

foreign peoples, the English seemed mainly governed by the circumstance that opium was prohibited by the Tai-ping government at Nanking, the trade in this pernicious drug proving a far stronger interest with them than the hopeful results from the missionary movement.

Operations against the insurgents took place through the treaty ports, and British and French troops aided the imperial forces. The British cruisers treated the Tai-ping junks as pirates, because they captured Chinese vessels, and the soldiers and sailors of Great Britain took part in forty-three battles and massacres in which over four hundred thousand of the Tai-pings were killed. More than two millions of them are said to have died of starvation in the famine caused by the operations of the Chinese, British, and French allies.

General Ward, an American, led a force of natives against them, but their final overthrow was due to the famous Colonel Gordon, "Chinese Gordon," as he was subsequently known. He was not long in organizing the imperial troops, the "Ever-Victorious Army," into a powerful force, and in taking the field against the rebels. From that day their fortunes declined. City after city was taken from their garrisons, and in July, 1864, Nanking was invested with an immense army. Its fall ended the hopes of the Tai-ping dynasty. For three days the slaughter continued in its streets, while the new emperor avoided the sword of the foe by suicide. Those who escaped fled to their former homes, where many of them joined hands of banditti.