

CHAPTER XIII

THE STRUGGLE FOR NANKING AND COLLAPSE OF THE REBELLION

THE progress of the imperialists during the summer of 1862 was seriously interrupted by the heat and the resulting pestilence among the soldiers. In Anhui, Chekiang, and at Nanking great numbers of them died and countless others were ill and weak. Operations about the Taiping capital were therefore practically suspended.¹

In the northwest, however, scattered rebels, chiefly the Nienfei, were unusually active. Li Shou-i, who had started for his home to mourn for his parents, was appointed imperial commissioner (ordered to serve during the period of his mourning with the rank of acting governor), and the military authorities of Shantung, Honan, Chihli, and Shansi were commanded to consult with him on measures of united action against both the Taiping and Nien rebels. Sheng Pao was also sent as an imperial commissioner into Shensi. So many imperial commissioners scattered about show us how seriously the government now regarded the situation. By their careful measures danger from the north was greatly minimised.

The pestilence was long continued. In October it was especially severe in its ravages about Ningkuo, and al-

¹ *Nienp'u*, VIII, 17b; *Dispatches*, XVI, 53 f. (August 16) and XVI, 75 ff. (September 22), where Tsêng reports several generals as ill, more than half of Tso Tsung-tang's forces incapacitated, and 10,000 of his brother's camp at Nanking ill.

most as severe at Nanking, Huchow, and Ch'ichow. Among the leaders Pao Ch'ao and Chang Yun-lan were seriously ill. Tsêng Kuo-fan became gloomy over the prospects, and urged Peking to send another official of high rank to share his responsibility, but Peking refused to do so, professing its satisfaction with Tsêng's management of the campaigns in central China.²

Reports began to come in that the Taipings were going to take advantage of their enemy by dividing their troops into three great armies, of which one, led by the Shiwang, would attack Tsêng Kuo-ch'üan at Yuhwat'ai, outside Nanking. But the truth was even worse than the rumors. On October 13 the Chungwang himself led the armies against the younger Tsêng, while the other leaders inflicted defeat on Pao Ch'ao at Hsinghochuang and captured Ningkuo-hsien (October 28). In view of these reverses and dangers Tsêng sent a dispatch to Peking, November 3, enumerating the difficulties before him:³ (1) repeated and desperate attacks on his brother at Yuhwat'ai; (2) fear lest the rebels should enter Kiangsi from Ningkuo and threaten his rear; (3) the danger that rebels at Tanyang should reach the Yangtse and dispute his control of it; and (4) the reports that Nien rebels were about to come from Honan through Hupeh to Anhui, where they expected to make common cause with the Taipings in raising the siege of Nanking. He reported, furthermore, a shortage of funds due to a falling off of the *likin* revenues in Kiangsi, making it necessary for him to resort to desperate measures to meet his obligations.⁴ In conclusion he begged that Tolunga be stationed north of Anking to guard the Hupeh-Anhui border.

Even Tsêng began to waver. But, being something of a

² *Nienp'u*, VIII, 21; *Dispatches*, XVI, 81 f. (October 5).

³ *Nienp'u*, VIII, 22b; *Dispatches*, XVII, 7, and 9-12.

⁴ *Dispatches*, XVII, 9-12, 14-17.

philosopher, as was his remote ancestor of the days of Confucius, he bolstered up his spirits by composing admonitory couplets on the three words, purity, sincerity, diligence:⁵

Hold fame and riches alike cheap, desire little and keep your
heart clean;
Keep utterly from illicit gain—demons will fear and gods re-
spect you.

Act with the utmost care, even to the latest hour of life;
If your goal you fail to gain, turn and seek the cause in yourself.

Let hand and eye work together, join mind and strength to each
other;
Exhaust your knowledge, goad yourself onward, even through
the night that follows day.

The worst fears of Tsêng, as outlined in his pessimistic memorial, were not realised. The rebels at Tanyang did, indeed, try to break out, but were defeated by Tsêng's flotilla with the help of the land forces, November 9 and 12, 1862, at Kinchu-kwan. The Yangtse thus remained clear of the enemy.

With terrific punishment at Yuhwat'ai Tsêng Kuò-ch'üan sustained an almost continuous attack for forty-six days, while the Chungwang and thirteen other *wangs*, reinforced from the city, tried to shatter him. Nor were they content to use the old-fashioned weapons hitherto in vogue, but employed foreign shells fired from mortars which fell upon his armies with a noise like thunder. They mined his breastworks and blew them up. Nevertheless he stood firm and his brother kept the grain roads open.

Tsêng Kuo-fan was almost beside himself with anxiety during these critical days, and so anxious was he that he consented to receive the aid of Burgevine and the "Ever

⁵ *Nienp'u*, VIII, 24b.

Victorious Army" in lieu of General Ch'en Hsueh-chi, whom he had loaned to Li Hung-chang and whose services the latter could ill spare at that moment from Kiangsu. For one reason after another Burgevine failed to come.⁶ Tsêng, therefore, lest the Hunan force be shattered and his whole effort fail, urged Kuo-ch'üan to retire to Wuhu, for he thought that the chances of failure were certainly as great as those of success, and the whole imperial cause was at stake. But Kuo-ch'üan took the risk, and won.⁷ At the end of forty-six days of gruelling warfare the rebels were driven off on November 26 following a hard battle in which several thousands fell. Thereupon the Chungwang retired north of the river.⁸

The victor of this long battle was awarded the highly prized "yellow jacket" and other marks of distinction, whilst his younger brother, Chen-kan, was granted the rank of a prefect—an honor he did not live to enjoy, because on the very day news was received of the award he died. Thereupon he was granted posthumous rank as a provincial judge and awarded a posthumous name.⁹

After the attacks on Yuhwat'ai had ceased Tsêng felt strong enough to detach some forces for service at Lü-chow, where they would avail to repel the Taiping attacks or act, if necessary, against Miao P'ei-lin. This officer had first been a Nien rebel, then for a time with the Taipings, then treacherously betraying the valiant Yingwang he had submitted to the imperialists. After that his conduct gave rise to suspicion and he now required careful watch-

⁶ See chapter XII.

⁷ Tsêng wrote him almost daily letters during this anxious period, encouraging, then warning of danger, and finally imploring him to withdraw.

⁸ *Nienp'u*, VIII, 24 f.; *Dispatches*, XVII, 27, 33.

⁹ *Nienp'u*, VIII, 28a, 30b. Such names were the gift of the emperor to worthy officials, usually of higher rank. For the younger Tsêng to receive it when he had just been promoted to the rank of a prefect was most unusual.

ing lest he rebel.¹⁰ Tsêng also stationed both Anhui recruits and Human veterans at points opposite and above Nanking. South of that city the rebel strength was still imposing. On December 27, 1862, they had penetrated westward as far as Keemun, which, however, they could not hold.¹¹ To the southeast, Yenchow was captured early in 1863 by Tso Tsung-tang, and Changshu by Li Hung-chang.

Far away in Ssueh'uan the Assistant king, Shi Ta-k'ai, was defeated and captured at Shuchow on January 31, 1863. For some time he had wandered at will over that enormous province, defeating the official troops in many engagements. When they brought against him approximately a hundred thousand men, chiefly militia (a number almost equal to his own following), he was overpowered and withdrew into Yunnan. On January 9, 1863, he was reported at Sunglin with five or six thousand of his guard, after having appeared at various places in the interior of Yunnan and even in some districts of Kweichow. The officials hastened to surround him; he was attacked, wounded, and eventually captured. Carried in triumph to Chengtu, the provincial capital, where he composed his 'diary,' he was put to death a month later with two thousand of his followers. Thus perished the last of the original *wangs* who had followed the *T'ienwang* from Kiangsi. For several years he had been detached from the main body of the Taipings and become a vagabond adventurer, but among the heroes of that period his name stands out from the others and stories and legends in great profusion cluster about this wandering knight.¹²

¹⁰ *Nienp'u*, VIII, 26.

¹¹ *Nienp'u*, VIII, 27; *Dispatches*, XVIII, 39-42, 46a.

¹² *Nienp'u*, VIII, 32; *Hatsuzoku Ran Shi*, pp. 101-106, *passim*. A book purporting to be the diary of Shi Ta-k'ai has been published recently, but the presence of a number of modern terms has led to its being suspected as a forgery, or at least as having been 'edited' liberally.

The beginning of 1863 thus saw the emperor's cause slightly improved. The various commands in Kiangsi, Anhui, and Hupeh were preventing the insurgents from retiring into central China, at the same time keeping apart the Nienfei and Taipings towards the north; and the "Ever Victorious Army" was undergoing the reorganisation under General Gordon which enabled it to become such a factor in the pacifying of Kiangsu. During this period the less spectacular Anglo-French forces in Chekiang were rendering aid to Tso Tsung-tang. The foreign observers in the treaty ports had the achievements of these two forces, particularly of the "Ever Victorious Army," reported to them every week. As they followed the movements of the army in its successful progress through Kiangsu they gained the impression that Gordon and his men bore the chief burden of active warfare. We must not, however, deny to the commander-in-chief at Anking, with his eye on the theaters of war, doing all in his power against serious handicaps which we are now in a position to appreciate, the meed of honor that is his due. His laurels have been taken away by Western writers, who have known little of the enormous difficulties he overcame, having had access only to the records of the operations in Kiangsu and Chekiang.¹³

During March, 1863, Tsêng determined to make a tour of inspection from Anking to the theater of operations outside the walls of Nanking, despite the fact that rebel activities rendered it a risky adventure.¹⁴ Leaving Anking on the seventeenth, he paid a short visit to P'eng Yu-ling at Wuhu and arrived at Yuhwat'ai on the twenty-fourth. There he remained until the twenty-ninth.

¹³ One of the most recent accounts of the "Ever Victorious Army" and its campaigns will be found in Morse, H. B., *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, II, chapters IV and V. It is derived almost entirely from sources in English.

¹⁴ *Dispatches*, XVIII, 23-25.

In reporting this visit Tsêng found reasons both for discouragement and for hope. On the one hand (a) poor villagers along the river had been forced to escape for safety to the islands where many had perished; (b) so widespread was the devastation of fields in Chekiang and Kiangsu that the rebels faced a shortage of supplies which led them to consider a general retirement into Kiangsi—a very serious possibility if realised;¹⁵ (c) reconquered regions in Anhui and Chekiang, still subject to wandering rebels (and if popular reports were correct, even more to imperialists), could not yet be brought under cultivation; and (d) Li Shi-chung was losing battles—P'ukow and other small places had just fallen—under circumstances that suggested treachery. His dismissal was necessary.

Elements of hope, on the contrary, were: (a) the very lack of agriculture, which brought the danger of a general retirement inland, was also weakening the rebels so that they could not hold out much longer; (b) most of the strongholds and strategic points east and south of Nanking were in the hands of the government; and (c) amid all the disappointments and hardships the spirits of the army remained good. Not the slightest murmur of disloyalty was heard.¹⁶

While Tsêng was on this journey some rebel bands were driven into the Poyang area of Kiangsi, and others into the Huichow and Keemun regions. By this time Tso Tsung-tang, having captured Kinhwa (March 1) and Shaohsing (March 13), together with several other districts in eastern Chekiang,¹⁷ felt strong enough to spare

¹⁵ The Chungwang was urging this, but the T'ienwang vetoed it.

¹⁶ *Nienp'u*, IX, 3; *Dispatches*, XVIII, 23-25.

¹⁷ *Nienp'u*, IX, 1b, 2a; *P'ing-ting Yueh-fei Chi-luch*, XV, 1b-3a. *Hat-suzoku Ran Shi* omits these because in each case the cities were actually abandoned as untenable and not captured.

forces for the aid of Huichow. During the third moon (April 18-May 17) Tso was appointed viceroy of Minche and acting governor of Chekiang. In a later dispatch Tsêng Kuo-ch'üan was designated as titular governor of the latter province. The forces of Pao Ch'ao and those supplied by Tso Tsung-tang gave strength enough to the loyalists outside Huichow, who drove away the rebels there on May 12.

Other victories were reported in the direction of Chekiang in the territories of Huichow and Hsiuring. But in the north trouble again broke out when Miao P'ei-lin, a former rebel who had come over and seemed to prove his loyalty by surrendering the Yingwang, again revolted at Shouchow. Tsêng had for some time been watching him, and now laid siege to the region where he was strong in Shouchow and Ch'iehchow. To add to the danger and confusion in that direction, the Nienfei effected a junction with the Taipings in spite of imperial watchfulness, and arrived before Luanchow, north of Anking on May 11.¹⁸

These activities in widely separated areas were so similar to the tactics employed by the Chungwang and the Yingwang during the critical days of the siege of Anking, that Tsêng believed they were again trying to induce him to draw away men from the siege of Nanking.¹⁹ As on the former occasion, he realised the possibility of serious danger at some of these outlying points, but as on the former occasion, he was unwilling to withdraw men for use in Hupéh lest he weaken himself too much at the chief goal of all his efforts and shatter his whole campaign. To stand on the defensive at these places and prevent Taiping successes until Tso Tsung-tang should capture Fuyang and bring the conquest of Hang-

¹⁸ *Nienp'u*, IX, 5.

¹⁹ *Dispatches*, XVIII, 44 (May 14, 1863).

chow into the range of possibility, while Li Hung-chang was securing Soochow by taking K'unshan (Quinsan), was the policy that he deemed wise. He aimed to make Nanking, Hangchow, and Soochow the corners of the triangle within which the Taipings were to be confined until they were finally crushed. The strategy was sound. Its rapid accomplishment was practically impossible owing to the lack of forces under his command.

Nevertheless progress was visible in Kiangsu, where Li Hung-chang's forces in combination with those of General Gordon took Taitsang (May 2),²⁰ thereby opening the way to K'unshan which they captured on May 31.²¹ It was possible now to concentrate on Soochow. Within Tsêng's direct jurisdiction the siege of Luanchow was lifted through the efforts of Pao Ch'ao, aided by other generals, May 18, and moved to the relief of Shouchow which Miao P'ei-lin was besieging. In his advance Pao Ch'ao drove off all wandering rebels from northern Anhui,²² but he and others were held back by the Nienfei until it was too late to reach Shouchow before it fell before Miao P'ei-lin (July 19, 1863). The imperialists were thrown back on Luanchow and Sanhotsien.²³

At Nanking the rebel entrenchments at Yuhwat'ai fell on June 13. Those at Hsiakwan were captured by the joint efforts of Yang Tsai-fu (henceforth known as Yang Yoh-ping) and P'eng Yu-ling, and finally on July 18 the

²⁰ This is the date given in *P'ing-ting Yuch-fei Chi-lueh*, XV, 10b, and *Journal North China Royal Asiatic Society*, December, 1864, p. 119, n. Morse, II, 95, gives May 1, but does not cite his authority. Morse does not mention the Chinese as participating but Chinese accounts name some of the commanders who were stationed there. The Chinese account does greater justice to Gordon than Morse's does to the Chinese.

²¹ Here again Morse differs, placing the date on June 1. For details of this attack read Morse, II, 95 ff., and Hake, pp. 260 ff.

²² *Nienp'u*, IX, 6b, 7b; *Dispatches*, XVII, 47-50.

²³ *Nienp'u*, IX, 10b.

Ch'ang Chien bridge was seized.²⁴ Of these losses the Chungwang writes:

The loss of Yu-hua-t'ai threw Nanking into great trouble and trepidation and the T'ien-wang sent me orders to return as soon as possible. . . . Ho-chow soon fell, Kiangpoo followed its example and our troops were in serious disorder. . . . After my return General Tseng carried our remaining stockades at the Yu-hua-t'ai, and rendered them so impregnable, as to defeat any possibility of their recapture. Our troops, minus rations and having no spot whereon to plant themselves, dispersed to Soochow and Hang-chow, and altogether I lost 100,000 men. Thus the nation was endangered by this loss attributable to me alone.²⁵

Under such conditions the Chungwang urged that Nanking be abandoned, since it was no longer tenable under the circumstances. He pointed out that he had no way to shake off General Tseng, who held the approaches to the city on the south, east, and west. At a greater distance from the city the grain roads were also blocked by the imperialists. But the T'ienwang grew angry and severely reproached his faithful lieutenant for such a suggestion when God Himself had given the control of empire into his hands and would defend His son to the end.²⁶

While Tseng Kuo-ch'üan was thus slowly encircling the city, Pao Ch'ao received orders to return to the Ningkuo region, and the efforts of Kiang Chung-i drove the rebels entirely out of Kiangsi (August 16).²⁷ These defeated forces went down the river, stopping to attack a town called Ch'ingyang which was defended by Chu P'ing-lung for thirty-eight days. At the end of this time, having received reinforcements, Chu was able to give battle in which the rebels were defeated with great losses and compelled to retire to Shit'ai and Taiping.²⁸

²⁴ *Nienp'u*, IX, 8 f.; *Dispatches*, XVIII, 67-69.

²⁵ Chungwang, *Autobiography*, p. 55. ²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 55 f.

²⁷ *Nienp'u*, IX, 9-11.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 12b, 14a.

Miao P'ei-lin still evaded capture in northern Anhui, where he held the Hwai River, thus blocking the roads over which the salt came and endangering the revenues which supported a part of the army. Inasmuch as the salt supplies for Hupeh, Hunan, and Kiangsi were allotted to the salt fields of Anhui, and the presence of rebels along the lines of communication interrupted the traffic, these provinces had for some time been forced to secure their salt from Ssuch'uan, Kwangtung, and Chekiang. Tsêng, as viceroy, was trying to restore the customary arrangements in order to secure once more the revenues from that source. Hence the ability of Miao P'ei-lin to defy him was doubly annoying, particularly in view of the fact that four armies were trying to bring him to action. Tsêng therefore suggested the unifying of the four separate commands under Chin Kwo-ch'en.²⁹ It was not until December that Miao was finally defeated and Hwaiyuän captured.

In Chekiang the converging policy was given a great impetus by the capture of Fuyang, September 20, by combined Chinese and French efforts. Since this was the key to Hangehow its loss is thus bitterly described by the Chungwang:³⁰

The troops at Chin-hua, Lung-yu, Yen-chow, Wen-chow and T'ai-chow successively retired upon Fu-yang, which Tso Fu-tai attacked with a large force for several months without success, when the aid of devil soldiers was again invoked to operate by water. The place was bombarded by the devils, who had several engagements with us, but, being repulsed throughout, they brought up reinforcements to their assistance, and Tso Fu-tai likewise increased his men, and this city ultimately fell. The devils having received their reward in hard cash for the capture

²⁹ *Dispatches*, XIX, 36 f. (October 9).

³⁰ Chungwang, *Autobiography*, p. 58. See *Journal North China Branch Royal Asiatic Society*, December, 1864, p. 120; *P'ing-ting Yuch-fei Chih-luch*, XVI, 8b-10a.

of Fu-yang then returned to Ningpo. The defeated forces at Shao-hing and Siao-shan retired to Yu-hang, where they entrenched themselves and threw up works. They were attacked incessantly by Governor Tso, and daily fights took place. Our object was to keep a firm hold on Yu-hang, as affording a guarantee for the safety and security of Hangechow. Governor Tso, with a naval and military force, then proceeded to Hangechow.

His lines extended from Yuhang to the West Lake, a distance of thirty miles.

In November the insurgents in southern Anhui were weakened by the defection of one of their commanders, Ku Lung-hsien, at Shit'ai. This made it necessary for them to evacuate this region.³¹ In Kiangsu, as we have already seen, the "Ever Victorious Army" and General Ch'en had been steadily pushing their way towards Nanking, capturing Soochow and driving the Chungwang back to Ch'angchow and Tanyang.³² The Shiwang, Li Shi-hsien, was at Liyang Hsien, about sixty miles southeast of Nanking, whither he was trying to bring his cousin in the hope of detaching him from the T'ienwang's cause.³³

Everything pointed to the early capture of the beleaguered city. Throughout the autumn the cordon was more and more tightly drawn about the walls. Finally, on the eighteenth of December, a mine was exploded under the wall, but the Taipings were strong enough to keep their opponents from entering through the breach. Of this attempt the Chungwang wrote:³⁴

In the 11th month of last year, when General Tsêng blew up part of the wall near the south gate, the troops in the city had then sufficient food, and, with the creek intervening, were able

³¹ *Nienp'u*, IX, 16; *Dispatches*, XIX, 68-70, 72, 77.

³² Chapter XII.

³³ *Autobiography*, p. 60. This is implied from the fact that he was already at odds with the T'ienwang and did in fact soon take his departure for Kiangsi.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

to repel the imperialist assault. But after this changes took place and the city became harassed more and more every day. Great fear and alarm were prevalent in the city, and there was no one on whom reliance could be placed for the safe keeping of the city or fortifications. In the event of any dispatch from the enemy being picked up and opened without the fact being reported to the T'ien-wang, the offender, with the whole of his family, was sure to be executed. When General Tsêng drew his lines closer round the city, a severe mandate was issued by the T'ien-wang to the effect that anyone holding treacherous correspondence with the enemy, and any one failing to report the fact, when conscious that such correspondence was going on, should be treated as an accessory and dealt with in the same manner as the offender, that is, be either pounded to pieces or be flayed alive. Who was not afraid of death in this form? Every one must have been.

In spite of such cruel penalties it is probable that the number of those who would have abandoned the cause of the T'ienwang was very great had it not been for the fear of death by torture at the hands of the imperialists. This fear was increased by the execution of the surrendered *wangs* at Soochow. "But three days had not elapsed after their surrender of Soochow before they were killed by Li Fu-tai, a measure which has since then deterred other chiefs, who would have surrendered, from doing so."³⁵

On December 20 the Chungwang entered the Celestial Capital to lay the desperate condition of things before the T'ienwang and endeavor to get his consent to remove to Kiangsi or elsewhere. The T'ienwang, still fatuously clinging to his claim of divine power, scorned the idea. The Chungwang, whether from pure loyalty or because his mother was in the power of the T'ienwang and he himself constantly surrounded by spies, elected to remain beside his doomed chief. A sortie on December 23 was

³⁵ Chungwang, *Autobiography*, p. 60.

thrown back by General Tsêng's army. Strong forces were holding all the important cities towards Chekiang and northeastern Kiangsi.³⁶

Nevertheless, with the pressure from Li Hung-chang and Tso Tsung-tang aided by their "devil soldiers," the Taiping hold on places west of Soochow became so precarious that a constant melting away of their armies into Kiangsi became unavoidable. The Shiwang, Li Shi-hsien, failing to get his cousin to join him, went independently to Kiangsi, passing through Ningkuohsien on February 14, 1864. The imperialists were not strong enough to bar his way, though they were able to prevent his forces from doing any mischief as they went along. Tsêng's chief cause of anxiety now was lest the thousands of rebels in Huchow and other towns in Kiangsu and Chekiang might make a sudden dash for Kiangsi when their positions became untenable. The beheading of the *wangs* at Soochow had apparently convinced the rebels that their only recourse was in scattering out to meet at some distant rendezvous.

By way of precaution Hsi Pao-t'ien was sent to the prefectures of Fukien and Kienehang (Kiangsi), and Pao Ch'ao in the direction of Huchow, directly across the lake from Soochow, while the emperor was asked to command the provinces of Fukien, Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Hupeh, and Hunan to devise measures for their own defence.³⁷ But not a man was removed from Nanking, where at most fifty thousand held a line of about thirty miles encircling that vast city, within which supplies were rapidly giving out. A sortie was expected at any moment.³⁸

³⁶ *Nienp'u*, IX, 17b; *Dispatches*, XIX, 85, 91 ff.

³⁷ *Nienp'u*, IX, 21.

³⁸ *Nienp'u*, IX, 21b. The walls themselves are about twenty-two miles in circumference.

About the first of April some four thousand women were sent out of the city in the hope that they could secure food from the imperialists, the supplies doled out by the Chungwang having come to an end. In this crisis the T'ienwang had won the contempt of his followers when they laid the case before him, by suggesting that the starving folk live on "sweet dew," by which he meant the natural products of the earth. "In concert with others," records the Chungwang, "I then represented that such was not a fit article for food, upon which the T'ien-wang observed, 'Bring some here and after preparing it I will partake of some first.' No one, however, complying with this he gathered several herbs from his own palace garden and having made them up into a ball, he sent the ball outside with orders to the people to prepare their food in like manner."³⁹

While Nanking thus grew weaker, General Ch'en took Kiahsing (Kashing) on March 20, but was himself wounded and died at Soochow a little later. Tso Tsung-tang's combined Franco-Chinese forces recaptured Hangchow on March 31, its defenders escaping to Huchow. The great mass of rebels then made good their retreat into Kiangsi as planned, despite desperate resistance. Reinforcements were sent to the Poyang region and Kiu-kiang.⁴⁰ About the same time the Nienfei and Taipings were defeated in Fanch'eng, Hupeh, and driven back into Honan.

This retreat of the rebels into Kiangsi soon made its effect felt on the *likin* revenues on which Tsêng depended for support. From his dispatches asking for aid we are able to learn how his armies were chiefly supported. Hunan, through a special bureau and the grant of half her *likin* taxes, was doing all she could and her contribu-

³⁹ Chungwang, *Autobiography*, pp. 67 f.; also see pp. 62 f.

⁴⁰ *Nienp'u*, IX, 22-24.

tions were regular. From Kwangtung only 90,000 *taels* had come during the year, the Kiangsu revenues from *likin* had fallen to 30,000 *taels*, and nothing whatever had been forwarded from Ssuch'uan and Hupeh (Hupeh was pledged to furnish 50,000 *taels* per month, Hunan 25,000, Ssuch'uan 50,000, Kiangsi 30,000, and the other two provinces indefinite sums).⁴¹ Tsêng was greatly embarrassed by these failures.

In Kiangsu the "Ever Victorious Army" brought its career to an honorable end by aiding in the capture of Ch'angchow, May 11. Tanyang thus became untenable and was evacuated on May 18, leaving nothing between Li Hung-chang's forces and Nanking. The defeated rebels escaped into Kiangsi.⁴² During June strong imperialist forces were operating in that province under such leaders as Yang Yoh-ping and Pao Ch'ao, chiefly in the region of Shuichow, in order to prevent a consolidation of all the retreating Taipings.⁴³

Throughout the winter and spring the spectacular successes of Li Hung-chang and Tso Tsung-tang, contrasted with his own lack of results at Nanking, had preyed on the mind of the younger Tsêng. The elder brother was placed in an impossible situation as well. On the one hand, General Tsêng seemed to be jealously apprehensive lest he lose the glory of capturing Nanking; while on the other, Tsêng Kuo-fan feared that his own honor and that of his family would be tarnished if he did not bring the strength of Li Hung-chang and Tso Tsung-tang to bear on Nanking so as to expedite its capture. He was so worried over the matter that early in February he informed his brother that he had sent for General Ch'en Hsueh-chi

⁴¹ *Nienp'u*, IX, 25 f.; *Dispatches*, XX, 49-51.

⁴² *Nienp'u*, IX, 25 f.

⁴³ *Dispatches*, XX, 70b, 71.

and if necessary he would invite Li Hung-chang himself to come to Nanking.⁴⁴

His dilemma was not lightened by the fact that word came through spies of prevailing panic within the city. They reported that the T'ienwang had surrounded himself with firewood with which he planned to burn himself should the city fall.⁴⁵ At the end of March Tsêng wrote home that the melon was almost ready to cut.⁴⁶ Early in May another letter records that many of the rebels were shaving their heads and no longer killing people or starting fires, because they were preparing to scatter out and lose themselves among the population.⁴⁷ His apprehension that the delays were injurious to his family's honor combated the fear that his brother, through excess of eagerness, might overshoot his bolt and fail to take advantage of any sudden chance presented by the adversaries. In warning he wrote: "Since the capture of Soochow and Hangchow there has been a keen desire for the capture of Nanking. I myself am not so concerned about its early capture as about its safe capture. Therefore I have written you several tens of letters enjoining caution. Hung and Nanking are entirely different from other persons and places. I am worried for fear that in your over haste you may wear yourself out and your soldiers may be too exhausted to seize the opportunity when the mine is sprung."⁴⁸ To his brother at home he wrote: "Ch'angchow has been recaptured, also Tanyang. In the whole of Kiangsu only the one city of Nanking remains uncaptured. Our younger brother Yuan is terribly worried and his agitation is deep. I am constantly writing him letters to dispel it."⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Letter to Kuo-ch'üan, February 3, 1864.

⁴⁵ *Home Letters*, March 21, 1864.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, March 31, 1864.

⁴⁸ *Home Letters*, May 11, 1864.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, May 8, 1864.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, May 19, 1864.

As the days went on Tsêng's position became infinitely more difficult when from all sides came hints that Nanking could be taken if the unemployed forces of Li Hung-chang were brought to the spot. Imperial mandates also ordered them forward. Tsêng, who had already called on Li Hung-chang for some of his command earlier in the year, now requested the governor to bring his entire force to Nanking. He also appealed to the reluctant younger brother to make the best of the situation and join in the invitation to Li Hung-chang. On June 15 he tells Kuo-ch'üan that he has already written to Li Hung-chang. Should Li come, the capture of the city will mean the sharing of honors, but failure to capture it will also imply the sharing of responsibility. To his brother at home he sends the same message, adding that although Kuo-ch'üan was ten years younger than he, he was already half gray, while the elder Tsêng grew weaker day by day, and neither of the two brothers could indulge the expectation of a long life. When at last he had persuaded the reluctant younger brother to join in the request to Li Hung-chang, he expressed his appreciation in these words: "Shao-ch'üan (Li Hung-chang) is willing to help us brothers finish the work, but still he does not dare to say so directly. His consideration is admirable. Your letter expressing your desire for him to come quickly is splendid. Gordon came today and he believes your fortifications are good and your discipline strict."

With admirable delicacy of feeling Li Hung-chang perceived the difficulties of his superior at Anking, and, alleging the shallow pretext of giving aid in Chekiang—where Tso Tsung-tang was in no need of help—begged off from coming. Tsêng Kuo-fan reveals no displeasure in this decision which enabled him to "save his face." In a letter of July 13 he wrote in appreciation: "I have read Li Hung-chang's letters and his memorials have

been sent to me, and I understand from these memorials and letters that he is altogether determined not to come to Nanking to join in the attack. If he realises your bitter suffering and does not feel urged to share the coming glory, and is able wisely to hold thus to his purpose, he far surpasses others." However mixed Li Hung-chang's motives may have been in this act of renunciation, it enabled Tsêng Kuo-ch'üan to win the coveted honor of taking the rebel stronghold and bound Tsêng Kuo-fan to him by a debt of gratitude for his courtesy and tact. It may have been inspired in part by gratitude for the support already received from Tsêng, whereby Li had so rapidly risen to the position of governor, and in part by prudence, lest he offend two such powerful men as the Tsêngs and the Hunan group among whom he, as an Anhui man, might be regarded more or less as an interloper.

Indeed, the two Tsêngs were now growing almost too powerful, and they themselves realised it. As early as May 1 Tsêng had written to his younger brother: "I have asked for sick leave, first, because I have been at the head of affairs too long and I fear that in China and abroad they will suspect that my military power is too great and my chance for profit too good, and they may attempt to curb me in some way; second, when Kinling falls we brothers must subside somewhat."⁵⁰

If Li Hung-chang did not wish to be involved in any unpleasantness regarding Nanking, there was no hint of disloyalty in his attitude, nor did he ignore Tsêng's call for help, at any rate financially. A sum of 238,000 *taels* arrived to help defray Tsêng's huge expenses. Of this sum 50,000 went to Pao Ch'ao in Kiangsi, 40,000 were retained for the commissariat in Anking, and 130,000 went

⁵⁰ Also compare letter of May 18 to the same effect.

to Nanking for the support of the besieging army there. Even this amount was insufficient.⁵¹

On July 3, 1864, Lung Potzu Shan (Dragon's Shoulder Hill) was captured, giving Tseng Kuo-ch'üan the ability to dig his mine despite the resistance of the rebels within the walls. This was ready on the nineteenth. Its explosion made a breach of more than two hundred feet, through which the imperialists poured, cutting their way into the city. Immediate siege was laid to the imperial city within; it fell the same evening. Word was sent speeding to Peking by a courier travelling seven hundred *li* per day.⁵²

For three days and nights the imperialists gave themselves up to pursuing and slaughtering the defeated Taipings, nor did they stop before a hundred thousand had perished.⁵³ The Chungwang and the younger brother of the T'ienwang, Hung Jen-tah, were captured as they were attempting to escape to Kiangsi, but the T'ienwang was beyond their reach, having committed suicide on the first of June when he realised that matters had become hopeless. News of the suicide had been kept from the populace who were already on the verge of panic, and within the recesses of the palace the lost leader was buried and his son, Hung Fu-t'ien proclaimed as T'ienwang in place of his father.⁵⁴

⁵¹ *Nienp'u*, IX, 28b, 29a; *Dispatches*, XX, 70.

⁵² *Nienp'u*, IX, 30; *Dispatches*, XX, 77-83. Translations of the dispatches about the fall of Nanking are given in the appendix to the Chungwang's *Autobiography*.

⁵³ *Dispatches*, XX, 83. Later British estimates of the number slaughtered would reduce the number here given. Tseng possibly refers to the numbers hunted down in the country outside Nanking as well as within the walls.

⁵⁴ *Nienp'u*, IX, 27; Chungwang, *Autobiography*, p. 70. The translator is wrong in dating the suicide on June 30, the *Nienp'u* and the Chinese version of the Chungwang's *Autobiography* agreeing on June 1. Of this young T'ienwang an edict issued in August, 1860, had said that he was God's grandson. See Brine, *The Taiping Rebellion in China*, pp. 266 f. The account of the capture of Nanking says that the T'ienwang was buried not in a coffin but in his imperial robes.

For some time the young T'ienwang eluded the imperialists who were trying to capture him. In the hour of disaster he was mounted on a poor animal but received the good horse of the Chungwang, thus being able to escape while the abler but less fortunate Chungwang was captured. The Chungwang records of him: "The new Sovereign was but a youth, unacquainted with state matters and with no intellectual genius sufficient to cope with difficulties." "After my defeat at the Taiping gate I returned to the Palace gate, where the Young King, together with the other two sons of the Tien-wang, came to me and asked what was to be done. I was at this time in a great dilemma and really at a loss to proceed, and was obliged to discard attention to all save the Young King. To him I gave my war horse (pony), as he was without one, and rode myself a weak and useless animal. . . . Though the Tien-wang's days had been fulfilled, the nation injured through others baffling and deceiving him, and the state lost, still, as I had received his favours, I could not do otherwise than evince my faithfulness by endeavouring to save his son." After one or two frustrated efforts they sallied out at one in the morning; though they succeeded in penetrating the lines of the imperialists, a hue and cry was set up and they were pursued. They scattered, and the Chungwang never knew what became of his master whom he would not abandon.⁶⁵

On the arrival of Tsêng Kuo-fan (July 28) careful inquiries were made into the condition of affairs in the city. The Chungwang, Li Siu-ch'eng, and the brother of the late T'ienwang, Hung Jen-tah, were brought before the two Tsêngs and some other generals, and were condemned to death, despite the fact that the edict of the emperor had called for their transport to Peking. It was at this time that the autobiography was composed, which

⁶⁵ Chungwang. *Autobiography*, pp. 70 f.

in an altered form was later translated and published. The alterations consisted in the omission of the flattering references to the Hunan troops, the proposals for securing the allegiance of the Taipings still at large in ransom for his life, and his analysis of the causes for the downfall of the T'ienwang's cause.⁵⁶

Tsêng was greatly disappointed to discover no store of treasures in the rebel capital. Inquiry brought out the fact that there had been nothing of the kind, the so-called Sacred Treasury being simply the repository of the T'ienwang's private wealth. If there ever had actually been treasures the fleeing rebels had carried them away. Tsêng Kuo-ch'üan desired to make the soldiers of his own army give up the loot they had taken from the persons of soldiers and the houses of the people, but Kuo-fan objected, arguing that "as the loot obtained by the braves and soldiers was not in the same ratio, some having possessed themselves of a great deal and some of very little, if each were compelled to deliver up a certain amount the feeble would suffer punishment and nothing be obtained; and the strong would be mutinous and desert. In fine, that such a measure would not have for its result the acquirement of funds, but would injure the national dignity to no purpose and would disappoint the military spirits."⁵⁷ He therefore ordered that only buried treasures should be brought in.

In the distribution of rewards General Tsêng Kuo-ch'üan was created an earl of the first grade and granted a double-eyed peacock feather. Yang Yoh-ping, now viceroy of Shensi and Kansu, became a baronet and Junior Guardian of the Heir Apparent. P'eng Yu-ling received similar honors and Pao Ch'ao was made a baronet. Other

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁵⁷ *Dispatches*, XX, 33b, 34a. Translation in appendix of Chungwang, *Autobiography*.

officers also received suitable rewards in the general distribution. Li Hung-chang became an earl of the first grade with a double-eyed peacock feather. The imperial rescript concerning Tsêng Kuo-fan reads as follows:

The Imperial Commissioner, Under Secretary of State, and Viceroy of the Two Kiang, Tsêng-kuo-fan, in the 4th year of Heen-fung, set on foot the volunteer movement in Hoo-nan and built several war boats. He obtained great successes in Hoo-nan and captured Wu-ch'ang and Han-yang, and cleared Kiang-se of rebels; and since his operations eastwards has passed through Su-sung, captured Chien-shan and Tai-hu, and occupied Ch'i-mun, from which place he effected the recovery of Ngan-king, making that place the base of operations for the conquest of the Lower Valley. He has fortunately so achieved his work as to cut up the original abettor of the mischief, and has on the whole shown his competence to select men suited to the exigencies of the time, and that he is possessed of great military tactics. We now, therefore, of Our favor confer on Tsêng-Kuo-fan the title of Senior Guardian of the Heir Apparent, and create him a Marquis of the first grade, which is to be hereditary, and We moreover reward him with a double-eyed peacock's feather.⁵⁸

The fall of Nanking brought the leaders of the rebellion to destruction, but remnants of the nation under different officers or *wangs* were gathered in other centers, notably in Kiangsi and Chekiang, and along the Hupeh-Anhui borders, where joint raids of the Nienfei and Taipings disturbed the countrysides. The Kiangsi rebels were defeated by Pao Ch'ao (August 7) at Hsuwan in Fuchow prefecture with a loss of forty thousand. In the next few days several district cities were occupied and several thousands of rebels submitted. The mass of homeless Taipings moved towards the southern border of the province, where the southern prefectures and the adjoin-

⁵⁸ Chungwang, *Autobiography*, appendix, pp. 91 ff. (Spelling as in the English translation.)

ing provinces of Fukien and Kwangtung kept a careful watch for them.⁵⁹

In Chekiang Tso Tsung-tang, with the aid of Li Hung-chang and the French contingent, captured the last great stronghold of the rebels, Huchow, on the twenty-eighth of August, and on the following day the capture of Anchi-hsien completed the pacification of that province.⁶⁰

The young T'ienwang, who, through the loyalty of the Chungwang, eluded the imperialist vigilance at the fall of Nanking, arrived in Kwangteh, Anhui, August 8, and there received a great welcome from his fellow rebels.⁶¹ With the fall of that city on August 30 he was compelled to flee to the hills in Ningkuo. On the first of September the fugitive Taipings from Huchow and Kwangteh escaped towards Huichow, the prefecture in the southern tip of Anhui, where they were met and defeated by Liu Sung-shan. Tso Tsung-tang likewise extinguished a band of them in the districts of Changhwa and Shunan, September 3, and other groups suffered a similar fate during that month. All the defeated bands of rebels, including their young T'ienwang, were met by combined Chekiang and Kiangsi forces in Kwanghsin prefecture and again overthrown. The T'ienwang, who had slipped away from the battle field, was pursued and captured by Hsi Pao-t'ien, October 25, and sent to Nanch'ang where he was beheaded.⁶² By the end of October all the Taipings in Kiangsi were driven into Fukien and Kwangtung.

⁵⁹ *Nienp'u*, IX, 39b.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* The *Journal* North China Branch Royal Asiatic Society mentions the French contingent alone as having captured the city December, 1864, p. 120.

⁶¹ *Nienp'u*, IX, 34a.

⁶² *Ibid.*, IX, 36-39, *passim*. *Dispatches*, XXI, 12 ff., gives a complete account of the escape of the young T'ienwang, explaining the circumstances and the measures taken to apprehend him. The same volume, pp. 30 ff., covers most of the battles here recorded.

With this we may regard the Taiping rebellion as practically suppressed. Some of the rebels did, however, operate for a time in Kwangtung and Fukien. From Kiayinchow, which they captured in Kwangtung, they continued their depredations in connection with those who had gone into Fukien, ravaging the prefectures of T'ingchow and Changchow. This necessitated the return of Tso Tsung-tang to Chuchow (Chekiang), whence he dispatched forces into Fukien to oppose them. These rebels were apparently under the command of the Shiwang, Li Shi-hsien, brother of the Chungwang. Early in 1865 Tso led his army in person and captured Changchow about May 25.⁶³ Although the Shiwang escaped from his clutches at this time and fled into the mountains, he presently emerged from his retirement and committed suicide.⁶⁴ On his way to join the Shiwang, Burgevine also met his end.⁶⁵

This victory at Changchow and another not far away cleared Fukien of rebels. Those who remained of the Kwangsi and Kwangtung men escaped over the border to Kwangtung.⁶⁶

⁶³ *Nienp'u*, IX, 42b, 44b.

⁶⁴ *Unofficial History of the Taiping T'ien Kuo*, XIII, 23.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, XVIII, 6. Morse, II, 88, states that Burgevine was captured at the fall of this city.

⁶⁶ *Nienp'u*, X, 10b. Moule, *Personal Recollections of the T'ai-ping Rebellion*, p. 1, says that about 100,000 of them settled in the southwest of China, where they were quiet enough if unmolested but showed fight if interfered with. He adds that these last remnants were finally driven out into Tongking, where they became the main force of the Black Flags. A grandson of Tsêng Kuo-fan informs the writer that numbers of them emigrated to America and worked on the railways there.