

CHAPTER XX

THE PRESENT SITUATION IN CHINA ¹

IN 1900 the Chinese people were in a state of unrest, partly caused by a failure of the crops and partly by the recent introduction of European education and a feeling of the necessity of reform. The movement was primarily anti-dynastic, but the Court, realising its danger, managed to divert the Boxer Movement to an anti-foreign outbreak. At that time the country was united under one rule, and enjoyed the benefits of individual security and prosperity under a mild form of autocracy, the only form of government suitable for Asiatic nations in their present undeveloped state. Therefore, whilst the anti-foreign movement was more dangerous owing to the better organisation under a united government, still it was greatly lessened and localised, thanks to the Provinces being swayed by an exceptional number of eminent and capable viceroys and governors, such as Liu Kun-yi at Nanking, Chang Chih-tung at Wu-ch'ang, Li Hung-chang at Canton, Yuan Shih - K'ai in Shantung and Tuan Fang in Shensi.

In 1900 those who prophesied trouble, before

¹ Written by General Pereira in December 1921.