

## CHAPTER XX.

DUPLICITY OF THE COMMISSIONERS—ARRIVAL OF THE EMPEROR'S ASSENT—ARRIVAL OF REINFORCEMENTS—ABANDONMENT OF VISIT TO PEKIN—CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY—STATE OF MATTERS IN THE SOUTH—FINAL VISIT TO COMMISSIONERS—DEATH OF THE PRIME MINISTER, YU—HWASHANA'S POEMS—"OLD" CHANG : HIS POETICAL EFFUSIONS—DEPARTURE FROM TIENTSIN—THE GREAT WALL—STATE OF MATTERS IN THE SOUTH—APPOINTMENT OF FIVE COMMISSIONERS—MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF CANTON—LORD ELGIN'S DESPATCH TO THE GENERAL—DEPARTURE FOR JAPAN.

ALTHOUGH in the ordinary course of diplomatic routine it is considered unnecessary to procure, before ratification, the assent of the sovereign to a treaty negotiated between specially appointed plenipotentiaries, Lord Elgin decided upon adopting the course followed by Sir Henry Pottinger in the Treaty of Nankin, and obtaining the Imperial assent to the Treaty, the ratifications of which, it had been arranged, should be exchanged at Peking within the period of a year from the date of its signature. His intention to this effect was expressed to the Commissioners, who, accordingly, four days after it was signed, forwarded to his Lordship a communication in which they

stated that they had received an Imperial Autograph Rescript to the following effect :—“ We have perused your Memorial and know all. Respect this.” As the fact of the Emperor’s cognisance of “all” did not by any means imply his assent to it, the Ambassador replied that he “was still awaiting his Majesty’s approval to the conditions of the Treaty.” In answer to which the Commissioners stated, that “as soon as we shall have in person presented the originals of the different nations’ treaties, with the seals and signatures, to his Majesty at the capital, and received the ratification of them in the Imperial autograph, it shall be transmitted, with all speed, to Shanghai for the information of your Excellency.”

Lord Elgin, in reply to the above communication, states “that he cannot consider peace to be re-established until he shall have been satisfied of the Emperor’s entire acceptance of the conditions agreed to by the Commissioners as his Majesty’s Plenipotentiaries. That the Undersigned is neither acting nor insisting upon more than is justified by the usage of the Empire, is shown by the decree of the late Emperor, a copy of which he has the honour to enclose. Within a few days of its arrival at Nankin, Sir H. Pottinger began to move his fleet down the Yang-tse-Kiang. The Undersigned is bound to require an assurance, similarly complete, of the purpose of his present Majesty to abide by the engagements entered into on his behalf. Without such an

assurance the Undersigned cannot quit Tientsin, and delay in procuring it will leave him no other alternative but to order up to that city the large body of troops which has arrived from Hong-Kong, and is now lying in the Gulf of Pechelee."

This letter was followed up by a prompt requisition for barrack accommodation for the 59th Regiment, which had recently arrived in the Gulf in the troop-ship Adventure. It produced an immediate effect, the Commissioners replying the same day, and promising to procure the required assent, all difficulty on the subject being removed from their minds by the fact which had been brought to their notice of the existence of a precedent.

Accordingly, on the 4th of July, or only two days afterwards, a letter was received from the Commissioners, with the following enclosure } — "On the 23d day of the 5th moon of the 8th year of Hien Fung (3d July), the Great Council had the honour to receive the following Imperial decree :—

"Kweiliang and his colleagues have submitted for our perusal copies of the treaties of the different nations. These have been negotiated and sealed by Kweiliang and his colleague. As Kweiliang and his colleague now represent that the different nations are desirous of having our autograph acknowledgment as evidence of their validity, We (hereby signify) our assent to all the propositions in the English and French, and in the Russian and American treaties, as submitted to us in their previous Memorial by

these ministers, and we command that the course pursued be in accordance therewith. \ Respect this."

With reference to this Imperial decree, Mr Wade states in his note on the above document, that "these Shang-yu Imperial decrees are never in autograph. They are prepared by the Council, and go forth as the will of the Emperor. It will be remembered with what ceremony Kweiliang produced that declaring the powers with which he and Hwashana were invested at their first conference with Lord Elgin." It will be observed that this decree, which was only forced out of the Emperor by Lord Elgin's pertinacity, was in general terms, and applied to the treaties made by the other Powers, as well as ourselves.

The 59th were actually on their way up the river in gunboats when this letter arrived. Their advance was at once countermanded, and they returned to Hong-Kong without ever having reached Tientsin, but not without having done good service.

It was indeed with feelings of the deepest regret and disappointment that, in consequence of the news which now arrived from Canton, Lord Elgin found himself compelled to give this order, and to abandon his original intention of visiting Peking, in order to present to the Emperor the letter with which he had been accredited by Her Majesty. The very success which had attended our operations hitherto, and the facility with which they had been carried out, only furnished a more unmistakable proof of

the ease with which we might have reached Peking, had we been at Tientsin two months earlier, when Canton and its neighbourhood were still tranquil, when the Chinese were unprepared, and the climate was that of an English spring. The political importance of such an achievement it is impossible to over-estimate. The much-vexed question of the reception of a British Minister at the capital would have been set at rest for ever, and under peculiarly favourable conditions.

Now, unfortunately, everything combined to induce his Excellency to abandon the idea. A Tartar force had collected in the neighbourhood of the capital during the last two months, and although a visit to Peking after the signature of the treaty of peace would not have had a hostile character, yet it would have been distasteful to the Emperor, and it must, in common prudence, have preceded the evacuation of Tientsin by the allied force. A state of affairs had, however, arisen in the south, that made it imperative that neither the naval nor military force should be detained in the north any longer than was absolutely necessary. Moreover, the sun was in its most fatal month, and a march of fifty miles would be attended with serious consequences ; while the *eclat* and prestige of any such movement would have been very much neutralised by the dilatory nature of the negotiations, and the apparent vacillation at the outset.

Thus every one of those evil results, as arising out

of the delay, which had been anticipated by Lord Elgin at Shanghai more than three months before, and to avoid which he felt justified in proceeding to the north without waiting for the Admiral, had been realised.\*

On the 26th of May, Lord Elgin had received a communication from General Straubensee, assuring him of the perfect tranquillity of Canton, and of his ability to spare a large share of his troops for operations in the north should they become necessary. In consequence of this assurance Lord Elgin did not

\* THE EARL OF ELGIN TO THE EARL OF CLARENDON.

“ SHANGHAI, April 3, 1858.

“ MY LORD,—The Coromandel, tender to Rear-Admiral Sir Michael Seymour's flagship, has just arrived in this harbour, and reports that the Admiral did not intend to leave Hong-Kong before the 25th ult. He cannot, therefore, be expected here before the middle of this month. If I were to postpone my departure for the north until after the Admiral's arrival, I think, and I believe, that my opinion on this point is shared by the Plenipotentiaries of the other great Powers who are acting in concert with us in this quarter, that the interests of the public service would suffer, for the following reasons:—Firstly, Because the Chinese would impute the delay to vacillation and weakness; secondly, Because we should lose our hold on the rice-junks destined for Peking, which are now proceeding towards the north, and may yet be arrested, if necessary, at the mouth of the Peiho; thirdly, Because, if the information I have received from Count Poutiatine on this head be correct, the season for operations in the region to which we are proceeding terminates with the end of the month of May. I have, therefore, taken it upon myself, in the absence of Admiral Seymour, to address to the senior officers at Shanghai and Hong-Kong letters, of which I herewith enclose copies, and which, I trust, will be approved by your Lordship.”—*Blue-Book*, p. 258.

hesitate, immediately on his arrival at Teintsin, to write to him requesting him to send up the force available for the purpose, and on the 30th of June these reached the Gulf. They brought with them, however, intelligence of a totally altered condition of affairs from that which had existed only a few weeks previously. Sufficient time had elapsed, since our first appearance in the Gulf, to enable the Chinese Government to instigate the Braves to attack Canton. Their assaults on the city, the expedition of our troops to the White Cloud Mountains, and the increased audacity of the Braves in consequence of the unsuccessful issue of this operation, was news which imparted to the state of matters at Canton a more serious aspect than they had yet worn. Although, from our previous acquaintance with both the foreign and Chinese community, we were aware that the panic which existed in the south was probably to a great extent groundless, still the representations generally made of the nature of the crisis were too urgent to be disregarded. From the effect they produced in England some idea may be formed of the sensation they were calculated to create at Tientsin.

To keep troops in the north after the Treaty had received the Emperor's assent, and when it was reported that the British community at Hong-Kong were to be ruthlessly massacred, and the British garrison in Canton ignominiously expelled, for want of a sufficient military force to protect the one place,

and retain the other, would be clearly unjustifiable; and Lord Elgin at once returned the whole force to General Straubenzee, in the earnest hope that they might arrive in time to enable him to restore confidence by administering to the Braves that lesson, without which, according to the opinion generally entertained, they would never be imbued with a proper respect for British authority. With this view he reminded his Excellency "that the power of resorting to such hostile operations as they might deem necessary for the security of their military position at Canton was reserved to the Commanders-in-chief, in the most ample terms, in the communication addressed by the Plenipotentiaries to the Government of China, which formed the subject of my letter to yourself and Sir Michael Seymour, dated the 6th February last."

Before leaving Tientsin, Lord Elgin intimated his desire to meet the Commissioners in a semi-official manner; and accordingly, on the morning of the 6th of July, we proceeded to the "Temple of the Winds," which was not so distant as that at which the former interviews were held, and there paid a friendly visit to the Commissioners, in the course of which Lord Elgin alluded to the state of affairs in the south, and the conduct of the Imperial Commissioner Hwang. Had he insisted upon it, there is no doubt he might have procured this worthy's disgrace, instead of leaving this to be done on a



future day. Lord Elgin was, however, unwilling to use language which might seem to imply that we were unable to cope with the Canton Braves, and he therefore contented himself with warning the Commissioners that the conduct Hwang was pursuing in the south would lead to a recurrence of those scenes which they must deplore equally with himself. Kweiliang replied in the same spirit, and expressed his earnest hope that the troubles at Canton were now at an end, and that the Treaty just concluded would inaugurate a more peaceful era in the relations of the Celestial Empire with foreigners. He promised to use his influence to put a stop to the proceedings of the Governor-General Hwang.

Since our last interview with this venerable old man, news had been received of the death of Yu, the First Minister of the Council of State. This gave Kweiliang the highest rank in the Empire.

The Ambassador adverted to the expediency of a Chinese officer of rank being sent to England as Ambassador, and asked the portly Hwashana whether he would like to go in that capacity ; to which that sedate and imperturbable old aristocrat replied, " that if the Emperor ordered him to go, he would go ; but if the Emperor did not order him to go, he would not go." ) Lord Elgin then complimented him on his eminence as a scholar and a poet, and referred to the distinction which was conferred upon him by his having taken the degree of Han ; an allusion which

caused him somewhat to relax, as he acknowledged the compliment with an air of grim gratification. The allusion to his poetical compositions was met by an offer on his part to present Lord Elgin with a copy of some of them, and a goodly supply of volumes accordingly followed us on our return to the yamun, containing the metrical effusions of this accomplished "Imperial Expositor of the Classics." As I am not aware that the poem of a Chinese Cabinet Minister has ever yet appeared in print, I take this opportunity of giving publicity to the following stanzas, as a specimen of those which have, during the intervals of his political labours, flowed from the pen of His Excellency Hwashana. It is just possible that their merit is due rather to Mr Wade's elegant translation, than to the poetic talent of the composer.

*Hwashana's Complaint when, on his second mission to Moukden, the Capital of Manchouria, he finds himself once more at the Inn at Chalau.*

## I.

"On towards the sister capital once more,  
 By duty called, I track my distant way ;  
 The watch-dog notes my wheel, as droops the night  
 O'er the thatched cot, and slowly tramp my steeds  
 Up the wild pass, in autumn's mourning sad,  
 Joyless the moon. And now in chamber lone,  
 Beneath his single lamp, the traveller dreams  
 Of house and home, an hundred leagues behind.  
 Where are his rhymes these panels bore of old ?  
 Vain search ! o'er Lu ho let him listless pore.

II.

Where herds and swine once lay, a hostel now.  
 Chalau is won at last. My car is staid,  
 As sunset, slanting, strikes its roof, and chill  
 The widespread bars admit the evening's breath.  
 Forlorn the scene—a very “ Walk in Dew.”\*  
 Envoy of majesty ! so known to whom ?  
 Peace where the State hath need—no word of care ;  
 Turn to thy muse—let verse these walls adorn.”

I leave to competent critics the task of discussing the merits of this production ; but in justice to a humbler poet, who became well known to us during our trip to the north, and whose gentle and amiable character impressed us all in his favour, I venture to insert a composition which I think bears off the palm from his exalted competitor. Old Chang was one of those not very old men who have probably been known as “ old Chang ” all their lives. He was a not unfavourable specimen of the literary class of China,—a good scholar, an efficient spy in behalf of his own Government, a gentleman in his manners, a great humbug, and a confirmed opium-smoker. He did not speak a word of English, though he had lived with Mr Wade as teacher for many years, and in that capacity accompanied us to Tientsin. The poem, also translated and versified by Mr Wade, which was writ-

\* The “ Walk in Dew ” is a poem, allusion to which is made to convey to the reader the idea of shuddering or shivering horror with which the present poet gazes on the scene before him. The lines on the title-page of this volume are a rhythmical version of the last half-stanza.

ten on a fan in memory of the occasion, was thus headed:—

“ Two stanzas of verses, in five words each, presented by Chang-Tung-Yau to Wade his pupil, and literary acquaintance of nine years’ standing, with whom he had been a shipmate to Taku, and at Tientsin, on finding himself several months on board the same vessel with him. Composed on the 5th moon of the year Wu Wu (June 1858).

## I.

“ So best, in lettered toil thine aim  
 To aid the world—by one fair deed  
 To earn a thousand autumns’ fame.  
 The day’s capricious will why heed ?  
 Fitful as down upon the air  
 A bubble that the waters bear,  
 Is all our glory’s fleeting pride.  
 Thy pastime in the leisure hour  
 The nicely-studied rhyme to pair ;  
 Nor titles win thy praise, nor power—  
 And well, for all is change. Tho’ fair  
 The moon, yet dark the evening’s doom :  
 Changeful our lot, as light and gloom  
 Play o’er the blue stream’s tide.

## II.

Nine years since first we met are sped,  
 Thenceforth in friendly union bound ;  
 Now six long moons one deck we tread.  
 Our night-lamp trimm’d, we chat the round  
 Of earth’s affairs ; the burning day  
 On weighty labours pours its ray ;  
 We part inditing matters grave.  
 For me, my part fled vainly by,  
 And with what haste ! No longer proud,  
 But free I stray, as floats on high,

Now clustering, now dispersed, the cloud.  
Home to my books—I ask no more—  
With age my limbs and travel sore :  
Give me my hill-side cave.”

Hwashana's volume was not the only present Lord Elgin received from the Commissioners ; nine enormous earthen jars of wine, of dimensions sufficient for Morgiana to smother thieves in, made their appearance just as we were leaving the yamun.

The same afternoon we bade a final adieu to the “Temple of Supreme Felicity,” and embarked on board the Firm gunboat. A flowing tide swept us down to the Gulf in eight hours, and that night we had the satisfaction of once more finding ourselves on board the good ship Furious. As she had now remained without moving from her dismal anchorage for three months, our appearance was hailed with some pleasure, as the signal for a change to new and more lively scenes.

As we found that we should just have time, on our way back to Shanghai, to visit the Great Wall, we steered a north-easterly course after we had weighed anchor on the following day. Before dark we saw the Sha-liu-tien, or “Sandhill Fields,” extensive sandbanks rising but a few feet above the water, remarkable only for being a favourite and profitable fishing-ground, and for a square joss-house painted white to serve as a beacon, and which, situated at one corner, is the only building visible.

The following morning found us off the high land

of the department of Shuntien in the province of Chih-li. Unfortunately the weather was thick and lowering ; the mountains were capped with clouds ; and we could only judge of their height when we caught an occasional glimpse of a peak rising from two to three thousand feet above the sea-level. In fine weather there is no difficulty in finding the Great Wall, which is seen for miles scoring with an irregular line the sides of the steepest hills, and crossing their highest ridges. To-day, however, we looked in vain for any such indication of its existence ; dense masses of cloud rolled along the base of the range ; while misty drizzling rain rendered our search neither hopeful nor agreeable. About 9 A.M. we passed a large walled city, near which a mass of solid masonry abutted on the sea, with a tower or two in rear. This answered in some degree to Lord Jocelyn's description of the locality, but according to the chart, the position was placed some miles further on. We therefore followed the coast for two more hours, until we shoaled the water to five fathoms, without observing any sign of the Wall.

It was now evident that we had passed the object of our search, and that the walled town we had observed was Shan-hai, described as being situated at the point where the Great Wall abuts on the sea. The north shore of the Gulf of Leatung, along which we had since been steaming, was the most beautiful piece of coast scenery we had seen in China. Rich plains, covered with the brightest verdure, rose in

swelling undulations from the sea, to the magnificent range of peaked mountains in rear. Villages were scattered plentifully over them. Snug farmhouses nestled in clumps of wood, and innumerable cattle dotted the landscape, as though they had been sown upon it broadcast. Everything indicated a prosperous rural population, occupying a champaign of much fertility and picturesque beauty.

We were sorry to turn our backs upon it, without either prosecuting our voyage to the new port of Neu-chwang, from which we were scarce fifty miles distant, or returning to inspect more closely the far-famed Wall ; but the heavy fogs would have decided the question against further exploration, even had not our anxiety to reach Shanghai in time for the departure of the mail influenced Lord Elgin in avoiding any further delay. A rapid and prosperous passage of four days to Shanghai, from this point, enabled us to secure this latter object.

Prior to leaving Tientsin, Lord Elgin had acquainted the Admiral with his intention of proceeding at an early date to Japan, at the same time adverting to the state of affairs at Canton, and informing his Excellency that the conclusion of the Treaty would release the naval forces from any further service in the north of the Empire. As the complexion of the news received from Canton on our arrival at Shanghai, however, was not in any degree improved, Lord Elgin determined to postpone his departure for Japan, in order to consult with the

Admiral upon the course to be pursued in that quarter.

The following fortnight we passed at Shanghai in a state of some anxiety, as the Admiral did not appear, and the condition of Canton seemed to be getting worse by each successive mail : not until the 26th were we cheered by the arrival of the Coromandel in the river, the Admiral having made a slow passage from the north in his flag-ship, which was then lying at the Rugged Islands. He had been more fortunate than ourselves in his trip to the Great Wall, which was visited both by his Excellency and Baron Gros.

{ On the day previous to the arrival of the Admiral, Lord Elgin received the intelligence from Peking that five Commissioners had been appointed to proceed to Shanghai for the settlement of the tariff, and the framing of those general trade-regulations which must necessarily be drawn up as a supplemental part of the Treaty. Of these Commissioners, two were our old friends, Kweiliang and Hwashana, to whom was added the Governor-general of the Two Kiangs, Ho-Kwei-tsick, one of the most highly esteemed men in the Empire for learning and administrative ability. Two other mandarins of less note completed the commission. }

As no commissioners of the eminence of these mandarins had been demanded for the revision of the tariff, &c., their appointment to this function was a spontaneous act, on the part of the Government, of



some significance ; and their position and character were such, that whatever idea Lord Elgin might at one time have entertained of proceeding to Canton instead of Japan was now abandoned, as he considered it above all things essential that he should not lose the opportunity which the visit of the Commissioners would afford him, of exerting that influence which personal intercourse would, he doubted not, enable him to acquire over them.

Though the Treaty of Tientsin effected the great object of revolutionising the system under which our political and commercial relations with the Empire were to be for the future conducted, there were many most important details to be considered, in the altered conditions under which these latter were to be worked out ; and the Ambassador perceived with no little satisfaction that these might now be arranged by himself, in accordance with the spirit of the Treaty, and with that deliberation and solemnity which they deserved. Nor, indeed, however deeply interested he might feel in the state of affairs then existing at Canton, did he consider that their settlement fell within the province of a civilian. The city was under a purely military government. It is true, the Governor Pih-kwei was exercising certain functions as a Chinese authority, but he did so only with the sufferance of General Straubensee, and as an assistance to that officer in preserving peace and order : should the General have found his presence an obstruction rather than an aid to his ad-

ministration, it was in his power at any time to suspend him from his functions, and turn him out of the city or keep him in confinement, as indeed for some part of the time he did.

Lord Elgin was strongly impressed with the notion that the most thorough and satisfactory way of restoring quiet to Canton, was to inflict a summary chastisement upon those who disturbed the peace there. And accordingly, in a letter to General Straubenzee, informing his Excellency of the expected arrival of the Commissioners above named, and of his intention to meet them at Shanghai, the Ambassador goes on to say: "It is not impossible that I may be able to induce these high officers to take some active steps to check the proceedings of the Braves at Canton; but looking at the present state of affairs in that quarter, as portrayed in your Excellency's despatch of the 22d instant, and in the reports I have received from Mr Parkes, I cannot help thinking that it would be very desirable that any such intimation by the Chinese authorities should be preceded by some vigorous decisive action on our part, showing our power to control and punish the Braves.

"It is for your Excellency to determine how such a blow can be most effectually struck, but I trust you will excuse me for making a suggestion which is prompted by the expected arrival of the Imperial Commissioners, and the anomalous state of affairs at Canton."

Lord Elgin also wrote a letter to the Admiral immediately on his arrival at Shanghai, calling his Excellency's attention "to the continued existence in that quarter of a state of affairs to which it is most important an arrest should be put at the earliest period;" and proceeding in terms almost identical with those I have quoted as already addressed to General Straubenzee. In reply to this communication, the Admiral stated that it was his intention, prior to going south, to proceed to Nagasaki, for the purpose of delivering over the yacht Emperor to the Government of Japan, and watering the Calcutta.

During this period of our stay at Shanghai, the climate was more oppressively hot than I ever remember to have felt it in any part of the world. The thermometer did not show a higher temperature than at Tientsin, but there was a stifling heaviness in the atmosphere which acted in a most depressing manner both on health and spirits. Cases of death by sunstroke were of daily occurrence, chiefly among the sailors in the shipping which crowded the river. Upwards of a hundred merchantmen, waiting hopelessly for cargoes, were lying at anchor under the broiling sun, their lists of sick daily increasing under the deleterious influence of the climate.

As two or three weeks must elapse before the arrival of the Commissioners, Lord Elgin determined to escape for the interval to Japan, and return in time to meet their Excellencies at Shanghai. In the mean time certain changes had taken place in the "personnel"

of the mission. Mr Bruce had proceeded to England with the Treaty of Tientsin, immediately on our return to Shanghai ; Mr Jocelyn had arrived to relieve Mr Cameron, who went home on his promotion ; and Mr Morrison returned to England. With our party thus reduced, we embarked on board the Furious on the last day of July 1858, delighted under any circumstances to escape from the summer heats of Shanghai, were it only for a few weeks ; but our gratification increased by the anticipation of visiting scenes which have ever been veiled in the mystery of a jealous and rigid seclusion.