

as to take lessons in mathematics like a school boy; and so far overcomes the national prejudices as to grant to strangers full liberty to appear at his court, and actually to raise them to high dignities. Many of his actions doubtless were the result of advice given him by the jesuits, but some of them emanated entirely from himself, and bespeak the most enlightened views of policy. Opening all the ports of his empire to foreign commerce was surely a measure which might have greatly tended to the advantage of his subjects, and shews how far he was beyond his age and nation. His successful wars in western Tartary, his conquest of Thibet, his treaty of peace with the Russians, and his conquest of Formosa, laid the foundation for the future greatness of China. His treatment of the papal legates, and the excellent method by which he managed the jesuits, without curtailing their liberty, are great proofs of his political sagacity. Indeed he was the Peter the great of China. His reign lasted above 60 years, to the great benefit of the whole nation. Had he lived in our time, he would have been enabled to make amazing improvements, but it was his lot to be attended by foreigners who in several respects were more bigoted than the Chinese themselves. With him died the desire for improvement, and his son Yung-ching who ascended the throne in 1722, bore a hatred to Europeans and to their sciences. If China had strength in itself to rise from a state of ignorance and overweening pride, we should not so much lament those changes which shut the door against foreign improvements; but alas, the whole country is a stagnant pool to which healthful motion must be imparted by foreign hands.

Yung-ching reigned peacefully for a short time; he had imbibed the industrious spirit of his father, but he equalled him only in this respect. He may be said to have fully learned the system of national exclusiveness, which the Chinese are so fond of inculcating and practicing. Throughout the nation, the badge of submission to the Tartars was adopted, — a shaved head and long tail. The great officers who receive their salary from the emperor, and are entirely dependent on his favor for their rank, are servile; the inferior officers follow their example, and the people themselves care very little who is upon the throne, provided they are not too severely oppressed.

The long reign of Keen-lung was marked by many unimportant wars, which had little influence on the prosperity of the empire. He succeeded to the throne in 1736. There had been disturbances in Soungaria amongst the Eleuths, or Calmucks. Keen-lung fearing that the peace of the empire was not secure against them, sent an army thither in 1755 which took Ele, expelled Dawatsi the turbulent khan, placed Amoursama on the throne, and sent his own lieutenants to watch all the motions of the new khan. But they very soon revolted, even the new khan was dissatisfied, and a Chinese army sent against

him was totally destroyed; but after many a hard fought battle, the Eleuths as well as some neighbouring tribes were subjected to the Chinese sceptre. The vengeance of the Chinese was dreadful, and the immense slaughter sanctioned by Keen-lung is one of the great stains on his reign. He next found a pretext to invade little Bukharia; here also the Chinese arms proved victorious, and in 1759 Bukharia was reduced to subjection.

But the imperial army was not so successful in the invasion of Burmah in 1767. The Burmese, after reducing them to a want of provisions, put the army to total rout, and took so many prisoners that scarcely any returned to tell of their defeat. A second army shared no better fate; but to give to the whole affair a plausible aspect, Keen-lung gave audience to a Burmese ambassador, who it was stated, came to sue for peace.

The glory of Keenlung's reign was well nigh tarnished by a rupture with the Russian government. Each nation had committed aggressions on the other, but Keen-lung's conduct, in seducing many thousand Calmuck families to leave their homes in Asiatic Russia, and to migrate to the country of the Soungars, deserved severe chastisement. Had the Russians made an inroad on China, to reclaim their subjects, the Chinese would soon have found, that they were not now to fight the nomades of the desert. But this they have yet to experience at some future period. Troubles were afterwards occasioned by some Thibetan mountaineers, in the province of Sze-chuen, which cost the Chinese generals a great deal of fighting; but as we have our information respecting the war only from Chinese reports, we shall not say much respecting it. The chief who had waged war against the emperor, with all his family, suffered death by the slow and painful execution, Keenlung being himself present to enjoy the sight of the cruel punishment.

Though harassed by so many cares, Keen-lung yet found time to establish a large library, and to repair the embankments of the rivers; he received also a visit from the Bantchin Lama of Thibet, and rendered divine homage to a man who was mortal like all his race, and who soon after this died. So far can rational creatures forget themselves.

The Mohammedans of the western frontiers and those near Kan-suh province, successively revolted; they resisted the imperial armies with great valor, but were finally subdued. In this contest again the emperor executed the most sanguinary vengeance upon them who had opposed his authority. Always desirous to appear great in the eyes of the whole world, he constituted himself umpire in the wars between Tungking and Cochinchina, with the intention of subduing the former country. But his army was repeatedly defeated, and he was glad to conclude a peace. His aid having been solicited by the