

CHAPTER VI.

ATTEMPT OF COUNT POUTIATINE TO REACH PEKIN—LAWLESS PROCEEDINGS IN THE CANTON RIVER—SINGULAR NATIVE PROCLAMATION—THE HALL OF PEACE AND PATRIOTISM—PREPARATIONS FOR WAR—THE ULTIMATUM—OCCUPATION OF HONAN—YEH'S ANSWER—REPORT OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE EMPEROR HIEN FUNG AND KI SHUH-TSAN—EMBARKATION ON BOARD THE FURIOUS—DISAPPEARANCE OF THE FLOATING POPULATION—ASPECT OF THE RIVER FACE OF CANTON—EXPIRY OF THE DELAY—ANCHORAGE AT DANE'S ISLAND—TEMPER OF THE INHABITANTS—DELAY OF THE BOMBARDMENT.

THE principal event which had occurred at Hong-Kong during our absence at Manilla was the departure of our Commander-in-Chief, General Ashburnham, for Calcutta, in the *Ava*, and the instalment of Lord Elgin in the house vacated by him on shore. The increasing coolness of the temperature rendered this change doubly enjoyable. Early in November the American Minister, Mr Reed, arrived in a frigate of gigantic proportions, and the Russian Minister, Count Poutiatine, in a paddle-wheel steamer of very minute dimensions. The latter had made the journey overland from St Petersburg to the Amour; not, however, without having applied for admission to Pekin by way of Kiahkta. On this being refused, he

proceeded, on his own responsibility, to the mouth of the Peiho, where he was informed that no communication with the court of Peking could be made on his behalf from that point. It was, however, after some time, conceded to him that a letter would be forwarded to Peking, but that, if he wanted a reply, he must return to Kiahkta and wait there. Count Poutiatine declined to accede to these terms, and in consequence it was ultimately arranged that an answer should be sent to him at the mouth of the Peiho, whither he would return to receive it. When at last, after an interval of some weeks, Count Poutiatine once more appeared at the mouth of the Peiho, he received his answer, which consisted of a refusal to see him at Peking, with an intimation that under no circumstances could the performance of the "Kotow" be dispensed with. The result of his experience had in fact been, to confirm the opinion entertained by Lord Elgin from the commencement, that nothing could be done with the Government of China except at the Peiho, and then only when a force sufficient to strike terror into the capital, and of a description calculated to navigate the shallow waters that lead to it, should be assembled there, to give irresistible force to the arguments of diplomacy.

About this time there occurred a curious illustration of the violent character of the more lawless portion of the population, inhabiting the creeks and islands of the Canton River, as well as of their ingenuity in turning to good account the troubles in which their

country was involved. The incident was also instructive, as tending to show how many and serious were the evils to which might be exposed the unfortunate well-disposed inhabitants, who found in our cruisers but a poor substitute for the mandarin and war junks which had formerly protected them, and which we had scared away. A petition was sent down to Lord Elgin, enclosing a copy of a notice stated to have been widely circulated among the people, to the following effect:—"That the British navy, being now stationed from Shakok at the Bogue, up to Shekmun, it is hereby decreed that, in return for the protection the British vessels afford to the population against lawless persons who would otherwise cut grain without authority, 2 mace per acre (Chinese) shall be paid into the British office, called the Ning-i-Tong (Hall of Peace and Patriotism), near Nei-Tong; to which all agriculturists are directed to repair on the 30th or 31st October, or 1st November, with the money. On payment of this, they will receive a license to cut grain. If any person attempt to cut or carry grain without license, the vessels of the Ning-i-Tong of Great Britain will bring him to the said hall, with his vessels, which will be confiscated." Three regulations were appended to the above notice—"1. For every acre registered at the Hall of Great Britain, at Nei-Tong, license to reap shall be issued. 2. In any case where the brethren recognise the seal to be the seal of the hall, they will immediately release the person whom they may have detained.

3. Rice-junks, from any village or fort whatsoever, must give notice at the hall, where their papers or licenses will be viséd, for the prevention of delays." Mr Wade, who translated the above, was requested by Lord Elgin to put himself at once into communication with the Admiral, for the purpose of discovering, if possible, this Hall of British Peacemakers and Patriots, and visit with the punishment they deserved those who had so foully wronged, if not our fair name, at least their own unfortunate countrymen. Mr Wade proceeded with a force to a building indicated by some country people as the hall in question, where he found six persons in chains, and some papers, one of which stated, that orders had been received from the captain of the ship of English barbarians to look after the grain, and menacing any of the brethren who should presume to cut grain on their own account. It was found difficult to bring home the charge to any of the persons in the neighbourhood; a comprador, however (or man whose business it was to supply one of Her Majesty's ships in the river with provisions), was recognised and taken into custody in consequence. There is probably no other country in the world, but China, where an organisation upon so large a scale could have been formed, which would use for a protection the dreaded name of its country's enemy—display for its banner the symbols of peace and patriotism—and have for its object the plunder and spoliation of its neighbours.

Though there may be an absence of patriotism

generally in China, patriots can always be found here by paying for them, as in other countries. Thus we discovered a spy located at Hong-Kong, whose papers we seized, and who kept a daily record of events there, and, at some risk to himself, sent Howqua full information of all the plans and rumours of plans current in Hong-Kong as to our movements. Nothing was too trivial for his report: the number of ships in harbour—the daily exercise of troops—Lord Elgin's personal appearance and reputed character—the extent of our losses in India, and the causes of the mutiny—all were minutely but frequently erroneously recorded, and forwarded by Howqua to Yeh. Some of the information was furnished by Americans resident at Hong-Kong, and some by Chinese in our employ.

Meanwhile General Straubenzee had succeeded General Ashburnham in the command-in-chief, and the prospect of active service seemed to infuse new life and energy into the feeble and wasted garrison of Hong-Kong. The one weak regiment of which it consisted was perpetually being inspected and reviewed, and exercised in camping and in rifle practice. The daily booming of artillery practice, added to the constant thundering of salutes from the ships, as Admirals or Plenipotentiaries paid or received visits of ceremony, began to prepare the Chinese mind at Hong-Kong for something more serious than the "talkee pigeon" to which for so many years they had been accustomed. We were now only waiting for

the last detachment of marines ; their arrival early in December rendered further delay unnecessary ; and, on the 10th of that month, Mr Wade, accompanied by Mr Marques, proceeded with a flag of truce to Canton, and delivered the ultimata of the French and English Plenipotentiaries to a subordinate officer sent by Yeh to receive it.

In the communication which the British Minister addressed to the Imperial Commissioner upon this occasion, he alluded to the exceptional attitude of hostility and dislike which had always been maintained by the authorities and people of Canton in their intercourse with foreigners, as compared with the other ports ; to their determined refusal to fulfil treaty-rights ; to the constant quarrels which had arisen out of this unsatisfactory state of things ; and to the barbarous way in which hostilities on the last occasion had been carried on by the Cantonese. As a proof that these complaints were not ill-founded, or confined to British subjects alone, his Excellency adverted to the recent capture of the Barrier Forts which had been forced upon the Americans, and to the fact that the French were prepared to join us in the determination to procure reparation for past, and security against future wrongs.

The execution of treaty-engagements, and compensation for losses sustained by British subjects, were the only demands the fulfilment of which was required from the Imperial Commissioner ; and a *délai fatal* of two days, to date from the 12th in-

stant, was accorded : during this period, the island of Honan was to be occupied as a material guarantee, and, at its expiry, in the event of non-compliance, Canton was to be taken. In consequence of the above intimation, Honan was successfully occupied on the 15th instant by 400 British marines and 150 French blue-jackets, no attempt at resistance having been made on the part of the inhabitants.

On the following day Yeh's answer reached Hong-Kong. That functionary denied that there was any difference in their disposition towards foreigners between the inhabitants of Canton and those of the other ports ; denied that any article existed in any treaty relative to the opening of Canton ;—though the question had been twice raised, he declared it to have been finally abandoned ; then put in a plea in traverse, to the effect that no treaty could force the people of Canton to do what they did not like ; and recommended Lord Elgin to adopt the policy pursued by Sir George Bonham, which might, as in his case, procure him the Order of the Bath. Yeh went on to recite the want of success which had attended the efforts of Sir George Bonham and Sir John Bowring, to open a more direct communication with the capital, as an instance of the impossibility of opposing the Emperor's will. He then discussed the merits of the Arrow case, warned the Ambassador against the occupation of Honan, as being likely to lead to hostilities, and concluded by assuring his Excellency that all existing

difficulties might be satisfactorily arranged through the medium of a little amicable correspondence.

The following report of a conversation between his Celestial Majesty and an ex-judge of the Quang-tung province, will throw some light upon the policy of the Emperor and his Commissioner at Canton, upon the extent of their acquaintance with barbarian affairs, and upon the sources from whence they derived their information. This most interesting and curious document was among the papers found in Yeh's yamun subsequently to his capture, and it has since been translated by Mr Wade :—

Report of a Conversation between the Emperor Hien Fung and Ki Shuh-tsan, ex-Judge of Kwang-tung, in 1851.

[The following is translated from a memorandum forwarded to Yeh by a late Judge of Kwang-tung, named Ki Shuh-tsan, of his conversation with the Emperor Hien Fung, at the audience granted him, according to custom, on his return to Peking at the end of his term of service.

In his "Chinese and their Rebellions," (page 123 to 136), Mr Thomas Meadows gives a similar conversation between the late Emperor and Pih-kwei, the present Governor of Kwang-tung, and then Judge of the Province. This took place in 1849, and it is remarkable that, towards the close of that audience, the late Emperor asks Pih-kwei if he is acquainted with

the newly-appointed Judge, Ki Shuh-tsan, and volunteers a very favourable opinion of him as an honest and unaffected man.

A great deal of his correspondence with Yeh was found in the papers of the latter; amongst the rest the Memorandum here translated, and with it a note explaining that, besides the matter to which it relates, the Emperor had put questions regarding the contumacy of the literati of the district of Tungkwan, who had lately manifested their dissatisfaction with the authorities by refusing to attend the examinations for degree, regarding the alleged misconduct of a military officer who had been very backward against some Kwang-tung outlaws; and, lastly, regarding the publication of the "Sing-li Tsing-i," the "Essence of Moral Philosophy," and of another work, reprints of which had been ordered by His Majesty, at the suggestion of a high official, for the regeneration of the age.

Ki Shuh-tsan was younger brother of Ki Tsiun-tsan, who died not long since, one of the four principal Secretaries of State.—T. F. W.]

(Translation.)

AT my audience His Majesty questioned me very particularly respecting my official career, my settlement, my family, and my life before and after I came to be employed. I submit no copy of these questions to your Excellency, but confine myself to laying before you those which His Majesty condescended to

ask concerning Kwang-tung affairs. His Majesty asked,—

Q. Are the English barbarians quiet at the present time, or the reverse ?

A. They are so far quiet.

Q. Will no trouble be caused by their trade at some future period ?

A. In the nature of barbarians there is much to suspect. A communication received from them two or three months ago, raised several questions in language of a menacing character.* Seu and Yeh perfectly understand their trickiness, and as it is only by being resolute and positive that they can deal with them, they employ no word in their replies either more or less than is sufficient fully to meet † what is said by the barbarians, and thus they are left without anything to rejoin.

Q. Do you know what they wrote about ?

A. In their administration of barbarian affairs Seu and Yeh hold it important to be secret. As Governor-General and Governor they consult each other in confidence on all replies to be written (to barbarian letters). Neither your Majesty's servant, nor his fellow-commissioners, nor the intendants, although residing in the same city (as their Excellencies), are able to learn anything beforehand. If, as is sometimes the case, reference has to be made to

* Questions they had no right to raise ; *lit.*, put forth shoots not from the joint : a figure from the bamboo tree.

† To meet, to controvert, or to reprove.

Pih-kwei, the Commissioner of Finance, the reply drafted by him has again to be considered and approved by them ; and on such occasions, when the question has been disposed of, Seu and Yeh are sure to communicate it to your servant, and to the rest as well. In former times, when barbarian affairs were in process of administration, news has reached barbarian quarters even before the event ; but, nowadays, not even those who are constantly about Seu and Yeh can obtain information of the measures they are considering, and so the barbarians can ascertain nothing ; while we, on the other hand, are accurately informed of all that affects their countries.

Q. How are you informed of what passes in their countries ?

A. In foreign parts (*lit.*, in the outer seas) there are newspapers. In these everything that concerns any nation is minutely recorded, and these we have it in our power to procure. And as the barbarians cannot dispense with our people in the work of interpretation, Seu and Yeh manage to make their employés furnish them privately every month with all particulars. We are thus enabled to know everything that concerns them.

Q. How is it that persons in barbarian employ will, notwithstanding, furnish us with intelligence ?

A. It merely costs a few hundred dollars more a-year to bestow rewards on them. For these they are well pleased to serve us. Then, again, if the news received from any one quarter appears unsatisfactory,

there is more sent in from other quarters, and if the reports from different quarters agree, the information is of course entitled to full credit.

Q. Are their newspapers in their barbarian character, or in our Chinese character ?

A. They are translations into Chinese.*

Q. Have you seen those papers ?

A. In the campaign in Tsing-yuen last winter, Yeh † received some, which he gave me to look at.

Q. What did they say ?

A. Your servant remembers one circumstance. The English were at war with Bengal. ‡ A Bengal man-of-war wanted to pass through English territory to attack (*lit.*, trouble, have a row with) some other nation ; the English authorities § refused her a passage. Both sides opened a fire, in which an English ship was sunk, and a large number of the managing heads (directors) killed. The Sovereign of their State assembled the chief persons (*lit.*, the head-eyes) in the Chamber where business is discussed (*sc.*, the House of Parliament). It was there proposed (by some) to speak reason to (or argue the point with) Bengal, but by others, to raise a force, and take satis-

* That is, the papers he has seen, as will appear directly.

† Yeh was then Governor of Kwang-tung, and was absent from Canton four months, endeavouring to put down outlaws, or rebels, in Tsing-yuen and Ning-teh.

‡ Birmah is probably meant.

§ *Lit.*, those of the English barbarians who manage their affairs. This is very likely a translation of the term "Directors of the East India Company."

faction. Your servant has also been told by Yeh that, in the different letters which have come from the Sovereign of the State to Bonham, he has always been directed to trade with China in a friendly spirit, and not to be troublesome (or meddlesome). It is also said that, in reward for his administration of commercial intercourse, Bonham was presented by the Sovereign of the State with a decoration called "O-tá-pá" (Order of the Bath), a thing somewhat of the same sort as the ancient red gold-fish purse.* Bonham is well pleased with this. He parades it with pride; it will prevent him from making any more difficulties.

Q. How did the barbarians put their alleged grievance in the letter received from them?

A. When your servant returned to Canton from the Tsing-yuen campaign, to lay down his office, he was told by Seu and Yeh, that in the third moon Bonham † had written to say that, as there was no great market for goods at two of the five ports, namely, in Cheh-kiang and Fuh-kien, he wanted to exchange the two ports in question for two others. Hang-chow and Soo-chow would both answer the purpose; but, if this could not be, Chin-kiang would do. If Chin-kiang was also impossible, his ships of war would be obliged to go to Tien-tsin. Seu and Yeh

* An ornament or decoration, of ancient date.

† He alludes to Sir George Bonham's letters, under instructions from the Foreign Office, written April 19, 1851, in which an exchange of ports was proposed.

replied, that trade at the five ports having been long settled by Treaty, no change could be made ; that, besides this, there was a fixed quantity of goods sold in China every year, the amount of which did not depend on the number of ports, more or less. Take the trade, they said, as it was before the five ports were opened, and has been since that event, and a calculation of the profits and losses of different parties will convince you (of this). If, with a good understanding existing between our two nations, your men-of-war attempt to go up to Tien-tsin, it is on your side that the quarrel will have been commenced ; no blame will attach to us. Since this reply was sent, no letter has been received from them.

Q. Who has charge of barbarian affairs besides Bonham ?

A. Your servant has been told that Bonham is the Governor-in-chief (*lit.*, general head of the troops). Besides him there are Gutzlaff and Meadows. Gutzlaff was a practised machinator when he was in China before.* This time, it is said, the ruler of the State makes him confine his attention to commercial affairs, and does not allow him to meddle (with politics).

Q. Are the other trading nations on good terms with the English barbarians ?

A. When the English barbarians gave trouble some time since (*sc.* 1839-42), different nations as-

* Mr Gutzlaff, then Chinese Secretary, returned to China in January 1851, and died in August.

sisted them. In the sequel it is said the English barbarians became deeply indebted to other nations for shipping, the value of which they have been unable to recover from them ; hence a good deal of misunderstanding. The other tribes are jealous, too, of the English barbarians for having carried their point (*sc.* with China) ; and so, although so far as outward appearances go, they trade together amicably, each party is, in fact, considering his own interests, and no cordial understanding is possible.

Q. Are the French quiet in Kwang-tung ?

A. The French continue to give no trouble in Kwang-tung. But it is said that, with the exception of trade, what they most prize is the teaching of their doctrine.

Q. What people practise their doctrine in general ? Are there licentiates and graduates amongst them ?

A. It is the common (*lit.*, the little people), who have no sense. All that they hear of the question is, that by the practice of virtue they may look for happiness,* and so the chances are that they are mystified by them. Licentiates and graduates, inasmuch as they have rather more reading and acquaintance with philosophy, which makes them respect themselves, are of course not to be so deluded. Your servant has never heard that such persons had embraced their doctrine.

* Confucianism does not teach men to be virtuous, only in the hope of a reward. It is corrupt Buddhism, and other superstitions, which set the people propitiating good fortune.

Q. Have there been any prosecutions for the profession of the doctrine in Kwang-tung as well? *

A. Your servant has heard that some time ago there were some. There had been none from the time of his arrival last year until the fourth moon of the present, when Yeh wrote to him, confidentially, to the effect that, in the district of Ying-teh, Li San-wan was reported to be playing the Great King of the Red men,† and that in his behalf certain recreant graduates, already degraded with vagabonds and others, had privily leagued themselves with yamun followers and soldiers, most of whom were professing the doctrine; and he desired your servant to send a subordinate to make secret investigation. Your servant did send a subordinate, who went through the district from village to village in disguise, making inquiries for a month and more, but without any positive evidence of the fact. In the fifth moon your servant handed over his office to Tsui-tung, who again sent to make inquiry in every part of the Ung-yuen and Kiuhiang districts. When your servant left Canton the officer sent had not returned, and he cannot say what steps were subsequently taken.

* His Majesty probably means "as well" as in Kwang-si, although little if any notice had as yet been taken by the Court of the troubles there. The word I translate "prosecution" includes the infliction of the penalty.

† The rebels have long been known as the "red head men," from their turbans. The "red" here used is, however, a different character.

Q. Is not the doctrine of the Lord of Heaven * also preached in Shan Si ?

A. It is. When your servant was a licentiate, and superintending instruction in the district of Hung-tung, in Ping-yang Fu, the outlaw, Tsáu Shun, and others, murdered the authorities in the city of Chau, and took the city itself. Hung-tung being but thirty li from Chau, we were on the alert night and day, and one day a confidential despatch was received from the Prefect of Ping-yang, stating that in the street of the Shang-kia, in the city of Hung-tung, persons were propagating the doctrine, proselytising, preaching observances, and reciting canonical books ; and desiring that, as they were very probably in league with the bad characters of Chau, they should be secretly arrested. On this, the District Magistrate, in co-operation with the military, seized a Chih-li man surnamed Wang, who was preaching the doctrine there, and on whose person was found a crucifix and some books of the doctrine of the Lord of Heaven, all in European characters (*lit.*, characters of the western seas). After this, all persons teaching or professing the doctrine were proceeded against according to law.

Q. And what did their books say ?

A. Your servant saw that, besides others, there were some books copied in our Chinese character,

* Here written "Tien tsu kiau," doctrine of the Grandfather of Heaven. "Tien chu kiau" is evidently meant. It is the style by which Christianity, as taught by the Romanist missionaries, is known.

which were all about Jesus. Jesus was the person who was nailed on the cross. They purported to exhort people to be virtuous, to keep the heart good, and to do good actions. But there is great unanimity (or community of opinion) amongst the professors of the doctrine ; and though, under ordinary circumstances, while people of no intelligence do no more than observe fasts in the hope of obtaining happiness, it can do no great harm, if, in the course of time, a single remarkable person should appear (amongst its professors), he would be almost certain to create trouble by inflaming and deluding (the public).

Q. Have you ever seen the barbarian buildings at Hong Kong ?

A. Your servant has not seen them. Those in the foreign factories on the Canton river he has seen, but he has never been into them.

Q. Have you seen any barbarians or barbarian ships ?

A. Your servant has seen a Flowery Flag (*sc.* American) steamer on the Canton river. There were barbarians on board the vessel, all dressed in white, both men and women. But she was too far off your servant's vessel for him to see them well.

Q. What nation is the Flowery Flag ?

A. The American. The trade of the nation is very great ; it is very rich and powerful, and yet not troublesome.

Q. How is it that America is rich and powerful, and yet not troublesome ?

A. As a general rule, the outer barbarians trade, because their nature is so covetous. If one of them breaks the peace (makes trouble), the prosperity of the other's trade is marred. Thus the English are at this moment beggared ;* but if they were to break the peace, it is not on their own trade alone that injury would be inflicted : other nations are therefore certain to object to any outrageous proceeding on their part. Were they to commence a disturbance, the Americans would certainly be the last to assist them.

Q. Why would not the Americans assist them ?

A. Your servant has been told that the Americans have business relations of great importance with Wu Sung-yau (How-qua), formerly a hong merchant of Quang-tung ; indeed, that they have had money of Wu. Every movement of the English barbarians is certain to be privately communicated to the family of Wu by the Americans, and Wu Sung-yau thereupon makes his private report to Seu and Yeh, who take precautionary measures accordingly. Thus, last year, it was by a communication from the Americans that it was known that a man-of-war of the English barbarians was coming to Tien-tsin (the Peiho). Not that this shows any sincere friendship for us on the part of the Americans : it was simply that their desire for gain is strong, and that they were afraid that their trade would be disturbed by (the act of) the English.†

* And therefore, he means, not likely to go to war.

† The remainder of this most curious and interesting document is to be found in the Blue Book. I have been induced to make this

In the absence of the Shannon, the Furious had been placed at Lord Elgin's disposal. Her very light draught of water rendered her a much more available ship for the purpose than the Shannon; while Captain Osborn spared no effort or personal sacrifice to fit her up as comfortably as possible for the accommodation of the mission. On the 17th we all embarked on board this good ship, which was destined to be our floating home for the following eighteen months, and proceeded up the river to Blenheim Reach, where Baron Gros with the French fleet were already assembled. It appeared that the communication of Yeh to the French Ambassador was couched in the same stubborn and unyielding tone as that which he had addressed to Lord Elgin; it was therefore determined, at a conference held on board the *Audacieuse*, that in consequence of the unsatisfactory nature of the Imperial Commissioner's replies, the matter should be placed in the hands of the naval and military authorities, but that a few days' grace should be allowed after the expiry of the *delai fatal*, so as to afford some opportunity to the inhabitants of escaping.

I took advantage of the return of the Admiral up the river, to accompany him to Honan. Three miles after passing Macao Fort, the former limit of our explorations up the river, we rounded the point of

extract here, because it illustrates in a remarkable manner the position we held in the eyes of the Chinese authorities, and the views by which they were influenced in their dealings with us.

Honan Island, and the scene became novel and interesting. The most striking feature in it was the entire absence on the part of the Chinese of any preparations to meet the attack, which they must have been anticipating ; much less did they offer any active resistance to the occupation of the Pack-houses in Honan by our troops, or molest the men-of-war which had been quietly moored in front of the city wall, within 150 yards of the guns upon it. The instincts of self-preservation seemed to extend only to the floating population, which had simultaneously disappeared on the arrival of the ships, and taken refuge in the numerous creeks with which the country is intersected. Still, even these had not wholly vanished, and every now and then I was startled by seeing a two-storied mansion, with verandahs and a tiled roof, which appeared to be the last house of a street, deliberately detach itself from its neighbours, and float complacently down the stream to some secure aquatic retreat. In this manner about half a million of people had moved to other waters ; how they managed to subsist when they got there remains a mystery. Probably they adopted the Peace and Patriotic line.

The point of Honan Island was admirably adapted to the purpose for which it was designed. The pack-houses were spacious oblong buildings of solid construction, extending from the water's edge back to a narrow lane. On the opposite side of this was a row of mean cottages, and in rear of them an extensive

mud flat separated our troops from a populous Chinese suburb. Many of these packhouses contained tea, sweatmeats, and other articles of export, which were being rapidly transported by Chinese coolies, under the superintendence of their owners. The ginger, cumquots, and other preserves, often, however, proved too strong a temptation for our men ; and their smeared faces and sticky fingers gave indisputable evidence that they had made the jars pay toll as they passed. In the evening, when the lofty warehouses were lit up by numerous large fires made upon the stone floor, round which were collected groups of hard-visaged men, the scene was animated and picturesque, and would have been by no means of a consolatory character to the Chinese authorities, had they been there to witness it.

On the following day I visited a party of Engineers engaged in erecting a mortar battery on the Dutch Folly. A large crowd were collected on the city bank of the river watching their operations, and men were stationed as look-outs, on stages erected for the purpose above the roofs of the houses. I ascended one of the trees on the little island, and looked over the yamun of the Imperial Commissioner, not a hundred and fifty yards distant. Canton presents a most ragged appearance from this point : the river bank was strewn with the debris of houses, the result of the bombardment and fires of the previous year ; the site of the foreign factory was covered with heaps of rubbish ; half-demolished houses reared gaunt

gables above their prostrate neighbours ; and miserable hovels, which enterprising paupers had erected upon spots too exposed for the taste of the legitimate owner, only added to the dilapidated aspect of the town. Nevertheless, people passed briskly to and fro along the river margin, and were ferried across under the guns of our ships. I counted from one of these, the Cruizer, seven guns on the city wall, the muzzles of which were directed so as to cover her deck. In the afternoon Lord Elgin passed the town in a gun-boat, and was as much struck by the desolate appearance of the city, as by the apathetic indifference of its inhabitants.

On the 21st, being the day before the expiry of the delay accorded in the ultimatum, a conference was held at Whampoa by the Plenipotentiaries and naval and military Commanders-in-Chief, relative to the place of attack and the preliminary arrangements. On the 24th it was intimated to Yeh by the allied Plenipotentiaries, that, the delay having expired, they had called upon the naval and military Commanders to act, and Lord Elgin stated that he "reserved to himself the right to make on behalf of the British Government such additional demands as the altered condition of affairs, produced by the Imperial Commissioner's refusal to accede to terms of accommodation, may seem in his eyes to justify." At the same time Yeh also received a summons from the allied Commanders-in-Chief, stating that it was their intention to attack the town at the expiration of

forty-eight hours, if it was not surrendered within that time. In a communication addressed in reply to Lord Elgin's despatch, the Imperial Commissioner recurred to the Arrow case, and adverted at length to the points discussed in his former letter, without manifesting the slightest alteration in his tone, or in the tenor of his sentiments generally. Meanwhile, for many days past, Mr Parkes had been occupied in posting up proclamations, both at Honan and along the river face of the city, at considerable personal risk, advising the inhabitants to leave the city during the approaching bombardment ; but the very indifference with which they collected round the placards, and the contempt for them they occasionally manifested, by tearing them down, only proved how insensible they were to the coming danger, and how hopeless it was to expect that these warnings would produce any effect.

Up to this time we had been anchored at Whampoa, close under Dane's Island, and our principal amusement was rambling over that picturesque spot : though not above five miles in circumference, the island was broken into hill and dale and fertile glens, where a rural population lived peaceably amid all the troubles, and seemed utterly indifferent as to the fate of their provincial city. Indeed, many of them who had suffered severely by the interruption of trade, rather hoped for our success than otherwise ; and in one of the villages we met a man who had

formerly lived at Whampoa, and spoke a little English, who assured us that he expressed a sentiment very common among his countrymen when he said,—“You takee Canton chop chop, my no gotchie money.” He moreover told us that the army had not been paid for two months, and were very discontented, and that the authorities were really as well convinced as he was of our power to take the city. It was not, however, prudent to enter indiscriminately into villages. Although at Dane’s Island we found the people well disposed, some members of the French Embassy had not been so well received on Whampoa Island, and had not found it safe to extend their rambles very far from the ships: under all circumstances it was desirable to take our evening walks armed with revolvers.

We celebrated Christmas Day by taking up the position which the Furious was destined to occupy during the remainder of our stay in the river, with the view of getting as near Canton as her draught of water would admit. Captain Osborn pushed her past the Barrier Forts until her nose was buried in the mud; and from her main-top a panoramic view was obtained of the city, and that portion of the surrounding country which was shortly to be the scene of the military and naval operations. The Primauguet, in which Baron Gros had taken up his temporary habitation, was anchored immediately astern of us. Though by the terms of the summons

the bombardment ought to have commenced on the 26th, preparations were not sufficiently completed until the 28th. It will thus be seen that every opportunity was afforded to the authorities to yield, and to the people to provide for their own safety, and the security of their property.