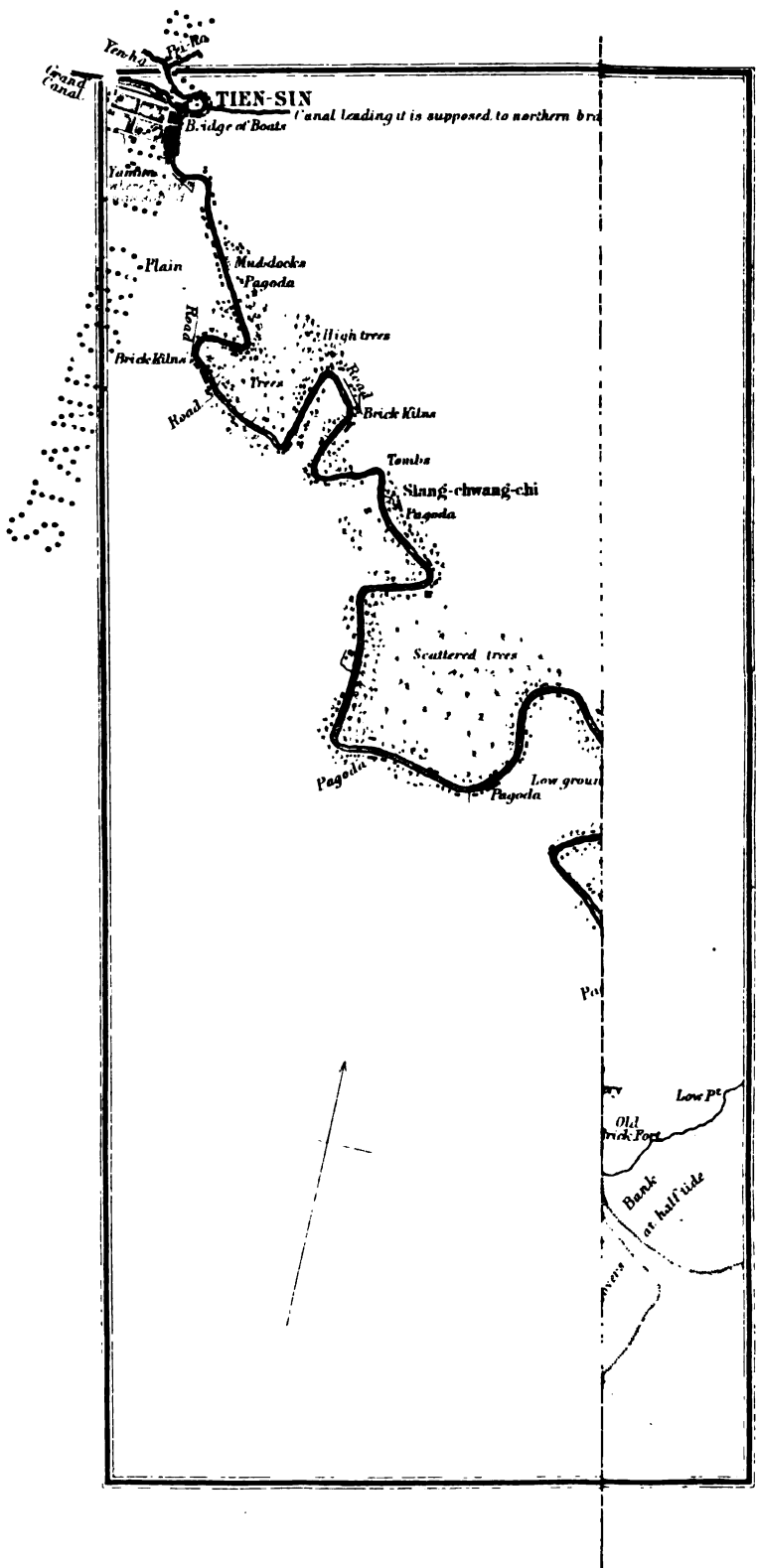


## CHAPTER XVI.

ASCENT OF THE RIVER—A CROWD OF JUNKS—ASTONISHMENT OF POPULATION—THEIR SUBMISSIVE BEHAVIOUR—BRILLIANT BON-FIRES—A STEPPE COUNTRY—APPEARANCE OF THE VILLAGES—DIFFICULTIES OF NAVIGATION—FIRST VIEW OF TIENTSIN—A DEPUTATION OF MERCHANTS—APPOINTMENT OF IMPERIAL COMMISSIONERS—THE PLENIPOTENTIARIES ASCEND THE PEIHO—APPROACH TO TIENTSIN—DENSE CROWDS—“THE TEMPLE OF SUPREME FELICITY”—VIEW OF THE RIVER—MAKING OURSELVES COMFORTABLE—BEDROOMS IN THE TEMPLE—FURTHER EXPLORATION OF THE PEIHO—ARRIVAL OF RUSSIAN AND AMERICAN MINISTERS—THEIR ABODES—PEAN—ARRIVAL OF THE IMPERIAL COMMISSIONERS—FULL POWERS AT LAST—OUR OFFICIAL PROCESSION—“THE TEMPLE OF THE OCEANIC INFLUENCES”—INTERVIEW WITH THE COMMISSIONERS—EXCHANGE OF FULL POWERS—ABRUPT TERMINATION OF THE INTERVIEW—ARRIVAL OF THE KWANG-FANG—KWEILIANG—HWASHANA—SUCCESS OF LORD ELGIN'S POLICY—ITS BEARING ON AFFAIRS AT CANTON—BRIGHTER PROSPECTS.

The day following the capture of the forts was devoted to repose after our exertions. On the 22d, however, a report reached our distant anchorage, to which I had returned, that the allied Admirals had decided on moving up the river. It had originally been arranged that they should be accompanied in the first instance by the Plenipotentiaries ; but as it



was now understood that the presence of the representatives of all four powers—two of whom were neutrals—might rather prove an encumbrance than otherwise, Lord Elgin expressed his readiness to await the Admirals' pleasure on the subject, anxious to avoid any act which might embarrass the naval authorities in the unlikely event of their being induced, by a very active opposition, to exchange their pacific for a warlike attitude. I was, however, permitted to accompany the force upon this occasion, and found quarters on board the *Opossum* with my old friend Commander Colin Campbell.

On my way, I landed at the North Fort to inspect a gigantic brass gun captured by the *Cormorant*, and also to explore the scene of desolation for which her guns were responsible. These forts were even more substantially constructed than those on the south side, but upon no known principle of fortification. The consequence was a terrible slaughter to the exposed garrison, twenty-nine of whom had been counted lying round their guns in one battery. The commandant of the fort had not yet been buried, and was lying at the door of his room, a round-shot having struck him just as he was emerging from it. Every building was riddled, and shells, entering from the exposed rear, had burst inside the bomb-proof chambers, so that the garrison was little to be blamed for only waiting a quarter of an hour in so warm a locality. The *Cormorant* moved up, the next morning, to the barrier, through which an opening had

been made to permit the egress of the junks, which were being cleared out of the river by the Admirals' and advanced gunboats.

The villagers of Takoo now came boldly down to the water's edge and communicated with us ; and we amused ourselves and the populace by driving a donkey tandem through the narrow streets.

About mid-day the Opossum was ready to start for the front, but the passage through the junk barrier seemed an impossibility. Temple Bar on a wet day never looked more hopelessly crowded to a gentleman in a hansom anxious to catch a train, than did the junk barrier to us, anxious to overtake the Admiral. At last we dashed at it in despair, and by a miracle of steering, which created a panic among the crews of the junks, who were all running into each other—crushing, jamming, and shouting at the same moment—succeeded in squeezing safely through. The breadth of the river at this point was not more than that of the Thames at Richmond. Its banks were thickly fringed by long reeds, behind the waving tops of which saltpans extended as far as the eye could reach, covered with conical tumuli of varied dimensions. Borne onward by a strong flood-tide, we swept round the sharp angles with which the river abounds throughout the whole length of its tortuous course from Tientsin, and soon found ourselves between banks of a more cheerful character. The gaunt reed had given place to the more profitable holcus, or Barbadoes millet, fields of which, bordered by willows,

and neatly fenced in the neighbourhood of the villages, imparted quite a civilised air to the country.

In two hours we arrived at the reach in which the Admirals were at anchor with five gunboats, and in company with them went quietly along, feeling our way with no little interest and curiosity, up waters for the first time ploughed by a foreign keel. Towards evening the mud villages became more numerous : their entire populations turned out as the leading gunboats passed, and saluted them with profound and reverential obeisances, then squatted in a long blue line upon the river's bank, and gazed in awe-struck wonderment as our ardent little craft, defying wind and tide, puffed steadily along, a slight commotion under her stern being the only external evidence to the Celestial eye of the demon that was propelling her. Our progress was in some measure retarded by the necessity which existed of clearing all the junks out of the river as we advanced, lest, in so narrow a stream, the authorities might order them to be sunk behind us, with the view of catching us in a trap. Although, doubtless, this was a very proper precaution, it was perfectly evident, from the panic which our appearance created, that no real danger was to be apprehended on this score, and that, so far from wishing to entrap us, they would be only too glad to get rid of us. The villagers were clearly under the impression that we were on our way to upset the dynasty. I accompanied Captain Hall and Mr Lay to the shore, when the latter gentleman

had some communication with the people. It invariably commenced, however, with a request that we should come and reign over them. "Hail, O King!" they shouted, as we approached; "welcome, Great King! be thou our Emperor; come thou and reign over us!" Then they would protest with the greatest earnestness their intention immediately to comply with the order to clear out their junks, and offer provisions of all sorts, refusing to receive money; this latter piece of politeness arising from dread of their own authorities, and the rest of their civility being based upon the alarm inspired by ourselves, and a prudent desire to propitiate the incoming dynasty. When asked to procure beef or other provisions not easy to get, they would urgently plead the difficulty of obtaining any, but submissively conclude by saying, "However, since you the Great King command, we must obey." Meantime, when the junks did not clear out fast enough, we cut their cables, sending whole fleets of them occasionally pell-mell down the river.

But we were not content with marking our track by these floating evidences of our progress; our advance was heralded by huge bonfires, which were made of stacks of millet straw, their position upon the margin of the river rendering them too available for fire-rafts to make it wise to leave them behind us, to be floated up with a flood-tide on the first dark night. As night closed in, the lurid glare cast by these huge conflagrations over the sky, doubt-

less carried terror into the hearts of mandarin and peasant ; while upon ourselves the effect was no less solemn and impressive. A broad belt of light shed its glowing lustre upon a grove of large trees, illuminating its sombre recesses, but throwing into gloom yet deeper by contrast those which were still in shade. The thick foliage flushed for a moment, then crackled and withered up under the scorching heat, leaving the scarred and naked branch like a maimed limb extended towards the blaze. The river eddied and rippled in the ruddy light, and the gunboats, with every spar and rope vividly distinct, seemed anchored in a sheet of flame.

Our day's work was over. We had reached a point about twenty miles from the mouth of the river, not only without molestation, but with every demonstration of good-will on the part of the inhabitants ; and I went to bed, encouraged by the hope that, as this absence of hostilities seemed likely to continue, we might still succeed, with our force of nine allied gunboats, then anchored at or near the spot, in reaching Tientsin.

On the following morning we had another most convincing and satisfactory proof of the anxiety of the enemy (if such they could be called under the circumstances) to avoid us. On going up to the fore-top of the Opossum, I observed encamped on the plain, at a distance of about a mile and a half, a large body of cavalry, estimated at about a thousand by Captain Osborn, who, in company with Sir Frederick

Nicolson, was in the Bustard and Staunch leading gunboats. They threw a round-shot or two amongst them, on which they speedily decamped. They were in all probability the same cavalry which had retreated on the capture of the forts. We were detained a few hours this morning for the French Admiral, who had got aground a short distance astern of us; and in the mean time I inspected the surrounding country through a glass. It reminded me in many respects of the south of Russia. The only trees visible were those which marked the course of the Peiho; and, indeed, inasmuch as in whatever direction one turned, the river was always in sight, the trees which wooded it were sufficient to wood the landscape as well. Throughout its whole course to Tientsin I observed no stream or canal of any note entering it. The country stretched away to the horizon a dry brown steppe, and across it, in labyrinthine twists and most eccentric windings, the Peiho finds its way to the sea, watering at least twice the extent of country which it would traverse did it flow in a straight line. The banks are composed of clay and sand, and I scarcely remember to have seen a stone either at Tientsin or on the way there.

Not far from our anchorage there was a large village. On the dusty main road to it there passed a considerable traffic—covered carts and donkey tandems predominated. One large waggon drawn by six or eight horses going at full trot, and crowded with passengers, appeared to be a stage-waggon. I



also observed wheel-barrows—a man being in the shafts and a donkey leading. Sometimes these carry passengers, the occupants sitting back to back, as in an open Irish car, on each side of the single huge wheel which works in the middle, between them. I was particularly struck with the neatness of construction of the solid mud cottages of which the villages are composed. The angles are all sharply finished, the gables adorned with ornamental moulding, the overhanging eaves of an excellently thatched roof, neatly trimmed, and rising out of it a respectable solid pair of chimneys. Circular brick kilns, like watch-towers, here and there dotted the landscape, as bricks are occasionally used for joss-houses and the superior order of residences.

Hedges, fences, and mud walls divided the fields near the river-bank, but away from the possibility of navigation, the country looked barren and uncultivated; primitive docks with mud dams contained junks undergoing repair, or in process of construction; and the tapering masts of these craft were visible in all directions, as they were anchored in different bends of the river. Now we could make out the smoke of our leading gunboats to the right, now to the left, now in front, now almost behind us, so interminable and intricate seemed the windings of the stream. Fortunately our only difficulty lay in getting some of the larger craft round the sharp turns; of water there was always abundance in mid-channel, the soundings never giving less

than two fathoms, and sometimes as much as seven. The French gunboats especially were constantly sticking on the sharp angles, their length and want of power rendering it a difficult operation to steer them in a narrow river with a strong tide running. Occasionally the Coromandel shared the same fate ; but by getting out hawsers to the shore, she was hauled into the stream ; and the villagers coming to the rescue in a strong body, and tugging away cheerfully at the ropes, facilitated the task considerably. Still we did not make so much progress as on the previous day, having accomplished probably ten or twelve miles.

Upon several occasions official messengers, with the buttons of petty mandarins, were observed waving on the shore, and making signs of their desire to communicate with us. Only once, however, was this attended to, and the messenger turned out to be the emissary of the magistrate of the district, who expressed a wish to hold intercourse with us ; the Admiral, however, very properly refused to incur any delay, or open communications with any one until he arrived at Tientsin.

The next day our advance was not more rapid ; indeed, we were left behind by the Admiral and advanced gunboats, in consequence of being attached to the *Fusée*, a heavy French craft that stood in need of much pulling and hauling at the corners. It is worthy of note that all our eighty and sixty horsepower gunboats traversed the river without the

slightest difficulty, subsequently making the passage in eight hours; and even the Cormorant despatch gun-vessel got up to Tientsin from Takoo in about twelve hours.

We passed in the course of the day a barrier of junks, which, however, were soon sent floating down the stream, and offered no material impediment to our advance. On the 26th we reached a point within a mile and a half of Tientsin, the country as we advanced having become more thickly populated, the banks more richly cultivated, and the river itself more crowded with junks. From the mast-head of the Opossum the gates and pagodas of the city were distinctly visible. It was reported that the Bustard and Staunch had actually reached the suburb, and as the achievement had thus been successfully completed, the Opossum was sent back to the Gulf with the news; and I had the satisfaction of reporting to Lord Elgin, by midnight of the same day, the gratifying intelligence of the fortunate issue of the expedition.

The Admirals did in effect reach Tientsin within a few hours afterwards, and Admiral Seymour was immediately waited upon by a deputation of leading merchants and gentry. (These people being impressed ✓ with the absurd notion that our real object, in pursuing a vigorous policy in China, was an extension of our commercial relations with it, immediately offered to trade with the gunboats then at Tientsin, in spite, they themselves averred, of the opposition of

their government, and requested the Admiral to send in a list of the merchandise he wished to dispose of, together with their prices ; and in consideration of his finding a ready market, they went on to express a hope that he would spare the town. Mr Lay informed these gentlemen that we desired not trade, but Commissioners, and that, if these did not speedily make their appearance, he feared the town would be destroyed ; upon which the deputation stated that they would themselves proceed to Peking, and knock without ceasing at the Imperial Palace ; and they guaranteed that by their importunity they would obtain Commissioners, and hoped that in the mean time their august Excellencies, then in the river, would be satisfied with abundance of beef and provisions, upon which numbers of oxen were incontinently brought to the bank and sacrificed as peace-offerings.

During my absence the Sampson had arrived from Hong-Kong with the Woodcock and Kestrel, forty-horse-power gunboats, in tow, and having on board a company of Royal Engineers, 105 strong.

On the following morning Mr Bruce proceeded up the river, to make arrangements for the reception of the Ambassador ; and on the 29th news was received from him that these were completed, and that no obstacle remained to impede the immediate progress of the allied Plenipotentiaries.

On the same day another and more important

communication was received, the last with which we were favoured from our old friends Tan, Tsung, and Wu. It enclosed, without comment, a copy of the following Imperial decree : "We command Kweiliang, Chief Secretary of State, and Hwashana, President of the Board of Civil Office, to go by post route to the port of Tientsin, for the investigation and despatch of business. Respect this."

The fact that this document emanated from the court, immediately on the report reaching Peking of the arrival of our gunboats at Tientsin, not only thoroughly bore out the view of the Plenipotentiaries in the estimate they had formed of the probable effects of the policy they had pursued hitherto, but served as a most complete justification of that policy, inasmuch as the Imperial Government, by at once superseding Tan & Company, tacitly acknowledged their mismanagement of affairs, and by the appointment of two new commissioners gave a fresh proof of their desire to settle matters amicably. With any other nation one would have supposed that the capture of the forts at the mouth of one of its rivers, and its subsequent ascent by a hostile force, would have called forth a warlike demonstration instead of a civil commission.

The Chinese differ, however, from other nations, and fortunately the Plenipotentiaries appreciated the distinction. This news, of course, rendered their immediate departure for Tientsin more than ever imperative ; and it was therefore arranged that Lord

Elgin and Baron Gros should proceed up the river the same evening. As it was discovered at the last moment that the French gunboat appropriated to Baron Gros's use was unable to ascend the river, from defective machinery, his Excellency and staff accompanied the English mission in the *Slaney*.) A lovely moon lighted up the windings of our watery path, and tempted us to remain on deck till a late hour; and as we swept rapidly past grove and hamlet, we regarded with wonder, in the pale clear gleam of that midnight hour, all the evidences of a population as tranquil and unsuspecting of danger as though the thunder of barbarian guns had never fallen on their ears, or as if their countrymen flying before the barbarian bayonet was a sight devoid of all significance.

Yet scarce a week had elapsed since the fortifications these poor peasantry had gazed on wonderingly, as impregnable fortresses, had been levelled with the ground, and an army, in their eyes invincible, had been scattered to the winds. Now the pant of the steam-engine mingled with their dreams, but was powerless to keep them awake; and so thoroughly was this mutual confidence established, that a solitary gunboat, in the dead of night, was fearlessly threading its way through an enemy's country, along the narrow and devious river which formed the high-road to the capital—the mysteries of which, a week before, were unknown to the foreigner; and on board that lonely bark which now traversed it for almost the first time, were the Ambassadors of the two

greatest powers in the world, forcing their way into the heart of a country containing 300,000,000 inhabitants, in defiance of the will of the Government, as expressed by an overt act of hostility only a few days before. Probably no British minister ever performed a journey in the country to which he was accredited under such anomalous circumstances as those which attended the one upon which Lord Elgin was now engaged; not even Lords Macartney and Amherst, when in the same capacity they ascended this same river in Chinese junks, and inscribed themselves as "tribute-bearers" on the flags which floated from their mast-heads.

Daylight found us in the suburbs of Tientsin, the first aspect of which, as approached from the east, is most remarkable; enormous stacks of salt, numbering from two to three hundred, line the banks of the river for some hundreds of yards below the town; these stacks vary in length from two hundred to six hundred feet and average about a hundred in breadth; they are twenty or thirty feet in height, shaped like the rounded top of a carrier's waggon, and covered with matting, or thatched with millet straw—the salt being stacked in bags. Passing these we arrived at a bridge of boats, which connected one of the suburbs with the city, and which was opened to let us through. The river now flows between banks ten or twelve feet high, and densely populated; the mud houses were packed closely on either side, and their occupants still more compactly

wedged, not only down to the water's edge, but into it up to their waists, in order to gaze at their ease on the phenomenon before them. Thus an oblique plane of upturned faces and bare heads extended almost from the surface of the water to the eaves of the houses; and up to the last day of our residence the banks were always more or less crowded with spectators, watching the movements of the barbarians. A long straight reach extends from below the bridge of boats to the point of the junction of the river and the grand canal, which enters the Peiho at right angles from the southward, and here terminates its extended course of about 600 miles.

Directly facing us, as we steamed up this reach, past a line of our own gunboats, which were anchored in it, was a picturesque line of buildings, abreast of which the allied Admirals were moored. This fragile and somewhat fantastic construction suggested the notion of a summer palace. We were informed that as such it had, in fact, served the Emperor Kien-lung, in honour of which happy event it had been invested by imperial patent with the title of "The Temple of Supreme Felicity," under which auspicious designation it was now about to serve as our abode.

We were soon clambering up the steep bank, finding some difficulty in freeing ourselves from the services which were officiously pressed upon us by the Chinamen who crowded it, and who, thrusting forth helping hands, seemed anxious to show us every mark of civility. We found, when we stood within





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MEMBER OF SUPREME EFFICIENCY  
Residence of the United States of America.

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the walls which enclosed our future residence, that it was not belied by its external aspect. As is generally the case in China, it served the double purpose of a temple and a palace, though it had not been honoured with the imperial presence since the Emperor Kien-lung had made it his temporary abode.

Upon the top of the wall, which was only separated from the edge of the river-bank by a narrow pathway, were two large apartments of light and graceful construction, surrounded by verandahs, elaborately carved, in which depended monster horn-lanterns, gaudily painted, as transparent as ground glass, and decorated with innumerable tassels and silken hangings. The Chinese have carried the art of fabricating these lanterns to great perfection. They first soften the horn by the application of a very high degree of moist heat, and then extend it into thin laminæ of any shape, either flat or globular. The walls of these rooms were composed of paper pasted upon the wooden trellis-work; the sliding-panels into which it was divided were made to answer the purpose of windows. When they were all shut, however, the paper was so transparent that there was plenty of light, and on a sunny day the glare was unpleasant. These two buildings were thirty or forty yards apart, and connected by a verandah which ran along the top of the wall, and terminated in two quaint little kiosks, their up-turned roofs supported by carved posts. These apartments were appropriated by Baron Gros and

Lord Elgin; that occupied by the latter being perched upon an artificial mound, laid out in true Chinese taste, and ascended by steps of ornamental rockwork. Overhanging the river, they commanded an extensive and ever-interesting view: below them a dozen English and French gunboats, some of them moored within pleasant conversational distance, imparted a satisfactory sense of security to the position.

Not a single native craft, except an occasional ferry-boat, rippled the surface of the stream, or reposed upon its waters. What a metamorphosis had been wrought in a few hours by the magic devil-ships from the west! We were not able to appreciate it, but to the Chinese the change must have been startling and significant. We learn from the accounts of the embassies of Lords Macartney and Amherst, how active the river life at Tientsin was in their day. "We crossed a bridge over the river," says the historian of Lord Amherst's mission, "the surface of which was scarcely visible from junks;" and again, "I counted 200 spectators on one junk, and these vessels were innumerable." The spectators were as numerous as ever, but their posts of observation were no longer junks. People and houses completed the view from these windows; a part of the city wall, one of the gates, and some pagodas, appearing at no great distance to the right.

The *personnel* of the two missions were accommodated in the temple, and other buildings all enclosed within one outer wall. A partition wall, however,

divided us from our allies. They occupied a number of detached summer-houses, dotted about a garden. We established ourselves in the innermost recesses of the temple, our bedrooms furnished with sacred pigs and bronzes, in which smouldered eternal fire (until we came and allowed it to go out); our slumbers pre-



A Bedroom at Tientsin.

sided over by grim deities, with enormous stomachs, or many-armed goddesses, with heads encircled in a blaze of golden or rather brass flame. The perfume of incense still clung to these sacred purlieus. Would it had been the only odour to which our nostrils were subjected! Now began the process commonly known

as "shaking down" into our quarters: altars were turned into washhand-stands; looking-glasses were supported against little gods; tables, chairs, and beds were indented for upon certain venerable citizens, who had been appointed by the authorities to attend to our wants. Doubtless they must have wondered much at many of our demands, and some of them—as, for instance, tubs—they never succeeded in satisfying.

Servants with a white badge, emblem of an armistice, attached to their coats, waited assiduously upon us, perpetually presenting us with little cups of tea; indeed, for the first few days a man was always walking about with a teapot, ready at the shortest notice to refresh the thirsty soul. The tables with which we were supplied were solidly constructed and well carved, square in shape, as Chinese tables always are. A red cloth, elaborately embroidered, served as a tablecloth, and, falling to the ground, in front, concealed the legs of the table. The high-backed uncomfortable chairs were similarly decorated, gorgeous enough to look upon, but very disagreeable to use. Some of us erected our mosquito-curtains over square wooden ottomans; others slept upon a brick platform, generally used in China, and which in cold weather is heated by fires from beneath, after the manner of an oven—an unhealthy style of bed-place at all times, it should seem, for in summer the damp is apt to strike through the bricks, and in winter, when they are not only dry but

heated, a semi-baking process must be more or less prejudicial.

In front of the temple was a square courtyard, which was partially shaded by the spreading arms of a fine old tree ; however, we thought nature required a little assistance, so the whole court was matted in, which not only added to the picturesque effect of our abode, and enabled those of us with vivid imaginations to fancy themselves in Italy, but was of a most practical utility in reducing the temperature, when mind and matter were both in danger of being melted entirely away. A raised flagged passage intersected this court, and on each side of it was a quaint little kiosk, the roof separated by four carved pillars, also elaborately carved, brilliantly coloured, and surmounted with dragons' heads, rampant fish, and other devices. In one of these a marble slab was erected vertically upon an elevated stone platform, and was covered with Chinese characters, alleged to have been traced by the hand of the Emperor Kien-lung, and to embody a high moral sentiment.

The building on the opposite side of the courtyard was formed into the guardhouse, the guard being usually composed of engineers and marines, and numbering upwards of a hundred men. Attached to this building were the servants' offices, and behind them the stables. Our establishment was thus very complete ; and it was not without a feeling of regret that I saw it dismantled, preparatory to its

restoration for the rites of paganism, when, after having occupied it for upwards of a month, we looked back upon it for the last time.

As it had been deemed not impossible that it might be necessary to advance at some future period nearer to the capital, the Admiral had been induced to push two of the gunboats on an exploratory expedition still further up the Peiho. One of these, the Kestrel, was of the smallest class, and, drawing only five feet water, was well adapted for the service. At a distance of about ten miles, however, above Tientsin, even this draught proved too much, and she was compelled to return, having solved the problem that, unless considerably lightened, and not with certainty even then, the ascent of the Peiho to Toong-chow would be impracticable for our gunboats at that season of the year. From the high-water marks on the river-banks, however, there can be little doubt that at certain periods of the year the Peiho would be navigable for all classes of our gunboats. She reported the character of the river-banks above Tientsin to be unchanged.

On the afternoon of the day of our arrival, Count Poutiatine and Mr Reed arrived together in the Russian steamer "Amerika," and immediately issued a proclamation stating that their visit to Tientsin was altogether of a pacific character. The attitude they found themselves thus compelled to assume was not without its inconveniences, as compared with ours; for although exact in the payment of our just debts,

we insisted upon all our reasonable wants being promptly and satisfactorily supplied. Thus we had at once appropriated the most convenient and respectable residence we could find ; but our neutral allies had some difficulty in renting a house on shore : the proprietor (doubtless a good deal puzzled as to the relation of might and right in his view of the state of matters generally) made a novel proposition in the shape of an offer of 6000 dollars if they would *not rent* it. This, however, was declined, the difficulty somehow or other overcome, and a handsome rent for the short space of one month was ultimately pressed upon the reluctant owner. To judge from the appearance of the mansion, he was a rich man. Mr Reed lived in a charming retreat with a Levantine air about it ; a courtyard with flowers and fountains, and ponds full of gold fish, was surrounded by cool airy apartments with paper walls, and verandahs and balconies overhanging the river. Count Poutiatine lived next door—a strip of intervening building which was impregnable from without, and consecrated to the use of the female portion of the Chinese owner's establishment, alone separating him from his colleague.


This residence was on the right bank of the river, and within view of our yamun, though distant from it about half a mile. Ere long the flags of our respective nations, waving proudly in the breeze, signified to the Chinese world of Tientsin the distinctive abodes of the chiefs of the four barbarian



hordes who had thus boldly located themselves in their city.

In a country which abounded with horses and roads, it was not to be supposed that persons of an exploratory tendency were to be satisfied with pedestrian excursions ; we therefore sent in a requisition for a certain number of steeds, and after some delay were furnished with what appeared the scum of the stables of Tientsin. These were indignantly rejected, and we ultimately obtained six very respectable ponies, and six very uncomfortable Chinese saddles, very hard and angular, and garnished with extensive drapery, and an awkward bolster-shaped protuberance in front. To these uncouth contrivances, however, we ultimately became accustomed ; and I had minutely explored the country round Tientsin within a radius of about six miles before we left it.

Intelligence now reached us of the near approach of the Commissioners, and Mr Lay received a note from his friends who had formed the deputation on the day of the Admiral's arrival, calling his attention to the fact of their prompt nomination as a proof that their promise had been fulfilled. This news was confirmed on the following day (2d of June) by the Prefect of the city, Pean, who came to pay us a visit, ostensibly to see that our wants were supplied, and inform us of the proximity of the Commissioners, but really to investigate the barbarian character, and acquire importance in the eyes of the Commissioners by



the fact of his having had personal intercourse with us—a proceeding the dangers of which he would no doubt descant upon, as also the wonderful talent he displayed in “soothing” our “uncontrollable fierceness.” \

In consequence, probably, of his own representations of his qualifications for the office, he was afterwards appointed one of the subordinates in carrying on negotiations, and proved to be a self-sufficient ambitious “intrigant:” his dishonesty, however, was so transparent, and his general bearing so offensive, that he soon became as obnoxious to his own superiors as he was to us. Upon this occasion of his first interview, his manner was one of fawning servility, while his aspect and gestures were so effeminate that the description of one of our party, who called him “a large flirt,” was most appropriate. Notwithstanding an immense deal of insinuating giggle and coquetry, he failed in his principal object of seeing Lord Elgin, and returned very little wiser than when he came. )

On the afternoon of the same day I was taking a ride with Fitz-Roy, making trial of our ponies and of the road to Peking for the first time, when a cortège, preceded by a cloud of dust, indicated the approach of some grand personages. Presently appeared runners with rods of office, corresponding to javelin-men: these cleared the way, and forced the people to the right and left; then followed two stately chairs, each borne by eight

stalwart bearers, containing two of the most elevated dignitaries in the realm. The common people at once brought themselves up to the attitude "attention," the hands being pressed on the outside of the thigh, and the body maintained erect and motionless. We could scarcely make out the features of the inmates through the small window of the chair, across which was stretched fine gauze; but though in all probability we were the first barbarians they had ever set eyes upon, they gazed, with all the imperturbability of Chinese dignity, impassively in front of them, their countenances manifesting neither curiosity, alarm, surprise, or any emotion whatever. Immediately behind was a dense and dusty crowd of footmen and horsemen, evidently coming off a journey, and though many of them were handsomely apparelled, and were doubtless officials of some rank, they looked worn and travel-stained. A number of excellent well-built covered baggage-waggons, drawn by four or six large fat mules, completed the procession, which was evidently one not of display, but of serious earnest.

On the following day our conjecture that we had witnessed the entry of the Commissioners was confirmed by the communication they addressed to Lord Elgin, in which, after styling themselves Imperial Commissioners and Ministers, they announced their arrival with full powers, and fixed the day after for an interview. In answer to this communication the Ambassador informed the Commissioners that,

although the nature of their powers was not described in their letter, still, inasmuch as they appeared, according to the title by which they announced themselves, to be invested with authority corresponding to that conferred upon him as the Plenipotentiary minister of his Sovereign, he would make no objection to meet the Commissioners at the hour they named, "to the end that by an exchange of powers all doubt may be removed as to the sincerity of an intention on both sides to terminate existing differences by peaceful negotiation."

It did, indeed, seem to augur favourably that the term "Minister bearing full powers" should have been used, as upon no former occasion had a Chinese functionary been invested with this title; and all previous demands for a Commissioner so named had met with a decided refusal. It was consequently arranged that the interview should take place in a temple dedicated to the "Oceanic Influences." This building was situated in the middle of a plain at some distance from the town, and upwards of three miles from our yamun. The mid-day sun had now become so powerful that it was considered expedient, for the sake of the soldiers forming the guard, that the ceremony should be postponed until late in the afternoon.

At 3 P.M. on the following day we left the yamun, the thermometer then standing at 133° in the sun. The procession was composed of the Ambassador and suite, in twelve chairs, accom-

panied by a guard of honour of 150 marines, preceded by the band of the Calcutta. Lord Elgin's chair was of the description usually employed by mandarins of the highest rank, much larger than the ordinary size, surmounted by a brass knob, and borne by eight bearers. To avoid a long detour the chairs were sent round to meet us, and we crossed the river in boats. As usual, a dense crowd lined the river-banks, evincing the most eager interest and curiosity. ( Upon the guard presenting arms, the band striking up "God save the Queen," and the procession forming and commencing to move, this was converted into excitement; ) nor, indeed, was it to be wondered at that an event altogether unprecedented, and of so striking and novel a character, should create some sensation. A procession of 200 Chinamen marching down the Strand armed with spears, and bows and arrows, or gigantic matchlocks, with their own tails reaching to their heels, and squirrel tails adorning their conical caps, with dragon-emblazoned breasts, and trousers and sleeves of equal dimensions; surrounding chairs of state containing obese dignitaries with peacocks' feathers and red balls on their head, would probably attract a crowd; and should this crowd have become strongly impressed with the belief that in this outlandish procession they were gazing upon specimens of the race into whose hands the government of the country was about to pass, their countenances would betray a more than ordinary interest. But the effect, even

then, upon an English mob would not be so great as that which our appearance was calculated to create, inasmuch as Chinamen do occasionally perambulate the streets of London, and this type of countenance and peculiarity of costume is familiar to every child who is fond of picture-books. But in a country where an "Illustrated Pekin News" does not exist, and the Chinese costume is popularly supposed to be the only dress known to the world at large, the appearance of our red-coated marines, and cocked-hat diplomats, must have been sufficiently startling.

Our way for nearly two miles led through the extensive suburb which surrounds Tientsin in almost every direction—the winding streets choked with people who only allowed a narrow lane for the passage of the procession, and who bobbed as each successive chair passed, down to the level of the window, so as to have a good view of the inmate.



Sedan Chair.

The most perfect order and silence was maintained throughout, and every sign of outward respect shown in the demeanour of the people, whose heads were uncovered, and tails let down: the latter only, how-

ever, is the usual Chinese mark of respect. The shops were all shut, but our confined position in chairs added to the intense heat, which rendered the task of observation irksome ; and the dense crowd which confined its range, prevented our doing more on this occasion than obtaining a cursory impression of the surrounding scene. At last we emerged from the labyrinth of streets we had been threading, and found ourselves on a vast open plain, and in the distance observed the group of buildings, situated upon a slight eminence, and in an isolated position, which was our destination. The intervening distance was thickly dotted with human beings, reminding one of the Epsom Downs on a Derby day.

As we approached the building, the sounds of shrill pipe and tom-tom fell upon the ear, and mingled with the martial strains of our band. A feeble intimation was made to Major Boyle, commanding the marines, that he was not to enter the gate of the court with the guard. This, however, he very properly disregarded, and soon the discordant music emitted by half-a-dozen blind performers, who stood at the door, and played probably the same air with which Lord Macartney had been honoured, of "subjugation perfected," was completely drowned in a stentorian adieu to our "own Marianne." The group of buildings enclosed within the outer wall which we had now entered, was composed of temples, audience-halls, and priests' houses, separated by courtyards of different dimen-

sions, in which were planted rows of trees and flowering plants, the whole covering a considerable area. The audience-hall in which the Commissioners were waiting had very much the appearance of a deep verandah, as it was entirely open to the courtyard on one side, from which it was approached by a flight of steps. Opposite to these the marines drew up. The Commissioners came down the steps to meet Lord Elgin as he got out of his chair; the guard presented arms, and the band played the National Anthem. The effect of this mixture of European and Chinese ceremony was striking even to us, who were familiar with both; but to the Commissioners, totally unacquainted with Europeans, the sudden appearance of 150 stalwart bearded soldiers, as they poured into the inmost court of the temple, must have been alarming;) and as the hoarse word of command was given within a few yards of them, followed by the ringing clink of the muskets on the paved yard, and the roll of the big drum, they might be excused if a momentary suspicion flashed across their minds that the fate of Yeh might be in reserve for them.

Lord Elgin was now invited to a seat at a long table, covered with sundry descriptions of Chinese delicacies, the Commissioners being seated upon either side of him. After the whole party had been accommodated with chairs round this table, and the usual preliminary compliments had passed, the Ambassador stated that the object of the meeting being, as is usual in such cases, an exchange of full powers, he



had brought his, and they were forthwith produced and read.

The full powers of the Commissioners were then handed to Kweiliang, upon a tray covered with a cloth of imperial yellow. The venerable mandarin, after receiving them with every mark of respect, and holding them for a moment elevated above his head in a reverential attitude, handed them to Mr Wade, who translated the document. Although the terms of the decree conferring full powers on the Imperial Commissioners were reasonably large, still Lord Elgin, on inquiry, ascertained that the Commissioners had not been put in possession of a seal of office, termed the Kwang-fang. When he complained of this omission, he was informed by them, that this seal was only given to officers holding permanent situations. Being apprehensive that some mystification might be involved in this explanation, he deemed the circumstance one which warranted him in manifesting some displeasure. Nor was he sorry to avail himself of the opportunity, knowing the importance which the Chinese attach to expression and manner, to make his dissatisfaction apparent. Among the Chinese the physiognomy and deportment of the individual are carefully noted, as indices of the spirit in which the affairs with the management of which he is intrusted are likely to be conducted; and in their dealings with foreigners especially, we have repeated evidence, from the accounts given in their official despatches of the varied expression of the

barbarian countenance, that the functionaries employed were much guided in the tone they held, by the emotions they thought they could detect as portrayed in the physiognomy.

Lord Elgin had arrived at Tientsin as the representative of a nation whose dignity had been outraged. It had been necessary to have recourse to violence, and to force an entry into the country, to obtain satisfaction for insults; and any symptom of reluctance to grant it rendered a stern, uncompromising bearing doubly necessary. He accordingly declined the refreshment which was pressed upon him, and terminated the meeting abruptly, stating, as he did so, that he would reserve for a written communication any remarks he might have to make upon the subject of the full powers. As he descended the steps to his chair, the most undisguised dismay was depicted on the countenances of the Commissioners and their satellites, the former hurrying after the Ambassador to his chair with a profusion of protestations and remonstrances.

This meeting was productive of the most salutary effect, and led precisely to the result desired by Lord Elgin. A communication from the Commissioners arrived very shortly afterwards, requesting that Mr Lay might be allowed to visit them, and assist them with his advice in the difficult circumstances in which they found themselves placed. Mr Lay's position at Shanghai, where he held the appointment under the Chinese Government of Inspector of Customs, had

brought him into close and intimate contact with their officials; and he possessed their confidence to an extent probably never accorded to a European. As Lord Elgin had the highest opinion of this gentleman's capacity and judgment, it was most desirable that the Chinese should place him in the position relatively to themselves in which Lord Elgin most wished to see him. From this period Mr Lay was in daily communication with the Chinese Commissioners, and affairs were thus early put into a train which enabled them to be brought to a speedy and satisfactory conclusion.

The mission of Mr Lay, however, being somewhat of a confidential or non-official character, Lord Elgin kept up his official intercourse with the Commissioners by insisting that the Kwang-fang should be obtained without delay. In this application he was quite successful: the Kwang-fang was sent down from Peking, and the much-vexed question of full powers set finally at rest.

Such was the nature and such the results of the first interview of Lord Elgin with the Imperial Commissioners. It did not last a quarter of an hour; nor did the Ambassador again visit the "Temple of the Oceanic Influences," or meet the Commissioners, till he went there finally to sign the treaty. At the ceremony above described, the Commissioners were dressed in the plain but handsome costume of the Chinese mandarin, the only mark denoting their high rank being the opaque red button and peacock's feather;

a tippet of rich maroon silk covered their shoulders and arms ; and with the exception of one or two rings, their persons were devoid of all ornament. As is usual upon all occasions of ceremonial interviews, numbers of minor officials crowded the apartment, eagerly listening to the conversation, while four or five intelligent-looking secretaries took notes in writing of all that passed.



Kweiliang, First Imperial Commissioner.

The senior Commissioner, Kweiliang, was a venerable man, of placid and benevolent expression, with

a countenance full of intelligence, though his eye was somewhat dimmed and his hand palsied from extreme age. His manners were polished and dignified, and his whole bearing that of a perfect gentleman. He is a Tartar, and has risen to his present high position after a long course of services. His brother Iliang was Governor-General of the Two Kiangs (in one of which Shanghai is situated), and his account of the visit of Mr Maclane to the neighbourhood of Soo-chow has been already alluded to. Kweiliang himself was Governor-General of the province of Chih-li at the period of Sir John Bowring's visit to the Gulf of Pechelee in 1854. He then ranked as second Manchu in the Empire, Yu-ching, the senior Chief-Secretary or Prime Minister, being the first. Yu-ching died during the negotiations. His full titles, under which he signed the treaty, were as follows: "Kweiliang, a senior Chief-Secretary of State, styled of the East Cabinet, Captain-General of the Plain White Banner of the Manchu Banner Force, and Superintendent-General of the Administration of Criminal Law." His colleague, Hwashana, a mandarin of the same grade, was a much younger man, with a square, solid face, and a large nose. In general appearance he reminded one strongly of the pictures of Oliver Cromwell; and in the lines of the lower part of his countenance, much firmness and decision of character were apparent. He styles himself "one of his Imperial Majesty's Expositors of the Classics, Manchu President of the Office for the Regulation of

the Civil Establishment, Captain-General of the Bordered Blue Banner of the Chinese Banner Force, and Visitor of the Office of Interpretation." \The accompanying portraits are copied from photographs taken by the Hon. N. Jocelyn.



Hwashana, Second Imperial Commissioner.

Within the two or three days following our meeting with the Chinese Commissioners, Baron Gros, Count Poutiatine, and Mr Reed, had interviews with their Excellencies, and expressed themselves respectively satisfied with the full powers which they produced.

It will thus appear, from the above narrative of events, that the allied Plenipotentiaries had every reason to be satisfied with the results of the policy they had persevered in hitherto, in spite of the many obstacles which had been interposed. It was evident that the Imperial Cabinet was thoroughly alarmed, and that the Plenipotentiary Commissioners sent down to treat were prepared to make an extensive sacrifice of national prejudices, in order to relieve the Government from the standing menace which was presented by our appearance at Tientsin, and naval occupation of the Peiho to that point.

The opinion recorded by Lord Elgin on the occasion of his first arrival in China, that the only solution of the problem, as it then stood, was in the exercise of a moral pressure of this description in the neighbourhood of the capital, was now in process of justification. By these means alone he conceived that, without in any way interfering with the flourishing trade which, in spite of our misunderstanding with the Imperial authorities in the south, was being carried on at the ports, and any interruption to which would have been most disastrous to our commercial interests, the great object of the mission he had undertaken to China might be gained, and a lasting and satisfactory treaty effected. But it had seemed almost hopeless that, with the limited force at that early period at his disposal, any such measure could ever be successfully undertaken. Baron Gros not having arrived, the French support was hypothetical.

An army of scarce 2500 men, still on their way from England, and the naval force then on the station, composed the entire resources upon which the Ambassador could depend, in the attempt he was about to make to obtain satisfaction from the Imperial Government, and extort from it a treaty of a more extensive scope than that which was granted to Sir Henry Pottinger only after two-thirds of the seaboard had been ravaged, the Imperial troops repeatedly vanquished, and the principal cities of the Empire stormed and captured. The expenditure of men alone upon that occasion, from sickness and other causes, was numerically as large as the whole force with which greater results were now to be achieved. But even then Lord Elgin might have adhered to his original intention of proceeding to the north as soon as the season permitted and the troops arrived, had not the conduct of affairs at Canton produced complications of so anomalous and intricate a nature that, upon his arrival at Hong-Kong in September, he found himself compelled to abandon his idea of a northern expedition, and to devote to the capture and occupation of Canton the force which he had designed for Peking.

He still clung to the hope, however, that a portion of it might yet prove available for this purpose, and the object of his visit to Calcutta was so far gained, that he succeeded in obtaining a valuable reinforcement of native regiments. He further believed that a form of government might be established at Canton, which would facilitate the task of its military occu-



pation, and enable the General to spare some of his troops for service in the north. In this expectation he was not disappointed: by the Sampson, which brought up the engineers, he received an intimation from General Straubenzee, that, if more troops were required, they could be spared ; and on the 4th of June, on the very day of the first interview with the Commissioners above described, the Fury left the Gulf of Pechelee, for the purpose of bringing to the scene of negotiations the 59th regiment. There can be little doubt that the timely arrival of this regiment removed from the Imperial mind the last shadow of doubt as to the necessity of concluding the treaty. In a word, then, the policy of the allied Plenipotentiaries, as so far developed, had in effect placed the Emperor in their grasp, and the dynasty itself at their mercy, without in any way endangering the European communities at the ports, or even disturbing their trade. It was, indeed, matter for congratulation that they had at last succeeded in placing themselves in this favourable attitude, with a force so limited and hampered, and under such adverse influences generally. It may be readily imagined that the five weeks we passed at Tientsin formed a most cheerful contrast to the same period spent in the Gulf of Pechelee. There we had more than once utterly despaired of ultimate success ; now we felt that, though disappointed in our hopes of reaching Peking, the doubts and anxieties we had experienced would probably be more than compensated for by a diplomatic triumph.