

Such are the general circumstances always favorable to an uprising, the tinder, as it were, that awaits but a spark from the torch of revolt, to grow into an immense conflagration. In the present case, the immediate causes are : antipathy to the stranger ; hatred of Christianity ; and the connivance of the Government with the secret societies.

The Chinese have always been noted for their intense national pride, and a supreme contempt for all not Chinese. For centuries, China has been shut up within herself, in relative isolation. No wonder, then, that she could have become vain and egotistic by prolonged self-contemplation, that she should regard all that does not resemble her as worthy only of contempt, and all that contradicts or thwarts her as objects of hatred. She is to her almond-eyed sons, the one country, the Flowery Kingdom, the Celestial Empire ; her soil is sacred, her Emperor is the son of Heaven, her people the children of the Sun, and Europeans the " devils from the West."

This national pride, though excessive, and to us ridiculous, is, when examined by Chinese standards, not without some show of reason to back it up. Chinese tradition can go back forty centuries. Ages ago, when nearly all the rest of the world was plunged in the grossest barbarism, China enjoyed the benefits of a cultured civilization. When the rude Briton or Frank roamed through his native forests, clad in the skins of beasts hardly wilder than himself, his Chinese contemporary, attired in gorgeous silk, was leaving his red visiting-card at some dainty villa surrounded by well-kept gardens ; or he was studying the revolutions of the stars ; or listening to a dissertation on philosophy. Centuries before the Christian era, China possessed her poets and her philosophers, while, in the sciences of astronomy and mathematics, she was far in advance of any country in the world. Gunpowder, the printing-press and the mariner's compass, were known and were used in China long before the present European nations had begun to exist. What she was in the past, she is still in the eyes of the Chinaman, — the one, great, civilized country, surrounded by barbarians, or, at best, upstarts. But, alas for the Chinaman ! While China has remained stationary, the world around her has changed, and, whether she wills it or not, she must change also to suit her surroundings. Her provinces are far too rich for Europeans to be excluded from them, and the disinterested foreigner must be allowed to enter her sacred ports, bringing with him his questionable civilization, and departing with their silk and gold. Japan realized the need of reform, and, at one bound, she passed from the civilization of the third century to that of the nineteenth. She that had been, from time immemorial, the satellite of China, found herself at once her rival, then her conqueror.