

Let me say here that fair warning was given to the Chinese authorities of the existence of this spirit. In many quarters the missionaries had the clearest evidence of its presence, and were ready to furnish the names of the guilty parties were there any desire to prosecute them.

While such a spirit was shown to exist among the people, it must have surprised many in China and out of it to hear of what was now being done at headquarters in Peking. There the Emperor granted an audience to the foreign Ambassadors in the capital. This has happened but seldom in the history of Chinese diplomacy. It has led to a great deal of trouble in by-gone days. More than this was done, however. Soon after the audience was granted an Imperial edict was issued. This edict professed to express approval of the laudable object the missionaries have in view and was a plea for toleration. Need it be said that we all rejoiced in this evidence of the Imperial good will. It was understood that the edict would speedily be posted up all over the Empire, and that thus Christianity would have a fair field in China.

Soon afterwards the riots broke out in full force again, and matters were carried to such a pitch that the home governments had to interfere. It was evident to all that the edict was powerless.

Few however, expected that it was a kind of blind used by the Chinese diplomats. When Sir John Walsham, the British minister to Peking, announced that "this edict and its publication in the *Gazette* was obtained by us with great difficulty," it became apparent that the document meant much less than was at first thought.

Up to this time (about August, 1891) scarcely any of the missionaries undertook to write on the matter. It was now time that they should be heard from. Fortunately for them one of the most competent and highly respected missionaries in China, took the matter up and wrote several letters regarding it. This was Rev. Dr. Griffith John of Han-Kow. He is a Welshman, laboring under the London Missionary Society, has been in China well nigh forty years, most of that time in the Yangtze region. His communications at once attracted attention. It was evident that he had been a close observer of events and was entitled to be heard by all on the subject. Discussing the Imperial edict, Dr. John said,

"This edict is the most satisfactory document of the kind that has ever been issued from Peking. I am delighted with it. Not a word in it to indicate on the part of the government, doubleness of heart. What shall we say then to the state of things that exist now? Are the Chinese officials wholly insincere? One hesitates to answer in the affirmative. And yet how is it possible to do otherwise? The principal instigators of the riots are unarrested yet. No publisher or disseminator of the anti-Christian placards and pamphlets has been punished. Their names are well known to the Chinese

lower authorities. Were their arrest pleasing to official chief, criminals would long ago have been arrested and punished. Does it not look as if the edict and proclamations are issued merely to amuse the foreigners and that the real instructions given to the lower officials are, "Don't be too zealous."

Such is the deliberate conclusion of this veteran missionary. There is too good ground for believing it correct.

It may be well to look at some of the explanations given of the riots by those who have attended to the subject.

1. Popular dislike of missionaries and the Christian religion, which has been simmering for years, having risen to boiling point and boiled over.

2. A sudden accession of race hatred of foreigners.

3. These outbreaks are part of a political movement for the expulsion of the present dynasty.

It is probable that all of these reasons do not account fully for the disturbances. One thing is certain. The educated and influential classes are more to blame in the matter than the common people are. This is admitted on every hand. Many of the common people hear the gospel gladly. Very few of the scholars or officials ever think it worth their while to listen to what a missionary has to say. It is not unlike the position of affairs in Judea in Christ's day. Have any of the gentry or officials believed on Him? is the question asked here.

The feeling of uneasiness, as I have said, spread beyond the Yangtze region. For this there were good grounds. It was discovered that hundreds of rifles were being smuggled into the country. Large seizures were made at Shanghai and Tientsin. In the latter city the foreign residents met and took steps for the defence of their homes in case of an outbreak. So urgent did the situation appear to the foreign consuls there that they petitioned the Viceroy, Ti Hung Chang, not to leave the city as he is in the habit of doing each winter. He decided to stay.

Soon after that decision was arrived at the country was startled by news of an outbreak in the far north, not many day's journey from Peking. There a rebel force made a raid on a certain town and massacred many of the inhabitants. In another town it is reported that a large number of Roman Catholics and some Belgian priests were killed by them. A missionary whom I know well happened to be in the town where the rebels commenced their plundering, but was fortunately enabled to escape uninjured.

Latest accounts reported the Imperial forces victorious over the rebels. We trust this is the case. News travels slowly in China and is not always reliable when it does come.

So far there has been no indication of anything in that line in this region. It is to be hoped that the movement will not spread in this direction.