

both a righteous and reasonable man. But, where all are righteous and reasonable, and determined to stand by their own good cause, and enforce it to the utmost, and still are not all of one mind, it is easy to see what must happen. In this Chinese revolution, therefore, we may expect any thing rather than that it should proceed with well regulated steps toward a wise and equitable settlement of national affairs.

Before any such consummation can be approximated, the actors may have changed many times, and the objects aimed at undergone many modifications. That the accounts we have of its commencement are obscure and confused is, therefore, a presumption in favour of the correctness of the general outline which is thus presented. But in all great revolutions, and this in China is likely to prove such, there are some leading principles of action which from the first domincer over all inferior motives, and with more or less of influence continue to preside to the end. These give its peculiar character to the Revolution. We cannot from a knowledge of these predict either the cause or the termination of the movements to which they seem to give birth, because the unruly passions of men hurry them into devious tracks, and drive them far from the goal at which they are desirous to arrive. Still, though we may not be able to decide what course the Chinese people will eventually pursue, it is interesting to note what is the actual course on which they have entered, and what are their present views in entering upon it. The leading features of their Revolution we may presume to have been fairly seen and faithfully portrayed.

All accounts agree in giving to the movement the name of a Revolution, as the word which will best represent its general character to Western apprehensions. The insurrection therefore against the reigning dynasty is, in the minds of those who are looking-on, only the first wave of the mighty tide they perceive to be rising. This insurrection or rebellion against the reigning dynasty is a thing which has been frequently predicted as likely to happen some time. It is further generally predicted now that the rebellion will prove successful. This is also a thing probable in itself.

The reigning family is of Tartar origin, and was imposed upon China by force of arms. This the Chinese have never forgotten. Their princes are not enthroned in the loyalty of the nation. But, while their authority has not taken root in the hearts of the native Chinese, they have lived and reigned so long in China as to weaken, if not destroy, the remembrance of their personal identity with the Tartar stock in the minds of its numerous hordes.

The Chinese, therefore, are not likely to encounter any serious opposition from this quarter in their attempt to overturn the throne of their Tartar princes. But, if any descendants of the native royal race can be found, they will be much in the

same predicament as the family which is to be supplanted. Their claims have gone into oblivion, and their persons fallen out of popular reverence. The contest is not one between the partizans of rival families, which might admit of some definite decision. This is the point of peril in the movement which has commenced. There is a throne to be made vacant, and a government to be overturned; but there is no one ready to be put into the empty seat of authority; and it must needs be a very difficult matter for the Chinese to construct a government without an Emperor. In the times of the commonwealth it was found very difficult to make the Law run in England in any other than the king's name. A bloody and uncertain future, we fear, lies in the path of this Chinese revolution.

But, further, all reports agree that a certain religious character attaches to this revolution. This is likely to be the case, for such elements generally make their appearance in great popular commotions. But it is also said that this religious element is derived from Christianity, or, to speak more in accordance with the reports, and probably more in accordance with the truth, from the Scriptures in which the doctrines of Christianity are contained.

Some felt disposed to doubt of this at first, till it was confirmed as a fact in the mouth of many witnesses. Further enquiry and consideration pointed out that it was a thing not impossible in itself. The fact itself, however, is of a very vague description. There is no reason to think that the body of Chinese revolutionists, or any considerable number of them, either are or profess to be Christians. There is no ground for supposing that their insurrection against their government is influenced by hostility to the state religion. In truth there was little in China that could be called either a national religion or state church. At one time it is likely that their religious views were embodied in a mass of incongruous mythological fables, not greatly differing from those still in vogue among other Eastern nations. But for a long period they have had no national religion. A few state ceremonies, wearing a religious appearance, were practised on public occasions by their civil authorities, and certain modes of superstitious observance were so prevalent as to form the fashion of religion among the people. They were nominal heathens, neither adopting formally a new creed, nor denouncing the old, generally received one, but suffering it to die out of their own minds and the minds of their children, while they carelessly continued to practise the least burdensome of its rites, more to relieve *ennui* and make a holiday than discharge a serious religious duty. Buddhism and other forms of Eastern superstition were of course most prevalent, as most congenial to what had once been the popular creed. There were a considerable

number of Mahomedans to be found amongst them. The Jesuits had made converts, Protestant Missionaries had also gained a few. The Jesuits had drawn persecution upon themselves and their followers from the government through an apprehension that political objects were connected with their spiritual labours. Protestant Missionaries were jealously watched, because all intermeddling of foreigners in Chinese affairs was matter of alarm to the government. It does not appear, however, that there was any specific form of a dogmatic creed on religious subjects, or any particular god or gods, whose honour and worship either the people or the rulers felt bound to maintain. We do not hear of any religious riots being excited among them by preachers of new doctrines, like that which took place at Ephesus when the great goddess Diana was supposed to have been blasphemed by the first messengers of the Gospel. It may be doubted whether any Pagan creed, which in substance and form is the mere creature of traditional reverence, having once lost its hold on the public mind, can again by any teaching be restored to its lost power and place in the heart and imagination of man. If but one generation is fairly delivered from its influence, it is forever dead. Its youth cannot be renewed for a second and more vigorous life. There was little chance, therefore, of a religious revival in China on the principles of heathen superstition; and no general disposition towards Mahomedanism had manifested itself. As a thing, therefore, probable in itself, we may believe, on the present loose reports, that the religious watchwords of this Chinese revolution are borrowed from the Christian Scriptures. But, more than this, there is some ground at least for a hope that the national sentiment is taking a direction in favour of the Christian religion.

We do not suppose that a knowledge of even the general outlines of the Christian creed is very extensively diffused throughout China; but we have noticed in various accounts of their manner of life and way of thinking that one Christian truth has been making progress among them, and that they are disposed to acknowledge that there is one God, who hath made all nations of one blood, and that consequently all men are brethren, and have one Father in Heaven, who is God over all. Some may think this is not a truth peculiar to Christianity, but belongs to what is called philosophical religion.

Be this as it may, the whole spirit of Heathenism was opposed to this truth, for each people considered itself as the descendants of its own gods. It is equally certain that philosophers have never taught any people to receive this truth, and that Christianity alone distinctly, perseveringly and consistently holds it up to view, and has had and still has a host of opposing prejudices everywhere to contend against, in