printing was first discovered and turned to practical use during his reign, more than five centuries before Caxton and the printing presses of Germany.* His principal successes had been obtained over the Khitans, who were the most troublesome of neighbours, but their losses were so severe that they were fain to accept the terms accorded them. Mingsong showed a desire to propitiate them by releasing several of their officers whom he had made prisoners, although he was warned that the knowledge they had acquired in China would be turned against himself. Mingsong thought the risk on this account preferable to a perpetuation of the hostile feelings between the peoples.

In A.D. 933 he fell dangerously ill, and troubles arose in his own family on the question of the succession. One son absolutely appeared in arms in the palace, and Mingsong was constrained to order summary steps to be taken for his punishment. Distressed at this act, Mingsong's malady assumed an intensified form, and he died very shortly afterwards, leaving behind him the reputation of a wise and peace-loving prince.

* The exact date of the first printing press, in which wooden blocks were used, is uncertain ; but it was probably about this period that it was first generally employed. The celebrated publication commonly called the *Pekin Gazette*, was nearly two centuries older, as it certainly existed in the reign of the enlightened Mingti of the Tangs (A.D. 713-756).

His son Mingti succeeded him, but his brief reign of one year was a series of misfortunes. Litsongkou, Prince of Lou, one of Mingsong's favourite generals, revolted against him, and drove him from the throne. The Empress declared in favour of this pretender, and, when Mingti had been got rid of, Litsongkou became the Emperor Lou Wang. He did not long enjoy the power he had won by the extinction of the family of Likeyong, for within a year he fell a victim to the ambition of a rival general. Seeing that the end was at hand, he retired with his family to a turret in his palace, which he set on fire, thus perishing in the flames. So expired the brief dynasty of the Later Tangs.

Cheking Tang, such was the name of the new ruler, had taken a prominent part in the troubles of this period. Indeed he had been the first to urge Litsongkou to make his attempt upon the throne; but when that ruler was beset with difficulties he did not scruple to turn them to account for his own purposes. On assuming the purple, Cheking Tang changed his name to Kaotsou, and gave his dynasty the title of the Tsin.

As a matter of fact, the power of the new Emperor was little more than a shadow of the despotism of the Khitan king on his northern frontier. That despotism had been steadily growing and extending its limits in the few years that had elapsed since Litsun-hiu had warred with Apaoki; and in A.D. 937 Tekwang, the son of the latter ruler, changed the name from Khitan to Leaou. He openly claimed the Emperor as his vassal, and Kaotsou was sufficiently prudent to recognize that his strength was inadequate to contest the pretension. Kaotsou addressed him as Father Emperor, and sought on all occasions to propitiate a personage of whose superior military power he stood in daily apprehension. Several of the more old-fashioned of the ministers, not approving of these condescensions towards a "barbarian" potentate, remonstrated with Kaotsou; but their sense of the slighted dignity of the Empire was ill-suited to the time, and their inconvenient protests were summarily dismissed or passed over. It was also practically observed by one of the ministers that the Khitans or Leaous were no longer a

barbarous people. They had appropriated, with a large portion of Chinese territory in Leaoutung, and Pechihli, the civilization and refinement of Chinese life, at the same time that they retained the hardy characteristics of their Tartar ancestors. A war between this warlike and united people, and the enfeebled strength of the Empire could have but one result. Tekwang felt sure of his superior power. It would have been strange if he had refrained from exercising it.

So long as Kaotsou lived, his tact availed to avert an overthrow, and the Khitan king rested content with the profuse profession of goodwill and subservience sent him at frequent intervals by the occupant of the Dragon Throne. Kaotsou had, however, to pay a still heavier price to prevent the invasion of his dominions by this northern people in the surrender of several of his border cities, and the grant of an annual subsidy. He accepted the inevitable with the calmness of a philosopher. His death after a reign of seven years altered the position of affairs, by affording those who had throughout exclaimed against the indignity to the Empire an opportunity of carrying their opinions into acts.

The new ruler was Tsi Wang, Kaotsou's nephew, but during his four years' reign he left no distinct impression on the history of the times. He fell into the hands of ministers who were inclined to dispute the claims of the Khitan king, and their arguments, based on the personal disgrace to the Emperor, proved palatable to the mind of a new ruler. It was certainly not hard to show the shame of a Chinese monarch being the feudatory of a northern king; but they excluded from their calculations stern necessity which is generally clothed in a garb without symmetry to the eye or pleasure to the imagination. Tsi Wang paid his court, with less judgment than his uncle, to Tekwang, who in retaliation resolved to depose the Chinese ruler. His resolve was intensified by a severe defeat inflicted upon his army by one of Tsi Wang's generals, and in order to make the blow the more crushing, he collected all his strength for a supreme effort. Before the rising tempest Tsi Wang would have yielded, but it was too late. He sought an ally in the King of Corea, who had suffered from the aggressiveness of the Khitans; but his envoy returned with

the depressing judgment that their alliance would be valueless as they possessed no arms, and were destitute of all knowledge of war. Tsi Wang had to rely solely upon his own resources. The two armies came face to face on the banks of the River Touho, and they remained so for some months, neither caring to strike the decisive blow without long deliberation. In the skirmishes which took place, the Tartars were generally the more fortunate, and at length Tekwang by a skilful manœuvre succeeded in shutting the Imperial army up in its camp, when want of provisions compelled its speedy surrender. The surrender of his army involved for Tsi Wang the loss of his crown. Before he could make any fresh preparations for defence, his capital was in the possession of the Khitans, and his abdication and retirement into private life followed an abortive attempt to commit suicide. With this act the dynasty of the Later Tsins reached its consummation. Tekwang held for a short time possession of the capital, and then retired to his own dominions. He wished to place a puppet prince upon the throne as master of the Empire, but his own death arrested the plans which he had formed. Lieouchi Yuen, a trusted companion of the first Emperor of this dynasty, was placed on the throne by the public voice, and took the name of Kaotsou of the later Han dynasty.

This new family only enjoyed the possession of its high titular rank for the short space of four years. Lieouchi Yuen, who gave some proof of the possession of great qualities, died less than two years after he snatched the state out of the grasp of the Khitans, and his son Ynti succeeded him. The Khitans of Leaoutung seized what they thought a favourable opportunity to renew their enterprise; but Kwo Wei, who had been left by Lieouchi Yuen as the chief adviser of his son, baffled their attempt by winning several victories over them. Ynti turned his increasing security to reckless account by indulging his passion for idle pleasures. The season for such conduct was singularly inopportune, as the Empire had barely escaped a great danger, which might at any moment recur. On Kwo Wei's return from his victorious campaign in the north he was received with such acclamations by the

people that he determined to no longer defer the design he had for some time secretly cherished of placing himself upon the throne. Ynti, anticipating the popular verdict, fled from his capital, but was murdered in a neighbouring village by some of Kwo Wei's soldiers, who, it is asserted, did not recognize him. His son occupied the throne for a few days, but was deposed. Within four years of the departure of Tekwang, the Tartar king, another dynasty had run its transient course, and rapidly reached its point of collapse.

Kwo Wei became the founder of the fifth and last of these insignificant dynasties. His career was cut short when he had only governed the country for three years. He had many difficulties to contend against, but he seemed in a fair way to overcoming them when his death removed him from the scene. It is said that it was during his reign that the Mahomedans, who had been both conquering and colonizing most of the countries west of China during the last three centuries, first established themselves in China. There had no doubt been other immigrants of the same creed before this, but their progress first began to attract attention in this reign. Of Chitsong, his adopted son and successor, there is little to be said. He possessed many virtues, and endeavoured to restore the Empire from its fallen state; but his life was too short to admit of much more than the formation of plans which were never destined to be carried out. In the six years of his reign he obtained several successes in the south, and established his power more vigorously on the banks of the Great River. He even drew up a scheme for the expulsion of the Tartars, but at the very point when he formed the most ambitious of all his plans his career terminated with his sudden death. His son Kongti only reigned for a few months after him, and he was then deposed by his minister Chow Kwang Yn, the founder of the great dynasty of the Sung.

The close of these five dynasties, which occupied the throne for less than sixty years in all, marks the end also of the petty rulers of China. In the future there will, at intervals, be the repetition of the old weakness, and the decline of the Empire will be sometimes marked in face of the greater but

more transient reputation of a neighbouring and foreign people; but there will at least be in its misfortunes an absence of any pettiness similar to that under these princes. China has often since stood apparently on the verge of ruin, but even when she has done so her triumphant enemies have presented a scarcely less interesting theme for description than the even tenour of her own history. These petty dynasties served no doubt their momentary purposes, but with their disappearance, nearly a thousand years ago,* the starting-point of China's Imperial history on a sound and durable basis may be considered to have been reached in the founding of the dynasty of the Sung.

* In the nine hundred and forty years that have since elapsed, China has been governed by only four dynasties, the Sung, the Yuen, the Ming, and the Manchu still reigning—a fact unparalleled in the history of any other people or Empire.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SUNG DYNASTY.

The Reunion of the Empire.

CHOW KWANG YN* took up the task which the death of Chitsong had left half finished and incomplete; and it was his good fortune to complete it. The country prayed for peace, and was anxious to give all the support it could to a man acting for its interests. Public spirit had become extinct during the years when the Empire had been the lottery of soldiers, and when ruler succeeded ruler with a rapidity which was in itself the strongest inducement to the ambitious to advance their claims. Chow Kwang Yn had therefore in the first place to raise the public spirit, and to show incontestably that he had other ends in view than the mere attainment of power. In short he was a patriot. It was the independence of the Chinese Empire for which he fought, and, although some of the credit is due to Chitsong as having paved the way to success, it was by his own unaided abilities that the Sung ruler attained the great object of his life.

The people hailed his advent to power with acclamations

* Chow Kwang Yn, unlike most of the soldiers who had risen to power during these years, was a Chinese by birth. He had distinguished himself greatly in the wars carried on by Chitsong for the restoration of the Empire. On one occasion it may even be said that his presence of mind saved the day in the battle at Kaoping. He was born in a village near the modern Pekin, of which place, then a small town called Yeoutou, several of his relations had been governors. His father had succeeded to an office which had almost become hereditary in his family. Chow Kwang Yn served his earlier years in the guards, and is represented as having been of majestic appearance.

of joy. Signs were seen in the heavens proclaiming that it was the will of God that he should rule over the Empire, while his devoted soldiers adopted a more trenchant argument when they pointed to their swords. "The Empire is without a master," they said, "and we wish to give it one. Who is more worthy of it than our general?" The first acts of the new Emperor proclaimed the man. A general pardon was granted to all, and a proclamation was issued to the whole Empire, and sent into provinces defiant towards the Imperial authority, ordering the observance of the laws, and the preservation of domestic peace. At the same time Chow Kwang Yn gave his dynasty the name of the Sung, declared red to be the Imperial colour, and himself assumed the style of Taitsou.

He then restored to the lettered classes the privileges of which they had been deprived during the previous troubles, and, although not a learned man himself, encouraged learning by all the means in his power. He took these steps not for the advantage of any particular section, but for the general welfare of his people, believing that knowledge must be good, and its extension beneficial to the best interests of the nation. He made the happiness of the greatest number the chief object of his policy, and boasted that the meanest of his subjects might approach him at all times and at any hour. For this purpose he had the doors and gates of his own palace left open both during the day and at night, wishing to show that his house resembled his heart, "which was open to all his subjects." To the reform of his military organization he devoted not less attention than he did to domestic affairs. He drew up a system of examination for entrance into the army and for promotion in its ranks, which was practical and well adapted to the end in view. From officers it required some unequivocal proof that they were physically capable of performing their duties, and that they possessed some acquaintance with military subjects. Taitsou showed not less attention to the interests of the soldier, with whose privations he had all the sympathy of an old campaigner.

By the confidence of success perceptible in everything that he undertook, the founder of the Sungs had disarmed

many of his adversaries, who dreaded an overthrow that appeared inevitable. Several governors sent in their formal submission, while others who had entertained the idea of rebellion banished it from their minds. The area included within the provinces of such governors as these was far from representing the full extent of the Empire, and it was both for the conquest of the districts held by foreign tribes and rulers as well as for the complete pacification of those within his immediate sphere that Taitsou drew his military strength together, and added to its efficiency by every means in his power.

The first and the most serious danger arose from the aggressions of a potentate in the north, named the Prince of Han, who had entered into an alliance with the Leaous or Khitans. A war was on the point of commencing with these allies when Chow Kwang Yn's attention was called away by Chitsong's death ; but he had hardly settled the most pressing matters when it threatened to break out afresh. The Prince of Han refused to recognize the new regime, and drew closer the bonds of friendship with the Tartar prince of Leaoutung. He won over to his side the governor of the important border city of Loochow, thus precipitating the conflict, for Taitsou saw that it behoved him to strike at this confederacy before it should assume larger and more dangerous proportions. He accordingly sent several bodies of troops in the direction of Loochow, and, in A.D. 960, he took the field in person, at the head of a large army. Having inflicted a severe defeat on the rebel's army in the field, near the village of Tsechow, where several of the Han officers were slain, Taitsou had the satisfaction a few days later of entering Loochow itself, which had been seized by one of his lieutenants. The governor in despair saved his honour by perishing in the flames of his own residence. The Emperor returned to his capital after this success, remarkable alike for its rapidity and completeness ; but he had hardly done so when his attention was called away to a rising within his own dominions.

Li Chongsin had shared with the Sung Emperor in earlier days his military career, and when the change was effected in the dynasty he was confirmed in his governorship by his

former comrade. But Li Chongsin cherished dreams of a higher ambition, and he thought he saw in this formidable northern rising a favourable opportunity for asserting his own position as an independent prince. Taitsou's rapid success undeceived him as to the feasibility of his enterprise, but yet it was not sufficiently rapid to prevent his revealing the design he had entertained. Taitsou's measures in face of this new danger were prompt and adequate. Taking the field in person with a small but select body of troops, Taitsou advanced by forced marches on Kwangling, where he arrived when Li Chongsin least expected him. Li Chongsin, seeing that resistance would be futile, also set fire to his palace and perished in the flames. Having thus satisfactorily disposed of two difficult questions, and checked the pretensions of two rivals, Taitsou obtained more leisure to carefully survey his position, which was one still calling for much tact, courage, and fertility of resource.

About this time the Niutchin Tartars, a tribe in Western China, came to Taitsou's court with presents of horses and pledges of good service. He received them favourably, and granted them the island of Chamen, probably Hainan, as a place of residence, where they should be exempt from liability for service on public works. In this voluntary surrender, imitated by several of the western tribes and peoples, may be seen a formal acknowledgment of the progress the Sung ruler was making towards accomplishing the reunion of the Empire.

The most important act of this period of his reign was undoubtedly the decree taking from the provincial governors the power of life and death which they had hitherto possessed. Henceforth it was ordered that no criminal should be executed without the Emperor's express sanction, and that a statement of every case should be sent to him for consideration ; for, said he, "as life is the dearest thing men possess, should it be placed at the disposal of an official, often unjust or wicked?" The effect of this act was not only beneficial to the people, but it was followed by consequences tending to strengthen the position of the Emperor. Not merely was it a change in favour of the personal liberty of the subject, but

it had the effect of promoting the influence of the ruler by restricting the power of his viceroys. It became the chief object of Taitso's policy to undermine the power of the semi-independent princes who remained, and to turn them into governors holding office at his command. The whole purpose of his life was to sweep away these states within the state, and to again place on a firm foundation the central authority of the Emperor. There was also involved in this the old disputed point whether the succession to vacant governorships rested with the ruler, or whether it was to be hereditary in the family of the occupant. On the way in which this principle was settled depended more than upon any other circumstance the tranquillity of the Empire. Taitso had not to wait long before the occasion offered of carrying his new resolution into execution.

The condition of these principalities represented in miniature the state of the Empire under recent dynasties. The prince or governor had in his conduct to his liege lord set an example which his own subordinates were not backward in imitating. The chief of a small district, especially if it contained a fortified town, aspired to independence, which in his eyes meant the possession of a standing army, and the right to wring as much money as he could out of the pockets of those placed under him. The conflict of rival pretensions was unceasing, and led to a strife between those who had and those others who wished to have, which was apparently endless. Taitso remained a vigilant observer of these quarrels, prepared to intervene whenever the opportunity offered of reasserting the claims of the state. In Honan and Kiangnan there had been a contest of authority, and while in the former it had gone hard with the governor, who had been reduced to extremities by one of his vassals, in the latter the viceroy had successfully maintained his position, and was fairly on the way to establish an irresponsible and independent government of his own. It was against these that Taitso resolved to act without further delay. His measures were taken with such secrecy and promptitude that he attained his ends without encountering any resistance. The army he placed in the field was of

overwhelming strength, for Taitsou had learnt, and wished to practise, the true humanity of war; and the campaign was fought and won without the shedding of a drop of blood. Two fertile provinces in the heart of the country, with a population of at least ten millions, were thus added to the dominions of the Sung Emperor.

In the north the Han prince and the kingdom of Leaou-tung were still not only hostile, but defiant. The Emperor wished to wage war against them, but his prudent minister Chowpou dissuaded him from the attempt. The task would necessarily be a difficult and a dangerous one, and success would depend on a variety of circumstances over which it would be impossible to exercise any certain control. It would be wiser, he insisted, to leave the settlement of this question until the last; and Taitsou adopted his opinion.

In the south there was another question, scarcely less pressing than that in the north, awaiting solution, and one, moreover, which was attended with less danger. In Szchuen the old kingdom of Chow had been revived, and had maintained its own independence and tranquillity during the stormy century through which China had been passing. Incited by the representations of the Prince of Han, and encouraged by promises of support from various quarters, the ruler of this state came to the rash conclusion that he could cope with and destroy the new power of the Sung. He accordingly declared war, and made preparations for the invasion of Honan. He had miscalculated his strength, but he had still more grievously mistaken his adversary. As soon as Taitsou learnt the hostile intentions of his neighbour he took prompt steps to anticipate the invasion of his dominions, by ordering sixty thousand troops to enter Szchuen from the side of Shensi. The success of his generals must have surpassed his most sanguine expectations. In less than two months the whole province was in his hands, and the ruling family prisoners at his court. A fertile province, commanding the navigation of the Great River, and twenty-six millions of new subjects were added at a stroke to the dominions of the new Emperor. Taitsou did not accompany this expedition in person, but in his palace his

thoughts were ever with his brave army. A heavy fall of snow reminded him of their privations, and, taking off his own furred coat, he sent it to the general in command with the wish that he had as many more coats as might provide each of his soldiers with one. This thoughtful act excited the enthusiasm of the army, which had already accomplished such remarkable and gallant actions.

Some years of peace followed these decisive successes, and in A.D. 969 Taitso had made all his preparations for the prosecution of the war which had been threatening since the beginning of his reign with his northern neighbours, the Prince of Han, and the King of Leaoutung. Nor had his opponents been backward in preparations on their side, and when one of Taitso's generals advanced from the frontier he found himself in face of an army numerically so much his superior that he was compelled to beat a hasty retreat. The Tartar troops pursued him, harassed his rear, and committed depredations within the frontier. At this Taitso was greatly irritated, and blamed his lieutenant not for declining an unequal battle, but for a precipitate retreat which exposed many unprotected towns and villages to the insults and attacks of the enemy. Taitso was far too practical to waste precious time in recriminations. Even while he censured his commander, he moved up reinforcements in large numbers, at the head of which he placed himself. The enemy in turn gave way, taking refuge in the Han capital, Taiyuen, to which Taitso laid close siege.

Taitso drew up his lines in front of this celebrated place, and surrounded it with a wall. He also endeavoured to flood the town by diverting two neighbouring rivers from their courses. In short, he employed every means known to the engineers of that time to render the place untenable ; but the defenders gallantly held out, meeting every attack with resolution, and each device with some counter-device. In the meanwhile a Tartar army was advancing from Leaoutung to the relief of the garrison ; but Taitso went out to meet it, and won a signal victory. The King of Leaoutung resolved to make another attempt sooner than leave his army in jeopardy, and he collected the whole military force of the

state, and despatched it to the relief of the gallant garrison still holding out at Taiyuen. In face of this great host, and also on account of the inclemency of the season, Taitsou adopted the prudent course of retreating from before the walls of Taiyuen. The disappointment was no doubt great, but the result showed the wisdom of the previous advice of his minister Chowpou. The campaign may be regarded as having closed without any decisive result to either side, but Taitsou undoubtedly returned baffled in his main object to his capital.

A fresh question awaited his consideration in the south. A prince of the Nan, or Southern Hans, held possession of Kwantung and a portion of Kwangsi, and was found to be implicated in several of the schemes formed for the overthrow of the Sung power.

It was resolved to take advantage of the lull in the contest in the north to reduce this potentate to a better sense of his own position, and of his obligations to the Emperor. Taitsou entrusted the task to his general, Panmei, and he had the satisfaction of finding another of the great Chinese provinces speedily reduced and subjected to his authority. This conquest was particularly grateful to the Emperor because it gave him increased means of asserting his claims with regard to the peoples of the south, although it only added, according to the official statement, less than one million subjects to the Empire.

There now only remained, among the independent governors of the previous dynasty, to be brought to a sense of order the Prince of Tang, whose territory embraced the modern provinces of Kiangnan. Warned by the fate of others, the Prince of Tang was very circumspect in his conduct, and strove to deprive the Emperor of all excuse for attacking him. But Taitsou was as wily in artifice as he was brave in action. He detained the envoys sent by the Tang prince, and when he asked for an explanation he was informed that he should come in person to pay his respects to the Emperor. This the Tang prince refused to do, because Taitsou declined to send him a patent for his states as a prince of the first order. Taitsou at once ordered the invasion

of Kiangnan, and entrusted the task of its subjection to Tsowpin, his favourite general. The troops of the Prince of Tang fought well, but they were badly led, and had little affection for the cause in which they bled. Driven from the field, they took shelter in the few fortresses in the country, but these were captured one after the other by Tsowpin or his lieutenants. Within a year of the crossing of the frontier Kiangnan had been reduced to the condition of a province of the Sung. There must in consequence have been a large addition to the population, but the exact number has not been preserved. This brilliant feat completed the task which Taitsou himself was destined to attain, and made his authority unquestioned in most of the provinces south of the Hoangho.

Taitsou completed the effect of these military successes by concluding a peace with the people of Leaoutung, thus depriving the prince of the northern Han of his chief allies. Having by this diplomatic success turned the rear of his adversary, he concentrated a large army, and marched on Taiyuen from which he had, some years before, been compelled to beat a hasty retreat. He now renewed the attempt with increased force, and such better hope of success, that he gave out that he intended conquering the dominions of the Pehan in the course of one campaign. But the progress of the war depended on a higher decision than his. The first skirmishes had been fought and won, and the operations for the capture of Taiyuen were in train, when the announcement of the Emperor's serious illness caused active measures to be suspended. The troops which had been in the course of performing several important movements retraced their steps, and were collected in the camp round the expiring Emperor.

Taitsou was at the end mindful of the advice of his dying mother. He left the Empire to his brother, Chow Kwang Y, Prince of Tsin, and his last words to him were, "Bear yourself as becomes a brave prince, and govern well." Taitsou had only occupied the throne for seventeen years, but in that short time he had done much towards effecting the reunion of the country. He had abased the pretensions of the ambitious and tyrannical governors who ruled only for their own pleasure and profit, and the peoples of China owed to his

generous sense of humanity a government which made the happiness and welfare of the nation its main object. Taitso's reign was a succession of wars, decided, however, by the display of skill, and with as little carnage as possible. They were fought also for the most laudable of objects—the unity of the state, and the government of a great people by a sovereign of its own race. The founder of the Sungs received the Imperial dignity when it represented little more than an empty pretence, but in his hands it acquired such substance and reality that he left it to his successor as a possession of the greatest value.

The new ruler, on his accession to the throne, took the name of Taitsong, and his first acts showed that he was fully determined not only to keep what his brother had won, but also to complete the task which he had carried so far towards a successful conclusion. Of China Proper there only remained to be subdued a small portion of Kwantung and Fuhkien, besides the northern states of Han and Leaoutung. In preparation for the struggle with the latter, Taitsong caused the frontiers touching these independent states to be placed in a better state of defence, and entrusted the commands of the border posts to the most skilful of his lieutenants. The result of these prudent arrangements was clearly demonstrated in the hesitation shown by his neighbours to come into collision with him, although they might reasonably have expected that after Taitso's death there would have been a decline in the vigour of the Emperor's authority.

The war with the northern Han, which Taitso's death had interrupted, was not resumed until Taitsong had occupied the throne for three years. There were some opposed to its resumption on public grounds, holding that enough had been done towards the vindication of the national dignity ; but the opinion of the Emperor himself, and of a majority in his council, was distinctly in favour of the view that the security of what had been accomplished was not assured so long as this hostile and military power held possession of the northern gates of the Empire. So it was resolved to renew the enterprise that had once resulted in failure, and that had a second time been abandoned ; and forthwith the Imperial legions

were directed to march on the maiden fortress of Taiyuen, which still flaunted the defiant banner of the Hans in the face of the Sung power. While the main army sat down in front of the Han capital, a strong body of troops was despatched to take up a position to the north-east of the city at Cheling Koan, where it would be able to intercept any relieving force that the Tartars of Leaoutung might attempt to send. The king of that people despatched an embassy to ask the Emperor for what reasons he was waging war with his friend, the Prince of Han; but Taitsong was not in the humour to give a very satisfactory response. He replied with the haughtiness of a great monarch: "That the country of the Hans was one of the provinces of the Empire, and that, its prince having refused to obey his orders, he was determined to punish him. If your prince stands aside and does not meddle in this quarrel, I am willing to continue to live at peace with him; if he does not care to do this, we will fight him." The Leaou King, enraged at this reply, declared war, and sent a large army to the relief of Taiyuen. It was, however, checked by the corps despatched for that purpose, and compelled to halt before it reached the scene of action.

Taitsong pressed the siege of Taiyuen in person, and with unexampled vigour. He was prudent enough, however, to leave his opponent a golden bridge for retreat, and before delivering the final assault he offered him terms that were not only honourable but generous. Lieouki Yuen, Prince of Han, had the good sense to accept the propositions of the Emperor, and, recognizing that further resistance to the Sungs would be futile, he presented himself at the head of his officers in the Emperor's camp. Lieouki Yuen became one of the minor princes attached to the Court, and the subjection of his dominions removed the last of the great feudatories who had asserted their independence of the central authority. The conquest of this northern province brought the Empire face to face with the Tartar kingdom of Leaoutung, which had interfered in the affairs of the Empire on so many occasions during the preceding century, and which was now in its turn to feel the reviving power of the Chinese sovereign.

Taitsong anticipated being able to bring his war with the King of Leaoutung to a conclusion in a single campaign ; but in this sanguine expectation he showed too little consideration for the proverbial uncertainty of war. The first successes were his. Several cities opened their gates, and some of the Tartar officials, thinking that the evening of their master's fortunes had arrived, hastened to welcome the day-star of Sung power. Taitsong, anxious to return to his capital, acted with a degree of precipitation which was highly imprudent when it is remembered that the Tartar army of Leaoutung had won a reputation for military prowess during a long career of unvaried success. Taitsong went out to meet the gathering strength of the Tartars in the hope that he would be able to strike a final blow before it could be concentrated ; but although he fell upon one corps and defeated it, he was in turn attacked by the main body. The battle was fought with great stubbornness on the banks of the Kaoleang river, and the Tartars vindicated their claims to be considered good soldiers by inflicting a severe defeat on the Chinese army. More than ten thousand of the Emperor's best troops fell on the field, and he himself had the greatest difficulty in effecting his escape, although he left all his baggage in the hands of the victorious Tartars. This defeat was a rude shock to Taitsong's dreams of speedy success, and it might have been followed by fresh troubles in the recently conquered province of Pehan, but that he himself and his generals strove, by the display of greater energy, to repair the disaster. The fighting for some time after this great encounter partook of a desultory character, the success going now to one side, now to the other ; but the measures taken by Taitsong were so far effectual that his authority in the newly won province of Pehan remained undisputed and indisputable. In fact, the people and soldiers of the whilom Prince of Han became the chief supporters of the Sung ruler in his war with the Tartars of Leaoutung. Yangyeh, the hero of this border war, had been the faithful general of the Hans to the last, and the most prominent of the defenders of the fortress-city of Taiyuen.

There can be no doubt that the Tartars were indebted for

their successes to the skill and martial qualities of their general, Yeliu Hiuco. It was the division under his command which had turned the fate of the day at Kaoleang, and in all the later contests he carried off the palm on both sides for tactical knowledge as well as for the personal characteristics essential to a great commander. For nearly twenty years he remained the chief prop and supporter of the Khitan or Leaou state, which, but for him, would have failed to maintain itself against the determined onslaughts of the Chinese. After the campaign of which the defeat at Kaoleang was the salient feature, peace endured for several years, although Tait song's thoughts were constantly turning on the theme of how he might overthrow the power which had baffled him.

In A.D. 985 an opportunity of realizing this object seemed to offer itself when the Coreans sent an embassy to his court complaining of the conduct of the Tartars, and asking for assistance against them. Tait song listened to their complaints with sympathy, and proposed an offensive and defensive alliance against the common enemy. At the same time he ordered several armies under his best generals to take the field, and to invade Leaoutung. The Tartars were probably taken by surprise, for the first battles were won by the Chinese, and the Tartars were forced to retire on several sides. The Emperor was congratulating himself on the success of his plans, and on the victories reported daily by messengers from his army, when the appearance of Yeliu Hiuco in the field changed the fortune of the war, and checked his felicitations. A defeat, scarcely less disastrous than that on the Kaoleang, to his principal army near the fortress of Kikieou Koan, north of the modern Peking, was hardly announced when the news came that Hiuco had followed up his success with remarkable energy, and driven the remnants of the beaten army into the river Chaho. The loss was so great on that day that we are told that the corpses of the slain arrested the course of the river. Other defeats followed this first decisive turn in the tide of war against the Emperor. His general, Panmei, was beaten with hardly less loss at Feihou, and all the fruits of previous success were nullified. The Tartars were left virtual masters of the field.

During the remaining years of Taitsong's reign the Tartars carried on incessant hostilities with the Chinese, inflicting immense loss upon the peaceable inhabitants of the border districts. They turned also upon the Coreans, who had made some show of combining with the Emperor, but who now averted the penalty by making an abject surrender to their formidable neighbours. The ill success of this foreign war was, no doubt, a strong inducement to many within the realm to put forward their complaints, and to air grievances which were more imaginary than real. "A man of the people" came forward in Szchuen as the redresser of public wrongs, and gave the authorities considerable trouble for many years. Taitsong was compelled to largely increase the garrison, and to carry on regular warfare in the mountainous districts of that province before the strong arm of the law was fully reasserted. Having clearly shown that violence and the breach of civil rights are not the way to obtain fresh privileges, Taitsong took steps to provide a remedy for the small grievance of which an ambitious and self-seeking agitator had sought to avail himself for the advancement of his own interests.

No glimmer of success in the war with the Tartars lit up the last years of the reign of Taitsong. They were still victorious and defiant, when his last illness seized this able ruler, who had governed China during twenty-two years with wisdom and moderation. The failure of his wars with the Tartars must, we think, be attributed to the exceptional ability of the Tartar Yeliu Hiuco, who vanquished every opponent he was called upon to meet. But Taitsong's reverses in the wars with the Tartars cannot blot out his success in Pehan, and the skill he showed in maintaining peace within the limits of his wide-stretching dominions. Like the modern strategist, he sought to direct the movements of a campaign from his palace, and on several occasions it would appear that his arms suffered a reverse because his generals had not adhered to his instructions. It is, however, as a wise administrator, and as a prince anxious to promote the best interests of his people, that he most deserves to be remembered.

Chintsong, Taitson's third son, succeeded him; and the surrender of a rebel who had availed himself of Hiuco's victories to revive the pretensions of the Hans, afforded a favourable promise of a peaceful and satisfactory reign. But certainly a more important event was the death of Hiuco, to whom the Chinese historians ungrudgingly allow the foremost place among the generals of the age. When the long-standing quarrel between the two neighbours again came to the arbitrament of arms, the loss of this wise commander was regretted, and felt as much by his people as it was rejoiced in by the Chinese. The Tartars were the first to resume hostilities, but when they did so it was with such little skill that they were repulsed without difficulty by one of the border governors. Chintsong proceeded in person to the frontier with a large army, and on his approach the Tartars thought it prudent to retire.

His attention was then called away to Szchuen, where the late insurrection had broken out afresh, principally through the mistakes made by the officials left in charge of the province by Taitson. This disturbance entailed further bloodshed, and the inhabitants had suffered much from the horrors of civil war before Chintsong succeeded in re-establishing order in this vast dependency. Having restored internal tranquillity, all Chintsong's thoughts turned on peace, and he set himself the task of reforming the administration in which great changes had been rendered necessary by the indiscriminate appointment of incompetent individuals to the ranks of the mandarins, or salaried officials. In one day he is said to have either suspended or removed from their posts one hundred and ninety-six thousand of these servants of the State!

But the Tartars of Leaoutung were not disposed to leave undisturbed so easy a prey as they had found the Chinese border provinces to be, and their incursions became daily more daring and more successful. So discouraged were the Chinese generals by their long ill fortune that they feared to encounter their opponents in the field, and their panic infected the court. In the year A.D. 1004 the Chinese ministers were so far discouraged by the failure of the war with Leaoutung

that they brought forward in council a proposition for the withdrawal of the court from Pienchow or Kaifong, to either Chentu or Kinling. The chief minister, Kaochun, firmly opposed this view, saying that those who originated it were worthy of death, and that the proper place for the Emperor was at the head of his army in the field. Chintsong, who appears to have been of a mild and vacillating character, was won over to the bolder course by the arguments of this minister, but his own timidity represented a permanent obstacle to the carrying-out of a resolute policy. The arguments of Kaochun were always at hand, and in the end carried the day in the struggle going on in Chintsong's mind. The Chinese army crossed the Hoangho in force, with Chintsong at its head. Although the two forces, between whom there was so long a list of previous encounters to decide in favour of one or the other, were now face to face, no action took place. Both sides were disposed to grant a peace without appealing to a conclusive judgment. The Tartars surrendered several towns which they had captured, and the Chinese promised them an annual allowance in silk and money as an indemnity for the expense they had been put to in invading their dominions.

Chintsong had now occupied the throne for seven years, and they had been years of war ; but during the remaining eighteen years of his life the Empire enjoyed a profound peace, when the wealth and prosperity of the nation developed at a rapid rate. But if the consequences of his love of peace were beneficial in many ways, there was little estimable in the change which came over the character of Chintsong after his return from this expedition. One of his first acts was to disgrace the minister Kaochun, who had done such good service in that war, and to deprive him of his high offices, because it was represented to him by one of that minister's enemies that he had committed a breach of etiquette in concluding a treaty of peace under the walls of a town. In deference to a silly superstition, the Emperor banished from his court the only man capable of giving him prudent and disinterested advice. After this Chintsong's downward course was rapid. He gave himself over to the most childish

practices, and became the slave of those persons who flourish on the credulity of mankind. The last fifteen years of his reign afforded the melancholy spectacle of the man who decides the most important events of his life by appealing to a chance of which we cannot possess the key, and by referring to accidents and other fortuitous circumstances which can have nothing whatever to do with the everyday duties and difficulties of life. Chintsong became the bond-slave of the spiritualist and fanatic of his time, and some of the Chinese commentators have given his reign a special significance by making it the starting-point in the decline of the original worship of Changti, or the great God of Heaven.

Little need be said of the sottish practices by which Chintsong placed himself on a level with the least respectable of his subjects. He left the council-hall of the noble and the wise to have intercourse with the adventurer and the charlatan, and in the magician's chamber he found greater pleasure than in the fulfilment of the duties of his position as ruler of a great people. This falling-off in his manner of living was accompanied by an inevitable decline in his moral character. When he neglected and turned his back on his duties he took the first downward step in his career, and when he sought to make up for the deficiencies of his conduct by appeals to prodigies and other miraculous tokens as evidence of the manner in which he was fulfilling his public task, he completed the retrogression he had made in the opinion of all honourable men. His death, in A.D. 1022, closed his reign, which in the commencement had given promise of exceptional brilliance; and in a spirit which we may take either as the height of satire or as the expression of affection, they buried with him the books which were said to have fallen from heaven, and which had been the primal cause of the deterioration in his character, and of the consequent stultification of his reign.

The reigns of these three Emperors, Taitsou, Taitsong, and Chintsong, covering a period of rather more than sixty years, or one longer in duration than the tenure of power by the five preceding dynasties, are remarkable in themselves

as witnessing the revival of the Emperor's authority, and also what may be called the reunion of the Empire. The wars with the Tartars of Leaoutung were not as successful as they should have been, and the danger from that quarter continued until it assumed larger and graver proportions in the hands of the Kins. With that exception the Sung were successful on all sides, and they conferred many benefits on the people of China, which they again raised to the rank of a great Power. The surest test of the progress made by the nation in material well-being is afforded in the official census already more than once mentioned. In the year A.D. 1013 Chintsong ascertained that there were among his subjects nearly twenty-two millions of men occupied in agriculture alone, and when it is remembered that these included neither women nor children, nor those employed in other pursuits, it appears to be a moderate estimate to say that the population of the Sung dominions exceeded one hundred millions. This unimpeachable fact is the strongest evidence in favour of the excellence of the administration of the first three Emperors of the Sung family. When Taitsou came to the front he found the reputation of the Empire sunk to the ground, and only the name of China's greatness remained. By restoring its unity he did much towards repairing the folly of previous rulers, and if it was not destined that the Sung should raise the country to as high a point as it had attained under the great Tsins, Hans, and Tangs, they may certainly claim to have restored to it the blessings—long unknown—of internal peace and good government.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SUNG DYNASTY—*continued.**Jintsong to the change in the Capital.*

JINTSONG, the sixth son of the late ruler, was only thirteen years of age when his father died, and the reins of authority were placed in the hands of his mother. Being a woman not less capable than ambitious, she retained the chief authority until her death, which took place eleven years later, and thus for one-fourth of his long reign Jintsong enjoyed nothing more than the name of power.

The first acts of the Empress-mother were marked by a wisdom and an appreciation of the national wants which never left her government. The unpopular taxes on tea and salt—which the expenses of a prolonged war had rendered it necessary to continue—were repealed, and a board was appointed with authority to supervise the taxation so that the people might not be oppressed. Having thus provided for the interests of the masses, the Empress determined to proceed with vigour against the magicians, spiritualists, and other impostors, who, encouraged by the late ruler, were prospering on the credulity of the nation. To such a pass had the machinations of these personages come that in several provinces they had compelled the doctors to give up their profession by inducing the people to consult them instead in all cases of sickness. An order was issued for the destruction of their meeting-houses, and of their laboratories where they either concocted their noxious drugs or performed their weird ceremonies, and it was carried into execution with all the energy of a body of men who felt that their own interests had

been endangered by the foibles of the Emperor Chintsong. In truth, the danger to public morality and national interests had reached such a pass that extreme measures were necessary to again place the condition of public affairs on a satisfactory and durable foundation.

During the ten years' rule of the Empress-mother there was peace in the land, and her conduct appears to have been throughout most exemplary, although in the last year of her life, whether through a freak of vanity, or with some ulterior design, she usurped certain functions which were considered the prerogative of an Emperor. Her death took place in A.D. 1033, when Jintsong became the responsible ruler of China, and his first act was to pay exceptional honours to the memory of the great minister, Kaochun, who had been disgraced by his father.

During the peace, which had now endured for more than ten years, the rebel who first appeared in the previous reign had consolidated his power, and dying, left a large tract of country to his son. The Tartars of Leaoutung had seen the growth of this new state with some feeling of dismay, and had sought to compass its destruction by the conquest of the territory of the Hiuho in western Kansuh. In this they failed; and Chao Yuen, the grandson of the founder of this state, became the stronger and the more confident. The Emperor sent him the patent of Prince of Hia; but this young ruler, seeing how easy a prey were his northern provinces, thought rather of attacking him than of living with his neighbour on terms of peace and friendship. Meantime he drilled his soldiers every day after the fashion of the Chinese manual, collected arms and munitions of war, and, out of his just appreciation of the decline in the efficiency of the Chinese army through a long peace, originated a policy inimical to the Emperor, and favourable to the Tartars, who had recently striven to bring about the ruin of his state. In A.D. 1034 he turned his arms for the first time against the Chinese, and he employed them with success. He could plead as an excuse that a border governor had given him some justification for commencing hostilities by invading a portion of his territory. He lost some of the fruits of this campaign the

following year in a campaign with the Tibetans, when one of his lieutenants was defeated and taken prisoner. Nothing dispirited, he renewed the war with fresh troops, and placed one hundred and fifty thousand well-trained soldiers in the field. The Tibetans, who then held possession of all the country touching China on the west, could not hold their own against this overwhelming force, and were compelled to give ground before their adversary.

Encouraged by his success, Chao Yuen resolved to assume a higher style than that of Prince of Hia, and "because he came of a family several of whose members had in times past borne the Imperial dignity," he took the title of Emperor. Peaceful as Jintsong's disposition was, he resented the assumption by a neighbour of a dignity equal to his own, and instead of taking measures to improve his relations with this ruler he spared no effort to form a league against him. Having met with some degree of success in these plans, he issued a proclamation forbidding his subjects to hold any intercourse with the people of Hia, and placed a price on the head of their king. Chao Yuen, enraged at this slight to his honour, answered threat with threat, and returned Jintsong the letters-patent which had on various occasions been sent him by Chinese rulers. The war thus provoked proved long, and disastrous for the arms of the Empire.

Well trained in its duties, and skilfully led by its great chief, the Hia army was able to take the field several weeks before the slower moving and less efficient forces of the Chinese ruler. The advantage of this celerity was shown by the capture of several towns, and by the moral strength which attaches to those who strike the first successful blow. Before Jintsong's troops had reached the frontier, Chao Yuen had advanced to a considerable distance within the Chinese territory. The armies encountered for the first time near the town of Sanchuen, when, after a stubborn fight of three days' duration, the advantage remained with the Hias. They came together again close to the town of Yang Mouloung, and as both armies were in great force and equally confident of victory, this may be considered the decisive battle of the war. Each felt it to be so, and the commanders on either side

resorted to various schemes to obtain some slight advantage of position over their opponent. In these preliminary manœuvres, Chao Yuen, who commanded in person, showed greater skill than Jintsong's lieutenants, and his plan of action was so ably conceived that he succeeded in surrounding the Chinese army, and in taking it at a great disadvantage. The Chinese fought with desperation, but the result was never in doubt. One after another their generals fell fighting bravely in the thick of the combat, and when night closed the flower of Jintsong's army encumbered the plain. Jinfou, the commanding-officer, was wounded in several places, and entreated by one of his soldiers to quit the field, but he exclaimed, "I withdraw! the general of this army. The battle is indeed lost, but I can and ought to die." His body was afterwards found amid the thickest of the slain.

From this rude shock the Chinese did not easily recover. The consequences of so signal a defeat were made less serious than might have been anticipated by the prudence and good judgment shown by other commanders on the same frontier; but the success of the Hia king remained undimmed by any reverse. Jintsong was threatened by a fresh danger at this crisis. The Tartars of Leaoutung, seeing in this defeat a fresh chance for renewing their incursions, attacked the border towns, and acquired possession of no fewer than ten cities. These they restored under the terms of a treaty in A.D. 1042; but the bad days, when the Empire trusted for peace and for the preservation of its rights to the skill of diplomatists rather than to the strong arm of a great government, were again threatening to return. The Tartars had obtained an ample recompense for their expedition in the plunder of several rich districts; but over and above this the weakness of the Emperor consented to give them an increased allowance of silk and money in addition to the annual present granted by Chintsong.

In the same year negotiations were opened with Chao Yuen, the victorious king of Hia, and, although technical difficulties were raised in the path of the conclusion of a peace, Jintsong taking the matter into his own hands soon brought it to a speedy and successful issue. Seeing that

Chao Yuen was restored to all his dignities, and that the Emperor agreed to pay him each year one hundred thousand pieces of silk and thirty thousand pounds of tea, there was little in this treaty for the Chinese to feel proud of, although at the time it arrested what appeared to be a grave danger from a successful soldier. In the following year the concessions were further augmented by the right conceded to Chao Yuen to construct fortified places on his frontier; but, although thus endeavouring to conclude and maintain a solid peace, there was distrust on both sides.

Jintsong was able, after these treaties, and especially after the death of his principal opponent, to devote himself with greater assiduity to his natural inclination for peace. Among the most notable of his acts were the re-establishment of the colleges on their ancient footing as under the Tangs, and some other measures which he sanctioned for the advancement of national education. On the recommendation of his minister Fang Chung Yen, he caused a college to be built in every town, and appointed lecturers and professors to hold examinations and to direct the studies of the collegians. Jintsong was especially interested in the raising of the standard of public speaking, and gave prizes for excellence in recitation. On the occasion of a visit to the chief college in the capital, dedicated to Confucius, Jintsong, wishing to show his respect for the man and the cause he represented, paid his memory the peculiar honour of prostrating himself before the door of the college.

Some years later, when his reign was approaching its close (A.D. 1060), he took steps for the publication of the great history of the Tangs as described in the official records of the Empire. The chief historians of the day were entrusted with its preparation, and as these included, among others of scarcely less note, the celebrated Ssemakwang, there is no doubt that this work, which filled two hundred and twenty-five volumes, is one of the most remarkable in the literature of China. The writings of Ssemakwang, Ginyang Sieou, Lieouju, and others, redeem Jintsong's reign from the character of mediocrity which might otherwise attach to it, if they do not absolutely stamp it as the golden age of literature

under the Sung. To the same period also belongs the introduction of the influence of the learned into the practical work of the administration. The historians named, and others, including the minister Fang Chung Yen, combined together to carry their views into execution, and as they were united among themselves, their influence was very great, and made itself felt on all important questions. Complaints were made by the courtiers to the Emperor against this body of critics, whose pencils were always ready to denounce measures not approved of by them, and to point out the shortcomings of ministers. At one time Jintsong seemed disposed to discourage, if not to repress, the activity of this body, because "men in the public service should not form a party amongst themselves." Ginyang Sieou, one of the most elegant of Chinese writers, replied to this covert censure in a treatise which has been preserved. The line of argument which he adopted was ingenious, pointing out that the results of their association were good and beneficial for the nation, and that it was not to be confounded "with dangerous cabals formed for an unworthy object." The peace enjoyed during the last twenty years of Jintsong's reign cannot be held to have been turned to an unworthy purpose when we find that the arts and literature were held in such repute, and produced so many illustrious men.

In A.D. 1063, Jintsong died, having occupied the throne during more than thirty years. His virtues were greater and more transparent than his abilities; but, if he failed to perform any striking achievement, or to leave any deep impression in history, he succeeded in the not easy task of gaining the affection of his subjects, and the esteem of those who served under him.

The short reign of his nephew Yntsong, his successor, requires but brief description. Ill-health compelled him at first to resign the reins of government into the hands of the Empress-mother, who proved herself well able to administer public affairs, and when he resumed the discharge of his duties he devoted his time rather to the relaxation of study than to the cares of his office. His principal object was to provide Ssemakwang and other writers with appropriate tasks

for their talents, and to profit by discussion with them. Had he lived he might have shown that he had turned their counsels to good account, but his death in A.D. 1067, after a reign of four years, cut short his career, and left only the promise of what might have been.

Yntsong's son, Chintsong the Second, succeeded him, and soon showed that in many ways he was disposed to depart from the peaceful policy of his two predecessors. The necessities of the country, which had been long suffering from a scarcity produced by the want of rain, imposed fetters on his inclination, and the advice of his mother further influenced him in adopting the prudent course of running as little risk as possible in foreign expeditions. Meanwhile the army was losing its efficiency through the long period of inaction that had followed the last war, and the country did not possess the services of a general capable of leading a large force in the field. The peaceful inclinations of these rulers produced beneficial results for the time being ; but they were in the end to entail dire consequences, and great national misfortunes.

The young monarch became the tool of a clique which endeavoured to compass the disgrace of Hanki, the chief minister of the two preceding rulers, and they succeeded so far in their designs that he felt compelled to resign his office. On the occasion of his retirement, he was asked whether one of his rivals was a proper person to succeed him. He replied, with candour, that he might possibly be of service in the Hanlin College, but that he had not had the necessary experience for the highest office of all. When Hanki was warned of the danger his candour entailed, he made the following noble reply, "A faithful subject ought ever to serve his prince with all the zeal of which he is capable. Good or bad fortune depends on Heaven, and, when we have done what we ought, should fear prevent us from continuing in the path of well-doing?" None the less for the excellent advice of the retiring sage, Chintsong gave the chief post in the ministry to this untried official, whose enactments excited so much discontent among the people, and such opposition in the palace, that they had to be withdrawn. The ascendancy which he obtained over the mind of the young monarch was

so great that, although banished from court on several occasions, he was always recalled and entrusted with some fresh office. Wanganchi—such was the name of this clever and unscrupulous minister or charlatan—was one of the most remarkable men who have figured in the history of his country. Although denounced as an impostor, he might, if he had met with better success in his plans, have been handed down to posterity as one of the great Chinese reformers and national benefactors.

Wanganchi is described as a man of great attainments and much original power of thought. He compiled a cyclopædia, and wrote commentaries on the classical writers; and he did not scruple to imitate the practice of many who came before and after him, and pervert the sense or strain the words of his author to extract a hidden meaning for adding some corroborative evidence in favour of his own views. Like all reformers, he drew a picture in sanguine colours of the consequences that would ensue from his proposals, and his enthusiasm at times carried the whole force of public opinion round to his side. But his schemes were Utopian. "The State," he declared, "should take the entire management of commerce, industry, and agriculture, into its own hands, with the view of succouring the working classes and preventing their being ground to the dust by the rich." During his term of office, these views were carried into execution. The poor were to be exempt from taxation, land was allotted to them, and the seed-corn provided. Every one was to have a sufficiency; there were to be no poor, no over-rich. The masses expected that their chosen minister would confer on them the greatest benefits, and the least discomfort entailed by human existence. China was to rejoice in an ideal happiness, because the people were to possess the main advantages of life which were stated to be plenty and pleasure.

These dreams were rudely dispelled by the reality. Although tribunals were appointed to direct and supervise the operations of the peasant proprietors, and although theoretically—man being assumed to be a perfect machine, unbiassed by passion or sordid motives—the scheme should have proved successful, and should have conferred great

benefits on the people, it as a matter of fact produced none of these results, and was an unqualified failure. In Shensi, where it was most extensively put into practice, the cultivated land became greatly reduced in area and impoverished in quality, not merely through the unskilful treatment of the small holder, but also on account of the dislike inherent in man to protracted labour for which he does not see an immediate return. The statesman-historian, Ssemakwang, showed sounder judgment and a more accurate estimate of human nature than his rival when he denounced these views as chimerical. But as men are swayed by their hopes, and as the statesman, whose argument is based on what the future—painted in his own brilliant colours—may bring forth, must always have the advantage over, and attract more sympathy than, those who dwell on the merits of the past and oppose change, Wanganchi triumphed over the sage Ssemakwang, and long had the great majority of his countrymen at his back. It was only when it could no longer be denied that his schemes had proved abortive, and that his regulations were mischievous, that he lost the sympathy of the public which had sustained him in his contest with the learned classes headed by Ssemakwang. The royal favour supported him for a short time longer, and then came his fall. He survived his disgrace ten years, dying in the year A.D. 1086, when a new ruler had succeeded his patron Chintsong. He protested to the end that his scheme was sound, and admitted of practical application; but he does not appear to have been wronged in being styled the Chinese Socialist or visionary and speculative minister of the eleventh century. His fortunes proved scarcely less fluctuating after his death than they had been during his life. In the year following his decease the Empress Regent prohibited, under penalty of dismissal from the public service, the use of his commentaries, which had been in vogue. Twenty years later his name was placed in the Hall of Confucius, on the ground that since Mencius there had been no one to compare with Wanganchi—a privilege of which the Emperor Kintsong deprived his memory in A.D. 1126, when Wanganchi's name finally disappeared from the public records.

Chintsong's last acts were to divide his dominions into twenty-three provinces, and to receive from the hands of the great historians the works upon which they had laboured for nearly twenty years. His death occurred in A.D. 1085, when he left peaceable possession of his dominions to his son Chetsong. Chintsong had studiously followed the example of his predecessors, and, whatever his original inclination for war may have been, he had repressed his martial instincts and given China eighteen more years of undisturbed peace. The Tartars of Leaoutung had made a further advance, and seized the cities which Chitsong of the later Chow dynasty had wrested from them. This accession of territory was far from being unimportant, and instead of solving the frontier question, added rather to the growing gravity of the situation.

As Chetsong was only ten years of age, the Empress-mother assumed the functions of government as Regent, and during her life the country rejoiced in a tranquillity which was the direct consequence of her wise administration. Her virtues were those which commended themselves most to her countrymen, who in their gratitude compared her reign to the semi-mythical period of perfection when Chun and Yao were the patriarchal rulers of a contented people. But even she dared not provoke a war with the Tartars. In A.D. 1090 they restored a few officers and soldiers taken prisoners during previous expeditions, but in turn insisted, under the threat of hostilities in the event of refusal, on the surrender of four fortified towns in the province of Shensi. The threat sufficed, and the towns were handed over to these insatiable opponents. The same year witnessed floods on a tremendous scale in the provinces of Chekiang and Kiangnan, when it is computed that nearly one million persons perished. The Regent's death, two years after this calamity, left Chetsong alone to cope with the dangers of his situation on his own resources. There were great questions to be dealt with at home, and the periodical visitations, now of drought and again of floods, were a constant source of anxiety to the ruler and of loss to the people, while on the northern frontier the war-cloud caused by Tartar ambition and military vigour was steadily assuming larger proportions.

His first acts were ill calculated to enlist public confidence. The eunuchs were recalled to the power from which they had been so long banished, and they set themselves to the task of undoing as much as they could of the work the late Empress had accomplished. Under their influence, Chetsong divorced his Empress—a step of the greatest gravity in Chinese eyes, and one not to be taken by even an Emperor save when morally justified—and when remonstrated with he replied with indifference that “he was only imitating several of his predecessors.” “You would do better,” retorted the public censor, “to imitate their virtues and not their faults.” He was not to be turned from his purpose, and having deposed one Empress he exalted another of his wives to her place. This domestic change did not prove auspicious. The infant son of the new Empress, on whom Chetsong’s hopes had centred, died soon after her elevation, and Chetsong himself expired of grief at his loss the same year* (A.D. 1100).

His reign of fifteen years had on the whole been peaceful. The incursions of the Hias had been checked, and two victories in the field added an unknown lustre to the Chinese arms; but it is probable that the importance of these successes is exaggerated in the Court chronicles. However, they signify at least that the border governors were strong enough to maintain peace on the western frontier.

When Chetsong died he had not named an heir after the loss of his son, because, it is naively recorded, “he did not expect to die so soon.” The troubles that might have ensued through a disputed succession were averted by the firmness of his widow, who pronounced herself in favour of Chetsong’s brother Chaoki, Prince of Twan. Chaoki took the name of Hoeitsong, and during his reign the troubles, of which the premonitory symptoms had been so long apparent, broke out.

* A sage presented Chetsong with a small book containing ten precepts as essential for the guidance of a ruler’s conduct. They were :
1. Fear Heaven. 2. Love the people. 3. Work to make yourself perfect.
4. Apply yourself to the sciences. 5. Raise wise men to the public service. 6. Listen to the advice which is offered you. 7. Diminish taxation. 8. Moderate the rigour of the law. 9. Avoid pomp. 10. Fly from debauchery.—Pauthier, p. 345.

Hoeitsong at first followed in the wake of the policy marked out for him by the Empress Mongchi, and the wise minister Hanchong Yen. But he soon wearied of following a set course, for he preferred to indulge his own inclinations. Open to flattery, he was unable to see through the snares of those of his courtiers who praised every trifle that he performed; while his superstition and credulous disposition made him a tool in the hands of the astute personages who were intriguing for the possession of power. With the ingratitude of weak minds, he turned upon his benefactress Mongchi, whom he deposed from her proper rank, and he also banished from his Court all the ministers whom he had accepted during the first year of his reign. He gave himself over to the superstitious practices, and to the study of magic, which were condemned in the case of the first Chintsong, and wished that his people should call him by a title signifying "the Emperor who is the master of the law and the prince of doctrine." To this testimony of his infallibility the nation refused to subscribe, and the attempt to force it on his people is only remembered as the extravagance of a weak ruler.

Hoeitsong's vanity was in no sense inferior to his incapacity to appreciate the exact character of his position. Surrounded by flatterers who echoed his opinions, he never saw the reality of the dangers which menaced him. He conceived that he had but to command for his orders to be obeyed and carried into execution; and he treated all his neighbours as petty potentates who would never dare to dispute the proposals which he might condescend to make to them. There was no friend at his elbow, no capable minister, to warn him that his views were erroneous. The enterprise which he desired to undertake was a great and a perilous one, but he entered upon it "with a light heart." It required brave soldiers, skilful generals, and wise ministers to bring it to a happy conclusion. He had none of these; but he trusted to the magic of his name, and inferred from the prognostics of the augurs a speedy and a happy result. It was in obedience not to the promptings of a great ambition, but to the dictates of a petty vanity, that Hoeitsong rushed blindly on his fate.

The Niuche or Chorchu Tartars, who more than a century before had come to settle in China, had steadily multiplied and gathered to themselves a considerable power. Their seven hordes represented a military force of considerable proportions, which had become subservient to the Leaoutung administration in the time of the great Apaoki. But a large number of them, sooner than surrender their privileges, had withdrawn beyond the reach of the Khitan power into the country which is now Manchuria. Early in the twelfth century, however, this people had come together again, and the remembrance of their common origin caused them to form a fresh alliance, and one having moreover its foundation in a mutual antipathy to the Khitans of Leaoutung. Among these there appeared a great warrior, Akouta, who first distinguished himself in battle in the year A.D. 1114 against his Khitan neighbours and the oppressors of his race. Inspired by his first success, he led his army from victory to victory, taking many towns and subjecting a large extent of territory. The rapidity of his conquest induced him to proclaim himself Emperor, when he assembled his army in order that it should witness the proclamation of the new government, and the announcement of the name by which he intended it to be known.

Akouta began his address by informing his soldiers that the Khitans had in the earlier days of their success taken the name of Pintiei, meaning the iron of Pinchow, but he went on to say, "Although the iron of Pinchow may be excellent, it is liable to rust, and can be eaten away. There is nothing save gold which is unchangeable, and which does not destroy itself. Moreover, the family of Wangyen, with which I am connected through the chief Hanpou, had always a great fancy for glittering colours such as that of gold, and I am now resolved to take this name as that of my Imperial family. I therefore give it the name of Kin, which signifies gold." In this proclamation (A.D. 1115) is to be found the origin of the Kin dynasty, the rival of the Sung.

After this ceremony, the Tartar king of Leaoutung realized that he would have to fight for the preservation of his kingdom, if not of his independence. The danger which had so

suddenly arisen on his frontier had imperceptibly assumed serious proportions, and threatened his very existence almost before he was aware of the approach of the struggle that was at hand. He then placed a larger army than before in the field—its numbers were computed at nearly three hundred thousand men, of whom the greater portion were cavalry. The Kin army was greatly inferior both in numbers and in the pomp of war, but Akouta knew that this show of strength was far from being real, and felt confident of victory. The result justified his anticipations. The immense army raised out of all the provinces from Shensi to Corea was scattered to the winds, and the baggage of the camp became the spoil of the victor. The results of a second victory in the same year were still more striking, and the defeated Khitans fled before the invaders, just as a century later the Kins themselves were to flee before the Mongols of Genghis.

It was not until two years after these events that Hoeitsong received tidings of the disasters which had been inflicted on the Khitan ruler. His first thought was to turn them to his own advantage, and in the ambitious schemes which he formed he never entertained the possibility of the Kins proving worse neighbours than the Khitans. He thought the former would be well disposed to play his game, and return to their own solitudes on payment of so many bundles of silk and pounds of silver, leaving him the undisputed possessor of long-lost provinces. On this point he was to be speedily undeceived. The King of Corea sent an envoy to warn him against the Kins, who were represented to be "worse than wolves and tigers;" but Hoeitsong was not to be turned from the path which he had chosen even by the representations of his best friends.

Akouta received the Chinese Embassy, sent to propose a joint alliance against the Khitans, with all the ceremony due to the Emperor and to the mission with which his representative came charged. Some turn in the war with the Khitans, of which no details have been preserved, induced Akouta to conclude a truce with his enemy, when the advantage of an alliance with the Chinese ruler became less obvious to him. He pretended to take offence at the style

of Hoeitsong's letter, and the negotiations were abruptly broken off. The truce between the Kins and the Khitans proved short-lived, and the abortive alliance between the Chinese and Kins on a perfect level of equality was again broached and concluded. Hoeitsong consented to call Akouta the Great Emperor of the Kins, and Akouta agreed for his part to assist the Chinese in obtaining possession of the Yen province, which formed the southern portion of the dominions of the Khitans. Each of the allies was to place a large army in the field, and the Khitans were to be finally crushed as if "between the upper and the nether millstone."

The alliance proved of a nature not conducive to its permanence. The Chinese army was slow to take the field, and when it crossed over into Yen, the Khitans met and defeated it in several encounters. The Tartars who had first won Empire under the great Apaoki might have to confess a superior in the hardier kinsmen who, under the name of Kins, were issuing from beyond their northern frontier, but they were still incontestably the superiors, as warriors, of the Chinese, whom a long peace had rendered effeminate and deprived of generals. When Hoeitsong's commanders sought to retrieve their bad fortune in the following year, they were treated still more roughly by Sioua, the Khitan general, and their army was ignominiously expelled from the district they hoped to conquer. The peasants of Yen made jokes and composed ballads about the inexperience of Hoeitsong's lieutenants, and the rude reception they had met with in their country.

Akouta's plans fared better. The Khitan army feared to encounter his, and their king fled before him to the desert of Shamo. A body of fresh troops, sent to his assistance by the Prince of Hia, was intercepted on the march, and severely defeated. The greatness of his own success, and the failure of Hoeitsong's attempt on Yen, led Akouta to place less value on the Chinese alliance, and to indulge hopes of extending his dominion beyond the dominions of the Khitan ruler. Hoeitsong's anxiety to acquire fresh territory was so great that he ignored the sentiment passing through the mind of his Kin ally, and, wishing to obtain as large a share as possible

of the spoil, sent an embassy to propose that to the province of Yen, which his armies had failed to conquer, there should be added several neighbouring cities as well. Akouta had no difficulty in exposing the unreasonable nature of this demand, and compelled Hoeitsong to make large concessions in other matters to obtain his consent to an arrangement which he was fully resolved to break at the first favourable opportunity. For the sake of maintaining an appearance of unity in face of the yet unsubdued Khitans, the old oaths were re-sworn, and the formalities of a defensive and offensive alliance performed over again.

Akouta then turned with all his energy to the task of finally vanquishing the Khitan king on the one hand, and that prince's victorious general Sioua on the other. The latter enterprise appeared the more difficult, and was the first essayed. Meantime the fragments of the two defeated Chinese armies had been collected and placed under the command of a fresh general, while Akouta detached a large body of his troops to attack the Prince of Yen on the north. Akouta's force was completely successful, while the Chinese troops remained passive spectators of the fray. Sioua and the Regent Princess, lately rejoicing at the repulse of Hoeitsong's armies, saw their hopes shattered like a house of cards at the first contact with the Kins, and were compelled to flee for safety. The province of Yen was thus at last subdued; but it had been conquered by the valour of the Kins, not by that of the Chinese, and Akouta had no intention of resigning his hold over it.

In the meanwhile Akouta was prosecuting in person the campaign against the unfortunate Khitan king, the descendant of the great Apaoki. With the few troops left at his disposal, the latter strove to check the victorious career of his opponent, but bad fortune attended all his measures. The strategy by which he sought to replace the want of numbers and of confidence was foiled, and the loss of his eldest son in battle further disheartened this last scion of a royal race. Despairing of success, he resolved to abstain from further effort, and to take refuge within the dominions of the Prince of Hia; but even there he found no certain shelter from his enemies, and

was fain to retire into the desert. During two years he led there a wandering existence, when he had often to go without proper nourishment, and was constantly in fear of his pursuers. In the year A.D. 1125 a detachment of the Kin army took him prisoner, and he died shortly afterwards of an illness brought on by physical suffering and grief at his misfortunes. With his death, the illustrious dynasty of the Khitans or Leaous reached its termination. It had held power from a period fifty years* before the accession of the Sung to this date, when the hand of destiny was already beckoning to those Chinese rulers, although half their course had not yet been run.

The great chief Akouta had not lived to behold the final triumph of his arms. Seized with a violent illness he had died suddenly in A.D. 1123, leaving his Empire to his brother Oukimai. The Chinese themselves praise his extraordinary aptitude for war, and in a not less degree that rare gift, the capacity of judging one's fellows and knowing how best to employ their talents, which carried him to the height of fortune, and rendered it true to say of him that he succeeded with everything which he undertook. In his character may be seen the germ of the great qualities which enabled the Manchus to complete, five hundred years later, the task almost accomplished by their ancestors the Kins.

Meanwhile the much-disputed province of Yen had been placed under the nominal authority of the Emperor by the treachery of one of the Kin governors, but Hoeitsong did not long rejoice in the possession of a province which he had so much coveted. He was obliged to send Oukimai the head of the rebellious governor, and to acquiesce in the re-establishment of Kin authority. Numerous signs were seen in the air predicting a coming change, and the public mind was much

* A.D. 907-1125. "Even in their ashes lived their wonted fires." A Khitan prince, at the head of the relics of his army and his race, like an Asiatic Æneas, crossed the Gobi Desert, and penetrated into Central Asia, where, after conquering several Mahomedan states, he founded the kingdom of the Kara Khitay (in which name its origin is proclaimed), and assumed the title of Gurkhan. This dynasty endured for 77 years (A.D. 1124-1201), when it was extinguished by Koshluk, the King of the Naimans. The Gurkhan is one of the potentates identified with Prester John.

exercised by the doubts and dangers which beset the Sung ruler. The Kins, full of the exultation of victory, demanded the surrender of all the country north of the Hoangho, and their ambassadors warned the Chinese ministers in no uncertain language that they would be conferring a real benefit on the Sung House by complying without delay or useless opposition. There is a wisdom of the highest character in timely concessions, but few distressed potentates have ever recognized it. The Kin troops proceeded to carry out the plan proposed by their ruler, and Hoeitsong bent before the approaching storm. He resigned his place to his son Kintsong, who was to bear the whole brunt of the danger ; but even by a cowardly abdication Hoeitsong could not escape all the penalty of the acts of weakness and irresolution which had reduced the state to this helpless condition in the face of a powerful foe.

Kintsong endeavoured by a proffer of friendship to arrest the further advance of the Kin army, but his offers were treated with scorn.

The Chinese troops were defeated in several engagements, and failed to defend the crossing of the Hoangho, where a small body of determined troops could have successfully arrested the advance of a host. The Kin general exclaimed, when he found his men marshalled on the southern bank without having encountered any opposition, that "there could not be a man left in China, for if two thousand men had defended the passage of this river, we should never have succeeded in crossing it." The invaders then continued their march on the capital, from which Hoeitsong fled for safety to Nankin, leaving his son to make the best stand he could against the invader. The Kin general Walipou carried everything before him, and menaced the capital Kaifong ; but the Kins had not yet determined how far they should prosecute their enterprise against the Sung. There were many among them who considered that the Hoangho marked the proper limit of their sway. Fresh negotiations ensued, and a treaty was concluded, on the strength of which Hoeitsong returned to Kaifong.

But Walipou himself desired above all things to humble

the Sung by the occupation of their capital, and he refused to abide by the terms of the treaty. Although compelled once to beat a retreat, Walipou returned in greater force, when the armies which the next Emperor Kintsong, encouraged by his previous withdrawal, sent out to meet him were beaten with heavy loss. The Kins then laid close siege to the capital, Kaifong. The garrison, mustering in all seventy thousand men, prepared to defend itself to the last extremity, while fresh troops were ordered from the south. Thirty thousand men arrived from Kwantung, and took up a position near the Tartar camp before Kaifong. There was even some reason for hope that the want of supplies might oblige Walipou to retreat before many months if only the place could hold out for a short period. Such was the view of Prince Kang Wang and of the braver spirits among the Chinese; but his brother Kintsong was altogether in favour of a peaceful settlement and for buying off the national enemy. A successful assault, when the ramparts and gates were captured by the Kins, seemed to justify Kintsong's view, and Kaifong would then have fallen into the hands of the Tartars but that Walipou refused to waste valuable lives in the street fighting for which the Sung generals had made elaborate preparations. Kintsong thereupon proceeded to the Kin camp to arrange the terms of the peace which had become inevitable.

The Tartars, true to their nature, demanded, in the first place, a large sum of money, which Kintsong was weak enough to promise, although he knew well that he could not procure it. When Walipou's followers discovered that there was not much likelihood of their obtaining the spoil, which they had probably in their greed already apportioned, there was so loud an outcry that Kintsong was detained a prisoner and prevented returning to his capital. The late ruler Hoeitsong, and all the members of the Royal House resident at Kaifong, were induced to seek the shelter of the Tartar camp. They were then conveyed into Tartary, where both Hoeitsong and Kintsong died at long intervals. The later triumphs of the Kins are undoubtedly to be attributed to the inadequate measures taken by these two Emperors for the defence of their dominions.

Walipou was not satisfied with the plunder of the capital and the carrying off of almost all the members of the reigning House. He aspired to give China a new dynasty. A creature of the Court was proclaimed Emperor, and enjoyed nominal power while the Kin army was close at hand ; but as soon as Walipou retreated he was set aside. The Sung dynasty was restored in the person of Kang Wang, who took the name of Kaotsong, and the condition of the realm reverted to its former footing, with the exception that the Kin state or Empire, as it was justly called, represented a larger and more powerful autocracy than that of the Khitans had been. Henceforth, until their conquest by the Mongols, these two Empires ruled concurrently over China. The Sung retain in history the exclusive right to the dynastic title, but the Kins continued to represent a more vigorous community, a stronger government, and a greater military power. They would, probably, in course of time have succeeded in extending their authority over the southern as well as the northern provinces which had fallen so rapidly into their grasp, but for the sudden growth of the Mongol power under the brilliant leadership of Genghis Khan and his successors.

The causes of the decadence of the Sung and of the inability of these later Emperors to oppose the Tartar hordes and armies are sufficiently clear, if they do not absolutely lie on the surface. "For nearly two hundred years," wrote the Empress to Kang Wang, "the nation appears to have forgotten the art of war," and although the virtuous Sung strove to promote the best interests of the people, they forgot that self-preservation is the first law not only of individuals, but of communities. Ruler succeeded ruler, who made it his chief object to maintain peace, and the state-policy consisted in paying the necessary price to buy off the danger threatened by the neighbouring tribes. Sometimes a young ruler, new to the practices of the court, and desirous of witnessing the parade of war, would depart from precedent and resolve to subdue turbulent races, or to wrest lost provinces from an alien ruler ; but in every case he repented of his freak when brought face to face with the grim reality. He repented the more quickly, indeed, because he speedily found that war is

not a game that admits of castle-building with impunity. The long peace had deprived the government of an army ; there were no skilful captains ; and the magazines were empty. The Sung Empire was a sham in so far that the sword with which its authority could be alone sustained was brittle, and wielded by a nerveless arm.

It is permissible to detect in the peaceful policy of the Sungs the high state of civilization which they had attained. Had their neighbours been persons of equally pacific dispositions, it is quite possible that the system of buying off inconvenient claims might have continued for an indefinite period ; but against Tartar and Turk tribes, lawless marauders and desperate chiefs, it could have but the one result of inflaming instead of satisfying their greed. The Sungs matched their well-known desire for peace, and their skill in that diplomacy of the artful and inferior kind that sometimes has its origin in weakness, and that ever fails to attain durable success, against the ambition, avarice, and consciousness of inherent strength of the northern states ; and the result was necessarily a failure. To Akouta and Oukimai, or their general Walipou, the subterfuges of the Sungs appeared in the same light that the arguments of the Roman citizens appeared to Brennus the Gaul.

The absence of that military power which, as a matter of fact, the Sungs never possessed in any large degree, but which is the only solid foundation for the maintenance of independence by any government, left Hoeitsong and Kintsong, during his brief reign of one year, defenceless in the face of a determined foe. Large armies of men were placed in the field, but throughout these later campaigns not one deed reflecting any credit on the arms of China was performed. The incompetence of the eunuchs entrusted with command was rivalled, if not surpassed, by the cowardice and aversion to battle of the men. With such an army, a campaign was really lost before it had begun.

The truth is made more emphatic by the events of this period, that no government can expect to endure which persistently closes its eyes to the first duty it has to perform—the defence of the country or the Empire against an

external enemy. It must be prepared to pursue a strong policy, and it must also possess the means to carry it out. It should strive to anticipate and to turn aside or roll back coming dangers, for the first step in retreat when the storm is raging marks the knell of empires. The Sungs failed to see the plain truth, and they fell.

Kang Wang's first act was to order the withdrawal of the capital from Kienfong to Nankin, and, although his qualities were of a higher order than those of most of his predecessors, this retrograde step could only prove, as it did, the beginning of the end of the Sung dynasty.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SUNGS AND THE KINS.

KAOTSONG began his reign at a moment of supreme difficulty. The wave of Tartar invasion had indeed retired beyond the frontier, leaving in its track a devastated region, but at any moment it might return. The Chinese power had never been reduced to a lower point than at this epoch, and the Kins, with two Emperors in their possession, might endeavour to attain the climax of their triumph by capturing the third. The crisis required a great mind to grapple with it, and it was doubtful how far Kaotsong would prove equal to the occasion. The bold spirit of the Empress Mongchi alone rose to the gravity of the situation, and her stirring words cannot but have inspired with fresh courage the young prince on whose capacity and conduct the whole future of Southern China depended. The messages sent from their place of imprisonment by his captive father and wife served also to restore his courage depressed by recent defeat. They exhorted him not to forget that they were held captive in a foreign land, and that they had only him to look to for aid. The greatness of the task entrusted to him should have made Kaotsong equal to the part he had to play; but, as it turned out, the burden proved greater than he could support.

Having proclaimed the general amnesty usual on the occasion of the advent to power of a new ruler, and having removed, as already stated, the capital from Kaifong to Nankin, Kaotsong authorized his minister Likang to take the steps necessary for the raising of a larger army, and for

the reform of prevailing abuses. Great attention was to be paid to the disciplining of the cavalry, and to the formation of a special corps of charioteers; but these reforms never advanced beyond an incipient stage. Likang's tenure of office was of very brief duration. Two months after his elevation he was disgraced, and with him disappeared the reforms which had not been more than fairly commenced. Once Kaotsong made this false step his downward course was rapid. He placed the guidance of affairs in the hands of a few inexperienced courtiers, and resigned himself to their influence. The first use to which they turned their power was to secure the disgrace of Likang, and the next to induce Kaotsong to again change his capital from Nankin to Yangchow, because the latter was "nearer the sea." Already Kaotsong was more anxious for the preservation of his life than for the overthrow of the national enemy.

The Kin general Niyamoho, who had succeeded to all, and more than all, the influence of Walipou, saw in these changes too favourable an opportunity to be neglected for renewing the enterprise against the Chinese of the south. His armies accordingly took the field in several directions, and had it not been for the skill and fortitude shown by Tsongtse, the governor of Kaifong, they would undoubtedly have succeeded in again snatching that great city from the Sung. In every other direction they were successful, and before the campaign closed, having suffered only one reverse in the field, Niyamoho had the satisfaction of gaining a decided victory over Tsongtse in person. The battle was more stubbornly contested than any recent encounter had been, and it was evident that the Chinese were recovering their martial qualities, while in Tsongtse they possessed a skilful captain. Niyamoho, recognizing the valour of his antagonist, withdrew his forces on this occasion, content with having sustained the lustre of his arms, and with having acquired possession of a vast amount of booty, and of some important cities.

Encouraged by the state of the Empire, and by the weak conduct of Kaotsong, several rebels appeared in arms, and disturbed large tracts of territory with their presence. The

Tartars withdrawn, Tsongtse turned all his attention to the pacification of these troubled districts, and to the restoration of internal peace. The tact and judgment he evinced in this task were not less remarkable than the skill and valour he had shown in war. He had the wisdom to abstain from the rigorous measures usually put in force against rebels, and he won them back to their allegiance by gentle treatment. On one occasion he excited general admiration by riding with a single attendant into the camp of a rebel, who was so struck by the gallant conduct of the Chinese governor that he then and there gave in his surrender, and promised to serve with his followers against the Tartars. Tsongtse's reputation was greatly increased by these moral triumphs, and when he petitioned the Emperor to return to Kaifong the voice of the nation was unanimous in favour of his request. There was a reasonable chance even at this late period that the Sung power might be revived, as the Kins were regarded with aversion by the peoples whom they had recently subdued. But Kaotsong refused to comply, although Tsongtse sent twenty formal applications to him. He preferred the feeling of safety afforded by the prospect of the junks on the Yangtse from his retreat at Yangchow. His weakness carried its own penalty, but its immediate consequence was to cause the death of Tsongtse from an illness aggravated, if not produced, by chagrin.

The death of Tsongtse removed the only obstacle the Tartars recognized to the renewal of their incursions south of the Hoangho. Niyamoho and Olito, the son of the great chief Akouta, took the field with fresh forces and vigour when they heard of the death of the man who had alone rendered doubtful the result of the previous year's campaign. A rapid succession of victories, and the capture of several important places showed that the Emperor had lost in Tsongtse the true guardian of his frontier, and that his troops fought with indifferent courage and success when they had no confidence in their commanders. So quickly did the Tartar Kins advance that Kaotsong felt himself insecure in his palace at Yangchow, and fled across the Yangtse for greater safety. Yangchow fell into the possession of

Niyamoho, who fired the palace, and then withdrew to carry on his depredations in another quarter.

Kaotsong's flight from his capital had saved him from his external enemies only to leave him face to face with the domestic opponents who had long complained of the weakness of his conduct. A mutinous army and discontented officials were scarcely less objects of dread to him than the hordes of the Kins. Personally they were his bitterer foes, for when they had brought about the disgrace and execution of the chief of the eunuchs they refused to rest satisfied with anything short of the abdication of Kaotsong himself. Kaotsong, deserted by the army, was constrained to submit to the commands of the mutineers, and to retire in favour of his son, an infant only three years old. Within a month of his fall he was, however, restored to power by a revulsion of opinion among the soldiers in his favour.

The first question with which Kaotsong had then to deal was the conclusion of a peace with the Kins, who were again on the point of invading the country. On the first occasion the haughtiness of his ambassador irritated Niyamoho so much that he caused him to be sent into captivity in Tartary, and on the second, when Kaotsong wrote a humble letter imploring peace, the Kin general did not deign to reply. The straits to which Kaotsong was reduced were indeed deplorable, but to narrate them to an enemy could only result in exciting his contempt. Kaotsong recognized in this latter document the supreme power of the Kins, and expressed his willingness to concede everything that was demanded of him.

The Kins continued their advance, compelling the inhabitants of the conquered districts to shave their heads in token of their subjection—a practice renewed five centuries later by their descendants the Manchus. On their approach Kaotsong fled to the sea-coast, where he embarked for one of the southern ports of China. Even then the Kins continued their pursuit, and a small force took boat to follow Kaotsong to his last retreat. This detachment was compelled, however, to return, and Kaotsong's personal safety was again assured. While the Sung Emperor was thus fleeing before the Tartars,

some of his lieutenants were making a brave resistance in other parts of the realm, and had even succeeded in checking their advance. But the balance of victory remained greatly in favour of the northern Power, although one Kin army was nearly compelled to surrender while attempting to cross the Yangtse.

Oukimai, the ruler of the Kins, now again endeavoured to force a fresh ruler and dynasty on the Chinese, and a new Emperor, pledged to depend on the Kins for support, was proclaimed. But a doubtful campaign in Shensi, where the Tartars, although victorious, obtained no tangible results and were obliged to withdraw, interfered with the development of this plan. Kaotsong returned to Yueichow in Chekiang, where he was in a position to either advance further or to retire to his former place of safety. The reviving confidence of his soldiers constituted a firmer basis for his authority than he had yet possessed, and when some aspiring rebels appeared in Kiangsi, his lieutenants restored order without difficulty. The nominee of the Kins was proclaimed guilty of high treason, and a price was placed upon his head ; but so long as that puppet-ruler possessed the Kin army at his back he represented a formidable danger for the Sung.

The indictment of their nominee, and the measures instituted for his capture induced the Kins to place larger armies than before in the field, and this was the more necessary as the Chinese troops showed that they were recovering from their long-standing panic, and as capable commanders had revealed themselves during these later campaigns. Prominent among these were Oukiai and Changtsiun, of whom the former, although of subordinate rank, attained the greater fame. Long descriptions might be given of the numerous encounters which he fought and brought to a successful issue with the national enemy, of the artifices to which he had recourse for the making-up of deficiency in numbers, of his rapid marches over vast distances, and of the valour he showed on the field of battle. It was to Oukiai, in short, that the change in the tide of war that now set in was mainly due. The old military superiority of the Kins was no longer undisputed, and Oukimai's lieutenants were met by generals who

in tactical knowledge might fairly be considered to hold their own with the best of them.

The campaigns between the years A.D. 1131 and 1134 were of a different character from those preceding them. The Chinese were in the main successful, and the Kin invasion was finally checked. The death of their great chief Oukimai in the latter year was also a serious blow to their power. While his generals, Walipou, Niyamoho, and Liuche, were winning battles he was engaged not less sedulously in the reform of the internal administration. He was steadily assimilating the customs of his Tartar people to the civilization of the Chinese, and figured as a patron of literature and art. His reign marks the pinnacle of the Kin power. After his death it began slowly but surely to decline. His successor was his cousin Hola, whose reign witnessed the first appearance and gradual growth of the Mongols; and the encroachments of these northern tribes proved another inducement to the Kins to abstain from unnecessary wars in the south.

Negotiations for the conclusion of a peace were begun on several occasions, but only to be broken off. At one moment Hola offered to restore Honan and Shansi; at the next he announced his intention of conquering Shensi. A treaty was concluded by which Honan was to be restored to the Empire, but the Kin generals refused to evacuate it. The Chinese were successful in the encounters that took place for the purpose of enforcing a settlement of the question, and on one occasion they slew eighty thousand men; but either through the weakness of Kaotsong or the incapacity of his ministers, they obtained none of the fruits of success. Honan remained an appendage of the Kins. The character of the Emperor and the temper of the age may be inferred from the fact that at this crisis of his reign Kaotsong sanctioned the imprisonment, which of course ended in murder, of the general who had contributed most to the restoration of his authority. An ignominious peace with the Kins, in the year A.D. 1141, followed, and was a fit conclusion for a period marked by victories that were rendered barren of result and by crimes wrought on the persons of deserving public men. By its

terms not only did Kaotsong resign all claim to a vast extent of territory undoubtedly his by right, but he consented to pay annually a large subsidy in silk and money to the Kin ruler. Kaotsong completed the disgrace of this treaty by accepting the rest of his states as a gift at the hands of the Tartar ruler. The restoration of the body of the dead Emperor Hoeitsong was but a sorry equivalent for so ample a surrender of territory and so grave a loss of dignity.

A few years after this treaty, which was followed by a peace of some duration, the King Hola was murdered by a grandson of Akouta, named Ticounai, who also seized the governing power. He began his reign with a number of diabolical crimes, and when he had satisfied his passion and lust of blood, he thought it would be a great deed to break the treaty with the Sungs and renew the war with them. He drew up a plan of campaign for the conquest of China in the first place, and of Hia and Corea after that had been accomplished. Two or three years would, he said, suffice for this great enterprise. He forgot how long his predecessors had taken in securing what was nothing more than a partial, if considerable, success. In all his measures he showed equal indifference to the teaching of the past, and not less overconfidence in his own abilities.

Kaotsong's power had been steadily increasing during the long peace which Ticounai was now bent on breaking, and the lessons learnt during a protracted war had been taken to heart and enforced. Ticounai could not conceal his extensive preparations for war, and Kaotsong, while desiring the continuance of peace, felt bound to sanction counter precautions. Both sides continued, therefore, their active exertions, and Ticounai boasted that he would place half a million of armed men in the field. But more than half this number was required to actually guard the frontier against the Mongols, the Hias, and the Coreans. Kaotsong wished to the last to preserve peace and avoid further strife; but Ticounai was resolved that there should be war, and, as he himself protested, he was only seeking a plausible pretext for declaring it.

His attention was in some degree distracted from his relations with the Sungs by a rising within his territory

caused by his own acts of tyranny. The chief of one of the clans of those Khitans, who had remained in the country after the fall of their dynasty, had found cause for complaint against this ruler, and his grievance not receiving the redress which he required, he broke out into revolt. Ticounai treated this occurrence as a matter of slight importance, but the defeat of one of his generals soon compelled him to see it in a different light. An end was put to his anxiety, however, by the murder of the Khitan chief by his own followers, who were discontented because he had begun his march to join their kinsmen in the west—the Kara Khitay of the kingdom of the Gurkhan. Ticounai did not suffer this episode to turn him from his main purpose, which was war with the Sung. In A.D. 1161 he accordingly gave orders to his generals to cross the frontier, and the long-expected contest began, after a peace which had endured for twenty years.

The war does not appear to have been very popular with Ticounai's subjects, as many desertions are stated to have taken place before actual fighting commenced. It was no doubt felt to be an unjustifiable war, one commenced without any reasonable provocation, and having no legitimate object in view. If ever a war was criminal, that which Ticounai began in so reckless a manner with the Sung ruler must be held to have been so. The wrongful action of the Kin ruler was so palpable that even in that day there were men resolved to mark by some great sacrifice their disapproval of it. Wang Yeouchi, a private individual of Shantung, expended his fortune in fitting out a small corps which rendered valuable and opportune service early in the war; and the great force of public opinion in all the border provinces was strongly in favour of Kaotsong and against the false and aggressive conduct of the Kin prince.

Ticounai was not to be checked in his design by moral compunctions, and he placed himself at the head of his troops. At first Kaotsong thought of retiring to a place of safety, but a wise minister dissuaded him from this suicidal act. Instead of showing his subjects an example of pusillanimity he then threw aside further hesitation and repaired to the camp of his army. The news of a great sea-fight off the coast, in

which his fleet had been completely successful—destroying a large number of the Tartar vessels—produced great rejoicings in his army, full of confidence at the sight of the king in their midst. To Ticounai there came at the same time one piece of bad news after another. His fleet driven from the sea removed an auxiliary in which he had reposed great faith ; but this was insignificant in comparison with the intelligence he received from his own state. His iniquities had resulted in an inevitable uprising of the people, and his half-brother, Oulo, had been proclaimed in his place, by the mass of his subjects and a portion of his army, Emperor of the Kins. Still Ticounai would not turn aside from the task he had in hand, and thought to crush all his enemies by winning some decisive success over the Chinese army.

Ticounai advanced to the banks of the Great river, driving the Chinese detachments across it. It then became a question of how he and his troops were to effect the passage. He sacrificed a black horse to Heaven, and he cast a sheep and a cock to the mercy of the waters ; but his religion, or credulity, brought him no good fortune. The Sung fleet stood in the path to dispute the passage, and when his war junks sought to engage them, they were repulsed with the loss of half their number. In a further engagement they were, practically speaking, annihilated. Ticounai persisted in his resolution to continue the war, although he was in reality helpless on the northern bank of the Yangtse. His army began to murmur in face of the impossible, and numerous petitions were presented to Ticounai by his officers, some suggesting a retreat, others that more time should be allotted to the preliminary preparations. These covert remonstrances excited Ticounai's ire, and roused all the savage in his nature. Executions and bastinadoings became of frequent occurrence in his camp ; the soldiers were discontented, and the officers embittered against a tyrant whose reckless and indiscriminating temper constituted a danger to all who approached him. A plot was formed against him among his own guards, and his death removed one of those monsters of iniquity whose crimes blacken the age and country in which they happen to have lived.

Having thus summarily solved the difficulty of the passage of the Yangtse, the Kin army concluded a convention with the Chinese and returned northwards to its own country, well content to have escaped from so dangerous a predicament with little loss, and also to be freed from the tyranny of an unjust ruler. Prince Oulo was generally recognized after Ticounai's death, and proclaimed Emperor of the Kins. His first act was to come to an amicable understanding with Kaotsong, thus terminating the ambitious enterprise of his predecessor in an arrangement which seemed to promise better times for these neighbouring states.

The signing of this new peace was the last act of Kaotsong's reign, for he abdicated the throne the same year in favour of his adopted heir Hiaotsong, a young prince, who was descended from Taitsou, the founder of the dynasty. During the long period of thirty-six years Kaotsong had been the nominal ruler of southern China, but his acts had not fulfilled the promise of his youth, when he was the foremost to press brave counsels on his father and elder brother. His natural timidity proved excessive, leaving him an easy tool in the hands of those who worked upon his fears. His reign was marked by many disasters, although it also witnessed a revival of Chinese military efficiency, and concluded with a peace which was more honourable in its terms than any concluded with the Kins. Kaotsong lived on for a quarter of a century after his abdication, dying in A.D. 1187 at the patriarchal age of eighty-four.

The Kin ruler Oulo did not obtain undisputed possession of his throne. Ticounai's army joined him to a man, but there was a fresh outbreak on the part of the Khitan tribes under the leadership of Ylawoua, a general of that race in the service of the Kins. Oulo had entrusted to him the task of keeping his own people in order, but Ylawoua became so intoxicated with his success, and the favourable reception accorded him by the Khitans, that he resolved to make himself independent, and caused himself to be proclaimed by the old title of Emperor of the Leaous. Oulo was compelled to send a considerable army against this rebel force before he could rest free from anxiety on its account. Ylawoua's

capture and execution relieved Oulo's mind from further apprehension on the score of his Khitan subjects.

Although both Oulo and Hiaotsong desired to maintain the peace so lately concluded, there were those among the Kins who regarded with disfavour the inactivity to which they stood pledged. Shortly after the suppression of the rising under Ylawoua, a powerful faction, including the principal generals, had been formed within the dominions of Oulo for the purpose of provoking a renewal of the war with the Sung. Their king was emphatically in favour of the preservation of peace, but they trusted to the irrepressible antipathies of two hostile peoples to goad him into war; and with this object in view they concentrated the garrisons of the frontier provinces, marched the troops victorious over the Khitans into the border districts, and spread abroad the rumour of a coming war. The Chinese on their side were not slow to meet this display of force with counter demonstrations.

The very year that was to have inaugurated an era of peace, beheld therefore the outbreak of a fresh war, in which justice was again on the side of the Chinese. The same generals who had led Kaotsong's armies to victory against Ticounai, again assumed the command, when Oulo's lieutenants threatened a renewal of hostilities, and their old fortune attended their efforts. In one of the battles the Kins were driven in confusion from the field, leaving eight thousand prisoners in the hands of the Chinese. Hiaotsong wrote with his own hand to Changtsiun, his victorious general, that "there had not been so complete a victory during the last ten years," and the whole nation was loud in its praises of the successful champion. The successful defence of Souchow, by a small corps under the command of an officer named Li Hien Chong against the main army of the Kins, was not less glorious as a feat of arms than the victory just recorded. These successes did not ensure all the results that might have been expected. Negotiations followed, but the interests of the government appear to have been sacrificed by a diplomatist who either did not understand the question or misinterpreted his instructions.

A fresh ambassador was sent to apprise the Tartars that no further territory would be surrendered, and no more presents sent in the form of subsidy by the Sung Emperor. Unfortunately Hiaotsong was not wholly convinced of the wisdom of this firm resolve, and losing the moral support of the veteran general, Changtsiun, he drifted back to the vacillations of previous years when, for the sake of peace, the Chinese ruler would promise to waive all his pretensions, and surrender his most cherished rights. The Tartars were not slow to perceive the irresolution of their opponent, and to turn it to their own advantage. They resumed their advance southwards in A.D. 1161, and, receiving valuable information from one of Hiaotsong's ministers, whom they had taken into their pay, succeeded in overwhelming a Chinese army. This rude blow made peace an absolute necessity ; and Hiaotsong, bowing to the force of events, instructed his ministers to arrange terms without prevarication or delay. As Oulo was an honourable antagonist, and desired peace himself, the terms were more favourable to the Chinese than might have been supposed after their great defeat. It was more remarkable that they proved durable, and that the years following, until the close of Hiaotsong's reign, were peaceful. The minister Weiki, who concluded this treaty, became as much an object of popular applause as his unfortunate predecessor, Lou Chong Hien, had been of public disapprobation. The necessities which beset both the Kins and the Sung were conducive to the prolongation of this pacific understanding, and after the long wars and the desperate struggle for supremacy which had resulted in a divided control, the people had peace and were at rest.

The remaining years of Hiaotsong's reign were marked by no event of any importance. He showed in his conduct the possession of the virtues which men appreciate and commend, and, freed from the anxiety of war, led an ideal kind of existence in the midst of his courtiers and sages, delivering maxims that were noble in their conception, and endeavouring by example and by deed to remove some of the abuses which had revealed themselves during that long period of confusion and uncertainty when no one felt sure what the day might

bring forth. When he had been on the throne for twenty-six years, Hiaotsong resolved to abdicate in favour of his third son. He was led to this act partly by his own inclination and partly because the death of the Kin ruler Oulo seemed to threaten fresh complications with the northern Power. Hiaotsong abdicated in the year A.D. 1189, and died five years afterwards. Of all the Sung Emperors after the change in the capital, Hiaotsong was probably the best and the most worthy of respect.

The last years of the Kin Emperor Oulo were scarcely more eventful than those of his contemporary. In A.D. 1170 his vassal, the King of Hia or Tangut, had been virtually set aside by an ambitious minister named Gintekin, who, aspiring to the supreme place, had concluded an agreement with his sovereign for the division of his states. It was necessary, however, to obtain Oulo's consent to this arrangement, and when the facts were placed before him he had the sagacity to see through the specious representations of Gintekin, and refused to ratify the convention, because "it must have been forced on the King of Hia." Not content with this, Oulo addressed a powerful remonstrance to the king on the character of his duty to his people, and his arguments opened that personage's eyes so clearly to the guile of Gintekin that he caused him to be arrested and executed.

He gave still more striking proof of the possession of great qualities by the manner in which he received the overtures of a Corean rebel who had repudiated the authority of his prince. This individual, having wrested the western districts of that kingdom from his liege lord, offered to become the vassal of the Kins ; but Oulo replied in the following dignified terms, which were creditable both to his judgment and disposition. "You and your master," he said to the envoy, "deceive yourselves if you believe me to be capable of approving an act of treason, whatever the personal advantage it might procure me. I love all peoples of whatever nation they may be, and I wish to see them at peace with one another. How have you imagined me capable of so mean an act as that you propose to me?" The remaining

acts of his reign were connected with the domestic legislation of his people, and with the translation into the Kin tongue of the Chinese classics. His death in A.D. 1189 was a serious loss to his people, who unanimously accorded him the next place after Akouta among the great men of their race. He was the first who showed himself to be something more than a mere soldier, and to perceive the truth of the aphorism that war is only a justifiable necessity as a means to a worthy end. He was succeeded as Emperor of the Kins by his grandson Madacou, who preserved during his brief reign the salient features of Oulo's policy.

Hiaotsong's son and successor took the name of Kwangtsong. During his short reign of five years he was Emperor in little more than in name. His wife, the imperious Lichi, asserted her influence over him, and exercised more practical authority than he did. The course of events during this reign was of an uninteresting character, and the attention of the public was monopolized by petty squabbles in the palace and between men of letters. Whether from ill-health or natural timidity and sluggishness is not exactly known, but Kwangtsong soon satisfied his inclination for playing the part of king. In A.D. 1194 he abdicated in favour of his son, and retired into private life, without apparently a single regret at the change in his position. During this short reign the Kins also enjoyed peace under the rule of their sovereign Madacou.

The new Sung ruler took the name of Ningtsong, and his first task was to restore the administration, so far as he could, to the position it occupied before Kwangtsong's unfortunate reign. It was not until Ningtsong had reigned nearly ten years that he found time to look abroad and see how his neighbours were faring. The spectacle he beheld was encouraging, and seemed to warrant a belief that the Sung might now recover everything they had lost during long and disastrous wars. The Kin power was shaken to its base, and tottering towards its fall. The great Mongol Genghis Khan had already struck shrewd blows against its reputation and its strength. Its military vigour was fast becoming a tradition. The army was discontented and ill-paid, and the people retained no affection for an alien government the

instant it lost the strength to make itself respected. Something of this untoward result must no doubt be attributed to the shortcomings of Madacou, but it was mainly due to the natural progress of decay in an institution that had attained a height far in excess of its innate strength.

Ningtsong would have been more than human if he had paid no heed to the tales brought him concerning the decadence of the Kins. Having suffered them to obtain a hold on his imagination, he allowed himself to drift into a war with his neighbour. Contrary to all expectations, the Kins were the victors, and Ningtsong was glad to conclude a peace by the ratification of existing treaties, and by the execution of the minister on whose advice he had declared war. Madacou died shortly after this event, leaving the throne to his cousin Chonghei, a descendant of the great Oukimai. This campaign was fought in the year A.D. 1208, and the last triumph to be obtained over the Sung cast a parting gleam of glory round the name of the Kin or golden dynasty.

At this point the old rivalry of the Kins and Sung sinks into insignificance before the advent of the new power of the Mongols. The main feature in Chinese history now becomes the steady growth of the confederacy of the great Genghis, and the petty events of the Sung capital assume an appearance of triviality in face of the great occurrences and startling changes beyond the northern borders. The Kins, by reason of their position, were the first to feel the effect of the martial vigour of the Mongol tribes ; but the Sung had eventually to succumb to the same force. Ningtsong's reign had little more than commenced when this new element asserted itself in the affairs of China.

CHAPTER XX.

THE MONGOLS.

THE Mongols were originally only one small clan among the numerous tribes bordering on the Chinese Empire. They had little to distinguish them from their neighbours in the vast region between the provinces of Pechihli, Shansi, Shensi, and Kansuh on the one side, and the great river Amour or Saghalien on the other. They were all alike—shepherds, hunters, and robbers, varying their pursuits with their needs or their whims, and with the season of the year. But for Genghis Khan, it is probable that they would never have been anything more than one of the pests of the settled populations within their reach, and even the supreme ability and good fortune of that conqueror failed to make them the dominant power in China. It was reserved for his grandson Kublai to crown the Mongol triumph by the most brilliant of all their successes ; but the extraordinary rise of this race to power is not to be lightly dismissed, more especially as it forms a subject of exceptionally varied and striking interest.

In the strip of territory lying between the Onon and the Kerulon rivers, both affluents of the Amour, may be found the cradle of the Mongol race. This retreat, almost impenetrable to outside attack, and containing within itself all the necessities for a frugal people, was no unfit abode for the ancestors of a race destined to exercise a world-wide sway. When they first issued from their own valleys in the ninth century as a portion of the great horde of the Shiwei, they attracted notice by their more than common courage and physical strength, earning either then, or perhaps in some

earlier raid against their neighbours, the title of Mongol, or "the brave." They were included by the Chinese with the rest of the tribute-paying clans beyond the northern confines, and from the ninth to the eleventh century their history presents no point of special interest. Doubtless they were not unrepresented in the ranks of those hordes which troubled the border officials of the Emperor, and which in time produced the various dynasties whose careers have already been described. At some remoter period it is possible that the Mongols were merely a section of the Hiongnou, and Genghis claimed descent from the Royal House of that celebrated people. It is not at all improbable therefore that Attila and Genghis, the two great conquerors specially known as the Scourges of God, came of the same stock, and represented one of those races which had been cast out by the civilization and millions of China.

Budan-tsar, in the tenth century, was the immediate progenitor of the House of Genghis. He it was who first conquered the district between the Onon and the Kerulon, and who laid the seed of Mongol power. Vested by popular fancy with an abnormal origin, Budan-tsar consolidated his power by the human means of decision of mind and energy in action, and in the first proclamation he issued to his followers there is perceptible a confidence in himself that augured well for the success of the undertaking he began. "What," said he, "is the use of embarrassing ourselves with wealth? Is not the fate of men decreed by Heaven?" The object he desired to accomplish was not so much the accumulation of riches, by the plunder of cities and the devastation of provinces, as it was the founding of a free and vigorous community. He succeeded in his design, and Budan-tsar struck the first blow for Mongol greatness, and laid the foundation of its future power deep into the ground.

In the twelfth century Budan-tsar's descendant Kabul Khan was the recognized chief of the Mongol tribe. It had been foretold to him that his descendants were to exercise Imperial authority, and his attitude towards the Emperor of Northern China was apparently dictated by such pretensions. In the year A.D. 1135 we know that he had begun to molest

the Kin frontier, and the Emperor Hola had in consequence been compelled to send an army against him. Kabul had in the reign of the wise Oukimai, visited the Kin capital, where he showed an independence of demeanour that would have led to his condign punishment, but for the forbearance of that ruler. After his return from this visit he showed an increased feeling of bitterness towards the Kins, and Hola had to send his general, Hushahu, to bring him into subjection. The Kin general is supposed to have set out on his expedition in A.D. 1135, but his progress was slow. He suffered much from scarcity of provisions, and was at length compelled to retreat, when the Mongols not only pressed him hard, but inflicted a crushing defeat on his army in the neighbourhood of Hailing. In A.D. 1139 a stronger army was sent against Kabul, but eight years later the war remained undecided. The result had been favourable to the Mongols, who were fast making themselves the heirs of the Kins. They had been joined by several of the neighbouring tribes, and Kabul Khan had refused to accept a lower style at the hands of the Kin authorities than that of Great Emperor of the Mongols. The surrender of twenty-seven fortified places was a still more expressive testimony to his growing power.

The task commenced by Kabul was worthily continued by his son Kutula or Kublai. This warrior was long a popular hero among his people, who delighted in the recital of his marvellous deeds. He too won several battles over the Kins, with whom the bitterness of the struggle had been intensified by the capture and execution of some of the members of the Mongol ruling family. His nephew Yissugei may be regarded as his successor; and in his youth Yissugei had learnt the meaning of defeat, when his father and a detachment of the clan had been overwhelmed by a neighbouring and rival people. On this occasion Yissugei had proved himself a good soldier, fighting bravely in the face of superior odds. The war with the Kins went on without cessation during these years, although only scant notice of it has been preserved. It is significant of the character of this new power to find it stated in the Kin history that the Mongols were being joined by many Khitans and Chinese.

The Mongol confederacy was always rather a military brotherhood than a national league.

Yissugei warred more with his neighbours than with the Kins; but he is the first Mongol who is recognized by the Chinese as having been wholly independent of either of their rulers. His great successes over the Tartar tribes surrounding him were crowned by the capture of Temujin, one of their principal chiefs. The exact date of this event is in dispute, and it is rendered the more important as having been that also of the birth of Genghis. On Yissugei's return from battle he learnt that his wife was about to give birth to a son, to whom he gave the name of Temujin, after that of his captive. The little that is known of Yissugei shows that he worthily sustained the reputation of his House, but unquestionably he has no greater title to fame than that of being the father of Genghis Khan, who was probably born in A.D. 1162.

Genghis's birth-place is still known by the same name as when he first saw the light there, Dilun Boldak on the banks of the Onon. The authority to which he was the heir was of a limited character. Forty thousand families obeyed the commands of Yissugei, and when he died in A.D. 1175, the young Temujin succeeded to a divided inheritance. The tribesmen, despising the youth of Temujin, cast off in many cases their allegiance to him, and when he implored them with tears in his eyes to remain true to him, they refused and made a contemptuous reply. At this crisis his mother, the heroic Ogelen Eke, came boldly forward, and raising the national standard or cow-tailed banner of the Tartars, brought back to their allegiance many of those who were on the point of departing to seek their fortunes elsewhere. Her energy averted the disintegration of the tribe, but Temujin's authority was only recognized by about half the number of warriors who had owned Yissugei as their chief. It became Temujin's first task to retrieve the loss thus inflicted.

His principal enemy at this early stage of his career was Chamuka, the leader of the Juriats, a neighbouring tribe, and this chief was joined by the Taijuts, who were then ill-disposed towards the Mongols. Chamuka, not content with

the assistance of one tribe, appealed to several others to combine for the purpose of crushing Temujin. The young chief was unable to maintain his position against his numerous enemies, and one day he was made prisoner by the Taijuts, who subjected him to several indignities, even, it is affirmed, to that of the "cangue." He soon effected his escape, and many of his old comrades and relations again rallied round him. His astuteness enabled him to baffle the wiles of his enemy, who sought to recapture him by an invitation to a feast; but his good fortune carried him safely through the danger. Chamuka thereupon appears to have resolved to bring the struggle to an end by attacking Temujin in his own country; but Temujin wisely stood on the defensive, and when the allied army attacked him he drove it back with great loss. This decisive victory raised Temujin's military fame to a high point, and brought numerous allies to his banner. Temujin's private virtues were exalted in the same breath with his military capacity. "Temujin alone is generous and worthy of ruling a great people," became the general opinion throughout the camping-places over the Mongolian steppes.

Already Temujin was aspiring to greater triumphs than any that could be won in his own country. By marriages, and by alliances based on identity of interests, he was bringing his neighbours into communion with himself, in order that he might extend his conquests. In A.D. 1194 he assisted the Kin ruler, Madacou, in an expedition against one of the Taijut clans, and for his good service he received a title of honour and rich presents. The latter excited the cupidity both of Temujin and of his followers, who had never seen such costly articles, and may in the end have contributed to the fall of the government which sent them. Temujin reaped additional profit from this campaign by the plunder of the Taijut tents, and this expedition in conjunction with the lieutenants of the Kins may be considered as the first of his greater and more successful undertakings. Temujin was in the thirty-third year of his age, when for the first time the perception came home to him of the weakness of the greatest of his neighbours.

The chief of the Keraits, a powerful tribe whose territory extended to the Hoangho, had also assisted the Kin Emperor

against the troublesome Taijuts, and had received at the hands of the Chinese the title of Wang or King. His subjects had subsequently risen against him, and Wang Khan had found shelter and safety with Temujin. In a few years Wang Khan was reinstated in his authority over the Keraites, through the generous assistance of the Mongol chieftain, and Temujin no doubt flattered himself that he had secured a staunch ally for his further schemes; but human ingratitude is proverbial, and Wang Khan was no exception to the rule.

In A.D. 1199 Temujin and Wang Khan declared war upon the Naimans, a great people holding the larger portion of Jungaria; but, before the campaign had fairly commenced, the alliance between the Mongol and the Kerait had been weakened by the insidious practices of Chamuka. Wang Khan then drew off his troops, and Temujin was constrained to retreat. The Kerait chief fared as badly as his treachery deserved, for the Naimans pursued him with vigour, and inflicted great losses upon his force. Indeed it was only Temujin's timely aid that saved him from complete destruction. On several occasions an attempt was made to cement anew this alliance, but Wang Khan, either jealous of the greater fame of his neighbour, or apprehensive of future danger from his ambition, was always half-hearted in his promises of friendship, and not indisposed to array his troops against Temujin whenever it suited his purpose. In A.D. 1202 he took a more decided step, and formed a confederacy amongst all the tribes friendly to himself for the purpose of arresting the career of the Mongols. The mask of hollow friendship was at last thrown aside, and the features of bitter hatred clearly revealed. The issue was simply whether Temujin or Wang Khan was to be supreme on the great Mongolian steppe.

The first encounter was disastrous to the arms of Temujin. The hostile armies came into contact at a place near the modern Ourga, where the mounds over the slain that day are still shown as the record of one of the most famous battles in Mongol history. The impetuosity of the charge of the Mongol horsemen broke the line of Wang Khan's army, and his best troops wavered before the shock. But the odds were

all in favour of the Kerait, and Temujin's wearied followers were at last compelled to retreat. After this disaster Temujin was reduced to the lowest straits, and it seemed as if the fruits of many years of wise government, and boldness in the field, were to be lost in a single day. Temujin himself never despaired of the result, and with a chosen band of followers, small in numbers, but formidable in their fidelity to their chief, and by reason of their discipline, he continued what seemed an unequal, if not a hopeless struggle. In A.D. 1203 he surprised Wang Khan in his camp, and compelled him to take refuge among the Naimans, by whom, in defiance of the laws of hospitality, and of the forbearance due to the unfortunate, he was put to death. The consequences of this event were important, as the Kerait people then became tributary to Temujin, whose authority was thus extended from the Amour to the Kin frontier. To the west there remained the powerful confederacy of the Naimans hostile and unsubdued.

Temujin's next task was to settle his future relations with these western neighbours. The Naiman chief was fully resolved to come to conclusions with the Mongols, and Temujin found in him a more formidable antagonist than Wang Khan had been. Both sides were eager for the fray, and the two forces encountered each other on one of the wide plains north of the Tian Shan in the heart of Jungaria. The battle was long and stubbornly contested. The Naimans fought with the utmost resolution, resisting their opponents long after the result of the battle had been virtually decided, and after their chief had been carried, covered with wounds, out of the press of the combat. The Naimans, and the tribes in alliance with them, were thus subjected, and Temujin's triumph was rendered the more complete by the capture of his old enemy Chamuka.

It was on his return from this great expedition, when he had accomplished some of the chief objects of his life, that Temujin resolved to express to the surrounding nations, by some higher title than he had yet assumed, the military power he had formed and consolidated. On his way back from the country of the Naimans he turned southwards into

the kingdom of Hia, which divided with the Kins and Sung the sovereignty of the Chinese Empire, and with his usual success defeated the army sent to oppose him. His stay in Hia was on this occasion brief, and having garrisoned two fortified places within its frontier, he returned to his great camping-place near the Onon to celebrate the completion of the first portion of the task he had resolved to accomplish.

All the Mongol chiefs were summoned from far and near* to the Grand Council or Kuriltai of their nation, a banner of nine white yak-tails was placed in the centre of the camp, and on the appointed day the warriors of this race of conquerors assembled round the national ensign to hear the decision of their great leader. It was then proclaimed that Temujin would no longer be content with the minor title of Gur Khan, which had fallen in dignity by the overthrow of so many of the name; but that he would take the style of Genghis† Khan. If we consider the significance of this proclamation by the light of the great events which followed it, and of which it may be considered the direct precursor, it would be difficult to assign greater importance to any other event of a similar kind in the world's history. The assemblage which gathered that day, in the year A.D. 1206, on the spot near which their great chief was born, was called upon to witness the consummation of one great triumph, and the inauguration of a still more brilliant period of military conquest and success. The subjection of the Keraits and Naimans was a very creditable exploit; but it sank into insignificance in comparison with the conquest of China, and of the states of Western and Central Asia.

Genghis was too versed in the ways of men to reserve all the honours for himself. Having assumed a title which overshadowed every other, he showered dignities on his followers.

* This custom was adhered to for several generations—in fact, until the gradual dissolution of the Mongol confederacy. It often resulted in the loss of half-won kingdoms, and sometimes afforded a respite to nations on the verge of extinction.

† Genghis, or any of the numerous other spellings employed by different writers, means "Very Mighty Khan." The Chinese translation, "Chingsze," is rendered by Douglas "perfect warrior." Mailla says that it is the reputed sound of the bird of heaven.

Muhule and Porshu, tried friends in many a dire emergency, the companions of his misfortunes and of his hour of triumph, the skilful leaders of armies, were exalted to a position next to himself. The one was made prince on his right side, the other on his left, for, he said, "It is to you that I owe my Empire. You are and have been to me as the shafts of a carriage, or the arms to a man's body." All the subordinate officers, and those who had in any way contributed to his greatness, were rewarded in proportion, and Genghis, on the advice of his Oighur minister Tatakhun, instituted the custom of giving to each of the officials a seal of office. These insignia were for the first time distributed on this auspicious occasion. The meeting of all the Mongol clans promoted among the race increased confidence in their own strength, and the chosen chiefs departed to their various posts with a more accurate knowledge of the plans of their great leader. It was clearly foreseen that Genghis had no intention of remaining inactive because all his nomad neighbours had been subdued. He had in his mind a richer and an easier prey than any furnished by the shepherd-warriors of the extensive regions of Mongolia and Jungaria.

In A.D. 1207 he led a fresh expedition into the dominions of the King of Hia, who, in a vague way, acknowledged himself the vassal of the Kin Emperor, and captured Wuhlahai, one of that ruler's strong places. The fame of this victory brought him the tribute of one section of the Kirghiz tribe, and the repression of a revolt among the Naimans added further to his reputation. In the following year his lieutenants obtained several successes over other tribes along the western portions of the Altai, and Genghis renewed in person his enterprise against Hia. In A.D. 1209 he devoted all his strength to the complete conquest of that state. The Mongol troops, augmented by almost all the desert tribes, flocked from every side towards the Hia frontier. The king of that country placed all his forces in the field, but the prowess of his opponent had unnerved both himself and his people.

In the first battle of this final campaign the eldest son of the king was defeated, and his best general taken prisoner. The Mongols pressed on to the Hoangho, bearing down all

opposition. An attempt to flood the country failed, and the King of Hia, in order to avert a complete overthrow, offered to conclude a peace and friendly alliance. Genghis accepted his proposition, and married the king's daughter, thus adding to his own the great military power of this north-western kingdom. By this achievement he not only deprived the Kin Emperor of a powerful ally, but he threatened his country from the west, as well as from the north, through the land of the Keraites. There was no further obstacle in the way of the collision, long expected, between the rising vigour of the Mongols and the waning power of the Kins; and in A.D. 1210, the year after the final humbling of Hia, the war broke out which was to decide the question of supremacy in Northern China.

The Mongols owed their remarkable success to their admirable discipline, and to their close study of the art of war. Their military supremacy arose from their superiority in all essentials as a fighting power to their neighbours. Much of their knowledge was borrowed from China, where the art of disciplining a large army, and manœuvring it in the field, had been brought to a high state of perfection many centuries before the time of Genghis. But the Mongols carried the teaching of the past to a further point than any of the former or contemporary Chinese commanders, indeed, than any in the whole world had done; and the revolution which they effected in tactics was not less remarkable in itself, and did not leave a smaller impression upon the age, than the improvements made in military science by Frederick the Great and Napoleon did in their day. The Mongol played in a large way in Asia the part which the Normans on a smaller scale played in Europe. Although the landmarks of their triumph have now almost wholly vanished, they were for two centuries the dominant caste in most of the states of Asia.*

* Much might be said about the military knowledge, the armour, engines of war, etc., of this extraordinary people. The reader curious in these matters will find the details in Sir H. Howorth's "History of the Mongols." But we may be excused for pointing out that no writer has given, in words with anything approaching the same effect, a picture of the great "out-pouring" of the Mongols, and of the military triumphs of Genghis, so graphic, brilliant, and impressive, as that contained in Gibbon's immortal "Decline and Fall."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FALL OF THE KINS.

ENCOURAGED by a long succession of victories, Genghis turned his arms against the Kins, whose struggle with the Sungs for undivided empire in China had reached a lull through the mutual exhaustion of the combatants. Some years before, when Madacou occupied the northern throne, a Kin ambassador had been received by Genghis with scant courtesy. This act is attributed to his contempt for the individual, but it probably arose from more complex sentiments. The ambassador returned to the capital, breathing vengeance against the Mongol, and besought his master to resent the slight cast upon his honour by the outrage thus offered to his representative ; but Madacou had sufficient wisdom to refrain from attacking where he saw that he would, probably, be only courting defeat. In a few years Madacou died, and it so happened that his successor Chonghei was the very ambassador whom Genghis had received in this uncere- monious fashion.

When the envoy arrived at Genghis's quarters to inform him that there was a new Kin Emperor, the great Khan turned to him and asked the name of the new ruler. On learning who it was, Genghis expressed his contempt in the strongest manner, by turning towards the south, and spitting on the ground, saying, " I thought that your sovereigns were of the race of the gods ; but do you suppose that I am going to do homage to [such an imbecile as that ?" Chonghei brooded over this second affront, and allowed his personal pique to so far influence his policy that, when an occasion

offered, he did not hesitate to assume the offensive against the Mongols. Genghis would have attacked him with or without an excuse ; Chonghei simply went out of his way to supply one. In A.D. 1210, when the Mongol campaign against Hia had been brought to a termination, Chonghei's troops attacked, and, from the account, apparently defeated a small detachment of Genghis's army. This added fuel to the flame, and war forthwith commenced along the whole frontier.

Genghis did not undertake this great enterprise without due deliberation. Information had been brought him from several quarters of the decline of the Kin power, and the abortive result of the later campaigns against the Sung had done much towards giving fresh courage to the numerous internal enemies of this alien dynasty. The Khitans were again breaking out into rebellion, and their chief, Yeliu Liuko, concluded a convention for joint action with the Mongol leader. Genghis issued a proclamation to all the tribes of the desert, reminding them of the wrongs they had suffered at the hands of the Kins, and that if they desired vengeance they had only to follow him. The appeal was generally responded to, and Genghis found himself at the head of an army vastly superior in numbers to any that had yet gathered round his banner. It was at this conjuncture that Chonghei's rash act removed whatever chance there may have been of the preservation of peace.

In March, A.D. 1211, Genghis broke up his camp on the banks of the Kerulon, and, leaving a small force of trusty troops to maintain order in his rear, advanced to the Great Wall. That barrier had often before failed to keep out the lawless tribes of the north, and there is little surprising in its having proved unable to arrest the career of Genghis's great host. At the point where Genghis attacked it, the custody of this line of fortification had been entrusted to a local tribe, whose chief, far from attempting to defend his charge, surrendered the passage to the Mongols for a sum of money. The outer defence of the Kins was thus pierced through without the necessity arising for striking a blow. The Mongol army, under the command of Genghis, four of his sons and his general, Chepe Noyan, afterwards celebrated above all

others in the wars in Western Asia, poured through the opening thus made, and proceeded to lay waste the province of Shansi. The Kin army was some time assembling, and Genghis and his generals were permitted to carry everything before them almost up to the gates of the capital. When the Kin army did take the field, its fortune was only indifferent. Several minor engagements were fought, but no decisive battle took place. The Mongols overran the northern districts of Pechihli, Shansi, and Shensi, and no doubt secured an immense amount of plunder; but the overthrow of a settled government, even when unpopular, is a much more difficult task than the subjugation of nomad tribes. During nearly two years Genghis remained encamped on Kin territory, but in August, A.D. 1212, having received a wound before the walls of Taitong or Siking, which resisted all his efforts, he collected his troops and retreated into Mongolia. The success he had met with had been very considerable, but the Kin Emperor was still resolved to defend his independence. It required twenty more years of constant fighting to crush this semi-Chinese potentate. If we contrast the resistance offered by him to the "irresistible" Mongols with that shown by all the western countries from Khwarezm to Hungary and Poland, we shall arrive at a fair idea of the stability and innate strength of a Chinese ruler at this period, although China was then almost as a house divided against itself. He had wealth, numbers, and reputation at his back; and although slow to adopt new ideas, or to sanction necessary changes, he was, even when at his weakest, a formidable opponent for the greatest of conquerors, with inferior resources.

The Khitan insurgent Yeliu Liuko had been equally fortunate. He had defeated the Kin general Houcha sent against him, and, with the aid of a small force lent by Genghis, captured the chief city in Leaoutung. Liuko was then proclaimed King of Leaou, in the capacity of a Mongol vassal. He chose Hienping as his capital, and rendered opportune service to Genghis two years later by winning a decided victory over the Kin army. We shall see later on that Genghis did not forget, when the occasion offered, to reciprocate these timely services rendered against his great enemy.

In A.D. 1213 Genghis returned with the full intention of completing his design ; but the Kins were better prepared, and fought with greater confidence. Under the guidance of a skilful general named Hushahu, they even defeated the Mongols, at the passage of one of the principal canals in Pechihli, near the modern Pekin ; but the Mongols succeeded in retrieving this check a few days afterwards, when Hushahu had departed to superintend matters elsewhere. The defeated general, in order to save himself from the death which he knew he had merited, attacked and murdered Hushahu, thus depriving his country of the services of a man who had given some promise of being able to defend it. This year had also witnessed the deposition and murder of the Kin Emperor Chonghei, and the elevation of his brother Utubu to his place, mainly through the influence of Hushahu. When Utubu was informed of the murder of his great general he evinced no regret, and appointed his murderer, the defeated officer Kaoki, to be his successor as commander-in-chief.

As if the danger from the Mongols was not in itself sufficient, the people of Hia, at this moment of anxiety, crossed the frontier, desirous, apparently, of obtaining some share in the spoil of the Kin cities. Genghis also placed fresh troops in the field, and among these were many native Chinese who regarded both Kin, Khitan, and Mongol, with equal dislike and hostility. Utubu was unable to offer any protracted resistance to the invaders, who marched almost to the gates of the capital, when Genghis announced that he was willing to retreat on certain conditions. The letter in which the conqueror addressed the Kin prince, was couched in the following naive terms, and would seem to show that he possessed a humorous appreciation of the situation. He wrote, "Seeing your wretched condition and my exalted fortune, what may your opinion be now of the will of Heaven with regard to myself? At this moment I am desirous to return to Tartary ; but could you allow my soldiers to take their departure without appeasing their anger with presents." Utubu was only too glad to secure the withdrawal of his troublesome guest to raise difficulties about the terms. A royal princess was given to Genghis as a wife ; five hundred

youths, the same number of girls, three thousand horses, and a vast quantity of precious articles were also handed over to the victor. But Genghis did not appreciate these presents, for on his march homewards he stained the reputation his previous successes had obtained for him by the senseless massacre of his prisoners. During this same campaign Genghis had furnished further proof that many of his instincts were only those of the barbarian, by causing the old men, women, and children, whom he had made captives, to be placed in the front rank of battle. It is just to mention these unfavourable incidents in Genghis's career lest too favourable a view should be taken of his character. His military virtues were incontestable, but the orgy of continuous victory deprived him of the desire to practise moderation, or to cultivate the generous instincts which at an earlier stage in his career he had often showed that he possessed.

Utubu's first act after the departure of the enemy was to remove his capital from Tungking to Kaifong, where he hoped the greater distance from the frontier would bring him increased security ; but he had mistaken his opponent. Genghis made this step a point of grievance against him, as he said it showed distrust of his intentions. Utubu had not long taken up his residence in his new capital when the Mongols again crossed the frontier, and renewed their depredations. They were joined by Kanta, one of the Kin generals, at the head of a large army ; and his example was followed by many of his colleagues, disgusted by Utubu's pusillanimity in retiring south of the Hoangho. In fact, from this time there were constant defections from the ranks of the Kins to those of the conquering Mongols, and as a rule the deserters were welcomed and given employment in the Mongol service.

The first act of this new campaign was the siege of Yenking (Pekin), where the prince imperial had been left by his father. Again Utubu's thoughts were of personal matters, rather than of the affairs of the state. He wished to save his son before the Mongols had completed their investment of the place, and in comparison with this object the relief of the garrison, or the preservation of the city, appeared of small importance. He rejected the advice of those who pointed

out what a bad effect the flight of the prince from Yenking would have on public opinion, and ordered his son to leave Yenking and repair to a place of safety. It was another edition of the old tale of the decay of a dynasty and the decline in national spirit. In face of a national danger the monarch thought only of the preservation of his life and of fleeting pleasures; and the people put aside resignation and fortitude as useless virtues, and strove to maintain the privileges of their class by a timely recognition of the power that promised to be triumphant.

Notwithstanding the great discouragement produced by these events, the garrison of Yenking defended itself with marked bravery against the Mongols, and had it been promptly succoured it is not improbable that Genghis's army would have failed to capture it. Finding that the defence could no longer be sustained, the governor retired to the ancestral hall of the Kins, where he drank the poisoned wine, and his last act was to indite a petition to Utubu for the dismissal of Kaoki, the murderer of Hushahu, and the worst of the state advisers.

The Mongols entered Yenking a few days after the suicide of the governor, when they put the garrison to the sword, plundered the town, and set fire to the palace. An enormous spoil was captured and sent to Genghis, who distributed it among his followers. With much of it he made preparations for fresh wars, and the quantity of arms and military engines seized in its arsenals proved most valuable in his subsequent expeditions. Genghis gave all the credit of this great success to his general, Mingan, but the victory was chiefly due to the indifference of the Kin ruler.

Genghis resolved to follow up this blow by a forward movement on all sides, and sent Samuka, one of his most trusted lieutenants, to force a way into Honan. The celebrated Tunkwan pass connects Shensi and Honan, and Samuka was instructed to capture it if possible. The Kins had not neglected its defences, however, and when Samuka saw the strength of this natural fortification, and the number of the garrison, he declined to attack it. Samuka therefore made a detour to avoid so formidable an obstacle, and after

a march under incredible difficulties reached the neighbourhood of Kaifong, where Utubu thought he was in perfect safety. Samuka was nearly paying the price of his temerity. The force under his command had not at the outset been very large, and it had suffered heavy losses during its arduous march. The Kin troops were hastening from all sides for the protection of the capital, and it was only by the rapidity of his movements that Samuka succeeded in regaining the northern side of the Hoangho with the relics of his army. It is doubtful if he would have succeeded in accomplishing this much had it not been that the Hoangho fortunately happened to be frozen that winter. Utubu's pursuit was not of the most vigorous, although this was the first success that had smiled upon his arms since Genghis retired discomfited from before Taitong in the first year of the war.

This victory was not, however, wholly without result, as it so far encouraged Utubu that he sent an army for the recovery of Leaoutung, where Yeliu Liuko had erected a kingdom of his own. For once the Kins were successful, and Liuko was obliged to seek safety in flight. When Genghis heard the news, he at once acted with his usual promptitude, and with the generosity he always showed towards a distressed ally. He sent a large army under the command of Muhule, the most famous of all his lieutenants, to drive out the Kins and to restore the Khitan chief who had done something towards promoting the Mongol success in China. Muhule carried everything before him, and recovered possession of the capital by a stratagem not unique in Mongol annals. One of his scouts took prisoner an officer sent by Utubu to encourage and give information to the commander of the garrison, when Muhule at once substituted a Mongol for the Kin, and threw the garrison off its guard by the favourable news he brought of the state of affairs generally throughout the country. Muhule delivered his attack while the garrison remained wrapped in a false sense of security, and concluded the war by driving the Kin troops out of the whole of Leaoutung. One of the consequences of this campaign was the surrender of the King of Corea, who acknowledged himself a vassal of the Mongols.

In recognition of this brilliant success, Genghis conferred fresh honours on Muhule, to whom was entrusted by patent the principal charge of the war in China. Muhule showed his worthiness for these honours by the brilliant campaign of A.D. 1218-19, when, having the whole conduct of the war, he invaded Honan, captured numerous cities, and defeated the principal Kin general Changju. For the first time during the struggle, the conquests made by the Mongols were permanently retained. The authority of the Kin ruler waned daily more and more.

Utubu's difficulties were further complicated by the action of Ningtsong, the Sung Emperor. Advantage had been taken of the misfortunes of the Kins to repudiate the treaty by which tribute was paid to the northern ruler; but Utubu had not acquiesced in this repudiation with good grace. Availing himself of a lull in the war with the Mongols, Utubu sent an army across the Sung frontier. He had no better success in this war of offence than he had in that for the defence of his dominions. The Sung general, Mongchin, inflicted several defeats upon his army, and the Kins had definitively to waive their old pretensions to superiority. The rapid progress made by Muhule in the north, and the ill success of the campaign with the Sung, induced Utubu to propose a suspension of hostilities to the Mongol general; but it was too late. The Mongols had resolved on his complete overthrow. The only terms which Muhule would grant were that the Emperor should resign all his possessions and content himself with the principality of Honan. The Kin Emperor had fallen very low, but he declined to be his own executioner.

In A.D. 1220-21 Muhule continued his measures for the complete subjection of the provinces north of the Hoangho; but his death in the following year nipped his final plans in the bud. For forty years, as he himself said, he had fought the battles of his master against the Kins and the northern tribes. His only regret was that he had to leave to others the task of finally reducing them. In him Genghis lost his right-hand man, the one general to whom he could entrust the direction of a war. Like Napoleon, Genghis had many

faithful and able lieutenants capable of fighting and winning battles ; but Muhule was his best if not his only general, in the highest sense of the word.

The Kins were reduced to such a state of weakness that they were unable to reap any advantage from Muhule's death ; and Genghis, in consequence of the death of Muhule, returned in A.D. 1223 from Western Asia, where he had for four years been engaged in humbling the pride of the great Mahomedan states from Kashgar to Armenia, and from the Jaxartes to the Indus, and in obtaining those brilliant military successes which are still among the marvels of all history. Genghis then assumed the personal direction of the war with the Kins. Utubu's death occurred in the same year as that of Muhule and of the King of Hia. The next Kin ruler was named Ninkiassu, and his first acts were to endeavour to conclude an alliance with the new sovereign of Hia, and to arrange his difficulties with the Sung.

Although the late king of Hia had long been on good terms with Genghis, and although his troops had on several occasions fought in the same ranks with the Mongols, causes of difference were not wanting between such ill-assorted allies. The Hias thought that in many ways the Mongols had derived greater advantage from their aid either than was politic for them to afford, or than they had received any adequate equivalent for. Moreover, the resources of this kingdom were very great, and its military strength far from insignificant. The young ruler of this state declined, therefore, to continue those offices of civility towards the Mongol in which his father had been prudent enough to acquiesce ; and, trusting perhaps too much to the consequences of Muhule's death and to the absence of Genghis, proclaimed his hostility in the clearest manner. Genghis's speedy return spoiled his plans, but he had gone too far to retrace his steps. The year A.D. 1224 was one of inaction on all sides, rendered eventful alone by the death of the Sung Ningtsong. During these twelve months Genghis was busily engaged in preparations for an enterprise which he knew would be of more than ordinary moment and danger. In A.D. 1225 he had assembled the largest army he had ever employed in his Chinese wars,

and took the field in person when the appearance of spring announced that the season available for active operations had arrived.

Powerful as the Hia state must have been, and confident as its king was in the half million of soldiers which he boasted he could place in the field, the success of the Mongols was rapid and unqualified. The principal cities, the rich centres of trade, the strong fortresses, fell into the hands of the invader; and the young king, who had broken the alliance with Genghis and rushed into this war, died of the grief caused by his numerous misfortunes. In a tremendous battle, fought over the frozen waters of the Hoangho, the army of Hia was almost exterminated; and this terrible day bears, in many of its features, including its main incident, a striking resemblance to the scene when Napoleon's artillery swept the frozen lake at Austerlitz. In A.D. 1227 the conquest of Hia was nearly complete; its king then gave in his formal submission, and recognized the triumph of Genghis.

The conquest of Hia was the last military feat in the life of Genghis Khan. He was not destined to behold the consummation of his long wars with the Kins, although he and his general Muhule had shattered their military power, and laid it level with the ground. It is recorded that his last public act was to refuse peace to the supplications of Nink-assu, who had begun his reign with an abortive effort to form a league against the Mongols, and whose protestations of friendship Genghis had every reason to distrust. With his latest breath he bequeathed to his successor the task of completing what he was not himself destined to accomplish.

There had been some symptoms that the life of the great conqueror was drawing towards its close. He had himself felt for some time that the end was not far distant; and in reckoning up the account of his life he detected the one blot in his system—the excessive, and too often wanton, cruelty with which it had been administered. His death-bed injunction to his successors and his people to refrain from the sanguinary sacrifices which he had exacted from enemies was faithfully obeyed, and henceforth the Mongol mode of warfare became not more terrible or vindictive than that of other

nations. This last decree is not less important as throwing some light on the character of the man who held the whole of the Asiatic continent in awe by the magnitude of his exploits.

Several stories have been handed down of the circumstances attending the death of the Mongol hero, but the most probable version is that he died a natural death in his camp on the Shansi frontier, on the 27th of August, A.D. 1227. He was therefore about sixty-five years of age, and during more than fifty of these he had been engaged in conducting wars which partook originally of the character of marauding expeditions, but in the end assumed all the proportions of vast conquests. The area of the undertakings conducted under his eye was more vast, and included a greater number of countries than in the case of any other conqueror. Not a country from the Euxine to the China Sea escaped the tramp of the Mongol horsemen, and, if we include the achievements of his immediate successors, the conquest of Russia, Poland, and Hungary, the plundering of Bulgaria, Roumania and Bosnia, the final subjection of China and its southern tributaries must be added to complete the tale of Mongol triumph. The sphere of Mongol influence extended beyond this large portion of the earth's surface, just as the consequences of an explosion cannot be restricted to the immediate scene of the disaster. If we may include the remarkable achievements of his descendant Baber, and of that prince's grandson Akbar, in India three centuries later, not a country in Asia enjoyed immunity from the effect of their successes. Perhaps the most important result of their great outpouring into Western Asia, which certainly was the arrest of the Mahomedan career in Central Asia, and the diversion of the current of the fanatical propagators of the Prophet's creed against Europe, is not yet as fully recognized as it should be.

The doubt has been already expressed whether the Mongols would ever have risen to higher rank than that of a nomad tribe but for the appearance of Genghis. Leaving that supposition in the category of other interesting but problematical conjectures, it may be asserted that Genghis represented in their highest forms all the qualities which

entitled his race to exercise governing authority. He was, moreover, a military genius of the very first order, and it may be questioned whether either Cæsar or Napoleon can, as commanders, be placed on a par with him. The manner in which he moved large bodies of men over vast distances without an apparent effort, the judgment he showed in the conduct of several wars in countries far apart from each other, his strategy in unknown regions, always on the alert yet never allowing hesitation or over-caution to interfere with his enterprise, the sieges which he brought to a successful termination, his brilliant victories, a succession of "suns of Austerlitz"—all combined, make up the picture of a career to which Europe can offer nothing that will surpass, if indeed she has anything to bear comparison with it.

After the lapse of centuries, and in spite of the indifference with which the great figures of Asiatic history have been treated, the name of Genghis preserves its magic spell. It is still a name to conjure with, when recording the great revolutions of a period which beheld the death of the old system in China, and the advent in that country of a newer and more vigorous government, which, slowly acquiring shape in the hands of Kublai, and a more national form under the Mings, attained the pinnacle of its utility and its strength under the greater Emperors of the Manchu dynasty. But great as is the reputation Genghis has acquired, it is probably short of his merits. He is remembered as a relentless and irresistible conqueror, a human scourge ; but he was much more. He was one of the greatest instruments of destiny, one of the most remarkable moulders of the fate of nations to be met with in the history of the world. His name still overshadows Asia with its fame, and the tribute of our admiration cannot be denied.

The death of Genghis did not interfere with the progress of the war against the Kins. With his dying breath he gave instructions for turning the fortress of Tunkwan, which still effectually guarded the approaches to the province of Honan where the Kins had concentrated their strength for a final effort. His successor Ogotai resolved to prosecute the war with the greatest energy, but a brief period of inaction

necessarily ensued, and the Kins availed themselves of it to assume the offensive. In a battle which took place between two small detachments the Kins were victorious, and as this was the first success they had obtained in the field for twenty years, its details were greatly exaggerated. Its importance was very trivial, and it had nothing more than a local effect. In A.D. 1229, when the ceremony attending the proclamation of a new khan was finished, Ogotai announced his intention of concluding the long war by the final overthrow of the Kins ; and he showed the decision of his character by dividing the territory already conquered from them into ten departments.

In A.D. 1230, therefore, the Mongols returned in great force, under the command of the brothers Ogotai and Tuli, and their generals Yeliu Chutsai and Antchar ; but whether it was that they were not led with the same skill as before, or that the Kins after their late victory fought with better heart, their old success apparently deserted them. In several encounters the Kins were successful, and a Mongol envoy who came to offer onerous terms of peace was roughly handled, and sent back with a message of defiance. In A.D. 1230, and again in 1231, the Mongols laid close siege to the town of Fongsian, but the garrison defended the place with resolution. The principal conduct of the siege operations was entrusted to Antchar, but the Kins continued to hold out, even after the repulse of an attempt to relieve the town. Antchar was compelled to change his tactics, and to leave a portion of his army to starve the defenders into submission while he overran the surrounding districts. On his return from this expedition he had the satisfaction of receiving the surrender of Fongsian, to the brave garrison of which he granted honourable terms. At the most the success of this campaign had been doubtful ; but it had been conducted in a humane manner. The next was to be more decisive, but marked by the recurrence of some of the sanguinary incidents which had attended the previous undertakings of the Mongols.

In A.D. 1232, both Ogotai and Tuli took the active conduct of the war into their own hands. The former attacked Honan—the last of the possessions of the Kins—from the

north by way of Hochung, while the latter, at the head of an army composed mainly of cavalry, marched through the difficult Han country of Southern Shensi and Northern Szchuen for the purpose of invading Honan from the west. Having overcome almost incredible difficulties, although by the violation of Sung territory, Tuli burst on the Kin garrisons with a fury resembling that of the mountain torrents of the inaccessible region through which he had forced his way ; but the Kins recovering from their panic saw that they were only opposed by a handful of men exhausted by a long march under arduous circumstances. A desperate battle ensued near the Yu Mountain, when the Mongols were obliged to retreat from the field. Their destruction would have been inevitable but that the Kins fancied they had completed their work, and did not follow up this advantage with any vigour. It may have been that the rapid successes of Ogotai on the Hoangho compelled the recall of this army from the south-west for the defence of the capital. When Tuli found that he was not pressed he resumed his march through Honan. The annals of the period are full of the deeds of ferocity he committed—of the thousands he slaughtered among the garrisons he captured and the armies he defeated.

The two armies of Ogotai and Tuli at last joined each other in the neighbourhood of the capital, and the Kin forces were confined to this town and the few other fortresses that remained in their possession. An attempt to flood the country was foiled, and ten thousand labourers sent to break the dykes were massacred to the last man by the infuriated Mongols. In a great battle at Ynchow the Kin army suffered a crushing defeat, losing three of the most trusted of its generals. No further obstacle remained to prevent the siege of the capital. Before Kaifong was completely beleaguered, Ninkiassu, the Kin Emperor, fled with a portion of the garrison to Kouete on the borders of Kiangsu, but his flight only precipitated his fall. The garrison of Kaifong, although disheartened by the desertion of its leader, continued to offer a brave resistance. The Mongol commander Subutai pressed it hard with the fire of numerous catapults, from which were hurled stones of considerable size, and he also employed

his prisoners in filling up the ditches of this city-fortress. The Kins were fighting for their lives, and in their desperation they succeeded for a long time in baffling the superior skill and persistency of the Mongol attack. At one stage in the siege operations Subutai was compelled to withdraw from before the town, but he speedily returned with renewed courage and force. After a siege, which lasted more than twelve months, the garrison of Kaifong reached the limit of its powers of resistance, and was fain to surrender almost at discretion. The spoil obtained by the victors was immense, and it is said that the inhabitants, and those who had taken refuge within its walls, reached the enormous number of fourteen hundred thousand families, or, at least, seven million persons. Subutai, true to the traditions of Genghis and Tuli, wished to put them all to the sword; but Yeliu Chutsai, who had already befriended the Chinese on several occasions, interceded with Ogotai, and obtained the rejection of his barbarous proposal.

The surrender of the capital did not deprive the Kins of all their means of defence; and the war continued in a desultory manner until the following year. It might even have gone on for a longer period but for the active intervention of the Sung, who, in a fatuous spirit of indifference to the dangers that threatened them, assisted with all their power in making the triumph of the Mongols more complete. Ninkiassu in his supreme hour of distress had almost discovered a capable commander in Usien, when the Sung general Mongkong crossed the frontier and drove him into the mountains of Mateng. After this the result was no longer in doubt. On one side pressed by the Mongols, and on the other by the Sung, Ninkiassu and the last of his army retired to Tsaichau, where they were soon closely beleaguered. The siege of this place was rendered famous by the valour shown by the last defenders of fallen royalty. Never did the abilities of the great Mongkong, in after years the mainstay of the Sung, shine more conspicuously; never was the impetuosity of the Mongols more strikingly evinced than on this occasion. But, at the least, the Kins proved themselves worthy of their steel. In the end Ninkiassu, finding all hope in vain, wished

to abdicate in favour of a younger kinsman, who might hope to escape the storm then imminent, and renew the struggle under more favourable auspices; but even whilst in the act of performing the ceremony of abdication he was interrupted by the tidings that the Mongol stormers were in the heart of the city.

There was no longer any room for hope that the contest could be renewed. It was only left to the last of the Tartar Kins to die with such honour as human instincts truly divine to be praiseworthy. Ninkiassu had fought an up-hill battle, and he had lost it. He fell before an accumulation of dangers and difficulties that were well-nigh irresistible. Unfortunate in his life, and not showing in the face of peril the resolution and firmness that might have been expected from him, he encountered his fate at the last with fortitude. The enemy was at his gate, and a stronger and more daring monarch laid claim to his throne. His army was dispersed, his treasury bankrupt, his people discouraged and in despair. There was no longer any hope of better times, of the revival which sometimes comes when fortune is at its lowest ebb. Ninkiassu had but the choice of two courses, to grace the triumph of his conqueror with his presence and draw out his days in hopeless imprisonment, or to meet death without fear or misgiving. He chose the latter. When the flames of his palace lit up with a lurid flame the horizon, the enemy was already master of his last city. Ninkiassu killed himself with his own sword, and his example was followed by several of his generals and many of his soldiers. In one sense, the Mongols were left little more than a barren triumph.

With Ninkiassu expired, in the year A.D. 1234, the dynasty of the Kins, who had given Northern China nine princes in the course of one hundred and eighteen years. Formidable as the Mongols were as soldiers, brilliant as was the military capacity of their chiefs, and valuable as the aid of the Sung proved to be, it took them more than a whole generation to conquer the northern provinces of China, and to sweep out of existence an alien dynasty which never secured the sympathy of its subjects. By as much as we regard the Mongols as a

formidable people and as a race of born conquerors, by not less should their victims the Kins be respected, because they fought better in defence of their rights than did either the great Mahomedan states of Western Asia, or the principalities of Eastern Europe, when assailed by the same foe.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SUNGS AND THE MONGOLS.

THE Sung had been induced to ally themselves with the Mongols by the desire to recover some of their lost possessions from the Kins. The intensity of their hatred for the dynasty which had established itself within their frontier blinded them to the dangers that might arise from the new race steadily encroaching southwards and carrying all before it in its career from the north. The Sung knew nothing of the Mongols, whereas the Kins were their bitterest enemies. To compass the ruin of the race which had imposed tribute upon him and stripped him of his glory was the fondest wish in the heart of the Sung Emperor. The successes of the Mongols, and the reduction of the Kin garrisons, which became necessary in consequence of the defeats on the northern confines, afforded the ruler of Southern China the long-wished-for opportunity of shaking off a thralldom which had always been irksome and hateful to him. That he did not hesitate to avail himself of it is rather to his credit than otherwise ; but prudence should have impelled him to abstain from taking any direct step towards promoting the triumph of the Mongols.

When Genghis undertook the conquest of Hia, the Kin ruler despatched an embassy to the Sung capital to ask the Emperor Ningtsong to join with him in opposing the Mongol invasion. The Sung refused to regard the interests of the two realms as identical, and declined to help their neighbour in distress. The warning of the Kin ambassador that the Kins were beset by the danger to-day, but that to-morrow it

would be the turn of the Sung, fell upon deaf or indifferent ears ; and at the tidings of each fresh victory of Mongol arms the native rulers rejoiced in their blindness. It has been seen that they were not content even with the part of gratified spectators. They desired to take a more active and, they hoped, a more advantageous share in the struggle. So it happened that while Ogotai and Tuli were winning conclusive battles on the Hoangho and the borders of Honan, Mongkong, the great Sung general, was hastening to give, by his skill and the large army placed under his command, a decisive turn to the struggle. And now the main object had been accomplished. The Kin dynasty had been destroyed, and of the formidable Niuche race there remained only the relics that had fled to remote Manchuria. Was there any reason to suppose that the Mongols, who throughout their career had been continually removing their neighbours' landmarks, would prove better neighbours to the Sung than the Kins had been ? There could be no question that their military power was much greater, and that their ire was not only more formidable but also more easily aroused.

By the terms of the understanding which had been agreed on for the purposes of war between Mongkong and the Mongol commanders, it was arranged that the province of Honan should be restored to the Sung when victory had been obtained over the Kins. The required result had now been attained ; it remained to be seen whether the accompanying stipulation would be carried out. The very large part which the genius of Mongkong had played in the final overthrow of the Kins has already been referred to, and it would not appear unreasonable to conjecture that the confidence felt by one side in his abilities, and the apprehension on the other of their consequences, were among the most prominent causes of the precipitation of a struggle that was in itself inevitable.

Tokens of the coming storm were not long in revealing themselves. The Mongol troops, instead of evacuating the province, remained in possession of the principal positions ; and if they retreated in any single direction, it was done merely for the purpose of drawing their strength to a head.

A proposition was then made to divide the spoil, and some steps were taken for the division of the province into two parts, one of which was to remain in the hands of the Mongols, and the other in those of the Sung. As the durability of such an arrangement was palpably impossible, it was no longer open to the most obtuse to refuse to see that the Mongols included not one portion, but the whole of China within their sphere of conquest. Both sides were eager for the contest, and the cause of strife was flagrant and well known to all. It mattered little under these circumstances which side, in the heat of the moment, struck the first blow.

The Chinese were inflated by their successes in the recent war, and inclined to underrate the superiority of their late allies. The supreme council was composed of men anxious to obtain fresh fields for their energy and also for their personal advantage; and under their advice Litsong resolved to attempt to seize by force the territory which had been the appendage of his ancestors, and to which he considered he was fully entitled by the solemn stipulations of treaty. The wish being thus formed, the large Sung army on the frontier supplied the ready means of carrying it into execution; and it so happened that the Chinese, having the larger number of troops on the scene, were successful in the earlier engagements. Thus often does Fortune, by an initial success, tempt nations to follow out a reckless enterprise and rush in blind confidence on their fate.

The Mongol commanders were at first singularly inactive, but when the first flush of Sung activity had passed away, and the full danger of the war began to be realized, the Chinese wished to conclude a peace even at the sacrifice of all their claims. The Mongol people had, however, been called into consultation on the subject of the war with the Sung, and they had decided to prosecute it to the end. From a kuriltai at Karakoram the fiat had gone forth that the Sung were to be dealt with in the same manner as the Kins had been. Litsong's passionate appeals for peace received but scant notice from his relentless and terrible opponents.

In A.D. 1235 three Mongol armies were raised for the

purposes of this war, and to each were entrusted operations that it was hoped would result in the breaking-up of the Sung Empire. While one army, following in the track of Tuli a few years before, crossed over from Shensi into Szchuen, two other bodies of troops invaded Kiangnan and Houkwang.* Ogotai's second son Kutan was placed in command of the first of these, and the campaign principally consisted of the deeds of this corps, although it was computed that Ogotai had in all half a million of men in the field. The task which Kutan was required to perform was one of exceptional difficulty, as the northern portion of Szchuen was then and is still a region presenting great obstacles to the movements of armies, and one where a handful of men might make a stout resistance against vastly superior numbers. Despite a few small reverses, the Mongols were generally victorious, and the large garrison, to which had been left the charge of this important province, offered little more than a show of resistance. Much is said in praise of the valour of Kaokia, governor of Mien, who died at his post like a brave man ; but neither Mien nor the more important Tsingzeyuen could keep out the Mongols. Before the year closed, the northern part of Szchuen had been wrested from Litsong, but Kutan and his troops retired as they had come. They were on this occasion only a passing scourge.

Eastwards the Mongol arms were not less fortunate, although on a smaller scale. Kutan's brother Kuchu, Ogotai's third son and acknowledged heir, commenced a career of success which was too soon cut short by his death, leaving to his father the bitterness of a loss not to be replaced. But at the end of a campaign, which had witnessed much bloodshed, the Sungs reoccupied cities that had been sacked, and again took possession of territory depopulated and impoverished by the horrors of war.

The Mongols, true to their traditions, began the conquest of Southern China by a series of expeditions that resembled in their character marauding raids rather than the systematic advance of a great conquering power.

* The former is now, as already stated, Kiangsi, Kiangsu, and Anhui ; the latter Hoonan and Hupeh.

During the remaining years of Ogotai's life little or nothing was done towards furthering the conquest of the Sung Empire. Ogotai took more interest in the progress of the wars in Russia and Hungary, where his nephew Batu was winning victories that will compare as military achievements with any of the most brilliant feats of his House, and his interest was only distracted from them by the growing hold which the pleasures of the table obtained over him. In the great palace that he built at Karakoram he gave himself up to the indulgence of his own inclinations during the last six years of his life, leaving to Yeliu Chutsai* the task of governing China. Ogotai's death occurred in A.D. 1241, and he left behind him the reputation of being not only a just and able prince, but one whose natural goodness of heart prevented him from enforcing the cruel practices of his race.

After a brief interregnum and the happy avoidance of differences and dangers which seemed at one point likely to break out in serious disturbances, Kuyuk, Ogotai's eldest son, was proclaimed Great Khan of the Mongols. It was not until A.D. 1246, five years after the death of Ogotai, that this decision was taken, and that the threatened disruption of Mongol power was averted by the election of a single head. The ceremony made up in splendour for whatever it suffered through the tardy arrangements that had preceded it. All the principal Mongol leaders—Batu, fresh from the passage of the Carpathians, and Argun, Khulagu's most skilful

* The name of Yeliu Chutsai has been mentioned several times. It was chiefly due to his moderation that the Mongols abstained from tyrannizing over their Chinese subjects. Under Ogotai he had shown both his sagacity and generosity in advocating the retention of the old mode of taxation in China; and when Turakina, the widow of that ruler, and for a short time regent after his death, farmed out the revenues, Yeliu Chutsai retired in disgust, and died shortly after of grief. Yeliu Chutsai was certainly the most estimable personage of his age. Père Mailla says of him that "he was distinguished by a rare disinterestedness. Of a very broad intellect, he was able, without injustice and without wronging a single person, to amass vast treasures and to enrich his family; but all his care and labours had for their sole object the advantage and glory of his masters." It is only just to add that D'Ohsson states that "his vast treasures" consisted exclusively of books, maps, etc.

lieutenant—were hastening thither, if not actually present ; and many of the conquered princes and tributary kings—Yaroslaf of Russia, and David of Georgia—came to pay in person the token of fealty to the great Khan. But although thus elected with the appearance of unanimity, and with all the pomp of power, the reign of Kuyuk was far from being a brilliant one. Beyond noticing the issue of a seal expressing, with the arrogance of unfettered authority, his own idea of his position, there is nothing to be said of the second successor of the great Genghis.

Kuyuk's death, in A.D. 1248, arrested the preparations that had been made for the renewal of the war with the Sungs, who had suffered an irreparable loss in the death of Mongkong, the one general possessing the ability to supply the numerous deficiencies of his countrymen in the art of war. His loss was the more appreciable because his soldiers rated his capacity at a higher value than it may intrinsically have been worth. Under his flag, having learned the first duty of a soldier, they fought with confidence, because they had always found it leading them to victory. His private virtues were on a par with his ability, and his modesty, affability, and single-mindedness endeared him to all who came within the range of his influence. The loss of such a man at such a moment was more than Litsong could hope to replace.

Kuyuk was succeeded by his cousin Mangu, who at once devoted his principal attention to Chinese affairs. Indeed, there was little else except the reform of the finances, which had been thrown into confusion by the recklessness of the regents, to engage his mind, as by this time the western possessions of the Mongols were practically independent of the great Khan's authority, and governed by kings of the House of Genghis. Doubtless the memory of his father's military achievements had much to do with this resolution, and the restless energy of another member of the same family, now about to appear for the first time prominently on the scene of affairs, also contributed to urge the titular head of the Mongols to devote his attention more exclusively to the Chinese question. The genius of Kublai became the spear-head of the energy and persistency of Mangu ; and the two brothers

took in hand, with a determination ominous for the Sung, the completion of the conquest of China.

Mangu appointed Kublai his lieutenant, with supreme command of all the forces in China from the Korean border to the desert, and southwards as far as the great Kiang. This appointment was made in A.D. 1251, and proved the immediate precursor of the resumption of hostilities with Litsong. Some of the most important offices were given to Chinese, who devoted all their ability to promoting the interests of a government that neglected no opportunity of showing that it knew how to appreciate good and timely service. Kublai himself did still more than utilize in a general way those who had special experience in the country. He attached to his person a Chinese secretary named Yaochu, who became his constant companion and most attached minister. Yaochu had been for some years tutor to the young prince, and it cannot be doubted that many of the most important acts of Kublai's after-career were inspired by this enlightened political student. Yaochu may be justly compared with Yeliu Chutsai, the sage of the preceding generation.

Kublai very soon gave proof of the assiduity with which he intended to devote himself to his duties. The southern districts of Honan had suffered most in the campaigns which had witnessed the expiring effort of the Kins, and the subsequent brief struggle of the Sung to retain the price of victory. They had, in truth, been turned into a barren solitude whence the people had fled. It became Kublai's first care to restore something of its lost prosperity to this region, and by the guarantee of protection to attract the inhabitants back to their homes. A board of inquiry into, and also for the redress of, grievances was formed, and Kublai's personal supervision prevented its functions being either neglected or becoming a mere form. The result of these measures was advantageous in a double sense. A base nearer the scene of war was obtained for a large army, at the same time that the new rulers secured a stronger hold on the affections of their subjects by advancing some claim to their gratitude. Kublai's popularity increased at a rapid pace ; and his brother Mangu supported him with his cordial assistance.

By these prudent preliminaries Kublai paved the way for the invasion of the country south of the river Kiang. It was not until two years after he commenced his preparations that he was in readiness to commence active operations. The necessity which had arisen for sending an army against the Coreans contributed, no doubt, to increase the delay, but it had been turned to useful account. During this period the Sung remained inactive behind their frontier, as if fascinated into a state of passiveness at the approach of a danger which, with a true presentiment, they felt they would be unable to resist. Their good behaviour, evinced too late, could retard neither the progress of fate nor the march of the Mongols.

The plan of campaign, which Kublai and his lieutenant Uriangkadaï drew up, was marked by originality, and showed that the Mongols were fully resolved to conquer as much by skill and strategy, as by superiority in weapons, and the brute force of numbers. In the extreme south of China, with a people of different race to the rest of the country, lies the province of Yunnan. It has frequently been constituted as a separate kingdom, and at this period was divided into several principalities, independent of each other, and also of the Sung Emperor. Kublai resolved to commence his enterprise by the conquest of Yunnan—a bold scheme, but one which, if it could be successfully carried out, would result in the isolation of the Sung by the cutting-off of their communications with the west and the south.

From Shensi Kublai marched through Szchuen at the head of a large army, divided into three corps, and having rapidly traversed the latter province and crossed the upper course of the Yangtse on rafts, he found himself at his destination in front of the fortified city of Tali. The people of Yunnan were thunderstruck at this sudden invasion of their country by an army that seemed to reck nothing of a march of a thousand miles, and of the passage of great mountain ranges and broad rivers. They could discover no better chance of defence than to shut themselves up in their cities and see whether the tornado would not retire as suddenly as it had arisen. The Mongols had never been deterred in their expeditions by walled cities, and the people of Yunnan soon

discovered that their fortifications were of no avail against their assailants. Several of the principal towns, including the capital Tali, were captured ; and when some Mongol officers were murdered, Kublai would have exacted a terrible revenge but for the exhortations of Yaochu to punish only the guilty and to spare the innocent. After this decisive success, further resistance on the part of the people of Yunnan stopped, and Kublai returned to Shensi, leaving Uriangkadai in chief command.

After Kublai's departure, Uriangkadai carried on operations with great vigour. Surrounded on all sides by independent tribes, and in the midst of a hostile population, he saw that his best chance of safety lay in unceasing activity. His first expedition was against the Toufan or Tibetan tribes, who had attained the zenith of their power some centuries before, and were now rapidly declining, but who had not yet forgotten all their martial prowess. Having inflicted several defeats upon these turbulent people, Uriangkadai turned his success to greater account by enlisting many of them in his service. He thus increased his small army by the addition of a valuable auxiliary corps, and, flushed with success, turned his arms in the direction of Burmah. The King of Ava and the numerous tribes that then held, and still hold, the fringe of country between China and the northern kingdoms of the Indo-Chinese peninsula, were next compelled to recognize the Mongol power, which had now made itself supreme to the south-west of the Sung territory. The bold enterprise conceived by Kublai was thus crowned with the most complete success.

Kublai's return to Shensi had been caused by the growing feeling of jealousy against him at his brother's court. Mangu himself had not been proof against the malign influences of his detractors, and, in A.D. 1257, took the extreme step of removing him from the high posts which he held in China. Kublai had none of the patience under personal injustice which moralists laud, and he gave some signs of an intention to resist with force the decree of the Great Khan. But his Mentor, Yaochu, was fortunately at hand to restrain his ardour, although it required a more than usual effort on the

part of this experienced minister to induce him to repress the promptings of his indignation. The term of his disgrace was not to be lengthy, and the blunders of those appointed to his place speedily produced his full justification. They strove to undo everything he had done for the Chinese, but their precipitate and ill-judged action only entailed their complete condemnation.

Kublai went in person to Mangu, protesting his innocence of the ulterior designs with which he had been charged, while each day showed more and more how indispensable he was for the proper administration of affairs in China. Mangu, greatly affected at the sight of his brother, forgave him his imaginary crime and reinstated him in his offices. To give increased importance to the occasion, and at the same time to show that he was resolved to take a more active part in the war, Mangu collected a large army and announced his intention of leading it in person against the Sung. Kublai was appointed to a command under him, and his next brother Arikbuka was left in charge of Mongolia.

In the meanwhile Uriangkadai's career of success in Yunnan continued. Tonquin had been added to those states already dependent upon his authority, and an outrage offered to his envoys had been amply avenged in the streets of Kiaochi, the capital. But while the Mongols had been thus successful in the far south, the Chinese had re-entered Szchuen in greater force, and their increased garrisons occupied positions severing the Mongol communications with the army in Yunnan. That army, although victorious over the local levies, could not hope to long resist on its own unaided strength any determined attack on the part of the Sung. That the Sung were meditating an attack on Uriangkadai's exposed rear was made sufficiently plain by their increasing activity in Szchuen. If a large Mongol army was not to be left in a dangerous dilemma it was therefore high time for Mangu and his generals to bestir themselves.

Mangu began his march in the winter of A.D. 1257, when the ice still upon the Hoangho enabled his army to cross that barrier without delay. The Mongol army was then divided into three bodies, one to operate in each of the provinces,

Shensi, Houkwang, and Kiangnan, while Uriangkadai was ordered to march northwards and, if possible, to join Kublai. The hostile forces were thus converging upon the last of the Chinese kingdoms from four sides. Although there were encounters at the other points, the details are only preserved of those which were fought in Szchuen, where Mangu commanded in person ; and here the resistance was of a stubborn character. In the neighbourhood of Chentu in particular the struggle was carried on with great bitterness. At one time in the possession of the Mongols, and then retaken by the Sung, its fate was not finally decided until Mangu's arrival with the main army, when the Sung withdrew their forces. Several victories followed, but they were all gained at such heavy cost that the result of the campaign cannot be considered to have been anything more than very dubious. The Sung fought throughout with bravery against their adverse fortune, and the Mongols progressed at a slow rate. An anxious consultation was held by their commanders at the end of the winter A.D. 1258-59, to decide whether they should return for the summer months to the north, or remain to prosecute the war. It was decided to remain, and active hostilities continued without intermission.

The new campaign began with the siege of Hochau, an important town in Szchuen, which had been entrusted to the charge of a brave and faithful officer named Wangkien. To the Mongol summons to surrender he replied by the arrest of the envoy, thus expressing his resolve to defend the place to the bitter death. The Mongol detachments marched from all quarters to the siege of this important place, and the garrison nerved itself to pass triumphantly through the coming ordeal. While Wangkien held bravely on to his post, another Chinese general, Luwenti, endeavoured by all the means in his power to harass the movements of the Mongols ; so that Mangu very soon found that the capture of Hochau was a task of unusual difficulty. He might have succeeded in the end, when the garrison's stock of provisions had been exhausted, could he only have maintained his own position outside the walls long enough ; but to the losses in the field were very soon added the ravages of dysentery, the plague of Eastern

armies. The siege continued throughout six months, and might have proceeded still further but for the death of the head Khan Mangu, who fell a victim to this disease. The Mongol generals at once resolved to retire into Shensi and to abandon for this occasion the attempt to seize Hochau.

Mangu's death, which seemed at first sight calculated to arrest the Mongol campaigns against the Sung, proved in reality the cause of their speedy and triumphant consummation, by again bringing Kublai to the front as their director. The troubles which immediately followed the death of the Khan Mangu produced a lull in the war, but, as soon as these were temporarily settled, Kublai turned all his attention to the consolidation of his position in the new sphere he had chosen, which was the Chinese Empire, in preference to an authority, weakened in significance, over the disjointed sections of the Mongol people.

Kublai was Mangu's proper heir, but his younger brother Arikbuka held possession of the centre of power in Mongolia. Arikbuka was also supported by all those who had grudged Kublai his good fortune and who had intrigued against him during the life of Mangu. It was clearly unsafe for Kublai to trust himself within his brother's power, but unless he went to Karakoram to attend the Kuriltai of the nation it was impossible to give validity to his proclamation as Mangu's successor. Kublai took a short road out of the difficulty by holding a council of his chief officers and supporters near Peking, when he assumed the functions and authority of the Great Khan. Arikbuka and the mass of the Mongols refused to recognize this illegal proceeding, and Arikbuka, with all the necessary formalities, and supported by the principal members of his House, took the same title at Karakoram. There can be no doubt that Arikbuka made up for much of the weakness of his claim by the manner of his election and by his popularity among the Mongols.

In A.D. 1261 Kublai marched at the head of a large army upon Karakoram, and, having defeated his brother, made good the superiority of his claims in the most forcible way that is recognized. Arikbuka fled to the Kirghiz, but he soon accepted the generous terms offered him by his brother.

He was reinstated in the rank due to a prince of the blood ; but Kublai returned to China, whither his tastes urged him, with the fixed determination to bring the long wars in that country to a conclusion. Discord within the ranks of the Mongols was to break out again at a later period and to cause grave anxiety to Kublai. But it became a matter of secondary importance, for henceforth we have to think of Kublai not as the Great Khan of the Mongols, but as the first Emperor of the Yuen dynasty of China.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FALL OF THE SUNGS.

BEFORE the death of Mangu, Kublai had obtained some minor successes over the Sung forces in the province of Houkwang, and when the tidings reached him he did not withdraw his troops from the positions he had seized on the southern bank of the Yangtse-kiang. The excessive confidence felt by the Sung in the impassability of that river had led them to neglect the defences of their towns in its neighbourhood. Kublai turned their mistake to the best possible advantage. The chief credit of forcing the passage of this river appears to have belonged to Tong Wen Ping, who, having captured some Chinese vessels, filled them with his most determined soldiers, and crossed in face of the Sung army. Kublai promptly reinforced this advanced-guard with his main body, when siege was laid to the important city of Wochow, the capital of the great dual province of Houkwang. The Mongol cavalry carried their raids into the province of Kiangsi, capturing the towns of Liukiang and Chouichow.

But meanwhile the garrison of Wochow held stoutly to its post, and large numbers of troops were fast assembling at Hanyang, the town in the fork formed by the Han and Kiang rivers. Unable to make any impression on the fortifications of Wochow, and apprehensive of the consequences of an abortive assault under the circumstances in which he found himself, Kublai turned a ready ear to the peace proposals sent by Litsong, who was terrified by the appearance of the Mongols in Kiangsi. As a matter of fact, the Mongol army, with a very uncertain command of the passage of the river,

and surrounded by numerous and rapidly increasing foes, was in a most dangerous position, out of which the panic of the Chinese alone extricated it. If Mongkong had only lived to have the command at this juncture, Kublai would in all probability never have regained the northern bank of the river he had so adventurously crossed, and the whole fortune of the war might have been changed. But as the event happened, Litsong acknowledged himself a Mongol vassal, paid a large tribute, and forbade his generals to take any offensive steps against Kublai's army. The Mongols withdrew across the Yangtse-kiang, the fame of this expedition and the treaty it produced bringing fresh lustre to their arms. None the less must Kublai's venture against Wochow be pronounced to have been imprudent, and one out of which he came with better fortune than he had any reason to anticipate.

It was fresh from this success—from having made the Sung Emperor a Mongol vassal—that Kublai came to settle as described the question of supremacy with his brother Arikbuka, and when he returned triumphant from Karakoram the thought that was uppermost in his mind was that nothing short of the annexation of the Sung territory would suffice to satisfy his own ambition, and to meet what he considered to be the political necessities of the day. Fresh cause of grievance had arisen between the neighbours. The Sung sought to evade the terms of the treaty, and went so far as to murder the envoys sent by Kublai to announce his proclamation as Great Khan. This conduct further embittered the contest and rendered the preservation of peace impossible.

During this period Kublai had neglected no means of making himself popular with his new subjects, by many of whom he was already regarded with more friendly eyes than any foreign ruler had ever been, and he had greatly strengthened his position in Northern China by adopting many native customs and by attaching to his person a chosen band of Chinese advisers. But perhaps the most important step he sanctioned was the personal interest he took in promoting Buddhism, and in gaining over to his interests the powerful class of the lamas. There appears to have been in this age a religious indifference, equal in its way to the political and

social decay plainly visible outside the vigorous ranks of the Mongols. The Buddhist lamas as a class were alone capable of making a resolute effort for a great and definite object. Sunk to a certain degree in the prevailing apathy, they still possessed cohesion among themselves, and stood apart from the rest of the nation on so many points, that their aid could not but be most useful to any individual knowing how to utilize their services. Kublai took them under his patronage, and they became his most devoted and trustworthy assistants.

Prominent among these was a young Tibetan, sprung from a family which during more than six centuries had given ministers to the kings of Tibet; and Kublai, despite his youth, made him the supreme lama, with the title of Pakba Lama. At a later period he sent him back to his own country with seals of office, and under Kublai's patronage he succeeded in making himself not only the chief religious, but the supreme secular authority as well in his own country. This may be considered the first proclamation of a Grand Lama, and it arose from the unbiassed conviction of Kublai, who saw in it a step towards the consolidation of his power. It was made the simpler of execution because Uriangkadai had conquered Western Szchuen and the approaches to the valley of the Sanpu. Scarcely less wisdom was shown in the proclamation granting their liberty to all the men of letters who had been taken prisoners by the Mongols during the long wars of this period. The Chinese were shrewd enough to see that Kublai represented the best traditions in their history, and that he endeavoured to guide his policy in accordance with them, whereas Litsong was typical only of weakness and decay.

Fresh troubles had arisen with the people of Corea who, ever tenacious of their liberty, refused to abide by the terms of the treaties imposed upon them by armies that were irresistible so long as they remained. One king had retired to a small island rather than sign his own disgrace, whilst another, although the friend of Kublai, had been seized with the national fervour, and placed himself at the head of the popular movement. But Kublai, knowing well the danger that always lurks in the despair of a people, resorted to

diplomatic means * to gain his end, and his diplomacy fared as well as the arms of his predecessors. Wangtien, the Korean king, became one of Kublai's firmest friends and allies.

No further task stood in the way of Kublai's commencing the final war with the Sung, who were reverting to the old policy of provocation, which had never succeeded and never could succeed. Kublai was the last man to tolerate wilful acts of hostility. The attack on Uriangkadai's rear-guard had not been forgotten, and other outrages swelled the bill of indictment against the Chinese. The detention of the Mongol ambassador and his suite crowned the mistakes of Litsong's government, and in the last year of that ruler's life Kublai issued a proclamation to the generals of his armies "to assemble their troops, to sharpen their swords and their pikes, and to prepare their bows and arrows," for he designed to attack the Chinese in the coming autumn "both by water and by land." The task was simplified by the defection of some of the principal Sung officers, who were disgusted and alarmed at the apathy of their king and the shortcomings of his court.

As if to compensate in a slight degree for these losses to the Sung, Litan, a Chinese general in Kublai's service, revolted against the Mongols. In Shantung, where he had been entrusted with a post of some responsibility, Litan collected a considerable band of troops and put to the sword

* The letter he wrote to Wangtien, the Korean king and his former friend, is well worth quotation, if only in part. "The Empire of the Mongols, founded by my grandsire of glorious memory Genghis Khan, has been so widely extended under his successors that it is composed of almost all the kingdoms enclosed between the four seas, and several even of our subjects possess the title of king, for themselves and their descendants, over vast extents of territory. Of all the countries of the earth there is only yours, beside that of the Sung, which has refused to submit to us. The Chinese regarded their great river the Kiang as a barrier which we should never be able to force, and I have just shown that belief to be a vain hope. They thought that the valour of the troops of Szchuen and Houkwang, joined to their impassable mountains, would preserve those two provinces for them ; and, behold, we have beaten them everywhere, and hold their strong places. They are at this moment like fish deprived of water, or as birds in the net."—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 293.

the few Mongol detachments in garrison throughout the province. But his reign of independence was short-lived. Kublai sent fresh troops against him, and, after defending himself in his city with the courage of despair, the hour arrived when he was compelled to surrender. Litan's execution served to show intending rebels the futility of an attempt to shake off Mongol authority.

Meanwhile Litsong's long reign was drawing to a close. Unfortunate in the period in which his fate was set, he was still more unhappy in the ministers he employed. To Kiassetao, more than to any one else, must the final overthrow of the Sung be attributed, for it was by his order that the Mongol envoys were retained in confinement. His incapacity was undeniable, but he concealed it by an arrogant bearing that silenced if it did not deceive the world. Those who ventured to give the Emperor advice different from the wishes of this magnate were forthwith exiled to the lagoons of Fuhkien ; so that few dared to cross the path of this formidable dictator. In many ways Kiassetao was a worse enemy to Litsong than the Mongols ; and Litsong's death must have been a happy release to himself as the clouds were lowering more darkly than ever overhead, after Kublai's announcement of his intention to invade and conquer his territory. Litsong died in A.D. 1264, and his nephew Choki succeeded him as the Emperor Toutsong. One act of the Emperor Litsong deserves record. He conferred on the representative of Confucius the hereditary title of a duke which still exists.

Several circumstances combined to prevent Kublai, already engaged in the embellishment of Peking, from carrying out his plan as soon as he had intended. It is possible that he deferred his attack on the Sung kingdom because he saw that each day it was becoming weaker and less able to resist him. Whether he perceived this or not there is no question of the fact, for as steadily as Kublai's reputation for wisdom and for power grew, that of Toutsong not less perceptibly declined. When Kublai at length issued his final instructions for the campaign, they were based on a plan submitted to him by a renegade general of the Sung. He thus availed himself of

an experience and a local knowledge which his side had not possessed in the earlier wars. The proposed plan rested on the assumption that the capture of the strong and important city of Sianyang should form the starting-point in the conquest of the Sung. This was held to be not only necessary in a military but justifiable in a moral sense, because it had once been in the possession of the Mongols. Sianyang is still an important town on the southern bank of the Han river in the province of Hupeh. At this period it was strongly fortified, the capital of a well-populated and prosperous district, and it also commanded the main road from the province of Shensi. To the south of Tunkwan it completed, on the western frontier, the defences still left in the possession of the Chinese. Its capture proved to be the difficult task which the importance attached to it by the Sung indicated. But the advantages that would accrue from its fall had not been exaggerated. Sianyang once captured, the navigation of the Han would be at the mercy of the Mongols, who could then devote all their efforts towards making their power supreme on the Kiang river itself. When both these objects were accomplished there would be practically an end to the authority of the Sung.

In A.D. 1268 Kublai's army, computed to consist of sixty thousand veteran troops, with a large number of auxiliaries, and commanded by two generals, appeared before the walls of Sianyang. They occupied all the surrounding heights, which they fortified, and their entrenched camp extended over a line of ten miles. Having cut off all communications by land, they next took steps for intercepting the supplies sent up the Han river by water ; and this portion of their task was the more difficult because they had to construct their own war vessels. They set themselves to the work with their usual determination, and in a very short time fifty junks of larger build than those used by the Sung were equipped and ready to contest the passage of the Han river.

Meanwhile, Lieouwen Hoan, the governor of the two cities of Sianyang and Fanching, which communicated with each other by means of several bridges, was holding out with good cheer, neglecting no precaution to improve his position,

and opposing the Mongol attacks with steady and unflinching courage. Confident in the strength of the place—surrounded by thick walls and a deep fosse—in the number of his garrison, and in the copious supply of provisions stored in the granaries—capable, it was said, of meeting all wants “for a period of ten years”—Lieouwen Hoan met defiance with defiance, and answered threat by threat. Warned by the Mongols of the fate that awaited an obstinate and vain defence, Lieouwen Hoan retorted by threatening to drag their renegade general in chains into the presence of the master he had abandoned. The bitterness of the struggle developed greater intensity underneath the ramparts of Sianyang.

Although the Mongol army was constantly reinforced by bodies of fresh troops, and notwithstanding that Kublai himself devoted much of his attention to the subject, the siege of this Sung stronghold made very little progress. Several times were his generals compelled to change their position, to extend their lines at one point and to curtail them at another. But still Lieouwen Hoan's fortitude remained unshaken, and Kublai's lieutenants were baffled on every side. The Mongols succeeded in intercepting and driving back, with considerable loss to the Chinese, a flotilla of store ships; but even this success did not bring them nearer a satisfactory result, because Lieouwen Hoan's supplies were still sufficient for all his wants. The siege was beginning to languish, and seemed about to lose the special interest that had attached to it, when at the very same moment Kublai resolved to press it with greater vigour than ever, and the Sung minister, Kiassetao, came to the determination that it was necessary to do something towards effecting its relief. The main power of the two hostile states was therefore converging, by a common impulse, upon the same point. The siege had already lasted three years, and the events about to be described happened in the year A.D. 1270.

Kiassetao placed a large army in the field, but he entrusted the command to an incapable and inexperienced officer named Fanwenhu. The movements of this force were dilatory, and the timidity of the general did not afford much

promise of any vigorous attempt being made to succour Sianyang, and drive away the Mongols. Fortunately, there were some braver spirits in the Chinese army than the miserable and pusillanimous personages occupying the highest places in the realm. Litingchi, the governor of Ganlo, a town south of Sianyang, and also on the Han river, was one of the most determined of them, and he resolved to do something towards helping his colleague, Lieouwen Hoan. At this time Fanwenhu's great army was still engaged making its tardy march from the Eastern provinces; but Litingchi, knowing that in war promptitude counts for everything, came to the decision to strike a blow with the small force at his disposal. He collected three thousand men, who devoted themselves to the dangerous but honourable task he proposed to them; and having bade all those depart who did not feel equal to the perilous attempt, he completed his arrangements for throwing into Sianyang this reinforcement, with a large convoy of supplies in which Lieouwen Hoan had informed him that he was deficient.

Several hundred vessels, escorted by this brave band, commanded by Changkua and Changchun, advanced in two divisions down a tributary of the Han, upon Sianyang. The Mongols had impeded navigation by chains and other barriers; but the Chinese war-junks broke through them and forced their way onwards. The Mongols were apparently surprised, but fighting from their superior positions on the heights above the river, they were recovering the ground they had lost when the division under Changchun, devoting itself to destruction for the attainment of a great end, charged, and kept occupied for some hours the whole Mongol fleet. The store-ships escorted by Changkua passed safely on to Sianyang, where they were received with acclamations of profound joy. The relief at this reopening of communication with the outer world, after a confinement of three years, was intense. In their excitement, the garrison forgot the beleaguering foe outside, and threw the gates open as if the Mongols had given up the siege, and were in full retreat for their own northern regions. The iron ring was, however, still tightly drawn round Sianyang, and the disfigured body of the hero Changchun,

found floating past their walls, reminded them that the Mongols were as formidable as ever, and as resolute to attain their ends. After this successful reinforcement of the garrison, the Mongol lines were reformed, and nearer to the city ramparts. Both Lieouwen Hoan and Changkua were imprisoned in Sianyang, and the Sung were too poor in brave men to spare two for the same place. Litingchi was also hovering in the neighbourhood at the head of a lightly equipped force of five thousand men. With so small a body of troops, he could attempt nothing serious against the numerous and skilfully placed army of the Mongols.

Changkua had effected his purpose when he supplied the most pressing wants of Lieouwen Hoan and his garrison. It was no part of his mission to remain in idleness at Sianyang, and after a short rest he prepared to cut his way back through the Mongol force to join Litingchi in some other design for the harassing of Kublai's army. He mustered the companions of his former exploit to raise their courage anew, by extolling the glory that was already theirs, and by pointing out how it might be increased ; but whilst addressing them he perceived that one of the band was missing, and immediately comprehended that he had deserted to the Mongols, to warn them of the attempt he was about to make. It was not by considerations of personal peril that the Chinese hero was to be turned back from the enterprise he had in view.

During the night he departed in the few war-junks that had escaped the encounter with the Mongols, and, having burst the chains placed across the river, cut his way through the first line of the Mongol fleet. It seemed at one moment as if he had accomplished his object ; the straight course of the river showed apparently unguarded before him, and a beaten Mongol squadron lay behind. The morning light gave promise to Changkua of a safe issue for his daring feat. But it was not to be. In his path stood another fleet, whose ensigns showed that it was part of the Mongol force, and on the banks on either hand were the thousands of Kublai's army in readiness to overwhelm his handful. The odds against him were irresistible. There was no choice between surrender and a hopeless struggle ; but Changkua never

hesitated to adopt the nobler part. So long as a ship held together, or as he could find an archer to bend a bow, or a spearman to use his spear, he fought on, and, when he was left the last of all his band, he refused to accept further favour at the hands of the Mongols than his death. Whether in admiration of his conduct, or out of a spirit of refined cruelty, the conqueror sent his body into Sianyang, where it was received with loud lamentations. The courageous Lieouwen Hoan caused it to be placed beside that of Changchun ; and the two heroes, who had been partners in as gallant a feat of arms as any recorded in history, were divided in neither their glory nor their death.

After this incident, the lines of the Mongols were drawn more closely round Sianyang, and greater resolution was shown in pressing the siege. Up to this point the Mongols had devoted their main attention to the city of Sianyang, but henceforth they included Fanching as well. By the advice of Alihaya, one of Kublai's generals, engineers accustomed to the use of machines capable of hurling vast stones with precision were brought from Persia. With these formidable engines the Mongols succeeded in demolishing many of the chief defences of Sianyang, and in destroying the bridges by which communication was maintained between that town and Fanching. No sooner was this accomplished than the Mongols concentrated all their efforts on the capture of Fanching, and after a prolonged bombardment delivered an assault which, although bravely resisted, proved successful. The garrison fought with the most determined courage and marvellous devotion. The battle raged from street to street, from house to house ; and, when there was no longer any possibility of continuing the contest, the officers, sooner than surrender, slew themselves, in which they were imitated by their men. The Mongols had indeed captured Fanching, but their triumph was only over a city of ruins and ashes.

With increased fury Alihaya turned all his engines against the ramparts of Sianyang, where Lieouwen Hoan still held bravely out, although the garrison was greatly discouraged by the capture of Fanching, and by succour not arriving from Kiassetao. But Lieouwen Hoan saw that his powers of

resistance were almost exhausted, and that unless aid promptly came his soldiers would refuse to continue what could only be a vain defence. Kublai's generals perceiving the temper of the garrison, made an offer of generous terms * to Lieouwen Hoan, if he would only yield. After some hesitation these were accepted. Sianyang, having thus held out for four years, surrendered, and Lieouwen Hoan transferred to Kublai the fidelity and courage of which he had shown the possession in the service of the Sung. The indifference manifested by Toutsong's government to the fate of this city had disgusted the most faithful followers of his cause, and injured the Sung reputation quite as much as it was by the actual loss of this double fortress.

Little as had been done for the relief of Sianyang its loss was felt by all to be a great blow to the native dynasty still governing the southern provinces of China. When Kiassetao announced its capture to Toutsong it seemed for a moment as if something of the old spirit of the royal race would reassert itself, and it required the exercise of all the minister's personal ascendancy to stifle Toutsong's first inclination to take a summary revenge on the real author of the disaster. Kiassetao's apathy and self-seeking policy had been the true causes of the surrender of Sianyang, and Toutsong's eyes were at last opened to his enormities. But the ruler lacked the moral courage to grapple with the difficulty, and to treat the traitor according to his deserts. He found it more congenial to his tastes to withdraw into the interior of his palace, and to pass his time in midnight debauchery. Toutsong appears to have felt deeply the degradation to which he was reduced, and sought forgetfulness in the wine-cup. His

* Kublai wrote the following letter to the commandant :—"The generous defence you have made during five years covers you with glory. It is the duty of every faithful subject to serve his prince at the expense of his life ; but in the straits to which you are reduced, your strength exhausted, deprived of succour, and without hope of receiving any, would it be reasonable to sacrifice the lives of so many brave men out of sheer obstinacy ? Submit in good faith to us, and no harm shall come to you. We promise you still more ; and that is to provide each and all of you with honourable employment. You shall have no grounds for discontent, for that we pledge you our Imperial word."—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 332.

excesses, aggravated by the increasing anxiety and danger of his position, soon put an end to his existence, and the crown of the Sung was placed, by Kiassetao's direction, on the head of his second son, a child named Chaohien (A.D. 1274).

The capture of Sianyang was the greatest encouragement to the Mongols, and the strongest possible inducement to Kublai to devote all his energy to the conclusion of a war towards which his father had, forty years before, contributed so much in its earliest stages. Toutsong's death and the accession of a child prince, who could be nothing more than a tool in the hands of the incapable Kiassetao, were additional reasons in favour of the prompt and vigorous action upon which Kublai had at last decided. If there was wanted another inducement it was furnished by the fact that in Bayan of the Hundred Eyes, the greatest general of the age was available for the conduct of the war. Toutsong's death, far, therefore, from arresting Kublai's military preparations, had the effect of hurrying them on. The hour had come to strike home, and nothing of advantage could be obtained by delay.

Bayan's apprenticeship in the service of arms had been passed in the campaigns in Persia, where Khulagu had won great fame and founded a dynasty of kings. The opportunity now offered itself on another field of turning to account the military knowledge he had acquired in Western warfare. The army with which Kublai entrusted him was the larger of the two placed in the field. While one force marched into Kiangnan, the other under Bayan, assisted by three trusty and experienced lieutenants, advanced against Houkwang. In the path of each lay the same obstacle, the broad waters of the river Yangtse-kiang, but even north of that stream the Mongol advance was not unresisted.

A numerous gathering held the fortified town of Ganlo, situated south of Sianyang, but on the banks of the same river, and as all preparations had been made by its commandant, Litingchi, for a protracted defence, Bayan prudently refused to halt before it. Leaving a small corps to observe the Chinese force stationed there, the Mongols passed on to assail the main positions of the Sung, defending the passages

of the Great River. Chang Chikia, the commander at this point, sent a portion of his troops to harass the Mongols in their operations against the neighbouring cities; but his lieutenant was drawn into a general engagement, in which he lost his life and the greater number of his troops. This preliminary success was followed by the capture of Chayang, and its sister town Sinhing, where the garrisons were either put to the sword or committed self-destruction in imitation of the conduct of their leaders. In the siege of the latter place, Lieouwen Hoan, who had become a marked man among the faithful adherents of the cause he had abandoned, nearly met his death. Riding near the walls to receive what he supposed would be a proposal to surrender, he was greeted with a flight of arrows, which killed his horse and inflicted several severe wounds upon himself. Enraged at this treacherous conduct, as he considered it, Lieouwen Hoan vowed that he would not spare a man of the garrison, and pressed the siege operations with all the energy springing from a personal grievance. The commandant cheated him of the revenge on which he was confidently counting by throwing himself into the flames of his burning residence when further resistance appeared useless. Bayan, more magnanimous than the Chinese renegade, ordered that the bodies of the slain should be accorded honourable burial in token of his admiration of their bravery.

Bayan then continued his movement on the Kiang river, taking as his central object the three cities, Hankow, Wuchang, and Hanyang, situated at the junction of the Han river with the main stream. At this point the Chinese had concentrated their strength. The garrisons had been largely increased, and a numerous fleet defended the passage of the river. Had the general Hiakoue been equal to the occasion, the Mongols would never have succeeded in forcing a passage in face of the strong positions he held; but unfortunately he permitted himself to be outmanœuvred by his more skilful and enterprising opponent. By a series of feints which completely deceived Hiakoue, Bayan seized several important posts on the northern side of the Kiang, thus intercepting supplies and nullifying the superiority in which the Sung could still boast on the water. That that superiority

was not to remain undisputed or to long endure after their reverses on land was shown by the increasing activity of the Mongol fleet, which at the very commencement of the struggle obtained some advantage over the more numerous and confident Chinese squadron.

Meanwhile Bayan had thrown his main body against Hanyang, and, while his war-ships, under the command of Artchu, were driving the Chinese to take refuge in Wuchang, he was subjecting that place to a heavy bombardment from catapults and engines that hurled combustibles with a precision remarkable in those days. When sufficient damage had been inflicted on the fortifications, he ordered several assaults to be delivered against the cowed garrison, who, although enfeebled in courage and numbers, fought with some valour. Disheartened by defeats elsewhere, and by the overthrow of the fleet, which afforded them an avenue of escape, the garrison accepted the terms offered by Bayan, and Hanyang surrendered to the Mongols. Hankow had been captured shortly before this, and the only place that still held out was Wuchang, the most southern of these three cities. Against this the Mongols now directed all their efforts, but it offered no protracted resistance. Bayan, leaving behind a force of forty thousand men under his lieutenant Alihaya, continued his march upon the Sung capital, Lingan or Hangchow, the celebrated Kinsay of Marco Polo.

After the naval successes of the Mongols, the remainder of the Sung fleet, with a considerable portion of the army under the command of Hiakoue, had retired down the Kiang river towards the capital, whither they carried the panic prevailing in those districts which had beheld the triumph of Mongol arms. In this moment of trepidation the public voice denounced in no measured terms the incapacity and indifference of Kiassetao, who, to avoid a worse fate, felt compelled to place himself at the head of the national forces. Large levies of men were ordered, the reserve in the treasury was drawn out for the equipment of an army, and individuals were called upon to contribute with their money and their arms to the scheme of national defence too late devised.

Meanwhile Bayan's army was on the march. Hoanchow,

a town on the northern bank of the Kiang, and eastward of the scene of his late triumphs, was surrendered by its governor, on the promise of a reward, without detaining him for a day ; and Kichow, south of this city, followed the same example. In this portion of the war the services of Lieouwen Hoan proved invaluable, for many of the most important of the governors in the province of Kiangnan were gained over by his representations to the side of the Mongols. Without halting, Bayan crossed the Kiang and entered Kiangsi, establishing his head-quarters at the important town of Kiukiang. From this position he directly menaced the Sung capital, as well as the cities on the lower course of the river. The advantage thus obtained with such little difficulty was rendered the greater by the voluntary surrender of several towns in the valley of the Kankiang river and on the banks of Lake Poyang. The generosity which Bayan had shown towards his adversaries afforded a powerful inducement to the officials of a decrepit and expiring family, represented moreover by a child, to abandon a lost cause and to attach their fortunes to the rising power. What the humanity and generous instincts of Bayan began, the tact of Lieouwen Hoan and the arrogance of Kiassetao completed. Before the fighting was resumed, the cause of the Sung had been reduced to the lowest ebb by numerous desertions and by the half-heartedness of many who still remained faithful in name.

The Mongols had, therefore, obtained a good foothold in the southern provinces, and might with some confidence anticipate the final result before Kiassetao had so much as arrayed the army equipped out of the last resources of the Sung. That army consisted of not more than one hundred and thirty thousand men in addition to a fresh fleet ; but the major portion were untrained levies, largely composed of the effete aristocracy of Hangchow. What it lacked in strength and efficiency for war its general sought to replace by an unusual parade. His own equipage was magnificent, and his principal officers lounged on silken couches, and ate off plates of gold. Before taking the field, this commander sent, by a Mongol officer who had been made prisoner, a haughty

message to Bayan, asking him whether he would conclude a treaty of peace on the old footing of the Kiang river being the boundary between the two countries. Bayan's reply was that the proposal had come too late. Nothing short of an unconditional and complete surrender on the part of the Sung would satisfy the demands of the people who had beaten them in several successive campaigns, and who now virtually held them powerless in their grasp.

The fortified town of Chichow, on the Kiang, had been abandoned by the military commandant, but the civil governor, named Chao Maofa, resolved to hold it to the last, and made preparations for undergoing a siege. His efforts were neutralized by another traitor within the town, who concluded an agreement with the Mongol generals for its surrender as soon as they appeared before the walls. Unfortunately the views of the garrison were more in accord with the officer who desired to surrender than with him who wished to resist the Mongols to the last. When Bayan's army arrived, Chao Maofa found that none would follow him. He therefore put an end to his existence, as became a notable of the Empire ; and his wife, Yongchi,* framed in a not less heroic mould, refused to leave him, and they died together. Bayan, always sympathetic towards acts of devotion and bravery, ordered that these two, the only worthy citizens of Chichow, should be accorded honourable burial.

The capture of this town was the prelude to the contest about to begin at the mouth of the great river, which now

* This is one of the noble episodes in Chinese history. When Chao Maofa saw clearly how matters stood, "he summoned his household and relatives to a great repast, and when it had nearly concluded he turned to his wife Yongchi, and said that in a very short time the town would be in the possession of the enemy, and that, having the honour to be one of the magnates of the Empire, he could not flee without covering himself with infamy. But as for his wife, he counselled her to retire to a place of safety while yet there was time. Yongchi replied that she felt strong enough to show herself worthy of him ; but her husband answered, smiling, that women and children were incapable of so much fortitude. Yongchi would then have killed herself, but that he arrested her hand. On the morrow, when the Mongols had completed their task, the two retired to a room in the interior of the palace, and gave themselves their death-wounds."—Mailla, vol. ix. p. 348.

beheld victorious Mongol armies marching on either bank, and a hostile fleet riding proudly on its broad waters. Kiassetao felt that the time had at last come when he must cast aside his sluggishness, or want of courage, and make some effort to arrest the steady advance of the Mongol army. He accordingly took up a position in the neighbourhood of Nankin, and occupied an island in the river with half his army, and arrayed his fleet for the purpose of disputing the passage. The position on the island was entrusted to a corps of seventy thousand men, under the command of an inexperienced officer named Sunhouchin; but it appears to have been not only badly defended, but also ill chosen.

Bayan marched against the Sung army in three divisions, the central one consisting of his fleet, still led by the intrepid Artchu. The Chinese were surprised, outmanœuvred and thoroughly beaten. Their resistance was very slight, as they seem to have been seized with an unreasoning panic. The Mongols pursued them with vigour, inflicting great losses upon them, and capturing their camp and all the rich spoil of a luxurious army. The Chinese fleet alone suffered small loss, but its escape was due to the precipitation or the caution shown by Hiakoue in withdrawing it from the encounter. On receiving the news of this defeat, Kiassetao at once withdrew to a place of greater safety, leaving the Mongols to continue their advance without further opposition. The defeat of Sunhouchin and the flight of Hiakoue's ships left Bayan master of the whole course of the Kiang river, and in a position to complete his preparations against the Sung capital.

Among the immediate consequences of this victory was the capture of Nankin, the governor of which, unable to fulfil his charge, saved his honour in the same manner as Chao Maofa had done at Chichow. He, too, invited all his connections and followers to a banquet, and then took the ready poison. In this instance proof was found also that the man who could regard death with such indifference was capable of devising a bold scheme of defence for the country. When his palace was being sacked by the Mongols, an officer discovered a plan of operations, addressed to Kiassetao, which

he brought under the notice of Bayan. That general, on perusing it, exclaimed, "Is it possible that the Sungs possessed a man capable of giving such prudent counsel? If they had paid heed to it, should we ever have reached this spot?"

By this time the main body had been, as the result of a grand council of war between the Chinese generals, Kiassetao, Hiakoue and Sunhouchin, withdrawn to Hangchow for the defence of the Emperor, while Hiakoue, with the fleet and a smaller force, remained to dispute the passage from the Kiang river to the open sea. No serious objection was made to the proposed removal of the Emperor and the court, for it was evident that the arrival of the Mongols was only a question of time, and Bayan's energy was so great that at any moment he might be expected. But still no determination was concluded, or, if concluded, carried into execution. Summer was then at its height, and Kublai wished that the army should halt and wait, before renewing the war, for the cooler weather of autumn. But it was no part of Bayan's plan to delay his final attack and give time for the Sungs to recover from their panic. His reply was characteristic of the man. He said that "to relax your grip, even for a moment, on an enemy whom you have held by the throat for a hundred years, would only be to give him time to recover his breath, to restore his forces, and in the end to cause us an infinity of trouble." Kublai had the wisdom to reply that, not being on the spot, he would leave the question in the hands of his general. Kublai's own inclinations are said to have been in favour of peace and of an arrangement with the Chinese; but Bayan saw more accurately the necessity of settling the matter once and for all.

At this moment, when Fortune wore her darkest aspect for the Sungs, the successes of the general named Chang Chikia revived their courage and gave them some better hope than the promptings of despair. He recaptured several towns in Kiangsi, and drove the smaller detachments of the Mongols back on Bayan's main body. A proclamation was issued by the Empress Regent calling upon all of Chinese race to oppose the Mongols with their utmost vigour; and

there can be no doubt that, had Bayan put off operations as desired by Kublai, the Sung would in the autumn have been much better prepared to resist the Mongols. The murder of several Mongol officers and envoys further increased the bitterness of the contest, and all hopes of a pacific settlement vanished in face of these outrages. At this crisis Bayan was recalled by Kublai for the purpose of leading an army against Kaidu.

The Mongols had not been less successful in the west of China than we have seen them to be in the Eastern provinces. Alihaya, who had been left in command at Wuchang, had overthrown a fleet and army collected in Szchuen and Hoonan for the recovery of that town, and had won a great naval fight on the Tungting lake. Still further west Wang Leangchin, the governor of the portion of Szchuen subdued by the Mongols in the Yunnan campaign, wrested from the Sung the few districts that remained in their possession, thus effecting a junction with the forces of Alihaya. On all sides, therefore, the Mongols had overcome the national resistance, save where the relics of the Sung fleet and army lay assembled round the capital under the command of Chang Chikia; for before this the powerful and incapable minister, Kiassetao, had fallen into disgrace, and the Empress Regent, yielding to the force of popular indignation, had removed him from all his offices and banished him for life. A private enemy, of whom he had so many that in his fall he could not have hoped to escape their malice, was appointed to conduct him to a remote spot in Fuhkien; but he was not fated to reach it. Having been subjected to every species of indignity on the way, he was murdered in a temple whither he had gone to rest from the noonday sun. Thus ignobly fell, by the hands of an assassin, the man whose incapacity and love of luxury had contributed more than any other cause to the ruin of the Sung dynasty.

Chang Chikia, now the only supporter left of the Sung cause, resolved to assume the offensive while the Mongols were still suffering from some of the effects of Bayan's absence. He accordingly sailed up the Kiang at the head of a vast fleet, computed to number not fewer than two

thousand vessels of war, with the intention of attacking the Mongol positions below Nankin. The encounter took place off Changkiang, near which place the river widens into a noble stream at the point where on both sides the Imperial Canal enters the Kiang; but, although Chang Chikia delivered his attack with resolution, Artchu, the Mongol commander, proved himself fully capable of sustaining the reputation of his race for invincibility. The approach of the Chinese fleet was discovered long before it reached the neighbourhood of the Mongol forts; and Artchu had time to devise a scheme for its reception. Placing his best marksmen, who were instructed to attach lighted pitch and other combustibles to their arrows, in the largest of his vessels, which he supported with the remainder of his fleet, he then advanced to attack the Chinese, probably driving them before him into the narrow part of the river where their numbers would place them at a disadvantage. The Chinese fought well but with little skill. Some of their ships were set on fire, carrying confusion throughout the rest of the unwieldy flotilla, and an uncontrollable panic seized Chang Chikia's armada. The loss was tremendous. Seven hundred vessels remained in the hands of the Mongols, whilst a still greater number were either burnt or sunk. Those that escaped this fatal day were so overwhelmed by the blow that they never afterwards dared to attack the Mongols save with an amount of trepidation that rendered victory next to impossible. As if to complete the effect of this victory, Bayan at this moment returned from Peking to again assume the chief command of the Chinese war.

Whilst Artchu, who had shown himself to be a worthy coadjutor of the great Bayan, laid siege to Yangchow, in Kiangsu, Bayan himself concentrated the scattered garrisons for an advance upon Hangchow, where the Sung court still tarried in hope of better times. The first resistance to the Mongol attack was made at the fortress of Changchow, on the Imperial Canal, where some of the Chinese generals collected their shattered forces, resolved to hold out with the last drop of their blood. Bayan defeated several detachments sent to effect its relief, but the fortitude of its defenders

compelled him to besiege it in form. To all his promises and arguments there was made the uniform reply that they held it for their master, and would continue to hold it with their lives. The delay caused by this resistance ruffled the usually serene disposition of Bayan, and for the first time in his career he used threats towards a garrison endeavouring to perform its duty. His threats were as unavailing as his promises and his appeals to the hard logic of fact. At length the town was carried by assault; all the Chinese officers were slain except one, who cut his way out with eight followers; and the Mongols, breaking loose from the restraining influence of their general, put every one they came across to the sword. The massacre of the brave garrison and inhabitants of Changchow is the single stain on Bayan's reputation.*

Meanwhile all was in confusion at Hangchow, where there was none to direct the military preparations commenced for its defence. The Mongol armies were converging on it both from the north and from the west, for while Bayan had been delayed before Changchow, another force was rapidly advancing through Kiangsi on the doomed capital. In these straits an embassy was sent to Bayan imploring peace on any conditions. "Our ruler is young, and cannot be held responsible for the differences that have arisen between the peoples. Kiassetao, the guilty one, has been punished; give us peace, and we shall be better friends for the future." Such was the burden of their message. Bayan's reply was to the point. "The age of your prince has nothing to do with the question between us. The war must go on to its legitimate end. Further argument is useless."

After the capture of Changchow no further obstacle worthy of the name remained in Bayan's path. The important towns Souchow and Kiahing, on the Imperial Canal, both

* There is much doubt whether the facts were exactly as stated in the Chinese history. Marco Polo says that the force Bayan left in possession was first massacred by the Chinese, and that Bayan only ordered the destruction of the town in expiation for this offence. See Marco Polo, vol. ii., p. 41, and Colonel Yule's notes.

surrendered to him without resistance. As a precaution, several of the princes of the Imperial family were now sent into Fuhkien, and all those who had the power began their preparations for withdrawing to a place of safety. The Empress Regent refused all proposals to retire with the Emperor to the south, and in a very few weeks after the plan was first mooted its execution was rendered impossible by the arrival of the Mongol army. Hangchow was in no position to offer a protracted defence, and the Empress Regent made, therefore, an unconditional surrender. The terms were arranged by conferences in Bayan's camp, and, after appointing a tribunal for the administration of affairs, it does not appear that the Mongols in any way interfered with the government of the city. Bayan made a triumphal progress through the streets at the head of his army, whilst one of his officers notified to the Empress that she and the Emperor would have to set out with as little delay as possible for Kublai's court. Kongtsong, accompanied by all his relations who had been taken at Hangchow, was sent to the northern capital, thus closing his reign and virtually the Sung dynasty as well. His mother summed up the situation in the words, "The Son of Heaven grants you the favour of sparing your life; it is just to thank him for it, and to pay him homage."

After the capture of the capital, many of the great generals and officials of the Sung made their obedience to Kublai. The departure of the Emperor and of the principal members of his family removed the objects of their fidelity. The country was exhausted and tired of war. It wished for peace, and would accept the favour with some gratitude even at the hands of an enemy. Hiakoue and several other Sung commanders received from the hands of Kublai a reappointment to their different functions. There were still some exceptions to this wide-spread worshipping of the rising sun, and a few brave men preferred to encounter all the dangers of an unequal struggle to recognizing a foreign enemy as their master.

The relics of the Chinese army rallied at Wenchow, in Chekiang, under the command of the two princes, Ywang

and Kwang Wang, with whom still remained the faithful Chang Chikia. The former of these princes was declared Emperor, and the people of the coast and the southern provinces gathered round these representatives of their ancient kings. The immediate effects of their proclamation were to arrest the defection of many Chinese who meditated going over to the side of the Mongols, and to attract a very considerable force to their standard. Several skirmishes were fought and won, and these princes established their headquarters at Foochow, the capital of Fuhkien. These preliminary advantages were followed up, and for a moment it seemed as if the tide of Mongol success was not only arrested, but on the point of being rolled back. The successes were, however, only hollow and deceptive. They were more than counterbalanced at the time by the capture of Yangchow in Kiangsu, which had long resisted under the command of Litingchi the utmost efforts of Artchu and a chosen force.

After the surrender of that fortress, the Mongols resumed operations on a larger and more active scale in the south, where they had not enjoyed unvaried success. Their attention was called the more urgently to the matter by the tidings of a defeat inflicted upon one of their lieutenants in the neighbourhood of Canton. The Mongols rapidly advanced out of Kiangsi for the purpose of restoring their shaken authority, and a victory at Nanyong, in the north of Kwantung, more than compensated for the defeat near Canton. Following up their advantages with their usual rapidity, they had in a few days also seized Chaochow, where the Chinese vainly sought to defend their homes from the housetops and in barricaded streets. The main army of the Sung was still more unfortunate. In a great battle at Chuchow, in Chekiang, it was driven from the field with heavy loss, and many of the leaders, who could ill be spared, were among the slain. The Sung princes then retired from Foochow to Siuenchow, a harbour further to the south—having only succeeded in evading the pursuing Mongol fleet in a mist. At this place the governor received them with very little friendly feeling, and in consequence of some

misunderstanding even turned his arms against his fellow-countrymen. The Sung fleet was then obliged to seek another asylum. The year A.D. 1276 closed in unrelieved gloom for the cause of the native rulers. They had lost possession of every province, with the exception of a few districts in Kwantung and Fuhkien.

During that winter Kublai's attention was again summoned to affairs in Mongolia, where his nephew Kaidu had renewed his hostile measures; and this afforded the Sung an opportunity for momentarily recovering some of the ground they had lost. The Mongol armies speedily returned, vanquished the Chinese forces, and left the Sung princes no place of safety except their vessels and some of the lonely islands off the Canton estuary. Canton itself had before this been again taken by the Mongol forces. In this extremity the young Emperor died, but a few brave men were still left resolved to continue the struggle. Another prince was declared Emperor by this faithful but much reduced band, under the name of Tiping, and Chang Chikia and a few other resolute adherents prepared to renew hostilities with the Mongols. "If Heaven has not resolved to overthrow the Sung," said one of them, "do you think that even now it cannot restore their ruined throne?" Tiping's proclamation was made in the year A.D. 1278; but, instead of being the inauguration of a more prosperous period in the history of the dynasty, it was only the prelude to its fall.

The Sung prince took refuge with his fleet in a natural harbour in an island named Tai, which could only be entered with a favourable tide, and there Chang Chikia set himself to work with all his energy to prepare for a renewal of the contest. He had not neglected any precautions for the defence of the position he held should he be attacked in it. His fortifications crowned the heights above the bay, and nearly two hundred thousand men were under his orders. The Mongol fleet at last discovered the whereabouts of the Chinese place of retreat, and prepared to attack it. Reinforcements were procured from Canton, and on their arrival the signal was given for an immediate assault on the position held by Chang Chikia and the only force remaining to the Sung.

The Mongols attacked with their usual impetuosity, but after two days' fighting they had obtained no decisive advantage. The Chinese fought with great gallantry, and under Chang Chikia's leading their rude valour was supplemented by his skilful dispositions. On the third day the Mongol admiral Chang Hofan, who happened to be a connection of the Chinese commander, renewed his attack, and after a stubbornly contested engagement succeeded in throwing the Chinese fleet into confusion. There can be no doubt that not a ship would have made good its escape but for a heavy mist which suddenly fell over the scene, when Chang Chika succeeded in making his way out to sea, and his example was imitated by sixteen vessels.

The vessel of the Emperor had not the same good fortune. Unable to extricate itself from the press of battle, it fell into the power of the victor. In this desperate situation Lou-sionfoo, one of the most faithful of the Sung ministers, resolved to save the honour if not the life of his master. Having thrown into the sea his own wife and children, he took the Emperor in his arms, and jumped overboard with him. The greater number of the officers adopted the same resolution. Thus perished Tiping, the last of the Sung Emperors.

Meanwhile Chang Chikia was sailing away in search of another place of refuge; but his first thought still was more of the cause to which he was attached than of saving a life which had become of little value. On learning the death of Tiping, he requested the mother of that prince, who had escaped with him, to choose a member of the Sung family to succeed him; but the grief at the loss of a son proved more potent than any inducement on public grounds to name a successor. She refused to be consoled for her loss, and seeing no hope left, threw herself overboard, thus putting an end to her anxieties. The high courage of Chang Chikia would not recognize the impossibility of retrieving their defeat, and he accordingly continued to sail in the direction of the south, where he might be safe from the Mongol pursuit, and could obtain some fresh succours from the tributary states of that region.

In this hope he was not to be disappointed, for the ruler of Tonquin not only gave him a friendly reception, but assisted him to refit his fleet, to lay in stores, and to collect fresh troops. Having thus recovered to some extent from the effects of his recent defeat, Chang Chikia resolved to return without delay, expecting to seize Canton by a sudden attack and to renew the struggle with Kublai's forces. His followers endeavoured to dissuade him from the attempt, but he was determined to again tempt fortune; and perhaps he felt assured that unless he resorted to some vigorous course, not only would the cause of the Sung be utterly ruined, but his own chosen band would in all probability break up and desert him. In A.D. 1279, twelve months after the death of Tiping, a Chinese fleet, representing the expiring effort of the Sung family, was bearing down on the city of Canton with hostile intent, and under the command of a man whose resolution and valour alone would have made the cause he represented formidable. There is no information extant as to whether the Mongols were aware of the approaching enemy, or whether they were in sufficient strength to successfully resist a sudden attack. At the most favourable supposition, however, Chang Chikia could not have obtained more than a local and temporary success. The Mongol position was then too thoroughly assured—Kublai's power being at its apex—for this semi-piratical squadron to have achieved any durable success.

But the Fates willed that the blow, however forcible or feeble it might have proved, should not be struck. The approaching peril dissolved itself into a vain and empty menace before the wrathful elements of the China Sea. Chang Chikia's fleet had not turned the southern headland of the Kwantung coast when it encountered a terrific hurricane which destroyed the great majority, if not all, of Chang Chikia's ships. That gallant leader had refused to seek shelter under lee of the shore until the tempest had exhausted itself, and he paid the penalty of his temerity. He burnt incense to the deities of the waters, and expected that the observance of a few superstitious rites would allay the force of the waves, and still the blasts of the typhoon.

But on this occasion the simple faith of the Chinese hero produced no result, and when his vessel was overwhelmed and sank with all on board, the last champion of the Sung dynasty disappeared. "I have done everything I could," he exclaimed when entreated to seek a harbour of refuge, "to sustain on the throne the Sung dynasty. When one prince died I caused another to be proclaimed Emperor. He also has perished, and I still live! Oh, Heaven! should I be acting against thy decrees, if I sought to place a new prince of this family on the throne?" His plans and hopes received a sudden and unexpected solution and response; but the valour and fidelity of the brave and faithful Chang Chikia will still remain as a striking and instructive example of the devotion sometimes shown by an adherent to the fallen fortunes of a royal family and a ruling House.

The conquest of China was thus completed. The kingdom of the Sung, after nearly half a century of warfare, had shared the fate of its old enemy and rival, the Kin; and Kublai Khan had consummated the design commenced seventy years before by his grandfather Genghis. The long and obstinate resistance of the Chinese, despite treachery and incapacity in high places, against the first soldiers in the world, led by great princes such as Genghis, Tuli and Kublai, and by the most accomplished of living generals, Subutai, Bayan and Artchu, is the clearest of proofs how vigorous must have been the latent strength of the Sung kingdom, strictly speaking the sole representative of ancient China.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE YUEN DYNASTY.*

Kublai Khan.

WHILE the war with the Sung was in progress Kublai's authority had been steadily extending itself throughout Northern China, and acquiring a greater hold on both the affection and respect of the people. Several years before the death of Tiping and the last essay of Chang Chikia, Kublai had given his dynasty a distinctive name, and had assumed the title of Chitsou. Summoning to his court the most eminent of the Chinese ministers, and assisted by many skilful administrators from Western Asia and even from Europe, among whom was the Venetian traveller Marco Polo, Kublai's government had special elements of security, and was capable of attracting the sympathy and good-will of the indifferent as well as of crushing the opposition of its enemies. The skill and good fortune of his three principal generals—Bayan, Alihaya and Artchu—enabled him to devote all his attention to the consolidation of Mongol supremacy north of the Kiang river, where, it will not be forgotten, it had been established ever since the fall of the Kins forty years before, and where, amongst a population of semi-Tartar origin, and long accustomed to Tartar domination, there was less difficulty in adapting the customs brought from the wilds of Mongolia to the institutions of an alien population. When Kublai

* In A.D. 1271 Kublai gave his dynasty the name of the Yuen or Original. The Mongols in China are henceforth to be known by that name.

returned to his capital, Cambaluc or Pekin,* after his first war with his brother, Arikbuka, it was with the full intention of beginning a fresh era in Chinese history. Adopting all the advantages to be obtained from the ancient Chinese civilization, he only grafted upon it the greater vigour and military qualities of his northern race. Assisted by some of the most remarkable generals and ministers of the age, he soon succeeded in attaining his object and in making his court the most brilliant of the time. The final overthrow of the Sungs, the capture of their Emperor, the surrender of their capital, and, finally, the defeat of the last champions of their cause, all tended to facilitate the accomplishment of this task and to hasten its consummation.

From his earliest youth Kublai had given great promise of future valour and ability. His courage in a battle nearly fifty years before this time had been conspicuous, and his grandfather Genghis had predicted a more brilliant future for him than for any other of his children or grandchildren. The acts of his matured age amply confirmed any prophecies that may have been hazarded about his future career, and when the Sungs were vanquished he could boast that he had carved out in Eastern Asia an Empire not less

* Cambaluc or Khanbalig—"the city of the Khan"—the name of Pekin, or the Northern Capital, was made for the first time capital of China by the Mongols. A city near, or on its site, had been the chief town of an independent kingdom on several occasions, *e.g.* of Yen, of the Khitans, and of the Kins. A long description is given in Marco Polo. There were, according to him, twelve gates, at each of which was stationed a guard of one thousand men; and the streets were so straight and wide that you could see from one end to the other, or from gate to gate. The extent given of the walls varies: according to the highest estimate, they were twenty-seven miles round, according to the lowest eighteen. The Khan's palace at Chandu, or Kaipingfoo, north of Pekin, where he built a magnificent summer palace, kept his stud of horses, and carried out his love of the chase in the immense park and preserves attached, may be considered the Windsor of this Chinese monarch. The position of Pekin had, and still has, much to recommend it as the site of a capital. The Mings, after proclaiming Nankin the capital, made scarcely less use of Pekin, and Chuntche, the first of the Manchus, adopted it as his. It is scarcely necessary to add that it has since remained the sole metropolis of the Empire. See Marco Polo, *passim*; Amiot's "Memoires sur les Chinois," tom. ii. p. 553; Pauthier, pp. 353, 354.

splendid than that formed by Genghis in the North and the West.

When Kublai permanently established himself at Peking he drew up consistent lines of policy on all the great questions with which it was likely he would have to deal, and he always endeavoured to act upon these set principles. In framing this system of government he was greatly assisted by his old friend and tutor, Yaochu, as well as by other Chinese ministers. He was thus enabled to deal wisely and also vigorously with a society with which he was only imperfectly acquainted ; and the impartiality and insight into human character, which were his main characteristics, greatly simplified the difficult task that he had to accomplish. In nothing was his impartiality more clearly shown than in his attitude with regard to religion. Free from the prejudices and superstition of the Early Mongol faith, the family of Genghis had always been characterized by a marked indifference to matters of religion, and Kublai carried this indifference still further than any of his predecessors had done. His impartiality showed not the working of a well-balanced judgment towards the convictions of others, but rather the absence of all sentiment and the presence of a hard and unattractive materialism.

He at first treated with equal consideration Buddhism and Mahomedanism, the creed of the Christian and that of the Jew. He is reported to have said that there were four Prophets revered by all the world, and that he worshipped and paid respect to them all in the hope that the greatest among them in heaven might aid him. Whether this statement may be accepted with implicit credence or not, there can be little doubt that it expresses with sufficient accuracy Kublai's views in matters of religion. He made a politic use of one and all ; and he worked upon men by their fears and by humouring their predilections. Some have imagined that he sympathized with Christianity, but his measures in support of Buddhism and in favour of his friend the young Pakba Lama were much more pronounced than anything he ever undertook for the Nestorians or the Jews. Whatever his own secret convictions may have been, none

were ever admitted into his inner confidence ; but in his acts he evinced a politic tolerance towards all creeds, and none could say that he favoured one more than another.

But if Kublai was tolerant or indifferent in matters of religious belief, he was very firm in requiring from all prayers and adoration for himself as the Emperor of the realm. Priests were appointed and particularly enjoined to offer up prayers on his behalf before the people, who were required to attend these services and to join in the responses. About the same time Kublai also adopted the Chinese practice of erecting a temple to his ancestors, whom he named for several generations before Genghis. Coins with his image stamped upon them were circulated freely, and images of himself were sent to the principal towns to be paid reverence to by the people. These decrees were all passed before the year A.D. 1270, and no means were spared for rendering his rule popular with his new subjects. At first it will be perceived that he identified himself with no cause or party in particular ; but, as time went on, and as he appreciated the situation more accurately, he discarded this impartiality, and identified himself with many of the prejudices and views of the mass of the Chinese people.

Naturally fond of pomp, and knowing how much the masses are impressed by the glitter of a gorgeous court, Kublai caused a state ceremonial to be drawn up of a magnificent character. His courtiers were required to dress after a uniform fashion, and to appear in fixed apparel on all state occasions. His banquets were of the most sumptuous description. Strangers from foreign states were admitted to the presence, and dined at a table set apart for travellers, while the great king himself feasted in the full gaze of his people. His courtiers, generals, and ministers, attended by a host of servitors, and protected from enemies by twenty thousand guards, the pick of the Mongol army ; the countless wealth seized in the capitals of numerous kingdoms ; the brilliance of intellect among his chief adherents and supporters ; the martial character of the race that lent itself almost as well to the pageantry of a court as to the stern reality of battle ; and, finally, the majesty of the great king himself—all

combined to make Kublai's court and capital the most splendid at that time in the world. The gossipy, but shrewd and observant, Venetian traveller, Marco Polo, whose account of the countries of Asia illustrated an unknown continent, describes, in his own quaint way, the mode of life and the ceremonies in vogue at Kublai's capital. The curious in such matters will find that after six centuries the interest has not departed from his pages, which give us corroborative proof of the evidence we have from other sources.

When Kublai returned from his first campaign against Arikbuka he proclaimed his intention of proceeding no more to the wars. Henceforth he would, he said, conduct his military operations, not in person, but by his lieutenants. He was led to this decision partly by his increasing years,* and partly by the extent of his Empire, which necessitated vigilance at all points. For even before the overthrow of the Sungs he was meditating fresh conquests, and either actuated by some conviction of political necessities of which we must necessarily be ignorant, or goaded into action by the irrepressible energy of his race, he had resolved on prosecuting an enterprise for which no necessity existed and the benefit of which was more than doubtful. That enterprise was the invasion of Japan.

The old connection between China and the islands of Japan has been several times referred to, and it has been stated that the ruling dynasty in that country was supposed to trace back its descent to Taipe, a Chinese exile in the twelfth century before our era. At various periods the relations between the two states had been drawn more closely together than the intercourse usual between neighbours ; and although the Emperor of China had always been allowed a

* Kublai was born in the eighth month of the year A.D. 1216, and was the fourth son of Tuli, himself the fourth son of Genghis by his favourite wife. He was proclaimed Khakhan on his brother Mangu's death in A.D. 1260. Marco Polo describes his appearance as follows :—" He is of a good stature, neither tall nor short, but of a middle height. He has a becoming amount of flesh, and is very shapely in all his limbs. His complexion is white and red, the eyes black and fine, the nose well formed and well set on." His conquest of Yunnan in A.D. 1253-54 was the most remarkable of his military achievements.

superior position, and had sometimes asserted his shadowy claims to exact feudal rights, the Japanese Government had none the less maintained and preserved its independence with good-tempered firmness. There had been one conflict between the states in the case of Corea, but the result had been to inspire them with a mutual respect. The islanders of "the rising sun," safe in their insular position, had remained undisturbed by the great Mongol outpouring which had revolutionized the face of Asia. If they were aware of the startling changes on the mainland, nothing more than the echo reached their shores. Kublai was apparently piqued at their indifferent attitude towards his power, and resolved at an early stage in his career to bring them within the sphere of his influence.

In A.D. 1266, Kublai had sent two envoys with a letter from himself to the King of Japan, complaining that no friendly message had been received since his accession to power, and that it would be well to repair this omission as soon as possible in order to avoid the horrors of war. But neither the envoys nor the letter reached their destination. The Mongol messengers travelled by way of Corea, which held more intercourse with Japan than the other countries of Northern China, and which was allied on terms of friendship with Kublai; but when requested to assist these envoys in reaching their destination, all the Coreans did was to point to the danger and difficulty of the voyage, and to expatiate on the inaccessibility of Japan. Unaccustomed to the sea, these Mongols were easily dissuaded from their undertaking, and returned to Kublai's court without having delivered their letter or accomplished any portion of their mission. After this abortive attempt, the continued silence or indifference of the Japanese was treated as proof of their hostility. Two years later, in A.D. 1268, Kublai sent orders to the Korean ruler to collect his naval and military forces and to hold them disposable for his service. The war with the Sungs was still far from being settled, and it was uncertain whether Kublai would employ this auxiliary force against Japan or against the Chinese; but the Korean king promised to place at the service of the Mongols a fleet of one thousand vessels and ten

thousand men. Kublai sent one of his officers to inspect, and apparently also to instruct, the forces of this new ally and dependent.

In the following years Kublai's attention was frequently directed to the consideration of the subject of how he might best accomplish the chastisement of the Japanese, and as soon as the result of the Chinese war had become well assured, he adopted more active measures for the attainment of his object. In A.D. 1274 he sent a small fleet of three hundred vessels and fifteen thousand men against Japan, but the result was unfortunate. The Japanese attacked it off the island of Tsiusima, and inflicted a great defeat upon the Mongols. Apparently the larger portion of this fleet consisted of the contingent provided by the King of Corea ; and Kublai does not seem to have thought that his military honour was in any degree involved in this disaster, for in the years immediately following he showed greater inclination than at any previous time to come to terms with the Japanese. The Japanese, inflated by their naval victory, and confident in their insular position, refused to yield, in either form or substance, to the pretensions of Kublai, and, at last, either anxious to show the firmness of their resolve or desirous of bringing the tedious discussions to an end, they caused some of the Mongol envoys to be murdered in A.D. 1280. This violation of the laws common to all humanity, left Kublai no choice save to vindicate his majesty. He was the less disinclined to make the attempt because the conquest of Southern China had been completed, and a large body of disbanded Chinese troops, who had deserted from the Sungs, were available for military operations. At the time it must have seemed that the Japanese had chosen a bad moment for bringing their differences with a formidable enemy to a head.

During the year A.D. 1280-81, great preparations were made in all the harbours of Kiangsu, Chekiang, and Fuhkien for the expedition which was to punish and subdue the bold islanders who had openly defied the great conquerors of the continent. The fleets and the armies released by the destruction of the last vestiges of Sung power were concentrated in the eastern seaports, and a large number of the survivors

of the Chinese armies were re-enlisted for the purposes of this war. The total force to be employed considerably exceeded one hundred thousand men, of whom it is not probable that more than one-third were Mongols. The large number of native troops employed is shown by, among other circumstances, the harbours from which they set out, which were Kincsay and Zayton (Chinchow), the nearest and most convenient for the despatch of the troops stationed in the south. A preferable plan, because minimizing the sea-voyage for the inexpert Mongol sailors, would have been to have concentrated the army of invasion in Corea, and to have thence directed it against Japan. But this would have involved much preliminary marching to and fro, and the courage of the Chinese recruits would probably have evaporated long before a start could have been made. Moreover, the war was far from popular with the Mongols themselves, and the principal object of the Pekin Council was to get the business done as quickly as possible, and before the army had relaxed the energy which counts for so much in the prosecution of a war. Although, therefore, it entailed a long sea-voyage, it was from the harbours of Zayton and Kincsay that this great armada set sail.

As is often the case in an army composed of mixed nationalities, two generals were appointed to the command, one a Chinese and the other a Mongol; but the arrangement did not in this or in any other instance conduce to harmony. Numerous points arose for settlement, but they proved only provocative of dissension. One general fell ill and had to resign his command, and another disappeared during a storm at sea. When the wind-shattered fleet reached the islets off the south-western coast of Japan, it was reduced in numbers and the men were disheartened in courage. The Japanese fleet was hovering round it in readiness to attack whenever a favourable opportunity offered, and on the chief island of Kiusiu the Japanese forces mustered in great numbers. A fresh storm destroyed many more of Kublai's war-junks, and drove others out to sea to be never again heard of; and when the army, in despair, endeavoured to construct fresh vessels for their return journey the Japanese assailed them with all

their forces. After an unequal contest, in which the Mongols seem to have made a strenuous resistance, the relics of this army were compelled to surrender. While the lives of the Chinese and Koreans were spared, all the Mongols were put to the sword, and very few escaped to tell Kublai the mournful tidings of the greatest disaster which had ever befallen his arms or those of any of his race.

It was no part of the Mongol character to acquiesce in defeat. Their enterprises had on some previous occasions been checked, and not succeeded to the full measure of their hopes; but they had always returned in greater force to complete what they had been compelled to leave half finished. Brought face to face with a new and formidable element, the determination of the race was of a sufficiently practical kind to recognize that no advantage could be gained by rushing blindfold against an obstacle that defied their utmost effort, and the common sense of the Mongols revolted against the resumption of an operation that was seen to be most costly and unlikely to result in anything save discomfiture and disappointment. But Kublai was only a mortal, and the spectacle of his shattered vessels and his slaughtered thousands appealed to him strongly for revenge. What had been merely the prompting of ambition now presented itself to him with all the force of a sacred duty. A Mongol had never yet acquiesced in the immutability of defeat. Was it reserved for the proud Kublai to be the first to make so important a departure from the accepted policy and traditions of his race and House?

During the following years Kublai made energetic preparations towards repairing this defeat, and in A.D. 1283 he had, with the assistance of the Korean king, equipped a fresh fleet for this service; but he found greater difficulty in procuring sailors to man it. Several mutinies, which assumed alarming proportions, arose from the dislike generally prevailing to embark on this voyage; and Kublai's plans advanced very slowly towards realization. At last, in A.D. 1286, after a sharp protest from the President of the Council, Lieousiuen, Kublai gave orders for the abandonment of all further designs upon Japan. Bitter as the decision must have

been to this haughty ruler, it was resolved that no fresh preparations should be made for the retrieval of the late defeat, and that the brave islanders of Japan should be left to enjoy the liberty which they had shown they knew how to defend. The Mongols might well rest satisfied with what they had accomplished, although, like many great continental peoples, they had to confess on the sea a superior in a race of free-born islanders, inferior in numbers, and also in the science and machinery of war. It will be seen that their successful defence inspired the Japanese with a spirit of aggression, and that they became at a later period the assailants in a struggle with the inhabitants of the mainland.

The conquest of Yunnan by Kublai at an earlier stage in his career, and the subsequent successes of Uriangkadai, had led to the institution of relations with the rulers and peoples of the Indo-Chinese peninsula. Several of these had been reduced to a state of more or less dependence upon the Mongol general in that region ; but the principal of them, the King of Mien or Burmah, who arrogated to himself the title of King of Bengal as well, was inveterately hostile and defiant. While the Sung dominions remained only partly subdued, the Mongols were unable to act with any vigour in this quarter, and sought to obtain by diplomacy the recognition of their authority by the sovereign of Mien. But this potentate, trusting in his wealth, the numbers of his people, and the extent of his dominions from the borders of Yunnan to the Gulf of Bengal, if not to the Gangetic Delta, haughtily refused to abate one jot of his authority. He would be an independent prince or nothing.

The Mongol garrisons in Yunnan were, therefore, reduced to the lowest possible limits in order that an active force might be placed in the field ; and when the King of Mien crossed the frontier at the head of a large army, he found the Mongols drawn up to receive him on the plains of Yungchang. The numbers were greatly in favour of the Mien ruler, who had not only a large body of cavalry, but, like another Pyrrhus, had brought into the field a strong contingent of elephants. The Burmese army exceeded fifty thousand men, and included, according to one authority eight hundred,

according to another two thousand, elephants; whereas, at the highest estimate, the Mongols mustered no more than twelve thousand men in all. The Burmese possessed also an artillery force of sixteen guns. Despite, therefore, the well-known valour and great military qualities of the Mongols, the result of this battle appeared to be more than doubtful when the two armies halted in face of each other. The struggle proved long and bitterly contested. The superiority of the Burmese in cavalry, added to the advantage they possessed in their corps of elephants—manned with artillery and slingers—gave an impetuosity to their first attack which Kublai's soldiers were unable to resist. The Mongol commander had foreseen this result, and had provided against it. Dismounting his cavalry, he ordered his whole force to direct their arrows upon that part of the Burmese battle which was composed of the elephants. Before this hailstorm, for the Mongols were then incomparably the best archers in the world (although the age which we are accustomed to think of as the golden period of English archery—when the traditions of Robin Hood preserved their force, and when the bowmen turned the day at Cressy and Poitiers), the onset of the elephants was speedily checked and thrown into confusion, and these infuriated animals rushed through the ranks of the Burmese, carrying confusion in their train. The Mongols then remounted their horses and completed the effect of this panic by charging the main body of the enemy. The latter were driven with heavy loss from the field, and the Mongols brought the campaign to a brilliant conclusion by the capture of several towns on the Irrawaddi. The Mongol general was compelled by the heat of the weather to withdraw his troops to the cooler quarters of Northern Yunnan, leaving the Burmese king with a shattered reputation, but still untouched and practically secure in the interior of his dominions. The Mongols only retired with the determination that they would return to complete their triumph, and the local commander, Nasiuddin, sent a report to Kublai that it would be an easy matter to add the dominions of the King of Mien to his Empire.

Six years after this campaign, in which the Mongols fully

sustained their military reputation, Kublai sanctioned preparations for the invasion of the dominions of the King of Mien. He entrusted the principal command to Singtur, one of his most trusted generals and a member of the Royal House; and a large army was concentrated in Yunnan for the purposes of this war. The Burmese troops were defeated in several encounters, and the capital Mien, or Amien, was closely besieged. The king had made preparations for a protracted defence, but apparently his heart failed him, for after the siege had continued a few days he sought safety in flight. The Mongols followed up their successes by its capture, and by a triumphant advance to the neighbourhood of Prome. They carried their raids into Pegu, and received the submission of several of the tribes of the Assam frontier. Thus were the Mongol campaigns against the Burmese brought to a conclusive and successful issue; and the authority of Kublai became as firmly established in this remote south-western quarter as it was in any other portion of his wide-stretching dominions.

Almost at the same time as this war in Burmah troubles arose with the ruler of Chenching, a portion of the modern Tonquin. In A.D. 1278, after the final overthrow of the Sungs, this prince had recognized the Mongol supremacy, and had for several years sent tribute to Canton. But on his death his heir refused to hold further intercourse with the Mongols, and, gathering the braver spirits of the country round him, resolved to resist all attempt at encroachment on the part of his neighbours. Sotou, the Mongol commander at Canton, apprehensive lest the danger should assume larger proportions, resolved to adopt vigorous measures against this defiant prince. Sotou's force compelled these patriots to take refuge in the hills, but when the Mongols attempted to carry on the war in their fastnesses they experienced a decided check. One detachment was destroyed and cut to pieces in a defile, whilst Sotou's main body was roughly handled and compelled to beat a hasty retreat from before a stockaded position. Kublai was very much distressed by these reverses, and sent fresh troops from his capital, under the command of Togan, one of his sons. The increased interest displayed in

this insignificant contest did not, however, produce any greater or more fortunate result.

Westwards of Chenching was the state of Annam, which had also bowed to the Mongol yoke, but the discomfiture of Sotou had restored the sinking confidence of all these southern potentates, and when the Mongols recommenced their advance against Chenching the King of Annam had resolved to repudiate his allegiance to them and to throw in his lot with his neighbours. When, therefore, Togan's army, which had been joined by Sotou's forces, reached the frontier of Annam, it found, instead of the supplies and welcome upon which it had counted, an army drawn up to dispute its further march. The troops of Annam were ill able to cope with Kublai's trained soldiers in regular warfare. The Mongols crossed the river Fouleang on a bridge of boats in face of the Annam army, and drove their adversaries in confusion from their positions. The Annamites retreated, but continued to show a good front, and they possessed an invaluable ally in their climate. The heat and the damp proved more formidable to Togan's army than the valour or skill of these defenders of their country ; and after a resolute attempt to force his way to Chenching, Kublai's son found himself compelled to order a retreat. The Mongols appear to have lost all sense of discipline as soon as their backs were turned to the foe. Ignorant of the country, they wandered from their course, and only a few detachments regained the province of Kwantung. Liheng, Togan's principal lieutenant, was slain by a poisoned arrow in one battle, and Sotou fell fighting, sword in hand, when attempting to force his way over the Kien Moankiang river. Togan escaped to bear in person the sad tidings to Kublai. In A.D. 1286, Kublai wished to despatch a fresh army against Annam, and even went so far as to give orders to Alihaya, one of his chosen generals, who had been engaged in exploring the upper course of the Hoangho, to proceed to the scene of war. But the representations of the Chinese minister, Lieousiuen, again prevailed. The terrors of the hot and humid climate of Annam had been found, and were now admitted to be not less real and formidable than the hurricanes of the storm-tossed shores of Japan ; and

Kublai at last announced his intention of foregoing all design of retrieving the honour of his arms in this quarter.

Kublai was the more induced to adopt this pacific policy because numerous internal troubles raised feelings of apprehension in his breast. Already the great mass of the Chinese people were showing that they bore their new masters little love, and that they would not long consent to remain apathetic subjects of an alien rule. In Fuhkien, Houkwang, and Kiangnan the Mongol garrisons were kept constantly on the alert, and indeed had often to resort to extreme measures against the disaffected inhabitants. Some years before the final abandonment of all further designs upon Japan or Annam, a fanatic had proclaimed a revival of the Sung dynasty in Fuhkien, and his auguries, drawn from the position of the planets, of coming misfortune to the Mongols, sufficed to bring one hundred thousand supporters to his side. Kublai was thoroughly alarmed at this popular demonstration, which showed the hollowness of the Mongol conquest, and, suspicious of the members of the Sung family in his power, he caused them to be brought before him, with Wen Tien Sang, the last and most faithful of their ministers. The members of the Sung family were banished to Tartary, and Wen Tien Sang, whose fidelity remained proof to the end, and who refused to enter the Mongol service, was publicly executed. Notwithstanding these sweeping measures, the populace was far from being either cowed or won over; and Kublai found in the sentiment of the Chinese towards his race the most potent inducement to abstain from costly and hazardous expeditions against the few of his neighbours who were willing to give their lives in defence of their freedom.

But although his necessities compelled him to abandon the expensive dreams of military conquest which he had formed, his restless spirit urged him to attempt other means for the accomplishment of his purpose. He sent, therefore, a mission and a skilful envoy to visit the courts of the states and islands of Southern Asia; and the presents brought back from hospitable potentates flattered the declining years of the aged Emperor, who saw, because he wished to see, in their courtesy the formal recognition of his power.

Whether encouraged by the result of this embassy, or from some other cause that is unknown, Kublai came to the sudden determination to renew the war with the King of Annam; and he again entrusted the task to his son Togan who had been appointed Viceroy of Yunnan. The active command was divided between two generals, and a squadron co-operated with the land forces from the sea. The Mongols were victorious in seventeen encounters, and the vanquished prince of Annam, so late exulting in the confidence of victory, was obliged to seek personal safety by a timely flight. As has often proved the case under similar circumstances, the true danger of the undertaking did not reveal itself until all open opposition had been overcome. The Annamite army had been overthrown, the king had fled no man knew whither, and the capital was in the hands of the national enemy. There was no one left to dispute the authority of the Mongols, and apparently their work was done.

At this point Apachi, the most experienced of the commanders, recommended that Togan should order the return of the army to its own country. All the objects of the war had been, he said, attained, and the Annamites had been forcibly reminded that the Mongols could, when they chose, administer the necessary chastisement for any act of hostility. There was no inducement to delay the return march, and provisions were daily becoming more scarce and the heat more intense. But Togan put off his decision until his army had become so reduced by its privations that the safer plan seemed to be to remain in its position until it had recruited its exhausted strength. Meanwhile the Annamites gathered from all sides, their neighbours came to their assistance, and their king suddenly returned from his place of safety to put himself at their head. Togan was at length compelled to give the order of retreat, and the Mongol army, although victorious in the field, was constrained to make a hasty and undignified exit from Annam. Kublai was so indignant at this untoward and unexpected result that he removed Togan from his governorship, and forbade him to visit the court. The King of Annam completed by his tact the task which his valour and judgment had carried far towards a successful

conclusion, for when he had vanquished the Mongol army, and expelled it from his dominions, he sent a letter of apology for having so long opposed Kublai by arms, together with an image of solid gold in the shape of tribute. For this reign Annam made good its claims to independence, and, partly from its situation, partly also, perhaps, from its unimportance, it has succeeded in maintaining it ever since. If in the present age it is exposed to any immediate danger, it is at the hands of our gallant and courteous neighbours, the French, who only require the appearance of another Dupleix to carve out a fresh empire in the kingdoms of the Indo-Chinese peninsula along the banks of the Mekong and the Songkoi, and on the shores of the Gulf of Tonquin.

In the meanwhile the popular disaffection was steadily increasing. The Sung Emperor, whose place of imprisonment had been several times changed, was sent to Tibet to be instructed in the doctrines of Buddhism; but this did not prevent insurrections in Fuhkien and Kwantung. The necessity for exceptional precautions at the capital and in all the garrisoned towns, where the Mongols, literally speaking, slept with their arms ready to their hands, showed that the people were far from being reconciled to their fate. In their contempt for the barbarian conqueror, they would not even give his attempt at governing them with a fair show of justice and moderation a hearing. It was condemned before anything could be said in its defence. The Chinese people would have none of it. They eagerly expected the hour of deliverance from a foreign yoke, and submitted with such patience as they could muster to the tyranny of Kublai's administrators, and to the bungling, although well-meaning, efforts of that ruler to propitiate their good-will.

Much of the failure of Kublai's endeavours to popularize his authority must be attributed to the tyrannical acts and oppressive measures of his principal ministers, who were mostly natives of Western or Northern Asia, and who regarded the Chinese with unfriendly eyes. Prominent among these were two farmers of the taxes, who ground the people down by harsh exactions, and, although Kublai dismissed and punished them as soon as their iniquities became

too glaring to be passed over, their successors followed very much in their footsteps. Nor were the exactions confined to the civil authorities. The older Kublai became the more was he attached to Buddhism, and the lamas, or priests of that religion, acquired greater influence under his patronage. Encouraged by the royal favour, one of these ventured to plunder the tombs of the Sung Emperors, and when arrested at the instigation of a Chinese official the Emperor ordered his release and permitted him to retain possession of his ill-gotten plunder. This brutal and injudicious clemency added fuel to the flame of popular indignation.

The failure of his enterprise against Japan had not wholly cured Kublai of his desire to undertake expeditions beyond the sea. To avenge an insult offered to one of the envoys he was constantly sending into the Southern Archipelago, Kublai fitted out a large expedition against Kuava, a state identified with the island of Java. The Mongols as usual overcame the resistance openly offered them, but they were outmanœuvred, and suffered heavy losses in several skirmishes. Their commander, seeing that there was not much prospect of speedily conquering the country of Kuava, at once withdrew his forces and returned to China with vast booty, but little glory. A smaller expedition to the islands of Loochoo, which in the seventh century had been subjected by the Soui Emperor, Yangti, was not more fortunate, being obliged, on the death of its commander, to return to Chinese harbours without having accomplished any tangible result.

While these causes of discontent were in operation there were other circumstances threatening the fabric of Mongol supremacy in the very foundations of its power. The quarrel between Kublai and his brother, Arikbuka, has already been described; but although terminating with the success of Kublai, it left behind it the seeds of future trouble. Kublai's cousin, Kaidu, of the family of Ogotai, had, at an earlier period, assumed an attitude of marked hostility towards his kinsman, and the lapse of time only seemed to intensify the bitterness of their rivalry. But although Kaidu never wanted the inclination to molest his more successful opponent, it was

long before he could collect sufficient strength to work him any harm. But about the period we have now reached he had been joined by Nayan, a member of the House of Genghis, who had gathered together a power of considerable dimensions in Tartary, and had formed a bond between all the tribes and chieftains of Northern Asia in their common antipathy to Kublai. By the year A.D. 1287 Kaidu's plans were in a fair way towards completion, and a general revolt throughout Mongolia had been arranged and was on the point of breaking out. Fortunately for him, Kublai received intelligence of this scheme, and he resolved to strike a blow against Nayan before Kaidu could come to his assistance.

He sent his great general Bayan to Karakoram to maintain his authority there and to retard the advance of Kaidu, while he himself marched to encounter Nayan in the region which is now Manchuria. Nayan had made strenuous preparations for the war, but he was taken by surprise when he found that the Emperor was marching to attack him in overwhelming strength. Nayan's army probably did not exceed forty thousand men, while Kublai's may be computed at about one hundred thousand, better armed and with more formidable engines of war. Kublai, at this time more than seventy years of age, inspected his army from a tower erected on the backs of four elephants fastened together, and, having been informed by the soothsayers that the auguries were favourable and that he was promised victory, no longer delayed the signal for attack. The collision between these representatives of the same race proved bitter and protracted, and the result long hung doubtful in the balance. Nayan's followers fought with great valour, but the more desperate their resistance the more complete did it make Kublai's victory. Those who escaped the carnage of that day were glad to find safety in the woods of Northern Manchuria; but Nayan himself, who is said to have been a Christian, fell a prisoner into the hands of the great Emperor. It was a custom among the Mongols not to shed the blood of their own princes, so Kublai ordered that Nayan should be sewn up in a sack and then beaten to death. The overthrow of

Nayan enabled Kublai to return to Peking, but it did not close the war. Kaidu remained unconquered, and resolved to tempt the decision of Fortune. He was advancing eastwards as rapidly as he could, receiving many reinforcements from the tribes and Mongol chiefs on his line of march, and not to be deterred from his undertaking by the overthrow of his ally Nayan, or by the power of Kublai, or by the reputation of the great general Bayan.

In this quarter Kublai's arms had met with a preliminary disaster before Bayan had had time to reach Karakoram. Kanmala, prince of Tsin, and son of Kublai, endeavoured to arrest Kaidu's march at Hanghai, near the banks of the Selinga river ; but being forced to engage in a general battle, he was signally defeated, and owed his life to the personal valour and devotion of Tutuka, a Kipchak officer. The consequences of this reverse were considered to be so grave that Kublai again took the field in person, and, although no fighting is reported to have occurred, it may be assumed from Kaidu's retreat that Kublai succeeded in fully restoring his authority in the north. Kublai's prompt return also signified that he, for his part, did not desire to push matters to an extremity with Kaidu. He thought it more prudent to leave him the proverbial golden bridge for retreat.

After Kublai's departure, the war still lingered on in this quarter, and, indeed, it continued until after his death. On the whole, Kublai's lieutenants succeeded in maintaining their positions and in repelling the frequent attacks made against them. But they did not attempt to carry on an offensive war against Kaidu. They were well content to rest upon their laurels. Bayan, who arrived late upon the scene, was alone not satisfied with doubtful success. Wherever he appeared, the result of the fighting was sure to be complete and unequivocal ; and in the steppes of Mongolia his strategy and tactics were as conspicuous as they had been on the banks of the Great River and against the armies of the Sung. On one occasion he was, with a portion of his army, entrapped into an ambuscade, but his presence of mind and cool courage extricated him from the dangerous predicament, and his assailants left two thousand of their number slain

upon the ground, and the rest prisoners in his hands. This was the last military achievement of the great Bayan, the most remarkable of Kublai's generals, perhaps of all the Mongol commanders, with, of course, the exception of Genghis himself.

Bayan was too great a man to escape the shafts of the envious. In A.D. 1293, Kublai was so far influenced by the representations of those at the court that he ordered him to return to Pekin; and having removed him from his high military command, gave him instead the post of a minister of state. On Kublai's death, a few months later, Bayan reappeared upon the scene to determine by his powerful voice the elevation of Prince Timour to the throne. That prince happened to be absent at the seat of war when his father died, and he owed his undisputed succession to the firmness shown by Bayan in his interests. Bayan did not long survive this change in the person of the ruler. A few months after the day when he drew his sword in support of the cause of the absent prince, he died at the comparatively early age of fifty-nine, leaving behind him a great reputation for skill as a general and highmindedness as a man. His character appeals to our sympathy with the irresistible claims of a magnanimous and courageous soldier, who endeavoured on all occasions to mitigate the horrors of war and to temper the rage of his fierce soldiery. If Kublai had possessed many supporters like Bayan, or perhaps known how to make use of their services, the Yuen dynasty would probably have occupied the throne of China for a longer period, and attained a greater amount of popularity in that country than it did.

After Kublai's last journey to the northern frontier, his bodily infirmities increased so much that it was generally perceived that the end could not be far distant. In A.D. 1294, after the appearance of a comet in the preceding year, which the Chinese took advantage of to warn him to reform his administration, Kublai fell ill and died. He was then in the eightieth year of his age, and had occupied the throne for thirty-five years. Twenty-three years had elapsed since he first gave his dynasty the Chinese name of Yuen, and

during the last sixteen years he had been the acknowledged ruler of the whole of China.

With regard to the private character and domestic life of this prince, we owe most of the details to that vivacious gossip and remarkable traveller, Marco Polo. That Kublai was destitute of natural affection could not be sustained in face of his evidently unaffected grief at the loss of his wife Honkilachi, and his eldest son Chinkin; but there is much corroborative evidence of the charges brought against him by the Chinese historians, of having been too much addicted to such weaknesses as the love of money and a morbid inclination for superstitious practices; and he was also undoubtedly of a sensual nature. But admitting these faults and shortcomings, there remains a long list of virtues and high qualities in his favour. If he was not the greatest of Chinese Emperors, and that he certainly was not, his character is sufficiently vindicated by the events of his reign. They show him to have been well able to maintain a great Empire at its height, and to lead his people into the paths of peace and prosperity.

Kublai's long reign is not less remarkable if regarded from the standpoint of its being the climax of the triumph of a more vigorous race over a weaker. The greatest of the Mongol achievements, greater in its way than the march across Asia to the confines of Austria and the Persian Gulf, was undoubtedly the conquest of China. It had foiled the efforts of Genghis and his immediate successors, and all the credit of success was reserved for Kublai. The praise for having accomplished the most arduous of all the undertakings that formed part of the original Mongol programme belongs, therefore, to this prince. The Chinese were subdued and reduced by him to the condition of subjects of the Great Khan; but there can also be no question that they were throughout the most unwilling of subjects. Kublai showed that he knew how to conquer them; but it was above his capacity to reconcile them to his rule. Perhaps the task was impossible; but his later public acts were conspicuously deficient in the tact and judgment required for popularising his authority. The triumph of the Mongols was incon-

testable on the basis of their superior military strength and knowledge ; but it had no secure foundation in any portion of the country south of the Hoangho. Even before Kublai's death it was clear that it could not long endure ; and when he disappeared, the inevitable result came clearly into view.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE DECLINE OF THE MONGOLS.

OWING to the prompt measures of Bayan, Prince Timour, Kublai's grandson, was proclaimed Emperor under the style of Chingtsong. He retained possession of the throne for thirteen years, during which he governed the country with moderation and with a palpable desire to win the sympathy of the people over whom he reigned. Ill health, and anxiety on the score of the claims of others to the throne, prevented his undertaking any extensive operations at a distance from the base of his power, and Timour's reign was the very opposite to his father's, in that it beheld no foreign wars or costly expeditions on the sea. The bent of his own inclination was further strengthened by a great famine which visited the northern provinces and produced a vast amount of suffering. The preservation of peace became a matter of sheer necessity. When the scarcity passed away, it left other evils in its train, and prominent among these were the exactions of bands of brigands who traversed the country with almost complete impunity. Timour's attention was repeatedly called to the subject, but all he could do availed but little.

When, however, these brigands attempted to combine, and sought to attain other objects than mere plunder, their formidable character vanished. In small parties they were to be dreaded, but as soon as they collected in the proportions of an army they came within the reach of the Mongol garrisons, and were speedily dispersed. The anxiety shown by Timour to relieve the necessities of his suffering subjects and to repress the exactions of tyrannical governors, obtained

for him the sympathy and, to some extent, the support of many of the Chinese. The great Mongol chiefs and the princes of the House of Genghis had been allotted possessions throughout the Empire which they ruled in a semi-independent manner, and in their own districts they had assumed not only the right of raising taxes, but also the power of life and death. Timour abolished these privileges by decreeing that for the future no one could be sentenced to death without his express authority. All these measures tended to make his person, if not his race, more popular with the mass of the Chinese.

In many respects Timour had no choice save to rest contented with what had been accomplished. Kublai had done so much that there was very little left for his successor to perform. He often, indeed, received the formal expression of the results of previous triumphs; and among the most notable of these must be placed the embassy sent from Mien or Burmah, where a new king had ascended the throne. There had been some symptoms that this potentate had entertained thoughts of casting off the tie which bound him to the Mongols, but the arrival of the embassy with the tribute dispelled all apprehension on this score. Timour showed his prudence by issuing strict injunctions to the officers in Yunnan to refrain from molesting the Burmese frontier, and to content themselves with keeping the roads open and in a secure state for purposes of trade.

In the north, meanwhile, the rising under Kaidu still lingered on, without any important occurrence, it is true, yet threatening at any time to break out into serious proportions. The expense of maintaining an army in the field in these northern regions was very considerable, and even two victories won by a general named Changer over Kaidu's lieutenants were only an inadequate equivalent for it. In A.D. 1298, the effect of these victories was almost nullified by a disaster inflicted on the Imperial arms, when Timour's forces were surprised, and their commander, Kolikisse, the Emperor's son-in-law, preferred an honourable death to an ignominious surrender. The continuation of this struggle presents no features of interest, although it long remained a serious

element of weakness at the root of the Mongol power. Even Kaidu's death from chagrin at a defeat, in A.D. 1301, failed to put an end to the strife.

In the south the Burmese question assumed a fresh turn in these later years. The rightful king had been dethroned and murdered by his brother, who usurped his place. The Mongol forces thereupon crossed over the frontier from Yunnan, and restored order by replacing in power the prince whom they had recognized in the treaty. Whilst engaged in this task, which did not prove very arduous, a more serious matter claimed attention in their rear. A minister had proposed to Timour that he might win a cheap renown by the conquest of the country of Papesifu, in the south-west of China; and in a weak moment Timour had listened to the representations of his flattering counsellor. An army of twenty thousand men was collected for the purpose of invading this remote territory, which possessed no other value or importance than in providing an easy way as alleged of enabling Timour to hand down his name to posterity as a conqueror.

The expedition revealed unexpected dangers. One-third of the force perished from the effects of the climate before it reached its destination, and the commander was compelled to exact so much in the southern provinces of Kweichow and Yunnan that the people rose up and endeavoured to cast off the Mongol yoke. The intended conquest of Papesifu resolved itself into the necessity of defending a territory that had been subjected more than half a century against the efforts of an insurgent population. Songlongtsi, a chief of the people in this quarter, and Chentsiei, the wife of a local official, who had both suffered greatly at the hands of the military commander, placed themselves at the head of the disaffected, and, combining with their forces large numbers of the Miaotse and other fierce tribes of the hills and woods of Kweichow, attacked the towns within their reach. Several of these were captured, and the Mongol general entrusted with the operation against Papesifu was on the point of succumbing to the attack of his more active and numerous enemy, when Koko, Timour's uncle, the governor of Yunnan,

arrived with fresh troops and rescued him from his imminent danger.

Encouraged by the example of the people of Kweichow, the tribes of Papesifu and the neighbouring districts assailed the rear-guard and generally hampered the movements of the expeditionary force returning from Burmah. In the numerous skirmishes which were fought, the Mongols suffered very serious losses. The whole country from Burmah and Laos to Annam and Tonquin rose up against the invaders; and Timour had to collect a large army from the garrisons of Szchuen, Houkwang and Yunnan for the purpose of restoring his disputed authority. Before these troops could reach the scene of war further reverses had been inflicted upon his arms; and the authority of Songlongtsi and Chentsiei practically displaced his own. Several months were occupied in the preparations for restoring the Imperial reputation, and when at last the army was ready to take the field they found that their opponents had retired to the hills, where they occupied strong positions. Owing to the skill of a commander named Lieou Koukia, they were expelled from them and pursued for a considerable distance. The restoration of Mongol influence in this quarter was assured by the capture and execution of Chentsiei and the murder of Songlongtsi. Deprived of their leaders, the people returned to their homes, and affairs speedily resumed their normal aspect. None the less it was felt that the origin of the whole trouble was to be found in the rash and unnecessary proposition to invade Papesifu—a scheme which had resulted in addition of neither territory nor reputation to Timour.

The remaining acts of Timour's reign call for no special comment. Storms, earthquakes, and violent tempests visited the land with unusual frequency; but the people were less affected by these phenomena because there was domestic tranquillity. The frontiers were guarded in force, and a satisfactory termination of the question in the north with the other sections of the Mongol family gave Timour good reason for resting satisfied with the aspect of affairs. In A.D. 1306 the Emperor was seized with a malady which, gradually becoming worse, had a fatal termination in the following

year. The Chinese historians praise Timour's character in the strongest terms. He had done much towards making the Mongol dynasty more Chinese in its views and mode of government; and its subjects could not harden their hearts to virtues which were incontestable, and in face of a manifest desire to propitiate their sympathy. Timour was, there is no reason to doubt, sincerely regretted, and when he died the position of the Mongols in China was certainly not weaker than when he ascended the throne.

Timour left no direct heirs, and his nephews, Haichan and Aiyuli Palipata, were held to share between them the right to the throne. An attempt was made to secure the position for Honanta, Prince of Gansi, and at one time it looked as if the plot would succeed, for Haichan was absent in Mongolia, where he had distinguished himself against Kaidu. Fortunately Aiyuli Palipata was on the spot, and able to take vigorous measures against the pretender, who, when on the point of proclaiming himself Emperor, was suddenly arrested, with his principal supporters, and banished to Tartary. In the moment of triumph there were some who wished Palipata to place himself on the throne, but he possessed the strength of mind to resist the tempting offer. He summoned Haichan from Mongolia to assume the functions of authority, and that prince came, with thirty thousand chosen troops, to take what was his right. He was proclaimed as Haichan Khan or Woutsong, and the late conspirators were executed to give security to his new authority.

Haichan enjoyed his honours for only five years. During that short period he gave abundant proof of the excellence of his intentions and of his capacity for government. But, like all of his family, he was much addicted to the pleasures of the palace, and his uxoriousness was on a par with his inclination to gluttony and debauchery. He rather discouraged than promoted foreign trade, saying that it was a bad thing to permit the wealth of a country to leave it. With the Tibetans the relations were at this period of the most friendly character, in consequence of the influence of the lamas. The people of Papesifu and that region maintained their independence, and

on one occasion inflicted a defeat on a Chinese officer ; but, on the whole, Haichan's reign was one of continuous peace. His death occurred early in A.D. 1311, when his brother, Aiyuli Palipata, was proclaimed Emperor in his place. Haichan left two sons, who, temporarily set aside, eventually came to the throne.

Aiyuli Palipata began his reign with a formal announcement to his neighbours of his accession to the throne ; and as the Mongols were, owing to the death of Kaidu and the surrender of his son Chapar, more united among themselves than they had been for years, these had the good sense to yield a ready compliance with his demands. All the southern states and kingdoms sent tribute, and expressed their desire to execute the behests of the Emperor. At a later period embassies came from the Kings of Hien and Mapor. This ruler devoted much of his attention to education, and indeed his reign presents few features of interest, because no events occurred of exceptional importance. An insurrection, headed by his nephew, Hochila, son of Haichan, at one moment threatened the Emperor's peace of mind, but it was promptly repressed. Hochila fled the country to find a place of refuge among his kinsmen in the west. Aiyuli Palipata reigned nine years. His death, which was probably caused by the predominant Mongol vice of over-eating, occurred in A.D. 1320, when his son, Chutepala, or Yngtsong, succeeded him.

Chutepala bitterly lamented the early death of his father, and while he gave himself up to the indulgence of grief, his minister Temudar tyrannized over the people, and caused all his enemies at court to be executed. Temudar was on the high-road to the attainment of supreme power when Baiju, the commander of the Imperial Guard, and a descendant of Genghis's great general Muhule, intervened and ousted Temudar from the ascendant position he coveted and was steadily acquiring. Chutepala was, fortunately, not blind to the faults of Temudar, and felt towards Baiju admiration for his personal courage, and the sympathy of an equal age ; for, when Baiju was absent, Temudar, striving to regain his lost ground, presented himself at the palace. Chutepala refused to give him an audience, and Temudar died soon

afterwards, either of chagrin or, more probably, of poison self-administered. After Temudar's death, Baiju's position became more assured, and he may be said to have exercised all the functions of authority.

Fresh conspiracies were formed against the young ruler and his adviser; and Tiechi, Temudar's son, anxious to avenge his father's death, and fearful of the consequences of that father's acts of tyranny, which were becoming better known every day, placed himself at the head of a plot for murdering the Emperor and giving the throne to Yesun Timour, another of the grandsons of Kublai Khan. The plot succeeded better than it deserved. Baiju was murdered in his tent, and Chutepala, after a short reign of three years, shared the fate of his brave companion and faithful minister.

Yesun Timour, who had taken no part in this plot, and who, the instant he received intelligence of the conspirators' plans, had sent messengers to warn Chutepala, was then placed on the throne. But his first measures showed how much he disapproved of the means which had been employed to bring him to the head of affairs. Tiechi and his principal confederates were arrested and executed. Their goods were confiscated to the state, and their families experienced all the suffering held to be their due for having produced such criminals.

The five years during which Yesun Timour occupied the throne were years of peace, and no event occurred of unusual importance. He was the first of the Mongols to set his face against the votaries of Buddhism, and passed several edicts tending to limit the numbers of the Mongol priests or lamas. These precautions against the innovations of an alien religion, and the terrible earthquakes and other dire visitations from which the country suffered, were the only notable events of the reign. His death occurred in A.D. 1328.

Yesun Timour's death proved the precursor of many troubles. His two sons were in turn proclaimed Emperor, but their tenure of power was so brief that they are not recognized. Hochila, the banished son of Haichan, was recalled, and, when Yesun Timour's sons had been got rid of, placed upon the throne. Hochila owed his elevation to the

talents of his younger brother, Tou Timour, who gracefully made way for his elder; but he did not long enjoy the privileges of absolute power. Proclaimed in A.D. 1329, he suddenly died in the same year, and it is strongly suspected that his end was hastened by foul means. His brother, Tou Timour, had shown symptoms of regret at having surrendered the power he had acquired, and upon his brother's death hastened to seize the attributes of sovereignty. Tou Timour was the eighth prince of the Mongol dynasty.

The reign of the new ruler, although covering a rather longer space of time, presents as few features of interest as any of the preceding reigns. There is no evidence, unfortunately, throwing light upon the effect these repeated changes in the person of the ruler had upon the opinion of the great mass of the Chinese people. It cannot be doubted, however, that they strengthened the hostile feeling against a foreign domination, at the same time that they showed that the governing race was beginning to forget that the whole fabric of its power depended on the unity that might exist among themselves. These repeated changes in the person of the ruler boded ill for the long duration of Mongol power in China. They showed that the conqueror was becoming oblivious to the fact that the conquered still existed in their millions, and might easily acquire fresh courage.

The most noteworthy event that history has preserved of the reign of Tou Timour is his reception of the Grand Lama of Tibet, who visited his court in the year of his accession. Always a devoted Buddhist, Tou Timour was seized with a frenzy of religious zeal by what he regarded as so auspicious an event, and he issued an order to all his courtiers to bend the knee to the Lama whenever they addressed him. The disdain with which the haughty Mongol soldiers and barons received this order can be imagined. Nor were the Chinese themselves more pleased at the deference shown to the representative of a foreign and always much-hated religion. The President of the Hanlin College boldly refused to concede the mark of honour which the Emperor had wished to enforce.

During the greater portion of this reign an insurrection

prevailed in the south-western provinces of the Empire. In Yunnan and the adjoining parts of Szchuen the rebels expelled the Mongol troops and subverted the existing administration. It required a great effort, and the direction of a large body of troops from other quarters of the Empire, before tranquillity and the authority of the Mongols were fairly re-established. But Tou Timour troubled himself little with this complication, although it threatened his power very nearly, and he preferred to devote his attention to court ceremonies and religious rites. He did not, however, permit his superstition to interfere with his worldly pleasures. His death in A.D. 1332 exercised no perceptible influence on the fortunes of the Mongols, which were now steadily on the decline.

A child was proclaimed Emperor, but dying within a few months of his proclamation, a fresh arrangement had to be made. Tohan Timour, the eldest of the children of Hochila, and at this time a boy of thirteen years of age, was, after some delay caused by the intrigues of an ambitious minister, raised to the throne. Tohan Timour assumed the name of Chunti, and his reign, while being marked by a succession of misfortunes, witnessed the rapid decadence and fall of the Mongol power. At the very beginning of his reign Chunti showed himself a weak and vacillating prince, from whom little good could be expected. The difficulties by which he was surrounded were of the gravest character, for the people were being goaded into desperation by sufferings of no ordinary kind. The annals of the last fifty years of Mongol power contain one long list of terrible visitations, which reached their culmination in the second year of Chunti's reign in a famine, during which it is computed that no fewer than thirteen million persons died.

But the conflict of the elements was a matter of trivial importance in comparison with the storm gathering in the breasts of the Chinese. The people who had not refrained during the prime of Kublai's power, from showing their ineradicable antipathy to their alien rulers, were now, encouraged by the marked deterioration in the qualities of the governing race, to give unequivocal expression to their long-concealed hatred. In the prevailing troubles they saw

the clearest token of the anger of Heaven against the conqueror, and anxiously speculated on the prospect of the revolution which was beginning to loom in the near future.

Several attempts were made to depose the young Emperor, and in A.D. 1335 a desperate attack on the palace, headed by some of the chief members of the Mongol family, was only repulsed by the valour and timely precautions of Bayan, a descendant of the great general of the same name. The leaders in this rising were fortunately all captured, and expiated their treason with their lives. Instead of then devoting himself to the task of reforming the evils in the administration, and of mitigating the misfortunes of the people, Chunti turned from the path of duty to follow the course of pleasure, and passed most of his time in the chase. The remonstrances of the censors who strove to perform their duties with care and impartiality failed to show him the folly of his actions, and even the growing dangers which surrounded him only partially roused him to the gravity of the situation.

The first distinct rising on the part of the Chinese occurred in A.D. 1337, when Chukwang, a native of Kwantung, raised a considerable force and proclaimed that the Mongols had ceased to reign. The example thus set was followed in several of the neighbouring provinces. These insurrectionary movements, which were badly organized, and composed to a large extent of the scum of the people, failed to attract any general amount of sympathy or support from the nation. The Mongol troops succeeded, without any great delay or difficulty, in restoring order and in reasserting their master's authority.

In this hour of anxiety the Mongols, afraid of the Chinese officials, and wishing to take precautions in good time, ordered that all arms and horses should be surrendered by the Chinese. It is probable that in seeking to evade a danger they only precipitated the course of events, and that many who were disposed to stand by them found themselves compelled to attach themselves to the national party and to array themselves on the side of those who had resolved upon the expulsion of the Mongols.

The great qualities of one Bayan had contributed as much as any other circumstance to the consolidation of the Mongol power in China ; and by the irony of fate it was reserved for the bad qualities of another of the same family and name to expedite its fall. This later Bayan tyrannized over the people placed under his authority, as might be expected from one who, to strengthen his position at court, had soiled his hands with the blood of an Empress. Showing slight respect for even the person of the Emperor, he cared more for the advancement of his own ends than for the interests of the dynasty. Chunti does not seem to have felt the loss of the functions of government ; but when Bayan assumed a more magnificent train than that of the Emperor, and aspired to surpass him in his equipages, the growing power and arrogance of this subject appeared in a more unfavourable light to the last Emperor of the House of Genghis. When his vanity was touched, the crimes of Bayan, which had been long condoned, became heinous in the eyes of Chunti. In A.D. 1340 this too-powerful minister was deposed from his high place by a coalition between his personal enemies and those who wished to restore the Emperor's independence.

During the fifteen years that followed the disappearance of Bayan, Chunti's court was the scene of continual disputes between rival ministers, while, by some strange coincidence, the country suffered from drought and famine, from the overflow of the Hoangho, and from tremendous earthquakes. The insurrections which had at first been composed of mere adventurers were gradually taking a more definite form, and some had even gone so far as to claim that they were fighting for a restoration of the old dynasty. But still the Mongol troops were uniformly victorious, and the Chinese only rose to be repressed and slaughtered by their more disciplined opponents. On the sea, however, the pirate Fangkua Chin bade defiance to the Mongol fleet, which had lost its old efficiency, and captured the generals sent against him. On land, too, the rebels had taken a distinctive sign to mark the popular cause. Their leaders had given out red bonnets as their head-gear, and these became the bond of union between the foes of the Mongol.

In A.D. 1352 the first important success of the war was obtained at Kiukiang, when a Mongol detachment was annihilated. The principal of the rebels, Sinchow Hoei, assumed the title of Emperor, and followed up his success at Kiukiang by a rapid advance into Chekiang, when he menaced the famous city of Hangchow. The Mongol forces, hastily assembled from all quarters, proceeded to engage this army, and in a great battle recovered everything that had been lost. But for the continued successes of Fangkua Chin the Mongols would have retrieved whatever they had suffered, and on all sides. In A.D. 1354 there was a fresh outbreak; but the measures adopted by Toto, Chunti's minister, proved so effectual that the Mongol position may be said to have been at this point as much assured as it had been at any time since the commencement of this internal struggle.

Toto had barely succeeded in restoring some degree of order to the condition of affairs in the realm when he found himself the object of Chunti's suspicion and disfavour. A rival named Hama, who owed his fortune to Toto, and doubtless felt "the debt immense of endless gratitude," had maligned him during his absence fighting the enemies of the state, and succeeded in inducing Chunti to sign a warrant for his dismissal and arrest. When Toto returned, therefore, to the capital it was only to receive an order for his banishment. Hama completed his perfidy by sending Toto the poisoned cup, usually the portion or the solace of the unfortunate minister. With Toto disappeared the last possible champion of the Yuen or Mongol dynasty.

The country had been in a distracted state for a long time, and the Chinese, who had been brooding over their wrongs, had now for twenty years been accustomed to the spectacle of slaughter, and become hardened to the bitter struggle for their emancipation. But they had not yet combined. Their efforts had hitherto been spasmodic and disunited. Their principal leaders had shown themselves little better than brigand chiefs. With each fresh effort, however, their courage was rising higher, and their action acquiring greater method. Union was fast displacing disunion, and

their untrained levies were learning discipline in the field and under the hard master defeat. The discord among the Mongols, and the murder of their greatest leader further increased the prospect of an auspicious result. The occasion for throwing off the Mongol yoke had evidently arrived, and it only needed that the time should produce the man.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE EXPULSION OF THE MONGOLS.

THE prevailing disorders, which revealed the full extent of the people's misfortune, attracted, among many others, into the ranks of those fighting under the national ensign a simple individual named Choo Yuen Chang. Originally he had taken the vows of a priest, and entered a monastery ; but now he cast aside his religious garb to follow the more congenial pursuits of a soldier. Enlisting as a private, his zeal and attention to his duties soon caught the eye of his commander. Raised to the rank of an officer, he speedily found occasion to show that in enterprise and personal valour he was equal to every emergency. His first feat was the capture of the town of Hoyan—an exploit in itself sufficiently creditable ; but when he saved the inhabitants and their possessions from the rapacity of his ill-fed and badly paid soldiers, he showed not only higher qualities, but also a truer perception of the necessities of the time than had yet been evinced by any other of the Chinese leaders. Choo was the first to inspire his countrymen with a belief in their capacity to substitute, without much trouble, a stable Government of their own in place of the decrepit and expiring dynasty of the Mongol. By proving that the maintenance of order and the preservation of life and property did not necessarily depend on the measures taken by the reigning Emperor, Choo dealt a most forcible blow at the reputation of the House of Genghis—in fact, the only blow still required to ensure its fall.

At first Choo had to content himself with a very subordinate part in the contest, for a claimant had been put forward to

both the sympathy and the allegiance of the Chinese people in the person of a youthful member, pretended or real, of the Sung family. The Mongol Court had always feared the dormant affection to that native house more than the innate love of independence in the hearts of the people ; and now it concentrated all its force upon the work of crushing this particular movement. Its ends were attained. Army was sent after army to oppose this royal claimant and his general, Lieou Foutong ; and, although the struggle proved stubborn, the Mongol authority was completely reasserted. In face of these successes, Chunti and his ministers conceived that they had every reason to congratulate themselves on a safe and satisfactory issue from the crisis. This hope was soon found to be delusive. They had in reality been wasting their strength and resources in grappling with what, in comparison with the increasing reputation and power of Choo, was a danger of very minor importance.

In A.D. 1356, Choo made himself master of the city of Nankin, and thus obtained a hold on some of the wealthiest provinces in the country. His policy continued to be marked by the same moderation that had characterized the acts which first brought him into notice. He proclaimed that his sole wish, for the realization of which he was prepared to spare neither his life nor any exertion whatever, was to restore to the people their lost independence, and to revive their ancient form of government. The success which attended his military operations attracted to his side the young and the daring ; but the stability of his position was rendered the more assured because the more serious sections of the nation were won over to his party by a fertility of resource equal to every difficulty, and by the prudence with which the fruits of victory were turned to the attainment of noble and praiseworthy objects. Almost before the Mongol Court realized the danger likely to arise from the operations of this particular leader, Choo had gathered into his hands the power and influence which enabled him to become its destroyer.

From his post of vantage on the Yangtse, Choo succeeded in expelling the Mongol garrisons from most of the towns in Kiangsi, and, on their expulsion, in establishing an efficient

form of administration of his own. The overthrow of the Mongols did not cause the friends of peace and order those doubts as to what would thereafter ensue that nearly always suggest themselves at a time when the form of the existing institutions is undergoing a forcible change. But this confidence was only felt in those districts which were the scene of Choo's exploits. Elsewhere, Chinese patriots were only an euphemism for Chinese brigands. Ravaged regions, sacked towns, and the usual horrors of war proclaimed throughout the rest of China that the Chinese and their Tartar conquerors had met in a last death-struggle out of which the one or the other must issue finally vanquished. The question briefly put was, whether the natives would tolerate any longer a foreign and a much-hated race as rulers.

The growth of Choo's power proved slow but sure, and the districts subjected by him did not throw off his authority. In the north, particularly in the provinces of Honan and Shansi, other leaders made indeed more rapid progress. One of these had seized the city of Kaifong, and some had carried their raids through Leaoutung to the frontier of Corea; but they were all regarded with feelings more of apprehension than of love by the mass of the nation. Choo alone was considered to be working for the welfare of the people, and this reputation for sincerity and public spirit served to bring over to his side all those smaller leaders who could not hope to reach the highest place. Prominent among these was the pirate Fangkua Chin, whose naval exploits had exalted him to the rank of a national hero and made him a power for good or evil on the great river Kiang. In 1358 he sent an embassy to Choo, proposing an alliance for the emancipation of their country from the foreign yoke. He promised to place all his forces at the disposal of Choo, and in token of good faith sent one of his sons as hostage to Nankin.

Choo again showed himself well able to turn the opportunity to the best advantage. Having entertained this mission in a becoming manner, he returned the son to his father, saying that where expressions of friendship were sincere, hostages would be unnecessary. Fangkua Chin appeared greatly touched by this act of magnanimous

confidence, and sent Choo a short time afterwards a steed, magnificently caparisoned, with a saddle-cloth ornamented with pearls. But Choo refused to accept the gift. "I have no other passion," he said, "than to serve the Empire, and I ask only for skilful soldiers and ministers who may help me in my project. Corn, linen, and silk for the use of my soldiers are very necessary to me ; jewels have neither value nor use." After this expression of Choo's designs, the understanding between him and Fangkua Chin was drawn more closely together, and their alliance became more firm. It was well that it was so, as elsewhere dissension prevailed in the Chinese camp, and no two other leaders were found to advocate the same policy and course of action.

The penalty of this want of union soon arrived ; for in 1359 the Mongol general, Chahan Timour, recaptured Kaifong, and the Sung claimant, who had established his court there, barely escaped with his life and the relics of his force. Had Chunti possessed in any degree the capacity of the race from which he sprang, a turn in his favour might, even at this eleventh hour, have been given to the contest, and the authority of the Mongols might have been preserved north of the Kiang river. But Chunti's debaucheries continued, and Peking remained the scene of incessant intrigues. One plot in which the heir-apparent took a prominent part failed by the merest chance, and its failure proved only the forerunner of others. In the field the absence of union was not less conspicuous than it was at the capital. Chahan Timour, the best and most skilful of the Emperor's generals, whose recapture of Kaifong afforded some solid hope for believing in a retrieval of affairs, was the pronounced rival of Polo Timour ; and where the principal commanders set so pernicious an example, their lieutenants were not slow to do likewise. At this critical moment, Alouhiya, a descendant of the Emperor Ogotai Khan, raised a considerable army in Mongolia for the purpose of, as he said, reviving the dignity of the Empire ; but, however honourable his object, his pretensions constituted a grave peril to the Emperor Chunti, already sufficiently occupied and even embarrassed by the numerous hostile bands established within the heart of the

realm. A body of troops hurriedly assembled and despatched to encounter Alouhiya, under a general named Toukien, was beaten with some loss, and compelled to find shelter in the ruined city of Changtu, the Xanadu of Coleridge, where Kublai was wont to pass the greater portion of the year. From this peril Chunti was fortunately relieved by the capture of Alouhiya, who found that the integrity of his intentions with regard to the State was no excuse for taking up arms against the Emperor. There were those who counselled a policy of generous forbearance towards this energetic Mongol chieftain, but Chunti refused to be guided in this matter except by his own views. Alouhiya may have been either a misguided enthusiast or a shrewd critic of Mongol decay ; but he was undoubtedly a rebel in Chunti's eyes, and as such he was condemned to death.

The episode caused by Alouhiya's march out of Mongolia had hardly concluded, when the death of Chahan Timour caused fresh and serious embarrassment to the Emperor. In 1361, Chahan Timour had reduced the great province of Honan once more to its allegiance to the Emperor, and during the late winter of the same year he had employed his victorious soldiers in the reconquest of Shantung. He had almost completed the latter task, when two of the rebel leaders, to whom he had not only accorded their lives, but also assigned honourable posts of command, formed a plot to murder him. They succeeded only too well. Chahan Timour, with the confidence of a noble and fearless mind, trusted himself with a very small following into their power, when he was forthwith murdered in one of their tents. The loss of Chahan Timour proved irreparable. His adopted son Koukou exacted a fearful vengeance for this outrage ; but, although he succeeded to his father's dignities, and, possessing some ability, took a not inconsiderable part in the later troubles, he could not hope, and was not able, to wield the same power as Chahan had exercised.

The year which beheld these events in Honan and Shantung, was also marked by a rebellion in Yunnan, where the shadow, if not the substance, of the authority established by Kublai and Uriangkadaï a century before still existed.

An officer named Mingyuchin had been sent thither by the Sung pretender for the purpose of stirring up the people ; but although his efforts in this direction were far from having no result, he failed to maintain himself even against the weak garrison strengthened by reinforcements timely sent from Shensi. Baffled in Yunnan, Mingyuchin retired into Szchuen, where he met with better fortune, and for a short time maintained his authority in that province—in fact, until he was overthrown by Choo.

One of the natural consequences of these internal troubles was a falling-off in the respect shown by the neighbouring states to the Emperor's authority. The people and governing family of Corea, although loving their independence, had up to this obeyed without demur the edicts of the Mongol ruler ; but in 1362 Chunti unwisely sanctioned an arbitrary interference in their home affairs. Some relations of his wife, the Empress Ki, who was of Corean birth, murdered in that year the reigning king ; but, far from punishing the criminals, Chunti appointed a new king of their choice. Tasutumor—such was his name—left Peking for his new kingdom, with a Mongol general and an army of 10,000 men, oblivious of the storm which his nomination had aroused. The Coreans resolved to repudiate this nominee of Peking, and assembling in their thousands on the Yaloo river, under the leadership of Wang Jwan, their popular chief, inflicted so severe a defeat there on the Emperor's army, that only seventeen men escaped to tell the tale of their disaster. Such was the closing act of the Mongol dynasty in regard to its relations with the kingdom of Corea and its brave, independent people.

It was not until the year 1366, when Chunti's incapacity had alienated the sympathy of his own followers, and when the dissensions in the ranks of the Mongols themselves had produced distrust and suspicion on all sides, that Choo resolved to commence the war for the expulsion of the foreign rulers. Up to this point he had maintained and extended his authority without coming into contact with the power of the Emperor, and chiefly by quietly substituting his administration in districts which had been lost to the Mongols. But the end before him was the same as with the most

pronounced of their enemies ; he alone knew how best it could be attained. The difficulties which he had to overcome before he felt ready to grapple with the forces of Pekin were far from being few or trivial. A rival leader in the southern provinces, Changsse Ching, who represented the hopes of a numerous and desperate band of adventurers, threatened his position in the rear, and the dispersion of this faction was the essential preliminary to any operations north of the Yangtsekiang. Having accomplished this task, Choo found himself brought face to face with a new and unexpected difficulty in the momentary defection of his ally, the piratical leader Fangkua Chin. This personage had not been as sincere in his protestations of friendship and zeal as had at the time appeared to be the case. Personal pique led him to break away from the alliance with Choo, and to enter into another arrangement with Koukou, the adopted son of Chahan Timour, who, after taking a certain part in the affairs of Pekin, had been dismissed by Chunti from all his employments, and was now a desperate and dangerous man, striving to make a second fortune out of the troubles of the time. The promptness of Choo's measures foiled the plans of his enemies. Before they could draw their strength to a head, Choo's generals were in possession of Fangkua Chin's cities, and that chief had been compelled to seek safety in an island of the sea. Seeing the hopelessness of the cause, Fangkua Chin threw himself on the generosity of his conqueror, and sank into obscurity at Choo's court. With the removal of these perils, Choo was left free to concentrate all his attention and strength on his forthcoming struggle with the Mongols.

In 1366, therefore, Choo gave orders to his troops to prepare for a general campaign, and at the same time issued a proclamation to the Chinese people telling them that the hour had arrived for casting off the foreign yoke which had pressed heavily upon them for almost a hundred years. The proclamation was calculated to inspire the people with courage, and the effect of Choo's eloquence was made complete by the sight of his well-drilled and well-led soldiers. Three armies left Nankin at the same time, each charged with a distinct mission. The two first were instructed to

subdue the three provinces of Fuhkien, Kwangsi, and Kwantung. The notice of their approach, the mere sight of their banners, sufficed to attain their object. In the course of a few weeks the authority of the Mongols had been swept away for ever from three of the great provinces of the Empire. The people hailed the name of their deliverer with acclamations of joy, and many hastened to swell the ranks of the army to which had been entrusted the more difficult task of reconquering the northern provinces. Of the fate of the Mongol garrisons in the south history has left no record, a silence which by many will be considered more expressive than words.

Meanwhile, the third or great army, numbering 250,000 men, and consisting mostly of cavalry, was in full march for the northern capital. Choo did not at first place himself at the head of this force, as his own warlike disposition undoubtedly prompted him to do, but he entrusted it to his favourite general Suta, who showed a skill and an aptitude for command that fully justified his leader's selection. In the autumn of the year 1367 Suta crossed the Hoangho and advanced in the direction of Peking. Very little resistance was offered; and the Mongol garrisons, discouraged by a long succession of reverses, retreated on the approach of the national army. One officer, bolder than the rest, attempted to effect a diversion from the side of Tunkwan; but his scheme, though ably conceived, failed in the execution. After this no further opposition was encountered until the province of Pechihli had been entered, and by that time the result of the campaign being more or less assured, Choo set out from Nankin to place himself at the head of his troops. At Tongchow, Pouyen Timour made a vigorous defence; but the town was forced to surrender, and the commandant either died of his wounds or committed suicide. A few days later Peking, whence Chunti had fled, was carried by storm in face of the desperate resistance of a small portion of the Mongol army. These gallant defenders of the imperial city, headed by Timour Pouhoa and several of the civilian ministers, were cut down to the last man. The enterprise of Choo was virtually crowned with success by the capture of Peking and

the flight of Chunti. The war with the expelled Mongols still went on, but China was then emancipated from the Tartar yoke. The description of these later campaigns belongs to the reign of Hongwou, not to the career of the adventurer Choo Yuen Chang.

The expulsion of the Mongols from China, after they had exercised supreme authority in it for almost a century, marks the close of the history of that remarkable people as a great national power. After the death of Kublai, their decay proved rapid. Not one of his descendants or successors seemed capable of reviving the earlier glories of the family. Possessing, almost to the end of their struggle with the numerous champions of Chinese liberty, the best army in the country, their own divisions and incapacity as rulers prevented their turning this superiority to any advantage. They also showed, by their indifference to the growing power of Choo, an inability to realize the situation, which would alone convict them of grave short-sightedness. While a formidable military power was being formed at their very doors, they remained inactive, or still worse, they further enfeebled themselves by indulging personal rivalries and petty ambitions. The last page in the history of Mongol power in China is unworthy of its mighty past. At the very moment when the conqueror was being vanquished by the conquered, the great Timour, descendant in the sixth degree of Genghis, was about to begin in Western Asia that marvellous career of triumph which emulated, if it could not surpass, that of the greatest of the Mongols. This fact makes it clear that the old Mongol spirit was not yet extinct; but it had certainly departed from that section of the family which had established itself in China.

With the fall of the Mongols a brighter era began for the Chinese, whose aspirations had been repressed under a foreign rule, and the qualities shown by Choo during those years when he was moulding the national will to his purpose did not, fortunately, become less conspicuous after he mounted the throne, as the first of the Mings with the style of Hongwou. It was generally felt that a more auspicious epoch was on the point of commencing, and that the ancient

glories of China were about to be revived in the form most agreeable and palatable to the nation. The incubus of a foreign domination had been cast off, and a great people could rejoice in the prospect raised by so satisfactory an achievement. The advent of the Mings to power was effected in the way most calculated to ensure the durability of their tenure, and the affection of the people was won by the fact that their new prince had conferred upon them the greatest of all the benefits which can be rendered by individuals to communities—the attainment of freedom.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE REIGN OF HONGWOU.

WITH the capture of Peking, and the despatch of an army into the north-west, under the command of his able general Suta, Hongwou had the leisure to take a careful survey of his position. The Mongols were then in full retreat for their northern solitudes, but the situation was still pregnant with difficulty. In this events were but following the usual course of human affairs; for it has been often demonstrated how much easier it is to destroy than to create. To expel the foreigner and revive a form of national government was a task which appealed generally to the good-will and support of the nation; but it by no means followed that the endeavour to place Hongwou on the throne would meet with the same support, or attain a similar degree of success. The first years after the storming of Peking were, therefore, passed by Hongwou in considerable anxiety; but the prudence which had marked all his proceedings when in a minor capacity continued to characterize his acts as supreme ruler. He began his career by attaining a great and striking success, and he showed how deserving he was of the prize he had won by his subsequent wisdom and moderation.

The first proclamations he issued were those in honour of his parents and ancestors, which attract and receive the approval of the Chinese. Having indulged his own personal feelings and gratified the popular sentiment, Hongwou next turned his attention to reward those who had so far assisted him in his enterprise. The generals were recompensed with titles and pecuniary grants for their faithful service; but as

these favours would have been conferred by the most ordinary of princes, Hongwou resolved to show the exceptional nature of his own talents by the bestowal of a peculiar distinction. In the year 1369, the first of his reign, he erected at Peking a temple, or hall, in which statues were placed in honour of those of his generals who had been slain, whilst vacant places were left for those who still survived the chances of the long war of independence.

Hongwou was much too prudent a man, and too thoroughly acquainted with the idiosyncrasies of his countrymen, to make his army the sole prop of his power and the basis of his authority. The utility of possessing a highly efficient and trustworthy body of troops was incontestable, and Hongwou was happy and secure in the possession. But in China it is necessary to stability of authority that, in addition to the power of the sword, there shall be the expressed approval of the national mind. The force of public opinion is on cherished points irresistible from the unanimity of a great and multitudinous race; and Hongwou showed marked skill, not only in appreciating the drift of his people's minds, but in flattering the ideas which influenced their opinion. In a country composed exclusively of civilians, the new ruler saw how fatal a mistake it would be to unduly exalt the military class. The Mongols had committed that blunder, or rather it formed the distinguishing feature of their system, and consequently their rule never did, and probably never could, contain the elements of durability. Hongwou had no difficulty in reversing this system; and, while he kept several armies employed in the national war, he took every pains to impress upon his new subjects the fact that he was a man of peace, who believed that the national glory could be best advanced by promoting the welfare of the people. In China there are three principal ways of bringing these views home to the public mind. They are, first, by encouraging learning and by rewarding those who show proficiency in the study of the classical writers; secondly, by a pure and impartial administration of justice through the provincial governors; and, thirdly, by the imposition of moderate and fairly distributed taxes, and also

by a benevolent attention to the local wants of the people, who, scattered over an enormous extent of country, and living under every variety of climate, are frequently visited with all the horrors due to drought, famine, and pestilence. The key to Hongwou's reign will be furnished by the manner in which he discharged the duties, thus defined, of a Chinese ruler.

The Mongols, although Kublai himself had set a wiser example, took but scant interest in the literature of the country; partly because they suffered from the inability of "barbarians" to understand or appreciate the beauties of a southern tongue, and also, no doubt, because the supremacy of letters was an idea totally foreign to their system. The wisdom of Kublai had imposed some fetters on their savage inclination; but with his death the inclination to patronize the classics of China passed away from his unworthy successors. There remained, therefore, to Hongwou the possibility of securing a greater amount of popular applause by encouraging learning, and by patronizing the literary classes. His first acts showed that he fully appreciated the opportunity, and they were guided by an excellence of judgment seldom shown by mortals in the shaping of even their own affairs. Much of the State resources had been turned aside from their legitimate objects by the later Emperors of the previous dynasty, to be devoted to purposes of personal indulgence, or for the maintenance of an unnecessary and foolish splendour. Hongwou's first measure was to stop every outlay that could come under the charge of extravagance, and to devote the public money to objects that might fairly be included in the category of national requirements. Not content with stopping the imprudent outlay which had marked the decline of the Mongol power, he even went so far as to destroy some of the costly palaces which had been constructed out of Chinese money to testify to the magnificence of the House of Genghis. In this extreme step we may see the working quite as much of shrewd judgment and of close acquaintance with the character of his countrymen, as of the spirit of an iconoclast. Hongwou's conduct was based on the best models, and could not fail to secure the national applause. When he remarked

that "the Mongols should have devoted themselves to satisfying the wants of the people, and not to their own amusements," he was well aware that he was appealing to sentiments cherished by the Chinese from their childhood, and ingrained into the national character by centuries of precept.

In the true spirit of the founder of a new family, one of Hongwou's first acts was to entrust to a literary commission the task of writing the history of the preceding dynasty. This was the usual formal notification of the fact that one epoch had closed and that another was about to commence in the national annals. Having passed this decree, which was so emphatically sanctioned by custom that it had come to be regarded almost as binding as a religious rite, Hongwou founded a school for the sons of the greater officials; and to give it a claim to the high consideration it might otherwise have needed, he sent his own sons to be educated there. Nor did his measures for the advancement of learning and for the development of the national mind stop here. They reached their culminating point in two works of the highest magnitude, the restoration of the celebrated Hanlin College, and the codification and revision of the great book of laws.

The Hanlin College had first come into being, or, at all events, acquired definite form, under the wise and beneficent influence of the great Taitsong. That prince had given stability to his authority by the patronage he extended to the learned classes, but his main object had been to elevate the taste and mould the style of Chinese writers. With that object in view, he founded the Chinese Academy; and so completely did he attain the purpose he had before him, that the standard of poetical elegance achieved and laid down by the poets of his day remains the standard still. The verses of Keen Lung, which furnished a theme for the admiration of Voltaire, were based on precisely the same lines as those observed by the poets of Taitsong's reign, although they may exhibit graces to which the older writers had no claim. Having been started on the high road to success by the bounty of the great sovereign of the Tangs, the Hanlin College flourished on the munificence of those who came after him. In this instance, as in much else, each succeeding

dynasty strove not to outdo, but to perpetuate the work of its predecessor. The Sung and the Kins continued to show favour to the great institution that embraced within its wide-reaching folds the literature of the country; and one of the proofs of Kublai's capacity to rule the Chinese was that no sooner had he made himself master of the old Kin capital than he assigned as the abode of the Hanlin doctors one of the most costly and pleasantly situated of the palaces of the conquered. What Kublai had done as a matter of policy, Hongwou confirmed, and continued as a question of natural attachment and national predilection. To him the Hanlin represented an institution intimately associated with the dawn of China's greatness. True it is that it had no claims to go back to that vaguely known period of perfection when the constitution of the country had its origin; nor had it been handed down as a remote tradition, with not only its original merits, but also with all the accumulated imperfections caused by the dangers, difficulties, and responsibilities of centuries. But it was closely connected with the period when China took her place, not only as the most powerful empire in Asia, but also among the polished nations of the world.

And Hongwou was open to all these influences. A visit to the Hanlin College inspired him with the genius of the place, and he felt a national as well as a personal pride in reversing the neglect which Kublai's unworthy descendants had latterly extended to this monument of China's fame. Both at Peking, and also at Nankin—the favoured city of the earlier Mings—he granted favourable sites for the buildings necessary for the accommodation of its members, and extended to them all the assistance and material support which contributed to maintain the supremacy of its professors among the literary classes of China.

Hongwou's next great work, and one also which still endures, was the codification of the Book of Laws, the *Pandects of Yunglo* as it has been called. By this act he not only gave definite form and substance to the regulations by means of which society was kept together in China, but he also placed some further hindrance in the way of those who might seek to tyrannize over the people in districts remote

from the central authority. By recording in a clear and unequivocal form the statutes of the Empire—a work of immense labour, seeing that they emanated from a considerable number of different systems and opposite customs—Hongwou earned a claim to his subjects' gratitude, not merely because he thereby completed a national monument, but principally because he ensured by it just government and that immunity from official oppression which was, as stated, one of the three essentials to the popularity or stability of any administration in China. Hongwou was careful to do the thing that was not only just and true for all ages, but that which was likely to receive popular approval for the time being.

Nor did his efforts for the benefit of the country show symptoms of exhaustion with the accomplishment of these two grand schemes, which might be set down by the cynicism of sceptical critics to human vanity as much as to the benevolent desire of a paternal ruler. By one of the first edicts of his reign he had revived the ancient law of gratuitous national education. Under the Mongols the schools which used to exist in every town of any pretension had been allowed to fall into decay. They were now restored, and schoolmasters, properly qualified, were appointed to their charge, under the immediate supervision of the Emperor himself; and in order to place learning before the masses in her most attractive form, he caused public libraries, with books supplied from the capital, or at the expense of the Exchequer, to be placed in all the provincial capitals and larger towns. Indeed, it was his ambition that every village throughout the country should possess its library,* but in this it was not possible for him to attain the full success he desired. He had perforce to rest satisfied with having placed at the disposal of a vast number

* Libraries in China have suffered from the neglect which has fallen over most of the national monuments since the death of the fourth Manchu Emperor Keen Lung at the end of the last century, and very few now remain. Even the celebrated Imperial Library at Peking has suffered in common with those of less note and importance. There are at this time no general libraries or reading-rooms throughout the country; but, as M. Huc has observed, books can be bought in China at a lower price than in any other country, and thus the evil is to some extent remedied.

of his subjects a ready means of self-instruction, and a source of pleasant occupation which they had never enjoyed at any previous epoch.

Hongwou's care for his people was not confined to their mental wants ; it extended to the corporal necessities common to mankind. By sumptuary laws he had put down the extravagance of his Court, and the sums which previous rulers had wasted on personal indulgence were devoted by him to the alleviation of his people's requirements. Acting on the ancient and widely recognized principle that the aged and the orphan had peculiar claims on the State, which demands from all alike ungrudging assistance and service, Hongwou impressed upon his officials the duty of attending to the wants of the poor and the weak. It would be saying too much to assert that Hongwou was the founder of orphanages and hospitals in China ; but the peremptory instructions he gave his subordinates before despatching them to their posts in the provinces, probably accomplished the same benevolent objects. While he was on the throne the poor and the sick could feel sure of receiving from the authorities the amount of food or other assistance necessary for their support.

And the credit of this Prince was the greater, because the years which beheld the inception of these plans were marked by wars of which the bitterness and severity were undoubted, if the result continued one of uniform triumph for Hongwou. The people in the more remote districts had not yet acquired the habit of obedience to the new ruler, and so long as doubt was justifiable as to the future of the Mings, there was some reason for those who thought that the national interests might be promoted without any formal recognition of the new dynasty. The Mongol, moreover, was still formidable on the north-west frontier ; and while Hongwou was actively engaged in the restoration of the central authority and administration, his general Suta was not less energetically employed in the difficult and dangerous task of driving out the relics of their late conquerors, and of firmly establishing the imperial authority on the western borders.

Suta's campaigns, which form the most stirring episode in

Hongwou's reign, extended over a period of almost twenty years from his first invasion of Shansi to his defeat of the Mongol general, Arpouha, a few months before his death. The invasion of Shansi was accomplished with such ease that it encouraged the Mings to delay no longer than was absolutely necessary in commencing operations against the provinces of Shensi and Kansuh, and the adjoining districts, where the warriors of the desert, again brought face to face with the necessity and penury which had made them conquerors, might recover their old audacity and proficiency in the science of arms. The Emperor resolved to strike quickly and vigorously at the scattered bands of his beaten and discouraged foe before fresh courage and confidence should return.

In the province of Shensi, Lissechi, a general of the Mongols, still maintained an independence, which he evidently hoped might endure. Lissechi aspired to place his state in the path of the Chinese as a barrier against their further aggression, but neither Hongwou nor Suta was disposed to grant him the time necessary for the success of his plans. A brother general, Kuku Timour, had nursed a similar ambition in Shansi, but his ambition had dissolved with his power at the first contact with the vindicators of their country. And now it had come to Lissechi's turn to encounter the same foe under circumstances not more favourable to his prospects, and there was no reason for anticipating that the result in his case would be different or less promptly attained. The military superiority of the Chinese army over the disheartened fragments of the Mongol forces was turned to the greatest advantage by the tactical ability of the general Suta, and the issue was never left in doubt.

The bend of the great river Hoangho * forms a complete

* The Hoangho or Yellow River rises at a place called Sing-Suh-hae in Northern Tibet. Passing through Tcharing and Oring Nors, its course is generally east by north until it enters Kansuh, when it takes a more northerly direction. It stretches beyond that province into the desert, and forms a loop round the steppe occupied by the Ordus tribes; and then flowing south separates Shensi and Shansi until it reaches the Hoeiho. It then flows due east towards the sea. We have no exact knowledge of any roads leading from the east to the west in this quarter, or of any passage across the Hoangho, although both probably exist. The length of the Hoangho is 2600 miles.

barrier between the two provinces of Shansi and Shensi. Lissechi rejoiced in the possession of this defence, and imagined that Suta would experience great difficulty in overcoming it. With such confidence did the broad stream of the Hoangho inspire some of the Mongol leaders, that several of them sought to carry the war back into the country just subdued by the Mings. The idea may have been bold, but the scheme was not feasible. Esu, an ex-minister of the Yuens, collected a small band, and attempted to make a diversion against Pet-pin, a fortified place of some importance on the Pet-ho river. But the commandant of a neighbouring garrison threw himself into the threatened town, and the craftiness of his counsels proved of as much avail as the presence of an army; for when he found that his soldiers were few in numbers compared with the troops brought against him by Esu, he resorted to one of those stratagems of which the very simplicity has often sufficed from the earliest days of history to baffle the wisdom of a foe. He collected all the junks in the place, and, planting red banners at their mastheads, bade his soldiers, on the approach of the enemy, strike up with all possible vigour on their trumpets and drums. Esu, seeing this numerous flotilla, and inferring from what he heard the strength of the Chinese army, only stayed to gaze in disappointment on the city which he had hoped to surprise, and then beat a hasty and disorderly retreat.

In the meanwhile, Suta had completed his preparations and crossed the Hoangho with an army accustomed to victory. Lissechi did not so much as attempt any resistance, nor does he appear to have possessed the capacity to improvise a stubborn defence out of means which might, in more capable hands, have proved sufficient. The town of Tsin-yuen, where Lissechi had taken up his residence, and where he had expressed an intention to make a stand, surrendered without a blow on the approach of Suta's forces, and the pusillanimous leader, after a moment's hesitation as to the wisdom of making a timely and discreet submission, fled to prolong his hour of independence. It was only with diminished courage and weakened forces that Lissechi succeeded in finding shelter behind the walls of Fongtsiang. The town

of Koankia-tong, a place of some importance, had been entrusted to the charge of a brave Mongol officer named Sankocheli, whose sole thought in the hour of danger was how he might best defend the trust reposed in him. His fortitude rendered the concentration of the Chinese army necessary for this siege, and Suta had to devote all his energy to the task. Superior numbers soon decided the day, and Sankocheli brought a gallant defence to a conclusion by committing suicide after he had immolated his family on the altar of military honour and devotion.

Suta, when this siege was over, sent his advanced guard against Fongtsiang, where Lissechi had taken refuge, and with it went also a special emissary charged with a letter from the Emperor to Lissechi promising him pardon and oblivion for the past should he submit. But the Mongol had not yet made up his mind to resign the game as lost, although he remained irresolute as ever to tempt the fortune of war. On the approach of the Ming army, he fled to Lintao, and Fongtsiang forthwith opened its gates. The flight of Lissechi into Kansuh closed this portion of the campaign in Shensi. There remained to Suta the necessity of deciding whether he would continue his operations against Lissechi until they had resulted in his capture, or whether he would turn aside from his main enterprise and prosecute the war with the other hostile forces which still contested portions of Shensi against the imperial arms.

At a council of war held for the purpose of deciding what steps should next be taken, opinions were divided between those who proposed to continue the pursuit of Lissechi, and those who advocated leaving him for the moment undisturbed, while all their energies were directed against those of the Mongol leaders who had not yet suffered defeat. The latter were the more numerous. But councils of war are proverbially over-cautious, and Suta fortunately saw through the fallacy of his lieutenants' arguments. In a masterly manner, he explained the advantages that would accrue to them from an immediate advance on Lintao and from the prompt capture of Lissechi. Nor did Suta delay in the execution of his design. Having come to a prompt and

vigorous decision in striking contrast with the indecision and suggestion of half-measures that found favour and approval with his council of war, Suta's orders for a forward movement on the part of his main force were clear and emphatic. In a few days his cavalry had pressed on to Ningyuen, while his infantry had occupied in succession Long, Tsinchow, and Foukiang. Kongchang shared the fate of Ningyuen, and then, by a rapid advance, Suta's cavalry appeared before the walls of Lintao, where Lissechi had made no preparations for holding out. In this evil plight his old irresolution returned, and, as the situation appeared desperate, he placed himself, without striking a blow, in the hands of his enemy. He was sent to the capital, where Hongwou spared his life and gave him a small but honourable employment.

The surrender of Lissechi and the capture of Lintao were naturally followed by the voluntary adhesion of many of the western cities to the cause of the Mings; but, although the results of these campaigns were all satisfactory and far from few, Suta's task still remained little more than half accomplished. The main body of the Mongols, with their fugitive Emperor, had taken up their residence at Ninghia, a town situated on the further side of the Hoangho near the verge of the Gobi desert, and advantageously placed in many ways for the purposes of men who had lost a great possession, but who yet aspired to recover it. At Ninghia the Mongols stood on the threshold of their former renown and greatness. With it in their hands, the hope of regaining what they had lost might still be indulged; but, with Ninghia gone, there would be no alternative to returning into the desert and again sinking into the insignificant position of a nomad race. The interest and importance of the following campaign resolve themselves, therefore, into the question of the possession of Ninghia.

It has been seen that counsels were divided in Suta's camp between an attack on Lintao and on Kingyang; but when the former had been taken, the next enterprise that suggested itself to Hongwou's commander was naturally the siege of the latter place. The Mongol Changsetao had been in command there, but, after Lissechi's overthrow, he hastened to Ninghia to procure reinforcements, leaving a small garrison

under his brother Changsanchin to hold Kingyang against the Mings. Changsanchin, left to his own resources, became so unnerved by the greatness of the danger which threatened him, that he sent a messenger to Suta to say that he held Kingyang at his disposal, or he may have thought to better his chances of defence by a simulated surrender. Suta placed little confidence in the good faith of the Mongol, but sent a strong force under the command of his lieutenant Tangho to occupy the town. Changsanchin either recovered his courage, or had been playing a double part throughout. Tangho arrived only to find the gates closed against him, and the town well prepared to stand a siege. But if Changsanchin's overtures were intended as a ruse to gain time they signally failed in their object, for Suta's promptness left him no profit from his device.

Tangho's corps was too small to lay siege in form to so strongly placed and largely garrisoned a fortress, and had to content itself with acting on the defensive and repulsing the onsets of the Mongols, who hoped to crush this detachment before it could be reinforced. Tangho succeeded in holding his ground ; and the arrival of fresh troops, sent by Suta as soon as he learnt the real position of affairs, enabled him to surround Kingyang on all sides, and to cut off its communications with Ninghia, whence aid was anxiously expected by the beleaguered Mongol garrison. The siege had lasted some days, and no signs of the promised aid from Changsetao and the confederates of Ninghia were yet visible. Changsanchin therefore sent a pressing message for help to Kuku Timour, the principal general at Ninghia and the responsible leader of the Mongols in their hour of distress. The messenger, Choho, made his way in safety through the enemy's lines, and carried the news of Changsanchin's desperate situation to the conclave of Mongol leaders.

Kuku Timour was more prompt to send the needed succour to a comrade in distress than Changsetao had shown himself to help a brother. He hastily collected such troops as he could dispose of, and made a forward movement into the districts recently subdued by the prowess of Suta and his army. Several towns were retaken and their garrisons put to

the sword ; but the relief of Kingyang remained none the less a task of difficulty, if not of impossibility. For Suta himself had been far from inactive ; while his lieutenant Tangho had been laying close siege to Kingyang, he had continued his operations beyond Lintao, and had occupied Lanchefoo and defeated the Prince of Yu, one of the most powerful of the Mongol chieftains. When he had accomplished this part of his plan of campaign, and rendered the western cities secure against surprise, he returned to Lintao, whence he marched on Kingyang to assume the personal control of its siege. Changsanchin had been making a gallant defence, and up to this had baffled all the efforts of his assailants. But he had suffered considerable loss during his sorties, and it was clear that unless aid promptly arrived he would have no alternative save to surrender. The garrison was reduced to such straits that they used the bodies of their slain as food ; and, as no sign of Kuku Timour's promised succour was apparent, they at last threw open the gates and yielded their charge to Suta and the Mings. Changsanchin threw himself into a well, whether to invite death or in the hope of effecting his escape is not known ; but, being discovered, he was dragged forth and executed.

The capture of Kingyang virtually closed the campaign in Shensi ; and Suta, having enjoyed the personal gratification of witnessing the withdrawal, at his approach, of the Mongol forces to Ninghia, returned to the capital to seek a well-earned repose from his martial labours. Hongwou suffered about this time a serious loss in the death of his great general and well-trying follower, Chang Yuchun, who was in every way Suta's worthy colleague and peer. He appears to have been a gallant and daring soldier rather than a skilful commander ; but his character as a man is reflected in the fact that, although he was the senior of Suta, he served under him with cheerful obedience. With him it had been a common saying, in the dark days when the Mongols were on the throne of Peking, and when Chinese nationality was struggling for life and freedom on the banks of the Great River, that he would march with a hundred thousand men from one end of China to the other, and the saying has attached itself to his name. He is

still remembered in the military annals of China as Chang Hundred Thousand.

The departure of Suta inspired Kuku Timour and his Mongols with fresh courage. They flattered themselves that they had to fear only his superior generalship and not the valour or numbers of the Chinese. They might still, as they conceived, cherish the hope that they could regain what they had lost in Shensi and Kansuh, if not eastward of those provinces, and enjoy an existence in that quarter of the country, which they had first vanquished and then lost, preferable to any they could pass in the few oases of their old desert home. Suta, therefore, had not long departed before there was a return of activity to the Mongols within the cramped space they still held on the fertile territory of China. Kuku Timour resolved to take the field in person, and marched up the Hoangho for the purpose of besieging Lanchefoo, where Suta had left but a small garrison. The commandant, Changwen, must have been a man of more than ordinary courage and resolution, for, notwithstanding his numerical inferiority, he assumed the offensive, and at first he even obtained a few advantages over the Mongols. The latter returned, however, to the attack, and at last compelled Changwen to retire behind his fortifications. The news of the investment of this important place soon spread throughout the province, and troops were hastily collected from the surrounding garrisons and sent forward to reinforce Changwen's army. Prominent among those who came to aid Changwen was Yukwang, the Governor of Hongchang ; but his movements, if characterized by celerity, were also marked by rashness, and he allowed himself to be surprised and overwhelmed by a Mongol detachment sent against him. This victory seemed to justify Kuku Timour's hopes that it was the skill of Suta and not the military prowess of the Chinese which he had to fear.

The news of this disaster called Suta back from the capital. Several fresh armies were raised for the campaign in the west, and Hongwou sent Ly Wenchong and other experienced lieutenants to assist his principal commander in the operations against the Mongol army then laying close

siege to the city of Lanchefoo. The mere rumour of Suta's approach served to ensure the relief of Lanchefoo, where Changwen had made so successful and determined a defence ; for Kuku Timour broke up his camp and retreated, after another desperate effort to carry the town by assault. Having thus secured without a blow all the advantages of a pitched battle, Suta remained in his quarters during the year 1369, but he was actively engaged during that period in completing his preparations for the final move against the Mongols. He appears to have availed himself of this interval of rest to pay another visit to Hongwou's Court, where he was received with all honour, and where he presented Changwen, the gallant defender of Lanchefoo, to their Sovereign.

The first blow was struck by Ly Wenchong, who made a rapid movement against the few Mongol garrisons remaining in the north-west portion of Kansuh. These scattered detachments were ill able to make a protracted stand against this vigorous attack, and in a very short time Souchow and Kia Yu Koan, the western gates of the Great Wall, had surrendered to the Mings. By these successes the way was paved for an advance into the desert ; and the importance of Ninghia, still the head-quarters of Kuku Timour, was much diminished, if, indeed, its very safety was not seriously menaced by the establishment of the Ming power on its flank. The Mongols were reduced to such straits, that in sheer despair they had to face the alternative of a pitched battle. Kuku Timour drew up his army in a position of considerable strength near Souchow, but beyond the Great Wall. A precipitate attack made by one of Suta's lieutenants was repulsed with severe loss to the assailants, and the courage of the Mongols being raised by this preliminary success they set to work with renewed activity to increase the defences of their camp. Such confidence as they had vanished on the appearance of Suta. The very day of his arrival he reconnoitred their position, and resolved to deliver his attack on the morrow. The action commenced at daybreak, and the battle raged throughout the long hours of a summer day. The Mongols at first repulsed the main onset ; but Suta had sent a detachment to make a diversion in their rear, and it

succeeded in gaining an entrance within the lines of the defenders and in holding its ground. When this advantage had been obtained, Suta returned to the attack with renewed vigour, and carried the entrenchments at the charge. The struggle passed into a butchery. More than 80,000 men were counted among the slain when the slaughter ceased, and among these were the noblest of the Mongol leaders. Kuku Timour, when he saw that the fortune of the day had gone against him, beat a hasty retreat with a handful of trusty followers, making good his escape to Ninghia, whence, after a brief rest, he fled into the northern solitudes.

Suta sent one of his lieutenants into the desert beyond Kansuh for the purpose of receiving the submission of the nomad tribes and scattered settlements of that region. We are told that he accomplished his purpose, and that he nominated a governor for this territory, which was kept in awe by the reputation of its master, rather than absolutely conquered. While we may not attach any definite meaning or value to the reported exploits of this expedition, the consequences likely to follow Suta's great victory over the last army at the disposal of the Mongol chiefs will be admitted to have contributed to the elevation of Ming authority in the eyes of the impressionable children of the desert. The pacification of the north-west was undoubtedly rendered the more thorough and assured by this carrying of Chinese authority into the wilds beyond the cultivated districts, and by this occupation of the eastern approaches to the great trade-route with Turkestan and the West.

While Suta had been engaged in the operations that culminated in the overthrow of Kuku Timour, his colleague, Ly Wenchong, had, on another scene of the war, brought a campaign of brilliance and importance to a conclusion. The ex-Emperor Chunti had retired to Yngchang, a place on the Mongolian steppe, where he died in the year 1370, and his titles passed to his son and heir, Gaiourcheritala. A very short time after this event, Ly Wenchong approached at the head of the army with which Hongwou had entrusted him, and consternation seized in consequence the Mongol camp. The Mongols were too disheartened to offer any determined

defence, and surrendered one position after another. Yng-chang itself shared the same fate, and, although Gaiourcheritala made his escape farther into the desert, his eldest son Maitilipala and all the other members of his family were taken prisoners and sent to Nankin, where the Ming Emperor chiefly resided. Ly Wenchong thus completed, by dispersing the ex-imperial family, and by sending them as captives to Hongwou, the work which Suta had successfully begun. This crowning triumph afforded Hongwou's courtiers the opportunity to proceed in a body to congratulate him, and some among them suggested that Maitilipala should be executed in order that the late dynasty might be extirpated. But Hongwou was actuated by more generous motives, and refused to avail himself of the savage rights of a conqueror. The sole revenge he took was to oblige the young Mongol prince to exchange his Tartar dress for the Chinese costume, and he then conferred upon him a title of the third grade of nobility, with a small allowance or estate.

The campaigns against the Mongols being thus brought to a triumphant termination, and all prospect of any recovery on their part being at an end, the two victorious generals returned to Nankin to receive the thanks and congratulations of their Sovereign. The ceremony attending their reception was conducted with all the formality required by the national character of the occasion. Hongwou went down to the banks of the Kiang river to receive them, and preceded them in their procession through the streets. But the principal ceremony of all had yet to be performed. A few days later the Emperor, attended by his full Court, received the generals in public audience. They were then thanked, and received the rewards of their faithful services; but perhaps the most striking part of the Emperor's address was the warning he gave them to avoid luxury, and to cultivate some peaceful pursuit now that the days of warfare were probably over. In Hongwou's remarks may be seen something of the natural prudence of the man, who, knowing how easily those accustomed to lead their troops to victory might indulge dreams of reckless ambition, took the precaution to warn his generals

of the consequences of infringing the laws to which even princes had to bow.

Among the principal wants of an Eastern people must be placed a cheap and plentiful supply of salt, of which the central and maritime provinces of China produce abundant quantities. But the difficulty of conveying the precious article to the extremity of the Empire left the inhabitants of many districts imperfectly provided with this necessary. Hongwou devoted much of his attention to remedying this defect, and by his orders the provincial governors were entrusted with the task of distributing salt to the merchants in exchange for grain. By this means the people of the remote districts and of the frontier territories were able to procure a plentiful supply of this article.

In numerous other matters, small in appearance, but really very closely affecting the happiness and welfare of his subjects, Hongwou showed equal forethought, and a strong desire to extend to them the support and assistance of a paternal government. Nor did he confine his sympathy to those who were of his own race, and he extended as much consideration to the Mongols under his authority. Among the measures which had been taken at an early period of the war to root out the Mongol authority in the northern provinces had been the removal of a considerable number of Tartars to settlements in the interior of China. In their new homes they evinced a spirit of such turbulence and hostility towards the established authorities, that extreme measures against them were advocated by the local officials. Hongwou wisely and temperately replied that their misconduct was probably due to the influences of the climate, for it could not be supposed that a people accustomed to the cold of the north would be contented and happy in the semi-tropical regions of the south. The true remedy, he added, for their dissatisfaction was not to punish them for what, after all, was a natural sentiment, but to convey them back to their native regions, and to supply them with the means of leading an honest life there after their own fashion. From a sovereign of so just a mind, the thoughtfulness which prompted his sending to Ninghia for the garrison at that remote town a

supply of fur coats and other garments, appears to be but another natural trait in a noble character.

The fall of the Mongols had left the governor of the north-eastern province of Leaoutung cut off from the rest of China, and dependent upon his own devices to maintain there some form of recognized authority. But the rapid progress of Hongwou's arms served to convince Liouy, the governor, that it would be imprudent for him to delay any further in recognizing the new Chinese Government; and accordingly in A.D. 1371 he tendered his formal surrender, together with a list of the troops, resources, and population of his province. Hongwou received Liouy's overtures in a spirit of favourable condescension, and forthwith appointed him to act as military governor, with some of the rights of civil authority, in Leaoutung; and for a time it seemed as if that province had been reunited with the Empire without bloodshed or cost of treasure.

But this satisfactory result was not to be so easily obtained, nor without some of the proverbial disappointment and delay common to human enterprises. Liouy had local rivals and enemies who saw in his advancement as a lieutenant of the Mings the doom of the hopes they had indulged; but, although Liouy knew of their machinations, he permitted them to remain at large. He paid the penalty of his rashness, as they attacked and slew him on his own threshold. Two of his lieutenants succeeded in restoring order, and in arresting one of the murderers, while the other escaped to a Mongol leader on the Manchurian frontier. But the situation remained one of anxiety and difficulty. A long council was held at Nankin on the subject, but the only decision at which it arrived was to appoint Liouy's lieutenants and avengers to his post, and to await the further development of events. This clearly provided no permanent settlement of the difficulty, but merely an expedient to gain time.

The Mongol chief, Nahachu, caused considerable trouble to the people of this province, and the possibility of attack from this quarter created so much anxiety in the minds of the new governors of Leaoutung that they thought it better to attempt to conclude an amicable arrangement with him

than to live on in a state of doubtful relationship. An envoy was accordingly sent to his camp to discover a basis for negotiation; but the Mongol placed the messenger in confinement, and resumed his depredations with increased vigour. A report of these proceedings reached Hongwou, who thereupon despatched two armies, one by land and the other by sea, to release the captive envoy and to pacify Leaoutung. The military operations that followed were marked by rapid success. The Mongol bands were either captured or driven further back into the wilds of Manchuria, where both the inclemency of the climate and the barren nature of the soil rendered life cheerless and a matter of difficulty. To their principal leaders, sent captive to Nankin, Hongwou extended the generous forgiveness which he had previously exhibited towards other Mongol princes in the West.

While these events were taking place in the north, others of hardly less importance had happened in the extreme south, where the secluded provinces of Szchuen and Yunnan, after an interval of uncertainty, were undergoing the same vicissitudes of fortune which had attended the other parts of the Empire until they passed under the sway of Hongwou. In these provinces the officials appointed by the Mongol still retained, in A.D. 1372, their posts, nor did they appear to apprehend that there was danger in their neglect to send to Hongwou that recognition of authority which conquerors expect and require. So long as affairs in the north remained urgent, Hongwou neither felt the inclination nor recognized the necessity to interfere in a quarter whence he had no danger to anticipate. The Szchuen officials were thus left to enjoy undisturbed their brief hour of independent authority.

At length one of them assumed a royal style, and took the title of King of Hia; and the outrage to Hongwou's dignity from this act appeared the greater because Minchen, who committed it, was of Chinese race. An army was, therefore, collected and placed under the command of Thangho, for the purpose of bringing this potentate to reason and of reducing Szchuen to the state of a province of the

Empire. A naval flotilla was also brought together on the Yangtse-kiang in order to assist the land forces, and also to secure possession of the best road into the south-west. The invading force was divided into two bodies, one charged with the capture of the important river port of Chunking, the other with that of the capital Chentu. Success attended both movements. The advanced guard seized the narrow gorge at Ichang, and captured the city of Kweichow, where a successful stand might have been made. The Chinese forces, having thus carried the first and most formidable barrier in their path, pressed on, and appeared likely to easily overcome the resistance of Minchen's ill-disciplined levies. But the people of Szchuen fought with great determination, and long held Thangho's main body at bay before their position at Kutang. They might even have baffled Hongwou's commanders during a much longer period, but for the rapid successes obtained by another Ming general, Fuyuta, who was rapidly approaching the capital from the north. Three months were occupied in these manœuvres, which had not yet resulted in any decided advantage to the Ming army; and Hongwou, anxious lest the prize of war should escape him, sent large reinforcements to his generals.

The prompt despatch of these fresh troops decided the campaign, for it enabled both the Ming generals to assume the offensive. Two decided victories, gained by the prowess and skill of Fuyuta, settled the fate of Szchuen; for, with the loss of their hold on the river, Minchen's lieutenants had no choice save to retire to Chentu. While Thangho marched on Chunking, Fuyuta beleaguered Chentu. At the former place Minchen resolved to surrender to the Chinese, and presented himself laden with chains in their camp. He was granted terms honourable alike to himself and to his conquerors; and, after one unsuccessful sortie, the garrison of Chentu followed the example of the late King of Hia. The remaining towns of the province, with two exceptions, surrendered without attempting a futile resistance, and the whole of the great province of Szchuen was reduced to a state of submission to Hongwou.

The conquest of Szchuen had not long been completed,

when a revival of activity on the part of the Mongols beyond the north-western frontier called Hongwou's attention again to the subject which had so often previously engaged it. Kuku Timour had been joined by the so-called Mongol Emperor, and had availed himself of Suta's absence to make incursions into Kansuh. Resolved to bring this often-contested but never-ending struggle to a conclusion, Hongwou despatched Suta at the head of an army of 400,000 men, and assisted by his most celebrated lieutenants, to Kansuh for that purpose. His instructions were to pursue the enemy into the recesses of Tartary. The fortune of war is proverbially fickle, but seldom has its inconstancy been more strikingly evinced than on this occasion. The Mongol forces had been repeatedly defeated; for twenty years no glimpse of victory had attended their arms, and, so far as their physical resources went, they were never at a lower ebb than when the campaign of 1372 commenced. On the other hand, the Chinese forces were more numerous, and certainly should have been better disciplined than they were before, while they were still commanded by their chosen leader Suta. Yet, notwithstanding these facts, the earlier portion of the campaign was marked by Mongol victories and Chinese defeats, and in these encounters Suta himself was the greatest sufferer.

Twice did that general attempt to carry by a desperate attack the entrenchments which the Mongol leaders had erected for the protection of their army, and twice was he compelled to retire with heavy loss baffled from the assault. Nor was this the only reverse or the worst. The necessities attendant on the movement of an army in a barren country, where water and pasturage are only to be obtained in limited quantities and at isolated spots, had compelled Suta to divide his forces. The fortune of the corps under his immediate direction was to shatter its strength for the moment against the ramparts of Kuku Timour's encampment; but the second body, under the command of Thangho, whose ill-luck in Szchuen has been referred to, was surprised and cut to pieces at Kiteouchan in the desert.

The situation of Hongwou's great army was one, therefore,

of extreme peril ; for a retreat to China, with the exultant Mongol tribesmen in pursuit, could scarcely be less disastrous than a lost battle. The success of a third division of the army fortunately released Suta's main body from its unpleasant predicament.

A corps had been entrusted to the joint command of Fongching and the heroic Fuyuta, of whom the latter was placed in charge of the vanguard. The advance of this force was conducted with celerity, and the Mongols appear to have been disconcerted by the movements of a foe who showed that he understood as well as they did the kind of manœuvres necessary in a desert country. Fuyuta defeated several hostile bands and captured their leaders. He continued his march far into the desert, and then slowly retraced his steps to Kansuh with numerous captives and the spoil of fifty camps. Further east on the Shensi border another Chinese general, Ly Wenchong, gained, after a fiercely contested action, a signal success over a Mongol horde, but he found the obstacles of the desert an opponent more difficult to vanquish than his human foes. He owed the extrication of himself and his soldiers from a position of extreme peril rather to his good fortune than to the excellence of his arrangements.

Although the results attained by this great and costly expedition were far from being of the decisive character that its originators expected, the Chinese generals had been able to inflict a sufficiently heavy punishment upon the Mongol tribes to induce them to discontinue their incursions into Kansuh. The remainder of this year and the whole of the following one were employed in desultory engagements which redounded little to the military credit of the Chinese, and which brought the question no nearer to a definite solution. But for the fortuitous capture of two of their leading chiefs, the success and the profit of this border strife would have remained on the side of the Mongols. In 1374 the statement was still drawn from the veracity of the native historian that "the borders of the Empire were constantly insulted by these people." Fresh troops continued to be sent to the scene of the outrages, and Suta was again called upon

to proceed to the quarter where he had already gained much distinction, although his military ability had not availed to give solid peace to this troubled region. Further engagements followed, but the practical result remained almost the same. The Chinese retained full and unquestioned possession of the cultivated country within the borders of the north-west provinces; but they were unable to destroy, and were beginning to find it unprofitable to challenge, the right of the Tartars to levy black mail on all who passed through the desert.

The Mongols themselves now experienced a more severe loss than the adverse decision of numerous skirmishes in the death of Kuku Timour, whose fortitude and energy had long contributed to the preservation of their cause. The nominal ruler of this race, Gaïourcheritala, whose father's faults had lost him the imperial diadem of China, also died a few months later, but the fact would not possess much significance save for the incident that attended it. Hongwou sent a mission of condolence to his successor. He may have done this in the belief that the new prince would be his former *protégé*, Maitilipala, but under any supposition the act shows that these border affairs were regaining their normal aspect. The ex-Mongol princes were again becoming the chiefs of a pastoral and nomadic people.

Some sort of assured tranquillity having at last settled down on the northern marches, it was not inappropriate that the long career of Suta should reach its close when the most important portion of his labours had been ratified by the verdict of success. And so it happened, although this great soldier was still, comparatively speaking, a young man, and might have rendered many more years of faithful and useful service to his Sovereign. But that was not to be, and Suta, who during his retirement filled the honorary post of Governor to the Prince Imperial, died peacefully at the capital. With him disappeared the foremost and most notable of the men who had assisted Hongwou in his great enterprises, and the death of Suta heralded the end of this eventful reign. Hongwou mourned for the loss of his favourite general in private, while in public he pronounced a funeral oration over

him as the ideal soldier. Suta's statue was placed in the great hall at Nankin, and marked the addition of another celebrity to the list of departed Chinese heroes.*

Both in the south, and also in the north, there were further troubles arising out of the wars in Szchuen and Leaoutung ; but these, although fraught with considerable importance as marking further stages in the work of reuniting and pacifying the country, do not call for detailed notice. In Leaoutung, Nahachu had assumed a bolder attitude, and resorted to more vigorous measures. From being a leader in petty raids he advanced to the more dignified position of the commander of an army, and even menaced the hold which Hongwou had established with little trouble to himself over this province. But although he invaded the low country and threatened several strong places, his increased confidence in himself did not bring any greater success ; rather may it be said to have contributed to his fall, for it often happens that the confederacy which is formidable in irregular warfare, and if engaged in detachments, is easily overthrown and broken up when it attempts to combine and assume a vigour that it does not possess in reality. Such was the case with Nahachu. His followers were defeated with heavy loss, and he himself escaped with difficulty to the hills, which he never should have quitted. From that time Nahachu gave much less

* Suta was only fifty-four years of age, and during thirty of these he had borne arms. Keen Lung, translated by Delamarre (p. 83), said of him :—"Suta spoke little, and was endowed with great penetration. He was always on good terms with the generals acting with him, sharing the good and bad fortune alike of his soldiers, of whom there was not one who, touched by his kindness, would not have done his duty to the death. He was not less pronounced in his modesty. He had conquered a capital, three provinces, several hundreds of towns, and on the very day of his return to court from these triumphs he went without show, and without retinue to his own house, received there some learned professors, and discussed various subjects with them. Throughout his life he was, in the presence of the Emperor, respectful and so reserved that one might have doubted his capacity to speak. The Emperor was in the habit of speaking thus in his praise :—"My orders received, he forthwith departed ; his task accomplished, he returned without pride and without boasting. He loves not women, he does not amass wealth. A man of strict integrity, without the slightest stain ; as pure and clear as the sun and moon, there is none like my first general Suta." "

serious trouble to the officials of Leaoutung* than he had done before, and Hongwou's authority was generally accepted and recognized throughout this province and the north-east.

Nor were Hongwou's arms less successful in Yunnan. Two acts of perfidy had embittered the contest there and rendered the subjection of Yunnan a matter of as urgent necessity for the sake of vindicating the majesty of Chinese authority as for regaining possession of another and the last of the provinces of the Empire. Many other pressing affairs required the attention of Hongwou, and the preparations for this campaign being necessarily of a complicated and arduous nature, several years elapsed before the slow-moving arm of Chinese vengeance reached the wrong-doers in this quarter; but not for the lapse of time did the blow fall less heavy, nor did the Chinese forget the full measure of the injury they had suffered.

To Fuyuta, whose uniform success had marked the later campaigns against the Mongols, Hongwou entrusted the command of the army which was charged with the task of accomplishing the last of his great military enterprises; and neither the number of the troops nor the details of the preparations left the general cause to doubt the full and speedy triumph of his operations. The invading forces were divided into two bodies; one, under the command of an officer named Koen, and computed to consist of 50,000 men, advanced through Szchuen on the town of Oufan, menacing Yunnan from the north; while the second, led by Fuyuta in person, assailed it on the eastern side from Kweichow. Both armies advanced for some distance into the country without encountering any very serious opposition; but at Kinsing, a

* To this success must be attributed the resumption of official intercourse between the Courts of China and Corea. In 1369 Wang Jwan, King of Corea, had sent an envoy to Hongwou, and in 1375 it was followed by a formal embassy. Wang Jwan died about the latter year, and was succeeded by his son Yu, who enjoyed possession of the throne for only a short period, as he was deposed and ultimately poisoned. His son Mao, who succeeded him, met with the same fate; and an ambitious minister, Li Chungwei, seized the throne and established a dynasty of his own. The descendants of Li Chungwei still govern the primitive kingdom of Corea.—See Mailla, vol. x. p. 86; and Ross's "Corea," pp. 268-69.

town situated a short distance north-west of the capital, the Yunnan prince concentrated in a position of considerable strength all his troops, and checked the further progress of the Chinese general. But it was not for long. Fuyuta executed some intricate manœuvres, of which it would be difficult to indicate the significance, but which had the effect of bringing on a general action. The battle was stubbornly contested, and lasted many hours ; and at one time it looked as if one-half of the Chinese army, which was separated from the other by a river, would be overwhelmed before assistance could come to it. Fuyuta's promptitude retrieved the day, and the local forces were driven from the field with heavy loss, leaving 20,000 prisoners in his hands. The fall of the capital followed a very short time after this overthrow of the army, and the Prince of Yunnan fled for refuge to the hills of the Burmese frontier. The remainder of Yunnan was soon reduced to subjection, and these successes were obtained with as little bloodshed and trouble as could have been expected under the circumstances.

But the pacification of this region was not to be completed without a tragical incident. The Chinese soldiers had fought with valour, and their generals had shown moderation towards the defeated, so long as open hostilities continued ; but when, after a short period of tranquillity, the inhabitants of certain districts rose up against their authority, and entered the field as rebels, the whole attitude of the Chinese underwent a change. From moderation and forbearance they passed at once to the extreme of severity, if not of cruelty. The unfortunate and ill-advised insurgents were butchered, and it is estimated that, before tranquillity was restored, 30,000 of them had suffered at the point of the sword. Such has always been the Chinese practice. In their treatment of an open foe they have generally shown justice, and sometimes magnanimity ; but towards rebels their attitude has always been one of stern and relentless cruelty.

The Empire was now thoroughly at peace, and a succession of favourable seasons greatly promoted the prosperity of the people. Within the limits of the provinces of the country there were none left with either the wish or the power to

dispute Hongwou's authority, and the Chinese nation employed itself, with that energy and intuitive skill which are among its principal characteristics, in recovering from the depressing effects of a long season of anarchy and internal strife. And the progress made towards recovery was astonishingly rapid. In contrast with the general happiness and tranquillity of the people, the numerous skirmishes on the remote frontier lose their significance and become merely the ordinary incidents in the daily life of a great governing people.*

The chief, Nahachu, whose raids into Leaoutung have already been mentioned, had again drawn together the Mongol forces in the east, and, having made extensive preparations for a final bid for power, resumed at this conjuncture his operations against the Ming officials in that province. Although it might appear that the danger from this quarter was not of any serious character, yet Hongwou attached sufficient importance to it to induce him to send a large body of fresh troops, under the command of the generals Fongching and Fuyuta, into the province. A desultory campaign, marked rather by a conflict of words than by an interchange of blows, ensued, and in the result Nahachu's followers were dispersed or taken prisoners, while their chief, either by treachery or cajolery, was captured and sent to Nankin. Other successes followed, and the verdict of previous victory was amply ratified by the flight of the Mongol chieftains into the recesses of Manchuria and westwards towards the Tian Shan.

The last eight years of Hongwou's reign were undisturbed by any serious commotion, although a mutiny among a portion of his army, encouraged by an ambitious officer, seemed likely to cause great trouble. The scheme was fortunately divulged in good time, so that the Emperor's measures for the preservation of order were both prompt and effectual. Lanyu, whose share in the campaigns in Leaoutung, to which reference

* The population of China in the year 1394 is given at 16,052,860 households, and 60,545,812 souls. This would not include the inhabitants of the outlying districts and provinces, but it shows how greatly the Chinese people must have suffered from the ravages of these long wars.

has been made, had not been small, but who had allowed himself to be carried away by the promptings of ambition, was arrested and punished with death. He either gratified his pique or satisfied his private animosities by implicating many brave officers and soldiers in his schemes. Lanyu was the most, if not the only one, guilty; but twenty thousand lives were sacrificed to meet what were thought to be the exigencies of the occasion.

The last days of Hongwou's reign were marked by no disquieting events, and although the loss of his eldest son had raised causes of possible dissension by the elevation of a child to the place of heir-apparent, they did not present themselves in any tangible shape during the lifetime of the aged prince, whose long career was now about to close. In 1398 Hongwou's maladies grew worse, and although the skill or attention of his doctors kept him alive for some months, it was evident to all that his end was near at hand. Under these circumstances Hongwou made all the arrangements for the peaceful transfer of power with calmness and decision. He sent his sons, who were known to covet the throne, to their different posts in the provinces, so that his grandson might succeed him without disturbance or opposition; and having thus ensured, so far as he could, the tranquillity of the realm, he resigned himself to his end. In his will he set forth the reasons which induced him to select his grandson, Chuwen, for his heir; and caused the document to be published before his death in order that the people might know the motives of, and approve, his policy. He lingered until the summer of the year 1398, when he died in the 71st year of his age.

Of the character of the illustrious Hongwou posterity has best been able to form an opinion by the deeds which he accomplished. As described by his great successor, the Emperor Keen Lung of the Manchu dynasty, he appears to have had most of the virtues and few of the faults of mankind. But we need not attempt here to analyze his character too closely, for we shall arrive at a more just opinion concerning the man by considering his work. To his credit must not only be placed the expulsion of the Mongols, but also the

more difficult task of having created in their place a new machinery of government. Not only had he vanquished in innumerable encounters the chivalry of the Mongols, and dispersed, after long and arduous campaigns, the fragments of their broken power, but he had restored the dignity of the Chinese Empire to as high a point as it had reached under Kublai. The virtue of the man was just as conspicuous in his daily life as king, as his courage, fortitude, and military capacity had been as a popular and national leader in the dark days of Mongol despotism. It may be doubted whether China ever possessed a more beloved ruler, and certainly none had a better opportunity of realizing the national wishes and of supplying its wants than he had. Even now, it is asserted, the Chinese look back with secret longing to their favourite Ming dynasty, and the virtues and achievements of Hongwou form the basis of its fame. Hongwou must be placed among the limited number of the great rulers of China who never allowed themselves to be carried away by the magnitude of their successes, and who could meet the reverses of bad fortune with equanimity and resolution. But in the eyes of a civilized community not the least honourable of his characteristics will be held to be his moderation towards his enemies, and the mercy with which he tempered the severity of his country's justice.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE EARLY MING RULERS.

WHETHER the cause is to be attributed to the excellence and forethought of Hongwou's arrangements, to the general tranquillity prevailing throughout the state, or to the solid contentment of the people, the fact remains that Chuwen succeeded his grandfather without encountering any open opposition. He then assumed the title of Kien Wenti. But this tranquillity was soon proved, so far as the domestic relations of the Ming family were concerned, to be hollow and deceptive, and only the lull that precedes the storm. For Wenti's uncles, although banished to their provincial posts, still nursed the ambitious dreams that arose partly from their position and partly from their youth; and the new ruler appears not only to have been aware of their dissatisfaction, but to have credited them with a much higher ambition even than they possessed. As these princes were absent from the capital at the time of the late Emperor's death, Wenti felt obliged, out of ordinary decency, to send invitations to them to attend their father's funeral. Some declined and others accepted the summons, and among the latter, to the surprise of the Court, was the most formidable and ambitious of them all, Ty, Prince of Yen. The prospect of Yen's visit to the capital was far from being agreeable to either Wenti or his ministers. The latter had reason to doubt the friendliness of his intentions, and they stood in much fear of his influence with the army. Wenti dreaded his approach as that of his most daring competitor. A council was hurriedly convened to consider what steps should be taken to meet the threatening

danger, and at last it was decided to inform Yen that it would be more becoming in him to abandon his purpose and to return to his province. His duty as a son and as a subject were brought into conflict, and he had to sacrifice his respect for the dead to his obedience towards the living. But the slight thus inflicted made no passing impression on the spirit of this proud and vindictive prince, and the wrong of this act was to be atoned for only by a bitter civil war, in which thousands of lives were to be uselessly lost.

At this same council it had also been resolved that, as there could be no doubt of the hostile plans entertained by the Emperor's uncles against his position, if not his person also, immediate steps should be taken to bring them to a proper sense of their duty towards the new ruler. But while Wenti's ministers came to this resolute decision against the whole collective body of the late Emperor Hongwou's sons, they were cautious in their mode of dealing with the Prince of Yen in particular. One minister, indeed, showed sufficient courage to suggest that the proper course to pursue was to engage Yen at once with all their forces as the most formidable of these enemies of the public peace. But this view found no other supporter, and the determination come to was to proceed against the other brothers one by one, and thus deprive Yen of such support as they might be able to afford. Officials were sent to inquire into their conduct, and armies followed in their track to put down rebellion and to assert the Emperor's power and authority. Wenti's measures, so far as they went, were attended with unqualified success. All his uncles, save the one that was most formidable, were deposed from their governorships and reduced to the ranks of the people. One preferred death to that ignominious descent, but Yen alone remained to disturb the peace of mind of Wenti and his satellites, and also to avenge his brethren.

Yen's position was little shaken by these high-handed acts of authority, and it may even have been rendered the stronger because the wholesale proceedings against his brothers had the effect of representing his cause in the light of the injured party. As if to show his contempt for his nephew's

power, he imprisoned and then executed three officials who had been sent from Nankin to spy upon his deeds. Nor did his hostility cease with this outburst of indignation. An attitude of passive defiance, he felt, was one that could not be long maintained, and the time had evidently come when it was necessary for him to strike a bold blow for his own rights and independence, if he did not wish to be swept aside and share his brothers' fate. He accordingly issued a proclamation calling upon all those who cherished the memory of Hongwou to rally to his side. The Chinese historian appears disposed to regard the collision between these personages as a matter of family quarrel and dynastic pretensions, but the facts justify the assumption that the real point at issue had become a larger one. If Wenti's government could not yet be called hopelessly bad, it was fast tending in that direction, while Yen had the tact to promise and hold out for popular approbation a higher standard of excellence in the administration.

The Imperial Government perceived from this proclamation and the warlike measures of the Prince of Yen that the time had arrived when it would have to make good its position and rights against the formidable pretender who had been goaded into action by its injustice, and who claimed for his cause the support of all those who took as their motto justice and the common weal. At first the hope was entertained that the Prince of Yen would experience some difficulty in maintaining his authority within his own province when once it was realized that he had undertaken so dangerous a task as to pit his strength against the whole force of the empire; but this expectation had soon to be abandoned. The Prince rapidly consolidated his authority over the whole of his province. The fortified towns surrendered for the most part and hoisted his flag, while the few that declared for the Emperor were speedily brought back to a sense of their duty. The Prince's active army was augmented by these garrisons and by large levies raised from the hardy people of the north. While Wenti's ministers remained inactive and blind to the gravity of the crisis, the Prince of Yen was ready to begin an offensive war.

The first successes in the strife, which commenced with singular bitterness, and which raged throughout a period of almost five years, went to the side of the Prince, for, although they fought with the courage of soldiers who had contributed to the fame of Hongwou, the Imperialists were uniformly vanquished. Yet these victories were far from being cheaply purchased. Thousands fell on either side, and the Prince found reason to congratulate himself over some exceptional advantage when a hard day's battle left him some more tangible result than the name of master of a field of promiscuous slaughter. But one triumph soon brought another, and a fortunate prize of 8,000 horses enabled him to mount that number of men, and to strengthen himself in an arm in which he had hitherto been weak. Wenti experienced a further loss in the surprise and capture of some of his most trusted and skilful officers, whose services could ill be spared, but who found an easy issue from their misfortunes by attaching themselves to the cause of the Prince, their captor. Perhaps Wenti's greatest misfortune consisted in his never learning, until too late to repair them, the full extent of his disasters. Then, as in more modern times, and in countries nearer to our own, a fashion came into vogue with the Government to obscure its defeats by mystical statements and reports of corresponding advantages. An order of false bulletins was fairly inaugurated.

The progress of the struggle was marked by numerous battles which equalled in bitterness any recorded in the civil wars of China. It was not, however, until the year 1401 that this contest for power reached its extreme dimensions, when both the Imperialists and the Prince placed several large armies in the field. The Prince directed his main effort during the campaign of this year to the capture of Taitong, while Wenti's commander, Li Kinglong, resolved to strike a bold blow in the hope of averting the fall of so important a place. Li Kinglong assembled, therefore, all the available troops to the number of about 600,000 men, marched northwards with them from Tsekinghoan, and compelled Yen to forego his purpose. The two armies, after marching and countermarching for some weeks, drew up opposite to each

other near Techow, which place was in the possession of the Imperial forces. Both sides were anxious to begin an engagement that each hoped might prove decisive; and when the Prince offered battle his challenge was eagerly accepted. The engagement lasted several days from early dawn to setting of the sun, but whether the numbers engaged were so great as to render time necessary to produce any decisive result, or whether all fought with obstinate desperation, the balance of victory remained steady, and inclined to neither one hand nor the other. At one point, indeed, thanks to the intrepidity of two of Wenti's commanders, Tingan and Kuneng, the victory seemed on the point of being gained, and the cry was raised among the Imperialists, "The day is ours; now is the time to extinguish this revolt." The announcement was premature, and the Prince, heading his troops in person, restored the battle. The desperate position of affairs may be inferred from the fact that his boldest followers had counselled flight, and that, before he gained a moment's breathing-space to survey the field of battle, he had to head three charges, in each of which his horse was killed under him. Even then, the end appeared remote and doubtful, but the death of Kuneng and the dispersal of the two wings decided this hardly contested combat in favour of the Pretender. More than 100,000 men were either slain in the fight or drowned in the waters of the Euho during the pursuit; and Li Kinglong had difficulty in collecting the broken and discouraged fragments of his army in Techow. Even here the Prince allowed him no rest, and, inflicting a second defeat upon him, compelled him again to flee.

Wenti's first step, when the full extent of his defeat became known to him, was to remove Li Kinglong, the principal author, as was alleged, of this military disaster; and as it happened that his successor, Chinyong, was a soldier of considerable experience and skill, the very announcement of his appointment sufficed to restore the sinking confidence of the Imperialists. The result justified the choice, for in a very short time he had collected a large army, perfected all his preparations for a campaign, and drawn up strongly fortified lines round the town of Tongchang. The Prince having

taken several places which had hitherto resisted his arms, advanced rapidly towards this town, and took up a position at Lintsing, where he could draw supplies from his rear, both by means of the Euho Canal, and also from the sea. He did not make any protracted halt there, but continued his forward movement against Chinyong, who had placed a body of his troops in a village in advance of his main position. This corps was surrounded and destroyed almost to a man before Chinyong could come up to its support. But the Prince's troops, carried away by their success, pursued the fugitives too far, and were in turn assailed and driven back by Chinyong's main body. Their loss seems to have been considerable, and the Imperialists following up their advantage with close ranks, were carrying everything before them, when the Prince at last reached the field in person with his force. The two armies then closed in the shock of battle, and for hours the result hung in suspense. The Prince performed prodigies of valour, fighting on foot like a simple soldier, and the apprehensions of his friends were raised to the highest point when he and a small body of troops threw themselves into the midst of the enemy, and remained for a long time cut off from support in the masses of the foe. Nor did Chinyong evince in any less degree all the qualities admirable in a soldier; and when the long day's battle ended it left him master of the field. More than 30,000 of the flower of Yen's army encumbered the ground, and among the slain was his best and favourite general, Changyu.

To a struggling Prince or an embarrassed Government Fortune often gives a respite when on the eve of seeming destruction; and so did this gleam of success, transitory as it proved, carry gladness to the heart of Wenti. But seldom, indeed, has there been granted to those who have brought about their own ruin by their imprudence sufficient wisdom and sense to avail themselves of the grateful offering and to turn it to such account as to avert their fall; and this Chinese Emperor affords another instance of the established truth of the illustration. Wenti's first act on the news of his general's victory was to recall two of the most objectionable of his ministers and to reinstate them in their offices. This conduct

inflamed the resentment of the Prince of Yen, who devoted himself with renewed ardour to the task of recovering the ground he had lost.

The war continued during the two following years with indecisive fortune, although victory generally inclined to the side of the Prince. Moreover, the area of his operations was steadily growing larger, and he was gradually drawing nearer and nearer to the capital. After a single reverse Wenti repented of his having replaced the two ministers who were recognized as Yen's principal opponents, and he again summarily dismissed them, confiscating their property at the same time. An attempt was made after this apparent return to a wiser line of conduct to effect an understanding between the combatants, and to put an end to a war which was devastating the fairest provinces of the realm. But although the Prince of Yen expressed his willingness to accept fair terms, and to conclude a pacific arrangement, the Emperor was so ill-advised that, in the persuasion that the season was too far advanced for military operations, he broke off negotiations when they promised a successful issue.

The year 1403 witnessed the outbreak of hostilities afresh and on a larger scale than ever. Both sides had apparently come to the resolution that it would be well to make a supreme effort to terminate the struggle by a final appeal to arms, and to accept the consequences of defeat. For a new bitterness had been imported into the contest, and the civil war, which originally possessed little more than a local character, threatened to involve the whole country. The Prince of Yen was denounced on all hands as a disturber of the public peace. His promises of reform were forgotten, and it was only remembered of him that he was breaking that law of obedience which it was one of his principal vaunts that he wished to enforce. The adherents of the two parties turned again with renewed fury and energy to the arbitrament of arms for a decision of the dispute.

The first encounter after this further resumption of hostilities was disastrous to the arms of the Prince, for in a great battle fought on the banks of the Imperial Canal, he was repulsed with heavy loss by Wenti's generals, Tingan and

Su Weitsou. The consequences of this reverse threatened to be more disastrous than the actual loss in men and officers, for his troops were so much disheartened by the defeat that they refused to march any longer against their foe, and clamoured for an immediate return to their own country. But the Prince evinced the fortitude of a hero, and strove to animate his soldiers with his own courage by exclaiming that he knew only how to advance, and not to retreat. His bold words failed to dissipate the effects of disaster, and although he remained several days without changing his armour, he had gained few over to his views, when an error on the part of Wenti's Government averted the disbandment of his force, and played the game into his hands just as it seemed almost lost.

The Imperialists owed their victory to the opportune arrival of Su Weitsou with a strong reinforcement, but no sooner had this success been obtained than orders were sent for the return of Su Weitsou and his corps. The morrow of their great victory found Wenti's generals incapacitated from following it up by this withdrawal of some of their best troops, and the blunder of their master furnished their opponent with the opportunity of retrieving his fortune. Both armies constructed fortified camps, and remained vigilantly watching each other's movements in order to seize any favourable opportunity that might present itself of attacking the other unawares. Neither side obtained any advantage until the Prince, whose spies kept him well-informed concerning the plans of the Imperialists, succeeded by a stratagem in drawing them from their entrenchments, when he fell upon them with his whole force. This battle was as short as it proved decisive. Wenti's army was completely overthrown. Many thousands of prisoners, including the generals in command, and all the spoil of the camp remained in the hands of the victor. With the defeat of this veteran army, and the capture of Tingan, the fate of the war was virtually decided. From that day the result was never in doubt.

In this moment of distress conflicting counsels were pressed upon the unhappy Wenti. Some advised him to withdraw into the southern provinces, and there continue the

struggle, while others suggested coming to terms with the conqueror on the basis of a division of the empire. But the counsels of incapable men do not acquire decision in times of great peril, and while Wenti's ministers were advocating a leaden-winged policy, the Prince had crossed the Hoangho, traversed the fertile plains of Honan and Anhui, and planted his ensigns on the banks of the Great River, in the immediate neighbourhood of the capital. Emissaries from the Emperor were then sent, in the guise of suppliants, to the camp of the conqueror, but they failed to find in eloquence the means of reaching his heart. Thrice they beat the ground with their heads, but they were unable to do more than fill the cup to overflowing of humiliation and self-abasement. The Prince ironically apologized for causing them so much trouble, and also announced that he had not come so far to secure a division of the empire for himself, but to ensure the punishment of those who had outraged the honour of his family.

Some vain attempts were made to place Nankin in a position to stand a siege until the garrisons of the south, already summoned to its aid, could arrive ; but the soldiers who had long fought the battles of their unworthy master with courage and fidelity were not to be replaced, and many of them had joined the service of their conqueror. The Prince did not leave the supporters of the Emperor much time to complete their plans. Little beyond forming a municipal guard had been done towards defending the city, when the Prince of Yen delivered his attack against three of the gates. In a few hours all was over, and the capital was in the hands of the soldier prince who had waged a civil war during more than four years, not, as he protested, for a personal object, but for the honour of his family and the benefit of his country. The sequel will show how far his protestations were sincere.

In the mean time, the reign of Kien Wenti had closed by his voluntary abdication. Unlike the traditional Chinese monarch, he clung to life when he had lost the station to which he had been called. He hesitated so long about seeking a place of shelter in the south that he was soon deprived of the chance of making a dignified exit ; and when the news that the Prince of Yen held possession of the gates reached

him in his palace, there remained to him only three courses to pursue. Between suicide, surrender, and a hurried escape in disguise, Wenti might still, at this eleventh hour, make his choice. But the fear both of death and of his enemy reduced him to the last expedient. He and a few chosen comrades shaved their heads and put on the garb of priests, resigning the cares of worldly life with the capacity to meet or support them. The rumour was spread about that Wenti had perished by his own hand, while as a matter of fact he was wending his way to Yunnan, where he passed in retirement the last years of his life. Wenti survived his fall nearly forty years. Long afterwards, in the reign of Yngtsong, an aged priest published a book of verses describing the misfortunes of Wenti. By some accident the author was identified as that ruler, when the authorities at once relegated him to honourable confinement in the palace at Peking, where he died shortly after he had been deprived of his liberty. History contains few more striking examples of happiness being long enjoyed in a private station by one who could not obtain it on the throne.

The Prince of Yen, in possession of the capital, and with all cause of embarrassment removed from his path by the supposed death of his nephew, turned his first attention to the punishment of those whom he regarded as the aspersers of his family honour. During several weeks he pursued them with relentless vigour, and, not satisfied with wholesale executions of ministers and officers, he endeavoured to extirpate their race by massacring the other members of their families. The victor forgot in the hour of triumph that clemency is the most creditable quality in an irresponsible and supreme ruler, and indulged a terrific and inexcusable cruelty. But at first he evinced a seeming reluctance to assume the reins of power, although the bent of his thoughts was sufficiently indicated by the displeasure with which he received a proposal to place Wenti's youthful son upon the throne. At last, yielding to the importunity of his friends, or apprehensive of some rival supplanting him, he allowed himself to be forced into accepting what he wished, and then his measures to mark the commencement of his reign were thorough enough. By an

autocratic decree of unprecedented force, he ordered that the years of Wenti's reign should be blotted out from history and added on to those of Hongwou, so that he might figure as his father's immediate successor. His early acts as king were thus in striking contradiction to his promises and proclamations as prince; but neither his summary proceedings, nor the executions with which he never failed to follow them up, availed to obliterate the events of the preceding four years, or to remove the brief reign of his unfortunate nephew from the country's annals.

The new ruler took the title of Chingtsou, but he is best remembered as Yonglo, from the name given to the year of his accession. His first act was to remove the imperial residence from Nankin to Pekin, although the former retained the position and rank of capital; and his earliest cares were caused by his northern neighbours, who had not remained indifferent spectators of the internecine strife which threatened to wreck all the results of Hongwou's wisdom and success. Among the Mongol tribes, who were again becoming known under the general term of Tartars, there had arisen leaders desirous of establishing some form of central authority and of reviving the title and position of the Khakhan. One of these desert chiefs, Kulitchi, who had assumed something of the style and privileges of royalty, incurred the resentment of the members and supporters of the old Mongol royal house; and although Yonglo extended to him marks of his approval and pledges of his support, he either fell a victim to the machinations of his enemies or was unable to maintain his position against them. Whatever hopes Yonglo may have entertained of ensuring the tranquillity of his northern frontier by means of an understanding with an adventurer glad to hold his position under the protection of a Chinese Emperor, were speedily destroyed by Kulitchi's overthrow.

This cause for vigilance, if not of anxiety, existing on his northern frontier, Yonglo can have found little pleasure in the prospect which presented itself to him in the far south, where a critical state of affairs in the tributary kingdom of Tonquin called imperatively for his attention. With that interest in the condition of countries in their immediate

neighbourhood, which, combined with supreme indifference to occurrences in lands beyond their sphere, has always been characteristic of the Chinese, Yonglo heard of a series of palace plots and crimes there, which had resulted in the deposition of the ruling dynasty, and in the elevation of an ambitious statesman to the throne. At first Yonglo, misled by the artful messages of this minister, Likimao, was disposed to overlook the means which he had employed to gain supreme power, and this inclination was strengthened all the more because Likimao reported that he had placed a child of the royal house upon the throne. The Imperial ratification of the appointment was sent in the belief that these representations were true, and Likimao congratulated himself on having attained his ends without having provoked the wrath of his powerful suzerain. But his self-gratulation did not long continue. The ministers of a just revenge were already at work to ensure his fall.

Likimao soon sent another envoy to China to prefer some requests of a personal character, but on his arrival he found there an unexpected guest in the person of a fugitive, who declared that he was the rightful prince of Tonquin. From him Yonglo soon learnt all the truth as to Likimao's proceedings and crimes ; and the recital roused in him not only a natural detestation of the wickedness committed, but also a feeling of pique at having been so easily cajoled by Likimao's specious representations. The identity of the prince was clearly demonstrated by the respectful salutations of Likimao's own emissary, and Yonglo at once resolved to champion the cause of one who had been so cruelly injured. The unfortunate princes of tributary kingdoms and dependent states have ever found in the ruling family of China a sympathetic friend and willing supporter.

After the repulse of the small force sent to escort the rightful prince, Chintien Ping, back to his dominions—for when Likimao found that his schemes were discovered, and that he had no choice between the loss of the position he had acquired and a rupture with China, he resolved to adopt the manlier course and fight the matter out—Yonglo despatched a larger army to put down and punish the insolent usurper. A

campaign which included several encounters marked by great carnage followed, and Yonglo's commanders effected their purpose. Likimao was taken prisoner, and the authority he hoped to establish obliterated. As no eligible prince could be found for the throne, Tonquin, in deference to the prayers of the people, was incorporated as the province of Kioachi with the rest of the Empire. To Likimao was granted as a favour permission to serve in the army as a private soldier.

The Chinese authority was not generally recognized in this new region until the more turbulent races in the country had been disheartened by two unsuccessful risings. Changfoo became known not only as the conqueror, but also as the pacifier of Tonquin. The interest of this petty struggle is but slight, nor does any greater importance belong to the desultory warfare in which Yonglo was engaged with the tribes of the northern and western deserts. In this he obtained some successes, and met with a few reverses ; but the result left matters practically unchanged.

It was while on his return from one of these expeditions, which had been carried across the steppe to as far as the upper course of the Amour, that Yonglo was seized with his last and fatal illness. This event occurred in the year 1425, when he was sixty-five years of age, after he had reigned during twenty-one years. His eldest son, whom he had passed over in the succession, had been the cause of some trouble by forming intrigues against him, but his discontent having been discovered, he was placed under arrest. Another of Yonglo's sons, who had some time before been proclaimed heir-apparent, succeeded him without disturbance or opposition, and reigned for a few months as the Emperor Gintsong. His virtues gave promise of a happy and prosperous reign ; but the fates were not propitious, and his early death again cast the bark of state on troubled waters.

With the reign of Gintsong the first stage in the history of the Ming dynasty may be considered as reached. Its authority was firmly established, and the dangers which threatened it in consequence of the Yen civil war had been passed through in safety. Both on the northern and on the

southern frontiers the Emperor's sovereignty was successfully asserted ; and envoys came from the distant states of Bengal and Malacca to bring presents from their rulers to the Chinese potentate. The Chinese themselves were well pleased with these recognitions of their power, and regarded the elephants sent from India as omens of happy import. The internal condition of the country was prosperous, and its external affairs were directed with sagacity and confidence as to its mission.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE MING DYNASTY (*continued*).

THE accession of Gintsong's son, Suentsong, to the throne was not attended by any event of importance. For the time the clashing of arms had ceased throughout the land, and no more formidable contest presented itself for decision than a wordy war between the lettered classes of the nation. Yet that in its way was serious enough, and might have been fraught with grave consequences, because the grievances of a class so powerful as the literary body in China always has been, constituted a subject to which no ruler could be indifferent. The matter came home to every family in the kingdom and affected their worldly interests very closely. In the competitive examinations held throughout the country, students from the southern provinces carried everything before them, and threatened to monopolize all the honours. Not content with restricting their sphere of activity to their own native districts, they ventured beyond them, and were beginning to gain many of the prizes in the schools and academies of the north. Suentsong promptly answered the numerous petitions addressed to him on this subject by appointing a Commission of Inquiry, which found an easy and efficacious remedy by restricting competitors for literary honours to their native districts. The whole official and literary body was divided into three principal classes, one confined to the north, another to the centre, and the third to the south.

This difficulty happily solved, another presented itself in the discontent and ambition of the Emperor's uncle, Kaohin,

who had been created Prince of Han, but whose ideas soared above a provincial governorship. In a short time he adopted a menacing attitude towards his nephew, and, making extensive military preparations, boasted that he held the Empire as much at his mercy as his father the Prince of Yen had done in the days of Kien Wenti. But Suentsong showed courage and capacity ; and, assuming the command of his army in person, marched against his rival. The promptitude of his measures paralyzed the plans of Kaohin, and none thought of resisting a monarch who showed that he knew so well how to claim his rights and to assert his authority. Before it was generally realized in the country that Kaohin meditated revolt, he was under conveyance to a state prison at Peking.

The latest Chinese province, Tonquin, proved anything but an easily governed possession. The hill-tribes and a large section of the settled inhabitants were in a constant ferment, and the Chinese garrison was kept continually on the alert and under arms. This state of things soon grew intolerable, and it became a question whether the province should be abandoned, or whether recourse should be had to extreme measures in order to stamp out the national disaffection. After several of his detached corps had been cut in pieces by the mountaineers, the governor sent urgent messages to request reinforcements, saying that without prompt aid he would be unable to maintain his position. On the receipt of this bad news a council was held by the Emperor in the palace, when, after anxious deliberation, it was decided to withdraw the Chinese garrison. Changfoo alone, who had gained his reputation by its conquest, was averse to its surrender, but his advice was either ignored or over-ruled. Thus came to an end in A.D. 1428, after the brief space of ten years, the direct exercise of Chinese authority in Tonquin. The significance of the event was further enhanced by the deposition of the Prince left on the throne by Suentsong's lieutenant, and by the elevation to supreme power of an intriguing minister and popular leader. Notwithstanding this flagrant violation of the agreement upon which he had withdrawn his troops, Suentsong did not conceive it to be prudent to renew his grandfather's interference in the affairs

of this state. The conquest of Tonquin had not indeed been attended with much difficulty, but its retention and administration had been only effected at the cost of a great effort. There was nothing in its position to repay the bloodshed it entailed, and Suentsong was wise to relax his hold upon it at the first opportunity and with the least affront to his personal dignity.

The tranquillity of Suentsong's life was no more disturbed by foreign wars, and the internal affairs of his country continued prosperous and raised no ground for anxiety. But in one respect he shocked the national sentiment, although he appears to have been led to do so by the desire of considering the necessities of the state. Shortly after his accession, he had proclaimed his principal and at that time favourite wife Empress, but time went on without his having an heir. This naturally caused considerable disappointment to a monarch desirous of retaining the throne in his own immediate descendants, and when one of his other wives presented him with a son the Empress's fall in his affections was assured. The child was proclaimed Heir Apparent with all the solemnity due to the auspicious occasion, and his mother was elevated to the rank of Empress, from which rank the Emperor's first wife was deposed. This unusual step, contrary to established rules, was received with murmurs on the part of the people, but the Emperor would not be diverted from his path. He might, perhaps, have been less determined on the subject had he known that the boy was not his. A substituted child, if we may accept the authority of the Emperor Keen Lung, was thus put in the place of the heir to the Chinese Empire.

Suentsong seems to have varied the monotony of reigning by periodical expeditions into the region north of China, which partook of the double character of the chase and the foray. During these he succeeded in inflicting some punishment upon the nomad tribes, and exhibited capacity in the conduct of irregular warfare by the manner in which he surprised the scattered forces of his opponent. A reign of assured internal peace and much national prosperity was brought suddenly to a conclusion in 1435. Suentsong showed

during his reign of ten years the possession of many of the kingly virtues, and during his leisure hours he cultivated the Muses with attention and success. This amiable prince left the throne to the son whose doubtful birth he had hailed with such delight eight years before.

As Yngtsong, the new Emperor, was only a child of eight years of age, it was necessary that some one should assume the active responsibility of authority during his tender years ; and, as is usual under such circumstances, the opportunity was afforded the princesses of the reigning family to put themselves forward and assert their rights in the matter. The strongest willed and the most influential among them did not, however, prove to be the wife who had successfully imposed upon the late Emperor, and who had thereby obtained the supreme position in the palace ; but it turned out to be Changchi, Suentsong's mother. Her son was hardly dead when she seized the reins of power, and, proclaiming herself Regent, gained over the adherence of the most influential of the ministers by taking them into her confidence and by forming them into a council. This new governing body consisted of five members, who acted in co-operation with the Empress Regent. They possessed their offices, however, by her favour, and they appear to have been as little able to resist the tact of her advances as to oppose the schemes and policy which she propounded. They served as a useful screen for her ambition, and in bidding her grandson follow their example and accept their advice, she knew she was really directing him so as to best promote her own ends.

Her desire to exercise the authority of ruler being thus easily attained and gratified, it was only natural that she should look about to discern what persons there were who might threaten her undisturbed tenure of the position she had usurped, and whom she might count her friends and whom her enemies. Among the latter, as she conceived, none was more formidable and more to be dreaded than the eunuch Wangchin, who had gained a great ascendancy over the young Emperor Yngtsong ; and with the promptitude of an unscrupulous mind she resolved to compass his death. Before the assembled ministers and in the presence of the whole

court, she denounced him as an enemy of the state, and as one whose crimes rendered him deserving of death. But the young Emperor implored that the life of his favourite might be spared, and all present supported what he asked as a personal favour. The Empress felt constrained to yield, but she warned Wangchin that on the next occasion he must expect no mercy. She little thought at the time that she would never again have so much as the inclination to decree his punishment.

The exact character of Wangchin's crime is not known, but probably he possessed no fault greater or more disastrous in its consequences than his incapacity. Having thus been marked out in a public manner as the enemy, and consequently as the object also of the Empress Regent's resentment, he set himself to the task, difficult though it was, of removing the insecurity of his position by ingratiating himself into her good graces. In this he succeeded beyond his hopes, and in a degree that might appear to be incredible, although we know how much a handsome face, a ready tongue, and a plausible address may accomplish. Within three years after the scene described, Wangchin had not only gained a seat on the council, but his influence was all-powerful with the Empress Regent. She, who had been his bitterest, indeed, so far as we may judge, his only foe, was now his warmest friend and staunchest supporter. Without him nothing was done, and the Empress practically resigned to him the functions of authority.

The consequences of this diversion of the ruling power from the hands of the Empress and her council into those of this ambitious individual proved most disastrous and unfortunate, for his incapacity was boundless. Having displaced the experienced ministers of the Empire, he advanced to the front rank of the official service creatures of his own, but all had to retain office by humouring his whims and obeying his commands. The administration of the country was carried on after a certain fashion without any evil consequences becoming apparent, but when Wangchin selected his favourites or his creatures for commands in the army he imperilled both his reputation and the national interests by inviting defeat.

Even here his better fortune seemed at first likely to save him from the natural consequences of his impolicy, for a revolt in Yunnan was summarily repressed and the Emperor's authority promptly reasserted. But the natural consequences of human incapacity are not to be ultimately averted. They arise sooner or later ; and their advent was not long deferred in the case of Wangchin.

Among the Mongols of the northern frontier there had at this time arisen some fresh sense of union, and Yesien, Prince of Chuning, who succeeded to his father's place and name about the time when all Wangchin's designs had apparently been crowned with success, was possessed with the ambition to renew the incursions into China that had formerly been the prerogative and practice of his race. The border governors soon reported that Yesien was actively engaged in military preparations, and that his emissaries and spies were exploring the frontier of the Empire for the purpose of ascertaining its weak places. But for the time Yesien took no active steps against the Chinese authorities, and duly sent the usual envoy and presents to the capital for the purpose of announcing his accession to the chiefship of his people. He also made the customary request to the Emperor for a Chinese princess as his wife. Yesien's moderation removed the apprehensions which his military preparations were beginning to arouse, and both Yngtsong and the more experienced of his officials were in favour of a gracious compliance with the requests of the Tartar prince. But to Wangchin the occasion appeared to be one not for arranging in a satisfactory manner a difficulty that might imperil the national interests, but for exalting his own position and for gratifying his personal vanity. Wangchin appropriated for himself the presents sent by the Tartar chief, and haughtily refused to entertain the request for a bride. The messengers returned to the camp of Yesien to inflame his indignation by the rejection of his overtures, and by the relation of their discourteous treatment.

The desert chieftain took this conduct on the part of the Chinese Government as an affront to his person, and as a slight upon his honour. According to the code of honour among his race, the insult thus publicly offered could only be

atoned for in blood ; for the instincts natural to man raged, uncontrolled by the lessons of civilization, in the hearts of the children of these northern steppes. Yesien's reply to Wangchin was to collect his fighting men and to harry the border districts of the Empire. The boldness of his policy greatly disconcerted Wangchin and his advisers, for Yesien marched against the strongly fortified and strategically important town of Taitong in Shansi, and even proclaimed his intention of attacking Peking.

Wangchin, alarmed at the storm which he had so heedlessly raised, called out all the troops stationed in the northern provinces, and he also compelled the courtiers to take up arms and join the active army in the field. Five hundred thousand men were assembled, and, to increase the confidence of the soldiers and to make victory doubly assured, as he thought, Wangchin insisted on the young Emperor placing himself at their head. But, as the event turned out, these extensive preparations and this presence of the sovereign contributed not to make a victory more signal and illustrious, but to render a defeat more crushing and ignominious.

The eunuch general was ill-able to direct the unwieldy machine which he had found it so easy in the Emperor's name to create, and, ignorant of the way in which it was necessary to provide for the requirements of so vast a body of men, his troops had not taken the field many days before they were reduced to extreme straits by the breaking-down of the transport and commissariat services. In face of an enterprising enemy this mismanagement soon produced the greatest confusion in the ranks of the Imperialists. Divided councils also presented themselves in the Cabinet to increase the disorder ; but although many sought to expose the folly of Wangchin, and to cause his removal from office, yet he remained supreme in the affection of his Sovereign and in his own effrontery.

Meantime, Yesien was actively employed in the endeavour to take the superior army of his opponent at a disadvantage, and at last the favourable opportunity offered itself when Wangchin pitched his camp in a false position at a place called Toumon. The error of the Chinese commander was

so glaring that Yesien imagined that it must conceal some deep-laid stratagem, and accordingly sent one of his officers nominally to discuss the terms on which an arrangement might be concluded, but really to examine the military position. The envoy hastened back as soon as he could to urge Yesien to deliver his attack without delay, as fortune had given the Chinese army into his hands. The Tartar prince acted with the promptitude the occasion required. The Chinese, cooped up in a narrow space and surrounded on all sides, fought with desperation, but with little judgment. They broke in every direction, and were pursued with vigour by the Mongol horsemen. The battle in a few hours became a rout. The Tartars gave no mercy, and more than 100,000 Chinese perished at their hands. Nor had the calamity ceased there. The Emperor himself, the youthful Yngtsong, remained captive to his savage foe, and it seemed but a trifling consolation in the midst of the surrounding misfortune to find that Wangchin had paid with his life the penalty of the ruin entailed by his imprudence and temerity.

Large sums of money were offered for the ransom of Yngtsong, but Yesien was loth to part on easy terms with so distinguished a captive. After his great victory at Toumon, the Tartar chief did not meet with as many successes as he might have anticipated, for the border garrisons stood resolutely to their posts, and at last Yesien resolved to return to the Toula, taking back with him his state prisoner, Yngtsong. His parting message to the ministry at Pekin was to fix the ransom of the Emperor at 100 taels of gold, 200 taels of silver, and 200 pieces of the finest silk.

The departure of Yesien rendered it necessary for the Empress to take steps for the conduct of the administration during the enforced absence of the Emperor. At first there had been only a council of regency, but when it became known that Yngtsong had been conveyed to the north, his younger brother, Chinwang, was placed upon the throne in the year 1450, and he took the style of Kingti. The seven years during which he filled the throne were marked by the consequences of the rude shock which the rout of Toumon had produced throughout the whole country. That single

defeat had almost sufficed to undo all the fruits of the policy of previous years, and to even render the task of preserving internal order one of no slight difficulty, so easy a matter is it to destroy compared with the labour required to create.

The eight years during which Kingti ruled in his brother's place were marked by a fierce but intermittent war with the Tartars, during which Yesien carried terror and desolation through the border districts of Shansi and Pechihli. During one of these expeditions Yesien, who carried his imperial prisoner about with him, laid siege to Peking, but, as his force was composed mostly of cavalry, he was unable to do more than to beleaguer it and make feeble attacks on the gates. The arrival of fresh troops from Leaoutung enabled the Chinese to assume the offensive, when Yesien was glad enough to be able to make an orderly retreat back to his native districts with his captive. Yesien returned on several subsequent occasions; but the Chinese, who had had the good fortune to discover a capable general in Yukien, more than held their own.

The one disturbing element in the situation was the continued captivity of Yngtsong, whom neither the wealth nor the force of China could ransom. A feeling was gaining ground that not much harm would be done were Yngtsong left to his fate, and this was encouraged and strengthened by Kingti, who, having tasted the sweets of power, felt loth to lose them. For reasons which must have had force at the time, but the memory of which has not been preserved, Yesien came to the determination to release Yngtsong, and to permit his return to his country. This decision was suddenly formed, and was little expected by either the court or the people of China, and when the unfortunate Yngtsong reached his native country he found none prepared to receive and few to welcome him. His imprisonment had lasted little more than twelve months, but it had continued long enough to provide him with a successor, and to completely change the aspect of affairs at his capital. When he entered Peking the few hopes he had entertained of a restoration to the throne were abandoned, and he calmly accepted the apartments assigned

him in the palace by his brother Kingti. The shadow of the rout at Toumon still hung heavily on his mind.

But although Yngtsong thus waived all his rights in favour of his brother Kingti, his son had been proclaimed Heir Apparent, and it was generally understood that the succession would lie with him. Having fared so well in his first design of retaining possession of the throne, Kingti not unnaturally turned his attention next to the task of preserving it in the hands of his own branch of the family. In this plan he was on the point of succeeding, although success might have entailed a civil war, when the death of his only son marred his prospects. No other event occurred to redeem the memory of Kingti's brief reign from oblivion, but on his death in 1458 Yngtsong was brought forth from his seclusion and restored to the throne. The hope was indulged that under Yngtsong the national prosperity might revive; for Kingti had been a cold and unpopular ruler, whereas Yngtsong had shown that he possessed virtues and qualities well suited to the fulfilment of the duties of his rank, although, through the evil influence of the eunuch Wangchin, they had been obscured by the faults of his minister and by the catastrophe in the war with Yesien.

Yngtsong's return to power was not followed by any of those remarkable events which his friends had anticipated. He was restored to the throne by an intrigue not very dissimilar to that which had resulted in his temporary deposition, and his reappearance in public life was signalized by his supporters ordering the execution of their rivals. Yngtsong reigned for eight more years, but during these no event of greater moment occurred than the petty intrigues of a court presided over by a prince without force of character or any definite views of his own. At first the object of their lip-loyalty, and then, when their aims had been attained, regarded with indifference, Yngtsong's supporters soon began to either fall away from him or to plot his fresh deposition, for to the stormy petrels of politics a settled state of things is irksome and tranquillity impossible.

One plot among the eunuchs of the palace was on the point of succeeding, and only the faithful valour of the body-

guard thwarted their plans and put down the seditious movement in blood. Another, promoted by the prime minister, Cheheng, was fortunately discovered in time, and its authors were promptly arrested and executed after being stripped of their rank and honours. Cheheng avoided some of the ignominy of his sentence by taking poison. It was only through such anxieties as these that Yngtsong could make good his claim to reign in China, nor did the condition of the country afford much room for rejoicing, despite the fact that the Tartars left for a season the borders undisturbed. Earthquakes and inundations caused considerable loss to the country, and spread terror among a superstitious people accustomed to see in natural phenomena the measure of their faults and the anger of the celestial powers.

Yngtsong's death occurred in the year 1465, when he was thirty-eight years old, and he left his throne to his eldest son Chukienchin. In his will, which contained nothing else that was remarkable, he ordered that none should immolate themselves on account of his death, and by forbidding this mistaken practice he manifested some fellow-feeling towards his subjects. Yngtsong's later reign did not come up to the expectations formed about it before it began, but, at the least, it was not marked by any disaster similar to that of Toumon. When Yngtsong died, he could fairly say that he left to his children the heritage he had received almost intact, and in nearly the same condition as when he received it.

CHAPTER XXX.

THREE MING EMPERORS.

HIENTSONG promptly gained popular acclamation by the religious manner in which he obeyed his father's last instructions. The prescribed interval of mourning was kept with due observance, and the young ruler selected as his Empress the princess whom his father had designated for him. In great acts, not less than in small ones, he strove to imitate his predecessor, and to copy his virtues without repeating his vices. The harsh treatment and ingratitude shown towards the illustrious Yukien had been one of the darkest spots on the reputation of Yngtsong's later years. Hientsong had both the discrimination and the resolution to remove, so far as he could, this reproach to his family by publicly paying honour to the memory of that minister and general. The ceremony of rehabilitating the character of this worthy man, and of restoring his original honours, was performed with scrupulous exactitude, but in any other country than China this would seem but a useless and unnecessary proceeding. The Chinese have, however, continued to attach importance to this posthumous practice, partly because it may be held a tribute to truth, and also because it must be considered some redeeming feature in the hard conditions of their official service, which bestows comparatively few rewards, and which always calls for severe hardships.

During the twenty-two years that Hientsong occupied the throne, many questions presented themselves for his consideration, and, so far as may be judged, he endeavoured to, and did, fulfil his duties in a creditable and conscientious

manner. This period was one also of almost incessant warfare, not only on the extreme frontiers, but also in some of the more inaccessible districts of the interior. Yet no campaign on a large scale, signalized either by some great triumph, or by some equally decisive reverse, was fought to redeem the memory of these small wars from oblivion. When it has been stated that there were insurrections in Hupeh and Szchuen, seditious movements in Leaoutung and Yunnan, that there were disturbances among the fierce Miaotse, and the tribes of the Tibetan border, enough has been said to illustrate the condition of the country, and to show the vicissitudes of empire. None of these wars attained serious dimensions, and in all the encounters necessary to vindicate the authority of the Government, the arms of Hientsong were crowned with victory.

One contest, and one alone, threatened to assume a larger aspect, and may fairly claim brief description in this place. In the bleak region round the sources of the Hoangho, where scattered tribes have found it difficult, from the remotest ages, to gain a sustenance for themselves and their flocks, the chief Patan had gathered into his hands some of the power of supreme authority. His town or permanent camp, with its mud rampart, appeared in the eyes of his simple race as good a symbol of kingly power as the more pretentious buildings of the greater capitals seemed to a people of higher culture. The first ruler of Chechen, as this district was called, was quite satisfied to recognize the supremacy of the Chinese Emperor. Patan had been the faithful ally and dependent of the later princes of the Yuen dynasty, and when they were displaced and vanished from the scene he transferred his allegiance without hesitation to the new ruler Hongwou.

Time went on, and the arrangement, which had seemed natural and prudent to Patan and his son, assumed an irksome character in the eyes of the ambitious Mansu, the grandson of the former chief. The Chinese declared that he availed himself of his favourable position to make his town the refuge-place for all the evil-doers on the western borders, and certainly he adopted the attitude of a man who conceived that he had some more profitable and distinguished work to

do than to guide the fortunes and sway the councils of a pastoral tribe. His first collision with the Chinese authorities was caused by a dispute over the collection of the small tribute for which he was liable, and the removal of this difficulty was not facilitated by the existence of a sanctuary controversy. A small body of troops received directions to march against him, but Mansu was on his guard. He succeeded in taking them by surprise, and overwhelmed this detachment in the narrow approaches to his capital. This victory invested his party with a more formidable character than had yet been attached to it, but it also entailed the grave peril of marking him out as an irreclaimable foe of China. Fresh troops were sent against him; his followers, dismayed by the sight of the extensive military preparations brought to bear on them, deserted him, and at last Mansu himself fell into the hands of his enemy. His fate was intended to act as a warning to any who might aspire to imitate him, and on his arrival at the capital he was forthwith executed as a rebel.

Two measures of domestic policy carried out by the Emperor Hientsong attracted considerable notice, and both excited almost universal condemnation. The first of these was the creation of a Council of Eunuchs, into whose hands were placed all matters of life and death. At first it seemed as if this creation of a new administrative body aimed only at humouring a whim of the ruler, and it was not seriously anticipated that this tribunal would exercise much influence over practical affairs. It soon became clear, however, that its functions were more than honorary, and, as a body of troops was specially set apart for the execution of its behests, the new council rapidly became an engine of tyranny. The part taken by its members in the work of administration was most important, and the character of its charter also absolved it from responsibility. No one knew what decrees it passed, but none could escape the malice of a private enemy who happened to be a member of this Chinese Star Chamber. During five years this palace conclave was the terror of the land, but at last the public outcry against it became so loud that Hientsong had to suspend its functions, although he still

hesitated to destroy the work of his own hands. The nation was little satisfied with this inadequate reparation, and after its members had been formally denounced as enemies of the state, several of the principal of them were sentenced to death. Hientsong's popularity thereupon revived, and his subjects charitably attributed to weakness and amiability his having so long condoned the criminal and tyrannical proceedings of this section of his most intimate courtiers.

In the second measure, of which the consequences did not become immediately perceptible, will be found one of the chief causes that operated towards effecting the early overthrow and destruction of the Mings. The members of the reigning House, and all who had contributed to its elevation, naturally expected some reward for their position or their services ; and it became their first ambition to obtain territorial grants from the Sovereign, and to found an estate which could be handed down as a patrimony to their descendants. The feudal practices and system had died out in China many centuries before, and it was not to be supposed that a people, like the Chinese, strongly imbued with the principles of equality, and only recognizing as a superior class the representatives of officialdom and letters, would look with much favour on any attempt to revive an order of territorial magnates with whom they had no sympathy. Hientsong himself felt no strong interest in the matter. He knew the people's mind on this subject, and he was aware that the authority of the King is rather diminished than enhanced by the presence of a powerful and warlike nobility, who have always been prone to see in the ruler the highest member of their order rather than the "divinely elected" guide of a people. On the other hand, he was not sufficiently cold to resist the importunities of his friends. In the matter, therefore, of making territorial grants to the more prominent of his supporters he vacillated from one side to the other. The representations of one of the censors led him to pass an edict against any territorial concessions, but within a very few weeks of this firm and wise decision he was so far influenced by his relatives that he conferred several grants of land on members of his family. The rule once broken was seldom afterwards rigidly

enforced, and gradually the scions of the Ming family became territorial magnates to the great discontent of the people. It was in the eyes of the latter a flagrant interference with the laws of providence to "assign to one man a district which could supply the wants of a hundred families."

While this cause for discontent not only existed but was acquiring fresh force throughout the country, the extravagance of the court had resulted in grave pecuniary embarrassment, and, as some possible means of supplying urgent wants, orders were given to resume the working of all the gold mines in Central China upon which operations had been long discontinued. More than half a million of persons were employed, but the result was next to nothing. Many lives were lost from fever, and the total sum which the Emperor derived from this desperate expedient and experiment amounted to no more than thirty ounces. The search for gold was then abandoned in despair, but we are not told whether the Emperor sought the true remedy of his embarrassment in retrenchment and economy.

On the other hand, several undertakings of great public utility must be placed to the credit of Hientsong, and among these not the least important was the cutting of a canal from Peking to the Peiho, sufficiently deep to admit of large junks laden with grain proceeding to the capital both from the Yuho and from the Gulf of Pechihli. The transport of grain from the central provinces, in order to supply the wants of the capital and of the northern districts, where a large garrison was permanently stationed, was always very extensive, and a regular organization was required to maintain it in an efficient state. At first it had been placed in the hands of the civil authorities, but eventually it was transferred to those of the military, by whom the work was performed with remarkable success. In this measure may be seen the germ of an efficient military field transport, although it must be remembered that here the great difficulty of all was much simplified by the existence of a convenient water-way throughout the entire route.

Another enterprise of a dissimilar but not less useful character was accomplished in the repairing of the great wall

of Tsin Chi Hwangti. In 1474 it was reported in a memorial to the throne that this structure was in a state of great disrepair, and that the flourishing condition of the Empire afforded a favourable opportunity for restoring it. The necessary sanction having been obtained from the Emperor, the work was prosecuted with energy. The local garrison supplied the labour, and in a few months the wall had been renovated throughout a great portion of its length by the efforts of 50,000 soldiers. A large extent of territory within this wall was then parcelled out among military settlers, and while there was increased security from without, greater prosperity prevailed within.

The closing years of Hientsong's reign witnessed the achievement of several brilliant successes over the Tartars. The town of Hami was taken by one of his lieutenants, and again subjected to Chinese authority. But on the northern frontier near Taitong the Imperialists suffered a reverse, which the unlucky commanders represented in their official bulletins as a success. The latter misadventure was exceptional, and the capture of Hami more truly represented the condition of the Empire, when Hientsong's death left the throne vacant. (A.D. 1487.)

His son and successor, Hiaotsong, was a youth of eighteen when he was called upon to assume the grave responsibility of governing the Empire, but his youth does not appear to have led him into any greater indiscretion than to show a marked partiality for the doctrines of Buddhism. In China, although such a tendency has long been common, and although Buddhism now holds an important part in the religious ceremonies and belief of the court, a leaning towards Buddhism has always been denounced as a kind of infidelity. The moralists of the palace and the petitioners of the throne have ever seized the opportunity thus afforded them to dilate upon the virtues of the great men of a primitive era, and to protest against the immorality of these later days. So it was in the case of Hiaotsong; but whatever his errors of opinion, his acts as ruler appear to have been founded in wisdom, and marked by generosity towards those who disagreed with him.

The presence of a young prince upon the throne always affords the opportunity for rival ambitions to assert themselves in the arena of public affairs. The first few years of Hiaotsong's reign were not free from this cause of irritation, and several ministers were banished and decapitated in expiation of their crimes or misfortune before the Emperor felt sure that he had found in Mawenchin a man in whose integrity he might place the same faith as in his ability. Mawenchin held throughout Hiaotsong's reign the foremost place in official life, and the country benefited equally by his sagacity and his valour. Although the records are always too meagre, and sometimes too contradictory, to invest the subject with any of the interest which at the time it claimed in the eyes of the Chinese, we cannot pass over the one question which occupied the attention, roused the apprehension, and employed the talent of Mawenchin and his colleagues.

In remote Central Asia, where the exciting game of ambition has oft been played by ephemeral conquerors, whose fluctuating fortunes have been marked by the overthrow of dynasties, the Chinese had now for almost a century maintained their supremacy intact, if frequently disputed, and their strong position at Hami enabled them to foil the spasmodic attempts of their rude assailants. The governor of this town naturally became a personage of great importance on the north-west frontier, and at no other place did good service receive its due reward more promptly than at this gate of the Empire. One of Hiaotsong's first acts had been to raise Hanchen, the governor, who had retaken it in the last year of Hientsong's reign, to the rank of prince, but Hanchen's new honours did not bring good fortune to him in the matter of his onerous charge. For the very year following his elevation, Hahema, a Tartar chief who reigned at Turfan, attacked him suddenly, and, having slain the commandant, drove out the Chinese and set up his own authority. With the loss of Hami, all the possessions beyond Gobi also fell into the hands of tribes who, always hostile to the Chinese, had grown doubly inimical to them since they adopted the tenets of Mahomedanism. On this

occasion Hahema, concerned to defend his western frontiers against neighbours not less aggressive than himself, withdrew from his conquest, and consented to pay to the injured dignity of China the reparation Mawenchin required.

But Hahema's moderation did not last long. Mawenchin placed in the vacant seat of Hami a young prince called Champa or Hiapa, who came from Manchuria, and who represented in direct line the old reigning House of the Mongols; but this appointment seemed to Hahema an affront of a personal character. He accordingly marched against Hami, which he seemed resolved to prevent falling into the hands of anybody else, as he could not keep it for himself. Hami surrendered without any attempt at resistance, and Champa, instead of enjoying his new principality, became a prisoner in the hands of a malignant foe.

It was impossible for the Chinese to put up with this second and flagrant insult. The deposition of Champa reopened the old sore caused by the murder of Hanchen, and rendered it incumbent on Hiaotsong's ministers to take steps to inflict a summary punishment on the ambitious Hahema. It is always easier to decree the punishment of a vassal whose security consists in the remoteness of his district than it is to carry out his chastisement, and Hahema continued to enjoy the security of his position. After this second triumph, he proclaimed himself Khakhan, and he continued to make Turfan his principal place of residence. Hami he was content to leave in the charge of two of his lieutenants with a small garrison of two hundred horsemen.

The confidence shown in these arrangements provided the Chinese with the opportunity of striking a prompt blow against their opponent. An attack on Hami did not promise to be a very hazardous undertaking, although it naturally proved more difficult to keep secret the preparations for such an enterprise. Hahema's officers soon heard of the approaching force, and by a rapid retreat ensured their own safety and converted the Chinese success into a barren victory. The presence of a Chinese army at Hami sufficed to bring Hahema to a proper sense of his position. He then surrendered his prisoner Champa, sent in a fresh expression of his dependence

on the Chinese Emperor, and acquiesced in the installation of Champa as Prince of Hami. Peace was thus given to a region which the ambition of Hahema had threatened to disturb.

The rest of Hiaotsong's reign was uneventful so far as its external relations went, but an insurrection on the part of the natives of Hainan* called attention to a remote portion of the Empire which seldom received much notice from the magnates of Peking. The blacks of Hainan, as they were designated, had had the misfortune to be placed under the authority of a governor who ground them down with harsh usage, and when, on some rumour of his tyranny reaching the ears of his superiors, he was removed, his successor continued with still greater violence the course he had adopted. The Hainanese, unable to make their complaints in any form likely to receive attention at the capital, began to plot how they might effect their deliverance from an oppression which weighed so heavily upon them, and they found a popular chief in the person of Founancha, ready and willing to lead them against their Chinese masters. In the disturbances that followed in consequence of this effort towards freedom, the small Chinese garrison was unable to do much towards the maintenance of order, and the natives under the leadership of Founancha long baffled the attempts made to reduce them to subjection. It is possible that the struggle might

* The island of Hainan is of very considerable importance. It is attached to the province of Kwantung. At present little is known of the actual condition of this island, but its mineral wealth is believed to be considerable. Timber forms its staple trade. The Chinese authority was first established there in B.C. 111 by General Lupoteh, but for many centuries it has been a reality only in a few districts adjoining the coast. The capital is Kiungchow, and it is also the principal seaport. The inhabitants are divided into three races—the Chinese, the Shuli, who appear to be a cross between the natives and the Celestials, and the Shengli, Black Li, or aborigines, referred to above. The population is estimated at about two and a half millions. Hainan, which in the past has often been a mere piratical nest and a source of trouble to the Chinese Government, is probably destined to play a considerable part in the development of European trade with China (see, for an interesting description of Hainan with references, vol. xi. "Encyclopædia Britannica," 9th edition, 1880).

have continued for an indefinite period had not the Chinese raised a corps of native troops who were able to engage the Hainanese insurgents on more equal terms. This plan of proceeding answered extremely well, and when Founancha was slain in a skirmish his followers either disbanded or gave in their formal surrender.

With the pacification of Hainan the last important event of Hiaotsong's reign is recorded. That prince was still young, but his strength appears to have been feeble, and it had long been evident that his end was approaching. His death occurred in A.D. 1505, when he was only thirty-six years of age, and he left the throne to his son, who became the Emperor Woutsong. It is difficult to form a clear opinion as to the character of these princes of the House of Ming, who succeed each other on the stage of history without performing any deed calculated to impress the mind or to inspire the pen. Hiaotsong showed something of the care a great prince should exhibit towards his people by providing public granaries in which corn could be stored for years of dearth and famine. Into these each district of ten hamlets was obliged to send annually a quantity of grain until there were stored up 100,000 bushels in each granary. The wisdom of this precaution was undoubted, and in a land in which large provinces are so frequently desolated by famine, as is the case in China, the people had good reason to laud the forethought of their ruler.

The reign of Woutsong proved prolific of misfortune both for the prince and also for the nation. His accession to the throne served as the signal for a clique of courtiers to begin machinations which had the double object in view of advancing their own fortunes and of gradually usurping the functions of the sovereign. Eight eunuchs figured in the front rank as the leaders of this seditious movement, but Liukin was the most prominent of them all. To his ambitious mind the part even of chief minister appeared small and scarcely worthy of his claims, and, while feigning to be content with a position which left him the dispenser of the Emperor's favour, he was really plotting how to oust Woutsong and the Ming dynasty, and to place his own family on the throne. These

schemes long failed to arouse the suspicions of a too-confiding prince, but they very soon attracted the indignation of the people.

They also served to stir up ambitious dreams in the breasts of some who without an example of infidelity would have been satisfied to remain the dutiful subjects of the Emperor. In Szchuen the latent dissatisfaction found vent, as has often been the case in that great province, in a popular rising, but elsewhere throughout the country—at Nankin and in Shensi in particular—the Emperor's uncles took the lead in intrigues for the deposition of Woutsong. Of the fortunes of these cabals, and of the practical result that followed, it will suffice to briefly say that Liukin was on the eve of attaining his objects, when a quarrel with some of his confederates led to the divulgence of his plans and to his immediate arrest. In his palace proof was found, in the vast quantity of treasure and of military weapons he had collected, of the ambitious plans which he had entertained. His execution put an end to the designs of this Chinese Wolsey.

The Emperor's relatives, the princes of Ting and Ganhoa, did not stop their preparations because of this purification of the palace. The Prince of Ning was first brought to reason by one of Woutsong's lieutenants, and then his kinsman of Ganhoa was likewise reduced to a sense of good order. Within a very short period of the time when the machinations of Liukin and the ambitious plans of these princes threatened both the disintegration of the Empire and also the ruin of the Ming family, internal tranquillity was restored by the Imperial troops. Woutsong owed the recovery of his authority more to his good fortune than to the excellence of his arrangements. His natural indifference seems to have prevented his realizing the gravity of the danger to which he had been momentarily exposed, and from which he had been happily rescued.

The insurrection on the part of the common people in Szchuen, of which little had been thought at the time, proved more formidable and difficult to put down than the plots of courtiers and the agitation of self-seeking potentates, for in their case they were actuated by a real grievance and by an

overpowering sense of wrong. The inhabitants of that province, who have long been remarkable for their courage and love of liberty, qualities which they may have derived from their native soil, famed alike for the beauty of its scenery and for its productive character, collected in considerable force in the northern valleys, and bade defiance to the local authorities. Fresh troops had to be brought from the neighbouring provinces, and a large army was placed in the field before there seemed to be any good ground for believing that the insurgents would be dispersed. Even when assailed by an overwhelming force, they withdrew into the neighbouring province of Kweichow sooner than make their formal surrender to the officers of an unjust prince. In Kweichow they were joined by the Miaotze and others, but as soon as it was seen that depredation represented their principal object they were doomed. Never again did they become formidable, and the embers of this once popular rebellion were gradually and effectually stamped out.

The errors of the Government entailed a punishment still nearer home. In the metropolitan provinces of Pechihli and Shantung bands of mounted robbers collected, and they became, under the designation of Hiangma, the terror of a large tract of country, covering hundreds of square miles. Peking itself was not safe from insult and attack. In 1512, Liutsi, their principal leader, pillaged its suburbs, and for a moment it looked as if he were about to secure the person of the Emperor and to become the arbiter of the state. A large army arrived opportunely from Leaoutung, and Liutsi was compelled to retire. Having thus held complete success almost within their grasp, the Hiangmas lost ground as rapidly as they had gained it. Reverse followed reverse, and the same year which beheld Peking imperilled also saw the final overthrow of Liutsi and the complete dispersion of his band.

Although these numerous troubles might well have suggested caution in his actions to Woutsong, his last years were marked by much of the recklessness of the earlier ones. In defiance of the strict etiquette of the Chinese Court, he passed his later days in expeditions beyond the northern frontier,

which partook of the double character of hunting tours and of forays against the Tartars. Memorial was presented after memorial in the hope of inducing the monarch to see the error of his ways, but he regarded the matter from his own point of view, and was not to be turned from his path. A fresh revolt on the part of the Prince of Ning failed to disturb his serenity, but the energy with which he devoted his attention to its repression showed that he was at least resolved not to omit any measure of precaution in grappling with his enemies. A short time after this incident Woutsong was seized with a malady which proved mortal. His death, in the fourteenth year of his reign,* was the signal for much confusion, as he neither left children nor had he selected an heir. The consequences of the misfortunes which distracted the realm, but which left his position and equanimity undisturbed, were to be reaped by his successors.

* The most important event by far of Woutsong's reign was the arrival at Canton of the first European who landed on the shores of China. Raphael Perestralo sailed from Malacca to China about the year 1511; and in 1517 Don Fernand Perez D'Andrade, a Portuguese officer, arrived off the coast with a squadron, and was favourably received by the Canton mandarins. He visited Peking, where he resided for some time as ambassador. The commencement of intercourse was thus effected in a most auspicious manner, and it might have endured, but that a second Portuguese fleet appeared in Chinese waters and committed there numerous outrages and acts of piracy. Upon this D'Andrade was arrested by order of Woutsong, and after undergoing six years' imprisonment was executed by command of the Emperor Chitsong in A.D. 1523. The termination of the first act in the history of intercourse by sea between China and Europe was therefore less favourable than its commencement had promised.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE MING DYNASTY—*continued.**Chitsong and Moutsong.*

THE throne being thus left vacant and no heir existing whose claims could be held to be indisputable, there was every prospect of a period of trouble ensuing upon the death of Woutsong, and only the promptitude and resolution of the Empress Changchi averted such a catastrophe. She at once summoned all the principal officials to a secret council, and dwelling upon the critical nature of the situation, insisted on the absolute necessity of choosing some scion of the reigning House and proclaiming him Emperor. Their choice fell upon the grandson of the Emperor Hientsong, a youth of some fourteen summers, who ascended the throne under the style of Chitsong. A glimpse is obtained of this young prince before he had accepted the responsibility of power in his parting interview with his mother. Although fortune was about to raise him to so brilliant a station, we are told that he parted from her with reluctance. "My son," she said, "you are about to accept a heavy burden; never forget the few words your mother has addressed to you, and always respect them."

His first act was to proclaim a general pardon, from which Kiangping, an ambitious official who had risen by the personal favour of Woutsong, and who even aspired to the purple, was alone excepted. Neither the Empress Dowager nor her ministers would allow this measure of oblivion to apply to so formidable an opponent, and Kiangping was accordingly executed after his estates had been made forfeit to the Crown.

In a very few months, therefore, the dangers of a disputed succession were happily averted, and the most formidable enemy of the public peace had been removed without difficulty or strife. Chitsong's long reign could not well have opened under fairer auspices.

The incursions of the Tartar chief Yenta had formed a principal element of disturbance throughout the lifetime of Woutsong; they became still more frequent after his successor occupied the throne. Indeed, hardly a year elapsed without witnessing some of his depredations either in Shansi or Pechihli, and his raid formed the annual event along the northern frontier. Nor was Yenta the only chief who troubled the borders, or whose acts weighed down weak-kneed ministers at the capital with the cares of government. Mansour, of Turfan, had succeeded to the authority and power of Hahema, and he had again established at Hami a delegate of his own. In 1522 he advanced across the desert and laid siege to Souchow, but in this he had miscalculated his strength. The town was stoutly defended, and Mansour was in turn attacked by a relieving force. From the battle which ensued, he was glad to escape with his life and the relics of his army. After this reverse, Mansour gave little more trouble, and in 1528 he thought it better, on account of the defection of several of his allies, to send in his surrender and to admit the supremacy of the Emperor.

Nor were these the sole quarters whence danger emanated. The district included in the loop of the Hoangho, and bounded on the south by the Great Wall, was inhabited by the assemblage of tribes known then and now under the name of Ordus or Ortus.* These, although settled within what may be called the geographical frontier of China, were really as independent of her authority as if they had been a tribe in a

* A full but uninteresting description of these tribes is given in "Mailla," vol. x. pp. 300-3. They still constitute one of those semi-subdued people—an *imperium in imperio*—whose existence mars the symmetry and completeness of the Chinese Empire according to the notions of Europe. Reference may also be made, for information about these tribes, to Timkowski's interesting "Travels," vol. ii. pp. 266-8; and to Huc's "Travels," vol. i.

remote portion of Central Asia. They had owed this happy immunity from interference on the part of the Chinese tax-collectors and officials as much to the excellence of their conduct as to the natural difficulties and barren character of the region they inhabited. During the reigns of some of Chitsong's predecessors disturbances had arisen on this border, and the second year after his accession was marked by a raid on a more than usually large scale. The Ordus were doubtless encouraged in their depredations by the example of their eastern as well as by that of their western neighbours, although in comparison with either they were a source of small anxiety to the Peking authorities.

Chitsong felt little disposition to devote himself to the cares of government, and preferred to relieve his superstition in religious ceremonies and to indulge his inclination by cultivating a taste for poetry. His advisers deplored the attitude of their prince, and remonstrated with him on the consequences that his indifference to the duties of his high office must entail. But their counsels were poured into ears that did not heed, and Chitsong continued the even tenor of his way. A mutiny among his troops at the northern post of Taitong did not avail to rouse him from his torpor, but when, after the birth of an heir, he expressed a desire to retire from the throne into private life, and made some preparations towards carrying his intention into execution, his courtiers all joined to urge upon him the necessity of abandoning it in order to save the realm from the numerous calamities of a long minority or disputed succession.

Three principal subjects alone were of absorbing interest in the reign of this Emperor, and it is the common fortune of great empires that they should relate exclusively to foreign affairs. But it must not be supposed that they exercised little or no effect on the material condition of the country, or on the development of the national resources. These three questions were the wars with Yenta the Tartar, and with the Japanese, and the progress of events in Cochin China. Each of these topics occupied a most important place in the annals of the time, and they contributed to swell the tide of difficulty that was already accumulating round the Ming dynasty. It

might be more instructive to trace the growth of thought among the masses, or to indicate the progress of civil and political freedom ; yet not only do the materials not exist for such a task, but those we possess all tend to show that there has been no growth to describe, no progress to be indicated during these comparatively recent centuries. It is the peculiar and distinguishing characteristic of Chinese history that the people and their institutions have remained practically unchanged and the same from a very early period. Even the introduction of a foreign element has not tended to disturb the established order of things. The supreme ruler preserves the same attributes and discharges the same functions ; the governing classes are chosen in the same manner ; the people are bound in the same state of servitude, and enjoy the same practical liberty ; all is now as it was. Neither under the Tangs nor the Sungs, under the Yuens nor the Mings, was there any change in national character, or in political institutions to be noted or chronicled. The history of the Empire has always been the fortunes of the dynasty, which have depended in the first place on the passive content of the subjects, and in the second, on the success or failure of its external and internal wars. This condition of things may be disappointing to those who pride themselves on tracing the origin of constitutions and the growth of civil rights, and who would have a history of China the history of the Chinese people ; although the fact is undoubted that there is no history of the Chinese people, apart from that of their country, to be recorded. The national institutions and character were formed, and had attained in all essentials to their present state, more than 2000 years ago, or before the destruction of all trustworthy materials for the task of writing their history by the burning of the ancient literature and chronicles of China. Without them we must fain content ourselves with the history of the country and the Empire.

The disturbances in Cochin China, which were the direct consequence of those previously recorded in that portion of the Empire, do not call for the same detailed notice as the two other matters referred to. When Lili had consolidated his position in that kingdom by his amicable convention with

the Chinese, he reigned for several years in tranquillity, and left his throne to his children. That family was still reigning at the time of Chitsong's accession, but he had not long occupied the Dragon Throne when the House of Lili began to experience the same misfortunes as those by which it had risen to the purple at the expense of another. An ambitious minister named Mouteng Yong ousted the reigning prince, and made his way by a succession of crimes to the throne. Secure of his main object, the exercise of unquestioned authority, he feigned moderation by placing on the throne one of his sons, while in the background he wielded the attributes of power without much of its responsibility. The path of the new despot was not free from trouble, as the royal house continued to find many supporters, but it still looked as if he would succeed in his plans when the Pekin Government suddenly came to the resolution to interfere and support the expelled family. Mouteng made some preparations to resist the Chinese army of invasion, but his heart misgave him at the critical moment, and he thought it better to accept terms by which he surrendered the throne he had usurped but retained the office of first minister. Thus for a further period the kingdom of Cochin China, through the intervention of the Chinese, secured internal tranquillity.

The Tartar chief Yenta, whose marauding attacks on the Shansi frontier had for some time caused the Chinese considerable trouble, represented a more serious danger to the Empire, for the governorship of Taitong, which was the principal scene of his activity, was situated within a short distance of the capital. He began in the year 1529 a series of incursions into Shansi, which continued throughout this and the following reign. Sometimes he varied the excitement of his pursuit by combining with his brother Kisiang, the chief of the Ordus, in raiding the western district of Ninghia across the Hoangho ; but, as a rule, the neighbourhood of Taitong witnessed his exploits. Never, wrote the Imperial historian, were the frontiers of China more disturbed than they were by Yenta.

In 1541, Yenta carried his activity still further than he had yet done, for, under the guidance of a traitorous Chinese

monk, who wished to avenge himself for some slight that had been offered him, he in that year made his way through the Great Wall, and passing the garrison town of Taitong, marched against Taiyuen, the principal city in Shansi. The expedition, in which Kisiang and the Ordus also took part, was a complete success, and the invaders returned with a vast booty to their encampments. Impunity brought increased audacity, and thenceforth the interior of Shansi was not more safe than its borders from the attacks of this daring leader. Kisiang's death, caused by the effects of a debauch, left his brother supreme among all the Tartar tribes, and this event increased their formidable character for war, as it tended to promote union. Despairing of success in the open field, the Chinese hoped to obtain their object by the removal of their principal enemy. A price was set on Yenta's head, and 1000 taels, with an official post of the third rank, was promised to the bold man who should have the courage and the good fortune to slay that formidable chieftain.

This personal threat served only to inflame the animosity of Yenta against the Chinese. In 1542 he again entered Shansi, and inflicted a crushing defeat, as far south as the town of Pingyang, on the garrisons of Honan and Shantung, which had been ordered to march against him. The consequences of this success were most disastrous, for a large territory, which had been prospering by the absence of all strife for nearly two centuries, was handed over to the mercies of a fierce and reckless barbarian. Thirty-eight districts were ravaged by his followers, and the Tartars made good their way back to Mongolia with 200,000 prisoners and an incalculable quantity of plunder. The Chinese historian records that after this expedition Yenta remained quiet for twelve months.

In 1549, Yenta experienced his first reverse in this frontier strife. The encounter took place during one of his periodic raids near the town of Taitong, and Yenta was compelled, after sustaining the attack of superior numbers, to beat a hasty retreat with the loss of some of his best troops. That the reverse was far from being crushing, his return the very next year clearly showed, when his successes were greater

than ever. On this occasion he marched in the direction of Peking itself, to which he was resolved to lay siege. The arrival of fresh troops sent from Leaoutung and other provinces to succour the capital compelled him, however, to draw off his force. But he executed his retreat with skill, and succeeded in getting back without having suffered much loss.

Yenta desired for some reasons to come to an amicable arrangement with the Chinese Government, even though he neither expected nor wished the conditions of any understanding to be long observed. But these later years were occupied as much by the discussion of possible terms of peace as by active campaigning, and many thought that the hostility of the Tartar would be disarmed by the establishment of the horse fairs, which he asked for. Yenta kept his paid spies at Peking, and he numbered among those in his hire Yensong, one of the most trusted of Chitsong's ministers. Yensong's intrigues were discovered, and their author punished with death, and it may perhaps have been in consequence of this that Yenta's overtures were rejected. But no remedy was applied to the evil. The Chinese troops remained uniformly unsuccessful, the Tartars were persistently aggressive, and much of the northern frontier lay desolate.

Meanwhile, a new enemy appeared on the scene to add to the embarrassment and difficulty of the Peking Emperor. The Japanese had neither forgotten nor forgiven the unprovoked invasion of their country by the Emperor Kublai. It had become with them a traditional justification for any attack they might feel disposed to organize against the Chinese mainland. As soon as the Mongol power was seen to be on the wane, the Japanese began to make descents on the coasts of Fuhkien and Chekiang, and these had continued during the century and a half which the Mings had held the throne up to the time of Chitsong. These attacks were little more than semi-piratical expeditions, annoying enough in their way, but constituting no serious danger. Various precautions were taken to defend the coast. Towers were erected at intervals, and a militia was raised and trained for the purpose of resisting the descents of the Japanese. But no attempt was made to carry on the war on the other

element, and the Japanese naval superiority remained uncontested.

While this quarrel was in process of slow development, other and more promising relations had been formed between the two peoples. Both nations, by natural disposition, were keen in the pursuit of trade, and a very considerable commerce had sprung up between them. But this was carried on by smuggling, as all articles were contraband save those imported by the tribute embassy once in ten years. The Japanese traders landed their goods on some of the islands off the coast where the Chinese merchants met them for purposes of trade ; and the profits must have been very considerable, as the average value of a ship's cargo amounted to 1000 gold taels. But although they derived many advantages from this traffic, the Chinese appear to have desired to acquire the monopoly of its benefits, and they were not always either fair or prudent in their business transactions with the foreigners. A flagrant act of injustice was the immediate cause of the troubles which arose towards the close of Chit-song's reign, and which continued under many of his successors ; and it served to extenuate the unfriendly conduct of the Japanese * during previous years.

The refusal of a Chinese merchant to give a Japanese the goods for which he had paid provoked the indignation of the islanders, who fitted out their vessels to exact reparation for this breach of faith. In 1552 they effected a landing in Chekiang, pillaged the country round Taichow, and maintained themselves in a fortified position for twelve months against all the attacks of the Chinese. They were ill-advised to attempt so obstinate a stand in face of the overwhelming odds that could be brought against them, and they paid the penalty of their foolhardiness by being exterminated. This reverse, if it can be called one, seeing that only a few men

* The Chinese historian, translated by Mailla, describes the Japanese as "intrepid, inured to fatigue, despising life, and knowing well how to face death ; although inferior in number, a hundred of them would blush to flee before a thousand foreigners, and, if they did, they would not dare to return to their country. Sentiments such as these, which are instilled into them from their earliest childhood, render them terrible in battle."

perished after inflicting vast loss on the Chinese, did not deter other Japanese from undertaking similar adventures, and at the very time when the mariners of England were trying to earn the supremacy of the seas in the school of Hawkins and Drake, another race of islanders was gaining the same celebrity in the Far East.

In the five years between 1555 and 1560,* the Japanese made frequent descents on the coast, and even laid siege to Nankin. But they were beaten off in their last attempt, although all their minor enterprises succeeded, and the Chinese suffered as much at the hands of the Japanese on their eastern coasts as they did from Yenta on the northern borders during the dark days of the reign of Chitsong the Indifferent.

In 1563-4, piratical bands, who have frequently infested the coasts and estuaries of China, had gathered to a head under the leadership of a chief named Hwangchi, and how considerable their power was may be inferred from the fact that they could place one hundred war-ships in line of battle. In face of their flotilla the local garrisons were helpless. The Japanese formed a temporary alliance with them, and in both the years mentioned they jointly made a descent in force on the coast. At first they carried everything before them, but when it came to serious fighting the Japanese found that the valour of their confederates speedily evaporated. The Chinese collected a large army, and attacked the invaders with resolution. Their commander Tsikikwang showed considerable talent, and the Japanese were driven back to their

* In 1553 died, on the Island of Sancian, near Macao, Francis Xavier, the celebrated missionary, who was canonized after his death. He had gone to China for the purpose of converting the Chinese, but died within sight of land and on the threshold of his enterprise. The Portuguese still monopolized the European intercourse—a fact most unfortunate for the happy development of friendly relations with China. "*The Portuguese have no other design than to come under the name of merchants to spy the country, that they may hereafter fall on it with fire and sword,*" said the Chinese. In 1560 they obtained, however, the loan of the site on which stands their settlement of Macao, and in return for a rent of 500 taels per annum they were allowed to make it their principal station on the coast. The glory and the prosperity of Macao have both long departed.

ships with loss. The pirates also suffered, and their power did not soon recover from the rude shock inflicted by Tsiki-kwang's activity.

The long reign of Chitsong, which extended over a period of forty-five years, was now drawing to a close; but the general opinion as to his personal qualities and capacity for reigning may be gathered from the fact that memorials were presented to him at this late period of his life and reign on the necessity of his devoting closer attention to affairs of State. The first impulse of the Emperor was to punish their authors, but time brought reflection. At the eleventh hour he might have reformed and become a model prince had his life been spared, but his death shortly afterwards, in 1566, dissipated that prospect. His last will, written on his death-bed, was a confession of fault, and a plea of extenuation to be favourably received by those who would have to judge his place in history. "Forty-five years," wrote the Emperor, "have I occupied the throne, and there have been few reigns as long. My duty was to revere Heaven and to take care of my peoples; yet, actuated by the desire to find some solace for the evils from which I have continually suffered, I allowed myself to be deceived by impostors, who promised me the secret of immortality. This delusion has led me to set a bad example to both my magnates and my people. I desire to repair the evil by this edict, which is to be published throughout the Empire after my death." The confession of fault is a graceful weakness, or it may be the commencement of better days; but it is an ineffectual remedy for the embarrassments of either an individual or a state.

Chitsong's third but eldest surviving son succeeded him, and assumed the title of Moutsong. At the time of his accession he was thirty years of age, and his first acts showed that he had not been an indifferent observer of the discontent produced by many of his father's acts. He released several mandarins who had been imprisoned for having remonstrated with Chitsong on the folly of his conduct, and he imprisoned those who had encouraged him to persist in his search for the elixir of life. His private character was above reproach, and the promise of his earlier years seemed indicative of

a more prosperous era for China. The shortness of his reign afforded no time for the realization of these hopes and anticipations ; but if it did not allow of great achievements being performed, it could not prevent the memory of Moutsong's brief reign passing into a national regret.

At the least this reign would have been remarkable for the settlement of the long-standing dispute with Yenta the Tartar, who, although an old man, had not lost the energy of his youth, and whose reputation among his own race had been established and extended as his experience matured. In 1570 the defection of his grandson, who deserted to the Chinese, roused the apprehension of Yenta, and he presented a formal demand to the Emperor for his compulsory return. The only reply he received was to the effect that he must first restore those Chinese subjects whom he held in his power, and when, after some hesitation, Yenta complied with this condition, his grandson was sent back to him. This successful negotiation proved the precursor of an amicable arrangement between these hitherto bitter foes, and Yenta accepted the title of a Chinese prince, and went through the form of making his submission to the Emperor. This long-existing feud was thus happily settled for this occasion, at all events, if not as a permanent question of frontier policy.

Moutsong was suddenly seized with a malady which proved fatal, and the realm was thus left to be afflicted by a recurrence of those evils from which it appeared to have escaped. Moutsong feared the consequences that might ensue after his decease, and in his last will he implored his officials and subjects to unite in assisting the young heir apparent and in promoting good government. His fears proved only too just, for the long reign of his son Wanleh was to witness the culmination of the misfortunes which had been accumulating for some time.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE LONG REIGN OF WANLEH.

As the young prince Chintsong, better known in history as the Emperor Wanleh, was only six years old at the time of his father's death, his mother assumed the functions of Regent, and summoned to her council prudent and trustworthy ministers. In this latter respect she showed a laudable resolve to follow and carry on the policy of her husband Moutsong; and if her good sense did not avail to avert misfortune, the result must be attributed more to the impression of weakness produced by the minority of the sovereign, and to an accumulation of foreign complications, than to any shortcomings on her part. The young ruler himself was apparently actuated by the most laudable intentions, and showed himself very desirous of following the advice of men of experience. With touching simplicity he placed his person and the fortunes of his family in the hands of the ministers whom his father had most trusted.

The tranquillity which happily prevailed at the time of Moutsong's death was not disturbed during the first years of the reign of his successor. Yenta, who had been for more than a generation the scourge of the northern frontier of the Empire, had either learnt moderation with growing years, or had found friendly relations with the Chinese authorities to be more profitable than the uncertainties of an arduous war. And with Yenta passive there was no other border chief bold enough to disturb Chinese territory.

The results of this season of tranquillity were soon shown by an increase in the revenue and by a proportionately full

exchequer ; and, as one of Wanleh's ministers observed, it was only necessary that care should be exercised in the national expenditure to preserve the finances in their flourishing condition. But it does not appear that either Wanleh or any of his ministers possessed the necessary forethought to closely supervise the daily expenditure of the palace and the government, and the gradual accumulation of external difficulties left them little or no leisure to devote to the dry and unattractive precepts of a sound financial policy.

Wanleh had not long occupied the throne when the Miaotze of the Szchuen frontier broke loose from the slight control maintained over them by the local officials, but none of the incidents of this rising have been preserved. A revolt on the part of some military colonies in the North-West assumed larger proportions, and at one time appeared to threaten the security of even the Emperor's seat upon the throne. Popai, a soldier of fortune of Tartar origin, had risen high in the Chinese service, and among the officers to whom was entrusted the onerous task of guarding the north-west frontier few ranked higher than he did. It would seem that Popai's good fortune and distinctions had brought him the envy and dislike of the officers of Chinese race, and, as his position was too secure to be easily shaken, these latter resolved to gratify their spite by injuring those of his relations who were also in the Imperial service.

A slight offered to Popai's son led to a quarrel that soon developed grave proportions, and these aliens, whose example of seeking their fortunes under the auspices of the Mings had been imitated by many of their kinsmen, imagining that there was a scheme afoot for their destruction, took up arms in their own behalf and declared against the Government. This extreme act was committed in a moment of either temper or panic, and was unquestionably ill-judged. Had there been a prudent viceroy at the head of affairs in Shensi, this misconception might have been easily removed, and the ruin of a few brave men averted, with much saving to the exchequer and to the Emperor's peace of mind.

Popai and his followers easily overcame the opposition of the local Chinese officials and their soldiers. They then

exacted a summary revenge on those who had insulted them. After this open defiance of Wanleh's authority, they established their head-quarters at the important and favourably situated town of Ninghia, the capital of a prefecture, and one of the chief cities in Western China at this period. Nor did Popai's success stop with these achievements, for he captured, one after another, all the strong places on the upper course of the Hoangho. This bad news carried dismay to the Chinese Court, which at once ordered the despatch of a large force to Shensi to attack these audacious rebels. Before it reached the scene of action many reverses had been sustained and much suffering had been inflicted on the people. On the arrival of the Chinese troops, however, Popai no longer felt able to keep the open field. He shut himself up in Ninghia, resolved to hold the place to the last.

The Chinese concentrated as much determination upon the capture of Ninghia as Popai did upon its defence. Round its walls were soon collected all the available forces of the Emperor in the North-West; but Popai did not lose heart at the sight of the superior numbers of his foe, although he could find no prospect of succour from without. The siege was prosecuted with both vigour and audacity. Several assaults were delivered, and at one time the Chinese had gained a footing on the rampart. But the besieged showed equal courage, and these desperate attempts to carry the place by storm were all repulsed with great slaughter. The Chinese troops continued to blockade it, and their commander, Li Jusong, foiled in his endeavour to capture the place by the sword, turned his hopes and energies in the direction of engineering science for the accomplishment of his purpose. In this design he fared better, for by means of a trench or dyke he diverted the waters of the Hoangho against the wall of the town. All the efforts of Popai and his lieutenants to prevent the completion of this work were baffled, and the waters were rolled against the fortifications. The Chinese thereupon promptly delivered their attack, and overcame all resistance. Popai threw himself into the flames of his residence; but his body was rescued from the fire, and a soldier cut off the head and took it to Li Jusong. This siege had

entailed the loss of many brave lives to the Emperor, but when it closed it left the insurgents completely crushed. The rebellion, which had assumed such formidable proportions under the leading of Popai, thus happily terminated.

This episode in the fortunes of government had hardly closed when a more interesting and a more important complication distracted the attention of the Emperor and his advisers to the opposite quarter of the state. Beyond the sea the Japanese had reached a point of some material prosperity and considerable national greatness; and their growing activity had found a relief in adventures against the Chinese mainland, which have already been mentioned. Wanleh had not been long upon the throne when the career commenced of probably the greatest ruler and conqueror whom Japan has known. He appeared at a moment when the Japanese were in the fit mood to turn a sympathetic ear to any proposal of adventure against either China or any of its dependencies; and his fame is principally associated with the exploits which he performed when he identified himself with this great national aspiration.

Fashiba owed little to fortune. From the condition of slave to an individual of no high rank he raised himself by his own assiduity and resolution to be the despotic ruler of a brave and intelligent people. The story goes that he first attracted the attention of a Japanese daimio, whom the Chinese named Sinchang, by his neglect to pay the obeisance due to his rank. The daimio was on the point of inflicting summary punishment for the slight offered to his person, when Fashiba pleaded his case with so much eloquence that the daimio's attention was soon obtained and his favour won. Fashiba then entered his service, and showed such excellent zeal and discretion in advancing his interests that in a short time he made his chief the most powerful among the lords of Japan. One success led to another, and Fashiba did not rest content until Sinchang had become, by his aid, the virtual sovereign of the country. It was not until after the death of this master and benefactor that Fashiba came forward in person as the arbiter of the nation's destiny; and then, whether instigated by a desire to divert public attention from

his own doings in the excitement of a foreign war, or impelled by his natural ambition, he resolved to prosecute an enterprise which would have the effect of extending both the influence and the power of his country, still young as an independent kingdom among the states of Eastern Asia.

It was in the year 1592 that Fashiba availed himself of the disorder prevailing in Corea from the weakness and incapacity of its king, Lipan, to begin his schemes of foreign conquest by seizing the important harbour of Fushan, which was the most conveniently situated landing-place for troops coming from the Japanese archipelago. Fushan offered no resistance, and the hold which the Japanese then obtained on it has never since been completely relaxed. Having thus secured a gateway into this kingdom, Fashiba poured troops through it with the object of overrunning the country, and of adding it to his dominions. The Japanese continued their advance opposed, but not retarded, by the rude forces of the Korean king, and the capital itself surrendered without a blow. The Japanese are said to have behaved with great brutality; all who attempted opposition were put to the sword, and the ancient burial-place of the Korean kings was desecrated. Lipan fled before the invaders to China, where he implored the assistance of the Ming Emperor to drive out this fierce people, who might fairly be regarded as a common foe.

There was no hesitation at the Chinese Court in arriving at the decision that this unprovoked act of aggression on the part of the Japanese must be resisted at all costs. It acquired double force from the remembrance of unpunished descents on the Chinese mainland, and it needed only common sense to perceive that the presence of a numerous and fairly disciplined army in Corea constituted a standing peril of the most serious character to the peace of mind and security of the Emperor at Peking. An army was, therefore, at once assembled in compliance with the request of Lipan, and sent through Leaoutung to encounter the Japanese.

Flushed with its easy success, the Japanese army marched rapidly northwards, and, undeterred by the report that the Chinese Emperor had resolved to support the cause of Lipan

with all his power, it reached the town of Pingyang, which opened its gates without any attempt on the part of its garrison to stand a siege. By this time the first detachments of the Chinese army had entered Corea, and were marching towards Pingyang from the north. The Japanese went out to meet them, and a general action soon commenced. In this encounter the Japanese were victorious, but it does not appear that the loss of the Chinese was more than nominal. The latter attributed the reverse to the impetuosity of one of their commanders, who crossed a river in his front without support. The Japanese at once fell upon his brigade when it was separated from the main body, and they declared that they almost exterminated it.

This victory only served to show more clearly the serious character of this Japanese invasion, and to nerve the Pekin Government to make greater sacrifices. A lull ensued in the campaign; for, while the Chinese were hurrying up more troops, the Japanese, either from the deficiency of supplies, or in the hope of obtaining reinforcements from Fushan, retreated for a short distance. For one moment the peace party at Pekin, which was led by Chesin, the President of the Tribunal for War, obtained the upper hand, and the despatch of the large reinforcements demanded by the general commanding in Corea, and required by the occasion, was deferred. An attempt to carry on secret negotiations, and to arrange the terms of an amicable settlement of the quarrel by means of an emissary who had volunteered for the work, failed to attain its object, or only had the effect of revealing the exorbitant nature of the Japanese pretensions.

Then the despatch of fresh troops was no longer delayed, and the army which had distinguished itself at the siege of Ninghia, and against the rebel Popai, was ordered to march against the Japanese. The charge of the war was entrusted to Li Jusong, the same general who had pacified the North-West; and Wanleh's commander, advancing by way of Kaichow, crossed the Yaloo river, which the Japanese had demanded as a frontier. The Japanese army was commanded by a general named Hingchang, under the immediate orders of the King Fashiba in person. Hitherto the Japanese

had always been prompt to act on the offensive ; but now, in face of a force so superior to their own, they felt compelled to stand on their defence. Li Jusong was not the man to waste time in unnecessary delays when the task entrusted to him was one of such vital importance, and immediately after his arrival he began his attack on Pingyang. The Japanese fought well, and repulsed the first onset of their opponents. By a feint, however, the Chinese commander attracted the attention of the defenders of Pingyang to one portion of the wall, while he delivered his main attack on the opposite quarter. The Japanese continued to make a brave defence, but availed themselves of the coming on of night to evacuate the town, and to withdraw across the Datong river. The Chinese pursued them for a short distance, but the Japanese made good their retreat without serious loss.

The remainder of this campaign was occupied in desultory fighting, the result of which was generally favourable to the Chinese. In one skirmish, however, the successes of the war were nearly all lost by the narrow escape of Li Jusong from capture. He only succeeded in extricating himself from his perilous position by the prodigies of valour performed by himself and his chosen body-guard. Shortly after this affair the Chinese army was withdrawn from the neighbourhood of the capital to which it had advanced, and took up its quarters at Kaiching, where it awaited the arrival of further reinforcements and the abatement of the floods, which had rendered the low-lying country impassable for troops.

The following campaign commenced with a brilliant achievement, of which all the credit was due to Li Jusong. The Japanese had collected vast stores of grain and other necessities in a small town near the capital, and Li Jusong succeeded in surprising the place, and in burning all the stores on which the Japanese commanders mainly depended for the support of their troops. This great disaster necessitated their withdrawal from Hangchang or Seoul, which the Chinese immediately occupied ; but the Japanese still showed a bold front, and Li Jusong did not consider it prudent to attack them. They continued their retreat unmolested to

the harbour of Fushan, where they were in direct communication with their fleet and their own country.

Both sides were now tired of the war which had brought no practical benefit to either, and which had entailed an immense amount of loss and suffering on both. The Japanese first gave signs of a desire for peace by releasing the Korean magnates who were prisoners in their hands ; and Chesin, the Chinese President of War, at once despatched an order from Peking for the suspension of hostilities. Alone among the members of the Imperial Council, Chesin was in favour of recognizing Fashiba as King of Japan, but his influence was so great that he carried his point. As soon as this important matter was settled in favour of Fashiba's pretensions, the negotiations progressed at a rapid pace. Gifts were exchanged. A Japanese envoy was honourably received at Peking, and another Chinese official visited the Japanese camp. Fashiba expressed himself perfectly satisfied with the concessions of the Chinese, and returned the courtesy of their recognition of his sovereignty by the despatch of costly presents, which the recipients accepted out of vanity, or from deep motives of policy, as a form of tribute. But although the main current of these negotiations flowed on satisfactorily enough, the actual relations of the two armies and their commanders in Corea were far from being equally satisfactory ; and they were further complicated by the wiles of the intriguer, Chin Weiking, who had again been entrusted with the task of personally conducting the progress of the negotiations.

All might yet have ended satisfactorily, for the self-seeking aims of Chin Weiking were beginning to be realized at Peking, when an unfortunate step on the part of the Korean king undid everything that had been accomplished, and reopened the whole question. The envoy whom he sent as a messenger of peace to felicitate Fashiba on the assumption of the royal title of Tycoon of Japan, was discovered to be an official of very inferior rank, and Fashiba showed no hesitation in resenting this act as a personal affront, and as a slight cast upon his dignity. In 1597 he ordered a fresh fleet of two hundred sail to proceed to sea, and made other open preparations for the renewal of his enterprise

against Corea. These measures arrested the progress of the negotiations, and roused the indignation of the Chinese cabinet. Both Chesin and Chin Weiking were disgraced and placed in confinement; and preparations were made for the prosecution of the war on an extensive scale.

Li Jusong was not, however, entrusted with the command, and, although a very large army was concentrated on the Yaloo river, nothing was effected. The Chinese and Japanese remained facing each other without being able to gain any advantage or willing to risk the consequences of a reverse. But if the balance of superiority remained doubtful on land, there was no uncertainty at sea; there the Japanese superiority was incontestable, and their navy swept the China seas and plundered the coasts of Fuhkien and Chekiang with impunity. The whole of the year 1597 was passed in desultory fighting, but the differences and jealousies of the Chinese commanders prevented their deriving any advantage from their greater numbers. Indeed, they suffered a distinct reverse at the siege of Weichan, a small town on the coast; but this untoward result was due to the sudden appearance of the redoubtable Japanese fleet. Although reinforcements were repeatedly sent from China, the incapacity of the commanders was so great that the Japanese were able to keep the field, and to all appearance possessed the advantage over the Chinese. The end of the struggle, which had continued during the winter of 1597-8, was apparently as far off as ever when the news came of the sudden death of Fashiba. This put a summary end to the contest, as the Japanese troops* were immediately withdrawn. The Chinese army also evacuated the country, and, with the restoration of the native dynasty, the kingdom of Corea returned to its primitive existence, and sank again into a state of semi-darkness.

One further act alone remained to mark the termination of a war which, so far as practical results went, had been literally barren of achievement to all concerned in it; and

* The Japanese returned with an enormous quantity of booty, and, Mr. Mounsey ("Satsuma Rebellion," 1880, pp. 56, 57) says, with the ears of 10,000 Coreans. They also retained their hold upon Fushan.

the closing scene reflects no credit on the Chinese. The fortune of war had placed two Japanese officers, near relatives of the King Fashiba, in their power. They were sent with other prisoners to Peking, for their fate to be there decided. By some line of tortuous reasoning difficult to understand and impossible to approve, Wanleh's ministers decreed that Fashiba was a rebel, and that his kin must suffer death. With the murder of these unfortunate prisoners, the seven years' war in Corea closed. The motives of the Chinese in defending that state were alike prudent and honourable, and the commencement of the war promised them military success; but, as it continued, the incapacity of the commanders ruined all these favourable prospects. Its concluding stages were marked by lying bulletins of victories that were never won, and it was consummated with a disgraceful crime.

Misfortunes never come singly, and they descended rapidly on the devoted head of the unfortunate Wanleh, who was dearly paying for the faults of his predecessors. The revolt of Ninghia had been followed by the protracted war with Japan, and that contest had hardly concluded when a rising, destined to prove of a troublesome character, broke out among the tribes in the western mountains of Szchuen. A hereditary chieftain there, named Yang Inghong, had gathered a considerable military force together under his orders, and, knowing the embarrassment of the Imperial Government, thought the time was opportune for putting forward his claims to independence. He raised a number of troops, with which he harried the borders and captured several towns from the Chinese. Thirty or forty thousand men were reported to obey his orders, and the Government attached so much importance to the movement that several of the generals and most of the troops who had been employed in Corea were directed to cross China and march against this new enemy of the State. The rebels fought with great bravery, and the difficult nature of their country rendered the task of reducing them one of time. Thanks mainly to the courage and skill of Liuyen, the Imperial troops succeeded in forcing their way through the hills to

the fort where Yang had established his head-quarters. Terrified at the approach of the Chinese, Yang wished to surrender, but Liuyen refused to hold any communication with a rebel. With apparently no place to flee to, Yang resolved to commit suicide, but his son conceived it to be more honourable to be taken sword in hand. The execution of the latter, and the placing of a garrison in the captured hill fort, marked the close of this rebellion, which had been crushed with commendable promptitude. Its importance must not, however, be lightly judged because the victory was so easily attained. In estimating the significance of this and other similar insurrections, the effort necessary to restore order must be remembered. Here we see that a rising among a petty people in the South-West required the despatch of soldiers who had already borne the hardships of several campaigns in the North-East. The consequences of this inadequate military power became very perceptible when the Mings were assailed by a formidable foreign foe.

During these years of disturbance there had been a remarkable development in the intercourse between the Chinese and the nations of the West. The Portuguese had as early as the year 1560 obtained from the local mandarins the right to erect sheds for their goods at a place near the mouth of the Canton estuary, which became known as Macao. Some years later this place had attained so much importance, that between five and six hundred Portuguese merchants, it is stated on good authority, resorted thither annually for purposes of trade. This settlement continued to develop both in size and in the amount of its commerce, notwithstanding the precarious conditions under which it was held; and by the regular payment of their rent to the Government, as well as by a system of judicious bribing, the Portuguese long enjoyed the practical monopoly of the external trade of the great mart of Canton with the West.

About the same time that the Portuguese were thus establishing themselves on the mainland of China, the Spaniards had seized the Philippine* Islands, to which they gave the

* Manilla was declared the capital of this new possession by the Governor Legaspi in the year 1571.

name of their king. They were not long in possession of these fertile islands before they came into contact with the Chinese, who had been in the habit of resorting thither from Canton for purposes of trade from a time much anterior to the Spanish occupation. In the train of Canton merchants came Chinese settlers, and the prosperity of Manilla was due as much to the latter's thrift and capacity for labour of all kinds, as it was to the profits of the commercial dealings with the former. The number of the Chinese settlers increased with startling rapidity, and soon the Spanish officials and garrison began to see in these tillers of the soil, who so far outnumbered them,* a formidable foe and a possible source of peril. The southern imagination having once entertained the possibility of a rising on the part of the Chinese immigrants, did not suffer the fear to slumber, and magnified into an immediate danger what was only a conjectural contingency. The arrival of three mandarins in the year 1602, with some indefinite mission from the Emperor, seemed to confirm these suspicions, and, after they had been as summarily dismissed as circumstances allowed, the Spaniards formed their plans for achieving another St. Bartholomew at the expense of the helpless and unoffending Chinese. In this design their fire-arms enabled them to succeed, and after a butchery which lasted several months it was reported that most of the twenty thousand unarmed Chinese had been slaughtered. The Spaniards attributed the success of this first massacre of Manilla to the presence of their national saint, St. Francis ; but, while they congratulated themselves on their triumph, they had nearly ruined their colony, which owed all its prosperity to Chinese labour.

The Chinese Government was then, as now, indifferent to the fate of those of its subjects who went away to foreign states, and the Spanish explanations were accepted without any difficulty being raised, or even without many inconvenient questions being asked. Fresh Chinese colonists again flocked to those pleasant islands undeterred by the fate of their countrymen, and their numbers soon increased to a greater extent than before. The Spaniards had recourse to

* In 1602 there were 20,000 Chinese and only 800 Spaniards.

the same violent remedy as on the former occasion ; but this event belongs to a later period. The successive massacres of Manilla show, however, that the same principles of government which were carried out by the Spaniards in America against the Aztecs of Mexico and the Incas of Peru were enforced in the Philippines. In estimating the policy of the Chinese towards Europeans, much of their national dislike must be attributed to the impression produced by these massacres, and all other countries have had to suffer in this matter from the brutal and cowardly cruelty of the representatives of Spain * in the Chinese seas.

While these events were in progress for the establishment of commercial relations, individuals, urged by a laudable zeal to spread the truths of Christianity, had succeeded in gaining admission into China, where they were received with more consideration than would have been shown in Europe to any who came to teach the doctrines of Sakya Muni, or to explain the ethics of Confucius. The advent of these foreigners attracted little notice, and they appear to have been regarded with the complacent satisfaction which a great people always finds in the arrival of strangers from remote countries, whose very presence is an implied compliment to their own fame. Of these missionaries, charged by the Pope to convert the heathen in China, the first to arrive in the year 1581 was Michel Roger, a member of the Order of Jesuits. He was followed, two years later, by Ricci, who gained a ready way to the Emperor's favour by the presents of a repeating watch and a clock. Of Matthew Ricci it may be said that he possessed all the qualities necessary to convey a favourable impression both of his religion and his race ; and to his tact

* The Dutch did not appear on the scene until some years later. In 1624 they arrived off Macao, but the Portuguese drove them away. They then established themselves on the west coast of Formosa, where at a later period more will be heard of their doings. The French did not arrive till a much later period (reign of Kanghi), except as missionaries. In 1596 Elizabeth wrote a letter to the Emperor, but it did not reach its destination. Other attempts were made, but English intercourse did not fairly begin until 1634, when Captain Weddell's voyage, which was chiefly remarkable for the discovery of the mouth of the Canton river, and for the valour shown by our sailors and the ability evinced by the commander.

during a residence of twenty-eight years must be attributed the solid footing which the French missionaries obtained at Peking, and which they retained, with rare intervals, for nearly two centuries. Others followed in their footsteps, and of these the most notable were Adam Schaal and Verbiest.

The Chinese authorities seem to have regarded with a tolerant and half-amused curiosity these attempts to convert them ; but, although two high officials at least were baptized, and extended their protection to the foreign priests, very little progress could be reported in the work they had undertaken. On the other hand, the missionaries were, in a worldly sense, most useful. They reformed—on the recommendation of a Chinese official Li Chitsao, or Peter, President of the Tribunal of Rites at Nankin—the Chinese calendar, and corrected several astronomical errors. The Imperial Observatory flourished under their direction, and more correct maps of the provinces were drawn under their supervision. In short, they placed at the disposal of the Peking ministers their superior information, and, in return for the practical benefits they were able to confer, they received the rights of residency and fair treatment. But the Chinese* remained cold in any advances towards Christianity.

Wanleh's difficulties had proved unceasing since the first days of his accession to power. Even the Miaotze, those savage and unconquered hillmen of Kweichow, would not spare the anxieties of this unfortunate prince. As early as the year 1586 they had given the authorities much trouble, and obliged them to have recourse to extreme measures. More than thirty years later, in 1617, they broke out afresh, when the disturbances on the northern frontier were embarrassing the Government, and under a leader named Mongchang they committed numerous depredations in the plains. This quarrel was apparently arranged, but the Emperor's representative accepted the amicable expressions of the mountaineers, and did not push the matters with them to extremities.

These petty risings were of very small moment in com-

* As M. Huc, himself an ardent missionary, has put it—"A melancholy trait is it in the character of this people, that Christian truth does but glide over its surface !"

parison with the great struggle which was going on in the North with the Manchu Tartars, and which was to give a fresh turn to the destinies of China. We have to consider this important contest in detail; but although it began while Wanleh was still reigning, the other final incidents of his reign may be here briefly summed up.

One of the principal sources of anxiety to Wanleh's ministers was that, having no legitimate children, he had postponed the selection and proclamation of an heir. In 1590 he had been entreated to recognize one of his illegitimate sons as his heir, but his inclinations did not point in that direction. He accordingly rejected the proposition. Eleven years later the popular feeling on this subject had become so strong that Wanleh did not feel able any longer to run counter to it, more especially as there was then no hope of the Empress having a son. In 1601, therefore, Wanleh proclaimed Chu Changlo, the eldest of his children, Heir-Apparent, and on the second, whom he secretly favoured, he conferred the title of Prince Fou Wang. This act of decision did not, however, bring the Emperor that domestic peace for which he may have hoped.

The Prince Fou Wang, whose ambition had been raised by his father's preference for him, did not conceal the dissatisfaction with which he regarded an arrangement that consigned him to a place of secondary importance. His party was composed of men who felt little scruple as to the means they employed to compass their ends so long as they were attained; and the Prince Fou Wang himself appears to have been an accomplished intriguer. He doubled the guards attached to his person, and he spread abroad calumnies about his brother. At last he caused a proclamation to be issued affirming that the Emperor had only chosen Chu Changlo as his heir in consequence of the importunities of the ministers. This announcement excited great agitation, and the ministers insisted on its authors being discovered and punished. Accordingly, Wanleh published an edict to the effect that they should be dealt with according to their deserts, and without regard to either their quality or rank. Several arrests were made, and one courtier, although his innocence

was clearly established, was executed ; but the real culprits escaped. In 1615 an accident revealed the truth, and the ambitious schemes of Fou Wang and his mother, the Queen Chingchi, were laid bare. Even Wanleh's partiality could not overlook so flagrant a wrong, and all the guilty would then have been punished with death but for the intervention of Prince Chu Changlo. To the man whom above any one else they had desired to injure, they owed their lives and the condonation of their crimes.

Wanleh continued to reign until the year 1620, when he died as much from the consequences of mental distress as from any bodily ailment. The perils which had beset him from the first days of his accession to the throne had culminated in the invasion of the Manchu Tartars, and when he died he left his realm exposed to the assaults of its northern foe. The standards of the enemy, to use the words of the historian of the dynasty, were already metaphorically, if not actually, at the gates of his capital. Several emperors of the Ming family, indeed, ascended the Dragon Throne before the final overthrow of the reigning house was completed, but with Wanleh's death a formal invitation to the Manchus to invade the country as conquerors was issued.

Were there no other event to mark out the reign of Wanleh as a distinct epoch in history, the first introduction of Europeans into the country in a character independent of the Government would suffice. Then began that contact with the nations of the West which has resulted in the present vast commercial intercourse of China with the foreigner, and which has not, as yet, proved destructive to either the institutions or the power of this Empire. That intercourse has now been freed from many of the restrictions which hindered its development, and will yet attain proportions far in excess of those that it has reached. Its origin has been recorded, and the description of its growth will afford one of the most difficult problems in connection with the modern history of the country. We have again to turn our attention to the consideration of that Tartar invasion which was to be marked by another transfer of the ruling power, and which was followed by the accession to the throne of the family that now guides the destinies of the Chinese Empire.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE MANCHUS.

WHEN the Mongols overthrew, in the thirteenth century, the Kin dynasty in Northern China, many of the fugitives retired northwards into the solitudes beyond Leaoutung, where they found themselves secure from pursuit. With the loss of imperial title and position, they lost also the name which their great conqueror Akouta had given them, and resumed the earlier one of Niuche, by which Chinese writers had been in the habit of designating them. The Niuche occupied most of the country stretching from the Chinese province of Leaoutung to the Amour on the north, and their settlements dotted the banks of the Songari and the Usuri. The Niuche were divided into innumerable small clans, none of which possessed either great numbers or much authority; and their management presented to the Chinese officials few of the difficulties that were of such frequent occurrence in their dealings with the Mongols or any other of the Central Asian tribes. Of these small clans, only that which was ruled by the ancestors of the Manchu (the clear) family claims our consideration; but upon its success the other clans assimilated themselves with it, and became merged in the military confederacy headed by Noorhachu.

The clan which was destined to rise to so lofty a pinnacle of power originally occupied a small district on the Soodsu stream, situated some thirty miles east of Moukden. The principal camp or stockade—for, after all, it was little more—of this family was in the valley of Hootooala, which lies below the Long White Mountains and between the

Soodsu and Jiaho streams. The scene has been praised for its rugged beauty; and from the description of this remote valley, protected on three sides by water, and on the fourth by the heights of a lofty range, we can imagine that it was well adapted to be the cradle of a race of conquerors. In many respects it corresponded with the original home of the Mongols on the upper course of the Amour, but its two radical differences were that it was on a much smaller scale, and that it was close to the Chinese frontier. The valley of Hootooala was as much the object of the veneration and affection of the Manchus as that of the Onon had been of the Mongols.

In this particular district, which was surrounded by numerous others of similar character, there appeared as chief, about the middle of the fourteenth century, when Hongwou was busily engaged in his war with the Yuens, a man whose name has been handed down to us as Aisin Gioro. Aisin Gioro was to the Manchus all that Budantsar had been to the Mongols. He is said to have owed his birth to a singular and miraculous intervention of Providence. A magpie had dropped a red fruit into the lap of a maiden of the Niuche, and she having eaten of it conceived a son, who became Aisin Gioro. Calumnious writers have affirmed that this mythical hero was nothing more than a runaway Mongol, but at all events there is no question that he ruled as lord in the small and secluded valley of Hootooala. Five generations in descent from him came the old chief Huen, or, as his friends more boastfully called him, the Emperor Chintsu, and during Wanleh's life he ruled over the same territory, of which the dimensions may be inferred from the fact that its length did not exceed twelve miles. This state preserved amicable relations with the Chinese, who did not exact any tribute from it, and who allowed its inhabitants full and free commercial intercourse during the time of the fair or market held at Neuchang.

In the year 1559 an heir was born to the son of this chief Huen, whose name was destined to rise high on the list of great conquerors as Noorhachu. Great anticipations were formed as to the glorious future in store for this boy. His

personal appearance was remarkable, his strength enormous, and his determination of character attracted attention from an early age. When he was nineteen, his step-mother gave him a small sum of money and sent him out into the world to gain his fortune, but her sympathy having been won over by his exceptional talent, she speedily repented of her harshness. She wished him to return to her house, or at the least to accept further assistance ; but he resolutely refused to avail himself in any way of her aid.

Feuds existed among these Manchu clans, and contests between them were far from infrequent. But it was not until the close of the sixteenth century that this inter-tribal strife attracted the attention of the Chinese, and then apparently it was as much in consequence of the importunity of one of the combatants as from any interest taken in this trivial matter. About this period, too, the ambition to unite the scattered clans and to weld the Manchus, or more properly the Niuche, into a single confederacy began to take form in the minds of several of these petty chieftains ; and we may feel sure from his subsequent acts that such schemes were not foreign to the mind of the young Noorhachu. Neither his youth nor his opportunities allowed him to take the lead in this enterprise, and, indeed, his first appearance on the scene of public affairs was as the opponent of the man who took the initiative in the national cause.

In 1583, a chief named Nikan Wailan, or Haida, who ruled over a small district south of Hootooala, induced the Chinese commander in Leaoutung to assist him in an attack upon one of his neighbours. The Chinese appear to have also had some grievance against the victim of this onslaught, and lent a small body of troops with the greater readiness for the purpose of his chastisement. The main object of their undertaking having been thus successfully performed, the Chinese soldiers would have been withdrawn, but that Nikan succeeded in persuading them to remain to assist him against another of his neighbours, whose overthrow he also meditated. Now it happened that this neighbouring chief had married the cousin of Noorhachu, and when the news of the approaching army of invasion reached Hootooala, the old chief Huen

and his son and heir, the father of Noorhachu, at once set off with such force as they could assemble to succour their kinsman the chief of Goolo. At first they showed a wish to merely convey their relative to a place of safety until the cloud on the affairs of Goolo had blown over ; but the chief would not allow the removal of his wife, probably for fear that he would then lose the support of Huen and his companions. They all, therefore, remained together to defend the place against Nikan and the Chinese.

The latter did not dare attack the town when they found it prepared for a resolute and protracted defence, but they had recourse to an act of treachery to gain their end. Simulating a desire for a pacific arrangement, they enticed a large number of the garrison outside the walls, when they fell upon and massacred them all. Among the slain were Huen and his son. Nikan had thus far accomplished much towards the attainment of his object, and he flattered himself that he held ultimate success within his grasp. The brutal and cowardly murder of both his grandfather and father roused the indignation of Noorhachu to the highest point, and he swore to exact a bitter revenge for it from Nikan and also from the Chinese. Vengeance became the principal object of his life, and to the murder of his kinsmen must be attributed the origin of that danger which eventually cost Wanleh's successors their throne.

Nikan remained in possession of his first conquest, but Noorhachu was known to be making strenuous preparations to march against him in order to dispute the prize he had acquired by the aid of the Chinese. Noorhachu had already assumed the rights of the chiefship in his valley, and at his request the Chinese had restored the bodies of his father and grandfather for burial. Some compensation had also been allowed him by the Leaoutung officials, who disclaimed the main responsibility for the slaughter of his parents ; but Nikan still flourished on his crime, and the prominence of his position kept him in view as the mark of his rival's vengeance. Noorhachu's principal object now became to get Nikan into his power, either by force or by negotiation with the Chinese. He signally failed in his latter plan, and the Chinese

authorities, who pinned their faith to the designing Nikan, not only ignored his requests, but created Nikan chief of all the Niuche districts. By this step Noorhachu was virtually stripped of his authority, and became one of the vassals of his hated rival. The measure of the Chinese was extreme, but its very boldness might have ensured success, had they provided the necessary force to secure its execution. Li Chingliang, the Governor of Leaoutung, who made this creation of a new potentate, could at first congratulate himself on the success of his experiment, for on the Imperial proclamation becoming known among the Niuche many of Noorhachu's own people left him and attached themselves to the side of Nikan. Noorhachu himself still stood haughtily aloof, and fixed in his resolve to slay his father's murderer.

The Chinese did not support their nominee with any degree of vigour, and Noorhachu continued to carry on his plans for securing the person of Nikan. So persistently did Noorhachu pursue him that Nikan did not feel safe from his attack even in the interior of his stockaded camp at Toolun. Several times he made his escape only by a precipitate retreat into Leaoutung, and the Chinese at last grew tired of supporting a man who was apparently unable to defend himself. In 1586, therefore, they handed him over to Noorhachu, who at once killed him. The success which thus marked his plans, and which attended his performance of a sacred duty, raised Noorhachu's reputation to a high point among his countrymen; while, on the other hand, the fluctuating policy of the Chinese tended to diminish theirs and to weaken their authority. Noorhachu was still a young man when he thus accomplished the first object of his life. There yet remained for him to attain the purpose for which Nikan had striven—the supremacy over a Niuche confederacy.

His first care was to establish his place of residence at a spot well situated in the plain where water was abundant, and, having selected the site of his capital, he surrounded it with a triple wall. He also drew up a code of regulations adapted by their simplicity to the requirements and intelligence of his subjects; and he devoted all his leisure to the disciplining of

his small army. With the Chinese he renewed the amicable arrangements that had long been in force, and accepted at their hands the titles and money gifts which the Leaoutung officials were willing, and indeed eager, to bestow upon him. While he thus secured the neutrality of the Imperial governors, he resolutely pursued his schemes for uniting the clans of the southern Niuche under his sway. In this he encountered less difficulty than might have been thought possible, but his triumph over Nikan had produced a far greater effect than the real extent of that victory justified. In 1591 he began the second portion of his career by the annexation of the Yalookiang district, which, suddenly attacked, offered little or no resistance to his arms.

The success which attended this act of spoliation roused the apprehension of all Noorhachu's neighbours. Up to this they had passed their time in rivalries which led to petty wars, barren of result; but Noorhachu's well-prepared and vigorous measures were evidently directed towards the attainment of some higher object than the gratification of a feud. These measures constituted, therefore, a common danger to all the other chiefs. When there went forth a voice among the common folk of Manchuria that Noorhachu was a wise and valiant ruler who gave his followers a share in the benefits of his own elevation, there also passed through the courts or camps of the other chiefs of the Niuche the fear that this energetic chief, with his new-fangled ideas, aimed at their annihilation. What had been a vague apprehension or a mere suspicion before the seizure of Yalookiang became a settled fear and a complete conviction after that event.

Seven of the neighbouring princes combined and declared war upon Noorhachu. Thirty thousand Niuche and Mongols invaded his territory, and threatened to upset all the young chief's plans and calculations by his conclusive overthrow. Noorhachu was not himself appalled at the greatness of the approaching storm, but his followers and people had less faith in their leader's capability to repel the invaders. In this crisis of his fortunes, the care which he had bestowed on his fighting force stood him in good stead, for in each man who followed his banner he possessed a faithful and well-trained

soldier. The odds against him were apparently irresistible, for when he drew up his forces at the foot of Goolo hill he had but four thousand men with which to oppose the onset of thirty. Their superior discipline and the resolution of their commander supplied to some degree this deficiency of numbers; but the confederated princes had every reason to feel elate. The battle began with a furious charge against the front of Noorhachu's line. Although Yeho and the principal of the Mongol captains headed it, the charge miscarried. Yeho fell from his horse and was slain, while the Mongol captain, having experienced a similar mishap, remounted his horse and galloped away. Noorhachu's opportunity had come, and he delivered home his attack. The large force of the confederates broke into disorder, and in the pursuit 4000 of them were slain. Several chiefs were taken prisoners, and among the spoil several thousand horses and plaited suits of armour were counted, which came as an opportune help to Noorhachu in his schemes of army organization.

The victory of Goolo consolidated the position which Noorhachu had gained in the valley of Hootooala, and in 1599 he followed it up by the conquest and annexation of Hada, an extensive and fertile district on the northern border. These signal successes excited the alarm of the Chinese who were beginning to protest against the rapid progress of Noorhachu's power. Noorhachu took this grumbling in ill part, and discontinued paying a tribute which he had engaged a few years before to send to the Leaoutung governor. The adjoining state of Hwifa shared the fate of Hada in 1607, and the following years were employed in deciding the destinies of the Woola district which skirted the banks of the Songari. The chief of this territory, Boojantai, made a resolute defence, but his forces were no match for the cotton-mailed warriors of Noorhachu. Several minor engagements were fought before the decisive action came off, and then Boojantai, who had incurred the extreme displeasure of Noorhachu for an insult offered to his daughter, fled away and disappeared, never more to be heard of, in the mists of the northern region. These campaigns were but preliminary to the main attack on

Yeho, the most powerful of the late confederates ; and in 1613 Noorhachu began his operations against this territory, whose ruler had foolishly remained inactive while he was collecting in his hands the power to crush him.

His success on this, the first, occasion did not reach his expectations, for the people of Yeho retired into their towns, and, assisted by the Chinese with money and arms, they were able to hold out until Noorhachu's followers, disappointed at the slow progress made against their foe, were withdrawn. In two other districts, those of Hoorha and Doonghai, he fared better, for both either submitted to or recognized his authority. These successes resulted in the firm establishment of Noorhachu's power along the whole of the northern frontier of Leaoutung. The Chinese thus saw that central authority set up among the Niuche which they had always affected to desire, but it had been no part of their plan that the man to wield it should be one who owed nothing to their support, and who it was shrewdly suspected nursed a latent hostility towards themselves. The dispensation of authority, which seemed natural enough to the Chinese when vested in the person of a puppet ruler like Nikan, assumed quite a different aspect when exercised by the vigorous chief Noorhachu.

After the repulse of his first attack on Yeho, Noorhachu devoted more attention even than before to the improvement of his army. Not content with dividing his forces into companies, several of which were composed of picked men, he also collected engines of war, which showed that he meditated some more extensive and difficult enterprise than any he had yet undertaken. And such indeed was the case. For reasons which the geographical position of the states will not sufficiently explain, he came to the decision that he could not conquer Yeho until he had first overthrown the Chinese authority in Leaoutung. It was in 1617 that he came to this important resolution, and when his military arrangements had been completed he drew up a formal indictment against the Chinese Government. His army, which had originally consisted of no more than one hundred men, now mustered over forty thousand strong, and these troops had been drilled under his own eye, and were individually known to him. The

Manchu archer and man-at-arms were both famed for their skill and intrepidity ; and their equipment left nothing to be desired. The Manchu bow was a formidable weapon, and the cotton-plated mail of the horseman was proof to the shaft or the spear. Noorhachu's indictment of the Chinese took the form of a list of grievances, termed "the Seven Hates," against their border lieutenants, but the peculiarity of the proceeding was in the accompanying ceremony. Instead of forwarding this document to the Chinese Court, he burnt it in presence of his army, so that Heaven might judge the justice of the cause between himself and his enemy.

Thus were the slight power, insignificant resources, and scanty population of the Manchu districts raised to so high and vigorous a point by the thrift and ability of Noorhachu that the invasion of the great empire of China became a possibility. Notwithstanding the skill shown in husbanding and developing their strength, they could not have possessed any conceivable chance of victory had the Mings shown the smallest capacity ; for the Manchus, unlike the Mongols, were very few in numbers, and their recruiting-ground was extremely limited. While this war-cloud was gathering portent on his northern frontier, the Ming Emperor Wanleh was congratulating himself at paltry successes over rebel hillmen in the remote south ; and he remained indifferent to the pressing danger at his very door. Noorhachu's invasion of Leaoutung awoke him from his delusion, while it also revealed the most formidable of the enemies who threatened the Ming dynasty with overthrow, and the Chinese people with the horrors of invasion.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WARS BETWEEN THE MINGS AND MANCHUS.

THE Manchus, under their great leader Noorhachu, crossed the frontier into Chinese territory in the year 1618, and they first advanced against the border town of Fooshun, where an annual fair used to be held for the Tartar tribes. This open invasion of the Empire took the local officials by surprise, and the slight preparations they had made to resist such raids as it was alone thought possible that the Manchus might organize appeared insignificant in face of Noorhachu's well-appointed army. The governor was slain while attempting to defend Fooshun, and the town surrendered to the Manchus. After this encounter, Noorhachu sent to Peking, through the governor of Leaoutung, a list of his grievances, and it was said that he even promised to lay down his arms on his just demands being satisfied. The Peking Government did not appreciate the situation, and turned a deaf ear to the protests and minatory language of a petty Tartar chieftain, of whose name even the Court chroniclers pretended to be ignorant. Far from showing the least disposition to comply with his terms, the Chinese despatched an army to retake Fooshun and to expel the invader. Its movements were marked by little prudence, and the over-confidence and want of skill of the commanders were justly punished by their complete overthrow on the field of battle. The charge of the Manchus proved irresistible, and carried everything before it.

Noorhachu passed a portion of the summer in inaction, to see whether the Celestial Government would make any move towards coming to a pacific arrangement with him, and while

he remained in his quarters the report of his first successes over the Chinese brought him many fresh recruits to swell the numbers of his already elated soldiery. But when the autumn came without any sign of concession from Peking, Noorhachu broke up his camp and resumed his advance into China. This time he marched in an opposite direction from that which he had taken on the first occasion, and laid siege to Tsingho, where some preparations had been made for a siege. The place was in fact resolutely defended, and the Manchu assaults were several times repulsed. But a traitor opened one of the gates to the foe, and the Manchus thus succeeded in capturing the town when they seemed on the point of failure. More than 6000 of the garrison and 10,000 of the townspeople fell by the edge of the sword. Other successes should have followed from this signal victory, but the clamour of his soldiers, who were anxious concerning the security of their homes, because of the presence in their rear of the hostile state of Yeho, obliged Noorhachu to return to Hingking for the purpose of dealing with this neighbour.

The invasion of Leaoutung had, therefore, little more than commenced when Noorhachu found himself compelled to turn aside from it, and to resume his operations against the last of the independent Niuche districts. The campaign against Yeho had only entered upon its first stage, when tidings reached Noorhachu that a large Chinese force threatened his own capital, and he had to hastily retrace his steps for its defence. The successes of the Tartars at Fooshun and Tsingho had at last roused the lieutenants of Wanleh to some idea of the formidable character of the chief with whom they had to deal, and of the military force which he had created. When they heard, therefore, that Yeho was about to feel the full weight of the Manchu attack, they resolved to hasten to its assistance, and to assail Noorhachu before he had crushed his last opponent among his own race.

Yangkao, the viceroy of Leaoutung, realized the full significance of the situation at a glance, and placed in the field an army of more than 100,000 men according to the lowest computation, but it was unfortunate that he assumed the command in person, for his incapacity in the art of war

was notorious. His very first step showed that he had not learned one of the simplest traditions of military science both in his own and other countries, to the effect that victory generally goes with the big battalions; for he at once nullified the advantage he possessed from superiority of numbers by dividing his army into four divisions without any secure means of communication between them. The advance of the Chinese naturally produced a great panic among the Manchus and their allies; but Noorhachu's confidence, if it was ever shaken, returned as soon as he detected the fatal blunder of his opponent. The Manchu army consisted of about 60,000 trained soldiers, but it is doubtful if on the field of battle it would have proved a match for a well-equipped Chinese army of double its numerical strength. That point never arose, however, for practical decision, as Yangkao voluntarily surrendered his advantage by the distribution of his army in divisions, each of which was inferior in numbers as well as in other respects, to the Manchu force that could by rapid marching be brought against it.

Noorhachu proved his claims to be considered a great general by the skill with which he turned his central position to the most advantage. His tactics emulated those practised at epochs long after his by the two great European captains of modern times, Frederick the Great and Napoleon, who, in the crises of their careers, supplied the want of numbers by the rapid movement and concentration of their troops; and on the occasion we refer to the same strategy thoroughly disconcerted the torpid measures of the Pekin commanders. Yangkao had entrusted the command of the western and most important detachment to Tousong, an officer who craved to distinguish himself, and who set little value on his foe while he held a high opinion of his own abilities. His division was instructed to advance direct from Fooshun on Hingking, but the enterprising Noorhachu perceived that could he disperse it the flank and line of retreat of the other portions of the Chinese army would be exposed to his attack. Tousong moved by forced marches, but exact information of his approach reached Noorhachu's camp; and the Manchu advance to meet him was so timed as to make the meeting

on the banks of the national stream of the Hwunho. Tousong, anxious to secure for himself all the glory that would accrue to the man who gained the first victory over the Manchus, hastened to cross that stream without reconnoitring the further bank. The passage was not effected without difficulty, as the waters were swollen, and neither bridges nor boats were available. Yet, notwithstanding the inadequate means of regaining the western side in the event of a reverse, the Chinese commander recklessly continued his advance ; but he had not much farther to march, for the Manchu army was drawn up in battle array close to the Hwunho.

Tousong entrenched himself on Sarhoo Hill, while Noorhachu, whose disposable force comprised almost the whole of his army, made his final preparations for attack. Tousong, apparently ignorant of the impending storm, further weakened himself by detaching a small force from his main body to attack the neighbouring town of Jiefan. Here also the Manchus had been too quick in their movements and too well-informed for the Chinese, whose assault was repulsed with some loss. Noorhachu then no longer deferred his attack upon the position round Sarhoo Hill, and after some hours' desperate fighting he drove the Chinese in irretrievable confusion into the Hwunho, where most of those who had escaped from the arrows and swords of the Manchus met with a watery death. Tousong paid the penalty of his rashness with his life, and, instead of being the first to obtain fame by the overthrow of the Tartars, his defeat contributed more than any other achievement to spread their military fame.

Noorhachu then hastened to attack the other divisions in turn. That under the command of a general named Malin was the next to receive the brunt of his onset. At first Malin remained on the defensive in a position situated between two hills which he had fortified. On each of these heights he placed a strong detachment, and his main body was drawn up in the valley behind a triple tier of waggons. The position was chosen with judgment, and considerable art had been expended in rendering it more formidable. But

the Imperialists had not yet learnt the habit of standing on the defensive, and the sight of the enemy outside their entrenchments proved too irksome to be endured. Malin left his position and advanced to meet Noorhachu in the open. So vigorous was the charge of the Chinese general that for a moment the Manchus recoiled, and Noorhachu himself was in danger ; but the superior discipline of his soldiers restored the day. The Imperialists suffered a severe defeat, and Malin was able to rally only a very small portion of his troops at Kaiyuen after the combat had concluded. The cup of Chinese misfortune was now full to overflowing, but yet another battle was to be lost before the disasters of the year 1619 were to end for the unhappy Wanleh. The third Chinese division under Liuyen, the officer who had distinguished himself by the prompt punishment of the Miaotze, had obtained a few successes while Noorhachu had been overthrowing his colleagues in the west. The turn of Liuyen to be attacked at last arrived, and his defeat, despite his valour, was not less complete and crushing than those of his brother generals already described. The Manchus triumphed in this battle as much by means of a stratagem as by their own courage. They dressed a portion of their army in the clothes taken from the dead bodies of Tousong's soldiers, and Liuyen's troops admitted them into their ranks in the belief that they were friends. In this they were soon undeceived, and, attacked on all sides, Liuyen's followers fled in utter rout after the fall of their gallant commander.

Signal as were these victories, and great as was the effect they exercised on the destiny of the Manchus, Noorhachu did not waste much time in idle ceremonies at his capital. Within a month of these triumphs, which astonished even the Manchus, and which terrified the Chinese, Noorhachu again took the field. His first object of attack was the fortified town of Kaiyuen, whither Malin had retired with the relics of his force. Kaiyuen was carried by assault, and the Chinese had to mourn the loss of a large number of prisoners besides many officers, including their commander Malin himself, and soldiers slain in the fight. The Manchus then pressed on to fresh conquests, of which the last and

principal of this year's campaign was that of Yeho, the overthrow of which state had been one of the principal objects of Noorhachu's original policy. The annexation of Yeho to his dominions completed the reunion of the Niuche, who, since the downfall of the Kin monarchy, had only been a collection of disunited and scattered tribes. It also supplied him with a fresh means of increasing his army, which the Yeho clan augmented by the addition of at least 30,000 men. This extraordinary development in the power of the Manchus had been effected partly by their material progress under the instigation of Noorhachu, and partly by the collapse of the Chinese authority under a succession of military disasters unparalleled in its history in this quarter of the Empire. When Wanleh died in 1620, Noorhachu had firmly laid the foundation of the subsequent power of his race, and was already meditating the invasion of Leaoutung, if not the capture of Peking itself.

Yet almost the very last act of the Emperor Wanleh had been one calculated to undo much of the evil of previous years of mismanagement. The measure was nothing more striking than the appointment of a competent general to the command of the army garrisoning Leaoutung. Hiung Tingbi, who was now sent with all despatch to restore the sinking fortunes of the Empire, was gifted in a high degree with those qualities of patience and resolution which, if Yangkao and his lieutenants had possessed them, would have saved the realm, and checked Noorhachu's power in its growth. But even he could do little towards openly opposing the Manchus with the demoralized fugitives of the armies which they had routed. So great was the confusion throughout the north-east that Tingbi determined to devote all his attention to the defence of Leaouyang, the capital of the province, and for several months he left the Manchus to pursue undisturbed their marauding expeditions throughout the rest of Leaoutung. Tingbi succeeded at last in restoring some degree of order to affairs, and his vigilance and energy raised the confidence and discipline of the Chinese soldiers. When he had fully provided for the safety of Leaouyang, he proceeded to the other towns nearer the border, and set himself to work

to restore their fortifications and to place in them sufficient garrisons. In a very short time he succeeded in arraying along the frontier a force of 180,000 men, and in establishing a chain of fortified posts through which it would be difficult for any Manchu force to cut its way. In two years Tingbi had accomplished so much that the Chinese authority was again established throughout Leaoutung, and Noorhachu did not consider it prudent, so long as Tingbi remained in command, to attempt any fresh enterprise, although the greatness of his means in comparison with what they had been would have seemed to most men to justify a contempt for the Chinese power.

Wanleh had, in the meanwhile, been succeeded by his son Chu Changlo, who took the style of Kwangtsong. The new monarch during the brief period of his reign gave many proofs of the amiability and gentleness of his character, but it is doubtful if he possessed the resolution and sternness necessary to cope with the difficulties which he inherited. His death was caused by an attack of exhaustion from overwork, aggravated by the use of unsuitable medicines. The evidence is not clear whether we must assign his early death to the incapacity of his physician or to the machinations of his brother's mother. The suspicion of foul play was strong, but only slight proof in support of it could be produced ; and if there were any criminals in the case they escaped the penalty of their misdeed. Neither did they reap any advantage from it, for the magnates of the capital assembled in solemn conclave and insisted on the elevation of Kwangtsong's son, a boy of sixteen years, to the throne. The boy, without their few redeeming virtues, possessed, unfortunately, the weaknesses and irresolution of both his father and grandfather ; and the hesitation he showed in accepting the offer of the crown fitly represented the character of his reign. The new Emperor assumed the name of Hitsong, but he is best remembered in history as Tienki the Unhappy.

Tienki had not been more than a few months upon the throne when he was weak enough to sanction the recall of Tingbi, to whose energy and talent alone was due the Empire's preservation of its hold over the Leaoutung province.

Tingbi was essentially the architect of his own fortunes, and having been always distinguished as a man of independence, standing aloof from palace intrigue and court factions, there were none among the corrupt ministers of the Ming to espouse his cause. His appointment had been some slight sign of returning prudence on the part of Wanleh, and it was reserved for that prince's grandson to greatly contribute to the fall of his dynasty by its reversal. Tingbi was removed from his post in deference to the clamour of the eunuchs, and Yuen Yingtai, who had never heard a shot fired, nor seen the flight of the Manchu arrows, was sent to take his place, and to defend an extensive border against the most warlike people and the best trained army at that time existing in Asia.

While Tingbi remained in command Noorhachu had abstained from undertaking any enterprise; but no sooner was it known that he had been disgraced and that an inexperienced man of letters had been sent to take his place, than the Manchu leader saw that his opportunity had again come. He accordingly set out in the early spring of the year 1621, at the head of his forces, which had been strengthened in numbers by some Chinese deserters and by many Mongol adventurers from the West. His march was directed in the first place upon Fanyang or Moukden, where the large garrison left by Tingbi still remained to guard a town of much strength and importance. The commandant was a courageous man, but lacking in judgment; for when the Manchu columns came in sight, undeterred by the remembrance of former disasters, he at once marched out to encounter them. The step was doubly ill-judged, for not only did he thus lose the protection of the walls and towers of Moukden, but he thereby also deprived himself of the advantages of a superior weapon.* At this period the

* About this time the Chinese received, for the first time in their history, military assistance from a European people. A Portuguese envoy, Gonsalvo de Texeira, happened to arrive at Peking from Macao shortly after the Manchus had inflicted the first reverses on the Chinese. Texeira at once offered the Emperor the assistance of a small corps of Portuguese arquebusiers. The offer was promptly accepted, and 200 Portuguese were enrolled for the service. This corps was increased by

Chinese were just beginning to substitute the musket for the bow, but they had not attained much precision in its use, nor could a favourable opinion be pronounced on the excellence of their new weapons. The Manchus still retained the long-bow,* in the manipulation of which they were unrivalled, and in the open field their superiority as archers over the Chinese musketeers was necessarily much more marked than in the attack on fortified places.

In the engagement which ensued with the garrison of Moukden, Noorhachu inflicted a severe defeat upon them, and then his followers succeeded in entering the city at the same time as the fugitives from the field of battle. Notwithstanding that treachery within the town combined to facilitate Noorhachu's operations without, the Chinese fought stubbornly and well. Moukden was only taken after most of its garrison had fallen by the sword, but its loss proved the precursor of several other disasters to the Imperialists. Two relieving bodies of troops were cut up with heavy loss, and after a week's fighting the active army was reduced to less than half the dimensions it had reached under the fostering care of Tingbi.

The Chinese were loth to lose Moukden without making a vigorous effort to recapture it. Although their losses had been very heavy, they made one more attempt to drive the Manchus out of the city which they had just taken. But

the addition of an equal number of natives trained and disciplined by the Portuguese. This small army, magnificently caparisoned, travelled in state across China, but on reaching Peking it appeared too weak in numbers to be able to accomplish anything of importance against the numerous and formidable Tartars. The Portuguese were, therefore, sent back to Macao without having been engaged. Their artillery might have availed to change the fortunes of the day in some of the engagements with Noorhachu; but either jealousy or pride prevented the Chinese availing themselves of a source of help which, had it proved efficacious, would have revealed the vast superiority of European soldiers over Chinese. The Portuguese cannon were, however, borrowed, and others were cast in imitation under direction of the Jesuits.—See Mailla, vol. x. p. 409; also Du Halde and Pauthier, *passim*.

* To supply the inferiority in the character of their weapon, the Manchus had framed and practised a military exercise closely resembling the Roman *testudo*, or the tortoise.

this, notwithstanding the valour of the commander, Tung Jungkwei, and the execution committed by his artillery, failed not less conspicuously than either of the two previous attempts. Another Ming army was in this manner almost annihilated, and the Manchus forced their way over its fragments to lay siege to the provincial capital, Leaouyang, where Yuen Yingtai exercised personal command.

Here again the Chinese commander resorted to the same tactics that had proved so unfortunate on previous occasions. Although the defence of Leaouyang represented after all his main object, Yuen Yingtai quitted the cover of its fortifications, and endeavoured to oppose the Manchus in the field. He was compelled to beat a hasty retreat, but by this futile and ill-judged assumption of strength he had lost many brave soldiers, and the survivors were discouraged by a further reverse. Similar efforts to retard the siege operations carried out under Noorhachu's own eye were repeatedly repulsed, and at last the Chinese garrison was completely shut up in the town. Either by an assault delivered across a road hurriedly constructed over the moat, or by treachery within, the Manchus gained a footing on the walls. The garrison made a brave but useless resistance, and perished almost to a man. Yuen Yingtai and most of the officers committed suicide, but those of the townspeople who were spared recognized the Manchu authority and shaved* their heads in token of surrender.

The capture of Leaouyang completed Noorhachu's triumph, for the remaining towns at once opened their gates. No further resistance was attempted, and the Manchu chief

* This is the first occasion on which distinct reference is made to the "pig-tail." After this period it became compulsory for all those who wished to avert death to shave their heads on the appearance of the Manchus, who were thus able to easily distinguish those Chinese who surrendered from those who did not. At the present time the custom is common to all parts of China with the exception of a few of the more remote or mountainous districts of the southern and south-western provinces. The origin of this practice has not been cleared up. It is not even an ascertained certainty whether it was a custom among the Manchus, or a happy device to distinguish the conquered Chinese from those who persisted in resistance.

marked the completion of the conquest of Leaoutung by the removal of his capital to the site of his latest victory. Thus rapidly did their first great military conquest at the expense of China follow the reunion of the Niuche tribes under a single head, and from his new palace in Leaouyang Noor-hachu could speculate on how his next stride southward might carry him into the imperial city of Peking.

While the Manchus were thus arranging matters after their own fashion in the north, other enemies presented themselves in the south to cause anxiety to the Chinese Government. There is no evidence to establish a chain of connection between these two events, but it is only reasonable to suppose that the disasters in Leaoutung, by producing an impression that the power of the Mings was on the wane, encouraged the discontented and the turbulent in other parts of the country to resort to force for the attainment of their ends. In the mountainous tracts of Szchuen, which had often before nourished traitors and produced disaffected subjects, the clans had gathered round a local chieftain and assumed an attitude of covert hostility towards the Chinese authorities. Nor were the people of the cities and plains very staunch in their allegiance to the Emperor, although they looked with suspicion and apprehension on the movements of a race more prone to disregard than to respect the rights of property and the persons of law-abiding citizens.

The principal of the disaffected tribes in this province was that known as the Kolo, whose chief Chetsong Ming could raise an armed force of nearly 30,000 men, and in the time of the Manchu peril he had placed this body at the disposal of the Viceroy of Szchuen, either to relieve a portion of the local garrison, or to take the field against the Tartars. That functionary either formed a poor opinion of their military capabilities, or indulged the promptings of his own caprice, for he disbanded many of these would-be soldiers without awarding them the slightest compensation. Chetsong's followers thereupon broke out in open insubordination, and, having murdered the Viceroy, took possession of several of the most important towns in Szchuen. Chetsong immediately placed himself at the head of this insurrectionary movement,

and had the satisfaction of seeing his authority promptly established in Chentu and Chungking. Many of the people joined him, and the greater number of the mandarins put themselves to death in expiation of the disgrace of having found themselves unable to defend their posts.

The steps taken towards restoring Tienki's authority were necessarily slow, and the reduced numbers of the garrison rendered it a work of time to repress a rebellion that had been marked in its earlier stages by such decided successes. While on all sides there was abundant evidence of both treachery and incapacity, the noble conduct of Tsinleang, a woman who had inherited the chiefship of a small district, afforded some proof that the nobler virtues were not yet wholly extinct among the tributaries and vassals of the Empire. She had raised a corps of troops, and sent them to assist the Emperor in Leaoutung, where they had suffered great losses, and where her two brothers had been slain. And now, in face of this sudden emergency in her own province, she raised another large force, and hastened to combine with those who were endeavouring to maintain, or rather to reassert, Tienki's authority in the south-west.

The campaign fought with this object lasted throughout the greater portion of the years 1621 and 1622, and success was not assured until, after long sieges, both Chentu and Chungking surrendered to the Imperial arms. Chetsong escaped to the mountains, and, although baffled in his main undertaking, he could console himself with the remembrance of the infinite mischief which he had caused, and of what losses he had cost his conqueror. Chetsong's rebellion, however, did but apply the torch to the mass of disaffection which had long been seething in the south-west. In the neighbouring province of Kweichow a similar rising took place under the instigation of Ganpangyen, a local chief, who thought he saw in the embarrassments of the Chinese a short road to increased power. The successes obtained by this individual over the garrisons of Yunnan and Kweichow carried alarm throughout an extensive tract of country, and entailed the temporary subversion of the Emperor's authority in a great portion of these provinces. This insurrection might have attained much

larger proportions, but for the valour and resolution of the commandant of the principal city of Kweiyang. For nearly twelve months the rebel chief laid siege to it, but all his assaults were repulsed. He broke his strength against its fortifications, and his followers abandoned him when they found that he could not command victory. Ganpangyen was glad to be able to make a safe retreat to his own state, whither the Chinese were too exhausted to pursue him.

Much nearer the capital serious disturbances broke out in the province of Shantung, where a rebel leader named Su Hongju had gathered round him a military following of considerable numerical strength. He obtained several successes, plundered numerous towns, and for a time carried everything before him. But his successes happily proved ephemeral. The regular troops rallied, and returned to the attack. Su Hongju and his band were shut up in the town of Tengkien, where at length the rebels agreed to give up their arms and to surrender their leader. Su Hongju having thus run his brief career, was betrayed by his own followers and perished on the scaffold. In 1623 there was a renewal of the previous disturbances in both Kweichow and Szchuen ; but the Viceroy, Wang Sanchen, succeeded in rendering a good account of the rebels, although for himself these later operations had an unfortunate ending. He was enticed with a small body of followers into an ambushade in the mountains, where he and his comrades, overwhelmed by numbers, were all slain.

These numerous risings in different parts of the empire, which were of little more than local importance in themselves, possessed a very distinct and tangible significance from occurring at the crisis in the history of the Ming dynasty. They served to occupy a large body of troops who might have been employed against the foreign foe, and they also encouraged that foreign foe to proceed to greater lengths than he would otherwise have done, in the belief that the country was disunited within itself. The Ming dynasty had during these last few reigns failed to satisfy the popular expectation, and it could no longer count on either the hearty or the unanimous support of the people. The corruptness of the Court no doubt contributed most of all to the downfall

of the ruling family, which had enjoyed a brief, if exceptional, popularity ; but the Government had to apprehend as much danger from the supineness of its subjects as from their hostility. Yet even at the eleventh hour, if the Emperor had awoken to the gravity of the situation, China might have been saved from the Manchus, and the Mings might have preserved their throne. But the wisdom that had left them so long was not to be vouchsafed in the time of their extremity, and the sands in the hour-glass of Ming existence were running very low in face of dissension within, and of open attack from without.

During this interval the Manchus had been principally engaged in the task of consolidating their power in Leaoutung, and in preparations for a further movement in the direction of the capital. The river Leaou marked the border line, beyond which Noorhachu had not yet attempted to advance, and the defence or passage of that stream became the foremost object with either combatant. The misfortunes which had resulted in the fall of Moukden and the loss of Leaoutung had compelled the Peking authorities to so far provide against the exigencies of the hour as to give Tingbi a fresh command on the frontier ; but unfortunately the influence of the eunuchs of the palace was so strong that the importance of this step was nullified by the simultaneous appointment of another general to an equal command. The latter, secure in the staunch support of the Palace, was able to ignore and override the decisions of his colleague, who had to stand by the aid of a weak, if well-meaning, king, and by the spasmodic and often inconsistent expression of popular approval. The plan of campaign suggested by Tingbi was simple and well-suited to the emergency. But his colleague would have none of it. His mode of operation was more pretentious and more audacious, and it might have succeeded against an inexperienced captain or a mob of soldiers ; but against the experienced Noorhachu and his well-trained legions it invited disaster. The Manchus crossed the Leaou, and drove the Imperialists, and with them a large number of the inhabitants, behind the Great Wall. But for the resolute defence of Ningyuen even the Great Wall would hardly have restrained the torrent of

Manchu attack. In face of this new discomfiture, some further victims had to be offered up for the satisfaction of the people, who were beginning to see in the Manchus no longer a marauding tribe of the frontier, but an invader occupying the threshold, and threatening the very existence of the empire. Tingbi, to whose wise counsel the nation might have owed a safe issue from its peril, but whose recommendations had been treated with indifference, was the first to feel the spleen of those who, in the safety of the capital, decreed what was right and wrong, what wise and foolish, in the command of armies in the field. The execution of Tingbi closed an honourable career, and it removed another of the few soldiers who might possibly have been a successful defender of the country. With Tingbi, who had kept Noorhachu at the height of his success for two years at bay, disappeared the only commander whose skill had given any promise of restoring the inequalities of the struggle; but it is only a sorry satisfaction to remember that the eunuchs suffered in common with the nation, and that all their influence failed to save Tingbi's colleague from a fate similar to his own.

The Chinese lieutenants fared better than might have been anticipated after so crushing an overthrow in improvising a defence of that portion of the Great Wall which approaches most nearly to the sea, and of which the town of Shanhaikwan* may be taken as the central point. Nor were their efforts wholly confined to this object, for, finding that the Manchus were fully occupied in disposing of the large population in their new province, a Chinese officer, named Chungwan, threw himself into Ningyuen with a small band to reinforce the garrison of that place. The courage shown by Chungwan, and the all-providing care and energy of the new viceroy, Chungtsung, served to again arrest the advancing tide of

* Shanhaikwan, meaning "sea and mountain barrier," the most eastern gate of the Great Wall. An interesting account of a journey in this quarter of China, from Tientsin to Moukden, will be found in Mr. George Fleming's "Travels on Horseback in Mantchu Tartary," 1863; later information on the same subject is contained in Captain Gill's "River of Golden Sand," 1880, vol. i., and also in Mr. H. E. M. James's "Long White Mountain."

Manchu aggression. For the first time, indeed, it was not merely arrested, but rolled back, as Noorhachu did not feel strong enough to retain the country west of the Leaou. He found it an easier and more grateful task to superintend the transfer of his capital from Leaouyang to Moukden.

Once more, when things were beginning to wear a fairer aspect, the Chinese ministers proved their country's worst enemies. The capacity of Chungtsung could not, in their eyes, atone for his indifference and dislike to the incapable statesmen who were driving China to her ruin ; and at last he too fell a victim, like Tingbi, to their snares and intrigues. A successor was appointed with different aims, and pledged to pursue another line of action. Chungtsung's reputation had been won by the recovery of a large territory from the foe ; his successor began his term of authority by its voluntary surrender, and by a precipitate retreat behind the Wall. Chungwan, the heroic commander at Ningyuen, alone refused to leave his post, and vowed that he would defend to the last the outwork of the Empire which had been committed to his charge. The intelligence of this general withdrawal reached Noorhachu, who at once recrossed the Leaou and proceeded to reoccupy the abandoned territory. The small garrison of Ningyuen represented the only hostile force with which he had to cope.

The Manchu conqueror paid but little heed to a place of such comparative insignificance, and continued to carry out his schemes for the annexation of the narrow but extremely fertile strip of country skirting the sea and extending up to the Great Wall. But he soon found that the garrison of Ningyuen, if unsubdued, would be a thorn in his side, and that the capture of that town was essential to his further progress. Round Ningyuen, therefore, the Manchus collected in their thousands, and their great leader spared no device known to his experience to effect his object. In Chungwan, however, he met an opponent worthy of his steel. That resolute soldier had, in the most solemn terms, registered a vow to shed his blood in the defence of Ningyuen, and all his men with laudable fidelity had followed his example. Strong in their own fortitude, they also possessed in their artillery an

invaluable source of material assistance ; and Chungwan deemed it no disgrace to confine his efforts to the defence of the town without thinking of undertaking a foolish and useless offensive in the field. For the first time in their career, therefore, the Manchus had opposed to them a general who neglected no means of turning his position to the best advantage, and who was not filled with an overweening self-confidence and contempt for his adversary. The outcome of these changed tactics and different views was disastrous to the Manchus and highly creditable to the military fame of the Chinese.

Noorhachu delivered two assaults in force with the greater portion of his army, and they were made the more vigorously in proportion as the resistance encountered was unusual and unexpected. Their repulse appears to have been chiefly due to the European cannon, which, perhaps, caused more panic than actual loss to the assailants. For the first and only time in his career Noorhachu had to call off his soldiers and to raise a siege. Other successes elsewhere failed to compensate the aged warrior for this rebuff ; and sick with disappointed pride he retraced his steps to his capital to die. His death occurred at Moukden in September 1626, when he was nearly sixty-eight years of age. His descendants dated their dynasty from the year 1616, although the conquest of China had not then so much as commenced ; and with the vanity of a new family they assigned to their not very remote founder a semi-divine origin, while they gave to Noorhachu the posthumous and glorious title in Chinese eyes of Taitsou Hwangti.

Although Noorhachu was very far indeed from enjoying the reputation which he sought to acquire as the conqueror of China, yet there can be no doubt that he deserved all the respect and honour which his people and family could pay him. But for his energy and perseverance the small clan of which he was titular chief might never have risen to fame, and the titles of Tatsing and Manchu never been heard of or invented. In many respects he accomplished for the Manchus what Genghis did for the Mongols. It was not his fault if his sphere was a smaller one and more circumscribed. The credit of having emancipated himself from it may, indeed,

have been all the more conspicuous ; and it certainly seems that Noorhachu achieved a great exploit when he extended his sway from a small valley of a few square miles over a vast territory including two Chinese or quasi-Chinese provinces, and stretching from the Great Wall to the Amour. If much of his extraordinary success must be attributed to the blunders and folly of his opponents, cannot almost the same be said of every conqueror from the days of Alexander to those of Napoleon ? Noorhachu had the strength of will, seldom given to mortals, to know when to stop. His victories are not more remarkable than the vigour with which he made the most of their results, and with which he consolidated his authority in the new possessions that fell into his power. He built up the edifice of his empire step by step, and his successors had to thank him that he sank its foundations very deep in the affections of his own people, and in the possession of a well-trained and valiant army.

Noorhachu was succeeded by his fourth son, who became known in history as Taitsong or Tienming ; and the accession of a new prince afforded the opportunity for the resumption of negotiations with the Chinese authorities. Whatever his motives, it seemed that the new ruler was disposed to pursue a more peaceful policy than his father, and a return to the old condition of amicable relations with China was for a moment anticipated by the sanguine. Chungwan alone, who had been rewarded for the heroic defence of Ningyuen by promotion to the rank of viceroy and chief commander, received the protestations and overtures of the Manchu ruler with caution and evident disbelief. There ensued the usual despatch of embassies and the accustomed interchange of compliments on the occasion of the death of a mighty and neighbouring potentate ; but no real sentiment of friendship existed behind these empty courtesies. The pretensions of Taitsong, who wished to treat with the Ming Emperor on terms of equality, were quite incompatible with those of Tienki, who still asserted all his claims to supremacy based on a remote antiquity, and on the recognition of no equal authority save that of Heaven itself. The correspondence became warmer as it proceeded, and the open court paid by the chief of the

Kortsin Mongols to Taitson g flattered his vanity while it irritated the Chinese. Nor was the situation improved by the announcement that the Manchus were invading and rapidly overrunning the long faithful tributary kingdom of Corea.

Finding that nothing could be gained by a wordy war in which his Chinese opponent enjoyed the advantage, and with a large portion of his army released by the overthrow of Corea, Taitson g resolved on renewing the attack upon Ningyuen, and he threw his whole force against that place in a desperate resolve to succeed. Once, if not twice, he sat down before its walls, and led his picked Manchu veterans to the assault in person. But Chungwan was still there, and Taitson g's efforts ended in his signal discomfiture. Again, for a second time, the campaign closed disastrously for the Manchus, who retired behind the Leaou. The ramparts of Ningyuen constituted a secure bulwark for the Chinese capital, and might have long continued to do so had not Taitson g been seized with one of those brilliant ideas which occasionally flash across the minds of great commanders.

Meantime, the occupant of the Chinese throne had changed. Tienki, of whom nothing else has been preserved save his misfortunes, had never been of robust health, and in 1627 his death made room for his younger brother, who is known to history as Tsongching. Tsongching was destined to be the last ruler of the once-great family of the Mings, and on his head was to descend with tenfold force the retribution for his predecessors' weaknesses and crimes.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE GROWTH OF MANCHU POWER UNDER TAITSONG.

FOR a brief space it appeared that the Chinese had found in the hour of extremity a bulwark of safety in the fortress of Ningyuen, and the Manchus after their several repulses were beginning to lose heart a little, and to doubt whether Tait-song was a worthy ruler, and able to carry on the schemes of his father. There was no reason why the whole vigour of the Manchu tribe or confederacy should not be shattered and broken to pieces before the walls of a fortress resolutely defended and well-equipped in artillery. Disappointed in his expectations of success by a direct attack, Tait-song was still resolved to succeed, and his hostility towards China was inflamed and increased by his personal antipathy to, and jealousy of, Chungwan. But, like a prudent man, he would no longer waste his strength by throwing his forces against Ningyuen. It was by some higher instinct than mere prudence, if not by a flash of absolute genius, that he came to the determination to ignore Ningyuen and to advance by another route straight on Peking. Tait-song kept his own counsel, but he gave orders to the chief of the Kortsin Mongols, who had been one of the first to congratulate him on his accession, to get ready his forces by a certain day. Tait-song then raised his own army to the number of 100,000 men, and moved into the districts of the Kortsin, which are situated west of Ningyuen and the Palisades, which "exist only on the map and in the imagination of the Emperor of China." Up to this point nobody knew anything of his design, but when he had gone thus far the necessity for

further silence was removed. The plan was too bold, for the reputation of China's power was still great, to obtain the general approval even of the Manchus, and all his officers and kinsmen endeavoured to dissuade him from a course of such extreme peril. But Taitson saw that the time had come to strike a bold blow against the Emperor. In a few years the Ming would recover his lost vigour and overcome the Tartars by sheer weight of numbers. It was, therefore, high time, thought Taitson, especially as he had as yet done nothing, for him to strike a conclusive blow while the Emperor was bewildered and knew not how to utilize his vast resources. Taitson pressed on rapidly, and his course was not to be stayed by the counsels of the timid.

The Manchu army,* augmented by the fighting-men of the Kortsin Mongols, advanced rapidly through the Dangan Pass of the Great Wall towards the capital, scattering before it the small bodies of Chinese troops that were alone available to oppose them, and without being delayed for any time by the forts which had been constructed for the defence of this portion of the frontier. Taitson had forced his way across the mountains and had reached Kichow on the high road to Peking before Chungwan became aware that he had been outmanœuvred and that all his defences had been turned. Then he hastened back with all speed, and, having the advantage of the better road, he succeeded in outstripping the Manchus and in throwing himself with a portion of his army into the capital before Taitson had fully beleaguered it. The Chinese were further reinforced by a body of troops which arrived opportunely from Taitong.

Taitson issued a proclamation to the people and officials of China, in which he again recited his injuries, and dwelt upon the shortcomings of the Mings. In this document he

* It was about this time that Taitson first divided the Manchus into corps known as Banners. The Manchus proper were divided among the eight banners, and each banner followed its own leader and had a distinct military system. Each banner had a special flag and trumpeter attached. The Chinese who deserted to Taitson were also arrayed under a single banner, but in their case the arrangement appears to have been one of military expediency rather than of any national significance.—See Mailla, vol. x. pp. 442, 494.

first made an effort to prepare the public mind for his becoming the successor of their Emperor, for, having dwelt upon the humble origin of Hongwou, the founder of the Mings, he then naïvely demanded whether it were not possible that "Heaven had chosen him to be the master of the Empire and to succeed the Mings." While this manifesto was being gradually circulated through the country, Taitsong took up his position near Pekin. He does not appear to have subjected it to any close investment, but contented himself with concentrating his troops in a single camp and with offering battle daily to the Chinese. His own headquarters he established at Haidu, a pleasure-house of the Ming princes. The siege languished, and the Tartars would soon have been obliged to beat a retreat from the dearth of provisions, and the gradual increase of the Chinese forces, without effecting any of their objects, when Fortune, which had so often smiled upon their enterprises, came again to their aid. Pekin was not taken, it is true, but the disgrace and ruin of Chungwan were equal to a great victory.

Chungwan, whose reputation and great qualities made him a host in himself, had so well supplied the deficiencies of the Chinese position at Pekin that it looked as if the balance of victory would incline to their side. Taitsong, foiled in the field, resolved to effect his purpose by compassing the ruin of his most formidable opponent, and the machinations of eunuchs who were bitterly inimical to Chungwan greatly facilitated his object. A plot was soon formed between the Manchu leader and a party in the palace to procure Chungwan's disgrace and removal from the command; and it succeeded only too well. The eunuchs found, and availed themselves of, the opportunity to poison the Emperor's ear against the general who was valiantly defending the country from a victorious invader; and, apparently on the theory that the more improbable the charge the more it will obtain a temporary credence, Chungwan was accused of holding secret communications with the enemy. Invited to visit the Emperor on a pressing matter of state, he hastily left his post for the palace, where he was seized and placed in confinement. Nothing more was afterwards heard of this brave soldier, and

his secret execution in the middle of the night removed another of the few men whose courage and ability might have availed to equalize the struggle with the Manchus.

Simultaneously with this event Taitsong drew off his forces for a short distance, and proceeded to invest several places offering fewer obstacles to speedy success than the capital. The removal of Chungwan from the command recalled him to his former post at Haidso, and when he found that he was freed from further apprehension on the ground of his old and successful opponent at Ningyuen, he delayed no longer in making his dispositions for the assault. A fierce battle was fought outside the city, and a Chinese corps of forty thousand men failed to make any stand against the Manchus. Chungwan's successor, a brave but unskilful officer, was among the slain; and the fate of Peking seemed to be sealed. Taitsong himself had, however, difficulties of his own to contend against, although we are not cognizant of their exact nature. That they were sufficiently grave may be inferred from the fact that, when he seemed to hold complete victory within his grasp, he suddenly drew off his forces and retreated beyond the Wall. Peking was saved for this occasion from its northern foe.

Another lull ensued in the contest, and Taitsong resumed those proffers of a pacific arrangement which he had consistently made from the first days of his reign. Towards the Ming Emperor he adopted an attitude of equality tempered by the respectful expressions which he expected to have reciprocated; but his ulterior aims were foreshadowed in the persistency with which he recurred to the injuries of a misgoverned and oppressed people. Already he was putting himself forward in the guise of a champion of the subjects against the sovereign. While thus actively engaged in giving to his diplomacy an air of disinterestedness, he took other steps to attract to his side a certain amount of sympathy and regard from the Chinese people. The Manchus had before this adopted the Chinese character in their writing, and Tait-song continued the same line of policy by instituting schools and a course of examination similar to those existing in the Middle Kingdom. Nor did he stop at this point in the

measures which he was taking towards identifying his person and family with the traditions and customs dear to every Chinese subject. He had the sense to perceive that the conquest of China would be impossible for him unless he attracted to his cause the sympathetic support of a portion of its people. His proclamations, his daily life, were directed so as to produce the required result in the case of the multitude; but he trusted to other means to draw to his side those who had served in the administration, and who, knowing the corruptness and incapacity of the Ming system, might be the more readily induced to see in him the reformer of the morals of profligate court, and the Heaven-sent champion of an afflicted country. With these ends in view he drew up a list of military dignities precisely similar to those of the Chinese Empire, and by conferring on the officers who deserted to him a grade higher than the one they possessed under the Mings, he succeeded in inducing many to abandon their allegiance to the Chinese Emperor and to take service under him. But what he thus gained in actual numbers was small, indeed, in comparison with the impression produced among the Chinese by this close imitation of the conduct of the greatest and most popular of their former rulers.

During the four years following his first attack on Peking, Taitson was engaged more in the working-out of this astute policy than in the conduct of military operations. True it is that little or no cessation occurred in the strife on the border, for the Chinese ministers, with singular obtuseness or out of a headstrong and uncontrollable prejudice, refused to so much as even reply to the numerous letters which Taitson addressed to them. The retreat of Taitson and a small success gained in a border skirmish, where one of Taitson's brothers failed to sustain the reputation of his family, sufficed to restore the natural presumption of men who knew nothing of affairs and who had no acquaintance with the exigencies of a perilous situation. The eunuchs received all Taitson's protestations with contempt, and did not deign to make any reply; but it would have been better for them had they assumed a less defiant tone and adopted a few simple precautions for the defence of the realm. Their pride was grand

and not altogether without justification, but their inaction was the measure of their incapacity.

While the state of affairs remained thus critical on the Manchu frontier, events of the very gravest importance were happening in other parts of the country. At an earlier period in the struggle the report of Imperial defeats had sufficed to raise up numerous enemies in different quarters of the wide-stretching territories of the Ming. They had fortunately been put down, but the assertion of the Emperor's power had not been effected with that degree of ease and rapidity which would alone have deterred the discontented in other parts from imitating these insurgents. The danger from the Manchus had increased instead of diminished, and it was only in the natural course of things that those who before had the inclination to rebel should find that impulse greatly strengthened by the embarrassment threatening the stability of the Empire.

The first of these internal troubles might by wiser action have been avoided, for it was caused by the neglect to pay a body of troops which had been sent to reinforce the army on the frontier. The soldiers broke into open mutiny, and their commanders might have fared badly had they not come to the resolution to take the lead in the direction which their men had marked out for them. Of these officers Kongyuta was the principal and the most active, and to him was entrusted the main part in leading the insurgents. The province of Shantung became the principal scene of their exploits, and for a time they there carried everything before them. One viceroy was executed, and his successor set out with loud vaunts of the rapidity with which he would quell the rebellion. The acts of the new governor fell far short, as is often the case, of his protestations; for while the insurgents held the open country, he was compelled to confine his operations to the defence of Laichow, a small port on the Gulf of Pechihli. Even in this restricted sphere he was not destined to attain any great success, for he was killed by a cannon-shot while conducting its defence. The siege continued, and the rebels, having enticed under a show of negotiation several of the principal officers of the province into

their camp, gained a momentary strength by arresting and then executing them. But this breach of faith, which for the time seemed to answer their ends, proved fatal to their prospects, not only because it excited the indignation of all honourable men, but also because it roused the Pekin Government into a fit of energy.

A large army was sent against them, and all the resources at the disposal of the Empire were devoted to the task of crushing this rebellion. Several battles were fought and won. The insurgents, so lately rejoicing with all the arrogance of victory, were driven from one place to another, until at last there remained to them only the harbour of Tengchow, which also surrendered to the Imperial lieutenants. Most of the insurgents were taken alive, to suffer the fate of rebels; but Kongyuta, more fortunate than his supporters, made good his escape by sea to the opposite coast of Leaoutung, whence he hastened to pay his court to Taitson, who gave him a hearty welcome.

In 1634 Taitson commenced his next campaign with the invasion of Shansi at the head of an army composed equally of Mongol auxiliaries and of his own Manchu levies. The Chinese failed to make any stand against this invading force. No attempt was made to guard the outer wall save at Taitong which was too formidable to be lightly assailed, and Taitson experienced little difficulty in capturing most of the towns adjacent to the inner wall. Although the Manchus thus transferred the scene of their operations to a province which had been comparatively free from the presence of an enemy for several centuries, and notwithstanding that the northern borders of Shansi present exceptional facilities for defence and difficulties to an invader, Taitson met with little resistance from either the people or the local garrisons. One Chinese officer published a boastful report of a great victory which he declared that he had won; but Taitson intercepted the letter, and at once sent off a challenge offering to match 1000 of his men against ten times their number of Chinese. The bold offer was not accepted, and the Manchus continued to carry everything before them in Shansi.

It was at the close of this campaign, in the year 1635, that

Taitsong assumed for the first time the style of Emperor of China. Events had long been shaping themselves in this direction, but an accident alone induced him to take the final step. The jade seal of the Yuen dynasty had at the time of its expulsion been carried beyond the wall, and lost in the wilds of Mongolia. More than two centuries later a Mongol shepherd had chanced upon it and handed it to his chief, whence in due time it was passed on to Taitsong. As soon as it became known among the Mongol clans that the Manchu conqueror was the fortunate possessor of this treasured gem they all hastened, to the number of forty-nine separate chiefs, to pay their allegiance to Taitsong. Strange as it may appear, they demanded, as a kind of ratification to their own act, that the King of Corea should likewise pay his court to the new Emperor. The king of that state having heard the nature of the letters from the Manchu capital refused to open them, hoping thus to extricate himself from what promised to prove an unpleasant dilemma. But the Manchus could ill brook this show of independence from one who had already proved unable to resist them. An army was accordingly sent to chastise this indifferent if not defiant potentate, and to exact from him at the point of the sword the allegiance which he had so haughtily evaded. Taitsong's lieutenants carried out their master's plans to the letter, and Corea followed the example of the western Mongol clans and recognized Taitsong as Hwangti.

The remaining years of Taitsong's life were passed in conducting repeated expeditions into the provinces of Pechihli, Shansi, and even Shantung, although he never again molested Pekin, and the fortresses of Ningyuen and Shanhaikwan continued to form on the east insuperable obstacles in his path. The loss inflicted on the Chinese was immense, and the amount of spoil carried off incalculable; but so far as the Emperor and his Court were concerned the situation remained little changed. Taitsong was greatly assisted in his plans by the numerous internal troubles which were disintegrating the Empire, and at last he found himself again able to begin a forward movement in the direction of that Ningyuen which had hitherto baffled him. But before he

could reach the town it was necessary for him to capture Kingchow which was held by a resolute garrison, while the skilful general Wou Sankwei occupied the place of supreme command over the Quadrilateral of Leaousi.* Kingchow and Songshan were taken after several severe actions, and at the cost of a vast amount of bloodshed ; but Ningyuen, with its new commandant Wou Sankwei, remained defiant as of old.

Taitsong had, therefore, to resort in the year 1642-3 to his former tactics of despatching expeditions into Shansi, which carried everything before them, it is true, but which contributed only very slightly and indirectly to the weakening of Chinese power at Ningyuen. The return of the last of these expeditionary forces had hardly been signalized by the usual festivities at Moukden, when Taitsong was seized with what proved to be a fatal illness.

Before his death events yet to be described had brought the Ming Empire to the verge of dissolution. The days of Tsongching were numbered, and his capital was at the mercy of a cruel and relentless rebel. The Manchu, who had so long appeared the most formidable of his enemies, did not prove the instrument whereby his fall was effected. Taitsong was not destined to be the scourge of Providence to purify a corrupt court, and to reform a profligate society. Indeed, the Manchu chief's death preceded the suicide of the last Ming Emperor by some months.

Taitsong was only fifty-two years of age at the time of his death in September 1643, and when he died he left the main object of his life apparently as distant from realization as when he took up the scheme committed to him as a legacy by his father Noorhachu. The Manchus had inflicted an incalculable amount of injury on the Chinese, and Taitsong had enjoyed the empty honour of having laid unsuccessful siege to Pekin ; but the conquest of China remained a feat for the accomplishment of which all the military power of the Manchus, aided by the great talent of their leaders, had as yet

* Cis Leaoutung. The Quadrilateral were Kingchow, Ningyuen, Songshan, and Shanhaikwan,

proved inadequate. On the very eve of its attainment the balance of chances seemed, humanly speaking, greater against the Manchu ambition than it had been at any time during the previous generation ; and by the irony of fate the triumph which had been denied to both Noorhachu and Tait song was reserved for a child, the grandson of the former and the son of the latter.

Tait song was buried at Moukden* in the midst of the people whom he had helped to make great. He had made his authority recognized among all the Tartars from the districts of the Eleuths to the waters of Japan. Corea was his vassal, and Leaoutung one of his provinces. Famous as a warrior, he deserved to rank still higher as the civilizer of the Manchus. It was not his lot to conquer China, but he at least indicated the only way in which it could be subdued. The Chinese themselves recognized in him a man who strove above all things to adapt his ways of government to the customs of those he aspired to govern. In Tait song's hands the ambition of his family lost nothing of its dignity and grandeur ; and he passed it on to his successors in a more tangible and definite form. Tait song may fairly be held to have directed, as well as quickened, the growth of Manchu power, and, but for his energy and good judgment, it may be doubted whether his race would ever have been elevated to the high position of occupying the Dragon Throne.

* Moukden is now known to the Chinese as Shinyang. For the eulogy of this capital of the Manchus see Keen Lung's poem in Amiot's "*Mémoires Concernant les Meurs, &c. des Chinois*," Paris, 1776. An account of modern Moukden will be found in Fleming's travels already cited. The tombs of the early Manchu emperors were then (forty years ago) reported to stand in need of repair. A dynasty totters on the throne when the monuments to its founders and progenitors are neglected.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE CONQUEST OF CHINA.

THESE long years of misgovernment had allowed so plentiful a crop of private grievances and public misfortunes to accumulate in China that no difficulty was experienced by adventurers in attracting to their fortunes large numbers of followers under one plea or another. An individual had but to give out that he desired to redress any one of the many national evils, and forthwith he found himself at the head of an armed force, which, if not very formidable against trained battalions, more than sufficed to overcome the small, unpaid, and semi-mutinous local garrisons. Several of these insurrectionary movements have already attracted passing notice while the Manchu danger seemed more pressing and immediate ; but, as a lull ensued in the bitterness of that contest after Taitson's retreat from Peking, the internal peril thrust itself more prominently into view, and assumed larger and more formidable proportions. There were, no doubt, many who thought that the worst consequences of Tartar invasion had been realized, and that, although the end of the Mings might be at hand, the Manchus would not be strong enough to usurp their inheritance. Such a conviction was a direct incentive to the ambitious to seize the golden opportunity for finishing the Mings out of hand, and so it seemed, at all events, to Li Tseching, who now comes more prominently forward as one of the chief arbiters of China's destinies.

Li Tseching was the son of a peasant of Yen-an in the province of Shensi, and, at an early age, he betook himself

to the practice of arms, being renowned both as a horseman and as an archer. As early as the year 1629 he appears on the scene as one of a band of robbers, but at that time the Emperor's lieutenants were able to assert their master's authority, and Li Tseching was fortunate to make his escape from an encounter in which most of his companions lost either their lives or their liberty. The very next year, however, found him high in the command of a large force of rebels which assumed almost the proportions of an army. After a few years' service as lieutenant he succeeded to the command in chief on the death of his leader. In this capacity he gained many advantages over the Imperialists, and a large extent of country was subject to his exactions. Sometimes he acted in concert with Chang Hienchong, a Mahomedan chief, whose career closely resembled his own; but more generally he carried on his operations without the assistance or the cognizance of those having similar objects to attain. For it was the characteristic mark of his system that while he resorted to violence to carry his ends he often turned danger aside and extricated himself from a perilous situation by simulating a desire to come to terms with the authorities. Other insurgents obtained marked successes, and then after an interval disappeared. But Li Tseching remained, and the growth of his power was steady and sure.

The details of his career claim not our attention until, from the position of a robber chief in the mountains of Shensi, he raised his aspiring glance to the throne of Peking itself. In the year 1640, when it was computed that nearly half a million of men obeyed his orders, he first began to turn his thoughts in the direction of ousting the Ming. With that object in view he undertook the siege of the important city of Kaifong, one of the principal places in Honan, and once the capital of China. Before he could attack Kaifong he had first to besiege and take Honanfoo, where he was received with resolution, and long kept in check by the valour of the governor. Treachery within at last opened the gates to him, and the town of Honan no longer constituted an obstacle in his path. The place appears to have been handed over to the soldiery, when horrors that cannot be described are

reported to have been perpetrated. At Kaifong, which was at this period one of the strongest fortresses in China, he did not fare so well, for after laying siege to it during seven days he beat a retreat pursued by an army sent from Peking to the succour of the central provinces.

Li Tseching does not appear to have been much awed by the extensive preparations made against him, and although the Emperor placed four armies in the field he boldly assumed the offensive. The Imperialists, in dealing with the rebels, resorted to the tactics which had proved so fatal to them in the case of the foreign invader; and the consequences were similar. Li Tseching met their armies in detail and overthrew them. Many thousands of the soldiers refused to fight, and joined the ranks of their opponent. After these decisive successes, Li Tseching again invested Kaifong, and so greatly had the terror of his name increased that he might have captured it had he not been compelled to suddenly raise the siege in consequence of a severe wound inflicted by an arrow.

Several times after this second withdrawal Li returned to lay siege to Kaifong, and at last, towards the end of the year 1642, an accident placed it in his possession. The governor who had defended the town with such intrepidity had, among other precautions, flooded the moat by means of a canal from the Hoangho, and this extra barrier of defence had no doubt greatly contributed to the discomfiture of Li Tseching. But in the result it was to prove fatal to the Imperialists. The Hoangho, at all times capricious in its movements, and the source of as much trouble as benefit to the provinces it waters, rose suddenly to the dimensions of a flood, and, overflowing its banks, spread over the country. Li's camp was speedily under water, and many of his soldiers were drowned; but most escaped to a neighbouring eminence. The garrison was not so fortunate. The waters of the river bore down the walls and flooded the streets. Thousands perished at the time, and thousands more were slain by the rebels outside. The formidable defences of the city were levelled by the shock of nature, and of the once famous Kaifong there remained only the ruins left by this deluge.

The loss of Kaifong entailed the collapse of the Emperor's authority throughout the great province of Honan, for the prefectural city of Nanyang made no attempt at a resistance which it was seen would be futile. Numerous other successes followed, and recruits flocked in in thousands to join the great rebel leader. But some of these new allies were men whose support was of doubtful advantage, and who were actuated by ambitious motives of their own. Quarrels ensued from petty jealousies and rivalry; and, as might be expected from the character of the society in which they occurred, they ended as a rule in bloodshed. Li Tseching was not above suspecting the good faith of those in his service, and to incur his suspicion was tantamount to receiving one's death-warrant. Those he marked as his victims were always men whom he had reason to fear, and he issued from each trial of strength and authority with increased reputation and a more unquestioned command.

The first stage in his career closed with the capture of Kaifong; the second began with his attack on Tunkwan, the most famous of all Chinese fortresses. His fortune here stood him in good stead, for he might have been delayed by this fortress a much longer time than he had been kept at Kaifong, had he not succeeded in making his way into the city at the same time with a fugitive army which he had defeated outside. The fall of Tunkwan naturally produced great confusion and trepidation among the Imperialists, who then found themselves obliged to confine their operations to the defence of Singan, the metropolis of the West. The garrison wished to defend the place, but the inhabitants, terrified at the severity which Li had shown elsewhere, refused to stand a siege; and when the officers manifested an intention to hold out they rose and massacred them. Singan thus easily shared the fate of Tunkwan and passed into the possession of Li Tseching. The whole of Shensi soon succumbed to the attack of this determined chief, and even the distant Ninghia on the remote north-western marches surrendered to the terror of his arms.

Thus secure in his rear, and with several strong places at his disposal, Li Tseching was able to turn his attention to the

east, where the Ming Emperor was fast succumbing under an accumulation of difficulties. Before turning his face towards the yet unsubdued province of Shansi and the capital, Li Tseching took the final and extreme step of proclaiming himself Emperor. Master of more than one-third of China, and feared throughout the rest, the leader of the biggest battalions in the realm felt justified in assuming the style of Emperor, which, but for the Manchus, he might have maintained as the founder of a dynasty.

The invasion of Shansi proved a promenade of bloodless and easy victory. Town after town opened its gates without attempting any resistance to the terrible invader, and the city of Taiyuen alone arrested for a few days the onward progress of the conqueror. The governor of Taiyuen stood to his post bravely, but he could do little without assistance from outside, and there was none to come to him. One body of troops under the minister Likintai had indeed been despatched from Peking, but the principal hope of its commander had been to raise an army on his own private estate, and to organise a defence among the people of Shansi. Long before his arrival on the scene of action he learnt how affairs stood in that province. His family had been massacred, his property was destroyed, the people of Shansi and their country were both at the feet of the rebel, and Taiyuen itself was on the eve of capture. Likintai had no choice left save to make a discreet retreat on the near approach of Li Tseching.

From Taiyuen Li Tseching, acting on the sound principle of making both his rear and flanks secure, proceeded to attack Taitong and the other fortified towns on the northern border of Shansi before marching on the capital. At Ningwoukwan fortune hung for a moment in suspense, and it was only by the lavish expenditure of some of his best men that Li Tseching found himself able to carry the place by storm. But one determined defence meant half a dozen voluntary surrenders. The fortress of Taitong was handed over to the victor of Ningwoukwan by a garrison more anxious for the safety of their lives than for the performance of their duty. With Taitong in his possession there remained no further

reason for Li Tseching to delay the advance on Peking, where by this time confusion and terror reigned supreme.

Tsongching, the Emperor, hastily summoned all his ministers and officers to consult with him how the Empire was to be saved and in what way they might yet be able to extricate themselves from their perilous position. Likintai, who still kept the field although he had not yet struck a blow, sent the advice that the Emperor should at once withdraw to Nankin and renew the war in the valley of the Kiang. This counsel was not merely the most sensible, but it was the only advice that could have been given by a conscientious man under the circumstances. Yet it was not followed. The fatuity not so much of the Emperor as of his ministers was extraordinary and unparalleled. They came to the conclusion, after much wrangling, that the Emperor should not leave Peking, and that they would all await there the progress of events. Well might Tsongching exclaim that it was the folly of his ministers which was responsible for the destruction of the Empire. A trust in Providence may be classed among the virtues, but in great crises it will hardly condone supineness or inaction. The councillors of the Ming could devise no remedy for the situation, nor did they take any energetic measures towards placing Peking in a fit state to sustain a long siege. Almost before they had realized that Li Tseching would not hesitate to attack the Imperial city, they found that their own troops could not be trusted, and that there were traitors in their very midst. The tyranny and incapacity of the eunuchs and other Court officials had disgusted the people and the army, and in the hour of need there were none on whose fidelity the unhappy ruler could rely.

Li Tseching pitched his tent before one of the western gates of Peking, and sent an envoy to Tsongching demanding the surrender of his throne. If we are to form an opinion from the indignation shown by the Emperor at this request, we shall be justified in assuming that Tsongching only then understood the gravity of his position. He was still hesitating as to the course most becoming to his dignity, when the news was brought him that the guards of one of the city gates had deserted their post, and opened a way for the insurgents.

Then he saw that all was lost, and that his last chance of personal safety lay in immediate flight. In this moment of extreme peril the thought of Empire became subordinate to considerations of personal security.

Tsongching summoned round him in the palace the members of his family and the most faithful of his servants, and having called for wine, filled a goblet and passed it round. Then turning to his attendants he entrusted to their charge his sons, whom he desired them to convey with all despatch to their mother's kinsmen. He next exclaimed to his wife, "All is lost for us," and she, with the fortitude worthy of her race and her position, retired to her apartments where she hanged herself. Tsongching finally addressed his daughter, a girl of some fifteen summers, "Why were you born of a father so unfortunate as I am?" and with the words he drew his sword and struck her to the ground. She recovered from her wound and escaped. By his order, all the wives, princesses, and women of the palace were slain to save their honour; while he, to whom some faint hope of attaining a place of refuge still remained, hurried off to see if he could not make his escape from the city. Followed by a few guards, he sped from one gate to another; but wherever he turned his steps he found that the rebels were in front and in possession of all the avenues by which he could alone gain the outside country.

Baffled at all points, Tsongching retraced his steps to the palace, ignorant apparently of the fact that the brave Li Kweiching with a small body of troops was resolutely defending one part of the town. All had left the palace, whither it was feared that the conqueror would first make his way, and when Tsongching sounded the gong to summon his courtiers there was no reply. The Emperor then withdrew to the Wansui hill, a favourite spot of his beyond the north wall of the palace, and, having written out his last protest against the iniquity of his advisers and the harshness of fortune, he hung himself with his own girdle. One eunuch, more faithful than his class, shared these final perils and his master's death. With Tsongching disappeared the last ruler of the line of the Mings, and the end presents all the dramatic features that

comport with the fall of a great reigning family and with the dissolution of an empire. When Tsongching completed the last act in his sad history the condition of the country was such as to discourage all but the most fervent believer in its destinies. It might well have been with a sigh of relief that the last Ming Emperor, generally recognized as such, shook off the trammels of such a world as he had found it.

While these events were in progress in the interior of the palace, Li Tseching was fast making himself master of the capital. One officer, Li Kweiching, alone disputed for a time its possession with him, but he was soon overcome by superior numbers and taken prisoner. Brought into the presence of his conqueror, who praised his courage, he was invited to take service under the new Emperor ; and this he consented to do on condition that Tsongching's body was given honourable burial, and that the surviving members of the Ming family were spared. Li Tseching granted him all his requests ; but, at the funeral of the Emperor, Li Kweiching was seized with qualms of conscience and, sooner than serve under a rebel, committed suicide. Then Li Tseching, disappointed at the loss of an officer from whom he had expected useful aid, gave vent to his natural passions. The ancestral temple of the Mings was plundered and laid level with the ground, and all who had any connection with that family were summarily executed. Thus speedily ended the siege and capture of Peking, and the city which had defied Taitsong and his Manchus passed, after a few days' attack, into the hands of a rebel, whose origin was most ignoble and whose principal object appears to have been plunder. For a time it seemed as if there was no force in the country capable of coping with him, and that he was the virtual master of China.

While most of northern China had fallen into the hands of the rebel Li Tseching, there still remained in the undisturbed possession of the Ming the strip of territory embracing part of Pechihli and Leaousi and extending to the Manchu border. Here the fortresses Ningyuen and Shanhaikwan offered an effectual bar to the invader, and the skilful general Wou Sankwei preserved the peace with an iron hand. In the moment of his extreme peril Tsongching had at last

yielded to the advice of those who had urged him to summon to the defence of the capital the troops stationed on the north-eastern frontier ; and Wou Sankwei had been ordered to evacuate Ningyuen, leave a sufficient garrison at Shanhaikwan, and march in all haste with his remaining troops to Peking. Wou Sankwei had little more than completed half the necessary arrangements when the news reached him that Peking had fallen into the hands of Li Tseching, and that the last of the Ming emperors had been slain. There remained for a faithful subject and soldier no master to assist, but only one to avenge. Li Tseching made overtures and sent lavish promises to Wou Sankwei for his support, but they were all rejected. Placed between two opponents Wou Sankwei had only a choice of evils, but he decided that it was preferable to ask the aid of the Manchus in chastising a rebel than to become a partner in the crime of placing the Empire at the mercy of a robber like Li Tseching.

The Manchus themselves, to whom the main interest in the story again turns, had watched with feelings of delight the retirement of the Chinese from the fortress which had baffled them for so many years ; and Wou Sankwei's troops had not long quitted Ningyuen when their place was taken by Manchus sent across the Leaou. It was thus made evident that, although these Tartars had lost their prince and were under the nominal rule of a boy, they had not given up their old ambition, and also that they were as resolute as ever to take advantage of every symptom of declining vigour on the part of the Chinese. There was, therefore, no room for Wou Sankwei to flatter himself that the Manchus would remain passive while he tried conclusions with the robber Li. They were evidently determined to make the most of his embarrassments ; and he could not hope to resist their attack on Shanhaikwan with the few troops that he could spare for its defence, should he undertake an active campaign against Li Tseching.

The Chinese general did not waste time in coming to a decision. The situation was urgent, and he at once sent off a letter to the Manchu court requesting it to send an army to join his in putting down Li's rebellion, and in restoring

peace and tranquillity to the Empire. The request was at once granted, for the Manchus saw at a glance that their opportunity had arrived. The man, who, more than any other, had kept them out of China during these later wars, had sent them an invitation to enter that country as his friends and as the champions of the oppressed. Not merely did they thus obtain his services and those of his brave troops, but they also gained an easy and bloodless possession both of the Great Wall, and of the two principal and only remaining fortresses constituting the famous Quadrilateral which had alone prevented their conquering those northern provinces of China that they had so frequently plundered and devastated under their leader Taitson. Wou Sankwei's letter was barely perused before orders were given for the march to Shanhaikwan of those of their troops who were already in the field, and for the immediate assembly of the whole fighting force of the nation. It was no longer for a mere marauding expedition, or for a trying and unsuccessful siege, that the summons went forth to the Manchus to gather round the banners of their chiefs. The campaign for which they were called to arms was one presenting every likelihood of success for the conquest of China, and in the towns and camps of these Tartars and their allies the cry was raised with a common voice, "To Pekin!"

The first brunt of the fighting fell upon Wou Sankwei and his small but veteran force; for when he heard that a Manchu contingent was on the march to join him he delayed no longer, but set out for Pekin. Li Tseching, who remained in the capital to enjoy the power and dignity which he had won, sent a portion of his army to meet Wou Sankwei, under an officer whose instructions were to negotiate rather than to fight. Against this corps Wou marched with all rapidity, and the superior discipline of his men combined with his own skilful dispositions turned the fortunes of the day in his favour. As is always the case with a body of men who are subjected to none of the restraints of a severe discipline, the instant Li's men, although accustomed to victory by a series of unbroken successes, found that the day was going against them, they lost all heart and broke into hopeless

confusion. The battle became a scene of butchery. Wou Sankwei's troops gave no quarter, and more than twenty thousand rebels encumbered the plain. The news of this preliminary disaster came as a warning to Li Tseching ; but, as he still possessed an army greatly exceeding that of his adversary in numbers, there was no reason why he should yet despair of the result. So far as we are aware Li Tseching then knew nothing of Wou Sankwei's arrangement with the Manchus, or of the concentration and approach of a Tartar army.

Li Tseching left Peking in person at the head of 60,000 men, the pick of his army, and taking with him the two eldest of the Ming princes and Wou Siang, the father of Wou Sankwei. On the news of the advance of this formidable force, Wou Sankwei halted at Yungping, near the scene of his first victory, where he made all the preparations he could to resist the enemy, and whence he sent urgent messages to his Tartar allies to hasten their advance. The town of Yungping is situated only a short distance south-west of Shanhaikwan, and lies a few miles from the northern bank of the Lanhö, a stream difficult to cross at certain seasons of the year. The details of the battle that have come down to us leave obscure the part which this river played in the fortunes of the day, but it must have been considerable. Wou Sankwei's army was greatly outnumbered, and it is probable that he had to meet threefold odds, while the Manchu troops although known to be near at hand had not joined him. Under these circumstances it was Wou's policy to defer the action, but Li was no less eager to commence the attack. The latter adopted the traditional tactics laid down in the standard military treatise of forming his line in the shape of a horn or crescent and overlapping the wings of the enemy. By compressing the extremities, the opposing force is not merely outflanked but almost surrounded. Wou Sankwei was no inexpert or craven captain to allow a foe to acquire an advantage which either skill or courage could prevent ; but here he found himself unable to check the movement of his more numerous enemy, who had soon the satisfaction of perceiving, from the hill where he had taken his stand with

his state prisoners, that his army completely surrounded Wou Sankwei's small force. Victory seemed to be within his grasp, for, although Wou's troops resisted valiantly, it was clear that they could not long hold out against the very superior numbers of their assailants; when the fortunate arrival and impetuous charge of a Manchu corps carried terror into the ranks of Li's troops, and converted what promised to be a decisive victory into a signal overthrow. Li Tseching escaped with a few hundred horsemen from the fray, but thirty thousand of his best men had fallen. The defeat of Yungping destroyed at a single blow all the plans which Li had been forming for the consolidation of his authority throughout China. He escaped to Peking, where his authority was still recognized; but it was evident that he was in no position either to stand a siege at the capital or to risk a second battle in its neighbourhood.

After the victory of Yungping, the arrival of fresh Manchu troops was continuous, and Wou Sankwei, who still retained the principal command, was able to follow hard upon the traces of the defeated Li. Again did the baffled robber strive to induce Wou to detach himself from the side of the Manchus, but the latter received all his overtures with silent disdain. When Wou reached Peking and pitched his camp over against the eastern ramparts, he was greeted with the spectacle of his father's head upon the wall, Li having wreaked his vengeance and disappointment on the person of Wou Siang. From that time a new bitterness was imparted to the struggle, and thenceforth any reconciliation between these two leaders became altogether impossible.

Li Tseching made no attempt to defend the city which had witnessed his coronation and brief reign, but confined all his efforts to escaping from Peking with as much of the plunder which he had accumulated there as he could collect and convey. Li's flight was precipitate, but it was not conducted with sufficient rapidity to enable him to escape the attack of his vigorous and energetic opponent. Wou Sankwei pressed hard upon the retreating force, and, making a detour round the city, came up with Li Tseching's rear-guard at the bridge of Likao. The soldiers of Wou Sankwei and their

Manchu allies threw themselves with fury on those to whom the charge of the unwieldy baggage train had been entrusted, but the resistance they encountered was made with only a faint heart. More than ten thousand of Li's followers were then slaughtered to the manes of Wou Siang.

Li's line of retreat lay along the main high-road into Shansi, and, as he retired, his ranks were strengthened by the junction with him of the garrisons which he had placed in the different fortified towns of Pechihli. At Paoting in particular he was joined by a considerable detachment, but it was not until he reached Chingting that he felt able to make a fresh stand and to face his pursuers. The reasons which induced Li to again tempt fortune on the field of battle, when he held in his possession so advantageous a scene for renewing the contest as the western provinces, were more probably due to disappointed vanity than to any fear of his force disbanding. The latter danger was the more remote, because his followers knew that little sympathy was felt towards them by the mass of the Chinese people, in whose eyes they were nothing more than marauders and swashbucklers. When Wou Sankwei discovered his enemy in position near Chingting, he was not grieved to find him ready and willing to accept battle, for his own army had been raised by the arrival of eighty thousand Manchus and by numerous Chinese levies to close upon two hundred thousand men. Li's troops began the battle by a desperate charge led by their chief in person, and then the contest became general. Both sides fought with extraordinary courage and marked bitterness, and even Wou himself was compelled to express admiration at the fortitude of his adversary, who, after three reverses, appeared as eager for the fray as ever. Night closed on the struggle without leaving to either party a decisive advantage over the other; but the loss of forty thousand men, among whom were numbered many of his bravest and most faithful officers, compelled Li Tseching to order a retreat during the night. From Chingting he retired with such rapidity that he and his exhausted troops gained Shansi without further molestation.

With his defeat at Chingting Li's fate was virtually

decided, and the closing scenes of his career need only be briefly touched upon. From Shansi he was driven into Honan, and from Honan into Shensi. Several times he ventured to engage his pursuers, but Wou Sankwei was ever at his heels, and always the victor in these encounters. The fortress Tunkwang, on the easy capture of which Li had been wont to congratulate himself, fell now not less easily into the hands of his opponent. These repeated defeats, and this rapid flight from one extremity of the country to the other, destroyed the confidence of his followers, and when Li wished to make a final stand in his western metropolis of Singan, to which he had given its historic name of Changnan, he discovered that his troops would not obey his orders, and that they were only anxious to obtain terms from Wou Sankwei. Li Tseching then fled to the mountains with a mere handful of men, and after having effected the overthrow of a dynasty, and for a time indulged a reasonable hope of establishing his own family as its successor, he was thus compelled to return to the old robber-life of his youth. Even in this fallen state he was not destined to enjoy any long lease of personal safety. An active pursuit was still kept up on the traces of the arch-rebel ; and his band lost heavily in repeated combats with the pursuers. The necessity of procuring food obliged him to frequently quit the mountains, and it was while on one of these foraging expeditions that he was surprised in a village and surrounded by a superior force. Li Tseching was one of the first to fall, and his head was carried in triumph to the nearest mandarin. Such was the end of this remarkable man, who, with no other redeeming quality than courage, so nearly subjected the Chinese to his brutal and unenlightened rule. One of his sons attempted to revive his party, but the design fell through without meeting the slightest support. The Chinese might be divided in their predilections as to other parties, and might regard the Manchus with tolerance or aversion ; but they were unanimous in their detestation of the robber Li. He had very nearly attained success, but it is most improbable that any mere robber chief, such as he was, with no redeeming motives and representing no party save that of plunder, will ever

again be in a position to so nearly menace the liberties and dearly prized privileges of the Chinese people.

Wou Sankwei had performed his task nobly. He had avenged the Ming, and had crushed the most formidable of public enemies. His invitation to the Manchus had been the means of attaining these results, but as soon as he found that Li had ceased to be formidable he began to show anxiety for the departure of his Tartar allies. The Manchus, it is hardly necessary to say, were fully resolved not to comply with his solicitations. They had taken possession of Peking, and they meant to stay there. On the other hand, they did not wish to give umbrage to Wou Sankwei, whose ability they respected, and whose co-operation would be invaluable to them in the task of extending and consolidating their authority throughout the Empire. All their efforts were, therefore, directed to the object of keeping Wou Sankwei in good temper, and they also sought to popularize their government with the people. In both these respects their tact and good judgment were conspicuous. Wou Sankwei, half won over by his animosity to Li, and gratified by the receipt of honours and titles—among which may be named that of Ping-si-Wang, or Prince Pacifier of the West—was rendered still more disposed to throw in his lot unreservedly with the foreign House, because he found so much in its conduct to approve. As a practical man and experienced administrator, he felt bound to ask himself the question—what preferable candidate could he name for the throne to the young Manchu prince, who was evincing a sagacity beyond his years, and who was surrounded by wise ministers and tried soldiers? Wou Sankwei had to confess that he knew of none; but deep in his heart there existed a patriotism too pure to leave him well satisfied with himself at having been the means of introducing the foreigner into the Empire. For the time he kept his peace, and confined himself to the duties of his government in Shensi; but his mind was evidently ill at ease. We shall hear much more of this gallant soldier later on; but for the present we can leave him resting on his laurels in his provincial capital of Singan while we describe the course of events in the eastern provinces of the country where the Manchus were rapidly extending their sway.

As soon as the leaders of the Manchu army felt themselves firmly established at Peking, orders were given for the removal thither of the capital from Moukden ; and their boy ruler, the infant son of Taitson, was summoned to take up his residence in his new city. The governing power was vested in the hands of Taitson's brother, Prince Dorgun, better known by the name given him by his nephew of Ama Wang, the Father Prince. One of the Regent's first acts was to proclaim * his nephew Emperor of China under the style of Chuntche, and to announce the event with all due solemnity to the neighbouring potentates of Mongolia and Corea. The Manchus, who up to this point had left their Chinese allies to perform most of the fighting, now commenced military operations in earnest, and they sent several armies into Shansi and Shantung to establish their authority on a firm basis in those provinces. This had become all the more necessary because a native ruler had been proclaimed at Nankin, and his sovereignty had been recognized by the inhabitants of all the southern and central provinces.

The choice of the Ming officials stationed in the south of China for a prince of the native dynasty to fill the throne fell

* Chuntche, although a mere child, delivered the following spirited address in the hall of the palace to the assembled ministers and commanders of his people : " Princes, my uncles, and you illustrious generals of my armies, you have seen me ascend with a tranquil and firm step the throne to which you have elevated me. Do I derive that sense of security, that degree of assurance, which I have exhibited, from my own virtue, from my own capacity, or from my own talents ? I am only a child, and your suffrages alone have constituted me your master. Too young to have yet had an opportunity to justify your choice by some exploit worthy of you, I still feel myself superior to the weakness of my age, when I perceive so many heroes assembled round my throne. By your valour and wisdom you have raised our nation from obscurity to carry it to a height of power which all the kings, our neighbours, admire, and to crown the glory you have placed the Empire of China at the disposal of my family. Hence comes the confidence which you yourselves are perhaps surprised to find in a child. What may I not expect from your courage and experience ? Already I can see myself master of all the provinces of this great empire. Do not think that I am ambitious, solely for my own ends, to possess these vast estates. I desire them only in order to give peace to the many peoples who have suffered much during these later years, and also to reward your zeal and services."—Mailla, vol. x. p. 504.

upon Fou Wang, a son of Wanleh's son of the same name, who, many years before, had been mentioned in connection with the crown. The character of Fou Wang was not one to inspire his adherents with much confidence. Before his elevation to power he had obtained a reputation for dissolute conduct, and his tastes were too confirmed when summoned to assume the paramount position to leave those who knew him best any hope that he would forego his accustomed license and devote himself with the requisite energy and determination to the difficult task that lay before him. Yet, such as he was, it was to his hands that the destiny of the relics of the Ming cause had been confided. Had the Chinese, even at this emergency, possessed a capable prince, who could have recalled Wou Sankwei to his allegiance, there can be no doubt that the Manchu tide of invasion would never have advanced south of the Hoangho, and it may even be doubted whether within a few years it would not have been rolled back beyond the Great Wall.

Just as Wou Sankwei had been the pillar of the state on the north-east frontier, so did the able and honest minister Shu Kofa prove the prop of the new throne at Nankin. His reputation for integrity stood so high that it supplied the deficiencies of his master, and his intense patriotism attracted to his person the enthusiasm of a people eager to support with their blood a native ruler, but cooled in their ardour by the weakness, indifference, and sensuality of the Ming. Shu Kofa laboured at this critical moment under the disadvantage of being a civilian, and not a soldier; and as all his efforts to induce Wou Sankwei to desert the Manchus and to declare for Fou Wang failed, he laboured under this disadvantage to the end. The Manchus, still bent on their policy of propitiating, rather than of attempting to crush, the people of China, made overtures to Shu Kofa; but that minister stood resolute in his allegiance to his native sovereign, although Fou Wang was making it clear by his daily life that, as a wise and just ruler, he was not to be compared with the boy Chuntche or the Regent Ama Wang. A pretty war of words ensued between the Regent Ama Wang and Shu Kofa, in which the former dwelt upon the necessity of uniting the

Empire under a single sway, while the latter contented himself with pointing out how long China had been divided between the Sungs and the Kins. Although the doubtful honours of this verbal controversy may have remained with Shu Kofa, the Manchus could say that they had acted throughout with consistency and moderation. It was not they who were to be blamed if the obstinacy of a few ministers, who should have seen that their master's folly could end only in ruin, plunged provinces that had yet escaped the horrors of war into all the confusion entailed by a bitter and protracted strife.

When Ama Wang discovered that there was no hope of gaining over to his side by fair words or promises the minister Shu Kofa, he turned all his attention to the preparations necessary to effect the overthrow of the rival sovereignty at Nankin. While the Manchu troops were assembling from different quarters for the passage of the Hoangho, and while fresh levies were being raised among the northern Chinese, all was confusion at Nankin. Jealousies between the commanders, none of whom possessed much merit or experience, bickerings among the ministers, apathy on the part of the ruler, and bitter disappointment and disgust in the ranks of the people, all combined to precipitate the overthrow of the ephemeral throne that had been erected in the southern capital. Ama Wang waited patiently to allow these causes of disintegration time to develop their full force and to contribute to the ruin of the Mings; but in the winter of 1644-45 it was clear, from the tidings received from the south, that the time had come for the resumption of active military operations.

One army, which had been employed in pacifying Shantung, and which had distinguished itself at the siege of Sioochow, in Kiangsu, was directed to cross the Hoeiho and to march on Nankin. Its march was unopposed, and, making full use of the great canal, its approach to Yangchow was soon reported in the terrified streets of Nankin. Another army had entered Honan from Shansi in several detachments, which had been concentrated in the neighbourhood of Kaifong. Some preparations had been made for the defence of Honan,

but the feuds between the commanders were bitter. Nothing had been done to devise a common plan of action, and, when the Manchus crossed the Yellow river, the Chinese were wholly unprepared to receive them. Without any attempt at resistance the principal towns opened their gates, and within a few weeks the extensive and important province of Honan was added to the possessions of the Tartars.

The peril had now become so near and so grave, and his advice had so long fallen on unheeding ears, that the minister Shu Kofa determined to take the field in person, and to endeavour to oppose, with such troops as he could collect, the approaching Manchus. Brought in this practical way face to face with the invader of whom he had heard so much, but of whose military power he knew practically nothing, Shu Kofa soon came to the conclusion that with the troops he possessed little could be done to arrest their progress. His men unfortunately shared this conviction without the moral strength to subdue it, and before they had come under fire they were already half-defeated. Under these circumstances Shu Kofa resolved on retreat, and withdrew his corps behind the old course of the Hoangho, where he hoped to be able to make a better stand. In the idea of impressing the Tartars with a sense of the numbers at his disposal, he drafted a great many peasants into his force, and placed them with flags and other military ensigns along an extended line. The device, which may even appear puerile, did not succeed ; for the Tartars were either so eager to engage, or had discovered the fraud, that they at once crossed the river and began the attack. The mere sight of the Manchus crossing in their boats was enough for this mob of untrained and probably unarmed peasants, who, breaking into confusion, carried in their flight Kofa's trained troops as well. Shu Kofa succeeded in reaching the fortified town of Yangchow with a few hundred men ; all the rest of his army had either dispersed or fallen by the sword of the pursuing Manchus. Even at Yangchow Shu Kofa found neither safety from their pursuit, nor leisure to prepare for a protracted defence. With an army utterly dispirited, and without the smallest hope of succour from a Court too corrupt and selfish to trouble itself about the

misfortunes of even a faithful servant, Shu Kofa saw that the prolongation of the struggle so far as he was concerned was hopeless. He, therefore, came to the resolution to adopt the extreme course of killing himself sooner than afford his enemy the satisfaction of a further personal triumph. His example was followed by most of his officers, and Yangchow thus fell into the hands of the Manchus.

The loss to the Ming cause involved in the death of Shu Kofa was very considerable. Alone among Fou Wang's ministers he was actuated by pure motives, and his place could not be supplied. His public spirit and valour were equally conspicuous, and he probably only wanted experience to show himself a capable commander. His fellow-countrymen judged his loss rather by what they believed him capable of performing, than by anything he had actually done; and in their eyes the void left by his death seemed immense and not to be filled up. Wou Sankwei alone enjoyed anything like the same reputation, and he, whether heartily or with secret regret mattered little, was employed fighting the battles of the Manchus.

The capture of Yangchow was quickly followed by that of Nankin. Fou Wang abandoned his capital as soon as he learnt that the Tartars were close at hand, in the hope of securing his own personal safety by speedy flight. In this hope he was destined to be disappointed, for a Chinese officer, anxious to gain favour with the new rulers, undertook the pursuit, and promised to bring back the Ming prince, dead or alive. Fou Wang was discovered in the act of entering a boat on the Kiang, when, to avoid the disgrace of capture, he threw himself into the stream and was drowned. His victors, the Manchus, established themselves without further disturbance at Nankin, and completed their triumph in Central China by the occupation of Hangchow. The Chinese passed under their new rulers with less manifestation of dislike than seemed probable even so short a time before the capture of Nankin as the proclamation of Fou Wang, and all the officials who consented to recognize Chuntche and to shave their heads, a ceremony then proclaimed imperative on all, were reinstated in their offices. At Hangchow a Ming

prince, to whom the eyes of the people turned as Fou Wang's most natural successor, induced the Manchus to grant the city favourable terms by making a prompt surrender. The victory was easily obtained, but the victors sullied their success by a deed of inexcusable treachery. They spared the town and its inhabitants, indeed, but their first act was to execute the Ming prince with whom they had entered into this convention. Many of his officers, we are told, sooner than accept a favour of a people capable of such a crime, put an end to their own existence.

By this successful campaign, in which their losses were of the most trivial character, the Manchus had not merely obtained possession of the second city in the realm, but they had overthrown a rival potentate who had at one time seemed likely to gather round him the national forces. In the hour of distress the Chinese possessed the desire to give their own rulers one more chance of retrieving their reputation before they resigned themselves to the lot of accepting the foreign race who came with the sword in one hand, and the scales of justice in the other. But the events of Fou Wang's brief term of power were not of a character to encourage their hopes, or to strengthen their fortitude. They served only to discredit still further the Ming family, and to convince the intelligent that the best hope of the country lay in as speedy an agreement as possible with the Manchus. When Nankin opened its gates, and the dissolute Fou Wang fled to meet his death in the waters of the Kiang, all hope of the resuscitation of the Ming dynasty as the governing power passed away. It had been given another trial, and had been finally found wanting and condemned.

But even for the discrediting and disappearance of the reigning family the Chinese did not finally abandon all thought of further resistance, and, although with the overthrow of Fou Wang the triumph of the Manchus became assured, the efforts of Chinese patriotism flickered on for many years. A member of the Ming family, Tang Wang—who could, however, trace his descent no nearer to that family than Hongwou, its first Emperor—was the next to assume the leadership of Chinese patriots. He enjoyed in

the province of Fuhkien the hereditary dignity and estates of Prince of Nanyang. On Fou Wang's death many of the Chinese soldiers and leaders repaired to Tang Wang, who was proclaimed Emperor by them, and who took such measures as he could for continuing the struggle of independence. But even in his camp, and among the small section of the people to which he was able to appeal, there were dissensions and petty jealousies to hamper his movements, and to further detract from the vigour of the national defence in the province of Fuhkien. Nor would the episode of Tang Wang attract more than passing notice, were it not that it was signalized by the naval exploits of Ching Chelong, celebrated himself as a daring captain, but still better known to fame as the father of Koshinga.

When the Manchus crossed the Kiang and occupied Nankin, the Chinese fleet, instead of attempting to oppose them, had put off to sea, and taken shelter in the harbours of Fuhkien. It had originally been led by a relative of Ching Chelong, and when it sought a place of refuge in a region where his influence was supreme it naturally passed under his orders. It was by this fleet and the remnants of other Chinese armies that Tang Wang was proclaimed Emperor in 1645. Hampered in his measures by the want of money and by the presence of several rivals, this prince, rejoicing in his new title of sovereign, could do little towards arresting the progress of the Manchus. While he had been employed in the abortive effort to unite his followers, the Tartars had overrun Kiangsi and Kiangsu. Chekiang had also, after the capture of its capital, passed almost entirely into the hands of another army, and the Tartars had the satisfaction of seeing the resources of the two southern provinces, Yunnan and Kweichow, crippled and nullified by a bitter civil war. When the Manchus were so easily victorious in their more hazardous expeditions there was no valid reason why they should experience greater difficulty in dispersing the ill-led and badly-organized army at the disposal of Tang Wang. The circumstances in which the Chinese leader found himself placed compelled him to assume the offensive, but the attempt ended in disaster. At the first shock of battle his

soldiers were put to the rout. Nor was this an isolated success. Two Tartar armies advanced southwards through Chekiang in parallel lines, and as they marched they overcame all open resistance, and set up their authority in the towns, the wave of conquest being clearly marked by the shaven heads of the inhabitants.

Ching Chelong constituted, as has been said, the chief prop of Tang Wang's fortunes. Without him it was doubtful if that prince could have kept round his person the force which in appearance was sufficiently formidable ; and it soon became evident that Ching, in thus supporting a scion of the Ming, desired rather to advance his own personal ends than to benefit from pure motives the lately reigning dynasty. The circumstances of the hour were favourable to the indulgence of a lofty ambition, as who could declare what was impossible or unattainable in the troubled waters of the political situation ? Ching, therefore, brought all the pressure of his influence to bear on the prince in order to induce or constrain him to recognize as his heir the young man Koshinga, who already gave promise of future ability and greatness. But it is the habit of princes to cling more closely to the privileges of their birth in the hour of misfortune than even in the days of prosperity, and Tang Wang was inflexible on the point that the right of succession could not pass beyond the limits of the family to whom it had been entrusted by the mandate of Heaven. Ching took the rebuff to heart, and his zeal in the cause grew cold ; and he made advances to another competitor for a throne of which the giving away had passed into other hands. The rupture between Ching and Tang Wang was precipitated by the murder of one of Ching's friends, and Ching, vowing vengeance for the wrong, retired to his ships like Achilles to his tent. Thence he proceeded to join his forces with those of the Prince of Loo, another of the Ming rivals. Hardly had he done so than the Manchus assailed the dominions of that potentate. Ching's fleet combined with the land forces in attempting to defend the passage of the Tsien Tang river, which waters the Green Tea districts, and on which is situated Hangchow. Their joint efforts were so far successful that the Manchus were compelled

to ascend the stream as high up as Yenchow, where they were able to pass by a ford. From that moment, however, it was all over with the Prince of Loo. His capital Chowhing surrendered to the Manchus, and then many of his principal officers deserted to their side. Ching himself was not long in imitating their example, and allowed himself to be so much influenced by the lavish promises of the Tartars that he gave in his formal surrender and ranged himself under their standard. Even in this transaction he thought he saw a mode of advancing his own fortunes, and of attaining the ends he had long held in view, for, as he observed, "it is in waters that have been disturbed by a storm that we expect to find the largest fish." Ching was destined to further and bitter disappointment. The Tartars accepted his offers of fidelity and assistance, and in return protested the greatest respect for his person; but when he paid them a visit they placed him in honourable confinement, and then sent him off without scruple to Pekin. There he was kept a close prisoner, and all the threats and promises of his relations and followers did not avail to secure his release. After waiting some months in inaction his son Ching Chinkong declared eternal war upon the Manchus, and began those raids along the coast which made his name famous at a later day as Koshinga.

Even before this the cause of Tang Wang had expired. When Ching deserted, most of his troops fell away from him, and Tang Wang had no resource save to seek safety by a precipitate flight to the West, where a few supporters of Chinese independence still held out. But the Manchus were not at all disposed to allow their opponent to escape. A body of light cavalry was sent in pursuit, and succeeded in overtaking the unhappy Ming prince in a town in Kiangsi. He avoided capture by throwing himself into a well, where he perished by a miserable and lingering death. His wife fell into the hands of the Tartars, who sent her to Foochow, where she was executed—the natural ferocity of the Manchus again asserting itself and getting the better of the civilization which they had borrowed from the Chinese. Thus easily and rapidly was the Manchu authority set up and established in

the maritime provinces of China to as far south as the great territory of Kwantung.

As the Manchus advanced the Chinese retired, but, in order to show their determination to continue the struggle so long as there was an inch of territory to be defended, they set up in Canton as a new Emperor, on the death of Tang Wang, his younger brother Yu Ngao. In the adjoining province of Kwangsi the viceroy had proclaimed an emperor of his own selection in the person of Kwei Wang, a grandson of the Emperor Wanleh. Thus, even in the South, and at their last extremity, the old divisions revealed themselves; and the Chinese remained to the end as a house divided against itself. The Tartars did not delay their invasion of Kwantung, although many rumours had been spread as to both the formidable character of the defences of Canton and the number of the army collected for its protection. Their garrisons in the eastern provinces were concentrated, and placed under the orders of a Chinese commander, with Tartar advisers attached to his person. But even before this army had begun its march the fate of the southern sovereignties had been virtually decided by their own internal disputes and disagreements. The collective forces of the princes Yu and Kwei might have been formidable, but they neutralized each other, and destroyed their respective chances by flying at each other's throats when the formidable invader stood on the very threshold of their states. Before the Tartars had begun any active portion of the campaign, the two armies of these rivals had encountered in a battle marked by all the intense bitterness of civil strife. That representing the cause of Yu was almost annihilated, while the victors had little reason to congratulate themselves from the heavy loss they had suffered. With the way thus cleared for them, the Manchus laid close siege to Canton, which, after a mere show of resistance, surrendered to their arms. The Prince Yu ended his life and ambition under the axe of the executioner.

The capture of Canton gave the Manchus a post of vantage whence they could direct their operations against Kwei Wang with the greater facility and success. Nor were they slow to turn to all possible use a position which enabled

them to overawe and gradually absorb all the southern provinces of China. After his victory over his rival the forces of this Ming prince had advanced towards Canton, and taken up a strong position at Chowking, a town situated west of that city on the Sikiang river. But their heart failing them, they withdrew into the interior of Kwangsi, where, in a difficult country with few roads, they might hope to prolong the struggle with better chances of success. The result justified their anticipations, for the Manchus were at last compelled to recognize that they had advanced as far as their available strength permitted them to go. It was not until they had suffered two repulses in front of Kueiling that they felt constrained to admit this much, and, although fresh troops were summoned in all haste from the North, Kwei Wang continued to maintain his authority in Kwangsi for a much longer period than seemed possible after the capture of Canton. The disappearance of one of the Ming princes had had the effect of consolidating the power of the other.

Nor when the Tartar reinforcements reached the scene of action, early in the year 1648, were their efforts attended with a more happy result. The courage of the Chinese was greatly restored by their two successes at Kueiling, and Kiuchessa's measures were marked by the necessary admixture of boldness and prudence. This brave leader had the satisfaction of beholding the Manchus again recoil before the fortress which he had already twice defended against them with success. The effect produced by these reverses was electrical. Those who had given in their adhesion to the Tartars allowed themselves to revert to their natural sympathies, and the defection of two commanders, Li Ching Tong and Kinchin Hoan, who had greatly contributed to the Manchu conquest of Southern China, completed the subversion in this quarter of the realm of the newly erected authority of the young Emperor Chuntche. Not only was Canton lost in this wave of popular excitement and enthusiasm, but the provinces of Kiangsi and Fuhkien broke off their connection with Peking and expelled the Manchu. The authority of Kwei Wang was proclaimed throughout the whole of the South, and, after seeming destruction, promised to take deeper

root than ever. This resuscitation of the Ming power was probably wholly deceptive in inducing people to believe that Kwei Wang's position was secure, and that the Manchus might yet be successfully resisted and repelled. But, of course, it compelled the Manchus to undertake over again the subjugation of these provinces; and this task was entrusted to fresh troops drawn from the North and commanded in the field by the best Tartar generals.

The good fortune of the Prince of Kwei, after attaining this height of success, proved of short duration. The province of Fuhkien was the first to feel the returning force of the Manchus. In that province a Buddhist priest had raised a mighty gathering of the people, and had for a time subverted the Tartar authority. The presence off the coast of Koshinga's fleet lent some character to this otherwise badly organized and insignificant agitation, but even the war-junks of Ching Chelong's wrathful son could not enable the people of Fuhkien to withstand the brunt of Manchu attack. The monk defended himself during two months in Kienning with resolution; but the Manchus at last carried it by storm, and put every man inside the town to the sword. By this single success the Manchus recovered the province of Fuhkien, and Koshinga's fleet put to sea without venturing to take any part in the contest.

Many of the Manchu troops had retired on the proclamation of the Prince of Kwei to Kanchow, where they made all preparations for holding out until relief came. The Chinese commander Kinchin made several abortive attempts to take it, and Li Ching Tong was not more successful. When the Tartar reinforcements arrived from Nankin and Fuhkien they amounted to an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men; and neither Kinchin nor Li Ching Tong felt able to oppose it in the field. They resorted to Fabian tactics, hoping to tire out their enemy, but the strategy of the Manchus proved the superior. By a skilfully conducted manœuvre Chuntche's general enclosed Kinchin in the town of Kanchang, where he was placed at a serious disadvantage. His rashness had invited disaster, and only by a desperate effort did he succeed in cutting his way out again. Even then escape

was denied him, for his assailants, gathering from all quarters, attacked him while crossing the river. Kinchin himself was drowned, and most of his men perished either by the sword or in the water. Kanchang surrendered, and its garrison was massacred.

Nor was Li Ching Tong's end more fortunate. After a fresh repulse before Kanchow, he was obliged by the clamour of his troops to make a retreat, when his army gradually dwindled away. It is said that he sought relief for his distress and disappointment in the wine-cup; but, by a strange coincidence, he met his death in a similar manner to his colleague, being drowned in the swollen waters of a stream which he was crossing. With the loss of these two generals and the crushing overthrow of a third in a battle at Siangtan in Hoonan, the chances of the Prince of Kwei, which had at one time appeared so promising, were conclusively shown to be hollow, and the complete success of the Manchu arms became assured. From this time henceforth there will be no real fluctuation in the fortunes of the strife, and the progress of the establishment of the Tartar administration will be steady and certain. Many more battles have yet to be fought, Canton has to be recaptured, three provinces have to be subdued, the last of the Mings has to be driven into exile; but these events belong to the reign of Chuntche. At the point when the revival of Chinese courage received its check, and when Fuhkien, Kiangsi, and Hoonan, momentarily won back, were irrevocably lost, we may fitly close our account of the Manchu conquest of China.

How a small Tartar tribe succeeded, after forty years of war, in imposing its yoke on the sceptical, freedom-loving, and intensely national millions of China, will always remain one of the enigmas of history. We have traced the course of these campaigns, but, even while venturing to indicate some of the causes of their success, we must still come to the conclusion that the result exceeded what would at any time during the struggle have been thought to be credible. The military genius of Wou Sankwei, the widely prevalent dissensions among the people, and the effeteness of the reigning House, on the one hand, and the superior discipline, sagacity,

and political knowledge of the Tartars on the other, are some of the principal causes of the Manchu success that at once suggest themselves to the mind. But in no other case has a people, boldly resisting to the end, and cheered by occasional flashes of victory, been subjected, after more than a whole generation of war with a despised and truly insignificant enemy, in the durable form in which the Manchus trod the Chinese under their heel, and secured for themselves all the perquisites and honour accruing to the governing class in one of the richest and largest empires under the sun. The Chinese were made to feel all the bitterness of subjection by the imposition of a hated badge of servitude, and that they proved unable to succeed under this aggravation of circumstances greatly increases the wonder with which the Manchu conquest must ever be regarded.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE MANCHU DYNASTY.

The Reign of Chuntche.

WHILE these campaigns were in progress the youthful Emperor Chuntche, under the guidance of his prudent uncle, the Regent Ama Wang, was doing his best by wise and moderate conduct to attract to his person and administration the sympathy of his new subjects. And his efforts were not unavailing, for the Chinese were themselves anxious to secure and enjoy all the benefits that come in the train of a settled government. At first it seemed as if he was to attain a greater measure of success than his hopes could have conceived to be possible, for after the victories of Wou Sankwei and the collapse of the Nankin power most of the provinces gave in their adhesion to the new rule. It was then that orders were issued from Peking that the Manchu officers should show great moderation in their dealings with the people, and that all who surrendered should be allowed to retain their goods and liberty—instructions at variance with their national customs, and with many of the practices of eastern war.

The measures taken for the overthrow of the Prince of Kwei had to a great extent denuded the northern provinces of troops, and those operations were still uncrowned with success when there broke out in Shensi a revolt that threatened to further embarrass the Manchus, who now seemed to be masters only of the ground on which they stood. The Manchu troops left in that province by Wou Sankwei when he passed southward to annex Szchuen consisted principally, if not solely, of the garrison of Singan. Three thousand

Tartars did not in the eyes of the inhabitants represent a force sufficient to inspire them with such fear of the Manchu power as to induce them to remain true in the allegiance they had sworn in deference to the name and ability of Wou Sankwei. They therefore threw off their new yoke, and, gathering confidence from their meeting with no resistance, swarmed like bees round Singan, where they expected to crush the only practical vestige of Tartar authority in the province. Appearances seemed to favour their hopes, for the Manchus were few in number, and the prospect of aid was remote. The insurgents counted on the co-operation of the inhabitants of the town in their efforts to expel the foreigner ; but for some reason the citizens of Singan refused to repose much faith in the insurgents, and attached themselves instead to the cause of the Manchus. A corps of five thousand men was formed from their ranks ; the assaults of the enemy were repulsed, and, with the arrival of fifty thousand fresh troops from the capital, the insurgents were obliged to hastily disband. The Manchus pursued them with bitterness to their hiding-places, and most of them perished by the sword.

The rising in Shensi, thus happily repressed, proved but the prelude to a graver insurrection in Shansi, where the Manchu authority had been early set up, and where it seemed to be securely established. In this instance the revolt was due to the perpetration of an outrage, and not to any outburst of national antipathy as had been the case in Shensi.

In 1649, Chuntche being then fourteen years of age, Ama Wang sent an embassy to the principal Khan of the Mongols for the purpose of procuring a wife for the young Emperor. Motives of policy were at the root of this decision, for the alliance of the Mongols was of the first importance to the Manchus. A prince of the ruling family was charged with the mission, and while the preliminary negotiations were in progress he took up his quarters at Taitong, which was still held by Chinese troops under a governor of their own race named Kiangtsai. The followers of the Manchu prince conducted themselves in the town with arrogance, and acted towards the inhabitants in utter disregard both of the laws of

humanity and of the pacific proclamations which their master had repeatedly issued. Their insults culminated in an outrage of a heinous and inexcusable character. A young girl, the daughter of one of the most influential citizens of Taitong, was being led through the streets in honour of her wedding-day, when several of the ambassador's comrades with their attendants interrupted the procession and carried off the bride. So daring and unheard-of an outrage in the light of day shocked the sedate and well-conducted Chinese, and a cry was at once raised that those guilty of the crime should be punished with all the rigour of the law.

Kiangtsai himself took the lead in pressing this demand upon the Manchu prince ; but, unfortunately for Chuntche, his ambassador was himself a libertine, and made light of the offence of his boon-companions. Then it was that Kiangtsai resolved to exact a terrible revenge. The Chinese were summoned from all quarters to massacre the few Tartars in the place, and in a few hours not a Manchu survived save the ambassador himself, who only succeeded in escaping by a rapid flight and the swiftness of his horse.

Although this extreme act might have been condoned at Peking in consequence of the provocation received, Kiangtsai did not after this massacre feel safe in adopting any other course than one of pronounced hostility to the Manchus, and the proximity of the scene to the capital showed him how necessary it was to take immediate steps to render his position as strong as circumstances would permit. Having slain, in defiance of the sacred laws of hospitality, those who were living under his protection, Kiangtsai saw no safe course except to declare irrevocable war against the Tartars. He expressed his defiance of the ruling power in the most emphatic terms, and many rallied to his faction in the hope that this boldness, to which they had grown unaccustomed, might meet with its deserved success. But Kiangtsai saw clearly that his own resources would not suffice to enable him to cope with the Manchus, and he naturally turned to his neighbours to ascertain which amongst them could best afford him the support he needed. Of these the Mongols were by far the most powerful, and to their principal Khan he sent a

messenger praying for assistance to oppose the arms of Chuntche, and to restore to China the native rule she had lost.

The Mongols had given in their adhesion to the authority of the Manchus long before the latter had placed an emperor on the throne of Peking, and we have just seen how anxious Chuntche's advisers were to rivet that alliance by the marriage of their boy ruler with a princess of the desert. The tragic occurrence at Taitong had interrupted the progress of the embassy, and left the road clear for Kiangtsai to make his own propositions in the camp of the Mongols. The overtures of the Chinese rebel were received with favour, and the Mongol chieftain gave a promise of help against his late ally, whose success may have aroused his jealousy, while he was still ignorant of the friendly wishes of Ama Wang. In face of so grave a peril as the alliance of Kiangtsai and the Mongol tribes, the activity of the Regent was conspicuous. While he was collecting a large army with which to chastise the insolence of the rebel, he despatched an ambassador with a large suite and a magnificent display of presents to the Mongol camp to repeat the friendly proposal of the former envoy. The Mongol gave but slight heed to his plighted word when he scanned the jewels and rich silks of the Emperor, and at once acceded to the request of the Regent. The good understanding between these allies was restored, and the Mongols remained strictly neutral during the progress and suppression of the rising at Taitong.

Meanwhile Kiangtsai had been called upon to bear the first shock of the Manchu attack, and the unexpectedness of his success in the field seemed to warrant a belief that his power was greater than it appeared. Before the first Manchu levies marched against him he had assumed the title of Prince of Han, a name more dear than any other to the Chinese, and had given out that he aspired to be the restorer of the Empire. His conduct in the field soon showed that he possessed many of the qualities necessary to establish his right to the proud name and functions he had assumed.

The Manchus were fully impregnated with the doctrine of striking hard and quick ; and a strong detachment was

ordered to march without delay against Taitong. Kiangtsai left the fortress to meet his assailant, but it was to a well-conceived stratagem rather than to the numerical superiority of his troops that he trusted for victory. Kiangtsai caused a number of waggons to be specially prepared containing canisters filled with powder, and concealed from view, and these he sent forward under the charge of a guard as if they contained the baggage of the army. The Manchus fell eagerly on what they conceived would prove a rich prize, and the Chinese abandoned their waggons with precipitation when they had fired the train. The explosion which ensued cost many a Tartar his life, and threw the whole army into a state of disorder and alarm. Then it was that Kiangtsai delivered his attack with his whole force, and before the Manchus had time to recover from their panic he had succeeded in driving them from the field with a computed loss of 15,000 men. The Manchus soon collected in fresh strength, and reinforced by more troops from Peking, they advanced to again dispute the palm of superiority with Kiangtsai. The details of this second encounter present no feature of special interest, but the result was to confirm the previous decision. The baffled Manchus had to beat a hurried retreat, while the authority and reputation of Kiangtsai advanced to a higher point than before.

So grave did the possible consequences of these defeats appear, and so rapidly was the power of the rebellious Governor of Taitong increasing, that the Regent, Ama Wang, resolved to take the field in person, and to proceed against him with the best troops he could collect. Matters had reached such a critical pass that it was felt that, unless the Manchus wished to be greeted by a general insurrection throughout Northern China, it behoved them to put down the Taitong rising with the least possible delay. Ama Wang came to the decision to strike promptly, yet he had the prudence to act with due caution in face of an opponent whose confidence had been raised to a high point by two successes in the field. The armies on both sides exceeded 100,000 men, but Ama Wang foiled all Kiangtsai's endeavours to precipitate a general action.

The want of supplies, or the fear of losing the place by a *coup de main*, induced Kiangtsai, after two long months of useless campaigning, to retire to Taitong, where he flattered himself that an enemy who feared to attack him in the open would never venture to assail him. In this anticipation he was soon proved to be mistaken, for Ama Wang at once proceeded to invest him in his fortress, and to prevent either ingress or egress. Then Kiangtsai realized the error he had committed, for there remained to him no alternative between either fighting at a disadvantage in endeavouring to cut his way out, or to remain cooped up until the want of food should compel him to surrender. The results of previous victory were thus sacrificed, and a blunder in tactics transferred all the advantages to the side of the Manchus.

Kiangtsai came to the decision, with commendable promptitude, after he perceived the predicament in which he was placed, to cut his way through the beleaguering forces with the greater portion of his army, and the rapidity with which the Manchus were drawing up their lines of circumvallation left him no leisure for much deliberation. He addressed an inspiriting harangue to his followers, and then led them out to the attack. Such was the impetuosity of their onslaught that after four hours' fighting the Manchus were driven from their first entrenchments, which remained in the possession of the Prince of Han's soldiers. The Chinese were as much elated as the Manchus were depressed by this initial success, and for the moment it looked as if final victory would incline to the side of the former. A single incident served to change the fortune of the day. Kiangtsai had placed himself at the head of his men to lead them to the attack of the other positions remaining in the hands of the Manchus, when he was struck in the head by an arrow. The death of Kiangtsai carried confusion throughout the ranks of the Chinese, who, at once abandoning all they had won after such desperate fighting, retired in irretrievable confusion into Taitong. The Manchus, delighted to see the backs of a foe who had opposed them so valiantly, pressed them hard, and in a few hours the fortress of Taitong was in their power, and the faction which had attained such

formidable dimensions under Kiangtsai was completely broken up and effaced. Seldom has there been in history a more striking instance of the marked superiority of an individual over the rest of his countrymen than that afforded by the episode of Kiangtsai ; and the Manchus, brought so nearly to the verge of ruin by his capacity, easily triumphed after his death, and found, in the north at all events, no other opponent worthy of their steel.

This rising in the north had had its counterpart in the west, although the talents of Kiangtsai found no imitator. In Szchuen an adventurer had proclaimed his authority from the city of Chentu, and, assuming the title of Si Wang, bade defiance to Ming and Manchu alike. Many months he maintained his power there, but his severity and brutality prevented thousands from joining, and thousands more from heartily sympathizing with his cause. The responsibilities of government brought him neither wisdom nor moderation. Fearful of the strictures of the learned, he enticed into his city by promises of employment more than 30,000 men of letters, and when he had them in his power he gave orders for their massacre. Nor did his inhumanity stop there. The courtiers and attendants of his predecessor, a prince of the House of Ming, had been kept round his person to contribute to the dignity of his position ; but when one of these happened to omit the full title of his rank he caused them all, to the number of 3000, to be summarily executed. Other outrages, by which he showed that he neither respected the laws of religion nor placed much value on the hearty sympathy of his soldiers, followed, and ere Si Wang had enjoyed the tokens of supreme power in Szchuen for a year it was made evident that his rule was only a tyranny from which all would gladly be free.

The tidings that the Manchus were about to invade his province from Shensi only served to rouse him to fresh acts of barbarity, which culminated in the massacre of Chentu, when 600,000 innocent persons are said to have perished by the decree of this inhuman monster. From individuals he passed to things inanimate, and he compared his rage to the wrath of Heaven by the destruction of cities, the levelling of

forests, and the overthrow of any public monument that had given Szchuen a foremost rank among the provinces of the Empire. The Manchus gained an entrance into Szchuen by the capture of Hanchong, and it soon became noised abroad that they were about to make a further advance in the direction of Chentu. Si Wang may have dreaded in his heart the consequences of a collision with the Manchus, but the news of their advance nerved him to commit another act of atrocity which has served to perpetuate the infamy of his name.

The approach of the Manchus warned Si Wang that he could not hope to long maintain himself in Szchuen after they had resolved to annex that province. He came, therefore, to the desperate resolution to strengthen his position, as he hoped, by an act of inhumanity unparalleled in the records of history. The plan he formed was to rid his army of all the women attached to it, and by the lavish promises of future rewards, and of shortly procuring substitutes for these victims in the other provinces, he induced his followers to adopt his advice and to imitate the example of brutality which he did not hesitate to set them. The slaughter, once commenced, was carried on with a species of insane fury, and before the butchery ceased, more than 400,000 women had been murdered by those on whose protection and affection they possessed every right and claim. Occasions there have been when, in moments of extreme peril, there has been magnanimity as well as necessity in the slaughter of women to save them from a worse fate at the hands of a conqueror ; but here the destruction was wanton and unsurpassed in its extent and in the motives which operated in the minds of the actors. We are told that, the evil deed performed, Si Wang was inspired with a kind of frenzy, and swore that he had no longer any fear on the score of the Tartars, from whose presence he would speedily deliver China.

In these sanguine expectations Si Wang was destined to be soon undeceived ; for the Tartars, having strongly reinforced the garrison at Hanchong, secured the passes of the Kiulong range. A hostile collision appeared imminent between the two armies, when a sudden and unlooked-for termination was given to the struggle by the death of Si

Wang in an affair at the outposts. Si Wang, incredulous of the reported approach of the Manchus, had ridden out to satisfy himself of the truth of the reports, when one of the most famous Tartar archers marked his appearance and slew him with an arrow. Thus ignominiously perished Si Wang, who fancied that because he had violently broken the ties of nature he held the Empire within his grasp. Notwithstanding his momentary success in Szchuen he appears to have been an incapable leader, and such qualities as he possessed were those of a brigand without any of the redeeming features of patriotism. Upon his death his faction dissolved without giving the Manchus further trouble, and Chuntche's authority was set up in this one province the more.

The only task of any importance that now remained to be performed for the completion of the conquest of the mainland was that of overthrowing the authority of Kwei Wang, who still maintained the marks of power in Kwantung and Kweichow, and who exercised his influence over the millions of southern China from the great port and provincial capital of Canton westward to the frontier of Burmah. The Manchus, with the view of making their triumph as assured as it had proved rapid, resorted to the plan of nominating three Chinese magnates vassal princes for the south before they advanced against the last strongholds of Chinese power. When they had taken this preliminary precaution they gave orders for the immediate advance of the armies which had restored tranquillity in Fuhkien and Kiangsi. Kiuchessa, to whose fortitude the Prince of Kwei owed the origin of his power, saw the coming storm, and took all the steps he could to meet it. He assumed in person the command of the troops on the northern borders of Kwangsi, and drew up his army in strong positions to defend the passes of the Nanling mountains and the high road from Hengchow, on the Heng river, by which a large Tartar army was advancing towards Kueiling. The fleet had been summoned for the defence of Canton, and all the preparations betokened an intention to offer a vigorous defence. Had the Prince of Kwei acted with the smallest resolution and allowed Kiuchessa to exercise unquestioned authority over the whole of his army this anticipation might,

after all, have been realized ; but the approach of the Manchus only inspired him with an ungovernable alarm.

The first effect of the Manchu policy of placing Chinese commanders at the head of the operations was seen in the surrender, on their approach, of the positions at Nanhiong and Chowchow without any attempt at resistance. The road being thus left open to the invader, the Manchus pushed on rapidly to Canton, where some preparations had been made to hold out. But rapid as were these movements, an event of still greater importance had already happened in the west, where Kiuchessa was striving to maintain his master's authority at Kueiling in Kwangsi.

The second Manchu army, under the command of Kongyuta, had fared equally well in its operations from Hoonan. The partisans of the Prince of Kwei, disheartened by the pusillanimity of their master, thought rather of their private affairs than of the weal of their lord. When they had allowed themselves to be defeated in two battles they conceived that they had done everything demanded by their duty, and hastened to come to an understanding with the race which they saw was destined to be their conqueror. The shame of making a voluntary surrender to a foreign ruler was felt to be the less when it was effected through the means of a viceroy of Chinese birth. The conquest begun by means of the Tartar army was consummated by the tact and presence of Kongyuta. Kiuchessa alone preserved in adversity the firmness and fidelity consistent with his character. While his troops and officers abandoned him on all sides he remained at Kueiling awaiting the arrival of the foe, and to all the representations of his friends enjoining him to flee he turned a deaf ear, for he refused "to purchase a few more years of life by an act of which he would soon feel ashamed." Kiuchessa and the military commander Chang awaited together the appearance of the Manchus. Resistance was out of the question, for there were no troops left to guard the walls ; and when Kongyuta arrived he had only to march into the town and to make these two faithful officers prisoners. Kongyuta saw that the effect of his victories would be greatly enhanced if he could by any argument or promises

gain over to his side such invaluable supporters as these two officers. The reception he accorded them was one worthy of their rank and reputation, and the promises he made them were not confined to the assurance of personal safety, but embraced an absolute pledge of high employment in the Manchu service. But neither promises nor threats availed to shake the resolution of these two men; and at last Kongyuta, piqued at his ill-success and irritated by their taunts as to the bad example he, a descendant of Confucius, was setting his fellow-countrymen, gave orders for their execution. The Manchu dynasty, although it failed to secure valuable allies, was thus rid of two of its ablest and most bitter enemies.

The efforts of the Manchus were now all concentrated on the capture of Canton, which, defended by a large garrison under the command of a valiant officer, was well prepared to stand a siege. The presence of the fleet, by affording a means of escape in the last extremity, contributed beyond doubt to increase and sustain the courage of its defenders. The fortifications of the town had been strengthened by fresh ramparts and dykes, and several batteries of western cannon had been placed in position. During eight months the town was held against all the efforts of the Manchus, and the hardships to which they were reduced led them several times to meditate a retreat. On the other hand, the garrison had many difficulties to contend against, and no hope of succour existed except from Kwei Wang, who was already himself menaced by Kongyuta on the north. By a supreme effort Kwei Wang succeeded in raising a body of troops charged with the special task of relieving Canton, but, as Kwei Wang would not take the field in person, and as he could find no second Kiuchessa to occupy his place, the movements of this corps were not only slow, but were also marked by little judgment. The Manchus had no difficulty in dispersing this body, whereupon they returned with renewed vigour to the siege of Canton. The garrison was necessarily much discouraged by this repulse of the relieving force, and, after bravely defending themselves against the assaults of the enemy, they fell at their posts almost to the last man. Canton was handed over

to the soldiers to pillage, and scenes of indescribable horror ensued during the ten days that the sack continued. The capture of Canton virtually decided the chances of Kwei Wang, but some time elapsed before he fell into the power of the Manchus. For the moment he only withdrew to a safer distance from them, and established his headquarters at Nangan, in the south of Kwangsi. Several of his officers deserted him, and the town of Woochow, which he had named his capital, shared the fate of Canton.

Kwei Wang for a short space of time imagined that he might rally to his side the disappointed population of Yunnan, which had fallen into the hands of four military adventurers ; but, although he conferred titles of honour on one of these, he soon saw that the hope was delusive. As much disgusted with the treachery of his supporters as disheartened by fear of the Tartars, Kwei Wang fled over the borders of Kwangsi into Yunnan, whence he passed among the tribes of the Burmese frontier. Seven years later we shall find him re-issuing from his place of concealment to meet his fate at the hands of Wou Sankwei.

The rebel leaders in Yunnan sought to make use of Kwei Wang to promote their schemes of personal ambition, and one of them, finding that the Ming cause was defunct, and that it would not be possible to instil fresh vitality into it, resolved to proclaim the authority of Chuntche and to adopt the Manchu laws. This recognition of the Tartar yoke in Yunnan, which promised to bring without further bloodshed the last of the Chinese provinces under the Manchu domination, rested upon no very solid foundation, for the leader with whom the scheme originated had palpably views of his own, and expected a larger measure of liberty than could belong to a Manchu lieutenant. In the troubles which followed the advance of the Manchus was checked, and several reverses inflicted upon them ; and the nominal authority of Kwei Wang was again set up and maintained in Yunnan. But these events were of local rather than general importance, and we may leave them for a time to see what was happening in other parts of China.

The repression of the Taitong revolt had been the last

military exploit of the Regent, Ama Wang, although to him much of the praise must be given for having supervised the preparations for the conquest of the south. He lived long enough to hear of the capture of Canton, the stubborn defence of which had greatly contributed to swell his later anxieties ; but when the news came that the city was taken, and that Kwei Wang's power was broken, he felt that his work was done. To Ama Wang belongs all the credit of having consolidated the Manchu power in China. Chuntche owed to his vigour and moderation the position, as Emperor, which both his father and grandfather, although men of approved ability and experience, had failed to attain. While he devoted himself to the service of his nephew, he appears to have been actuated as much by the desire for personal distinction as by the motive of aggrandising the power of his family and race. Towards the Chinese he assumed an attitude of moderation and even of studied conciliation, which did not fail to produce a beneficial effect. Indeed, the people had in him not only a warm but a discreet friend, and to his influence must be attributed the speedy pacification of the capital and the northern provinces, which had long remained tranquil with the one exception of the Taitong revolt. We cannot doubt that this satisfactory result was mainly due to the untiring vigilance and prudent measures of the Regent, in whose hands the boy-emperor Chuntche, whether of his own accord or under compulsion may not be known, had placed all the functions and responsibility of government. Some trace of a warmer feeling between these near relations may, however, be detected in the name which Chuntche gave his uncle of Ama Wang, the Father Prince.

The Regent's death inspired several of the elder Manchu princes with the desire to succeed to his position ; but fortunately the general opinion of the ministers was adverse to their views. The Emperor, who had profited by the advice of his wise uncle, was considered to be old enough to rule for himself, and all the ministers returned their seals of office and refused to receive them back save from the Emperor himself. This extreme measure had the desired effect. The ambitious uncles retired discomfited, if not abashed, from the

scene, and Chuntche assumed the rights as well as the name of Emperor.

Then it was that he formed the supreme administrative council of the Empire, which still possesses the privilege of advising the Emperor and of approaching his person, and which, in conjunction with the six Tribunals and the Board of Censors, now controls the affairs of this vast empire. To this august body, composed of only four persons, he raised the more important of those dignitaries who had thrown up their seals of office sooner than acquiesce in the usurpation of his uncles ; and in order to attract the sympathy of the people, and, possibly, also to reward the services of faithful Chinese officials, he passed a decree to the effect that this council should be composed of an equal number of Manchu and Chinese officials. Before this act Chinese subjects had been admitted to no recognized share in the government, and this was the first formal admission of their right to occupy their natural position in the administration of the country.

When Canton fell into the power of the Manchus many Chinese escaped by the aid of the fleet over which Koshinga, or Ching Ching Tong, held command. As the Manchus had no vessels, this body of men was held together mainly by the sense of security derived from their immunity from pursuit, and they soon found in the daring and success of their leader a still stronger inducement to remain devoted to his interests. The marauding deeds of Koshinga became the admiration and the solace of the Chinese, just as they certainly proved a source of annoyance to the Tartars, if the statement cannot be sustained that they inspired them with terror. While the main forces of the Manchus remained assembled in the south, Koshinga seized the favourable moment to attempt a diversion in their rear, and, proceeding along the coast of Fuhkien, captured the port of Amoy. In the vicinity of that place he had the satisfaction of defeating a corps of Tartars or, more probably, of local levies ; but land operations on any large scale were not within reach of his capacity or resources, and he soon put to sea again. He still proceeded northwards, making several descents upon the coast, and, when the

Manchu forces collected, he effected his escape in his ships with much spoil and many fresh recruits.

In the year 1656 he obtained possession of the island of Tsong-ming, situated at the entrance to the river Kiang, whence he hoped to be able to carry out his most ambitious design of establishing himself in the dual province of Kiangnan. For the time being Koshinga had, at the least, obtained a place of retreat in the event of disaster, and an admirable station for his magazines and stores. His next step was to capture the town of Tongchow, on the northern bank of the Kiang, and to fortify it to the best of his art. Thus he secured the complete command of the entrances to that great river, and of all the water approaches to the city of Nankin, which he had marked as his next object of attack. The Manchus did not give Koshinga credit for as much audacity as he possessed, and flattered themselves that, although he had obtained a few successes on the sea, he would never dare to attack a place of such importance as Nankin. This view was destined to be rudely dispelled, for, notwithstanding the danger and difficulty of the expedition, Koshinga sailed up the Kiang with his fleet, and appeared off the city of Nankin. Not only had the Tartar governor made no preparations for defence, but the garrison under his orders, far from being numerically strong, scarcely sufficed to keep in awe a large population doubtfully affected towards the Government.

Up to this point Koshinga's movements had been marked by resolution and vigour, but here in the very crisis of his career he allowed himself to hesitate so far that he put off striking a decisive blow against the city until the garrison had been largely reinforced by fresh troops. His motive had apparently been to spare his men in the expectation of a rising on the part of the townspeople saving him the loss of carrying the place by storm; but, although the Manchu officer at one time so far suspected their good faith that he meditated giving an order for the slaughter of every man in the city, the inhabitants gave no sign of an intention to go over to Koshinga, and took their share in the labour of defending the city against this semi-piratical leader. The siege had lasted some weeks without any decisive action

taking place, when the intelligence that the garrison was undergoing great privations induced Koshinga to believe that the time had come to deliver his assault with certain effect. Unfortunately for himself, he allowed his men to spend the night previous to the proposed attack in a state of high revelry, and the vigilant commandant of Nankin did not fail to perceive and to seize the auspicious moment for frustrating his intentions. The Manchus sallied forth and attacked the intoxicated Chinese with fury ; and such resistance as they attempted was speedily overcome. More than 3000 of Koshinga's men were slain, and the rest with their discomfited leader were glad to find security in their ships, leaving their camp and the spoil of the towns they had plundered in the hands of the victor. Thus closed the siege of Nankin, and, with this repulse, Koshinga's dreams of making any further stand against the Tartar conquerors were dispelled. His naval superiority remained above challenge, but henceforth he is to be regarded rather as a rover of the sea than as a patriotic leader attempting to uphold the lost cause of the Mings.

We have now to turn our attention to the close of the career of the Ming prince Kwei Wang, who, after the failure of his officers to maintain themselves against the Manchus, had fled across the Yunnan frontier into the territories of the King of Mien or Burmah, by whom he was received with the honour due to an unfortunate potentate. He had resided seven years in the land of the stranger when a rising in the province of Kweichow, headed by several officers who proclaimed him Emperor, revived the hope of recovering the position he had lost. He left his place of refuge in Burmah with the wealth he had saved from the wreck of his fortunes in China, and also laden with gifts of friendship from his host ; but, while he was making his way through Yunnan to join his new partisans, Wou Sankwei, who, during the years of Chuntche's reign, had been playing the part of Warden of the Western Marches with credit to himself and advantage to the State, heard of his movements and hastened to intercept him. Kwei Wang was not in a position to offer much resistance to his assailant. His small party fought valiantly,

but they were soon all slain ; and Kwei Wang and his son remained prisoners in the hands of their enemy. Wou Sankwei, whose excessive moderation had on a previous occasion attracted the unfavourable notice of the Regent Ama Wang, did not for a moment hesitate in this supreme case, and gave the order for the immediate execution of Kwei Wang and his son. With their death disappeared the last recognized representatives of the House of Ming, and, as the native historian observes, this event deprived the Chinese of all justification for a continuance in rebellion against the dynasty which had by the high will of Heaven succeeded it on the throne.

The reign of Chuntche was marked by one event of great importance, and also of an unusual character. This was the arrival at the capital of the Empire of several embassies from European states. Chuntche's reign, which witnessed the beginning of many things in the modern history of China, also beheld the first diplomatic intercourse between the Government of the Middle Kingdom and the sovereigns of the West. The Dutch and the Russians can claim the equal honour of having each had an embassy resident at Peking during the year 1656, although in neither case can the result be held to have been very satisfactory. The Dutch were, after some delay, and on making the required concessions to the dignity of the Emperor, granted an audience ; but, notwithstanding that they freely bribed the officials, they obtained no solid advantage, unless the privilege of bringing their "tribute" at stated periods to the foot of the throne can be considered one. The end of this embassy proved little less than disastrous, for at Canton on their return journey the ambassadors were ill-treated in their persons and robbed of their property. Notwithstanding the Emperor's expressed appreciation of the nobleness of their mind, they never succeeded in obtaining reparation for the injuries and loss thus inflicted upon them.

Nor was the Russian Embassy more successful, although the dignified demeanour of the envoy better preserved the honour and reputation of his master. The first demand made by the Chinese was that the Russians should, in common

with the other tribute-bearing states, do homage to the Emperor's throne, and perform the ceremony of kowtow. With this the Russian officer consistently refused to comply, and after some time passed in useless argument the embassy was dismissed, and returned to Siberia, which had then been recently conquered and annexed by the Czars of Russia. The first diplomatic relations between the Chinese and the Oros, or Russians, were thus brought to an abrupt termination.

Diplomatic relations were also established about this time with the ruler of Tibet. The principal Lama of Lhasa was created Dalai, or Ocean Lama, and the connection between Peking and the holy land of Tibet, which under the Mings had been of only a vague and indefinite character, assumed a closer and more intimate form. The Europeans, to whom reference has been made, found an embassy from this remote kingdom resident at Peking, but the Dalai Lama appears to have paid, on an earlier occasion, a personal visit to Chuntche's Court. From this time the tie between the two states became very close, and up to the present day it has endured.

Wou Sankwei had not long pacified the south, and Koshinga had only just recommenced his active operations after wresting a portion of the island of Formosa from the Dutch, when it became clear that the days of the Emperor Chuntche, young though he was, were drawing to a close. In 1661, seventeen years after he had been proclaimed Emperor by the council of notables at Peking, he was seized with a fatal illness, which we may consider to have been either small-pox or grief at the loss of a favourite wife, according as we may feel disposed. A competent authority assigns his death to the former cause; but there is no doubt that the death of his infant son and of the child's mother, whose relations with the Emperor recall those of David and Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, preyed heavily upon his mind, and aggravated the disease. On the eve of death he named as his successor a boy reputed to be the second of his children, and afterwards known to fame as the Emperor Kanghi. The choice proved a happy one, although the accession of a child again launched the bark of state upon troubled waters; but the virtues and

genius of Kanghi in the end more than repaid the agony of suffering through which China had yet to pass before reaching the tranquil condition of a Manchu-governed country.

Of Chuntche, whose youth and early death prevented the performance of many great or striking actions, it may only be said that he gave promise of the possession of the remarkable qualities for which his family had become famous. Much of the credit of consolidating the Manchu triumph belonged to Ama Wang, but Ama Wang died long before any settlement was concluded, and left the young Emperor to grapple, on his own resources, with an extremely critical condition of things. Chuntche's acts as irresponsible ruler were always marked by great forbearance, as well as by resolution. His reign has been eclipsed by the brilliant achievements of his son, Kanghi, but in its way it was both important and remarkable. At the least it served to show that the supremacy of the Manchus was firmly established and not to be lightly opposed or easily displaced. Already it was evident that the wiser part for the Chinese would be to acquiesce in a yoke they could not shake off; and most of them were hastening to adapt themselves to circumstances throughout all the provinces of the Empire.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE EARLY YEARS OF KANGHI'S REIGN.

THE accession of a boy to a throne which demanded the support of strong hands and clear heads was not an event calculated to ensure the tranquil development of Manchu power. Kanghi was only eight years old when the weight of empire was thrust upon him, and the task of government was committed to the charge of four of the principal officials. After the proclamation of the new Emperor, and the promulgation of the general amnesty usually granted on the accession of a prince, the co-regents first turned their attention to purifying the palace from the presence of the eunuchs who had established themselves there during the later years of Chuntche's reign, and who doubtless saw in Kanghi's minority the opportunity of advancing their ends, and of firmly establishing their influence over the councils of the state. The first act of Kanghi's representatives was to impeach the principal of the eunuchs on a charge of peculation, and to punish him with death. All his colleagues were turned out of the palace and dismissed from their offices, to find some more honourable but certainly to them less agreeable mode of existence among the ranks of the people. Then was passed the law, graven on tablets of metal to defy the injuries of time, forbidding the employment in the public service of any of this unfortunate class. The iron tablets still exist, and the Manchus have remained true to the pledge taken by the young Kanghi. The eunuchs now disappear from the history of China as a political faction, and their enervating influence has fortunately been banished from both the court and the council board.

The first year of Kanghi's reign marked the summit and beheld the decline of the piratical power of Koshinga. In 1659, after the failure of his expedition against Nankin, Koshinga had been compelled to look beyond his possessions at the mouth of the Kiang for a permanent place of arms, and the naval preparations on which the Manchus were at last engaged made it more necessary for him to secure one without delay. There seemed to him no place better adapted to his necessities or more suitable for the task he had in hand than the island of Formosa,* long the home of a piratical confederacy which had for the time been partially displaced by the power of the Dutch.† It was not so much the conquest of this island with its fierce and courageous tribes that Koshinga wanted, as the possession of the few harbours which had been seized by the emissaries of Batavia. Although the attainment of his object involved a collision with a race well

* The island of Formosa, situated at a distance of nearly one hundred miles from the coast, is noted for its remarkable productiveness, and also for the fact that a great portion of it has maintained and still maintains its independence of any authority. It has been called "the granary of China." Its length is about 300 miles, and its breadth at the broadest point less than one-fourth of that distance. A lofty range of mountains, from north to south, divides it into two regions, differing from each other in political condition and material productiveness. The western half is under regular government, and remarkable for wealth and fertility. The eastern is still under the sway of native princes or chiefs; and the resources of this half are not only undeveloped, but are also undoubtedly inferior to those of the western districts. Formosa was called by the Chinese Taiwan, "the beautiful island," and since 1895 it has been in the possession of Japan, which acquired it under the Treaty of Shimonoseki.

† A brief sketch of how the island fell into the hands of the Dutch will here be interesting. In 1624 the Dutch sent a fleet with 800 men to attack Macao and expel the Portuguese. Confident of success, they were yet repulsed with loss. As some compensation for this disappointment, they established themselves on the Pescadore Islands, and a few years afterwards they landed on the mainland of Formosa, came to an arrangement with the Japanese then in occupation of the town of Taiwan, and erected in its neighbourhood Fort Zealand. The Japanese retired, leaving them in undisputed occupation of Taiwan. When the Tartar invasion began many Chinese crossed the channel and established themselves in Formosa. From this numerous colony Koshinga naturally expected much help in his design of ousting the Dutch, and, as the result proved, he was not disappointed.

equipped in ships and arms, and more formidable on sea than on land, Koshinga braced his mind to the struggle ; for the law of safety demanded that he should without delay obtain a secure place of refuge from the pursuit of the Manchus. Koshinga, partly out of sheer necessity, and partly, no doubt, in the hope of founding a new kingdom beyond the sea, resolved upon the conquest of Formosa, and concentrated all his strength for the undertaking.

The Dutch attempted to come to a friendly arrangement with Koshinga, whose designs on their possessions had been revealed by a preliminary revolt on the part of the many Chinese immigrants who had come across from Fuhkien. That insurrection had been repressed, although not without some difficulty, as was shown by the assistance of the aboriginal clans having to be enlisted. But Koshinga represented a more formidable antagonist, and while the Dutch were flattering themselves that he would not prove a very disagreeable neighbour, he was really drawing the toils round them and restricting their power to the fort and district of Taiwan. When openly assailed the Dutch made a valiant defence, but they appear to have taken few precautions against the determined attack of their opponent. Fort Zealand was carried by storm, the Dutch lost their possessions, and Koshinga was proclaimed King of Formosa. The relics of the national party gathered round this champion, who for a time enjoyed, in his own person and in that of two generations of his children, the dignity of a semi-regal and independent position. He did not himself long retain the position to which he had won his way by remarkable energy and force of character. Rage at the excesses and insubordination of his eldest son, who had been left in command at Amoy, which still remained in his possession, aggravated a slight indisposition ; and this formidable and much-feared naval leader died when it seemed that his matured career was only just beginning. Koshinga was no more than thirty-eight years old at the time of his death, and, although the Tartar yoke was not imposed upon Formosa for another twenty years, it very soon became clear that with him the spirit of his party had been destroyed. His death came opportunely to relieve the apprehensions of the

Pekin Government, which had just given orders for the devastation of the country for a distance of more than twenty miles from the coast. Not only was he a remarkable partisan leader, but, without exception, Koshinga may be pronounced to have been the foremost naval hero throughout the whole of the annals of his country.

Kanghi had not been long upon the throne when a great agitation, fanned by popular ignorance and fanaticism, was got up by a few of the more bigoted courtiers, against the Christian priests who had done no harm to anybody, and who had conferred some substantial benefits on the country. The anger of this extreme party was augmented by the favour with which the Emperor Chuntche had regarded these strangers, and by the fact that they had been raised to offices of marked honour and importance. It was not so much religious zeal as personal jealousy that instigated the Chinese official classes in raising this outcry against the foreigners, for they perceived that a charge of propagating "a false and monstrous religion" afforded the simplest and, in the eyes of the people, the most intelligible form of indictment. The Abbé Schaal was deposed from his presidentship, and the other Christian strangers were conveyed as prisoners to Peking, where they were all found guilty and sentenced to a common death. So heinous was their crime held to be, that many councils met to decide what form of execution would be adequate to their offence. The delay that thus arose, which was intended to enhance their punishment, ensured, as a matter of fact, their safety. It gave Sony, one of the Regents, time to exercise all his influence on the side of justice and mercy; and, thanks to his measures and to the support of the Empress Mother, the sentences were quashed and the prisoners released. Such, however, were the bodily sufferings they had undergone, that the principal of these innocent victims, the Abbé Schaal, died shortly after his release.

Whether the act must be attributed to this cause—for the question of the foreign missionaries roused much attention at the time and divided the political world into rival camps—or whether the capital was disturbed by the cabals and intrigues of ministers, it was very shortly after this episode that Kanghi,

on the death of the Regent Sony, determined to abolish the regency and to rule for himself. The act was one betokening no ordinary vigour on the part of a youth of less than fourteen years, and was fully in accordance with the greatness to which Kanghi established his claims. Kanghi seems to have been impelled to take this step by his disapproval of the tyranny and overbearing conduct of the Baturu Kong, another member of the Board of Regency. This minister had taken the most prominent part in the persecution of the Christians; and when death removed Sony, the only one of the regents whose reputation and moral courage rendered him his match, he eagerly anticipated a period of unrestrained power and privilege. The vigilance and resolution of the young Emperor thwarted his plans. By an imperial decree the Board of Regency was dissolved, and Baturu Kong became the mark for the accusation of all over whom he had tyrannized. He was indicted on twelve charges, each sufficient to entail a punishment of death. The indictment was made good; and the first act of Kanghi's reign as responsible sovereign was to decree the death of the unjust minister Kong, or Sucama. The execution of his family was in accordance with the law, and marked the heinousness of the offence.

The overthrow of the Ming prince Kwei Wang and the pacification of Yunnan had set the seal to the fame of Wou Sankwei, the general who, thirty years before, had invited the Manchus into the country to put down the robber Li, and whose military skill had contributed so greatly to their triumph. The Pekin authorities had endeavoured to keep him in the shade; but the splendour of his achievements defeated their plans, and obliged them to reward his services. The title of Prince was conferred upon him, and he was left to exercise uncontrolled authority in Yunnan and its dependent provinces. The Chinese rapidly settled down under his rule, and by a number of wise measures he promoted their welfare and increased his own revenue. His rule was rendered still less irksome by the fact that the majority of his soldiers were native Chinese and not Manchus. Although he does not appear to have nursed any schemes of personal aggrandisement, the measures he took and the reforms instituted under

his guidance were of a character to make his authority independent of Manchu control. The Manchu rulers may have silenced their apprehensions on the score of this influential Chinese leader with the argument that the death of Wou Sankwei would remove the ground upon which they subsisted ; but Wou Sankwei lived on until these hopes became fainter, and to the eye of Kanghi it seemed that he was establishing the solid foundations of a formidable power. Wou Sankwei had been for many years the object of jealousy ; and it needed but slight encouragement from the ruler to raise up numerous evil tongues to declare that the independence of Wou Sankwei dwarfed the dignity of the Manchu throne, and constituted an element of danger to its stability.

In the year 1671 Kanghi, either from the conviction of the necessity of establishing his undisputed authority throughout the country, or in deference to the representations of his officials, resolved to so far take action in the matter as to invite Wou Sankwei to pay him a visit at Peking. The request was reasonable, for many years had elapsed since he had visited the capital, and his expression of fealty to Kanghi had been made only informally and by deputy. The custom of the country and the time was that the great governors should leave behind them at the capital one of their sons as hostage for their fidelity and good conduct. A son of Wou Sankwei resided in this character at Peking, where he had been admitted, with the title of a royal duke, into the family circle of the dynasty after his marriage with a half-sister of Kanghi. He was of course aware of the intrigues against his father, and believing that his person would not be safe from the machinations of his enemies, sent off a special messenger to warn him of the danger, and to advise him not to come. The act was creditable to his heart, but it showed little knowledge of affairs. The excessive affection of his son proved the ruin of Wou Sankwei, for he adopted his counsel and declined to proceed to Peking to establish the innocence of his conduct.

Wou Sankwei excused himself on the ground of his old age, and of his desire to end his days in peace, and sent his son the necessary powers to perform the required act of

allegiance. But the Emperor was not a man to be put off with so transparent an excuse, and Wou Sankwei's conduct soon exposed the hollowness of his own protestations. Kanghi, still resolute on carrying his point, but loth to lightly embark upon a hazardous enterprise, and anxious to make the most of his case, then sent two of his most trusted officials to represent to Wou Sankwei the absolute necessity there was for exact compliance with his demand, and the grave consequences that would ensue from persistence in refusal. We may also suppose that they were instructed to see how far his statement was true that he was borne down with the weight of years and that his thoughts were only of a peaceful end.

Wou Sankwei met them with a magnificent reception, and treated them with all the courtesy and regard due to distinguished guests. Nothing in his attitude betrayed any hostile feeling until they came to discuss the main object of their mission. There is no reason to believe that they failed to discharge their task with discretion ; but the instant Wou Sankwei perceived their drift, and that the Emperor would not accept his allegiance by deputy, he interrupted them, and, casting aside further reserve, declared that henceforth he repudiated the Tartar yoke. "Do they think at the court," he exclaimed, "that I am so blind as not to see the motive in this order of summons? I shall, indeed, present myself there, if you continue to press me, but it will be at the head of twice forty thousand men. You may go on before, but I hope to follow you very shortly with such a force as will speedily remind those in power of the debt they owe me." Thus openly did Wou Sankwei throw down the glove of defiance to the race which he had so long supported. The military arrangements which he had never relaxed, and the considerable sum of money which he had collected in his coffers, both served him now in good stead. When he refused to wear the Manchu tail any longer and proscribed its calendar, the people of the West recognized that the time had come for another trial of strength with their Tartar lords. Wou Sankwei met with nothing but cordial welcome and promises of support in establishing his authority in Kweichow and the

greater portion of Szchuen and Hoonan, while the mere announcement that the great general was in arms sufficed to create a feeling of unrest throughout the realm.

While the father was thus openly playing for a big game in the south-west, the son was engaged in a secret plot to overwhelm the Manchus by the massacre of the principal members of the reigning family and of the officers of state. The conspiracy was arranged with considerable skill and, finding no better instrument ready to his hand, Wou's son proceeded to enlist in his service a large body of Chinese slaves naturally anxious to free themselves from their bonds. The scheme succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations. The Chinese bound themselves together by a solemn oath to be true to one another, and all the preparations were made for the massacre of the Manchus on the occasion of the New Year's Festival. Never had the Tartars stood in greater peril than they did in the year 1673, although to all outward appearance everything was calm and satisfactory.

The eve of the day appointed for the execution of the plan arrived, when one of the slaves, desirous of saving the life of his master, a Manchu officer, warned him of the coming danger. Matsi, such was his name, carried without delay the information to Kanghi, who took immediate measures to arrest the conspirators. Wou Sankwei's son and the greater number of his accomplices were seized and thrown into prison, whence, on formal proof of their guilt, they were conveyed to the place of execution. The plot of the son being thus happily disposed of, it remained for the youthful Emperor to essay the more difficult task of grappling with the father.

Although Wou Sankwei had placed himself outside the pale of consideration by his haughty defiance, yet Kanghi resolved to proceed warily with so formidable an antagonist. Instead of meeting his challenge by proscribing him, Kanghi was content to pass an edict ordering the disbandment of the native armies which Wou Sankwei and other Chinese commanders still retained under their orders in the south, for it must not be forgotten that there were other Chinese viceroys in the Manchu service besides Wou. This edict was directed

against them all alike, and it had the effect of compelling them to show their hands. The example of Wou Sankwei proved infectious and irresistible. All declared against Kanghi, and from Fuhkien and Kwantung to the borders of Tibet and Burmah, there was one common blaze of insurrection against the Tartars. Fortunately for the young Emperor, the danger was more on the surface than in the hearts of the people ; but the name of Wou Sankwei alone was as a tower of strength for the disaffected.

In face of this storm, which threatened to overwhelm him, Kanghi showed himself worthy of his race and fully capable of holding his ground against all comers. For a time the insurgents carried everything before them, but gradually the Manchu garrisons, reinforced by timely aid from Peking, opposed a steady and, as it often proved, a successful resistance to the advancing onset of Chinese patriotism. When the first great danger of being overwhelmed in a general revolt of the Chinese had passed away, and when the situation could be more justly as well as more critically scanned, it was seen that the Manchus could fairly hold their own, and that as soon as they should collect their resources the chances of final victory would rest again on their side. In the height of the crisis it was as much, however, as they could reasonably expect if they were able to maintain their position against the numerous and enthusiastic armies which Wou Sankwei placed in the field.

For a time, however, dangers continued to thicken on all sides round the young Manchu ruler. The piratical confederacy of Formosa despatched its vessels to plunder the coast, and naval disasters came to further embarrass the Manchus. Even among the Mongols, who possessed a greater sympathy and fellow-feeling with the Manchus than it was possible for any inhabitant of the Chinese plains to have, the conviction was apparently spreading that the misfortunes of the Tartar conquerors furnished them with an opportunity to promote their own separate interests. Satchar, chief of one of the principal banners, was the first to give expression to this general feeling, and, inviting levies from all his neighbours, proclaimed that on a fixed day he would take the field

with 100,000 men for the invasion of China. Thus, menaced in his rear, Kanghi stood in imminent danger of a double disaster. Nothing save the remarkable promptitude with which he summoned troops from Leaoutung, and the courage which led him to denude Peking of a large part of its garrison, extricated him from his perilous situation. The corps thus collected advanced by forced marches upon the encampment of Satchar. The swift-moving Manchu cavalry fell upon the Mongols before they had concentrated their forces, and returned with Satchar and his family as prisoners to Peking. The capture of Satchar paralyzed the Mongols for a time, and after that event none among them dared stir hand or foot against their vigorous opponent.

Good fortune continued to attend the plans of Kanghi, whose difficulties would have sufficed to crush a man of less courage. He profited by his own ability and firmness, but he derived quite as much advantage from the dissensions prevailing among his enemies. Ching, the son of Koshinga and the possessor of Formosa, had quarrelled with the Chinese prince who had unfurled the standard of revolt in Fuhkien, and, more keen to indulge his rancour than to save his country, had turned his arms against the very man whom he had come to aid. The result of the collision that ensued between them was to shatter the forces of the Fuhkien leader, and to compel Ching to retire to his island home. Thus in one province was Kanghi's battle fought and won for him without an effort on his part. The Emperor had but to send a small detachment to regain the province, and to win back the allegiance, for such as it was worth, of its disappointed prince. The resubjugation of Fuhkien entailed that of Kwantung. Those officials, who had been most eager to proclaim their adhesion to the cause of Wou Sankwei, were the very first to greet the return of the Manchus. The aspirations which they had cherished and which they had thought feasible, with the Manchus exhausted by their efforts, and governed by a mere boy, could not, they found, stand contact with the reality of the case. Their adventure required valour and a desperate resolve to win. They possessed neither, and their only course was, when the Manchu troops arrived, to

express their contrition and to promise better conduct for the future. Kanghi had neither the desire nor the intention to irritate the mass of the people. He forgave all save the most guilty, and affected a belief in their pledges. But for the first time Manchu garrisons were placed in all the walled towns, and a part, known as the Tartar city, was specially marked off for their use.

Meantime Wou Sankwei maintained his independence in his own immediate neighbourhood. He appears to have come to the wise determination to content himself with the sovereignty of these provinces which he hoped to weld into a kingdom for his son; and it was none of Kanghi's policy to venture upon a precipitate attack on this formidable general, whose military skill he rightly dreaded. All Kanghi's efforts were devoted to the work of detaching his friends and of crushing his allies. In 1677, however, he had so far succeeded in this preliminary task that he gave instructions for his armies to converge upon Wou Sankwei's territory from the north and also from the east. The Manchus met their match in the field, but the dissensions prevalent among the Chinese elsewhere had been manifested even in the ranks of the followers of Wou Sankwei, and this disunion more than counterbalanced their successes. Gradually his forces were driven out of Hoonan, and over his part of Szchuen he could claim only a precarious tenure. When Wou Sankwei took his first step backwards, the sun of his fortunes set. His own adherents abandoned him, the rebels in other parts hastened to come to terms with the supreme power, and all the scattered bodies of Manchu troops converged upon him as a common centre. For fifty years this Chinese warrior had never known the meaning of defeat, but he was now on the eve of irretrievable ruin, from which there was none to extricate him.

From Szchuen Wou Sankwei passed into Yunnan, whence he superintended the conduct of the campaign on the Hoonan and Kweichow frontiers. So long as he lived the skill shown in his military dispositions compensated to a great extent for other deficiencies, and the tardiness of his generals' success induced Kanghi to proclaim his intention of taking the field

in person. Several of his most experienced ministers disapproved of this resolution, as the absence of the Emperor from Peking was held to be calculated to create disturbances in the North ; but at this conjuncture the news of Wou Sankwei's death opportunely arrived. There are several versions of the manner in which this event happened, but the most probable one seems to be that he died of old age in the year 1679. Even with his great talents and reputation it had become clear that the success of his cause was virtually hopeless, and when he died his party dwindled down to an insignificant faction under the leadership of his grandson Wou Shufan. Kanghi then gave up his idea of taking the field in person, satisfied with the conviction that no other Chinese chieftain existed to take the place of his formidable opponent.

The disappearance of Wou Sankwei struck a rude blow at the courage and confidence of the Chinese people, for whom the death of their greatest man was an irreparable loss. Their ideas of resistance to the bitter end then gave place to the more worldly sentiment of coming to as speedy a settlement as possible with the Manchu officials. Wou Sankwei's long career covered the most critical period in the modern history of China, and, during the half-century that elapsed from the time when he distinguished himself in the defence of Ningyuen until he died as an independent prince in Yunnan, he occupied the very foremost place in the minds of his countrymen. The part which he had taken first in keeping out the Manchus, and then in introducing them into the state, reflected equal credit on his ability and patriotism. For even in requesting the Manchus to come to his aid against the robber Li he had been actuated by the purest motives, as there was then only a choice of evil alternatives ; and it seemed preferable that a respectable, if alien, form of government should be established, to allowing the Empire to fall into the hands of a freebooter whose thoughts were solely of plunder. The Manchus, although well aware of the magnitude of their debt, secretly wished to exclude him from the just recompense of his unequalled services ; but the Court was too wise to quarrel with one whose indignation might prove formidable. Yet

the workings of their minds were not wholly concealed from Wou Sankwei, and when he received from Kanghi the order to proceed in person to Peking and to disband his army, the moral indignation which had long possessed him broke forth. Something he may have presumed on the youth and inexperience of the Emperor, and he certainly forgot that his own age precluded his taking the active part in the field necessary to the success of his enterprise. For a moment it almost seemed that he was destined to succeed, and that the verdict of fortune would be reversed. With regard to the Manchus, Wou Sankwei might flatter himself that he had played the part of king-maker; but when he attempted to set up his own individual authority, he failed in his task. Notwithstanding that his life closed under the blight of a failure, the long, varied, and picturesque career of Wou Sankwei remains one of the most remarkable and striking to be met with in the course of Chinese history.

Wou Shufan carried on the unequal struggle with the Manchu generals for a few years; but in 1681 he lost all the possessions he had received from his grandfather, except the town of Yunnan. Long and valiantly did these representatives of a lost cause defend that stronghold, and Wou Shufan emulated the fortitude of his family. But the inevitable end could not be averted. The Manchus having once gained admission within the walls, the siege speedily terminated. The garrison was put to the sword, and Wou Shufan only baffled his enemy by committing suicide. Yet the full measure of the Manchu vengeance was not satisfied until his head had been sent to Peking to be hung up over the gate as a warning to traitors, and as a proof of the Tartar triumph. Nor was even this act the last that marked the repression of the great rebellion; for the body of Wou Sankwei himself was taken from the tomb, and his ashes were scattered throughout the eighteen provinces of China, to testify to all that no trace any longer remained of the man who had threatened the very existence of the Manchus, and at whose name all his foes used to tremble.

Kanghi had now occupied the throne for more than twenty years, and the child upon whom the weight of a great

Empire had been cast was no longer an inexperienced and unknown boy. Unusual difficulties had beset his path, but he had triumphed over them by his own energy and indomitable will; and although still a young man, he had already won his way to a position of power and personal fame that gave him high rank among the rulers of his time. What he thus early accomplished the deeds of his later years fully established and maintained. Up to this point it had been to Kanghi a struggle for existence, but henceforth his place as Emperor of China was secure. The Manchu conquest, begun by Taitson and completed by Ama Wang and Wou Sankwei, was achieved a second time and consolidated by the wise measures and determination of Kanghi.

Before concluding this early portion of the long reign, on the mere threshold of which we as yet stand, it may be pertinent to describe how the descendants of Koshinga fared in their later endeavours to establish an independent kingdom in Formosa. The conquest of that island represented another incident in the task of establishing the Manchu authority on a firm footing.

When the chief Ching lost Amoy, and with it his hold upon the mainland, he sank into a subordinate position; but his activity on the sea hardly showed any abatement in vigour. So late as the year 1680 Ching resumed his operations on the mainland, and again acquired possession of Amoy. For a time his successes seemed remarkable, but they also served to increase the ardour of the Manchus, who spared no effort to secure his overthrow. After several delusive victories his troops were signally defeated, and Amoy and the other towns on the coast were finally lost to him. Several of his best officers deserted him, and many of his men followed their example. Encouraged by this turn in the fortune of this war, Kanghi refused to listen to Ching's propositions for peace, and ordered the invasion of Formosa. The Manchu fleet had before this period attained a certain degree of efficiency, and, being reinforced by a Dutch contingent and several vessels captured from the rebel force, it enjoyed a material advantage in numbers over that of the Formosan chief.

At this critical moment Ching died of over-indulgence, and numerous disorders broke out on his death as to who should be his successor. The Pekin Court turned these dissensions to the best advantage. Their fleet seized Ponghu, the principal island of the Pescadore group, whence it was no difficult task for them to throw a force across to Formosa, and to establish themselves in one of its harbours. Then the people surrendered without further resistance, for it was clear to them that the Manchus could be no longer resisted, and that their triumph was decreed by Heaven.

In this case Kanghi felt he could afford to be merciful. The principal representative of Koshinga's family was spared and created a count. Those who surrendered voluntarily were either rewarded or dismissed without further punishment; but all had to accept the badge of conquest, and wear the Manchu tail. Thus ended the brief existence of the free Chinese authority in Formosa which had continued twenty-three years after the first proclamation of Koshinga, on the expulsion of the Dutch from Taiwan. Kanghi thus attained both his desires—the overthrow of Wou Sankwei, and the suppression of the piratical power of Formosa. He was at last supreme, both on land and on sea, within the limits of what was termed the Chinese Empire.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

KANGHI'S RELATIONS WITH GALDAN.

THE difficulty which had arisen with the Mongol chief Satchar warned Kanghi that he must be prepared to meet dangers from without as well as to encounter perils from within. If the Mongol tribes, who had helped his ancestors against the Chinese, and who had derived some benefit and advantage from the Manchu conquest, could not be trusted to remain staunch in their allegiance, what sort of friendship could he expect from those other tribes whose homes lay in the interior of Asia, and whose predatory instincts were continually urging them to harry the rich border districts of China? Kanghi had taken such measures as were within his power to establish the virtual supremacy of his name among these nomadic hordes, who resembled, in everything save military efficiency, the warrior clans which had followed the fortunes of the great Mongol leaders in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Of these tribes the Khalkas, who prided themselves on their direct descent from Genghis, and whose pasturages were watered by those tributary streams of the Amour which had beheld the dawn of Mongol fame and power, made no demur in recognizing the supremacy of the Manchu Emperor. They had long lost the ability to play any greater part on the wilds of Gobi than that of a small community of hardy and frugal shepherds, able and resolved to maintain their rights against the encroachments of their neighbours, but indifferent to any wider sway. Yet there still attached to their acts a higher significance among their kinsmen in consequence of

the greatness of their origin ; and the formal adhesion of the Khalkas to the Manchu cause meant that the great majority of the Mongols would thenceforth refrain from committing acts of unprovoked aggression on the Chinese borders.

Beyond the Mongols, in the region extending westwards to the provinces of Jungaria and Altyshahr (Ili and Kashgar), there was another people or race, which, divided into four hordes, obeyed the commands of as many chiefs. The Eleuths, a Calmuck tribe, more remote from the scene of Manchu triumph than their Mongol neighbours, were indisposed to pay those marks of subordination which either Chinese vanity or Kanghi's policy demanded. When the Khalkas made their court at the Chinese capital the Eleuths still held aloof, and expressed their intention to maintain an attitude of indifference towards the great Power of the East.

This resolution of the Eleuths might have possessed little practical significance, but for the appearance on the scene of one of those remarkable men who have risen at long intervals among these children of the desert, and who, out of unpromising materials and with scant resources, have founded a power of no slight proportions for the time that it endured. This individual, who now stands forward as a rival to Kanghi and as a competitor for empire with him—such was the exalted character of his ambition—was Galdan, chief by descent of one of the Eleuth clans, and the leader by virtue of his ability of all who bore the name. To the elevation of his race as a great people Galdan devoted all his energy and ability. The prize for which he strove was a brilliant and attractive one, while his own risk appeared in comparison insignificant. Victory assumed, under these circumstances, her most attractive colours, and defeat lost its chief terror.

Galdan was the younger son of the most powerful chief of the Eleuths. His proud and eager spirit could not forgive the accident of birth, and chafing at a position of inferiority, he quitted the camp of his people to advance his fortunes in a different sphere. The ambitious, as well as the disappointed, seek the ranks of religion's ministers to advance their ends and to gratify the promptings of an imperious will under the cloak of spiritual fervour, for humanity has allowed without

murmur to those who advocate the cause of heaven the unscrupulous resolution and the unyielding persistency that are condemned in the search of worldly ends. Such were the views of Galdan, who for a moment aspired to attain as a minister of religion that unquestioned sway which, as the chief of a nomadic people, the difference of a few months seemed destined to prevent his enjoying.

Over the whole of Buddhist Asia the fame of the Dalai Lama of Tibet spreads its gentle influence. The poor and scattered clans on the northern steppe believe in the benefits to be derived from that saintly personage's intercession quite as much as, and probably much more than, astute statesmen and rulers at Peking. The power of the Dalai Lama was exercised with less despotic sway over those who regarded that incarnation of an immortal spirit as their highest religious dignitary, than that of the Pope of Rome; but it was none the less real as a matter of general belief and common acceptance. It was to Lhasa, or rather to the lamasery of Botala, that the young Eleuth chief turned his steps. His absence was not lengthy. Before his departure Galdan had quarrelled with some of his brothers, and in the discussion that ensued had slain his full-brother Tsenka. This deed of violence precipitated his flight, but it also contributed to his prompt return. News of the crime reached the ears of the Dalai Lama, and the favour of admission to the ranks of the clergy of Tibet was refused to one coming with the stains of blood upon his hands. Galdan quitted Tibet and returned to the quarters of his race. Among a people accustomed to violence, his crime was easily forgotten, or lightly condoned by a brief absence. His return was hailed by those who knew that he came straight from the palace of the Dalai Lama, and he found that the reputation of having lived in the effulgence of that holy presence served him in almost as good stead as if his character were spotless. Then again he turned to the schemes of ambition which, ever uppermost in his brain, were to be attained either by fair means or by foul, and to which the superstition and the credulity of men were likely to be as good stepping-stones as his own ability and nerve.

Galdan's designs were carried out to the letter. He

deposed the Khan who had been elected in his place after the murder of Tsenka, and as the next step decreed the death of all the members of his family whose opposition to his plans might be expected. This holocaust in the camp of the Eleuths terrified the people into a state of subjection, which it became Galdan's main object to make as light and durable as he could. Galdan had done enough for the moment towards strengthening his own position. He had now to consolidate his power by systematic encroachments on the lands of his neighbours; and as the preliminary to these latent designs he sent a mission, nominally of congratulation, but really of inquiry and investigation, to the Court of Kanghi. It arrived at the very moment when the rebellion of Wou Sankwei was at its height, and it returned before the death of that prince and the subsequent pacification of the South had taken place. The tale it brought back to Galdan was one, therefore, not of the power and resources of the Manchus, but of their weakness and embarrassment. These Central Asian envoys may well have been excused if they spread the rumour that the brave young Tartar ruler stood on the verge of ruin.

When Galdan received the report of his messengers he abandoned whatever intention he may have had of preserving the peace with the Chinese Empire. The opportunity of advancing his interests at its expense, for which he had been on the look-out, seemed to have arrived, and he lost no time in beginning the encroachments over which he had long meditated. The Khalkas, who had given a willing and sincere recognition to the Manchu authority, presented the mark upon which he could most easily vent his simulated indignation and his deeply-felt ambition. They were within the reach of his power, and too remote to receive from China the aid which could alone enable them to resist his attack. The invasion of the Khalka districts formed the task undertaken by Galdan in his first campaign; but at the same time he sent troops in the direction of the Chinese frontier. The approach of his force induced many to flee within the Emperor's territory, and to seek the aid of his officials in recovering their possessions from an aggressor with no valid ground of complaint against them. Kanghi gave them

permission to settle on the frontier, and provided them with a few necessaries. But at first he could not do more than watch the progress of events with vigilant attention, and this he was always careful to do. His generals on the frontier were ordered to send spies into the territory of the Eleuths, and these reported that Galdan had established a formidable military power, and that he meditated extending his sway over all the regions adjacent to China.

While employed in the serious business of advancing his authority into the lands of the Khalkas, Galdan amused himself by frequently sending missions to Peking, with the double object of increasing his information and of blinding the Emperor as to his plans. So little was known about the state of the regions beyond the Chinese frontier, that for a long time Galdan was able to keep the execution of his plans without the knowledge of the Chinese officials. So well did he combine the arts of vigilant activity in the field and of dissimulation in his diplomatic negotiations, that in the year 1679, when his encroachments on the Khalka country were beginning to assume tangible form, his ambassador at Peking was accorded a flattering reception, and returned to his master with the seal and patent of a khan.

Three years later Kanghi commissioned two of the principal officers attached to his person to proceed to the camp of Galdan to ascertain how far the disquieting rumours concerning his movements and military preparations were true. At the same time he sent other envoys to the Khalkas, and among these may be noted Feyanku, then a young captain in the bodyguard, but afterwards one of the most celebrated of Chinese generals. These diplomatic agents were the bearers of the usual number of presents for the princes to whom they were about to proceed; but their instructions were of the simplest kind. One and all of the potentates whom they visited were to acknowledge the supremacy of the Chinese Emperor and to renew the formal expression of their allegiance at stated intervals. Of these missions, the result only of that to Galdan had any practical significance.

The laws of hospitality are sacred and exacting. Galdan, enraged at heart at the pretensions of a monarch whose power

he affected to despise, lavished on Kanghi's envoys all the resources of his people and circumstances. The arrival of an embassy in his poor country from the rich and powerful Emperor of China was an event, he said, that would be handed down to posterity as the most glorious of his reign; yet he was no doubt thinking that his relation to Kanghi might become very similar to those of the early Manchu leaders with the last of the Ming emperors. The Chinese envoys did not succeed in obtaining any of those formal concessions which they were expected to bring back from him, and the indifference of Galdan's attitude was enhanced by the unaffected cordiality of the pledges of friendship given by the Khalkas. To this they were impelled both by their apprehensions of Galdan, and also by the divisions and rivalries which disturbed the harmony of their assemblies.

The dissensions of the Khalkas afforded Galdan his opportunity, and when Kanghi succeeded in 1687 in effecting a reconciliation between these princelets, who swore before an image of Buddha to keep the peace among themselves, Galdan resorted to all the artifices within his power to disturb the harmony of this arrangement and to revive the feuds and discord that many hoped had been happily healed. Kanghi addressed them by letter in terms which sought to bring before them all the risk and attendant evils of the course they were pursuing; but his principal aim was to check the pretensions and encroachments of Galdan. Early in the following year, therefore, he sent a new embassy into the Khalka country; and he attached so much importance to its success, that he entrusted the mission to some of his nearest and most intimate advisers. Prince Sosan, a captain of the body-guard and minister of state, was placed at the head of the embassy, and with him was associated Tong Kwekang, another official of high rank, and Kanghi's maternal uncle. With these Chinese dignitaries also went the two European priests, Gerbillon and Pereira, as interpreters, for to the complications among the Khalkas there had been added a dispute with the Russian colonists, who had crossed a continent to find a fertile place of settlement on the banks of the Amour.

The Russians had constructed along the Southern border

of their new possession a line of block-houses, but, as their presence in this remote quarter did not apparently disturb the Chinese, they soon began to fortify their stations on a more pretentious and formidable scale. A fort was erected at Albazin, a place on the upper course of the Amour, and the Russian authorities in this quarter anticipated being able to derive substantial benefit from the disturbed state of the country held by the Khalkas as well as from the rival pretensions of Galdan and the Emperor Kanghi. In this expectation they were doomed to disappointment, for the Chinese troops sent into the neighbourhood by Kanghi, with the aid of the surrounding tribes, fell upon the garrison of Albazin, captured the place, and carried off a band of Russian prisoners to Peking, where their descendants still remain. The Russians returned and re-established themselves at Albazin with that obstinacy which is one of their characteristics, and which they derive from their Tartar origin. Hostilities recommenced and languished throughout the year, and then it was that Kanghi, more anxious to crush Galdan than to embroil himself in an indefinite quarrel with the Russians, accepted the overtures that came to him from the Muscovites for a pacific arrangement. This embassy had almost reached the scene of its proposed diplomatic labours, when an event compelled its sudden return. War had at last broken out between the Eleuths and the Khalkas, and Galdan was in the act of invading the very territory whither Kanghi's representatives had gone to assert his right against the Russians. Although the diplomatists were recalled, the negotiations were only suspended, and not broken off. In the following year it may be stated that they were brought to an auspicious termination by the treaty of Nipchu.

Galdan had on his side speculated on the possible advantages he might derive from the appearance of these Russians, and possessed with the idea that it must tend to his advantage, he resolved to defer no longer his open rupture with the Khalkas. Even in these uncivilized regions, where the law of might supersedes every other consideration, the moral sentiment of the human race requires that some cloak shall be given to acts of wanton aggression. Galdan specified his

grounds of complaint against the chief of the Khalka princes. He had participated in the murder of some of Galdan's kinsmen, and to all demands of redress had turned a deaf ear. There does not seem to have been much truth in the allegation, but it served its turn. Galdan had long resolved to overrun the country of his neighbours, and one excuse was as good as another. Yet in attacking the Khalkas the thought uppermost in his mind was how best he could injure Kanghi.

Chepsuntanpa, one of the principal Khalka princes, upon whom the Emperor had conferred the religious title of Koutuktoo, sent the first certain intelligence of Galdan's movements to China. With a force of 30,000 men he had overrun several of the districts belonging to these chieftains, and the Koutuktoo wrote that unless the Emperor promptly sent assistance it would be impossible for them to escape the yoke of the Eleuths. This bad news was fully confirmed by Kanghi's own envoys, who dwelt upon the panic that had seized the minds of the Khalkas in consequence of the rapid successes of Galdan. Kanghi at once gave orders for the reinforcement of the garrison in the North-West, and summoned eight of the Mongol banners to take the field with their contingents. Shortly afterwards, not feeling certain that these preparations would suffice in so critical an emergency, the Emperor moved a portion of the Leaoutung garrison, and some of the Manchu banners, nearer to the scene of the threatened fray.

Galdan was now more indifferent to appearances than he had ever been before, and he openly declared that he aimed at the destruction of the Khalka independence, and that nothing short of the death or capture of their two foremost princes would satisfy his intentions. He did not even refrain from putting forward a grievance against the Chinese Government for its having allowed several of the Khalka princes and their followers to take refuge within the limits of the Empire. Kanghi's reply to these pretensions was to allot the Khalkas settlements in the Kirong region, and to receive them into the ranks of his subjects, on the same footing as the other Mongol tribes. That Galdan was not wholly in

the wrong, or, at least, that he had succeeded in giving his case a semblance of right, is evident on the admission of Kanghi himself; but the unbridled extent of his ambition was clearly evident at all times.

In 1689 the question in dispute between these potentates had resolved itself into whether Kanghi would surrender the refugee Khalkas, or whether Galdan would agree to waive his demands on this point. Neither party was likely to make any substantial concession, and, unless a compromise could be effected, war was inevitable. Galdan's pretensions received the unexpected support of the Dalai Lama, who sent one of his attendants to Peking to urge on Kanghi the advisability of complying with the demand of the Eleuth prince for the surrender of his personal enemies, the Koutuktoo and his companion. Kanghi refused to listen to the advice of his spiritual friend and correspondent, for it would ill become him, he wrote, as a great prince not to show consideration for the unfortunate. At this stage Galdan met with an unlooked-for check in a disastrous defeat which he suffered at the hands of his neighbour and nephew, Tse Wang Rabdan, son of the murdered Tsenka, with whose future career the development of this Central Asian question will have much to do.

Galdan must have quickly recovered from the effects of this reverse, although report had painted its gravity to the Emperor in vivid colours; for the very next year, 1690, he took the first step of hostility that he had yet ventured upon against China. The act of hostility to which he resorted was to arrest the Chinese envoys staying at his camp, thus hoping to secure an equivalent for the eventual recovery of the objects of his personal animosity. In face of this outrage and insult all Kanghi's desire for peace, and dislike for an arduous war, disappeared; and, placing three armies in the field, he directed one to march with all despatch to the Kerulon. But Galdan was expert in this form of warfare, and, knowing the country well, long evaded the pursuit of the Chinese forces. His own difficulties, however, remained so numerous and grave, that it was impossible for him to collect all his strength to resist the Chinese. His neighbour,

Tse Wang Rabdan, continued to be a thorn in his side ; and his best chance appeared to be an alliance with the Russians, although they had nominally settled all their misunderstandings with the Chinese by the Treaty of Nipchu. The Russians, whatever their inclination may have been, did not possess the available power to help the Eleuths ; but, with the object of keeping themselves as well informed as they could about the affairs of their neighbours, they sent an officer on a visit to Galdan's camp. The mere rumour of a possible alliance between Galdan and the Russians roused Kanghi to acts of unprecedented energy and activity. The whole of the Northern army, composed of the picked troops of the Eight Manchu Banners, the Forty-nine Mongol Banners, and the Chinese auxiliaries, was ordered to proceed across the Mongolian steppe, and an expedition of formidable proportions was thus fitted out for the destruction of Galdan.

Meantime Galdan, although his main hope centred in the Russian alliance, and notwithstanding that his necessities had obliged him to kill most of his horses to satisfy the requirements of his followers, had not remained inactive. Collecting all his forces, he made a rapid advance into the territory under Chinese authority, attacked the advanced Chinese army under President Horni on the river Hourhoei, and after a stubborn engagement compelled it to quit the field, of which he remained the undisputed master. This reverse proved that the military power which Galdan had collected during these years was far from insignificant. Considerable as it already was for defence, but a few more years of inaction on the part of Kanghi were required to make it formidable for offence. The defeat of Horni on the banks of the Hourhoei proved this much, if it did not also show that Galdan was resolved to give the reins to his ambition in the direction of China.

Galdan's victory did not render him so elate that he failed to recognize that the chances in the war with China were overwhelmingly against him ; and the extensive preparations made by Kanghi warned him that it would be wise to avert the coming storm by timely concessions. He, therefore, sent another envoy to Peking, where the Emperor

accorded him an honourable reception, despite the fact that his own officers remained in confinement. Although Kanghi still protested his desire for a peaceful solution of the question, the only terms on which he would treat were the laying down of his arms by Galdan. At the same time that the Eleuth envoy left Peking, Kanghi set out from his capital to place himself in nearer communication with his army.

Kanghi's brother, Yu Tsing Wang, was appointed to the chief command, and his instructions were to bring Galdan to an engagement as promptly as he could, and to wipe out the stain of the defeat on the Hourhoei by either the overthrow or the capture of the Eleuth prince. Although the Emperor was compelled by the state of his health to return to Peking, active operations were continued with unabated vigour, and Kanghi had very soon the satisfaction of receiving the news of a decisive victory won by his generals. The battle was fought at Oulan Poutong, where Yu Tsing Wang fell upon the Eleuth camp, which had been formed at the foot of a mountain, with a wood on one side and a small stream on the other. The Chinese attacked Galdan in this advantageous position, and, although the Eleuths fought with much of the valour to be expected from men engaged in defending a popular cause, the former were completely victorious. The victors suffered considerable loss in this encounter, and among the slain was Prince Kiukiu, an uncle of the Emperor Kanghi.

This defeat made Galdan again anxious to come to terms with Kanghi, and negotiations were begun between him and Yu Tsing Wang. At first Galdan endeavoured to circumvent the intentions of the Chinese by negotiating on a basis from which his personal enemies, the Khalka princes, were excluded ; but he was dealing with a race fully his equal in the art of diplomatic fence, and, as the material argument of superior force was against him, he had really in the end no prudent choice save to give in his unqualified surrender. Galdan sent the Emperor a formal expression of fealty and obedience, and Kanghi in return wrote him a letter of forgiveness. This was in the year 1690.

A few months later, Kanghi sent Galdan the sum of one thousand taels for the purpose of alleviating the sufferings of

his people ; but, although these arrangements were apparently satisfactory, very little confidence seems to have been felt in their enduring. Kanghi himself regarded the treaty as a hollow truce ; but as matters stood he could congratulate himself on the conclusion of his first contest with Galdan. He had certainly curbed the pride of the Eleuths, and given security to the Khalkas.

CHAPTER XL.

KANGHI'S SECOND WAR WITH GALDAN.

KANGHI'S anticipations were soon verified. Galdan had not abandoned the ambitious dreams of his prime, and the mistrust of his intentions shown by the Chinese authorities supplied him with some excuse, if not justification, for renewing his aggressions in the direction of the Khalka districts. On the advice of his ministers, the Emperor had not only left a numerous garrison quartered in their country, but he held two bodies of troops in readiness to march at the shortest notice. Nor was this all. A summons was issued to the Khalka tribes to assemble on the plain of Dolonor for inspection by the Emperor, and the commotion produced by this ceremony caused a great stir throughout the steppe. The principal chiefs were granted further titles of honour, and rich presents were bestowed upon all according to their rank. When Kanghi returned to his capital he could congratulate himself on the cordiality which marked his relations with his Mongol subjects and vassals. Galdan alone held aloof from these transactions, and showed by his attitude that he regarded with little sympathy these measures for the extension westward of Chinese authority. Galdan's disapproval became more emphatic in consequence of the diplomatic negotiations which had been for some time in progress between the Emperor and Tse Wang Rabdan, his nephew and sworn personal enemy.

The question of their mutual relations might long have remained in this uncertain state without provoking a fresh appeal to arms but for an unfortunate occurrence which

rendered war inevitable, and which precipitated the crisis that had long seemed imminent. This event was the murder of one of Kanghi's envoys. The messenger had been commissioned to proceed to the camp of Tse Wang Rabdan, and, while strengthening the friendly understanding with that potentate, he was also charged to impress upon him the importance of preserving peace in his region, for Tse Wang Rabdan had several times evinced a disposition to bring his feud with Galdan to a settlement by the summary means most in accordance with the customs of his race. The Chinese envoy effected his journey in safety across the desert of Gobi, and the small escort of sixty men, which the Viceroy of Shensi gave him as a bodyguard, sufficed to afford him protection against the nomad tribes who regarded that region as being under their peculiar patronage. He had almost reached the friendly shelter of the town of Hami, when he was beset by a large band, either of Galdan's immediate followers or of tribesmen subject to his authority. Plunder appears to have been their main object, as it is improbable that Galdan gave them instructions to commit this outrage, for the very simple reason that he had himself just despatched an envoy to Peking. The result, however, was plain enough. The Chinese emissary and the greater number of his escort were slain, their baggage and the presents destined for Tse Wang Rabdan were carried off, and the fame of the achievement tended to enhance the reputation of Galdan in the eyes of the tribes as an individual not afraid to assert his power in the teeth of the Emperor of China himself.

Kanghi was either so desirous of peace, or so fully persuaded that Galdan would accept no alternative short of war, that, despite this outrage, he did not depart from his attitude of studied moderation. Galdan had broken the laws held sacred by all nations, and he could not but feel overwhelmed by the contrast of his conduct with that of the Emperor, who seemed anxious only for the preservation of peace. Kanghi still held open the door for the Eleuth prince to make reparation for his crimes, and to show that he desired to behave better in the future; but in the very letter in which he offered the opportunity of redeeming a fault, he resorted to the threat

that unless Galdan promptly made amends for so many outrages, he would come with arms in his hands to exact due punishment.

Nor was Galdan slow for his part in taking such measures as he could, both for the attainment of his objects against the Khalkas, and also for the defence of his possessions when the long-threatened storm from China should burst upon him. He sent emissaries among the Mongol tribes to sow distrust of the Emperor's intentions in their regard, and to dwell on the advisability of uniting in a single confederacy all the clans of the Chinese frontier. Nor did he stop with these diplomatic overtures and this declaration of hostility. The man who had once thought of taking high rank as a lama of Buddhism, now resolved to repudiate a religious belief which had tended rather to embarrass than to strengthen his position, for at every stage of his dispute with China he had been met with the menaces of his spiritual head, the Dalai Lama of Tibet. In 1693 he took the decisive step of proclaiming himself a convert to Mahomedanism, by means of which he hoped to gain the assistance of not only the Tartar tribes, but also of the Mussulman colonies in China. At the same time he showed no disposition to break with the Dalai Lama personally, whose moral support he strove to enlist in his behalf by promises to maintain his supremacy against the encroachments which rumour attributed to Kanghi's *protégé*, the Koutuktoo Chepsuntanpa. Galdan's policy was thus based on certain high pretensions, and he resorted to any artifice to supply the deficiencies of his position, and to procure some substitute for want of numbers, and inferiority in material resources. The Chinese proclaimed that "ambition became his only God," and that "to it he sacrificed even the religion of his fathers."

Between neighbours thus situated it could not be long before frequent conflicts would ensue on borders which were but vaguely ascertained, and at points to which both sides advanced equal claims. Kanghi's general, Feyanku, who had risen so high in the service that he now held the post of chief commander on the Shensi frontier, sent reports of several of these combats, and he was not less desirous than his master

of demanding the reparation necessary for the satisfaction of the military honour of his country. Kanghi continued to collect troops, and held several meetings with the chief of the Kortsin Mongols, the most powerful tribe of Mongolia, to arrange for a joint expedition against Galdan. These interviews took place in the year 1695, when Kanghi had so far lost patience with his neighbour that he had resolved to effect his complete overthrow. Nothing short of the utter and irretrievable ruin of Galdan would satisfy the imperial wrath.

While Kanghi thus sought to lead his enemy into a trap, the extensive preparations he made for war showed that his determination was fixed to compass the destruction of Galdan—even at the cost of an extensive and hazardous expedition into the recesses of Central Asia. It was not until the year 1696 that he had perfected his arrangements and brought together a force specially raised and equipped for a protracted war beyond the frontier. The principal command of this great army was entrusted to Feyanku, who left his post on the frontier to receive from his sovereign the personal instructions he desired to give for the conduct of the war. The importance of the occasion was marked by an imposing ceremony at Peking on the eve of the great national holiday, known as the Feast of Lanterns, when China old and young gives itself over to rejoicings and festivities that recall the Saturnalia of the ancients.

All the mandarins to be employed in the war, the special corps of artillery, cavalry, and infantry upon whose efficiency so much care and forethought had been expended, and the body of commissaries who had been trained for the supply services with much prudence and knowledge of war, were assembled in a double line along a parade extending between the principal gates of the city. The Emperor, surrounded by his court functionaries and the principal officials of his Government, took up his position on a raised platform, from which the whole scene could be surveyed. His heart might well have swelled with pride at this spectacle of the chivalry of the brave Manchu race, and at the power displayed before him of a great Empire. When Kanghi had carefully surveyed the

serried lines of his troops, and the attentive and respectful groups of his ministers and generals, and as soon as the noise of the trumpets, proclaiming to the capital the presence of the Emperor, had ceased, Feyanku approached his sovereign. Then Kanghi handed him the cup of wine, which Feyanku received on his knees, and which, having descended from the steps of the throne, he quaffed in the full view of the thousands of spectators. Having thus drunk success to his master's cause and confusion to all his enemies, Feyanku retired. Precisely the same ceremony was performed by each of his lieutenant-generals, and then by the subordinate officers of the army, who, ten at a time, approached the steps of the throne. Success having been thus drunk to the army charged with the overthrow of Galdan, the final preparations for the opening of the war were completed. Feyanku left the capital with his reinforcements to assume the active command in the field, and Kanghi, eager to compass the overthrow of his enemy, set to work to raise a second army, of which he proposed to take the command in person.

While Feyanku was hurrying towards the West to begin operations from the side of Kansuh, Kanghi was busily employed in drawing together from the garrison of Peking, and also from the Manchu Banners, another army, with which he proclaimed his intention of himself proceeding against the Eleuths. That opinions were divided among his ministers on the subject of these campaigns in a remote and little-known region may be judged from the open disapprobation with which the latter announcement was received. The censors, ministers of state, and other great functionaries, proceeded in a body to impress upon Kanghi the inadvisability of his taking the field. They were thanked for their solicitude, but the Emperor's intentions remained unchanged. The departure of the second army, which was to follow the route through Kukukoto, a place of great strategical importance beyond the Wall, was fixed for the day month after the ceremony attending the appointment of Feyanku.

The difficulties incident to campaigning in a sterile country compelled the further division of the expedition, and the task of effecting the overthrow of Galdan was finally entrusted to

four armies, of which Feyanku commanded the Western and Kanghi in person the Eastern. Of the march across the desert from Kukukoto towards Kobdo, where Galdan had established his head-quarters, we fortunately possess details from the narrative of the priest Gerbillon, who was among the personal attendants of the Emperor on this occasion. Despite the difficulties encountered, and the vastness of the distances to be traversed in this portion of the campaign, the Chinese armies succeeded in making good their way to the upper course of the Kerulon, where they were in the immediate vicinity of Galdan's territory. Several thousands of lives had been lost, and more than one detachment had been compelled to call a halt or even to beat a retreat ; but notwithstanding these disadvantages, an overwhelming force of Chinese had made good their way across the desert. Galdan's main defence had been shown to be of little avail, and, unless he could establish some more solid claim to success on the field of battle, it was clear that his ruin was a matter that could not be long averted. Feyanku, after a march through the desert of more than three months' duration, had pitched his camp near the source of the Tula. Only 10,000 soldiers remained available for active service, and this body was reinforced by 2000 more troops, who represented all that remained of another corps. These 12,000 men were placed by their able and gallant commander in a fortified position within the Mongol camping-district of Chowmodo.

Galdan has been represented in the character of a formidable antagonist, and the question naturally suggests itself, what had he been doing while this storm was developing portentous proportions upon his eastern borders ? We have seen that he had retired to a certain distance from the limits of his possessions. The Chinese found on the banks of the affluents of the Amour the traces of the camps which he had destroyed in order to concentrate his resources for the defence of the permanent camp or town of Kobdo. Either before or about this time Galdan had endeavoured to incite the powerful chief of the Kortsin Mongols to join him in a general Mongol league against Kanghi. The scheme was rejected by either the good sense or the fidelity of that prince, who, it

will be remembered, had been put up to simulate a sympathy with the plans of the Eleuth. But in consequence of the open state of war, Kanghi had abandoned that intrigue, and now Galdan's schemes only served to increase his indignation and to whet his ardour. But it was towards Russia that Galdan mainly looked for the support which would enable him to make head against the superior power of China. He even went so far as to draw up a scheme for the invasion and conquest of the latter country, but the essential part of the arrangement was that Russia should send a contingent of 60,000 men. In this century we have known something of the slight control possessed at St. Petersburg over the authorities in Central Asia. In the days of Kanghi there was not so much as the pretence of that control exercised; yet it is not to be supposed that the mere handful of Russian colonists in the Siberian solitudes ever seriously entertained the idea of entering upon hostilities on a large scale with the Chinese. To humour Galdan supplied an easy means of occupying the attention of their neighbours, and Galdan's own wants and apprehensions led him to augur from the observations made by the few Russians with whom he came into contact that the amount of support he might expect from them was much greater than could by any possibility have been afforded to him. The hopes of Russian support were soon shown to be delusive, and Galdan could find no better hope than in the difficulties of the desert barrier which protected his territories, and in such resistance as his band of followers, weakened by the indifference of Tse Wang Rabdan, could oppose. The progress of the Chinese armies across the desert, made though it was at the cost of a great expenditure of life, showed him that the former hope was no longer tenable, and that it only remained for him to make the most of the forces at his disposal, and to resist with all his strength the invader.

The situation was indeed desperate; but there still remained a possibility that the Chinese might be so far exhausted by the labour of having traversed the barren region of Gobi that it would be possible for Galdan to overwhelm one of their detachments before the whole of the army had been able to combine on the banks of the Kerulon. In a prompt

attack lay Galdan's sole chance of safety, and, while Kanghi was employed in recruiting his troops in the country of the Northern Khalkas, the Eleuth chieftain advanced as fast as he could from Kobdo, and threw himself upon the Chinese entrenchments at Chowmodo.

At the very moment when Galdan formed this desperate resolve the Chinese commanders were so much embarrassed by the difficulty of obtaining supplies that it seemed impossible for them to maintain their positions. The advisability of retreat was under discussion when Galdan's movement rescued Feyanku from a dilemma in which it seemed next to impossible to save both his military honour and the lives of his soldiers. Few of the incidents of this battle have been preserved. Little more is known of its details than that Galdan assumed the offensive, while Feyanku, having dismounted his cavalry, long contented himself with standing on the defensive. The battle had lasted for nearly three hours when Feyanku gave the signal for attack. The Eleuths made but a brief stand against the onset of their more disciplined opponents, and Galdan, seeing that the day was lost, fled with a mere handful of his followers, leaving his camp and baggage in the hands of the victor. Two thousand Eleuths were slain, and the character of the struggle may be inferred from the fact that the Chinese took only one hundred prisoners, of whom most were women and children. The principal wife of Galdan was among the killed, his army was scattered and reduced in numbers, while that chief himself, after aspiring to be the undisputed ruler on the steppe, became a fugitive glad to hide himself in its remote recesses.

The victory of Chowmodo came like an unexpected God-send to the Celestials, for, on the very eve of its attainment, it seemed as if all the expense and trouble to which Kanghi had been put were to result in nothing decisive. Feyanku's success removed further cause of disquietude, and enabled Kanghi to return to Peking, leaving behind him the order to pursue Galdan with the utmost vigour, as the results of the war could only be considered partial so long as he remained at large.

The overthrow at Chowmodo marked the destruction of

the power which Galdan had set up among the nomad and pastoral tribes of his region, and it also showed that the end of his career was approaching. There is no need to enter into the extremities to which Galdan was reduced during the last days of his life, nor would there be sufficient interest in the theme to dwell upon the schemes to which a desperate man thought of resorting for the retrieval of his fortunes. At one moment he sent an envoy to Peking to express, in abject terms, his desire to surrender, and at another he resumed his overtures to the Russian officials for a close alliance. But the one thing that was clear was that, although he had lost the power, he still clung to the wish, to injure the cause of China among the Mongols and her other vassals of his own race. The Chinese troops were on the eve of renewing the pursuit when the news came of Galdan's death. The nature of his last illness is not clearly known, and his death may be attributed either to the hardships and mental chagrin he had undergone, or, as some say, to the act of his own hand.

The death of Galdan not only removed from Kanghi's mind the anxiety which had so long weighed upon it, but it also closed a career of remarkable adventure. Galdan was a representative man of the class of desert chiefs who, from the earliest days of Chinese history, have troubled the Western borders of the great Empire. We have seen them in the persons of Meha, Yenta, and others as a cause of anxiety and trouble rather than of absolute danger to the integrity of the State. We have also in the cases of Genghis and Noorhachu found them sufficiently prompt and capable to overthrow the existing dynasty and to substitute that of their own family. Galdan belonged to the former class. Kanghi has himself testified to the remarkable skill and courage of this chieftain. In an edict summarizing the conquests which had made him the greatest potentate in Central Asia, he concludes with the statement that Galdan was "a formidable enemy;" and the energetic and persistent manner with which he had laboured to effect his ruin proves that the Chinese Emperor was fully persuaded of the accuracy of his own statement. But the overthrow of Galdan also shows that, except under abnormal

circumstances, which have only occurred twice or, at the most, thrice in history, the unflagging determination and vastly superior resources of the Chinese have always availed to turn the scale against the ambition and even against the love of war of these independent leaders. The vitality of Chinese individuality and imperial power has always asserted itself even after long periods of apparent decay and dissolution.

Galdan overthrown, Kanghi ordered the return of his armies. Feyanku was left with a small force to completely pacify the newly conquered region; but the Emperor hoped that peace had been definitely assured. That this hope was soon dispelled we shall have presently to see; and the manner in which the Galdan episode gave place to a long interval of trouble, and then to the necessity of formulating a distinct Central Asian policy, will constitute one of the most important facts in the history of the next seventy years. With the death of Galdan in 1697, however, Kanghi offered up incense to Heaven in the evidently sincere persuasion that peace had been definitely obtained for himself and his people. So far as his inclination went he had had enough of arduous and unprofitable campaigns beyond China's proper frontier—and the sentiment was the more firmly rooted in his mind because he had undergone the privations of his soldiers, and knew by practical experience that even the strategical skill of his commanders might prove of little avail in face of the passive resistance of natural obstacles.

CHAPTER XLI.

KANGHI'S TROUBLES IN CENTRAL ASIA.

TSE WANG RABDAN, whose enmity had contributed to bring about the ruin of Galdan, and whose assistance Kanghi had repaid with various privileges in carrying on trade with China, was left by his uncle's death the undisputed chief both in actual power and in reputation among the Eleuth tribes. The tribal resources, which had failed to support Galdan's ambition, passed by the law of hereditary succession to the son of the murdered Tsenka, and Tse Wang Rabdan soon found that he enjoyed all the temporal power arising from an undisputed sway over the Eleuths. The centre of his authority had indeed been shifted further westwards, and his ambition did not urge him to molest the Khalkas, or to encroach in the direction of China. But none the less Tse Wang Rabdan claimed to be a great and independent prince, and he had his own views as to his position in Central Asia.

The nature of his pretensions, covering as they did a different ground, might not have brought him into immediate conflict with China, but only too much reason existed for fearing that the relations subsisting between him and the Emperor could not long maintain their cordiality. Causes of friction soon revealed themselves. Kanghi, acting on the Chinese principle that rebels should be extirpated root and branch, had ordered that no pains should be spared to capture the few surviving members of Galdan's family, and a great reward was offered to whoever brought in the body or the bones of Galdan. At the first blush it seems only possible to detect in this malignant pursuit the working of a savage

and persistent vengeance, and the cruel maxim of the Chinese system, that "the families of rebels taken open-handed should be extirpated," tends to confirm the impression. A more careful consideration of the subject may, however, result in leading us to take the view that the Chinese wished for nothing more than clear evidence of their chief enemy's death, and for some assurance that no member of his family felt either prepared or willing to carry on his schemes.

The fortune of war had placed in the hands of Tse Wang Rabdan the persons of a son and daughter of Galdan, as well as the bones of that chief. These prizes had fallen to his share after a victory near the town of Hami, where he defeated a neighbour who thought to dispute his authority. The Chinese at once sent a demand for the surrender to them of these relics and representatives of their recent enemy. Tse Wang Rabdan, whose humanity was either aroused, or who felt aggrieved at the dictatorial tone assumed by the Chinese, long evaded the request preferred to him by Feyanku. Instead of showing a spirit of humility towards Kanghi, he busied himself with the extension of his power in both Jungaria and Kashgaria, while the first force of his wrath was vented on the Mahomedan prince of Hami. Kanghi very soon learnt that even the ruin of Galdan would not avail to deter many from imitating him, and that the overthrow of one chieftain would not suffice to ensure permanent peace among races whose principal avocation and amusement had always been a savage and sanguinary strife. The pertinacity of the Chinese carried their point for them in this matter, as well as in other questions. Kanghi sent several embassies to Tse Wang Rabdan's capital, and showed marked insistence on the subject of his demand. At length success crowned his efforts, and in 1701 the Eleuth prince surrendered the ashes or bones of his uncle, and the person of his cousin. With the acquisition of these marks of victory Kanghi remained fully satisfied, and his generous treatment of his defenceless captive showed that he sought to gratify the requirements of a policy, and not the promptings of a poor revenge.

Although Tse Wang Rabdan went at last so far as to

concede to Kanghi the demand on which he placed so much stress, his general action marked him out rather as the antagonist than as the supporter of Chinese authority in Central Asia. In a less ostentatious but equally efficacious way he was gathering into his hands the superior authority to which Galdan had aspired. His victories over his Kirghiz neighbours gave his position also a degree of stability to which that of his relative had never attained. The result of this feud and of the accompanying strife was that the Kirghiz chief, to whose daughter Tse Wang Rabdan was married, felt himself compelled to coalesce with his son-in-law, and thus the military forces of the Eleuths and the Kirghiz were combined. This alone sufficed to make the military power of Tse Wang Rabdan extend without a break from Hami on the East to Khokand on the West. The opportunity soon presented itself of employing this considerable available force on a larger scene in advancing the influence of the Eleuth prince into a different region.

It had been one of the main objects of Galdan's ambition to assert his right to have a voice in the regulation of the internal affairs of Tibet, and the desire to succeed in this object was strengthened by the knowledge of the reputation that would accrue to him as speaking with the approval of the great spiritual head of Buddhism. The Chinese Government had its own views upon the same subject, and regarded with disfavour any measures having a tendency to weaken its influence and authority at Lhasa. But as yet the direct exercise of Chinese authority in Tibet had not been very great, and the interests of the Jungarian prince were better and more emphatically represented there than those of China and her sovereign. It became one of Kanghi's main objects to alter this condition of affairs, and to bring Tibet and its order of priestly rulers completely under his control. These intrigues and counter-intrigues precipitated the course of events in Tibet, and recalled Kanghi's attention to his Western borders. The boldness of Tse Wang Rabdan brought on a contest that was, perhaps, in any case inevitable, and left the Chinese again no choice save to appeal to the sword. Kanghi had taken his plans with such care, and shown such excellent

judgment in his manipulation of the question, that the Chinese party in Tibet obtained a signal triumph. How that triumph was obtained, and what it practically entailed, must be described at some length, for it led up to several events of permanent importance, and it was marked by the double invasion of Tibetan territory, first by an Eleuth horde, and secondly by a Manchu army.

From an early period the supremacy in the Tibetan administration had been disputed between two different classes, the one which represented the military body making use of religious matters to forward its designs, the other being an order of priests supported by the unquestioning faith and confidence of the masses of the people. The former became known as the Red Caps, and the latter as the Yellow Caps. The rivalry between these classes had been keen, and was still bitterly contested when Chuntche first ascended the throne; but victory had finally inclined to the side of the Yellow Caps before the period at which we have arrived. The great spiritual head of this latter body was the Dalai Lama, pronounced to be of wisdom as profound and inscrutable as the ocean. The direct intervention of the Emperors Chuntche and Kanghi had contributed to make the triumph of the Dalai Lama still more decisive and unquestionable; but the Red Caps cherished for a further period the desire to dispute the palm with their rivals, if they felt that they could no longer hope to secure all the prize of victory. By the aid of a Calmuck army raised in Central Asia, the Dalai Lama had had the final satisfaction of beholding his opponents driven out of the country, and compelled to take refuge in the Himalayan state of Bhutan, where the sect of the Red Caps continues, after this lapse of time, to retain influence and authority. This event occurred before the year 1650, and consequently at a period when the Manchu authority was far from being firmly established in China itself.

The settlement of the disputes between the two rival religious parties in Tibet was followed by the appointment of a kind of civil and military functionary with authority to act under the Dalai Lama. This official was named the

Tipa, and, encouraged by the nature of the post he occupied, he soon began to carry on intrigues for the elevation of his own rank and power at the expense of the priestly rulers, in whose service he was pledged by the most sacred oaths to act uprightly and well. The ambition of one Tipa led to his fall and imprisonment; but the evil was set down to the indiscretion of the individual, and a successor was named to the office. The new Tipa had been chosen for the post chiefly because he was the reputed son of one of the Dalai Lamas, and when his father died in 1682 he concealed his death, gave out that he had only retired into the recesses of his palace, and ruled the state in his name for the space of sixteen years. The Tipa knew well that it would be impossible to secure the approval of Kanghi for what he had done, and, seeing that, the instant the secret of his perfidy was revealed, he would incur the resentment of the Chinese ruler, he began to prepare for the evil day by entering into cordial relations with Galdan, and by inviting the military support of the princes of Jungaria. For several years he proved able to carry on these machinations and to blind the Emperor as to his real intentions by a profusion of words. Kanghi, ignorant of the true state of the case, wrote the Tipa letters of friendly expression, and conferred upon him a title of much honour.

But even in the recesses of Asia the truth cannot be for ever concealed. Rumours at last reached Kanghi that there were suspicious circumstances in connection with the disappearance of the Dalai Lama, and these insinuations acquired increased force from the Tipa's undoubted sympathy with the cause of Galdan, for one of his personal lamas had even gone so far as to offer up prayers for the success of the Eleuth's arms. When Kanghi began to realize the fact that the Tipa had throughout been duping him, his indignation was pronounced, and he threatened him with condign punishment. The Tipa made numerous promises, and at last proclaimed one of his creatures as the personage into whom the never-dying spirit of the Buddha incarnate had passed. The choice proved an unfortunate one, and further roused the indignation, not only of Kanghi, but also of the Tibetans

themselves. The difficulty might have become more aggravated had not the military commander, Latsan Khan, taken the law into his own hands, and speedily put an end to the career and contentions of the Tipa. The latter was slain with most of his supporters, and the boy Lama he had selected died either by poison or by his own hand. Yet even the overthrow of the ambitious minister did not suffice to make the condition of things in the holy land of Buddhism one of assured tranquillity. For the new Dalai Lama did not obtain the support of Latsan Khan, and his friends conveyed him for safety to Sining on the Western Chinese border.

It has been seen that the Eleuth leader, Tse Wang Rabdan, had succeeded to much of his uncle's power and influence through Central Asia, and he had also inherited those political views on the subject of Tibet, which led the Jungarian family to figure as the champions of the Tipa, in contradistinction to the Chinese Emperor's support of the spiritual authority of the Dalai Lama. The fall of the Tipa seemed, therefore, to him to require some vigorous step on his part to counteract the preponderating authority it might give to Chinese interest in Tibet. For this reason he turned a deaf ear to the proposals for an alliance made to him by Latsan Khan, and brought matters to an open breach by the imprisonment of his son, who happened to be paying a visit to Ili. Tse Wang Rabdan then followed up this hostile act by despatching an army into Tibet to overthrow Latsan Khan, and to reassert the influence of Jungaria. At the same time he directed another force to march on Sining, whither the young Dalai Lama had been conveyed for safety by his friends. Thus both indirectly and directly Tse Wang Rabdan proclaimed his hostility to Kanghi, and brought down upon his own head, and upon his successors and subjects, the full weight of China's indignation.

The Eleuth army left the banks of the Ili in 1709 under the command of Zeren Donduk, and, having crossed the vast desert of Eastern Turkestan, in the centre of which Lob Nor forms an agreeable but almost solitary oasis, appeared in due course before the walls of Lhasa. Little or no attempt at

resistance was made there, and the Eleuths plundered and ravaged the whole of the surrounding region. Latsan Khan was slain, and the Eleuths slowly retraced their steps with a quantity of spoil, seized from the temples and monasteries, and stated to have been incalculable. Their expedition against Sining failed, but Tse Wang Rabdan could for the moment congratulate himself on having succeeded in the object which was of the more immediate importance, and which promised to prove the most advantageous. The tidings of this expedition and of the pillaging of Tibet warned Kanghi that in Tse Wang Rabdan he must meet an opponent scarcely less formidable than Galdan had been, and one whose overthrow would be the more difficult in consequence of his being at a greater distance from China. Yet the sincerity of Kanghi's desire for peace remained undoubted, and only the aggressions of his Western neighbours compelled him to turn his attention to this subject.

The invasion of Tibet had been conducted with such celerity and secrecy that there had been no time to despatch reinforcements to Lhasa from Szchuen or Yunnan in order to prevent the acts of plunder of the ruthless conqueror. But no sooner had the news been received, than orders were at once issued for the collection of a large army in Szchuen to march into Tibet to avenge the injury inflicted on an unoffending people. Before this force, however, had begun its movements it is known that the Eleuths had evacuated the country, and that whatever measures of punishment might be taken would have to be carried out not in Tibet, but in Central Asia. It was, therefore, towards Hami that the Chinese troops received directions to advance.

Emboldened by the failure of Tse Wang Rabdan's expedition against Sining, the Chinese troops advanced beyond Hami for the purpose of threatening Turfan. But the Jungarian forces stood prepared to resist their approach to that place, and while Kanghi's expedition was proceeding in perfect confidence towards its destination the Eleuths suddenly fell upon it, and inflicted great loss on the Chinese army. The consequences of this reverse revealed its gravity and extent. The town of Hami surrendered to the victor,

and, while in his hands, was given over to destruction. For the moment Kanghi's schemes of revenge remained perforce in abeyance, if they did not absolutely fall to the ground. He turned from unprofitable enterprises beyond Gobi to give security to the people of Tibet against any possible recurrence of the invasion from which they had so greatly suffered. Tibet was garrisoned by a Manchu army, while fresh levies were made for the reassertion of Chinese authority in the Hami region.

Very soon the wave of battle set in against the leaders of Turkestan, and the Chinese army of more than a hundred thousand men crossed the desert, expelled the Mahomedans, and again set up the authority of the Bogdo Khan in the stronghold of Hami. Although the possession of this place enabled the Chinese to keep in check the fanaticism and ambitious instincts of the Mahomedan princelets and of the chief Tse Wang Rabdan in particular, the troubles of Kanghi in Central Asia still continued. If a durable and peaceful settlement of the questions relating to his Western borders was to be attained, it was made clear to him that no policy of mere defence would suffice. Kanghi had overthrown Galdan, and established his power without the possibility of rivalry among all the Mongol tribes. But although his authority was unchallenged round the Amour and in the region of Koko Nor, it was more than he could do or felt disposed to undertake to conquer the country up to the Pamir. Yet nothing short of that would suffice to give assured tranquillity to the borders of Kansuh and Shensi, and to put an end to the ever-recurring peril from the inordinate ambition and warlike habits of the desert chiefs and their clansmen. Hami was finally won back in the year 1717, when Kanghi was growing old, and was beginning to feel that there were some questions which must be left for his successors to grapple with. Each of the last few years of his long reign was marked by a desultory campaign with the forces of Tse Wang Rabdan, who supplied the deficiencies of his resources by the rapidity and secrecy of his movements.

In 1721, on the eve of his death, Kanghi received the congratulations of his court on the occasion of a victory over

the Eleuth forces. The results of this signal success against the army of Tse Wang Rabdan proved, we are told, "equivalent to the conquest of Tibet." This achievement brought to as satisfactory a termination as the circumstances admitted the wars which Kanghi had waged for so many years in the heart of Asia. It showed that Kanghi's ardour and energy had not abated since the day when he first took up the pursuit of Galdan and decreed his ruin.

In Formosa, too, the same year was marked by an insurrection against the Chinese authority, and by its prompt and summary suppression. The Peking authorities attributed it to the malice of the Dutch, but in this calumny we may detect another proof of the revulsion against foreigners which marked the last days of Kanghi's reign. Both on the mainland and in the possessions beyond the sea the military power of China was firmly asserted and maintained. Kanghi's achievements in war entitle him to rank as a great conqueror, but they derive their principal importance from the fact that they were turned to the realization of magnificent administrative purposes. The Empire pacified by Wou Sankwei's overthrow, the Mongols and Khalkas confirmed in their allegiance by the vigour and presence of the young Emperor, the Eleuths and the other hordes of Central Asia driven back to the distant territories where they could do little to disturb the Chinese borders, Tibet annexed, Formosa pacified, Corea's friendship assured, and the Japanese overawed by the spectacle of superior might,—these formed the record of military achievements and their consequences during Kanghi's eventful reign. The grand result ensured was the security of a mighty Empire, and the prosperity of an industrious people, leaving to posterity a page of interesting and instructive history, and all the benefit that may be extracted from the consideration of a great and difficult task successfully and honourably performed.

CHAPTER XLII.

KANGHI'S ADMINISTRATION.

AFTER the subversion of the power of Wou Sankwei and the other Chinese princes in the South, Kanghi was left undisturbed to carry on the administration of all the provinces of the country. The arduous campaigns in the interior of Asia, in Tibet and Mongolia, and the very large sacrifices both of men and money that they entailed, did not affect the general tranquillity or prosperity of the realm. Kanghi ruled a contented people, who were actively engaged in the numerous industries provided for them by the varied resources of the country, and who were, moreover, quite content to accept his views as to the advisability and necessity of giving the Empire an assurance of peace by the vigorous prosecution of wars with external enemies. The fact is clear enough, although the want of details renders it difficult to describe the prosperous state of China during the forty years that Kanghi continued to reign after the overthrow of the great Chinese vassals in Szchuen and Kwantung. Perhaps the strongest evidence of this will be found in the fact that the Chinese people, although there was always an influential party at Peking in favour of the abandonment of the pursuit of Galdan, and of the cessation of all active campaigning beyond the desert, remained well-disposed towards the established Government. The absence of the greater portion of the Manchu and Mongol armies beyond the frontier afforded a favourable opportunity to revolt, but no inclination to do so was revealed.

Among the principal and most interesting features of

Kanghi's long reign must undoubtedly be placed his relations with the Christians who, in the persons of the Roman Catholic missionaries, had penetrated into the interior of China and established themselves at the capital and in the chief cities of the Empire. It has been already seen how, after passing through several vicissitudes of fortune, the Jesuit fathers obtained permission to reside in China and to preach their gospel to the people. Kanghi personally had benefited by their instruction in a peculiar and exceptional degree. The more important part of his education had been entrusted to their care, and his Christian tutors had placed at his disposal much of the lore of Europe. The intercourse he held with them during his earlier days led him to regard with a friendly eye a race from whom he had nothing to fear, and from whose superior knowledge and exceptional attainments he might expect to derive many advantages and to obtain much assistance in the task of government. The Christian missionaries, the representatives of the Church of Rome, were therefore employed in numerous capacities. As the price of the privilege to preach their religion they were required to make themselves as useful as they could be, and to give their word to think no more of a return to their native country. This company of excellent and high-minded individuals gave the required promise, and devoted their lives to the work they had voluntarily accepted. Few instances are there of a worldly sacrifice more nobly performed and undertaken than this dedication of the Jesuit missionaries to a lifelong exile in a strange land; and well would it have been for the prospects of foreign intercourse if the Dutch and the Spaniards, as other exponents of European civilization, had more closely imitated their example.

It is not in accordance with the human character for the representatives of an existing system to feel or to evince much sympathy for one coming in a foreign guise and asserting views of a conflicting nature to everything they have been in the habit of accepting as true and indisputable. The intensity of national antipathies becomes inflamed when the subject in dispute is the one upon which we all feel most strongly, the question of religious belief. The philosophical

calmness and political sagacity of Kanghi led him to tolerate the presence of men whose ethics he could appreciate with an academic pleasure, and whose services he knew as an administrator were highly valuable. But what commended itself to the judgment of an intelligent prince found very little favour in the eyes of a people antipathetic to the foreigner and incited by an official class jealous of possible rivals, and discontented at the spectacle of many of their favourite posts being filled by Europeans. The reign of Kanghi was marked throughout by the conflict of these two elements. Thanks to the staunch support of Kanghi and to his enlightened tolerance, the Jesuits more than held their own. The anti-foreign party was compelled to conceal the full bitterness of its venom, and to await with such patience as they could muster the time when the Emperor should grow tired of his favourites. For more than fifty years the Jesuits remained prominent among Kanghi's trusted councillors. They were employed as envoys, and as astronomers, as doctors, and as geographers. Their maps served to bring under Kanghi's eye the full extent of the territories he ruled, the artillery they constructed contributed to give him the victory over his enemies, and their medicines saved on more than one occasion the life of their benefactor. Kanghi's sympathy had been gained by his respect for their persons and their character, but his undeviating support was secured by the practical work they did for him—work which he felt there were none others to do so well, if at all.

In the year 1692, after a long discussion, during which the anti-foreign party spared no effort to thwart the personal views of the Emperor, and to impose restrictions on the persons and practices of the Christians, the Tribunal of Rites agreed upon an edict in favour of the strangers. Permission was given by this proclamation, which received the sanction and warm approval of Kanghi, to the missionaries to perform their religious rites, to burn incense and to preach their doctrine in the churches which they had already erected. It was also permitted to all persons to attend those services. The proclamation of the Tribunal of Rites in the year 1692 became the charter of Christianity in the Chinese Empire, and

the faithful execution of its provisions was rendered the more certain by the recovery in the very same year of the Emperor Kanghi from a bad attack of fever by means of the medicine and attention of the French missionaries after his life was despaired of by his own doctors. Eight years after this incident Kanghi, who had previously allowed the missionaries to reside within the precincts of the palace, gave them permission to build a church adjoining their place of residence. Not merely did he grant them the site for the proposed building, but he presented each of the missionaries with the sum of fifty golden crowns, or more probably taels, to enable each to subscribe that amount towards the cost of construction. Such princely generosity and consideration have rarely been equalled.

The position of the Christian missionaries was, therefore, not only secure, but also of considerable influence and profit during the greater portion of Kanghi's reign. This unprecedented success—for elsewhere in Asia Christianity made but slow and fitful progress—encouraged the members of the Jesuit order to believe that in the dense masses of China they had found fit and willing subjects to receive the great truths of the simplest and most beautiful of inspired religions. Had there been danger in the path they would not have held back from the adventure, but the very friendliness of Kanghi offered a further inducement to them to attempt it. Every year was marked by the arrival at Canton of recruits for those who were spreading the truths of Christianity, and it became the order of the day at Paris and at Rome to seize the opportunity afforded by the presence on the throne of Peking of a sovereign sympathetic in his views, and of an exceptionally just cast of mind. The policy was intelligible and would have been sound, had there been any real leaning towards Christianity among the Chinese. As there was none, but only a contemptuous indifference towards "the men from over the sea," this undue haste and precipitance in snatching at what seemed a prize provoked dangers that might have been averted by a more cautious and circumspect manner of proceeding. Kanghi's friendship alone enabled them to hold their ground, and with each succeeding illness after the

year 1710 it became clearer that no great confidence could be placed even in its much longer continuing. The death of Kanghi, it was feared on the one hand, and confidently expected on the other, would mark the term of Christian prosperity and security in the country, and particularly at the capital.

The predominant feeling of hostility towards the Christians arose not so much from antipathy to their religion as from jealousy of their thinly-veiled assumption of superiority. This sentiment had naturally most force among the officials, who believed that they were ousted from many high posts and offices by the men whom Kanghi's caprice had protected and rewarded. There was a certain amount of truth, too, in their allegations, for some of the highest offices in the state were filled by Christians, which necessarily curtailed the number of places available for the numerous body of the Chinese civil service. The intensity of this feeling was naturally very much increased by each fresh arrival, and although Kanghi remained staunch in his favour, it was clear that the Christians* were exposed to many perils, and that unless his successor proved equally sympathetic towards

* In 1702 an attempt was made to hamper their movements and to check their liberty by a provincial official, the Viceroy of Chekiang. The edict of 1692 gave the Christians the right to use the churches already built, but said nothing about the construction of new ones. Christian emissaries established themselves at the convenient harbour of Ningpo, and naturally presented a request for permission to build a church. They based their demand on the Edict of 1692, but the Viceroy rejected their petition, saying that there was nothing in it allowing the building of new churches. The matter was referred to Peking, when a decision was given in favour of the Christians on the grounds that "they have never been the cause of any trouble to the Empire, nor ever committed any reprehensible act, and that their doctrine is not bad."—Mailla, vol. xi. pp. 305-7. Kanghi's own opinion of the Europeans may here be appropriately quoted :—"Europeans, whom I employ even in the interior of my palace, you have always served me with zeal and affection, without any one having been able up to this to cast the slightest reproach upon you. There are many Chinese who distrust you, but as for myself, and I have carefully observed the whole of your conduct, in which I have never found anything irregular, I am so fully convinced of your uprightness and good faith that I publicly declare that you are deserving of every trust and confidence."—"Lettres Edifiantes," tom. xviii. p. 92.

them all the good work of the previous century and a half would be destroyed.

It was becoming clear also towards the commencement of the eighteenth century that the question of the relations of the Chinese with foreign countries was one that could not be restricted to matters of religion. The Jesuits and their companion orders came to convert a people, who regarded them in return with a certain curiosity, and their efforts with a philosophical scepticism and amusement ; but other nations came to trade and to establish themselves in the seaports of the Empire. Canton had already heard the thunder of English guns, the Dutch had played their game of ambition in Formosa and Japan, and the Spaniards had established a powerful, defiant, and inhuman authority in the Philippines. The China seas were covered with the vessels of strange peoples, whose engines of war made them appear as terrible as the unscrupulous nature of their acts showed them to be false of faith and regardless of the manner in which they attained their ends. The question of holding commercial and political relations with such nations as these was, therefore, one of a very different nature to allowing a few useful individuals to reside in the chief city of the Empire. Even Kanghi treated the two matters as being on a totally distinct footing, and his good-will towards the Jesuits did not dispose him to deprecate any the less the development of his commercial relations with European countries. The Manchus were the more inclined to adopt a policy of isolation, because, being themselves a foreign dynasty, they were apprehensive lest some of these formidable Western peoples should seek to imitate what they had accomplished.

In 1716 the trade between Canton and the Philippines had attained considerable dimensions, and the export of rice in particular is stated to have been very large. An Imperial edict, issued early in the following year, prohibited the export of rice, and forbade Chinese vessels to sail for foreign ports. This proclamation, of course, gave fresh courage to all who were secretly inimical to foreign intercourse, and petitions to the throne became frequent for the dismissal of the foreigners, and for the breaking-off of all intercourse with the outer

world. One petition, presented by a military officer named Chinmao, who held the principal command of the troops at Canton, was composed of a homily against the vices and self-seeking aims of Europeans. But it seemed to touch a chord of sympathy even in the heart of Kanghi, for the petition was so far favourably received that all the tribunals in conclave assembled called attention to the extent to which Christianity had spread, and demanded the passing of severe measures against its votaries. These were not sanctioned in the exact form in which they were presented; but in 1718, for the first time during Kanghi's reign, restrictions were placed on the practice of the Christian religion. Even before the death of their greatest benefactor, therefore, it was clear that the prosperous days of Christianity in China were numbered, and that the small religious community which had so adventurously established itself at Peking would very soon be exposed to all the perils from the fanaticism and natural hostility of the people. The full force of the storm did not reveal itself until after Kanghi's death, when his crown had passed to a sovereign more intensely national and more deeply prejudiced.

Deservedly fortunate in most of his relations, Kanghi could not altogether escape from the anxieties caused by the rival pretensions of his sons, who all aspired, without much reference to either their capacity or their claims, to be his successor. The eldest son of the Empress had at an early stage of the reign been declared heir-apparent, and the letters which Kanghi addressed to him during his absence in Tartary showed that he was the object of his affection and tender solicitude. In 1709 the same prince fell under the suspicion of Kanghi, who had been led to believe in his treason by the specious representations of some of the courtiers. The palace became the scene of a fierce rivalry, threatening to disturb the tranquillity of Kanghi's last years. And although there appears to be no doubt of his complete innocence of the main charge, the Prince Imperial was arrested and cast into prison. His family underwent the same fate, and many who were believed to be his supporters paid the penalty of their attachment to his person with their lives.

The arrest of a prince so nearly related to the ruler, and the deposal of the recognized heir to the crown, were not to be accomplished without exciting very considerable notice and comment among the Chinese people. Kanghi recognized the necessity for explaining the causes of the summary proceedings taken against his heir, and gave his permission to the drawing-up of a form of indictment, enumerating the supposed misdeeds of the Prince Imperial from an early age. This step was taken in compliance with established form, but it appears to have had little effect on the public mind, which was in favour of the disgraced and imprisoned prince. A very short time elapsed before the true facts of the case came within the cognizance of the Emperor, and then it was found that Kanghi's credulity had been imposed upon. The heir-apparent had been aspersed for personal motives by his eldest brother, who was known by the title of the First Regulo, and his fall was wholly attributable to the envious machinations of this relative. When the true history of this intrigue became known, it was discovered that the charges against the Prince Imperial possessed no better foundation than the evidence of a few lamas and dealers in magic attached to the party, or in the service of the First Regulo.

Kanghi was naturally much distressed at these domestic troubles, and his dissatisfaction was increased when he found that a strong party among his courtiers was in favour of proclaiming as the heir to the crown the eighth of his sons, instead of restoring the deposed prince to his rightful position. They were induced to act thus in order to avert the consequences they imagined would be entailed by their having contributed towards the disgrace of the Prince Imperial. Kanghi in no way sympathized with the illogical and unfair attitude of these ministers towards his once-favoured son, and took summary means to convince them of the unwisdom of the course they suggested. Some he banished to the remote provinces, and others he dismissed from their offices ; and having released the Prince Imperial, and restored his honours, he formally celebrated the conclusion of this painful incident. Public fêtes, national rejoicings, and the performance of a play based on a somewhat similar incident in the ancient

history of China testified to the warm feelings with which Kanghi beheld the return of his favourite son to the position for which he had designated him early in his reign. The First Regulo, on the other hand, was deposed from his rank, and many of his supporters were executed. Thus was domestic tranquillity ensured, but not without cost. The episode tended to disturb Kanghi's peace of mind, and he attributed this discord to the prevalent practices of magic and spiritualism. The death of the Empress-mother in the year 1718 may be mentioned as another domestic event of some interest, and also of importance as indicating the near approach of the end of this eventful reign.

In 1721, the sixtieth anniversary of Kanghi's accession to the throne was celebrated with all the ceremony which so unusual and auspicious an event deserved. The Chinese people without distinction saw in this fact, which could not be paralleled since the earliest period of their recorded history, a mark of peculiar favour on the part of Heaven, and a divine confirmation of the wisdom of their prince. That the same prince should rule throughout a complete cycle was in its way remarkable, and in the case of Kanghi the feat seemed the more worthy of being handed down to fame in that he had succeeded to an insecure inheritance, and that he had made good his right of possession by the vigour and ability with which he had overcome innumerable difficulties, and won his way triumphantly through a sea of troubles. It was only natural and becoming, therefore, that the Chinese nation should, at the close of sixty years of an eventful reign, express, in such form as human gratitude has been able to devise, their respect for their great ruler, and their sense of the obligations under which they lay to him as the man who had maintained the Empire and established peace within it on a firm foundation.

Among the principal events of these last years of his life must be placed the arrival at Peking of the Russian Embassy, sent by Peter the Great to draw closer the bonds of intimacy with his neighbour. This was not, indeed, the first time that a Czar had despatched his representative to the Chinese capital; but the failure of the first mission, in consequence of

the prostration ceremony, and the comparative insignificance of the second,* have resulted in Peter's Embassy standing out in greater prominence than either of those that preceded it. It was in the year 1719 that Peter's Embassy entered China. It consisted of the Ambassador M. Ismaloff, his secretary M. de Lange,† the English traveller Mr. Bell, and a considerable suite. The Chinese Government, acting on the emphatic commands of the Emperor himself, consented to accord this embassy an honourable reception. A house was set apart for the use of the members, who lived as the guests of the Emperor. On the other hand, much of the innate suspicion and dislike of the officials were evinced in small matters, most probably beyond the personal knowledge of Kanghi; and among these may be mentioned the circumstance that they were sealed up in their house, in order to prevent their going out to examine the town. M. Ismaloff protested against the indignity, and it was forthwith discontinued; but it is possible that there was more justice than is allowed in the Chinese plea that they did this in order to ensure the safety of their guests. An equal compliance—after many difficulties and objections had been raised and withdrawn—with the scruples of the Westerns was shown in the all-important matter of the prostration ceremony; but Kanghi's personal interference in a controversy which the rigidity of his ministers promised to make an insuperable barrier to the reception of the embassy alone smoothed over the difficulty. The envoy of the Czar found no further reason to refuse to pay the kotow to the Chinese throne when one of Kanghi's first ministers by his order offered for him the same token of respect to Peter's letter.

Upon this Ismaloff was received in audience by Kanghi, and presented the letter‡ and presents sent by the Czar Peter.

* This was in 1692. The name of the envoy was Ides, but little or nothing is known of the details.

† We owe to the journal of M. de Lange, translated by Mr. Bell, a graphic and complete picture of the fortunes of this mission and of the condition of Peking at this period.

‡ Peter's letter was as follows:—"To the Emperor of the vast countries of Asia, to the sovereign Monarch of Bogdo, to the supreme Majesty of Khitay, friendship and greeting. With the design which I

By the general testimony of all who witnessed the scene it was allowed that never had a Chinese sovereign conferred greater honour on the envoys of a foreign state than Kanghi did on this occasion to the representatives of Russia. After a short residence Ismaloff returned home, but before his departure he succeeded in inducing the Emperor to consent to his leaving the secretary De Lange at Peking, as a sort of diplomatic agent for the Czar. This concession was the last gained from the large mind and broad views of the great Emperor in favour of any European people, for after this act the prejudices and jealousy of the official classes secured and maintained the upper hand at his council-board.

Ismaloff, consequently, brought back to his master a flattering tale of the success of his visit to the great Khan of China, and Peter, encouraged in his expectation of securing the profit of the rich trade with the wealthiest country of the East, fitted out a large caravan to tap the fertile regions of Northern China, and to open up a land route to Peking. The caravan duly reached its destination in the year 1721, but it found the position of affairs in the Chinese capital very different from what Ismaloff's glowing report had led the Czar and his Court to believe and expect. The secretary, De Lange, was little more than a prisoner, the ministers refused to have anything to do with commercial matters, and Kanghi, the only person at all well-disposed towards the foreigner, lay upon a bed of sickness. Soon after the arrival of this the first and last caravan sent by Peter the Great, De Lange received a curt request to take his departure, and for the future it was announced that such trade intercourse as might be carried on between the two countries should be restricted to "the

possess of holding and increasing the friendship and close relations long established between your Majesty and my predecessors and myself, I have thought it right to send to your court, in the capacity of ambassador-extraordinary, Leon Ismaloff, captain in my Guards. I beg you will receive him in a manner suitable to the character in which he comes, to have regard and to attach as much faith to what he may say on the subject of our mutual affairs as if I were speaking to you myself, and also to permit his residing at your Court of Peking until I recall him. Allow me to sign myself your Majesty's good friend, Peter." This note was written in Russian, Latin, and Mongol.

frontiers." The successive deaths of Kanghi and Peter left no opportunity of retrieving the ground thus lost, and the question of some definite arrangement either for trade or diplomatic purposes had to be left over for a future period.

It is only needful now, in drawing to a close our description of this long and eventful reign, to say a few words on the subject of the personal character of the prince of whose career not the least notable incident was that it witnessed the consolidation of the remarkable Manchu conquest. We have seen Kanghi as he appears from the public acts and magnificent exploits of his reign. They show him wise, courageous, magnanimous, and sagacious as the sovereign of a vast Empire and of a multitudinous people. His private life, and those minor traits which so often reveal the true man better than his set conduct on the platform of public life, confirm the view impressed upon us by the record of his reign. The character of few rulers will bear the same searching investigation as his will. In the smallest affairs he seems to have been truly great, and his virtue was conspicuous in all he undertook.

Although so much occupied by the troubles beyond his borders, Kanghi's main object had ever been to secure for his subjects internal tranquillity and all the benefits of peace and of an impartial dispensation of justice. Whether residing in the Imperial Palace at Peking, or in his summer retreat at Chang Chun Yuen, "the park of eternal spring," Kanghi was always careful to avoid indulging in any useless or excessive extravagance. The same sound sense which he showed in refusing to assume a fresh title of honour, when requested to do so by his courtiers on the occasion of the overthrow of Galdan, was evinced in many other ways too numerous to be related. Among the principal of these instances of royal thoughtfulness it may be mentioned that he gave up one of his favourite pursuits, that of making tours or progresses through his dominions, from consideration of the wants of his people. When it came to his ears that his subjects were heavily taxed and obliged to give up their ordinary avocations for a time in order that the necessary preparations should be made for his visit, he at once gave orders that

these exceptional steps were to be discontinued. He provided a still more effectual remedy by abstaining from a practice which had become almost a habit with him, and which had proved productive of both amusement and instruction. Another similar but less costly practice with Kanghi was to make a tour without attendants through the streets of Peking. This remarkable condescension on the part of a Chinese monarch was shown for the second time during this reign, in recognition of the people's loyalty and affection, in the year 1709.

Kanghi was celebrated from his youth as an intrepid horseman and hunter. It was his favourite relaxation to pass the hotter months of summer in hunting expeditions in Tartary, that is to say in the country beyond the Wall. None among his companions excelled him as a skilful rider and archer, and with him the ardour of the sportsman was one of the keenest sentiments. Even at Peking he could not give up his chosen pastime, and he filled the neighbouring park of Haidsu with game and savage animals, in order that he might not have to forego his accustomed exercise. Here, in the sixty-ninth year of his age and the last of his reign, Kanghi went out to chase the tiger, to the astonishment, if not the admiration also, of his subjects. The case of this Chinese Emperor may be taken as furnishing another proof that the love and practice of manly exercises do not detract from the vigour of the arm in war, or from the clearness of the head in council.

Kanghi's interest in promoting literary pursuits and education was not less conspicuous than that he showed in the pursuit of the exhilarating sports of his race. One of the first objects to which he devoted himself was to procure a complete and trustworthy map both of the provinces and also of the dependent territories over which he reigned. With that end in view he sent the foreign missionaries on special missions of exploration into all the quarters of the Empire. By their agency he succeeded in acquiring a closer and more intimate acquaintance with the features and climatic conditions of the eighteen provinces of China than had been possessed by any of his predecessors. While one party

followed the course of the Great Wall throughout its entire extent from east to west, another explored the recesses of Leaoutung, and marked out the frontier of Corea, and a third proceeded to the borders of Tibet, and laid down on the chart the approaches to a country which was gradually but surely being drawn into closer and more intimate connection with Peking.

The Hanlin College came in for a large share of favour during this reign, and the name of Kanghi occupies a prominent place in the annals of that great national institution. The Emperor was himself a man of letters of no mean proficiency and skill, and his collected works filled one hundred volumes. Among the offspring of his imagination were pieces of poetry and fugitive essays, as well as more serious memoirs on public affairs, the history of his country, and the work of administration. But of all his literary labours none has achieved a higher or more durable fame than his sixteen maxims on the art of governing states. Each of these maxims contained no more and no less than seven characters, but they were subsequently amplified and annotated by his son and successor, the Emperor Yung Ching. Another work in which Kanghi's hand may be traced, but which was actually performed by a commission of Hanlin doctors, may be mentioned in the celebrated Imperial dictionary, which represents an imperishable monument to the greatness of Kanghi. Many other literary achievements were accomplished during this reign, and among these were translations into Manchu, for the use of the conquerors, of the principal Chinese classics. All Kanghi's writings were marked by a high code of morality, as well as by the lofty ideas of a large-minded statesman.

Kanghi could not escape the shafts of the envious, and several gossiping travellers* have endeavoured to spread reports to the disparagement of this prince. An excessive vanity and avarice have been imputed to him, but the whole tenor of his life disproves the former statement, and whatever foundation in fact the latter may have had he never carried it to any greater length than mere prudence and

* Laureati and Le Gentil.

consideration for the wants of his people demanded. On the other hand, we know that he resorted to gentle pressure to attain his ends rather than to tyrannical violence. When he wished to levy a heavy contribution from a too rich subject, he had recourse to what may be styled a mild joke * sooner than to the thumbscrew or the rack. Nor did he ever allow his anger to carry him into extremes, which he might afterwards have cause to repent. His long reign is singularly free from the executions of prominent princes and officials, which are found so frequently in Chinese history under even the best of rulers; and wherever possible he always tempered justice with mercy. A very short time after his accession one of his ministers fell into disgrace, and lay under sentence of death. But when he bared his breast and exposed the marks of the wounds he had received in saving the life of Kanghi's grandfather, Taitsou, he was immediately pardoned, and found his way back to the confidence of his sovereign.

The frequent illnesses from which Kanghi had suffered during his later years had done much to undermine and weaken a constitution that had always been considered exceptionally sound and robust. Notwithstanding these reasons for observing simple precautions, he still persisted in the winter of 1722 in following his amusement of the chase in the neighbourhood of Peking. He was thus employed when his last and fatal illness seized him. In a few hours all was over, and in the evening of the 20th of December, 1722, there passed away all that was mortal of the best and greatest monarch of Asia. On all sides, and from witnesses of different opinions on most subjects, came unanimous testimony † to his worth. Of the magnitude of his services to

* This will be found described at length in note on p. 366 of vol. xi. of Mailla. Briefly it may be thus narrated:—One day Kanghi made this official lead him riding on an ass round his gardens. As recompense he gave him a tael. Then he himself led the mandarin in similar fashion. At the end of the tour he asked how much greater he was than his minister? "The comparison is impossible," said the ready courtier. "Then I must make the estimate myself," replied Kanghi; "I am 20,000 times as great, therefore you will pay me 20,000 taels."

† Père Parennin, in his letter of the 1st of May, 1723 (tome xix. of

China and to his own race there could, indeed, be no question. They were conspicuous and incontestable. He had ascended the throne at a time when it seemed that the Manchu conquest, far from giving China the assurance of a settled and peaceful rule, would prove in its main result the perpetuation of internal dissension and of sanguinary strife. The presence of the able and powerful feudatory Wou Sankwei strengthened that conviction, and none dared think when the crisis reached the stage of open war that the youthful prince would more than hold his own, and eventually triumph over the veteran general whose military skill and consistent good fortune had been the theme of admiration and wonder with his countrymen for more than a whole generation.

From his earliest youth Kanghi had given abundant promise of his future greatness; and one story which is preserved of him when about to succeed to the crown is indicative of his firm confidence in himself and his destiny. It is said that, when Chuntche was on his death-bed, he summoned his children into his presence. "Which of you," he said, "feels that he possesses the ability and strength to retain a crown that has been won only so short a time?" All pleaded their youth or their inexperience, except Kanghi, the youngest, in whose vigorous instincts there dwelt the assurance of success. The result more than justified his

"*Lettres Edifiantes*"), wrote as follows:—"This prince was one of those extraordinary men who are only met with once in the course of several centuries. He placed no limits to his desire for knowledge, and of all the princes of Asia there never was one with so great a taste for the arts and sciences." And again, "This prince was not put out by the expression of an opinion different to his own—rare, indeed, is it among persons of his rank to tolerate contradiction." Mailla's opinion is not less favourable and not less clearly expressed. He calls him "one of the greatest men who have honoured the throne of China." The following quotation of his personal appearance is taken from Bouvet's "*Vie de Canghi*:"—

"There is nothing in his appearance which is not worthy of the throne he occupies. His air is majestic, his figure excellently proportioned and above the middle height; all the features of the countenance are regular; his eyes bright and larger than is usual with his nation; the nose slightly curved and drooping at the point; and the few marks left by the small-pox detract nothing from the charm which is conspicuous throughout his person.

confidence in himself, and the Chinese people not less than the Manchu race had reason to congratulate themselves that Kanghi triumphed over his difficulties and succeeded in consolidating his authority. During the sixty-one years of his reign China made rapid strides towards the attainment of perfect material prosperity, and when he handed down his crown to his fourth son and successor, Yung Ching, he left an Empire of vast dimensions thoroughly reduced to a sense of obedience to the Government of Peking, and prosperous by reason of the assurance of security for all classes, and for all kinds of property.

The place of Kanghi among Chinese sovereigns is clearly defined. He ranks on almost equal terms with the two greatest of them all, Taitsong and his own grandson Keen Lung ; and it would be ungracious, if not impossible, to say in what respect he falls short of complete equality with either, so numerous and conspicuous were his talents and his virtues. His long friendship and high consideration for the Christian missionaries have no doubt contributed to bring his name and the events of his reign more prominently before Europe than has been the case with any other Chinese ruler, even in that of his grandson. But although this predilection for European practices may have had the effect of strengthening his claims to precede every other of his country's rulers, it can add but little to the impression produced on even the most cursory reader by the remarkable achievements in peace and war accomplished by this gifted Emperor. The right of these three Chinese rulers to appear in the same rank with the greatest sovereigns of antiquity or of modern times, of Europe or of Asia, cannot be disputed. They showed the same qualities that gain the admiration of mankind in the heroes of Greece and Rome ; nor can those few rulers and conquerors to whom by the allowance of all civilized peoples the title of Great is due—Alexander and Cæsar, Charlemagne and Alfred, Genghis and Timour, Akbar and Peter, Frederick and Napoleon—be placed in any way above them, whereas in the magnitude and utility of their deeds some of these fell very far short of any one of these Chinese Emperors. Kanghi's genius dominates one of the most critical periods

in Chinese history, of which the narrative should form neither an uninteresting nor an uninstrusive theme. Celebrated as the consolidator and completer of the Manchu conquest, Kanghi's virtue and moderation have gained him permanent fame as a wise, just, and beneficent national sovereign in the hearts of the Chinese people, who will ever cherish and revere his memory as that of a man who was among the best of their monarchs, at the same time that he represented one of the most favourable types of their character.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE REIGN OF YUNG CHING.

IMMEDIATELY after Kanghi's death his fourth son, whom he had long designated as his heir, and in whom he fancied that he traced a strong resemblance to himself, was proclaimed Emperor under the style of Yung Ching. In the edict with which he announced to his subjects the death of his father, and his own accession to the throne, he said that on the advice of his ministers he had entered upon the discharge of his official duties without delay, and, without giving up precious time to the indulgence of a grief natural, so far as his personal feelings were concerned, but probably prejudicial to the public interests. Yung Ching was a man of mature age, and could, from the place he had enjoyed in the confidence of his predecessor, assume without any delay the responsibilities and duties of his lofty station. He declared that his main purpose would be to carry on the great administrative work in the same manner as Kanghi, and that he would tread as closely as he could in his footsteps. But while Yung Ching took these prompt steps to place himself upon the throne, and to exercise the attributes of supreme power, several of his brothers whom his elevation had displaced assumed an attitude of covert hostility towards his government, and their demeanour warned him that he would have to exhibit vigilance and energy if he desired to retain his authority. At the same time it appeared evident to the people that Kanghi had selected his worthiest son as his successor, and that China would have no reason to fear under Yung Ching the loss of any of the benefits conferred on the nation by his predecessor.

His fine presence, and frank, open manner secured for him the sympathy and applause of the public, and in a very short time he also gained their respect and admiration by his wisdom and justice.

The principal and in every way the most formidable of his rivals was Kanghi's fourteenth son, who, at the time of his death, held the chief command in Central Asia against the Eleuths. This prince, and more especially his son, a youth of some sixteen summers, named Poki, had enjoyed a certain amount of popularity during Kanghi's lifetime, and some had even thought that he would have been chosen as that ruler's successor. But for reasons no doubt excellent Kanghi passed him over and selected Yung Ching instead. It is not clear that Yung Ching had any reason to believe that his younger brother meditated a revolt, but there is no doubt that he at once began to act towards him as if he were a concealed and dangerous enemy. Repeated messages were sent him, in the name of the deceased Emperor, to return without delay to the capital, and to resign the seals of his command to one of his lieutenants. At first some thought of disobeying the summons entered this prince's mind; but after more consideration he resolved to obey. On his arrival at Peking he was placed in honourable confinement, which was changed to closer imprisonment at Chang Chun Yuen on the death a few months later of his mother, who, as Yung Ching's own mother too, had exerted her influence on the side of mercy. At this palace the prince and his son Poki remained during the whole of Yung Ching's reign, and they owed to the clemency of the next Emperor, Keen Lung, their release from the enforced seclusion of thirteen years.

The reported ambitious schemes of Sessaka, another of Yung Ching's brothers, and the ninth of Kanghi's sons, also tended to disturb the tranquillity of the new ruler. Sessaka's want of ability justified a more lenient course of proceeding with him, and his case was considered to have been adequately met when he had been fined to the extent of the greater portion of his personal property; after this he was relegated to a small military command in the provinces. Nor were those who fell under the suspicion of the new sovereign

confined to his near relations. Lessihin, the son of Prince Sourniama, and the representative of the elder branch of the Manchu family, had been publicly known as one of Sessaka's sympathisers, and he was accused of dilatoriness in his official capacity on the occasion of extorting from that personage the fine required by Yung Ching. Whether the accusation was just or not, Lessihin and his brother were involved in the disgrace of Sessaka, and banished to Sining on the Western frontier. There, either as the result of long secret conviction, or from some other motive that cannot now be traced, these fallen magnates adopted Christianity and were baptised. This conversion could do nothing but harm to their worldly prospects, and it also certainly had the effect of heightening the new Emperor's antipathy to the Christian religion and its representatives.

Yung Ching had from the first regarded with an unfriendly eye this branch of the Manchu family, and their adoption of Christianity added further to his resentment. The importance of this indiscretion consisted in its providing him with a decent pretext to resort to extremities against all whom he had marked out as being ill-disposed towards his person. On the one hand the adoption of a foreign and heretical creed served as some proof of confirmed contumacy on the part of his relations; and on the other it gave a semblance of truth to the statement that the Christian priests meddled and took a side in the internal politics of the country. Yung Ching saw and seized his opportunity. His measures of repression against the recalcitrant party in his own family culminated in the summary exile of Sourniama, and all his descendants down to the fourth generation.

It was in vain that Sourniama sought to establish his innocence, and to turn Yung Ching from the vindictive policy upon which he had resolved. In accordance with Manchu practice he sent three of his sons to the palace laden with chains to declare the fidelity of their father, but an audience was refused them; and Sourniama was curtly informed that no course was open to him save to obey. Even in his place of exile the wrath of the Emperor pursued him, and, to satisfy the suspicious exactions of his sovereign, he and his were

compelled to retire into a district still further from the inhabited portions of the country. Here they were reduced to severe straits from absolute want, and early in the year 1725 Sourniama found in death relief from his misfortunes and necessities. His descendants were to owe to the clemency of Keen Lung such reparation for their wrongs as the present can at any time make for the past.

If Yung Ching thus pressed with a heavy hand on those whose assistance and sympathy he felt it doubtful that he could secure, he was certainly not disposed to regard with less sternness or severity the foreign religion towards which he had never felt any sympathy, and under cover of which his enemies appeared to think that they might find shelter. Having settled most of the disputes which threatened the security of his own position, and having restored, as he might reasonably hope, union and tranquillity to the circle of the reigning family, Yung Ching next turned his attention to the effectual humbling of the bold band of foreigners who had established themselves in the capital and throughout the country, and who, having monopolized some of the most important dignities in the service, continued to preach and propagate their gospel of a supreme power and mercy beyond the control of kings, a gospel which was simply destructive of the paternal and sacred claims on which a Chinese Emperor based his authority as superior to all earthly interference, and as transmitted to him direct from Heaven.

Yung Ching's sentiments of aversion were seized and turned to advantage by the official classes, whose hostility to the foreigners had always been pronounced, and which, long pent up, had begun to reveal itself in acts before the death of Kanghi. It was in the provinces that this anti-foreign agitation naturally enough first began to reveal itself in acts of open hostility. In Fuhkien the military governor issued a proclamation denouncing Christianity, forbidding its practice, and ordering all the churches that had been opened within his jurisdiction to be closed. This official condemnation of the foreign religion as a pernicious and demoralizing creed naturally augmented the popular feeling against strangers who had hitherto been regarded with little more than

indifference ; and on all sides accusations were freely advanced against the moral character of the Christian converts. The eighteen churches which had been erected by the piety of converted natives were devoted to different public purposes, and the missionaries were ordered to leave Fuhkien without delay and to return to Macao. The success that attended their movements in this particular province encouraged all who were from any cause unfriendly to foreigners to present a petition to the Emperor for the extirpation of Christianity throughout the country. At Peking the Jesuits lost all their influence. Those who had been well disposed to them either had been banished or were cowed into silence. The Emperor refused to receive them in audience, and they could only wait in inaction, and with such human fortitude as they could muster, until the storm had burst or passed away. Yung Ching expressed in writing his formal approval of everything that had been done, but at the same time he enjoined on his officials the necessity of using as little violence as possible. All the missionaries were to be conducted either to Macao or to the capital, where, if their services were useful, they might still be employed.*

The missionaries, when they saw the results of many years of labour slipping away from them, and as soon as they found

* Some of the views expressed by the Chinese authorities during this crisis may be quoted. The missionaries (Fredelli, Castillon, and De Mailla) entreated a brother of Yung Ching, the thirteenth son of Kanghi, and generally considered as favourably disposed to the Christians, to interfere in their favour. Placed in a judicial position with regard to the throne his favour rapidly cooled, and he declared that since the discussion of their question first began they had been the cause of an infinity of trouble and fatigue to the late Emperor, his father. "What would you say," he continued, "if our people were to go to Europe and wished to change there the laws and customs established by your ancient sages? The Emperor, my brother, wishes to put an end to all this in an effectual manner." The same prince said on a subsequent occasion, "I saw the other day the accusation of the Tsongtou of Fuhkien. It is undoubtedly strong, and your disputes about our customs have greatly injured you. What would you say if we were to transport ourselves to Europe and to act there as you have done here? Would you stand it for a moment? In the course of time I shall master this business, but I declare to you that China will want for nothing when you cease to live in it, and that your absence will not cause it any loss."—Mailla, vol. xi. pp.392-3.

that the foundations of the position they had gradually attained by the tact and fortitude shown during 150 years, from the days of Matthew Ricci in the reign of the Ming Wanleh, were being sapped, resorted to all the efforts of persuasion to avert the collapse of their influence. Their attempt to enlist the sympathy and support of those members of the Manchu family who had once regarded them with favour signally failed to produce any beneficial result. They had all been won over to Yung Ching's views, and the fate of Sourniama and his family proved an effectual deterrent to prevent any imitating their backsliding in the matter of this strange religion. Yet before the controversy closed, Yung Ching received in audience for the first time a deputation from the Jesuits, when, however, instead of listening to their complaints and demands, he enunciated his own policy with regard to them, and in his sketch of the question he gave some hints as to the lines upon which it was based.

"The late Emperor, my father," he said, addressing the small band of foreign priests who had proved their zeal in the cause of their religion by renouncing all hope of return to their native land, "after having instructed me during forty years, chose me in preference to any of my brothers to succeed him on the throne. I make it one of my first objects to imitate him, and to depart in nothing from his manner of government. Some Europeans in the province of Fuhkien have shown a wish to destroy our laws, and they have been a cause of trouble to our people. The high officials of that province have duly apprised me of these facts. It is my duty to provide a remedy for the disorder. That is a matter for the government, with which I am charged. I could not, and ought not to act now as I used to do when I was only a simple prince.

"You tell me that your law is not a false one. I believe you; if I thought that it was false, what would prevent me from destroying your churches and from driving you out of the country? False laws are those which, under the pretext of spreading virtue, rouse a spirit of revolt. But what would you say if I were to send a troop of bonzes and lamas into your country in order to preach their doctrines? How would you receive them?

“Limatow (Ricci) came to China in the first year of Wanleh. I will not touch upon what the Chinese did at that time, as I am in no way responsible for it. But then you were very few in numbers. In fact, there were only one or two of you, and you had not your people and churches in every province. It was only in my father's reign that these churches were raised on all sides, and that your doctrines spread with rapidity. We then saw these things clearly enough, and we dared say nothing on the subject. But if you knew how to beguile my father, do not hope to be able to deceive me in the same manner.

“You wish that all the Chinese should become Christians, and indeed your creed demands it. I am well aware of this, but in that event what would become of us? Should we not soon be merely the subjects of your kings? The converts you have made already recognize nobody but you, and in a time of trouble they would listen to no other voice than yours. I know as a matter of fact that we have nothing now to fear, but when the foreign vessels shall come in their thousands and tens of thousands, then it may be that some disasters will ensue.

“China has on the north the empire of the Russians, which is not to be despised ; on the south there are the Europeans and their kingdoms, which are still more considerable ; and on the west there is Tse Wang Rabdan, whom I wish to keep back within his borders lest he should enter China and cause us trouble. Lange, Ismaloff's colleague, the Czar's ambassador, solicited that permission should be given the Russians to establish factories for commerce in all the provinces. His request was refused, and trade was only allowed at Peking or at Kiachta on the frontier, in the Khalka country. I permit you to reside here and at Canton as long as you give no cause for complaint ; but, if any should arise, I will not allow you to remain either here or at Canton. I will have none of you in the provinces. The Emperor, my father, suffered much in reputation among the literati by the condescension with which he allowed you to establish yourselves. He could not himself make any change in the laws of our sages, and I will not suffer that in the least degree there shall be cause to

reproach my reign on this score. When my sons and grandsons are on the throne they may do as shall seem good to them. It matters not to me in the smallest what Wanleh did on your account.

“Do not imagine in conclusion that I have nothing against you, or on the other hand that I wish to oppress you. You are aware how I used to act in your behalf when I was only a Regulo. What I do now, I do in my character of Emperor. My sole care is to govern the Empire well. To that I apply myself from morning to evening. I do not see even my children or the Empress; but only those who are engaged in the public administration. This will continue as long as the term of mourning, which is for three years. When that is over I shall, perhaps, then be able to see you more often.”

There is no contesting the ability shown by the Emperor in this speech, which summed up the formal indictment against the Christians as the propagators of a religion incompatible with the constitution and customs of China, and from his point of view much in the argument cannot be gainsaid. The persecution of the Christians, of which the letters from the Pekin missionaries were so full, did not for a time go beyond the placing of some restraint on the preaching of their religion. No wholesale executions, or sweeping decrees passed against their persons, attended its course or marked its development. Yung Ching simply showed by his conduct that they must count no longer on the favour of the Emperor in the carrying out of their designs. The difficulties inherent in the task they had undertaken stood for the first time fully revealed, and, having been denounced as a source of possible danger to the stability of the Empire, they became an object of suspicion even to those who had formerly sympathised with their persons if not with their creed.

Yung Ching was still engaged in dealing with these difficult questions with his relatives and his alien subjects, when his attention was called away by reports from several of his viceroys on the subject of great floods which had carried destruction to the crops throughout a large part of Northern China. The provinces of Pechihli, Shansi, and Shensi in particular suffered greatly from this cause, and many

thousands of persons were compelled out of sheer want to take refuge in Pekin. Yung Ching devoted all his energy and resources to the task of alleviating the prevalent distress and of mitigating the public misfortune. Large supplies of rice were brought from the south at the expense of the State, and when the Emperor learnt that owing to the speculation of minor officials rice of a very inferior quality was being distributed, he immediately took steps to put an end to these malpractices, ordering, under penalty of death, that none save the very best rice should be purchased and supplied to those in want. About the same time the amount of taxes leviable on the important cities of Nankin and Nanchang, the capital of Kiangsi, was greatly reduced in compliance with a petition made on the ground of their excessive character. Yung Ching showed in both these matters that he kept his people's best interests very much at heart. His sincerity in these acts of public charity was demonstrated by his emphatic refusal to allow a statue to be erected in his honour, and by his grave rebuke of those who suggested such a useless expenditure during a time of great public want. At one period during this time of famine as many as forty thousand persons were fed daily for more than four months at Pekin alone.

The suffering from this cause had scarcely been allayed, when one of those terrible visitations of nature, which come at long intervals to startle the world into a general feeling of insecurity, carried wholesale destruction throughout the metropolitan province of Pechihli. As if to afford some counterpoise for the too bounteous favours showered on them by Providence, the northern districts of China have for many centuries been liable to the frequent recurrence of earthquakes on a vast and terribly destructive scale. None, however, of which any record has been preserved equalled in its terrific grandeur that of the year 1730. More than one hundred thousand persons in the capital were overwhelmed in a moment, the suburbs were laid in ruins, and the havoc extended for a wide distance round the country. In several places the ground opened, and from the fissures issued forth either a thick smoke or jets of black water. During a period of ten days, from 30th of September to 10th of October, 1730,

the shocks were repeated at frequent intervals, and terror reigned supreme among a superstitious people.* The Emperor himself feared to remain in the interior of his palace, and camped out with his court and family in tents specially erected for their accommodation. Even the splendid pleasure-house of Yuen Ming Yuen, which Yung Ching had erected near his father's palace at Chang Chun Yuen, was so seriously damaged that for a time it was thought to be uninhabitable. Large sums were drawn from the Treasury for the alleviation of the public necessities, and as much as fifteen millions sterling is stated to have been distributed before the exigencies of the occasion were considered to have been met, or before Yung Ching's feelings of humanity rested satisfied.

Yet notwithstanding these terrible visitations and afflictions the general state of the country continued to be most prosperous. A full exchequer and a contented people were accompanied by their necessary concomitant and consequence, an increase in the population. In Yunnan and Kweichow in particular this increase was so great as to attract much notice, and to raise no inconsiderable alarm on the score of the rice supply. A partial remedy was applied to the evil by the distribution of large tracts of waste lands among the poorer classes. Yung Ching seems to have attached great importance to the growth of the population, which he evidently regarded as a permanent feature in the condition of his country rather than as a passing phase in its social history. It was in view of that evil that he issued an edict offering special rewards to such widows as did not marry again, and to bachelors who preserved their state. To the former he decreed that there should be erected in their native town at the public expense a triumphal arch, and to the latter, who had devoted themselves to the performance of their filial duties, he gave titles of honour. By this latter means he also enhanced the merit

* The superstition of the Chinese is an admitted fact, although their general character is at variance with the idea implied. A proof of it may be found in the statement of a competent observer that "Hope is half a Chinese faith ; his cult is to him as a lottery ; he will pay his last farthing to a soothsayer to predict good fortune."

of that filial obedience which is not only the corner-stone of Chinese social life, but also the very foundation on which Chinese sovereignty rests.

These endeavours to check in a simple and natural way any excessive increase in the number of his subjects did not blind Yung Ching to the claims that the aged and infirm had upon the care and consideration of the State. Imitating the example of his father he issued doles to those who had exceeded the allotted space of man's life. These were divided into three classes—those above seventy, those above eighty, and those who had exceeded ninety years. He also encouraged the Empress to institute a similar system of relief for women who had passed the seventieth year of their age. From these instances it may be recognized that Yung Ching had formed a high ideal of the duties of a paternal ruler, and he was employed, to use his own words, from the rising to the going down of the sun in performing the numerous and varied duties of his onerous position.

Although Yung Ching had from the first shown but scant favour to the foreigners, yet in the second year of his reign he allowed an envoy, who had been sent by the Pope, to come to his capital. Beyond according him a favourable reception, and giving expression to several platitudes as to "all religions being calculated to do good," Yung Ching did not commit himself to any promise on the subject of his policy towards the Christians ; and we have already seen how fully made up his mind was on that point. In the following year a Portuguese embassy under the charge of Don Alexander Metello, which had been despatched in consequence of communications made in the reign of Kanghi through the instrumentality of Antony Magelhaens, arrived in China, and as its origin was due to the initiative of the Chinese themselves the Emperor felt obliged to receive it in audience. While the Pope's legate had come to discuss matters of religion, Metello confined his attention to the more practical questions of commerce. His gravity of demeanour and general tact made a favourable impression at a court where the etiquette reflects by its severity the polished taste of a people of culture ; but of practical results, even for the Portuguese, this costly embassy produced

none. It was very shortly after the departure of Metello that Yung Ching took steps of marked severity against several officials who were said to be Christians, and exposed for the first time in a public document his contempt for the religion of the foreigners. Strange as it may seem, he connected in this formal indictment Christianity with Buddhism, and expressed his final astonishment at the fact that any of his subjects should be so misguided as to "be ready to shed their blood in such a cause."

It was not until the year 1732, towards the close of Yung Ching's reign, that the inimical sentiment of both the people and the Government towards the foreigners again revealed itself in open acts; and then Canton, the second city of importance in the Empire so far as the Christians were concerned, was the scene of these measures of national antipathy or repressive legislation, according as we may feel disposed to regard the question. At one moment the situation appeared to be pregnant with danger for the Europeans, as Yung Ching, influenced by the views expressed even by the Canton mandarins—who had been more sympathetic, from selfish motives it is true, towards Europeans—was on the point of giving an order for their expulsion without exception from the Empire, when in a moment of indignation he summoned the missionaries into his presence in order to read them a homily on their want of paternal respect. He appears to have been informed by some of his ministers that the Christian religion did not enjoin filial obedience, which of course shocked his understanding. When, however, the missionaries in defending themselves pointed out that it was one of their first and principal laws, Yung Ching was too just and enlightened a man to persist in his threats as soon as he found that he had been working on a fallacy and that his argument was untenable. From that time to his death, in 1735, the missionaries had nothing worse to complain of at his hands than his passive indifference to their presence. So far as notice of them by either the Emperor or the Court went, they might just as well, indeed, have quitted China and returned to their own countries. The arrival of recruits being interdicted, it was only a question of time until they should

all die and disappear from the scene of their labours. It was also a question, as the event showed, of the duration of Yung Ching's own life.

When Yung Ching ascended the throne, the wars which had long disturbed the Western Marches were far from being concluded. Kanghi's successful campaigns had given security to the Khalkas, and had asserted the predominance of Chinese influence at Lhasa ; but they had not availed to curb the growing power and pretensions of Tse Wang Rabdan. The last few years of Kanghi's reign had been saddened by military reverses, and although there was no relaxing in the energy of the steps taken towards their retrieval, yet, with the absence of the Emperor and with no worthy successor for the intrepid Feyanku, the result had not corresponded either with Kanghi's hopes, or with the greatness of the effort made.

Tse Wang Rabdan, although unable to attempt so distinct a trial of strength with the Chinese Emperor as his relative Galdan had done, continued his attitude of more or less open defiance, and his acts of aggression were numerous and frequently successful in their objects. The general opinion, certainly, was that Yung Ching would carry on these operations with renewed vigour, and that he would seek to exact a speedy and complete satisfaction for the reverses that marked, but could not dim the lustre of, his father's latest years. Yung Ching's policy disappointed these natural expectations. He was essentially a man of peace, caring nothing for the so-called glory of foreign wars and costly expeditions, and declaring that his proper province was to attend solely to the wants of his own people. Instead, therefore, of despatching fresh armies into Central Asia he withdrew those that were there, leaving the turbulent tribes of that region to fight out their own quarrels and to indulge their petty ambitions as they might feel disposed. The policy in this matter * which

* Here may be briefly summarised the closing scenes of the career of Tse Wang Rabdan, the most powerful of Jungarian monarchs. We have seen the success with which he had intervened in Tibet and operated against Kanghi. His paramount authority was generally recognized throughout Eastern Turkestan or Little Bokhara, where he had stepped in successfully to advance the interests and establish the authority of a chief called Daniel. His career was cut short by his murder in 1727, and

Yung Ching began with the first day of his reign was continued until the hour of his death.

Yung Ching's death occurred suddenly. On the 7th of October, 1735, he gave audience to the high officials in accordance with his usual custom, but feeling indisposed he broke off the interview earlier than on ordinary occasions. The same evening his indisposition assumed a grave character, and in a few hours he had ceased to live. The loss of their Emperor does not appear to have caused any profound sentiment of grief among the masses, although the more intelligent recognized in him one of those wise and prudent rulers whose tenure of power promotes their people's happiness. Rumours were spread about to his disadvantage and to the detriment of his private character; but an impartial consideration of his reign shows them to have possessed little or no foundation in fact. During the thirteen years that he ruled we find him ever anxious to promote the public weal and to alleviate the sufferings of his people. Whether it was in matters of State, or of his private conduct, he seemed equally mindful of the dignity of his position and of the fame of his family. Without aspiring to the eminence of his father, he left a name for justice and public spirit that entitles him to rank high among the sovereigns of China who have deserved well of their country. Even his attitude towards the Christians was dictated by a firm belief in the necessity of limiting the intercourse of his people with the Europeans, and of curtailing the growing influence of the latter. Yung Ching had always placed the

his power passed to his son Galdan Chereng. Galdan Chereng was the monarch of the Jungarians during the whole of Yung Ching's reign and the first years of that of his successor. Sir H. Howorth ("History of the Mongols," vol. i. pp. 646-9) gives a very interesting account of the relations that subsisted between Tse Wang Rabdan and his neighbours the Russians. So far back as the year 1714 a scheme was laid before Peter the Great for the annexation of the country of Little Bokhara. The prime motive put forward for this act was the gold said to be contained in this reputed El Dorado. The Russians went so far towards the realization of their designs as to send a force of nearly 3000 men down the Irtish. The conquest of Yarkand was their immediate object. The expedition was assailed on all hands by the Calmucks and compelled to retreat. The attempt was renewed several times at later periods, but without success.

public interests in the foreground of his conduct, and whether rearranging the order of the official classes, or compiling the history of his family, or providing for the wants of his people we find him equally true to his principles and not less ardent than consistent in carrying out the dictates of his conscience.

Yung Ching left three sons, but, as none of these had been formally declared heir-apparent, the eldest was placed upon the throne by general consent. The result proved the choice to be singularly happy, for the young prince, who was the fourth of the Manchu rulers to ascend the throne of China, has earned an imperishable place in history as the Emperor Keen Lung.

CHAPTER XLIV.

KEEN LUNG'S EARLY YEARS.

WHEN Yung Ching's sudden death left a void in the seat of authority, there was none probably more surprised at the first consequences of that event than the young student, who was summoned from the interior of the palace to take his place as the responsible head of affairs. For although the eldest of Yung Ching's sons, he was not the off-spring of the Empress, and the custom of imperial succession was too uncertain to justify confidence in the recognition of his claims. Keen Lung had been brought up by his father in the pursuit of literary knowledge, and his skill and proficiency in the field of letters had already been proved before Yung Ching's death. But of public affairs, of the work of administering a great Empire, Keen Lung knew literally nothing. He was a student of books rather than of men, and he had to undergo a preliminary course of training in the art of government before he felt himself competent to assume the reins of power. When it has been said that Keen Lung was more fully persuaded of this fact than anybody else, it will be understood how great must have been his merit and strength of character to have realized wherein he was deficient to fulfil the duties of his onerous post. Few princes of his years, born in the purple, have ever had the profound sagacity to admit their shortcomings, and still less the prudence to take efficacious steps to supply them. Keen Lung's first act was to appoint four regents to show him how to rule. The very edict, however, which entrusted them with so much authority

expressly limited its application to the period of mourning, extending over four years; but as a measure of precaution against illicit ambition, he made the office terminable at his discretion.

Keen Lung began his reign with acts of clemency, which seldom fail to add a special lustre to the character of a sovereign. His father had punished with rigour many of the first princes of the court, simply because they happened to be connected with his family; and he had been in the habit of making use of his antipathy to the foreign heresy as a cloak to conceal private animosities and personal apprehensions. Keen Lung at once resolved to reverse his predecessor's policy on this point, and to offer such reparation as he could to those who had suffered without valid cause. The sons of Kanghi and their children, who had fallen under the suspicion of the Emperor Yung Ching, were released from their confinement and restored to the rank* from which they had been deposed. The young Emperor was so far fortunate in that instead of harbouring vindictive feelings for their long imprisonment they felt the warmest gratitude towards him as their benefactor and rescuer, to the splendour of whose reign some of them afterwards greatly contributed. The impression made on the public mind by this admirable moderation was scarcely less favourable, and the sentiment became generally expressed that a reign which began so auspiciously could hardly fail to prove a benefit and blessing to the people at large.

The restitution of their rights and privileges to these personages, whose former sympathy with the Christian

* Taitso, or Noorhachu, had in the early days of his power divided the members of his family into two branches, distinguished from each other by the colour of their girdles or belts. To himself and his direct descendants he reserved the use of the yellow girdle, while to his brothers and their heirs he awarded a red girdle. The principal distinction between these different branches of the family was that, whereas the former could be made *Regulos*, the latter could not. On this occasion some of those, *e.g.* the descendants of Prince Sourniama, who experienced the clemency of Keen Lung, although entitled to wear the yellow and enjoy all its privileges—which appear to have consisted of free quarters and an allowance from the State—were only restored to the rank of the red girdle.—See Mailla, vol. x. p. 454, and vol. xi. p. 517.

missionaries had been marked and notorious, revived the hope among the latter that the evil days of persecution were at an end, and that they would be received back into such favour with the new Emperor as they had enjoyed under the wise Kanghi. These hopes were destined to rude disappointment, as the party hostile to them remained as strong as ever at Court, and the regents were not less prejudiced in their case. Keen Lung's own opinion does not appear to have been very strong one way or the other, but it is probable that from being so thoroughly versed in Chinese literature he was imbued with more or less prejudice against foreigners. When the subject was placed before him by his regents he sanctioned their suggestion of an order prohibiting the practice of Christianity by any of his subjects, and ordaining the punishment of those who should obstinately adhere to it. The foreign missionaries themselves were ordered to confine their labours to the secular functions in which they were useful, and to give up all attempts to propagate their creed. The restoration to their natural positions of the Manchu princes, who had formerly regarded the Christians with a favourable eye, was not followed by that return of the foreigners to favour which had been anticipated. The young Keen Lung showed himself disposed on this point to continue and carry out the policy of his father.

Ten years after Keen Lung's accession to the throne these persecutions still continued, and, indeed, they had developed a fresh and more serious phase, for in the year 1746 several Spanish missionaries were arrested and tortured, those who had given them shelter were strangled, and all who had shown or expressed sympathy with either their persons or their religion suffered different degrees of punishment. The province of Fuhkien was again the principal scene of these outrages, but it is possible that the local officials were impelled to commit acts of greater severity by the knowledge of what their own countrymen had suffered at Manilla. The example set by the Viceroy of Fuhkien found faithful imitators among the other governors throughout the country, and a general outcry was raised against both the teachers of the foreign religion and their converts. The Emperor himself

lent his countenance to the movement, and it seemed that Keen Lung with the greater vigour of his character had resolved to relieve himself once and for all from the embarrassment and trouble caused his Government by the ever-recurring question of the Christians and their demands for greater liberty of action. The order sent to the Viceroy of Fuhkien to execute the missionaries, who had been thrown into prison and tortured, seemed to mark the termination of Chinese tolerance towards Christians.

The first years of Keen Lung's reign were devoted not merely to his self-instruction in the art of government, but also to the task of arranging the internal affairs of his vast possessions. Yet, strange as it may appear, very little is contained in the annals that have as yet seen the light about the events of the first ten years, during which Keen Lung's authority was recognized. They were undoubtedly years of great internal prosperity, and their predominant characteristic was the general prevalence of peace and the accompanying satisfaction and natural progress of a great and thrifty people. With the restoration of union among the ranks of the ruling family, which had now so widely extended its branches that there were stated to be at this time more than two thousand princes of the blood, one of the most disturbing causes to the assured tranquillity of a military race disappeared; and the mass of the subjects were only too eager to follow the example thus set them of concord and good-will. During this period there appear, from certain vague references to be met with in the letters of the foreign residents, to have been some disturbances among the Miaotze and several of the intractable tribes of the South; but these were probably of no great importance.

Keen Lung's attention had at a very early period of his reign been attracted to the unsatisfactory condition of things on his remote Western frontier, where the advantages gained by his grandfather Kanghi had been sacrificed through his father Yung Ching's indifference or neglect. Although there could not be said to exist in this quarter a state of open war, yet the Mongol tribes, under the protection of China, had suffered much at the hands of Tse Wang Rabdan and of his son and successor Galdan Chereng. There was also the

memory of unavenged defeats which had occurred during the last few years of Kanghi's reign to further complicate the situation, and to prevent men's minds from settling down on the basis of the existing condition of affairs. And although matters assumed a somewhat more favourable aspect after the accession of Keen Lung, it was clear that the vague and undefined basis on which these frontier affairs were being regulated contained little guarantee of any long continuation of tranquillity. Galdan Chereng shared, but in a minor degree, the abilities and ambition of his father, and during the last years of his rule, which was contemporary with the first ten years of Keen Lung's reign, he refrained from any direct conflict with Chinese authority. Until the death of Chereng in 1745 there was some probability that the turbulent spirits and nomadic tribes of the Gobi region would have been kept for an indefinite period tranquil, and in inaction by the existence of an understanding between the Chinese Emperor and the sovereign prince of Jungaria. To the death of Galdan Chereng in the year mentioned must undoubtedly be attributed the reopening of the whole question of border policy and frontier security, which had been long pressing itself under notice at Peking.

Chereng had maintained the paramount influence which his father had acquired in the region south of the Tian Shan. On the death of the chief Danyal, he had divided the kingdom of Kashgaria into four distinct governorships, over each of which he placed one of Danyal's four sons. So long as the vigour of the Jungarian prince remained undoubted, this arrangement produced the most beneficial results, for the country of Little Bokhara had been for generations a prey to intestine disorders, and it needed a strong hand to repress these for the sake of the common weal. When Chereng died that hand was removed, and the old dissensions began to reveal themselves. There existed no longer any assurance of stability, and the Chinese border officials saw reason to fear the early recurrence of difficulties with their turbulent neighbours. When this unsatisfactory phase of the question arose, the Chinese also were less advantageously placed than they had been. Their authority was established

firmly enough in the Amour region, and on the Kerulon ; but in the districts of Hami and Turfan it had been displaced.

The death of Galdan Chereng proved the signal for the outbreak of rivalries and contentions, and among those of his relatives who succeeded in establishing their authority none rose higher than the representative of the collateral branch of Ta Chereng. The son of Galdan Chereng, after enjoying a brief term of power, was deposed by an elder but half-brother, who usurped his place, and ruled for several years, chiefly by the support of the lamas, as monarch of Jungaria under the style of Dardsha. This insurrection and the violent scenes by which it was accompanied carried confusion throughout the tribes and peoples who had acquiesced in the supremacy of Tse Wang Rabdan and his son. The further stages of this complication were marked by a contest between Dardsha and the faction headed by Davatsi, Ta Chereng's grandson, assisted by Amursana, chief of the tribe called the Khoits. At first the balance of victory inclined in no uncertain manner to the side of Dardsha, who drove his opponents out of their territory and compelled them to seek refuge amongst the Kirghiz. But although thus unfortunate, neither Davatsi nor his friend and supporter Amursana despaired of the result, and when they had succeeded in raising a fresh force among the Kirghiz tribes they returned to renew the struggle with their rival. This time they experienced a kinder fortune. Dardsha was taken by surprise, his troops were scattered, and he himself was slain. Thus was Davatsi restored to the enjoyment of the sovereignty of Jungaria. His ally Amursana, whose assistance had greatly contributed to this success, evidently felt persuaded that the best way to promote his own ends was up to a certain point to advance his friend's interests ; and when the struggle with Dardsha terminated he proceeded to set up his authority in the Ili region. He there assumed the semblance of royal state, and affected to regard Davatsi rather as his ally and equal than as his superior. Davatsi showed that he did not share his former colleague's opinion of their relative positions, and he accordingly turned his arms against his ambitious neighbour. Amursana either

did not await, or at once succumbed to the storm. Davatsi's followers seized and occupied Ili, and Amursana fled to bear the tale of his grievances to the Emperor of China—a circumstance which will be found pregnant with important consequences.

The first decade of Keen Lung's reign had, therefore, little more than closed when the course of events began to make it clear that the affairs of these neighbouring peoples would attract much of the Emperor's attention. Before considering the reasons which induced Keen Lung to take up arms in support of Amursana, we may briefly consider the remaining events of this tranquil season which preceded the long period of war carried on by Keen Lung in Central Asia. The severe measures to which the Emperor at last had recourse against the Christians continued during the whole of this period. In the year 1750 these acts of repression had been extended into parts of China which had enjoyed a happy immunity from polemical warfare. The country round Nankin became the scene of persecutions, not less energetically carried out than those in the province of Fuhkien. These persecutions served the one useful purpose of inducing the missionaries to tell us of some of the inflictions that visited the country during these years. They failed to see, or neglected to record, events of national and historical importance passing under their very eyes ; but when it became a question of retribution for wrongs inflicted on themselves they hastened to describe some of the events that made up the history of the country.

From their remarks it appears that, in the year 1751, Keen Lung had the misfortune to lose not only his eldest son, but also the Empress herself, while several of the provinces were ravaged by a terrible famine. The ministers whose advice had contributed to increase his dislike for the Christians happened to fall under his suspicion for different crimes, and were punished with severity—a coincidence which seemed in the eyes of a religious enthusiast to mark the vengeance of Heaven. These punishments may be taken with less stretch of the imagination as showing that the difficulties of conducting the State administration in the Chinese Empire

included the management of a powerful and almost irresponsible official class.

To the other difficulties of his position there were added for Keen Lung a physical weakness and a susceptibility to bodily ailments that detracted, during the first few years of his reign, from his capacity to meet all the duties of his position; and more than their usual share of power consequently fell into the hands of the great administering tribunals of the State. Probably the disgrace of the officials referred to must be attributed to this cause; but when Keen Lung resolutely devoted himself to the task of supervising the acts of the official world they became less perceptible, if they did not cease to exist, and gradually the provincial governors and administrators found it to be their best and wisest course to obey and faithfully execute the behests of the sovereign. For a short time Keen Lung seemed likely to prove more indifferent to the duties of his rank than either of his predecessors; but after a few years' practice he hastened to devote himself to his work with an energy which neither Kanghi nor Yung Ching had surpassed.

An interesting and imposing ceremony marked the commencement of the year 1752 on the occasion of the Emperor's mother attaining her sixtieth year. The capital was given over to the due performance of the accompanying fêtes, which were celebrated with much magnificence. The Emperor and his Court proceeded through the streets of Peking, escorting the Empress-mother in state; but according to our ideas half the effect was destroyed by the people being compelled to remain in their houses, with closed doors and barred windows. The masses were, however, allowed to share in the Imperial rejoicings, and benefactions were placed at the disposal of the poor and the aged. Even the European residents were permitted to offer their presents, and we fancy we can trace to this time some relaxation in the regulations made with regard to their position.

Among Keen Lung's favourite pursuits was that of witnessing the painters Castiglione and Attiret engaged in their labours within the palace. But we are told that the Imperial wish in regard to such alterations or changes as he might

suggest in their work was equivalent to a command. It is to this period that must be assigned the various portraits we possess of the principal and earlier Manchus. Keen Lung seems to have greatly appreciated an art that served to bring events as well as persons prominently and clearly before him ; and to the sense of gratification produced by this cause must be mainly attributed the more favourable opinion formed of the European missionaries by the Emperor during these last few years. As one of them wrote, China, indeed, was for them "the land of vicissitudes."

Much of Keen Lung's time was passed in his summer residence at Jehol, a small town beyond the Wall, where he was able to enjoy the quiet of the country, and the purer and more invigorating breezes of his native land. Here he varied the monotony of rural pursuits with grand ceremonies, of which he ordered a missionary selected for that purpose to draw him a picture, and although his instructions left little scope to the artist's genius or imagination, he passed no harsh criticism on his works, and generally sent him word that it was "very well." At last he was induced to sit for his own portrait, and so pleased was he with the result that he wished to make the painter Attiret a mandarin. The worthy missionary experienced much difficulty in escaping an elevation which he appears to have regarded with almost superstitious objection.

In order to gain some increased freedom in the practice of their religion, the French missionaries devoted all their ingenuity to the amusement as well as to the edification of Keen Lung. The automaton they invented and constructed, which were moved principally by clockwork, served to while away his hours of leisure, and their conversation enabled him to form a fairly accurate and complete idea of the kingdoms of Europe. To this period must be traced the conviction always existing in Keen Lung's mind that France was the great country of the West. The variety of Keen Lung's tastes kept all the foreigners employed at their different pursuits, and he seems to have taken peculiar pleasure in studying their practice of arts, which he admired and appreciated.

From these peaceful pursuits, and this tranquil palace life, we have now to pass to the more stirring and exciting events that were in progress on the scene of foreign affairs, which occupied the greater part of Keen Lung's reign, and which have given it the prominent place that it can rightly claim in history. Throughout his life we find him equally determined to carry his ends, and to exact from all his officials the fullest amount of work of which they were capable. What he had shown himself to be in the smaller details, he was evidently resolved to prove in the larger affairs of government. He regarded the events in his neighbours' territories from the sublimity of the position of a Chinese Emperor, or, as he loved to call himself, of the Son of Heaven; and he expected all minor potentates to bow before him, and to resign themselves to his will. Such were the principles of his conduct; the result will show how well he could carry them into practice.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE CONQUEST OF CENTRAL ASIA.

THE arrival of the fugitive prince Amursana at the Chinese Court called Keen Lung's attention to a very old question, which had been a source of trouble at an early period of Chinese history, and which has only been settled in our own time with any appearance of duration. This question was what relations should subsist between the Chinese and the disunited but turbulent tribes holding all the region westward of Shensi and Kansuh. In the eyes of these clans the wealth and weakness of China had for ages been at once the prize and the incentive of ambition. The Chinese were in the majority of years the victims and easy prey of these races, who were kept in order neither by the solemnity of their engagements nor by any political expedient that had up to this been devised. These tribes had on some occasions been welded into a military confederacy of no slight power, when the danger with which they threatened the Chinese and their Empire became proportionally increased; and in the cases of the Kins and the Mongols their efforts had resulted in giving foreign dynasties to China. The Manchus, least of all rulers of the Celestial kingdom, were not disposed to regard with indifference the measures and movements of these warlike clans, for their own success warned them that the example they had set must find imitators, whose fate would depend on their own supineness or energy. The growth of Galdan's power had for that reason been watched with attention by the Emperor Kanghi, and when it threatened to absorb the faithful Khalkas all the resources of the Empire

had been devoted to the task of arresting its growth, and of subverting the influence that chieftain had acquired.

The overthrow of Galdan did not effect the durable remedy of the evil which Kanghi anticipated. That chief's nephew, Tse Wang Rabdan, became after his death an opponent hardly less formidable, and certainly not more friendly to the Chinese, although the pacific disposition of the Emperor Yung Ching had induced him to withdraw from the strife, and to leave this potentate and the hordes which acquiesced in his nominal authority masters of the field. The establishment of a Jungarian monarchy served to dispose the minds of Chinese statesmen to more willingly recognize the advisability of a policy of not interfering in the affairs of the Central Asian countries ; and, had it shown a capability to stand the test of time, their views of cultivating friendly relations with its ruler as the wisest and simplest solution of the difficulty might have finally prevailed. The contest for supremacy between Dardsha and Davatsi, followed by the rivalry and contention of Davatsi and Amursana, showed conclusively that the Jungarian monarchy was an ephemeral creation, that it would be speedily replaced by the old tribal chiefships, and that a fresh era of confusion and turbulence on the frontier was probably about to commence. Keen Lung had, therefore, as the responsible ruler of the Empire, to devise some means to avert these threatened troubles, and to ensure the security and tranquillity of his borders. Taking a large view of the situation, and regarding the matter in all its bearings and ramifications, as illustrated by the repeated occasions on which it had presented itself as a question of practical politics during the past history of his country, he arrived at the conclusion that the soundest course would be to seize the first favourable opportunity to attempt a settlement that should prove enduring.

The flight of Amursana, and the tale of wrong which he carried to the foot of the throne of the Bogdo Khan, seemed to afford that opportunity, and Keen Lung did not fail to listen to the woes of a distressed prince whose information as well as whose sense of injury promised to afford him the

means of realizing his object. It was one of the most cherished traditions at Peking that the unfortunate or unsuccessful princes of the neighbouring states should be accorded protection against their opponents, and, where possible, assistance in recovering their lost possessions. Amursana's claim to the former was freely recognized, and, while the Emperor and his council were engaged in considering whether measures should be taken to reinstate him in his former rank, he was permitted to reside as an honoured guest in an apartment of the palace.

The Emperor Keen Lung has himself instructed posterity as to the motives which induced him to take up this quarrel, and also upon the objects which he set before himself for realization. With delicate tact he suggests that he inherited this difficulty from his father, whose vacillating policy and half-hearted measures had failed to provide a remedy for the evil, or in any way to curb the aggressiveness of his neighbours. While Keen Lung put prominently forward his desire and natural inclination to imitate the moderation of his predecessor, he did not fail to show his resolution not to shrink from the duties of his position. "If I draw the sword," he wrote, "it is that I may use it, but it shall be replaced in the scabbard when my object has been attained."

When Keen Lung first ascended the throne, his intentions were of the most pacific character. He resolved to continue the policy of abstention which had been adopted by his father, and on sanctioning the withdrawal of his troops from their districts, he announced that he did so in order that the Eleuths might be able to show, without pressure and of their own free will, their devotion to his person and his family. For a time that plan answered its purpose, and promised to work well; and several of Tse Wang Rabdan's successors paid to Keen Lung the formal recognition of his supremacy that he so eagerly required. It was not until the years immediately preceding the flight of Amursana, which had been caused in the manner already described, that these relations were violently disturbed, and that the Emperor again found himself threatened by the well-known

inconstancy of his neighbours with a renewal of the old disorders.

There is no violation of probability in supposing that Amursana, knowing something of the views of his host on the subject of the Eleuths, lost no opportunity of impressing on him the advantage of taking up his cause, and of how easily he might effect a solution of the whole question by restoring him to a position of supreme authority over the territories from which he had been expelled by Davatsi. Keen Lung listened to the narrative of his guest, but might have refrained from having recourse to action, despite the specious arguments and flowing rhetoric of the Eleuth prince, had not the disturbances on the frontier been suddenly aggravated by the defiant attitude and arrogance of Davatsi.

That chief, not content with the recovery of his position, when reduced to the verge of extremity, or with his second triumph over an inconvenient and dangerous rival, imagined that he had nothing to fear from either the indignation or the power of China, and that no evil consequences would ensue if he were to openly proclaim his independence. The tie which bound these tributary states to China had never been very exacting. It was a question more of sentiment than of any practical importance, and the Chinese Emperor required little more than respectful sentences, and the recognition of a paramount authority which was seldom exerted. Davatsi thought to heighten his reputation by a cheap defiance of established precedent, and he sent an embassy into China with messages of friendship indeed, but couched in language only used by sovereigns of equal rank. This slight to his dignity roused the indignation of Keen Lung, who at once denounced Davatsi as a "traitor and usurper." Then only did the Emperor enter heartily into the schemes and proposals of Amursana, the support of whose cause seemed to offer the easiest and most efficacious way of restoring the suzerainty of China over the kingdoms and states in Central Asia.

Keen Lung's military preparations were commensurate with the importance of the undertaking, and worthy also of the loftiness of his position. One hundred and fifty

thousand men, including the picked soldiers of the Manchu banners and of the Solon contingent, were placed in the field, and Amursana received a seal of rank and the title of Great General. Although thus placed in a position of recognized authority, the actual command was entrusted to the Manchu general Panti, who enjoyed the reputation of being the best of living Chinese commanders. The ostensible task with which Keen Lung charged this army was to repress the insolent Davatsi, and to elevate to his place the injured Amursana.

The success which attended this great enterprise was unexampled both in its extent and in the rapidity with which it was attained. Five months sufficed to enable this large army to cross the desert, and to penetrate to the recesses of the Ili region where Davatsi indulged a belief as to his security. Little or no resistance was attempted. Davatsi's power crumbled to pieces at the first contact with the Manchu legions, and the chief himself was conveyed as a state prisoner to Pekin. Keen Lung says, in his brilliantly composed description of the campaign, "Confident of marching to victory, they broke cheerfully through every obstacle; they arrive, terror had gone before them. Scarcely had they time to bend a bow, or draw an arrow, when everything submits to them. They give the law, Davatsi is a prisoner, he is sent into my presence."

Thus, by the aid of a Chinese army, Amursana recovered what he represented, though with doubtful accuracy, to be his birthright; and, finding himself in the possession of the privileges to which he had long aspired, he gave reins to his imagination and placed less curb upon his ambition. Great as had been Amursana's success, it did not suffice to render him contented with the position to which the friendship of Keen Lung had raised him. The larger portion of the Chinese army had returned after the overthrow of Davatsi, but Panti remained with a small contingent, partly to give stability to Amursana's position, and partly to uphold the interests of the Emperor. Amursana considered that the presence of this force detracted from, more than it enhanced, the dignity of his position. It became his main object to

rid himself from it, hoping that with its departure or disappearance he would also be freed from the control of the Chinese Government and officials, which he was inclined to regard as almost intolerable. It soon became clear that the harmony of the relations between the Eleuth prince and the Chinese general was irretrievably broken, and that the existence of their respective authorities was incompatible with each other. The rupture was for a short time averted by Amursana's designs upon the independence of Kashgaria, for the success of which he needed further assistance from the Chinese. That assistance was granted only with reluctance, but still the loan of 500 Chinese troops sufficed to bring the cities of Yarkand and Kashgar under the subjection of Barhanuddin Khoja, who held his authority as the friend and dependent of Amursana. This further success confirmed Amursana in the favourable estimate he had formed of his own capacity and strength, and rendered him less disposed than ever to play a secondary part in his native kingdom. He aspired with more determination than before to exercise unquestioned authority.

Rumours of Amursana's dissatisfaction reached Peking; and Keen Lung, distrustful of the good faith of the Eleuth prince, summoned him to his capital. This step compelled Amursana to take a decided part and to declare his intentions sooner, perhaps, than he intended. His reply was emphatic and extreme enough to please the greatest admirers of uncompromising resolution. He surprised the small Chinese contingent, massacred every man of them, and caused Panti and the other officers to be executed. Thus, by the slaughter of his allies and supporters, did Amursana hope to gain that supreme and independent position in Central Asia to which he had aspired from the first days of his public career, and with which the recognition of Keen Lung's authority appeared in his eyes to be incompatible.

The fruits of Keen Lung's labours and military success were thus as rapidly destroyed as they had been attained. Five months of the year 1755 had sufficed to give tranquillity to Central Asia, and to replace a hostile potentate by one reputed to be a friend. And now, by another turn in the

wheel of events, the old sense of insecurity and uncertainty was revived, and an ambitious and defiant prince grasped the reins of power among a warlike population. The change had been effected in the most open and unequivocal manner, and Amursana thought he had ensured his success by the slaughter of the Chinese garrison and its commanders.

The impression produced by this event was profound, and when Amursana followed up the blow by spreading about rumours of the magnitude of his designs they obtained some credence even among the Mongols. Encouraged by this success, he sought to rally those tribes to his side by imputing sinister intentions to Keen Lung. His emissaries declared that Keen Lung wished to deprive them all of their rank, authority, and estates, and that he had summoned Amursana to Peking only for the purpose of deposing him. They also protested that their master, Amursana, like a true desert chief, preferred his liberty to every other privilege, and, sooner than trust himself within the toils of the wily Emperor, had bidden him defiance, and raised between them an inexpiable cause of hostility. Amursana proclaimed himself King of the Eleuths, and many of the clans gave in their adhesion to his rule and promised to support him in war.

If the shock caused by the news of the great disaster on the banks of the Ili gave a little confidence to those who were unfriendly to the Manchu authority, it also roused Keen Lung's indignation to the highest point. The sense of disappointment at the failure of his plans was increased all the more by the memory of the easy victory which had both flattered his vanity and attained his aims. There were those among his ministers who impressed upon him the wisdom of discontinuing a costly war, of which the results among a turbulent and treacherous population would always be doubtful. "We must have done with this useless and disastrous war," they exclaimed in the palace and at the council-board. But Keen Lung did not allow himself for a moment to be swayed by their advice. The blood of his slaughtered soldiers called for a summary revenge, the objects of his policy demanded that Amursana should be deposed from the position of defiance and independence which he had assumed,

and the reputation of China rendered it absolutely imperative that a reverse suffered in the field should be as openly and as signally retrieved. For each and all of these reasons Keen Lung rejected the counsels of the timid, whose natural courage, as the Emperor said, should have led them to reject their own advice as unworthy of their race and country.

Keen Lung made, therefore, the necessary preparations for another campaign beyond the frontier, and sent two generals, at the head of a large army, with orders to capture the rebel Amursana dead or alive. Amursana was in no position to resist this force, and many of his adherents deserted him at the first approach of the Chinese. Amursana himself was on the point of being taken when the disagreement of Keen Lung's two commanders provided him with an avenue of escape. The inaction of these officers, after the dispersion of their opponent's forces had gained them a bloodless victory, enabled the Eleuth prince to make fresh head against the invader. Keen Lung lays all the blame for the small results of this campaign on the apathy of his generals, whom he recalled to Peking. His intention was to execute them for their misconduct in the field, but during their journey back they were surprised and slain by a band of Eleuths. Two other generals were appointed to take their places, but they did no better than their predecessors. Keen Lung had to thank the incapacity of his officers for a second abortive campaign. Amursana, it is true, was compelled to lead a perilous existence among the Kirghiz tribes; but so long as he survived or remained at large there could be no assurance of peace in the Central Asian region. Keen Lung attributed the escape of his foe to the negligence of his generals, who were a second time recalled and, on this occasion, executed.

The nature of their offence appears to have been that they placed too much confidence in the promises of the Kirghiz. Taltanga, one of these generals, was on the eve of entering their country, when he allowed himself to be dissuaded from doing so by their pledge to surrender Amursana on the return of one of their chiefs. The Mongol contingent, disgusted by the credulity of their commander, or wearied by a

protracted campaign barren of result, left Taltanga and returned to their homes. The Kirghiz did not keep their faith; Taltanga saw that he had been duped, and Amursana again took the field against Keen Lung's army. The Chinese commanders found themselves obliged to order a retreat, and during the return march to Kansuh they were harassed by their active and enterprising assailants. The destruction of the small rear-guard under the intrepid Hoki, who seems to have voluntarily sacrificed himself by making a resolute stand to save the rest of the army, completed the disastrous events of this campaign. Encouraged by Amursana's success every petty chief hastened to set up his own authority, and they uniformly celebrated the commencement of their independence by the massacre of every Chinese subject on whom they could place their hands.

Yet not for these disasters and unfortunate occurrences did the Emperor Keen Lung give up his policy or depart from the line of action, in the wisdom of which he continued firmly to believe. To the incompetence of his commanders he could with much justice attribute the failure of his plans, and without indulging in useless recriminations or complaints he devoted himself to the task of discovering a man capable of executing his projects. The loss of Panti appeared for a moment to be irreparable. Keen Lung was still engaged in this search, when the message came from the scene of war that the exigencies of the situation had led to the discovery of a military genius. An officer named Tchaohoei had the command of a small detachment, and, when Taltanga began his retreat towards Kansuh, he hastened to collect such troops as he could, and made preparations for defending the district under his control against the advancing Eleuths. He gathered round him the relics of Hoki's force and the stragglers of Taltanga's army, and with them he prepared to uphold the Emperor's authority until assistance should come to him from China.

The news of Tchaohoei's fortitude and energy confirmed Keen Lung in his belief that the policy upon which he had decided was the right one, and that its success demanded only a competent and cautious general. Tchaohoei's conduct in

face of a confident enemy and under arduous circumstances seemed to mark him out as the very man for the occasion, and in a despatch to the Emperor, describing the position of affairs and suggesting the measures that seemed to him necessary, he showed such a grasp of the whole question, and his views so closely accorded with those of Keen Lung himself, that the Emperor at once determined to send him the reinforcements he required, and to entrust him with the chief command over all the troops beyond the frontier. When Tchaohoei revealed his talent as a commander, Keen Lung had been almost on the point of giving up the contest in despair. The sufferings of his troops had been great, their losses severe, and the result appeared as remote as ever. The complaints at the capital for the waste of precious lives and treasure could not with safety be much longer ignored; and had Tchaohoei failed in his task the Manchu ruler would, no doubt, have abstained from further action and given up the prosecution of his favourite policy.

In 1757 two fresh armies were sent across the desert, and, when they reached Ili, they enabled Tchaohoei to at once assume the offensive. Amursana, although he had so far preserved his life and avoided complete overthrow, was in no better state to offer a determined resistance to the onset of his assailants than on the first occasion of the Chinese advance. Again his supporters abandoned him, and sought only to secure their own safety by flight to the mountains that surrounded the favoured districts of Ili. Amursana, unable to rally round him a sufficient body of troops to justify his attempting open resistance to the Chinese, and possibly awed by their persistence in pursuing him, imitated the example of his supporters, and again fled for safety to his former friends the Kirghiz. His flight was so precipitate that he marched day and night without staying to inquire whether he was even being pursued, or whether his own supporters were following him.

Tchaohoei entrusted the pursuit of Amursana to Fouta, the most trusted and skilful of his lieutenants. This officer followed by forced marches on the traces of the fugitive. He reached Amursana's first place of retreat very shortly after

that ill-advised prince, and he had the satisfaction of receiving the surrender of the principal Kirghiz clans. But Amursana had then made his escape into Russian territory, where he was permitted rather to wander at large than to enjoy the absolute protection of the Czar's Government. Yet even at this remote distance, and notwithstanding that the solitudes to which he had fled were unknown and had not been penetrated by Chinese soldiers, Amursana still was not safe from Keen Lung's vengeance. The result of this war remained indecisive, his objects were considered to be but half-attained so long as Amursana continued at large. Both to Tchaohoei and to Fouta Keen Lung sent fresh instructions to lose no opportunity and to spare no effort to capture the rebel alive or dead.

The close of Amursana's troubled career was at hand, although the fatal blow that ended it was not struck by his implacable enemy. "An irritated heaven hastened the time of its vengeance," to use Keen Lung's phrase, "and a pestilent malady slit the black thread of his life." A demand was presented to the Russian officials to surrender the body, but with this request they refused to comply on the ground that their religion forbade the expression of enmity after death. They showed the emissaries of Keen Lung the corpse of his unfortunate antagonist, and with this incident the campaign that had as its main object the chastisement of Amursana may be said to have terminated.

The first intelligence of Tchaohoei's success had served to supply the peace party at Peking with a favourable opportunity for renewing their advice, that it would be wise to withdraw from Central Asia and to abandon once and for all dangerous and unprofitable enterprises in a far distant and impoverished region. "The kingdom of the Eleuths," exclaimed these men, "is too remote from the centre of our authority for us to be able to long govern it. Let us, therefore, abandon it to the care of whoever wishes to take it. What matters it to the glory of the Middle Kingdom, these uncultivated lands, and a people more than half savage?" The advice of these timid counsellors carried less weight than it would otherwise have done because Keen Lung had decided in his own mind

the right policy to pursue. He had resolved on nothing short of the establishment of his authority in the midst of the turbulent tribes that had disturbed his frontier, and, although momentarily undecided by a succession of reverses, he returned to the original plan with fresh confidence and energy as soon as he realized that in Tchaohoei he had found a worthy successor to Panti.

Having conquered the regions of Jungaria, and the favoured district of Ili, Keen Lung next turned his attention to the bestowing of the advantages of a settled government upon the inhabitants of those territories. At first he attempted to rule the tribes by means of native chiefs and princes, on whom he conferred the dignity of Khan. The plan did not work well. Many of them turned out incapable, and those whose ability increased their importance chafed at the restrictions placed upon their liberty and rebelled against Keen Lung. The Emperor's first scheme for the administration of his new possessions thus fell through, and it became necessary to devise another which should leave the people their liberty while it would place greater control in the hands of his officials. During this period of disturbance the Chinese commanders acted with marked severity, and the Eleuths suffered for the crimes and ambition of their chiefs.

Those who disturbed the tranquillity of the new Chinese possession were encouraged to do so by the knowledge that the country south of the Tian Shan mountains, known as Little Bokhara or Kashgaria, offered an asylum in the event of defeat. The authority of the Khoja Barhanuddin, who had been established in the place of power by the assistance of Amursana, was still recognized in the greater portion of that region; and neither at the time of Amursana's overthrow, nor during the period of the rule of the four Khans whom the Emperor had nominated as his viceroys, did Barhanuddin consider it to be necessary for him to make any overtures to Keen Lung's representatives, or to enrol himself as one of the Chinese well-wishers. Yet, according to Keen Lung's view of the situation, the conquest of the kingdom of the Eleuths carried with it the proper subordination if not the open surrender to him of the territory of its vassals. Of these

the principal was Little Bokhara, the incorporation of which with the Empire was stated by Tchaohoei to be necessary to the permanent and tranquil possession of Ili.

The Chinese writers assume for their country the credit of having released Barhanuddin and of having restored him to the seat of his ancestors at the time of Panti's invasion, but the fact seems to have been that he owed his liberty and restoration more to Amursana than to the Chinese general. When Amursana departed from the stipulations of his arrangement with the Emperor, and suffered at the hands of his more powerful allies, Barhanuddin allowed himself to forget all considerations of prudence in the fervour of his indignation against the Chinese. There was room for hope that a hostile collision might be averted until Barhanuddin and his brother laid violent hands upon the persons of an envoy and his suite, sent by Tchaohoei to discover whether a pacific understanding with these neighbours could not be arranged. The massacre of this embassy precluded that idea being any further entertained, and the Chinese troops were collected for the invasion of Little Bokhara just as a few months previously they had been assembled for the conquest of Amursana and his dominions. The murder of his representatives afforded Keen Lung the strongest reason for sanctioning the proposals of his general. This outrage compelled him to again draw the sword which he had only just placed in the sheath. "March," he wrote, "against the perfidious Mahomedans, who have so insolently abused my favours; avenge your companions who have been the unhappy victims of their barbarous fury."

Although Keen Lung simply reports that his generals duly set out on their enterprise, and that in a very short time they had subdued and annexed the country of Altyshahr, some of the details of this interesting campaign have been preserved in other quarters. The Chinese crossed the frontier in two bodies, one under the command of Tchaohoei, the other under that of Fouta. Such feeble resistance as Barhanuddin and his brother attempted was speedily overcome; the principal cities, Kashgar and Yarkand, were occupied, and the ill-advised rulers lately rejoicing in all the conviction

of security were compelled to seek their personal safety by a precipitate flight. The two brothers fled over the Pamir into the remote state of Badakshan, but so great was the terror caused by the successes of the Chinese that the prince of that country not only refused to receive them, but caused them to be slain, and sent their heads as a gift of propitiation to the Celestials. Fouta had followed hard upon their track, and succeeded in inflicting two reverses upon them in the elevated region of the Pamir. The more important of these battles took place near Sirikul, and the followers of the Khoja princes were driven from the field with heavy loss. Of the vanquished there escaped from the pursuit of the Chinese, and from the perfidy of their reputed friends, only the boy Sarimsak, who became the ancestor of the Khoja adventurers of a later period. Thus satisfactorily terminated the campaign in Little Bokhara, the conquest and annexation of which completed the task that Tchaohoei* had been charged to

* Tchaohoei described in a letter to Keen Lung his entry into Kashgar. The following are its principal passages. It was written from the camp before Kashgar on a date which corresponded with the 13th of September, 1759. "The two Hotchom" (Barhanuddin and his brother) "having learnt that your Majesty's troops were marching against them, abandoned their amusements in repairing the fortifications of Kashgar and Yarkand. They at once perceived that it would be impossible for them to resist your arms. They fled from their cities, and they dragged themselves and their families from hiding-place to hiding-place. The inhabitants of Kashgar, like those of Yarkand"—who had surrendered to Tchaohoei without offering any resistance before he advanced on Kashgar—"surrendered to us with every demonstration of joy, which was a sign that they asked for nothing better than to live under the laws of your Majesty, to experience in their turn the effects of the goodness of your great heart which embraces all the world. They came before us, bringing refreshments, which I accepted, and caused to be distributed among the soldiers, whilst giving in all cases to those who brought them small pieces of silver, or other money, not under the name of payment, but rather as a reward. They appeared to me to be very well satisfied with the arrangement. I entered the city by one gate, and left it by another. The inhabitants covered me with honour. Some accompanied me throughout my progress, crying out frequently, 'Long live the great Emperor of China.' Others lined the streets through which I had to pass. They were kneeling, and remained in that posture the whole time that I was making my progress. I made them a short address, in which I pointed out the happiness that they were about to enjoy, if they remained faithful in their duty to your Majesty. At the same time I announced that those

accomplish. Keen Lung's main idea had been realized. His authority was set up in the midst of the turbulent tribes who had long disturbed the Empire, and who first learnt peaceful pursuits as his subjects. At the cost of considerable sacrifices he had attained his object; and it only remained for experience to test and for time to show the soundness of his views and the practical advantage of what he had accomplished.

The Chinese commanders followed up this decisive success by the despatch of several expeditions into the adjoining states, although the exact extent and results of these campaigns * have not been preserved as historical facts of which we can feel quite certain. The ruler of Khokand was either so impressed by his neighbours' prowess, or, as there is much reason to believe, experienced himself the weight of their power by the occupation of his principal cities, Tashkent and Khokand, that he hastened to recognize the authority of the Emperor of China, and to enrol himself among the tributaries of the Son of Heaven. The tribute which he consented to pay was regularly delivered at Kashgar by himself and his successor, and it was not until fifty years later that its discontinuance afforded some proof of the relaxing of Chinese vigour.

What the prince of a considerable state like Khokand consented to allow, the petty chiefs of the scattered Kirghiz hordes could not well refuse. One chief after another of these tribes sent in his acknowledgment of Chinese supremacy, and in return for their courtesy and friendly expressions they received various titles of honour and presents. Whereas the

amongst them who had followed the side of the rebels would be sent to Ili, and that that would be the only punishment for a crime for which they deserved to lose their lives. I was frequently interrupted by fresh cries of, 'Long live the great Emperor of China! May he and his descendants give us laws for ever!' I at once gave orders for the preservation of public tranquillity, and for the prompt re-establishment of all things on their ordinary basis." The remainder of the letter is filled with a description of the Emperor's new province, which is very interesting, but which we need not quote.—See "*Mémoires concernant les Chinois*" (Amiot), tom. i. pp. 384-95.

* Sir H. Howorth says that the effect of these successes was to strengthen "a Mahomedan superstition that the Chinese would one day conquer the whole globe, when there would be an end to the world."

overthrow of Amursana and the incorporation of the kingdom of the Eleuths with the Empire had brought neither tranquillity to the Chinese nor prosperity to the new subjects on whom they had forced their yoke, the conquest of Kashgaria and the chastisement of its Mahomedan neighbours were very soon followed by the establishment of a firm peace throughout the whole of this region, and by its attendant era of prosperity. So far as was compatible with the preservation of Keen Lung's authority, Tchaohoei, when he drew up the scheme of administration, left the inhabitants as much liberty as he could, and the executive to which the charge of Chinese dominion was entrusted consisted of a native and Mahomedan official class.

For the present we can leave the Chinese victorious in Central Asia. Whether the results justified the means in this case, or repaid the cost must be matter of opinion, but it must be remembered that at no previous epoch in history has the western frontier of China been less disturbed by hostile attack than during the last one hundred and thirty years. This triumph had been won by the military skill of the two generals Tchaohoei and Fouta, as well as by the indomitable will and resolution of Keen Lung. Its results were assured and consolidated mainly, if not solely, by the admirable tact and moderation of Tchaohoei.

One event, and one only, remains to be recorded before concluding this description of the Chinese conquest of Central Asia. The Tourguts were the neighbours of the Eleuths in the days when Tse Wang Rabdan raised high his pretensions as the sovereign of Jungaria, and Ayouka was their chief. Not himself without courage and ambition, he feared in the Eleuth the qualities which he knew that he possessed, and which under more favourable auspices he might have exercised with practical effect. Ayouka saw in Tse Wang Rabdan an opponent too powerful to be resisted, and one of whom he could not but stand in awe. The Tourgut felt that the one chance of avoiding the danger that menaced him lay in a prompt withdrawal from the neighbourhood of the aggressive Rabdan. His followers shared his love of liberty, and, recognizing the gravity of the emergency, agreed to adopt his

proposal, and to seek a fresh home beyond the sphere of their rival's influence. Ayouka took his measures with the necessary vigilance and precaution. Tse Wang Rabdan was on the eve of delivering his attack when he learnt that the Tourguts had fled into Russian territory, and were beyond his reach.

Ayouka had to march with his people across the steppes of the Kirghiz for many hundred miles before he reached the settlements of Russian authority. The movements of this considerable body of people created some alarm, but when the Government of Orenburg realized their intentions, a district between the Volga and the Yaik was allotted as their place of residence. There, as the faithful subject of the Czar, Ayouka lived out the few remaining years of his life, and his son succeeded to his position as chief without possessing the desire to return to his ancestral home by the Ili. For fifty years and more the Tourguts remained the contented dependents of the Russian Government.

The report of Keen Lung's victories reached their settlements on the shores of the Caspian, and they appear to have stirred in their hearts a memory of their own country. The race of tyrannical despots, of whom Tse Wang Rabdan had been not the worst but only the most notable instance, was extinct, and in their place had been established the milder and more just rule of the Chinese Emperor. The Chinese had not neglected to proclaim that the Tourguts would be welcome whenever they pleased to return to their old settlements; and the exactions of the Russian tax-collector and drill-sergeant, which were rendered more severe by the wars with his neighbours in which the Czar was constantly engaged, gave increased weight to considerations of sentiment and patriotic feeling. The Tourguts, however, might long have wanted the resolution to undertake a second journey across Asia, but for an outrage offered to their chief Oubacha, the great grandson of Ayouka. The Russian officials seized his son either as a hostage for his father's good conduct, or as a further recruit for the service of the Czar.

Whatever the motive of the outrage, it decided the Tourguts to no longer hesitate about the return to their

native state to which the friendliness of the Celestial Government invited them to come back. Towards the close of the year 1770 they, to the number of several hundred thousand, gathered in their worldly belongings, collected their flocks, and, breaking up their camps, which served them in the place of more permanent dwellings, began their return march to the district they had reluctantly and under the pressure of a great fear quitted half a century before. Eight months were occupied in traversing the region from the Yaik to the Ili, but the local forces were too few, and the means of summoning fresh troops too inadequate to allow the Russians to interfere with their movements or to molest their flight. The Tourguts reached their destination in safety, and became the faithful and peaceful dependents of the Chinese Emperor or Bogdo Khan. Their flight* from east to west, and their return to their old settlements, contribute a picturesque episode to the establishment of Chinese power in Central Asia, and we may attribute their coming back after the proclamation of Chinese authority either to the hardships of Russian rule, or to the greater attractions offered by that of China. Certainly in the eyes of the Asiatics there never has been a more lenient or considerate government established over them than that of the Chinese in times of peace and domestic tranquillity.

The return of the Tourguts ten years after the close of active campaigning in Kashgaria came as if to ratify the wisdom of Keen Lung's Central Asian policy. The sneers and doubts of the timid or the incapable had been silenced long before by the prowess and success of Tchaohoei, but ten years of peace and prosperity had placed in still clearer light than military triumphs the advantages of the able and far-seeing policy of Keen Lung. A strong frontier had been secured; the hostile and semi-hostile peoples and tribes of Mahomedan Turkestan had been overawed and converted into peaceful subjects; the reputation of China had been extended to the furthest bounds of the Asiatic continent; and the monarch who had conceived the grand scheme of

* The reader may be referred to De Quincey's "Flight of a Tartar Tribe."

conquest, and seen how to carry it out, had crowned the glory and durability of his achievements by showing that he knew when and where to stop. In the boundless wastes and intricate passages of the Pamir, in the dizzy heights and impracticable passes of the Hindoo Koosh, and the Kara Tau, he had found the perfection of a frontier. His own immediate territory, the rich provinces of China, were rendered secure against aggression by the strong position he occupied on either side of the Tian Shan, in the remote Central Asian province three thousand miles distant from his capital. His policy had been vindicated by results. He could say that he had effected a complete and lasting remedy of an evil that up to his time had been dealt with for many centuries only by half-measures and by compromise.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE WARS WITH THE BURMESE AND THE MIAOTZE.

KEEN LUNG'S anxieties on the ground of his foreign relations were far from being confined to one quarter. The frontier of Yunnan was as much the scene of disturbance as the borders of Kansuh. The Shan and Karen tribes were by instinct not less addicted to predatory habits than the Mongols and the Eleuths, and behind the former stood the arrogant though feeble courts of Ava and Pegu anxious on occasion to make use of the military services of these clans. The weakness of the Chinese Emperor and the numerous other claims on his attention had long made it a point of policy with him to disregard the unsatisfactory condition of the Yunnan frontier, for the simple reason that his Government had neither the leisure nor the available resources to devote to its effectual and permanent pacification. Successive rulers had been content to leave the problem unsolved as one of the accidents of government, and trusted to the weakness of their neighbours that no serious consequences would ensue. So long as Pegu and Ava remained disunited and antipathetic to each other no cloud of danger threatened the peace of mind of the Viceroy of Yunnan. The corruption of the courts and the effeteness of the dynasties of those two kingdoms corresponded with the decrepitude to which their military power had been reduced by a long period of misrule. The commencement of the eighteenth century found such pretensions as Pegu and Ava possessed to the authority of kingdoms vanishing beneath the incompetence of the ruler and his advisers. From such neighbours China, even at its worst days, had nought to fear.

In the hour of their distress the peoples of Burmah, however, found a champion and reliever in the person of one of those men sent by Providence to scourge and purify a profligate society. Alompra sprang from the people. He belonged to the hunter class which, among a race averse to danger, had been relegated to a position of undeserved contumely and inferiority. He overthrew the Talaing kings of Pegu who had established their supremacy in Ava, and when he had freed his native state he proceeded to expel his foes from their own kingdom. He extended his Empire from the Bay of Bengal to the frontier of China. The tributary kingdom of Assam recognized his might, and the terror of his name penetrated to the Gangetic Delta. Alompra imparted an unknown vigour into a decaying system, and left to his children an authority in the Irrawaddi region which could claim the obedience of its subjects and for a brief space also the respect of its neighbours.

Alompra's successors, surrounded by courtiers who flourished by extolling the virtues and power of their master, allowed themselves to be easily deluded into the belief that they had nothing to fear from the utmost power of China, even if a policy of irritation should result in provoking the wrath of their great but impassive neighbour. The exact details of the origin of the war that broke out have not been preserved, but there is little doubt that it arose from border disturbances which the Burmese authorities neglected to do their part in suppressing. The arrogance of the Court of Ava had been swelled to a higher point than ever by the military successes of Alompra, and when the pretensions of the two haughtiest courts of Asia clashed it was inevitable that a hostile collision should ensue. The greater power possessed by Keen Lung, and the more complete results from the work of administration which he demanded within his frontiers, also contributed to produce a grave complication on the Yunnan border. The successful campaigns in Central Asia had not long closed when Keen Lung gave orders to increase the garrisons in the south-west provinces, and to make general preparations in that quarter in the event of the outbreak of hostilities.

It was not until the year 1768, when Alompra's grandson Sembuen occupied the throne, that the Chinese troops began the invasion of Burmah, which had been imminent for several years. Keen Lung entrusted the conduct of this war to a favoured officer, the Count Alikouen, whose experience in the field had, however, been so slight that many raised a cry that Fouta should be recalled from his enforced retreat and placed in the principal command.* But the Emperor was fixed in his resolve, and it was under Count Alikouen that his troops marched for the invasion of Burmah. The Chinese advanced guard, computed to consist of some 50,000 men, crossed the frontier and took up a strong position between Momien and Bhamo. The Burmese troops advanced in greater force to expel it from the camp, which the Chinese commander had fortified. The result of this action is not known, but both sides claim it as a great victory. The approach of the main

* The valiant Fouta after the close of the campaigns in Central Asia returned to Peking, where, however, he failed to sustain as a courtier the reputation he had gained as a soldier. Fouta was a member of the Solon tribe, and his appearance has been painted in the following words, which serve to bring the bluff character of the plain simple-minded soldier before us:—"Fouta had been brought up in Tartary among his compatriots, the Solon Manchus, and like them he had passed his youth in inuring himself to the fatigues of the chase and to military exercises. He had not contracted that easy air and that suppleness to be acquired only at a court, where he always appeared embarrassed. Frank and incapable of disguising his thoughts, and even slightly rough, he would have chosen to have been rather the last of soldiers than the first of courtiers. The tents, a camp, soldiers, those were what he needed, and then nothing was impossible to him. To support the greatest hardships, and rudest fatigue; to endure the extremes of thirst and hunger; to march by night or by day across arid deserts, or marshy places; to fight, so to speak, at each step as much against the elements as against man,—these are what he was seen to perform during the course of a war which had added to the number of the provinces of the Empire the vast possessions of the Eleuth. The Emperor had said on one occasion to an envoy boasting of his master's artillery, 'Let him make use of these cannon, and I shall send Fouta against him.' His end did not correspond with the promise of his brilliant prime. Accused by an official of having appropriated some Government horses for his own use, he was recalled to Peking, where he was sentenced to death. This was commuted to the deprivation of all his ranks and titles and to a state of permanent confinement. Keen Lung refused to pardon Fouta with a persistence strangely disproportionate to the trivial offence."

Chinese army compelled the Burmese to retire, and the scene of war was shifted from the Chinese frontier to the valley of the Irrawaddi.

The Chinese commander, Count Alikouen, established a strongly fortified camp at Bhamo, where he left a considerable detachment, while with the greater portion of his army, said to number more than 200,000 men,* he marched on Ava. So far as numbers went the superiority still rested with the Burmese king, whose military position was further improved by his well-trained band of elephants and by the natural difficulties of the region of operations. Yet notwithstanding these obstacles, and that Alikouen did not evince any exceptional capacity in the field, the Chinese remained masters of the greater portion of the upper districts of Burmah during the space of three years.

Although no decisive engagement appears to have been fought, the Burmese were obliged, after this protracted occupation, to sue for peace on humiliating terms. The King of Ava was so irritated at the poltroonery of his general, in having concluded an ignominious but probably inevitable treaty, that he sent him a woman's dress. But he did not dare to repudiate the action of his officer; and the Chinese army was withdrawn only after having obtained the amplest reparation for the wrong originally inflicted on a Chinese subject, and a formal recognition on the part of the ruler of Ava of the supremacy and suzerainty of the Emperor of China. This campaign resulted, therefore, in the addition of Burmah to the long list of Asiatic kingdoms paying tribute to Peking.

The war with Burmah was followed by a more protracted contest with the Miaotze tribes, who, secure in their difficult mountain regions, had long bidden defiance to the Chinese authorities, and proved a source of constant trouble and danger to the settled inhabitants of the provinces of Kweichow and Szchuen. When the Emperor Keen Lung ascended the throne these people had just inflicted a severe reverse

* This number was probably greatly exaggerated by the vanity of the Burmese, who also claim most of the encounters as victories. The terms of peace clearly show how far these pretensions are justified by the facts.

upon the Imperial troops, and, although no steps were immediately taken to retrieve it, the fact had not been forgotten. There appears to be little doubt that the Miaotze were not alone to blame for this unsatisfactory state of things, and that much of their turbulence and misconduct should rightly be attributed to the provocation offered them by the local mandarins both civil and military.

The Miaotze recognized the authority of tribal chiefs and heads of clans. They were by nature averse to agricultural pursuits, and chafed at the restraints of a settled life. Their courage and rude capacity for war enabled them to hold and maintain a position of isolation and independence during those critical periods which had witnessed the disintegration of the Empire and the transfer of power from one race to another. Each successive wave of conquest had passed over the face of the country without disturbing their equanimity or interfering with their lot. The Miaotze remained a barbarian people, living within the limits of the Empire but outside its civilization, and the representatives of some pre-historic race of China. When Keen Lung mounted the throne their position was practically unchanged, and their late success seemed even to warrant the supposition that their independence was more assured than at any previous period. Nothing happened to disturb this persuasion until the year 1771, when Keen Lung had ruled the Empire for more than thirty-five years.

In that year the Miaotze had broken out in acts of disorder on a larger scale than usual, and whether incited to commit these depredations by the pressure of want or by the arrogance of the Chinese officials, there is no question that the area of their raids suddenly became extended, and that the Chinese troops met with further discomfiture. Whereas the Miaotze of Kweichow had hitherto been the most turbulent, it was on this occasion their kinsmen of Szchuen who carried their defiance to a point further than the Emperor could tolerate. Orders were, therefore, issued for the prompt and effectual chastisement of these hillmen, and troops were despatched against them for the purpose of reducing them to obedience. The troops marched, but

their valour proved of little avail. The Miaotze were victorious in the first encounter of the war, and it was made evident that in order to subjugate them a regular plan of campaign would be requisite.

Rendered over-confident by these preliminary successes, the Miaotze completed by an outrage the defiance they were resolute in showing towards the Emperor. They murdered the two officers he sent to their capital to negotiate, and they completed the insult by tearing up the letter which Keen Lung had condescended to write to them. The excessive pretensions and ambition of the Eleuth princes had compelled Keen Lung to take up the settlement of that question and to prosecute it with vigour. Success beyond precedent had attended his efforts, and established the wisdom of his policy of "thorough." The outrages committed by the Miaotze led him to the conclusion that similar energetic action in this quarter might very possibly be followed by results as satisfactory and as conclusive as those that had been attained in Central Asia. Just as he had decreed the annexation of a vast region beyond Gobi for reasons of state, he now ordered from scarcely less weighty causes the destruction of the Miaotze.

The Miaotze of Szchuen inhabited the mountainous region in the north-west corner of that province, which skirts a remote portion of Tibet. Their two principal settlements were known, from the names of streams, as the Great Golden River and the Little Golden River districts. The occupation of these settlements became the principal object with the Chinese Emperor, for he well knew that, when these hillmen were deprived of the only spots capable of sustaining themselves and their flocks, they would be obliged to recognize his authority and to accept his law without murmur. It only remained for Keen Lung to select some competent commander to give effect to his wishes, and to carry out the military scheme upon which he had resolved. The necessity for exercising care in such a choice had been shown by the tardy and meagre results of Alikouen's campaign in Burmah, but either the etiquette of the court or the dislike of the Emperor prevented the recall of Fouta,

whose great capacity rendered him the fittest leader for the post. Keen Lung's choice fell upon Akoui, by birth one of the noblest of the Manchus, and, as the result was to show, of talent equally conspicuous.

When Akoui reached the scene of operations he found that the gravity of the situation had been increased by the excessive confidence of those in command. One of the lieutenants of the border had worsted the Miaotze in an engagement, but, carried away by the ardour of pursuit, he allowed himself to be enticed into the mountains, where his detachment was destroyed almost to the last man. Akoui had, therefore, to devote all his attention to the retrieval of a defeat that might easily have been avoided. Several months were occupied in collecting the necessary body of troops, and a sufficient quantity of supplies for their use during a campaign that might prove of some duration in a barren region where means of sustenance were almost unprocurable.

The district of the Little Golden River formed the first object of Akoui's attack. The Chinese troops advanced in several bodies, and the Miaotze, assailed on all sides, were compelled to precipitately evacuate the territory. In less than a month the first part of Akoui's task had been successfully performed, and the Little Golden River settlement became incorporated with the province of Szchuen and accepted the Chinese law.

The second portion of his undertaking proved infinitely more arduous, and the Miaotze collected all their strength to defend their possessions round the Great Golden stream. The king or chief of the Miaotze was called Sonom, and, undaunted by the overthrow of his neighbour, he prepared to defend his native valleys to the last extremity. So resolute and unanimous were the Miaotze to fight to the death in defence of their last strongholds, that they refused to listen to any terms for a pacific arrangement, and even the women took up arms and joined the ranks of the combatants. The advance of the Chinese troops was slow, but being made systematically there could be no doubt that it would prove irresistible. The narrowness of the few passes, the natural

strength of fortresses built on the summit of mountains and protected on several sides by precipices, and the impossibility of effectually utilizing their superior numbers, all contributed to retard a decisive result ; but, notwithstanding all these obstacles, the Chinese steadily approached Sonom's chief stronghold of Karai.

At last the Chinese appeared before the walls of this place, within which the entire Miaotze population had been driven. The Chinese completely surrounded it, and there was no room for hoping that starvation or an assault would not speedily terminate the siege. Under these circumstances Sonom expressed a desire to surrender on the guarantee of their lives to himself, his family and his people. Akoui had no authority to grant such terms, and, as Sonom refused to trust to the indulgence of the Emperor, the siege continued. When Keen Lung learnt that this petty opponent was reduced to the last extremity, he sent word that the lives of the chief and of all his followers might be spared. Whereupon Sonom surrendered, his fort was destroyed, and the Great Golden River district shared the fate of the Little Golden district, and became portion of the province of Szchuen.

Akoui was largely rewarded, and Keen Lung rejoiced at being able to congratulate himself on having permanently settled one of the oldest and most troublesome internal difficulties that beset the Empire. The Miaotze of Kweichow took the lesson inculcated by the chastisement of their kinsmen in Szchuen to heart, and refrained from causing the Chinese officials the trouble they had been wont to produce on the borders of civilization. A great quantity of treasure and several thousand lives had to be expended to attain this result, but once attained there could be no doubt that a serious blot on the efficiency of the administration had been removed, and that a well-timed act of vigour had sufficed to establish tranquillity in another part of China.

Although Keen Lung had passed his word that the lives of his captives should be spared, he neglected to keep his word, thus leaving himself open to the charge of a breach of faith, which it would have been better for his reputation to

have avoided. Sonom, the chief members of his family, and his principal officers, were all executed within the precincts of the palace; and the other Miaotze captives were exiled to Ili in Central Asia. The motives which induced Keen Lung to proceed to such lengths of severity, if not of absolute cruelty, on this occasion, are not known. His moderation was usually conspicuous, and we can but suppose that the intensity of the general antipathy to the savage Miaotze, who were regarded as only half-human, led him to sanction measures he would not otherwise have permitted. The spectacle of the heads of these brigand chiefs placed in iron cages over the gates of his capital could not have added much to his personal gratification, nor could it have proved any very great deterrent to those disposed to rebel.

The province of Shantung was also the scene about this time of disturbances that caused some anxiety to the ruler. A rebel named Wanlan had been the leader of a considerable seditious movement, and the people appear to have suffered greatly, first from his exactions, and then from the presence of the army sent by the Emperor to put down the insurrection and to reassert his authority. However, Keen Lung's ends were attained in this case as elsewhere, and, before Akoui returned to the capital, peace had been restored in Shantung.

Although Fouta had accepted, or been compelled to take, a subordinate command under Akoui in the Miaotze campaign, he had been secretly piqued at the slight thus cast upon him; and when he returned to the capital and found Akoui the object of the Emperor's esteem and affection, he allowed some disparaging remarks to escape from him. Akoui's friends were all powerful, and the hero of the Pamir received little consideration when he ventured to assail the reputation of that popular and influential general. Keen Lung, who attached so much importance to the subjection of the Miaotze, that he raised Akoui from the Red to the Yellow Girdle rank, would not listen to petitions to deal leniently with the bluff, outspoken soldier, who in his turn became the object of all the evil tongues in the army and at the court. Fouta was accordingly sentenced to death, and his execution in the year 1776 served to show the inconstancy of fortune,

and also the severity of the conditions of Chinese service. With his summary death there can be no doubt that a notable military career was cut short. Akoui remained the master of the situation, and his voice decided all military questions; but these did not arise for a long time after the pacification of the two most disturbed parts of the Empire. With the Eleuths and Miaotze reduced to a sense of good order, it was only an act of aggression on the part of one of his neighbours that could have availed to disturb Keen Lung's peaceful resolutions. We shall see, however, that as the occasion had not failed to arise from the arrogance of the Burmese, it was to recur from the military ardour and ambitious aggressiveness of the Goorkhas of Nepaul.

CHAPTER XLVII.

WARS IN TIBET, NEPAUL, AND FORMOSA.

THE control which the Emperor Kanghi had established over Tibet, after the retreat of the Jungarian army from Lhasa, was maintained under both of his successors. The internal affairs of that country regained their normal state of tranquillity after the decision of the rivalry between the Yellow and Red Caps, and the departure of the Eleuth hordes. Nor does any event of marked importance call for our notice during the fifty years that elapsed between the sack of Lhasa and the time when Keen Lung's attention was first drawn by the course of affairs to Himalayan regions. A brief notice* is alone necessary, and, indeed, possible, of the relations which subsisted during this period between the Tibetan lamas and the Chinese garrison and officials.

The young Dalai Lama, who had been removed for safety to Sining because he did not possess the support of the soldier Latsan Khan, returned to Lhasa after affairs had settled down there, and was restored to all the rights and privileges of his lofty spiritual position. This Dalai was named Lobsang Kalsang, and enjoyed the title for more than half a century. His relations with the Chinese Government continued to be of the most friendly and intimate character during that long period; and although the jealousy of the

* To Sir Clements Markham we are still indebted for the best account extant of the land of Tibet, which he has illustrated by copious notes and by a historical and geographical introduction to his edition of the "Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet, and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa," 1879.

lamas towards the Chinese Ambans, added perhaps to the natural antipathy between the two races, produced some unpleasantness, the main tenor of the connection continued satisfactory.

In 1749 there occurred the one complication that seemed likely to produce an unfavourable effect on the continuance of this amicable intercourse. The Gyalpo or Nomen Khan (Regent), who exercised for the Dalai the civil functions of his authority, incurred the displeasure of the Chinese Ambans. Without referring the matter to Peking, these mandarins resolved to carry matters with a high hand, and to give reins to their resentment. The Gyalpo was put to death, and for the moment it seemed that none would dare to cross the path of the Ambans. But neither the people nor the lamas were disposed to regard with patience or indifference so flagrant an outrage against one of their recognized chiefs, and the people of Lhasa, instructed by their spiritual guides, or prompted by a natural movement of indignation, rose up and massacred all the Chinese, officials and soldiers, upon whom they could place their hands. The consequences of this wholesale slaughter might have been serious, as far less provocation had often brought down upon a people or country the full weight of Chinese vengeance ; but Keen Lung, on ascertaining the unwarrantable conduct of his representatives, refrained from adopting the extreme measures suggested by his natural impulse. An army was, however, sent for the purpose of restoring the connection that had been so rudely dissolved, but its commander was instructed to make concessions to popular agitation as well as to assert the authority of the Emperor. Keen Lung's moderation and the tact shown by his representatives sufficed to avert the danger of further complications and to restore the friendly relations previously existing.

Up to the time of this outbreak the Chinese authorities had been content to trust for the maintenance of their predominance rather to their influence with the Dalai Lama and their well-known power than to any distinct or generally recognized position at Lhasa, where the justification for their presence had to a great extent been removed by their own

occupation of Central Asia and the consequent disappearance of all possibility of a repetition of the Eleuth invasion. But after this popular ebullition the policy of the Celestial authorities so far underwent a change that they no longer confined their efforts to obtaining the sympathetic support of the Dalai Lama. They resolved to assert their right to have a supreme voice in the nomination of the Gyalpo or Regent, and by always filling that office with a creature of their own to secure the support of the principal civil functionary as well as of the great spiritual head of Tibet. The policy was astute, and proved successful. From that time to the present the Gyalpo has been the nominee and creature of the Chinese, to whose cause and views he stands fully pledged. One of the first objects to which the Chinese turned the undisputed supremacy they thus acquired was to effect the expulsion of the small Capuchin colony which had resided at Lhasa for nearly half a century.

The cause and the justification of the presence of the Chinese in Tibet were, as has been said, the danger from foreign aggression which beset a people unaccustomed to war and without an army. The sense of security that arose after the destruction of the Jungarian power contributed to give an appearance of unreality to the Chinese occupation, and so long as events favoured the supposition that the Manchu garrison was unnecessary, there was a distinct element of weakness in the hold of the Emperor upon this dependency. The people of Tibet pined for complete independence, and the Lamas resented the interference of the Chinese Ambans. It is impossible to say whether the connection would have been long maintained in face of these causes of disagreement ; but the sudden advent of an unexpected danger to the people of Tibet came to prove the necessity of, and the advantage to be derived from, the protection extended over their country by the Emperor of China. This new peril appeared from an unexpected quarter, and both its gravity, while it lasted, and the important consequences which followed, call for detailed notice of its origin and attendant circumstances.

South of the Himalayan range, but independent of the authority of either the Mogul or the British, there existed at

this time several small hill-states or kingdoms, of which the principal and most important was that known as Nepaul. The Nepaulese enjoyed complete independence under a native dynasty, but the strength derived from a happy union soon departed when the state became subdivided into three separate and hostile kingdoms. The kings of Khatmandu, Bhatgaon, and Patan, thought of little else than of indulging their mutual antipathies and rivalry; and although each was sufficiently strong to preserve his own independence, not one of them could impose his yoke upon either of his neighbours. In the year 1760 the reunion of the country appeared as remote as ever, when the King of Bhatgaon, threatened by a combination between his two rivals, entreated the assistance of the chief of an insignificant but warlike clan situated in the west of Nepaul and known by the name of Goorkhas. With the assistance of the Goorkhas the King of Bhatgaon repulsed the attack of his neighbours and signally triumphed over them. Indeed, so great was his success that it looked as if he might be able to subject to his yoke the whole of the Nepaulese valleys. The Goorkha chief Prithi Narayan, having performed his part of the compact, soon showed that he was not only master of the situation, but that he had views of his own on the subject of the future of Nepaul.

Prithi Narayan began his career by supporting one of the rival kings, but the ease with which he overthrew the others led him to conceive the ambitious task of retaining what he had won. Availing himself of their dissensions, and making an appeal on larger grounds than had yet been employed by any of the national leaders for the support of the peoples of these valleys, Prithi Narayan, backed by his band of hardy and warlike Goorkhas, soon made himself the undisputed master of the country from Kumaon to Sikhim. Before the year 1769 the Goorkha chief had overcome all his adversaries, and the three representatives of the ancient Newar kings were either slain or fugitives in India. The movement which had been begun by the English for the support of the native dynasty was suspended, and the fortunes of Nepaul passed into the hands of a military caste which regarded commerce with contempt and strangers with dislike.

Had the Goorkhas rested content with their achievements, it is possible that their views on questions of external policy would not have possessed much practical importance ; but their ambition and spirit of aggression soon constituted a disturbing element along the whole of the Himalayan range. Not only did they put a stop, by the severity of their custom dues, to the once flourishing trade that had been carried on between India and Tibet through Nepaul, but they took no measures to prevent the raids which began after their advent to power on their borders, and which very soon excited the displeasure and apprehension of the authorities of Tibet. It was not, however, until more than twenty years after the establishment of Goorkha power that this border strife attained the serious proportions and resulted in the overt acts of hostility which attracted the attention of the then aged Emperor Keen Lung.

In the year 1791 the Khatmandu Durbar suddenly came to the resolution to invade Tibet. The apparent indifference of the Chinese to the requests sent from Lhasa for support in checking the audacity of the Goorkhas is said to have contributed to strengthen the belief that the Peking Government would not intervene for the protection of this state, while the, no doubt, greatly exaggerated reports of the wealth to be found in the lamaseries and temples of Tibet afforded a powerful temptation for a race of needy if courageous warriors to essay the enterprise.

The Goorkha army was, therefore, ordered to assemble for the purpose of invading the territories of its northern neighbour. With a force computed to number eighteen thousand men, the Khatmandu general entered Tibet, having crossed the Himalayas by the lofty passes of Kirong and Kutu, and advanced by rapid marches into the country. The Tibetans were unprepared for war and ill-able to make any determined resistance against this sudden invasion. The Goorkhas carried everything before them, and captured the second town of the state, Degarchi, with its vast lamasery of Teshu Lumbo, the residence of the Teshu Lama, who ranks next to the Dalai Lama. This achievement having been thus satisfactorily performed, the Goorkhas halted in their

movements, and wasted many precious weeks in counting their spoil, and in asserting the rights of a conqueror.

The approach of the Goorkha army had carried terror into the midst of an unwarlike population, and the Tibetans, without giving thought to the possibility of resistance, fled on all sides. In this emergency the one hope of the people lay in prompt assistance from China, and petitions were sent to Peking representing the urgency of the situation and imploring aid before it should be too late. Keen Lung had not felt disposed to send troops to restore tranquillity at so remote and little known a spot as the Nepaulese border, in order to put an end to the petty raids which are natural to a frontier adjoining an uncivilized or warlike race; but it was quite a different thing to hear that a portion of his dominions had been invaded, and that those who called themselves his subjects, and who looked to him for protection, should be suffering under the sword of a wilful aggressor. He at once sent orders for the despatch of all available troops from the South-West to Lhasa, and his preparations for war were made on a large scale. The aged ruler was roused by the outrage committed against his dignity and country to one of those fits of energy which had previously enabled him to settle several of the most difficult and complicated questions that had perplexed his predecessors.

Within a few months the Chinese army assembled in Tibet had reached the large number of seventy thousand men, with several pieces of light but serviceable artillery; and the Goorkhas, awed by this formidable array, began to take steps for a return to their country. The quantity of spoil which they carried off was so vast that it greatly delayed their march, and time was thus afforded the Chinese to gain upon and to attack them before they had reached the southern side of the passes. The Chinese commander Sund Fo, or Thung Than, conducted the operations with remarkable skill and vigour, and his manœuvres compelled the Goorkhas to risk a battle north of the Himalayas in the hope of being able by a victory to secure their unmolested retreat.

In accordance with their usual practice the Chinese drew up a list of the conditions on which they would refrain from

prosecuting the contest, and these included the surrender of all the spoil taken at Teshu Lumbo, and of the person of a renegade lama, whose tale as to the wealth in the Tibetan lamaseries had been the original cause of the war. It is almost safe to assume that the Goorkhas were also requested to promise better conduct for the future, and to recognize the suzerainty of China. The Goorkhas, accustomed to success by an unbroken succession of victories, haughtily replied that they would not consent to any one of these conditions, and that they defied the Celestials to do their worst.

The Goorkhas took up a position on the plain of Tengri Maidan, where the Chinese commander found them in battle array. The Chinese at once delivered their attack, and after a desperate encounter, of which, unfortunately, no details have been preserved, they compelled the Goorkhas to abandon the field and much of their spoil, and to hasten their retreat to Nepaul. The vigour shown by the Chinese in the pursuit proved that their losses could not have been severe, and before the Goorkhas gained the Kirong they were attacked a second time and defeated. The Goorkhas experienced great difficulty in making their passage across the Kirong pass, and had to abandon most of their baggage and spoil in order to march the more rapidly. The Chinese did not slacken their ardour in following up the advantage they had obtained, and pressed hard upon the traces of their defeated enemy.

The Goorkhas became demoralized under this unflagging pursuit, and their resistance more faint-hearted. Defeat followed defeat. The forts in the mountains commanding the narrow roads and defiles by which admission could alone be gained into their State, were captured one after another without long delaying Sund Fo's army. At Rassoa, half-way between Daibung and the Kirong, the Goorkhas defended the passage over a chasm for the space of three days; but here, too, their despair did not avail to alter the decision of previous encounters. Although the losses of the Chinese had been very severe, not only during these frequent combats, but also throughout the passage of the snowy range, they had practically overthrown their opponents when they succeeded in concentrating an effective army of about 40,000

men on the southern side of the Himalayas. The Goorkha capital, Khatmandu, lay almost at their mercy, and it was in nothing short of sheer desperation that the Goorkhas assembled near the village of Nayakot on the Tadi stream, for the purpose of making one last effort to defend their principal city and the seat of their Government.

It is impossible not to admire the resolution with which the Goorkhas defended themselves against the foe, whose righteous indignation they had incurred by their own wanton aggressiveness. Within twenty miles of their capital, after having suffered a succession of defeats that would have demoralized any ordinary army, they made a final stand against their persistent and ruthless antagonist. The Chinese advance was momentarily checked by either the valour of the Goorkhas or the strength of their position; and it was only when Sund Fo, resolved to conquer at any price, turned his artillery against his own troops, and thus compelled them to charge, that the resistance of the mountaineers was overcome. The fire of the Chinese guns was sustained on the mass of combatants until the Goorkhas had been swept over a precipice into the stream of the Tadi. Many Chinese, of course, perished, but even in the numbers slain the greater loss fell upon the Goorkhas.

After this crushing overthrow the Goorkhas gave up further idea of resistance, and sued for peace. Indeed, they had no alternative, unless they were prepared to lose their independence as well as their military reputation. The Chinese general, having assured the attainment of his main object by the destruction of the Goorkha army, was not disinclined to accept the ample concessions offered by the Khatmandu authorities. His own losses had not been slight, and he was anxious before the advent of winter to recross the lofty mountains in his rear. When, therefore, the Goorkha embassy entered his camp, Sund Fo granted peace on terms which were humiliating, but which were still as favourable as a people who had themselves invited so crushing a defeat could expect. The Goorkhas took an oath to keep the peace towards their Tibetan neighbours, to acknowledge themselves the vassals of the Chinese Emperor, to send

a quinquennial embassy to China with the required tribute, and lastly to restore all the plunder that had been carried off from Teshu Lumbo. On these terms being accepted and ratified, the Chinese army retired to Tibet in two divisions, and such was the effect of this memorable campaign that the Goorkhas still pay tribute to China, still keep the peace on the Tibetan border, and are still enrolled among the nominal vassals of Peking. Although the main provisions of this treaty are known, its exact phraseology and terms have never been ascertained—the vanity of the Khatmandu Court refusing to make known what Chinese pride and independence have kept a State secret at Peking.

The results of this campaign were to greatly strengthen the hold of the Chinese Government upon Tibet, for the people of that country felt they owed to the intervention and protection of China alone their escape from their formidable aggressors. Not only did Keen Lung then avail himself of the opportunity to largely increase the local garrison, but he felt able to assert his authority more emphatically than before in the councils of the Dalai Lama. On the other hand, the ruling lamas recognized the necessity of Chinese protection, which the people were henceforth content to accept as a fixed condition in their political being.

In their distress the Goorkhas had applied for assistance to the Governor-General of India against the Chinese, and their request, like a previous one from the Tibetans, had been refused. A mission, however, was sent, under a British officer, Captain Kirkpatrick, to draw closer the ties of friendship with Khatmandu, and to negotiate a treaty of commerce. The Chinese commander appears to have misunderstood the part taken by the East India Company, and when he returned to Peking it is said that he inveighed against the English for their duplicity in assisting “the robbers” of the Himalaya. In consequence of his representations the Chinese took increased precautions to prevent commercial intercourse between India and Tibet, and the Khatmandu Durbar, irritated by what it considered the desertion of the English, seconded their object by adopting a policy scarcely less exclusive than that of the Chinese. The passes through

the Himalayas were closed by means of strong block-houses situated at the northern entrances, and the use of the principal of them, that known as the Kirong, was prohibited to all except those employed on official business. The country of Tibet, with its interesting secrets, has since then remained closed to us, and this great dependency of the Chinese Emperor, touching our possessions in Hindostan along a mountain barrier of some 2,000 miles, remains to this day sealed to our commerce.*

There can be no doubt that, regarded simply as a military exploit, the Chinese campaign in Nepaul was a very remarkable achievement, and one deserving of a high place among the famous wars of Asiatic peoples and countries. It may, perhaps, be said that the Chinese triumphed by sheer weight of numbers, and of course the statement is partially true. But in this respect the Chinese were only following the precepts of the best masters of the art of war in bringing to bear against their opponent a preponderating force. When we consider the difficulties that had to be overcome, first in moving a large army across the barren country between Sining or Szchuen and Tibet, and then in providing for it when assembled at Lhasa, we shall not be disposed to disparage the skill shown by Chinese commanders in organizing their forces for such an arduous campaign. Nor when we recollect that the natural obstacles of Northern and Eastern Tibet are not for a moment to be compared with those to be met with between the Dalai Lama's capital and the seat of the Goorkha dynasty, will our wonder become less at the many signal victories obtained by Sund Fo over his adversaries, although the latter always possessed the advantage of position, if not of superior weapons as well. The valiant resistance with which the Goorkhas opposed us in 1814-15,

* After the return of the Bogle and Turner missions there was a long interval of inaction. In 1811, Mr. Thomas Manning, one of the most intrepid and highly gifted of English travellers, succeeded in reaching Lhasa, where he resided for some months—a feat in which, so far as this country is concerned, he stands alone. Thirty years afterwards the French missionaries, MM. Huc and Gabet, visited the same city from China; and again thirty years later they were followed by the Indian explorer, the Pundit Nain Singh.

the courage and intrepidity shown during sixty years of service in the Anglo-Indian army by the Goorkha sepoy, preclude the idea that the Chinese success was due to the craven spirit of their foe. The victories of Sund Fo were gained over the bravest of Indian races under circumstances all in favour of those who were fighting on the defensive; and they serve to show, by what ill-armed and imperfectly trained Chinese soldiers have done in the past against a foe whose military capacity we can gauge, what a well-armed and disciplined Celestial army may be capable of in the future. The successful defence of the Tibetans, the rout of the Goorkhas, and the subjection of Nepaul, form a complete military achievement of the most striking character, and bring to a glorious termination the great and solid exploits in war which have raised the fame of Keen Lung to the highest place among great rulers. The aged prince, then more than an octogenarian, felt able to congratulate himself not merely on the success of his arms, but also on the conviction that his sword had been drawn in a righteous cause, and that the millions of Tibet felt grateful to him for having rescued them from the hands of a cruel and savage race of marauders.

Some years before the Tibetan question had reached the crisis that has been described, and before its settlement had been precipitated by the aggressions of the Goorkhas, the state of affairs in Formosa had caused very great anxiety to the minds of the Pekin authorities, and had rendered a great effort necessary for the recovery of their position as the governing power in Formosa. That island had been styled at a much earlier period of Keen Lung's reign "the natural home of sedition and disaffection;" but it was not until the year 1786 that the discontent of its inhabitants, or the machinations of a few intriguers, became revealed in acts. Early in that year the news reached Macao that the islanders had risen, massacred the Tartar garrison, and subverted the authority of the Emperor. At first the news was discredited, but later intelligence showed that the report was well-founded.

The control exercised over the subordinate mandarins in China has never been very exacting, and for all questions of

administration and revenue there is scarcely any appeal from the decision of the local official. But if the supervision of the central tribunals over the provincial functionaries was slight on the mainland, it practically did not exist at all beyond the sea in Formosa. The Tartar officials in that island did not abstain from indulging all their rights, and from enforcing to its fullest extent the authority placed in their hands. Despite the smallness of the Tartar garrison, they acted with all the arrogance and reckless indifference to popular prejudices shown by tyrants of an alien race.

When the general opinion among a people is one of dislike, if not of absolute detestation, towards their rulers, it needs but a trivial circumstance to reveal what is uppermost in their minds. Such was the case in Formosa. An individual, named Ling, incurred the displeasure of the principal mandarin, and, because he refused to pay the heavy bribe demanded by this official, he was at once thrown into prison, where his early death was assured if he persisted in refusing to satisfy the demands of the mandarin. Fortunately for himself, and unfortunately for the Pekin Government, Ling was very popular with his neighbours, and apparently a representative man among the people. His arrest proved the signal for a general insurrection on the part of the Chinese in Formosa.

The mandarin was the first victim of this outburst of popular indignation, and the prisoner Ling was released from his place of confinement. At first the Chinese settlers appeared satisfied with what they had accomplished, and might have taken no further steps against the Manchu Government, had a wise oblivion been cast over acts which were due to the tyrannical proceedings of an official. The viceroy of the province of Fuhkien, to which the island of Formosa is dependent, regarded the situation from too lofty a standpoint, and despatched a military mandarin with plenary powers to bring the Formosans to a proper sense of their position and duty towards the central authorities. This officer exercised his powers to their fullest extent, and confounded the innocent with the guilty in the sweeping measures he took against the disaffected. The popular

indignation, which had been temporarily allayed by the release of Ling and the death of his persecutor, broke out afresh in face of these exactions ; and the military mandarin found himself compelled to make as precipitate a retreat as he could to the mainland. The small garrison kept in the chief town had not the same good fortune, as the Tartars were put to the sword and those of Chinese race were compelled to enrol themselves in the ranks of the insurgents. The Tartar practice of shaving the head was prohibited, and for the time being Keen Lung's authority was completely subverted in the island.

At first the Emperor endeavoured to conclude an amicable arrangement with the rebels, by means of which it might be possible to satisfy the exigencies of his honour and at the same time to spare his Government and people the expense and trouble of overcoming the resistance of a brave and turbulent race. He, therefore, sent instructions to his lieutenants to propose a suspension of arms to the rebel Ling, who had been entrusted by his countrymen with the chief command of their forces, in order that some settlement of the question might be arrived at without further bloodshed. Having emancipated themselves from a yoke that had pressed heavily upon them, the Chinese in Formosa were still not so elated by their success as to feel confident of their capacity to maintain their independence against the full force of the Peking ruler ; and Ling was not, therefore, indisposed to negotiate. But it was soon made evident that the only negotiation to which the Emperor was likely to give his consent was an unconditional surrender on the part of the rebels, with which Ling not unnaturally declined to comply.

Negotiations failing, troops were despatched from Fuhkien to bring the islanders back to a state of subjection ; but they appear to have been sent in too few numbers to be able to effect much against a desperate and courageous people. They were attacked on landing before they had time to fortify their positions, or to combine their detachments, and overwhelmed by superior numbers. In fifty encounters Ling was reported to have been victorious, and the Manchus met

with scarcely a single success. Twenty thousand soldiers and eighty mandarins of high rank had fallen in the field, and with each fresh success the courage and confidence of the rebels were correspondingly increased. Keen Lung said in a public proclamation that "his heart was in suspense both by night and by day as to the issue of the war in Formosa."

So long, however, as the arrangements made to reassert the Emperor's authority were of the desultory nature shown in these small expeditions, a satisfactory conclusion of the war appeared as remote as ever. The military disasters culminated in the defeat of a body of 7,000 troops sent from Canton; but although this was the most signal reverse experienced by the Imperial troops, it was also remarkable as being the last. The experience of the campaigning in Formosa had been singularly unpleasant and bitter, but it showed that in this case, as in most other human affairs, half-measures never succeed. After the serious loss mentioned, Keen Lung threw himself into the question with his usual energy and ardour, and ordered the despatch of a large army to Formosa to effectually put down this rebellion that had already continued so long.

An army of nearly 100,000 men, commanded by Fou Kangan, whose brother was married to one of the Emperor's daughters, was sent across the channel to quell the disturbances. The provinces of Kwangsi, Kwantung, and Kiangsi were required to send in special contributions for the war, while a large fleet of war-junks was kept permanently at sea. Although Ling and his Formosans continued to oppose the invader with resolution, the inevitable result at last arrived, and numbers carried the day. The suppression of the revolt in Formosa cost the Emperor many thousands of lives, a vast expenditure in money, and some anxious months; but in the end his good fortune reasserted itself, or the excellence of his arrangements received their due reward.

In the year 1785 further cause of anxiety had been produced by the insurrection of some of the Mahomedan colonies established in Western China. In Kansuh these settlements had increased both in numbers and importance since the

subjugation of the territories in Central Asia, for the establishment of commercial relations with the Mahomedan cities of the Tian Shan region and the Khanates of Western Turkestan had been necessarily followed by the gradual but sure introduction of Mussulman ideas and customs into the north-west portion of China. As early as the year 1777 disturbances had broken out at Hochow in Shensi. Under the leadership of a fanatical priest a considerable band had collected at that place and defied the authority of the local officials. The provincial mandarin found it necessary to send a considerable force against them, and it was only after a stubbornly contested engagement that he was left master of the field. The Emperor was inclined to resort to extreme measures against these sectaries, but on the recommendation of his ministers he refrained from putting his desires in force, and remained satisfied apparently with having cowed the opposition of subjects of such dubious fidelity.

The war in Formosa had only just reached a satisfactory conclusion, and that in Tibet had not yet begun, when an insurrection took place in the province of Szchuen which met with unexpected success, and which attained almost incredible proportions considering the firmness with which the Manchu dynasty was then established. Two Taouist priests took the principal part in organizing this seditious movement, which aimed at nothing short of the subversion of the reigning family, and the elevation of a young man, said to be a descendant of the Ming dynasty, to the throne. By the lavish promise of dignities and rewards as soon as their enterprise had been crowned with a successful issue, these intriguers succeeded in gathering round them a very considerable number of supporters, both among the well-to-do as well as from the masses. Several districts of the great province of Szchuen were to simultaneously throw off the Emperor's authority, and to proclaim in its place that of the young pretender, who was to assume the dynastic title of Chow. Forty or fifty thousand men were said to have received arms, and to be in readiness to rise at the given signal. The insurrection was to be inaugurated by a general massacre of the garrison and the officials.

The secret was well kept until the very eve of the proposed massacre, when one of the conspirators revealed the plot. The Governor of Chentu at once took vigorous measures to arrest the ringleaders and to seize the arms they had collected. The so-called Emperor was one of the first to fall into the hands of the authorities, and the execution of himself, his family, and his chief supporters effectually tranquillized the province without further bloodshed. Many Christian converts happened to be implicated in this seditious movement, and the fact was naturally taken advantage of by the numerous enemies of the foreign religion. Fortunately, the mandarins could not find sufficient evidence upon which to base an accusation against the colony of French missionaries established in the province of Szchuen. The suppression of the Chow rebellion, therefore, was not followed, as at one moment appeared likely, by an outburst of official persecution against the Christians.

These frequent disturbances, added to the numerous occasions on which it had been found necessary to take up arms against a foreign foe, were all followed by the complete vindication of the Emperor's authority, and at no previous time had the assertion of the supremacy of the central Government been more conclusive or easily maintained. The reputation of the Chinese Empire was raised to the highest point, and maintained there by the capacity and energy of the ruler. Within its borders the commands of the central Government were ungrudgingly obeyed, and beyond them foreign peoples and States respected the rights of a country that had shown itself so well able to exact obedience from its dependents and to preserve the very letter of its rights. The military fame of the Chinese, which had always been great among Asiatics, attained its highest point in consequence of these numerous and rapidly succeeding campaigns. The evidence of military proficiency, of irresistible determination, and of personal valour not easily surpassed, was too conclusive to allow of any one ignoring the solid claims of China to rank as a great military country in Asia.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

KEEN LUNG'S RELATIONS WITH THE WEST.

AMONG the important incidents of Keen Lung's long reign must undoubtedly be held the steady increase and development in the intercourse between China and the countries of Europe. Up to his accession the question had been confined to the fortunes of the missionary body, and of the small Portuguese colony at Macao ; but as his reign proceeded the subject assumed a wider importance, and embraced all the principal trading nations of our continent. From the frequent discussions between the Canton mandarins and their tenants the Portuguese authorities at Macao, down to the reception of the British embassy under Lord Macartney in the last few years of his reign, the topic of his relations with foreign nations was ever present in some form or other to the mind of Keen Lung.

So far as the Portuguese were concerned, and considering the antiquity of their connection with the Chinese Government, their affairs claim precedence, it was no very difficult task for the Emperor to decide what course was to be pursued, and how the matter was to be arranged. His superiority in this case was too incontestable to be challenged, and he had only to give such orders as his inclination suggested, or as the Canton mandarins deemed advisable. In 1750 an embassy was sent to Peking to endeavour to obtain some mitigation of the harsh terms upon which trade alone was allowed, and great sums of money were expended in fitting it out, and in purchasing suitable presents for the Emperor and his chief ministers. But although these gifts were graciously accepted,

the practical result was none, and the Portuguese could not have been worse situated if they had never sent any ambassador to the capital and if they had kept their milreis in their pockets.

The Portuguese authorities at Canton were, therefore, obliged to get on as best they could with their unpleasant neighbours, the Canton mandarins, who seized every opportunity of hindering them in their commerce, and of compelling them to pay large bribes for their not resorting to the extreme measure of expelling them from Macao. To the losses caused by Chinese arrogance and unfriendliness were added those produced by the depredations of the piratical societies, which had their head-quarters in the purlieus of Canton and in the creeks of the Bocca Tigris. The Portuguese succeeded in producing a more favourable impression on the Chinese by taking an active part in the measures adopted for the purpose of suppressing these marauding bodies, and to this cause may be attributed the more friendly understanding that was at last effected between these neighbours. The Portuguese had to show great tact in the arrangement of their affairs with the Canton authorities, and, although they were the first Europeans to obtain a foothold in the country, and long enjoyed a monopoly of its foreign trade, they have never succeeded in emancipating themselves from the position of being the tenants of China for a small port, of which both the prosperity and the importance have now departed.

Neither with the Dutch nor with the Spaniards were Keen Lung's relations of a nature calling for much notice. The latter had never held any direct communication with the central Government, but had always been confined to their intercourse with the Viceroy of Fuhkien, to whose charge were generally entrusted the affairs of the islands and territories beyond the sea. The former did indeed send an embassy to Peking in the year 1795, but its reception was not of an encouraging nature, and its despatch proved productive of more disgrace than of honour and profit.

With Russia the Emperor's relations remained, on the whole, friendly, although the contact between the two great Empires on the Siberian frontier had seemed on several

occasions to be likely to result in unpleasantness, if not in hostilities. The difficulties that were threatened by such matters as the surrender of Amursana's body, and the flight of the Tourgut tribe, were fortunately settled without an appeal to arms; and when those causes of disquiet were removed, none others of sufficient importance remained to disturb the serene aspect of the political situation. The Empress Catherine, following in the steps of Peter in this matter, as in much else, sought to establish more intimate relations with Pekin, and even went so far as to suggest to the Emperor Keen Lung the advisability of his deputing a resident agent to her court. When the Chinese Government showed such marked aversion to the reception of foreign envoys at the capital, it is scarcely necessary to say that this proposition was received with absolute disdain. Probably it was in consequence of this unusual message that the Russian envoy was refused an audience, and dismissed without a hearing.

In a spirit of retaliation the Russians refused to surrender some renegade Chinese who had fled into Siberia, and their refusal brought down upon them a characteristic letter of rebuke from Keen Lung. The Russians remained proof against the implied condemnation, and the caravan trade with Kiachta, despite every obstacle and difficulty, assumed increased dimensions. The very remoteness of the place of contact from the capitals of either Power served to blunt the edge of these slights and indignities, and to avert a hostile collision which repeatedly seemed next to inevitable. The relations between Pekin and St. Petersburg continued to preserve the amicable character they had assumed after the Treaty of Nerchinsk in the previous century.

There remain, therefore, to be described and considered only the intercourse between China on the one hand, and France and England on the other, the two great countries of the West. So far as the former of these European States was concerned, the intercourse with China always continued to be one more of sentiment, and of the propagation of Roman Catholicism, than of a profitable and advancing trade. There is no doubt that a scheme for the promotion of commerce

with India and China found great favour with Henry the Fourth ; but, notwithstanding the desire of the sovereign to increase the trade of the country, the scheme proved abortive, and resulted in nothing. Nor was an attempt, made more than a century later, in the year 1728, to establish commercial relations between the French possessions on the Mississippi and China more fortunate, although the very boldness of the idea should avail to preserve the name of its author, M. Duvalleur, from oblivion. The right was given to the French merchants, on payment of a small sum, to land their goods at Whampoa, the river port of Canton ; but notwithstanding this concession and the general favour shown to all enterprises promising to develop the industries and commerce of France by Louis the Fourteenth and his minister Colbert, the commercial intercourse between France and China always remained limited in its extent and of an unimportant character.

But if the growth of commercial relations proved slow, and if the result attained was only partial, more satisfactory progress could be reported in establishing between the two countries a sympathetic feeling in the sphere of intellect. The first two Chinese subjects who visited Europe came to France in the year 1763, and their return to China was the first means of opening the eyes of the Pekin Government to the fact that the kingdoms whence the Christians came were as civilized and powerful as their own. The letters written home to Paris from the Chinese capital, and the attention first given to Chinese literature by Frenchmen, also served to strengthen this connection and to establish a link of sympathy that had not been present in the case of any other country. The translation of the Emperor Keen Lung's verses* by

* The principal of these were his "Eulogy of Moukden" and his poem on "Tea." Voltaire's poetical letters will be found in his collected works. A passage referring more to Keen Lung's position as an Emperor than as a writer may be quoted :—

"Occupé sans relâche à tous les soins divers
D'un gouvernement qu'on admire
Le plus grand potentat, qui soit dans l'univers
Est le meilleur lettré qui soit dans son empire."

Père Amiot attracted the notice of Voltaire, and drew from his pen an epistolary poem asking certain questions of the Imperial author as to the difficulties and requirements of versification in Chinese. Keen Lung was undoubtedly flattered by the implied compliment to his poetical talent in the attention of the great French writer, and could not have remained callous to the delicate attentions of the courtier of Sans Souci.

The most important incident, however, in Keen Lung's relations with European Powers, was undoubtedly the arrival and reception of the British embassy under Lord Macartney. Up to that period the English intercourse with the Chinese had been of only a fitful and unimportant kind. It had had an inauspicious commencement more than a century and a half before in the bombardment of Canton by Captain Weddell; and after that event ships had come singly and at long intervals, sent either by the East India Company from Calcutta or by private venture from England. The growth of British commerce in China was hampered by numerous vexations, as well as by the hostility of the official classes; but so far as its acts and protestations went, it could not be said that the Government of either Kanghi or Keen Lung was inimical to the foreign trade, although we have already seen that its private views and opinions were less favourable than its language. Long before the opportunity offered itself, it had become one of the main objects with the English merchants to secure some means of approaching the central authorities, as they were likely to act more fairly by them than the Canton mandarins, who were in receipt of constant bribes from the Portuguese to exclude all other Europeans except themselves from the benefits of the trade.

The campaign in Nepaul had procured the Chinese the information that the English, who were known as suppliants for trade at Canton and Amoy, had established a supreme authority in Northern India; and while the news had no doubt enhanced the importance of our power in the eyes of the Imperial Government, it had also contributed to increase the apprehension with which the European States were regarded, and which furnished the true clue to the policy that

found most favour at Peking. That sentiment was to acquire intensified force when the suspicions of General Sund Fo, as to the part we had taken in supporting the Goorkha "robbers," became known and appreciated in the Chinese capital.

But before the Chinese commander, who had overthrown the Goorkhas and given security to Tibet, returned to Peking, the preliminary arrangements had been made and settled for the despatch of a British embassy to that city. At the last moment some delay had been caused by the death of Colonel Cathcart, the envoy who had been first selected for the post; but a suitable successor had soon been found in the person of Lord Macartney. As this was the first occasion on which a British ambassador received permission to proceed to the capital to have audience with the Emperor, some detailed notice* is called for, especially as we have already seen that it had been preceded many years before by embassies from the Czar of Russia, who in this matter anticipated the other potentates of Europe.

Every care was bestowed upon the proper equipment of this embassy. Chinese interpreters were sought for and procured after a difficult search. The presents for the Emperor were selected with the double object of gratifying his personal whims and inclinations, and of impressing him with a sense of the power and magnificence of England. The harshest or most cynical critic could not declare that in either one respect or the other there was anything deficient or open to animadversion. Even the names of the vessels that bore this mission to the shores of China were, whether by accident or design, singularly appropriate—the *Lion* and the *Hindustan*.

* The reader is referred for the fullest information on this subject to Sir George Staunton's "Authentic Account of an Embassy to the Emperor of China," London, 1797; and reference may also be made to Mr. Anderson's narrative of the same mission, published in the year 1795 in London. The name of Sir George Staunton cannot be mentioned without making a passing tribute to the solid and enduring work which he performed towards the better understanding of China. He was certainly the first Englishman who regarded the subject from an intelligent and comprehensive point of view. His translations from the Chinese, particularly his "Laws of the Manchus," remain a permanent monument to his memory.

The embassy sailed from Portsmouth in September, 1792—the very month when the fate of the Goorkhas was being decided at Nayakot—but it did not reach the Peiho until the month of August in the following year.

The Earl of Macartney was the great-grandson of George Macartney, of Auchenleck, in Kirkcudbrightshire, who settled in Belfast in 1649, and who, according to Benn's "History of Belfast," was the principal person concerned in laying the foundation of the future greatness of that city. According to Playfair, the family of Macartney is of great antiquity, having received from Bruce a grant of lands in Gallo-way still called by the name of Macartney, or Marcartney, in return for their services in the wars which, after many defeats, led to his accession to the crown of Scotland. About the beginning of the sixteenth century the family divided into three branches—Auchenleck, Leathes, and Blackets. From the first were descended the two members of the family whose names are so intimately connected with China—Earl Macartney, the first ambassador from England to China, and Sir Halliday Macartney, the well-known councillor to the Chinese Legation in London, of whom much more will be heard in the second volume ; whilst from the Blacket branch was descended the General Macartney who acted as second to Lord Mohun in the duel, fatal to both parties, which took place between him and the Duke of Hamilton in Hyde Park in 1712. From the Blacket branch are also descended Sir John Macartney, of Lisk, the present baronet, and Mr. Ellison Macartney, M.P., secretary to the Admiralty. In former times several of the Macartneys would seem to have been lawyers, and to have acted as such to the monasteries. From Sweetheart Abbey, Dulce Cor, the Leathes branch, extinct since 1780, received a grant of the property of Leathes in 1549, whilst that from which Lord Macartney and Sir Halliday Macartney are descended held for many generations the small estate of Auchenleck in fee from the Abbey of Dundrennan.

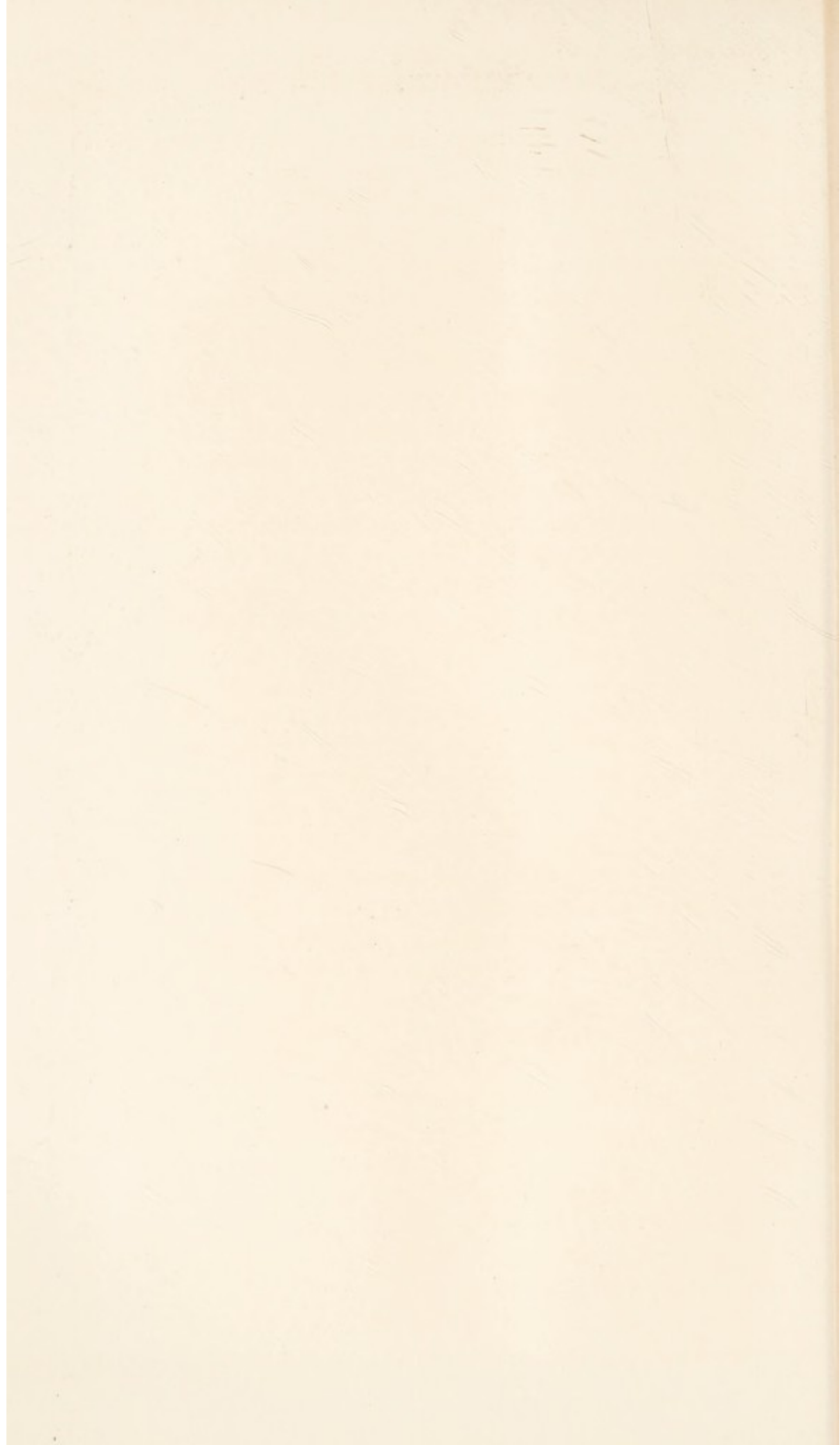
In the course of his official career Earl Macartney held many important appointments. He was ambassador from England to Catherine II. of Russia, with whom he was a *persona gratissima*, especially from the time when, in a courtly



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H.E. THE EARL OF MACARTNEY, K.B.,
Baron Parkhurst in Surrey, and Baron Auchenleck in Kirkeudbrightshire ;
Embassador of the King of England to the Emperor of China.



speech addressed to the great Empress, he said that her extraordinary accomplishments and heroic virtues made her the delight of that half of the globe over which she reigned, and rendered her the admiration of the other. His next diplomatic appointment was that of British ambassador to China in 1792, a difficult post, in which he conducted himself with great dignity and address. He declined to perform the degrading ceremony of the Kowtow, which until then, and for long afterwards, had been exacted as the price of audience of the Emperor from all European ambassadors to the Court of Peking, and he did this without giving offence to Keen Lung, the great Emperor who then occupied the throne. But he was less successful with the Emperor's ministers, for the Board of Rites, on hearing that Lord Macartney had been admitted to audience without performing the abject ceremony of the three genuflections and the nine prostrations, exclaimed that in dispensing with the ceremony His Majesty had sullied the lustre of his long and glorious reign, at the same time declaring that nought but humiliation was to be expected in the future at the hands of the proud and unbending nation to which the ambassador belonged. The unyielding but yet courteous conduct of the ambassador would seem to have raised him in the estimation of the Emperor, for in a banquet which he gave to the ambassador, and at which he himself was present, though not at the same table, His Majesty rose from his seat and with his own hand poured out a glass of wine for Lord Macartney. This is somewhat different from the scant courtesy which once a year the Emperor of China shows to the foreign representatives at Peking, when, like so many schoolboys in a class, ranged in a row, they are allowed to make their salutations and retire to some other apartment in the palace to be entertained by the members of the Tsungli Yamên.

Though the embassy was considered to have been a failure as regards the objects which the British Government had in view in sending it, it was otherwise a great success; and it would be difficult to say how different might have been the state of China to-day, had Lord Amherst, our next ambassador to China, been equally successful, and the then

reigning Emperor been a man as liberal in his views and as independent of his surroundings as Keen Lung. The friendly relations between the two courts established by Lord Macartney might have gone on increasing, the wars with England in the time of Taokwang and Hienfung might never have come to pass, and China might have been opened to foreign intercourse a hundred years sooner. Though this is not the place to pass in review the different high appointments held by Lord Macartney at home and in the colonies, yet I cannot close this short *resumé* of his career without alluding to his disinterestedness and high principle. When Governor of Madras he set an example of honesty and uncorruptibility—not common in India at the time when the custom was for officials to shake the pagoda tree and get rich. The well-disguised bribes which it was the custom of the native princes to present to Europeans of position, and which they always retained for their personal benefit, were by Lord Macartney placed in the public treasury to be sold for the public advantage. His conduct in this respect excited the surprise of Hyder Ali, and extorted from him the exclamation, so honourable to Lord Macartney, “I cannot understand this new governor; money seems to have no attractions for him.”

The reception that awaited it afforded every reason for gratification, and much cause to hope that the ends for which the embassy had been despatched would be successfully attained. After Lord Macartney left the man-of-war, he and his party were conveyed with all attention and ceremony up the Peiho to the capital. Visits of ceremony were paid and returned with the Viceroy of Pechihli, and some of the other principal mandarins. At Tientsin they were even accorded the unusual honour of a military salute. A missionary wrote from Peking to Lord Macartney to say that the Emperor had shown “marks of great satisfaction” at the news of his approach, and the instructions sent by Keen Lung to facilitate the movements of the British mission were too clear and emphatic to be disregarded. The embassy was detained some time in Peking, and for a moment it seemed as if a period of vexatious delay would herald the discomfiture of

the mission. Fortunately, when affairs appeared to be most unsatisfactory, a message arrived from Jehol, whither Keen Lung had retired, to inquire after the health of the ambassador, and to invite him to pay him a visit at his hunting-place beyond the Wall.

Lord Macartney, with his retinue and the guard allotted to his person, proceeded there in compliance with the invitation, and travelling in an English carriage, he reached Jehol in due course. Although the Emperor and his principal minister were in favour of conceding the English some, if not all, of the privileges they demanded, a very strong party, headed by the victorious general Sund Fo, who had been appointed Viceroy of Kwantung, were not only unfriendly to all foreign intercourse, but inimical to any with England in particular. However, notwithstanding their efforts to render the mission abortive, the Emperor resolved to receive the British envoy in audience, and the interview duly took place in a tent specially erected for the ceremony in the gardens of the palace. A second interview was held, and then the embassy returned to Peking, whence it made its way overland to Canton. The dislike of the mandarins, which had been only partially concealed during the residence at Jehol, broke out more unequivocally after its departure, and during their return to Canton the English ambassador and his suite suffered considerable inconvenience at the hands of officials, who took their cue from the general Sund Fo, whose Nepaulese laurels had been won at the cost of an irrevocable enmity to the English. Beyond receiving from the lips of the Emperor an assurance that he reciprocated "the friendly sentiments of His Britannic Majesty," no practical results followed from Lord Macartney's embassy, successful though it was in so far as its reception was concerned. Keen Lung's advanced age left him neither the inclination nor the power to go very closely into the question of the policy or impolicy of cultivating closer relations with the foreign race which asserted the supremacy of the seas, and which had already subjected one Asiatic empire to its sway. That question had to be left for his successors; but at the least it may be said that Keen Lung did nothing to retard the establishment of cordial and

peaceful relations with the countries of the West. In almost the last year of his reign he gave this country some ground for hoping for an assured diplomatic position at Peking by his flattering and favourable reception of Lord Macartney's embassy.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE END OF KEEN LUNG'S REIGN.

AT the very time that the British embassy was residing at Pekin and Jehol, the Emperor Keen Lung announced his intention of abdicating in the event of his living to witness the sixtieth year of his accession to the throne. Three years after the departure of Lord Macartney the auspicious event came to pass, and the Emperor therefore retired to one of his palaces, and caused his son Kiaking to be proclaimed in his place. Keen Lung survived his abdication about three years, dying in 1799 at the extremely advanced age of nearly ninety. During these last few years of his long and eventful reign he enjoyed the internal peace and assured tranquillity which were the just guerdon of his previous labours. Freed from the responsibility of the direct exercise of power, he was also able to guide his successor aright in the task of governing the Empire ; but no stronger inducement or incentive could be found for a ruler to do his best in the work of administration than the example left by the Emperor Keen Lung. The energy with which that sovereign threw himself into the settlement of external difficulties, and with which he grappled with questions of foreign policy, showed that he would not rest satisfied with either partial success or meagre results. It formed part of the natural character of the man, and was equally conspicuous in matters of domestic policy as in his foreign relations.

Good government is not an achievement that can be easily performed, even when the sovereign has to facilitate his task and to assist his efforts a model constitution and an incorrupt

civil service. In China, where the whole responsibility is thrown upon the Emperor, it is one of unusual difficulty. But for the admirable conduct of the people it would be a task almost impossible to accomplish, as the peculation prevailing among the ill-paid and loosely controlled mandarins has long reached a serious pass. Whether Keen Lung himself was fully aware or not of the extent to which the corruption had spread appears doubtful ; but his principal ministers* were perfectly cognisant of it. But while the evils and inconveniences of this seem to have been fully admitted, nobody possessed either the will or the resolution to attempt to grapple with the difficulty, so as to effectually cure the evil and to remove the great blot which used to and still does mar the symmetry of the Chinese system of administration.

The growth of the population had been quite extraordinary during the reign of Keen Lung. Within the space of fifty years it appears to have almost doubled ; but this astonishing increase, while affording strong evidence of the tranquillity and prosperity prevailing throughout the realm, was also accompanied by its necessary and inseparable penalty in a country dependent on its own resources, which, moreover, suffered periodically from visitations of drought and floods. On several occasions, especially towards the end of Keen Lung's reign, the northern provinces were desolated by the ravages of famine, which depopulated in the course of a few weeks districts as large as English counties, and paralysed all the efforts of the local authorities. The Emperor ordered the gratuitous distribution of grain usual under such circumstances ; but the remedy applied proved but imperfect, both

* The strongest testimony of this was given by a high Chinese minister to Monseigneur de Caradre (quoted in "*Nouvelles des Missions Orientales*," tom. i. pp. 90-91), who asked whether there was not some way of putting a stop to these privations and exactions. "It is impossible," replied the mandarin ; "the Emperor himself cannot do it, the evil is too widespread. He will, no doubt, send to the scene of these disorders mandarins clothed with all his authority ; but they will only commit still greater exactions, and the inferior mandarins, in order to be left undisturbed, will offer them presents. The Emperor will be told that all is well, while everything is really wrong, and while the poor people are being oppressed."

on account of the extent of the suffering, and also because of the peculation of many of the mandarins, who sought to turn the national misfortune to the attainment of their own selfish ends. In 1785 a state of dearth prevailed throughout the greater part of Central and Northern China; and the details preserved by the few European spectators, who were eye-witnesses of the scenes described, serve to show that its horrors have seldom been surpassed.

The very same year was also marked by the outbreak of a fresh spirit of fanaticism against the Christians, on the part not only of the people, but also of the representatives of the administration. The general suffering seems to have resulted in the outbreak of numerous petty and local disturbances, such as those previously referred to in the provinces of Szchuen and Kansuh. Whether because of the indiscreet conduct of some of the native converts, or, as may well have been the case, from a settled design to eradicate heretical doctrines, and to ruin their teachers and votaries, the opportunity afforded by these disorders was seized by the provincial mandarins, and persecutions began which have never been exceeded in ferocity and vindictiveness. Many of the missionaries were cast into prison, and, although violent hands were not actually laid upon them, several died in consequence of the hardships which they had to undergo whilst in confinement. Those who were proved to have assisted the Christians were branded on the face and banished to Ili, which by the toil of these and similar colonists was rapidly acquiring an unknown, and in Central Asia an unexampled prosperity.

The fury of the popular indignation against the Christians was fortunately soon exhausted, and before the year 1785 closed Keen Lung issued an edict rescinding most of the harsh penalties which he had passed a few months before. The missionaries who had been placed in confinement were released, and the question of the position of the Christian religion reverted to its normal state. The policy of the mandarins was not obscure; as they proclaimed they were resolved to prevent the growth of Christianity, and to stamp it out wherever it had been established. With this episode

our remarks on Keen Lung's relations with his alien subjects may be brought to an appropriate conclusion.

It is the custom in China that the Emperor alone has the power of life and death in his hands. No capital punishment can be awarded, save under exceptional circumstances, by any one except the sovereign in person, and in Keen Lung's reign this privilege and duty were practically exercised. Crowds of prisoners were sent every month to Peking to have their fate decided by the Emperor in consultation with his most intimate advisers. Neither Keen Lung nor his two predecessors shirked the onerous and responsible task they had in this respect to perform; and, so far as can be judged, they all appear to have conscientiously striven to mete out impartial justice in every case. Keen Lung, by the testimony of all beholders, was conspicuous not only for his justice but for the mercy with which he tempered it. None but the very worst cases received the punishment of death, and, indeed, with the existence of so convenient a place of transportation as Ili, it is not surprising to learn how common a form of punishment enforced banishment to that district became during this period.

Keen Lung devoted himself with unsurpassed assiduity to the innumerable subjects that demanded his attention, and he gave up even the night-time to the proper discharge of public business. He began the work of the day at an early hour, a course of proceeding to be attributed partly to the custom of the East, and partly to the active habits he had acquired from long practice, but which astonished those who saw him act with an energy unusual at his advanced age. The most important questions of State were often decided at a midnight council, and most of the ordinary business of administration had been accomplished before the first meal of the day.

Among numerous other subjects to which Keen Lung devoted his attention was one that had long baffled both the ingenuity and the resources of the Chinese Emperor—the proper control of the course of the river Hoangho. His attention seems to have been drawn the more forcibly to this question by the aggravation it had caused to the suffering of the people, to whose misfortunes from famine were added

those from the inundations of this great river. To the general Akoui, whose overthrow of the Miaotze had secured him the first place among Chinese soldiers and statesmen, Keen Lung entrusted, in the year 1780, a task that he hoped might serve to celebrate his reign by the achievement of a feat to which none of his predecessors could lay claim. The Emperor's final instructions were published in the form of an edict, so that the nation was taken beforehand into his confidence as to the magnitude of his designs and the excellence of his intentions. "My intention," said he, "is that this work should be unceasingly carried on in order to secure for the people a solid advantage, both for the present and in the time to come. Share my views, and in order to accomplish them forget nothing in the carrying out of your project, which I regard as my own, since I entirely approve of it, and the idea which originated it was mine. For the rest, it is at my own charge, and not at the cost of the province, that I wish all this to be done. Let expenses not be stinted. I take upon myself the consequence, whatever it may be. I have no other instructions to give you. Despatch!"

Akoui had, before receiving this marked encouragement from the Emperor, instituted some preliminary inquiries into the matter, and had come to the conclusion that it would be quite feasible to resist the encroachments of the river and to prevent its further ravages. Having received an emphatic promise of support from the Emperor, Akoui devoted himself to the great task which he had undertaken, and in due course he was able to notify to the throne that his efforts, supported by the Viceroy of Honan and the board appointed to control the waters of the realm, had been crowned with success. But although the ravages committed by this river in flood-time have been much less during the last hundred years than at any previous epoch, the present state of the Hoangho leaves much to be desired. And this great river is practically useless for navigation.

Keen Lung, as has been said, abdicated in favour of his son in the year 1796, and survived that event almost exactly three years. His reign forms the most important epoch in modern Chinese history, for it marked what was long thought

to be the prime of Manchu power, and it certainly beheld the thorough and complete consolidation of the Tartar authority. Its exceptional brilliance was enhanced and rendered the more conspicuous, not only by a succession of unsurpassed military exploits, but also by a series of literary and administrative achievements unequalled in Tartar, if not in Chinese, history. His attention to his people's wants, and his zeal in promoting what he thought were their best interests, showed that he desired to appear in their eyes as the paternal ruler, which is the salient characteristic of a Chinese Emperor. That he was almost completely successful in realizing his objects there can be little doubt, and it was by general consent more than by palace flattery that the title of Magnificent was attached to his name. Certainly the magnitude of his exploits, as well as the splendour of his court, justified its application to his name and rendered it appropriate.*

Keen Lung had abdicated because he would not consent to his reign figuring in history as being of longer duration than that of his grandfather Kanghi. He also had ruled throughout a complete cycle, and the events of these two long and important reigns mark out a period of almost unprecedented achievement in the annals of any country. In no case that can be called to mind had a greater exploit been successfully performed and satisfactorily maintained. The authority of the Manchus, which appeared likely to be overthrown and obliterated before the vigorous onslaught of the

* This Emperor has been described in the following sentences by a European missionary who had frequent opportunities of seeing and conversing with him :—"This prince is tall and well-built. He has a very gracious countenance, but capable at the same time of inspiring respect. If in regard to his subjects he employs great severity, I believe it is less from the promptings of his character, than from the necessity which would otherwise not render him capable of keeping within the bounds of dependence and duty two Empires so vast as China and Tartary. Therefore, the greatest tremble in his presence. On all the occasions when he has done me the honour to address me, it has been with a gracious air that inspired me with the courage to appeal to him in behalf of our religion. . . . He is a truly great prince, doing and seeing everything for himself" ("Lettres Edifiantes," tom. xxiv. p. 110).

Chinese commander Wou Sankwei, had been triumphantly asserted; and the sovereignty of the Emperor had been established and made good over remote tributary kingdoms and indifferent vassals. The Emperor Kanghi had accomplished a great deal, but he also left much either undone or for those who came after him to complete. Keen Lung, on the other hand, succeeded in everything he undertook, and his success was never partial, but decided and unequivocal. Those who succeeded to his throne had but to retain what he had won, to maintain intact the authority he exercised, to be able to boast with truth that they swayed the destinies of the most wonderful Empire of a homogeneous race that the world had seen since that of Rome.

When Keen Lung released his hold upon the sceptre the Manchu power had reached its pinnacle. A warrior race, supported by the indomitable courage of a great people, and by the unlimited resources of one of the most favourably situated of countries, had been able to set up its unquestioned authority throughout the Middle Kingdom and the dependencies, which from a remote period were included under the vague and uncertain term of tributaries. From that post of vantage, and by means of those powerful elements of support, it had succeeded in establishing its undisputed supremacy throughout Eastern Asia, from Siam to Siberia and from Nepaul to Corea. There remained no military feat for the loftiest ambition to accomplish when the aged Keen Lung retired into private life, leaving the responsibilities and anxieties of power to his son and his descendants.

Well for those later rulers of the Manchu race would it have been if they could have retained peaceful and undisturbed possession of the great Empire to which they succeeded; but a long period of decadence was to follow this century and a half of unexampled vigour and capacity. With the disappearance of the great Keen Lung the stern qualities necessary to the preservation of a widely-extended sway take their departure from Chinese history. With his death the vigour of China reaches a term, and, just as the progress had been consistent and rapid during the space of one hundred and fifty years, so now will its downward course be not less

marked and unequivocal, until in the hour of apparent dissolution the Empire will find safety in the valour and probity of an English officer. But the respite secured by the genius of Gordon has profited China but little through the blindness and lethargy of the ruling powers at Peking.

END OF VOL. I.



