

The people were deceived by these lies, listened to these pretended revelations and joined the Boxers. Soon the sect comprised thousands of fanatics : poor farmers, day-laborers, petty vendors, unsuccessful candidates in the examinations, together with a very large sprinkling of brigands and outlaws. The first risings took place in Shan-tung, then like a train of powder, the flame of revolt spread through Chi-li and the neighbouring provinces, as the rebels marched onwards to Peking, destroying all they came across.

Before things had come to such a pass, it was felt that another secret cause was at work fanning the flame of revolt. In 1899, the Empress dismissed the cabinet ministers favorable to Europeans, and formed a reactionary ministry ; at the same time she declared the nine year-old son of Prince Tuan, heir apparent to the throne. The Tuan family has twice been banished to Moukden in Mantchooria, since the uprising of 1860. Prince Tuan now a man of forty had grown up in exile. He returned to Peking nursing bitter revenge for all that had occurred during the last forty years, ignorant of European reforms, full of the old Chinese notions, and fully resolved to use the high position given him by his son's elevation, to rid China of the strangers. The old Chinese party rallied round his standard ; thousands flocked to his camp pitched under the walls of Peking. The secret societies had at last an ally in court circles, on whom they could depend.

The co-operation of the Government with the rebels was long suspected ; at present it is evident beyond a shadow of doubt. No other cause can explain the unmolested growth of the insurrection which, at its origin, could easily have been crushed. Officials who showed too great a zeal in preserving order were disgraced, while others who allowed the Boxers full scope, received promotion. Many of the banners carried by the rebels bore this significant device : " By order of the Emperor, we shall destroy the Christians." The flight of the Empress, with Prince Tuan, upon the arrival of the allied troops, is the final proof of this co-operation.

These were the causes. The results have been terrible. The number of Christians massacred cannot be less than fifteen thousand ; at least fifty missionaries have been killed ; some sixty Christian settlements have been burned ; the number of homeless and destitute reaches several hundred thousands.

The work of years seems annihilated ; yet out of this evil God knows how to draw good ; the charity of the faithful in Europe will rebuild the churches ; missionaries from Europe will replace their martyred brethren ; while the martyrs themselves from Heaven will look after their scattered flocks. The blood of these thousands will cause the arid soil of China to again bring forth legions of souls for Christ.

W. H. HINGSTON, S. J.