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LIFE OF SIR HARRY PARKES

VOL. I

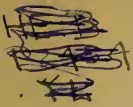
CONSUL IN CHINA







Beaman  
Yours truly  
Henry B. Parker



THE LIFE OF  
SIR HARRY PARKES

K.C.B., G.C.M.G.

SOMETIME HER MAJESTY'S MINISTER TO

CHINA & JAPAN

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I—CONSUL IN CHINA

BY

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AUTHOR OF 'THE LIFE OF VISCOUNT STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE'

WITH A PORTRAIT AND MAPS

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## PREFACE

SIXTEEN months ago I received an invitation from Sir Harry Parkes' representatives to write his biography. It happened that the late Sir Robert Morier was with me at the time, and, knowing how closely Chinese diplomacy was watched at St Petersburg, I asked him what he thought of the proposal. 'It is a fine subject,' he said, 'and Parkes was a splendid Minister: the only question is, whether it is not too soon to write his Life?' The Ambassador was thinking of the difficulties which might arise if a frank use were made of official despatches relating to comparatively recent negotiations. Such difficulties have not arisen, however, for the sufficient reason that Sir Harry Parkes' unpublished despatches have not been at the disposal of his biographer. Nevertheless, I do not believe that many subjects of importance have escaped notice. Private letters and the recollections of colleagues have supplied, probably, the pith of the unseen despatches. Certainly so far as his China career is concerned, before he became Minister, I have not to deplore any lack of materials. His work as a member of the Consular Service, which covers the whole history of British official relations with China—from the first Treaty signed in his presence at Nanking in 1842 to the establishment of a resident Minister at Peking in 1860,—is very fully recorded in his journals, his

regular correspondence with his sister, Mrs Lockhart, and her husband, and in later years in his letters to his wife during her absence in England. These, supplemented by his official correspondence with his chiefs, especially Sir John Bowring, Lord Elgin, and Sir Frederick Bruce, and with some of his colleagues, furnish a very complete record of the life and work of an interpreter, vice-consul, and consul in China from 1842 to 1865. They establish with perfect clearness Sir Harry Parkes' title to a foremost place among the consuls who have guarded British interests in the Far East. From his boyhood, when he first entered the public service at the age of fourteen, he was inspired by an unwavering belief in the imperial destinies of his country. Throughout his active and responsible career his devotion to that cause never faltered, and no one contributed more to make the name of England great and powerful in the distant regions where he wielded his unique influence.

The whole of the first volume is occupied with the twenty-four years of his Consular service. In 1865 he was appointed Minister in Japan, and with this elevation from the Consular to the Diplomatic branch of the foreign service a change takes place both in the character of the materials and in the authorship of the biography. Few of Sir Harry Parkes' despatches have been published by the Government; and his private correspondence, except when Lady Parkes was absent in England, became in late years extremely meagre. Yet the period of his tenure of the Japanese Legation corresponded with the most critical and eventful moments in Japanese history. Sir Harry was an eye-witness of the revolution which put an end to the old feudal system and established the Mikado as the constitutional ruler of Japan. In these momentous transactions the Minister took a part which, whilst consistent



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with the neutrality of his country, was acknowledged with gratitude by Japanese statesmen. To describe faithfully what that part was, a thorough knowledge of the political movements of the time is essential. No one could adequately relate the history of Sir Harry Parkes' work in Japan unless he had himself been a spectator of what was going on. It was therefore a great satisfaction to me when Mr Dickins, who possesses precisely this qualification, accepted my invitation to write the account of Sir Harry's eighteen years' work as Minister to the Court of Japan. For this part of the biography, which fills over three-fourths of the second volume, Mr Dickins is solely responsible. My editorial functions have been almost nominal. Mr Dickins' preface to Vol. II explains the difficulties under which he has laboured, in the midst of pressing official work, and also the help he has received from some of Sir Harry Parkes' officers.

With Sir Harry's return to China as British Minister at Peking in 1883 my own share of the biography recommences, and here for the first time I have suffered from dearth of materials. The period of his tenure of the Legation was, however, unhappily so short that very little political work of the first importance could have been carried through before his premature death; and the general character of the unremitting toil which hastened his end is perhaps sufficiently indicated in the correspondence which I have been enabled to quote. From what I have heard on high official authority I doubt whether the publication of his despatches of this anxious period—the time of the Tongking *imbroglio*—would add much of permanent interest to the biography, whilst it might very probably revive national animosities which had far better be soothed to sleep.

Among the many who have helped me in various

ways and degrees, Sir Harry Parkes' eldest sister stands first; for Mrs Lockhart has not only devoted her still exceptional energies to collecting, selecting, and annotating most of the materials used in the first volume, but has carefully read all the proof-sheets of the work. When it is remembered that Mrs Lockhart was in China from 1839 to 1852, either at the same port as her brother or in frequent correspondence with him, and that she really seems to have forgotten nothing, it is easy to understand how priceless has been her collaboration. Her husband had a still longer experience of China, where he was occupied with the establishment and management of his hospitals at Shanghai and Peking up to 1864; his remarkable memory has often stood me in good stead, while his library of works on China, which he has recently presented to the London Missionary Society, has been of frequent service. Sir Thomas Wade, who preceded Sir Harry Parkes at Peking and was his staunch friend during forty years of generous rivalry, has throughout been my referee on matters of Chinese scholarship, and has kindly permitted me to quote several letters which throw an informing light upon the transactions here recorded. To him I am also indebted for advice in the spelling of Chinese names; though it is right to add that no attempt has been made to reduce them to a scientific system such as he would himself adopt. All I have done is to spell the names in the form Sir Thomas Wade recommends as easily recognizable and most in accord with the older method adopted by Sir Harry himself, and to spell them always in the same way without regard to the divergences of the various writers.

To the veteran Consul and Minister, Sir Rutherford Alcock, who was Parkes' official chief so long ago as 1844, I am indebted for some interesting reminiscences

of the early days of the Consular Service in China. Among the officers and ex-officers of that service who have been kind enough to supply me with notes and recollections I may mention with gratitude Sir Chaloner Alabaster, Mr R. K. Douglas (now of the British Museum), Mr H. N. Lay, Mr H. S. Wilkinson (now Crown Advocate of the Supreme Court of Shanghai), Mr P. J. Hughes (late Consul-General at Shanghai), Mr Walter C. Hillier (at present Consul-General for Korea), Mr Herbert A. Giles (Consul at Ningpo), Mr W. R. Carles (Consul at Chinkiang), and Mr Lionel Hopkins (Vice-Consul at Tamsui). Our present Minister at Peking, Mr N. R. O'Connor, has contributed some graceful recollections of the last illness of his former chief; and the German Minister of that time, Herr von Brandt, has drawn upon his knowledge of the political affairs of Sir Harry's residence in Peking in my favour. To Lord Wolseley I am much indebted for the trouble he has been good enough to take in explaining certain difficulties connected with the history of the 1860 campaign. In a work involving the use of confidential official documents frequent reference has necessarily been made to the Foreign Office, and I have to thank the Under-Secretary of State, Sir T. H. Sanderson, for the kindness and consideration he has invariably shown in dealing with the many matters submitted to him. To Sir Edward Hertslet also, as on former occasions, I am indebted for information which none so well as he could supply; while Mr F. H. T. Streatfeild, of the Foreign Office Library, has been good enough to furnish me with various extracts from the official records. Of others who have advised me in matters of detail, supplied reminiscences, or permitted the publication of letters, I can only mention Sir Horace Rumbold, Sir Hercules Robinson, Mrs Bishop (whom Sir Harry first

knew in Japan as Miss Bird), Mr A. Michie, Mrs Pirkis, and last, but by no means least, Sir Harry Parkes' daughter, Mrs James Keswick, who has entrusted to me many letters which touchingly reflect the father's devoted affection and unselfish nobility of character in his own home, and show the softer side of the indomitable Englishman whose Life is recorded in these volumes.

STANLEY LANE-POOLE

THE ATHENÆUM  
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<sup>1</sup> Reproduced from Sir H. B. LOCH's *Personal Narrative*, by permission of Mr John Murray.





Life of Sir Harry Parkes.

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Sketch by Geo. Estab.

PART I—CONSUL IN CHINA

1842—1865

BY S. LANE-POOLE





## CHAPTER I

### THE FIRST CHINA WAR

1828-1842

ON the 20th of August 1842, the old capital of the Ming Empire was the scene of a ceremony which had no precedent in the immemorial annals of China. Before the long walls of Nanking an English army was preparing for the assault. On the broad waters of the Yang-tsze Kiang more than seventy British men-of-war and transports were drawn up for the bombardment. Admiral Parker and General Gough were at last about to administer a well-deserved chastisement to the Chinese for a long course of insult and injury. But neither Admiral nor General was called upon to do the work for which both had made elaborate preparations. Diplomacy, not war, was the instrument to be used; and Sir Henry Pottinger was there to conclude a Treaty which should put the relations of England and China on a proper footing. The Chinese had seen enough of English ships and guns, at Chapu, Woosung, and Chinkiang; and Imperial Commissioners had at last condescended to come to Nanking armed with full powers from the Son of Heaven to treat for peace. For the first time in the history of China, a treaty of defeat was to be concluded with the 'outer barbarians,' and insults were to give place (on paper) to international toleration. This it was that

made the first ceremonious interchange of courtesies so memorable an event. The Chinese Commissioners were received in state on board the flagship *Cornwallis* by Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary, supported by Admiral and General. The deck was ablaze with officers in full-dress uniforms; the marines presented arms; the band played, as the three mandarins set foot for the first time on a British man-of-war.

In the midst of this pomp and pageantry of court and war, a slim fair-haired boy with eager young face and vivid blue eyes was formally presented to the Imperial Commissioners. It was thus that Harry Parkes took his place at the age of fourteen in a great historical scene. From this day for more than forty years there were few events in the history of British relations with the Far East in which he did not play a conspicuous part; till the lad who carried 'chops' and despatches for Sir Henry Pottinger at Nanking in 1842 ended his busy and eventful life in 1885, in the high station of Her Majesty's Minister to the Court of Peking.

At the time of the Treaty of Nanking, Harry Parkes was employed in the office of J. R. Morrison, the Chinese Secretary to the Plenipotentiary, and was studying Chinese with a view to an interpreter's appointment. Those were not the days of competitive examinations, or it is probable that England might have been deprived of one of the most distinguished of her public servants in the East. A boy who went out to China at the age of thirteen could not have enjoyed many opportunities for acquiring the varied accomplishments of a modern student-interpreter, but it may be doubted whether he did not gain more than he lost by his premature initiation into public affairs. The man of action is seldom a man of grammars, and Harry Parkes belonged essentially to the class of men of action—the men who made the Indian Empire and planted the colonies of England over the face of the globe. To such natures, action and responsibility are the breath of life, and no competitive

examination has yet been invented which will discover their incomparable qualities. 1828

In the present instance the boy of thirteen was drawn into a career in China by a chain of circumstances in which he had no voice or option. Harry Smith Parkes was born on the 24th of February 1828 at Birchills Hall in the parish of Bloxwich near Walsall in Staffordshire. When his name became a household word in China thirty years later, various legends were invented to account for his origin. The facts, however, are simple and unromantic. He came of a good middle-class midland family, which sent several of its members into the Church or the Navy. His grandfather, the Rev. John Parkes, held a cure at Halesowen on the borders of Stafford and Worcestershire, and married a daughter of the Rev. William Boraston of Wolverley, by whom he had two sons:—John, who became a lieutenant in the Navy, and Harry, who, after working for some years in a bank at Wolverhampton, founded the firm of Parkes Otway and Co., ironmasters, whose works (the Caponfield and Goscote) are still in existence, though no longer connected with the family. Harry the ironmaster, father of Harry the consul, is described as a man of an energetic and self-reliant character, as might indeed be expected in a bank clerk who ventured to throw up his post and plunge into the difficulties and risks of a large iron business. Like his son he was full of life and spirit, bright of eye and short of stature, but, unlike him, he was dark in colouring. He is described as a social favourite, appreciated for recitation and song. It says something for his constancy of purpose that a long attachment and three years of formal betrothal led up to his marriage in 1821 to the daughter of George Gitton, 'stationer, bookseller, stamp and postmaster,' and earliest of printers in the old border borough of Bridgnorth. Mrs Parkes' sweet and judicious character and personal charm quickly won their way in her husband's family, and the union was drawn closer by the birth of her three children, to whose

1833 early training she devoted herself with equal tenderness and judgment. Harry was her youngest, and she delighted in discovering signs of that quick intelligence and affectionate disposition which were afterwards among his most conspicuous qualities. She took pains to develop his retentive memory by teaching him to repeat whole chapters of the Bible, and fifty years later he could still remember vividly 'the room where his mother prayed with him.' Unhappily she was not long permitted to watch over his childhood. A sudden illness carried her swiftly away in 1832, and within a year a carriage accident brought her husband to her grave, 3rd August 1833.

The three children, thus successively bereft of their parents, found a home at Birmingham with their father's only brother, the retired naval officer, who had five little girls and a son of his own. Harry soon joined his cousin at a boarding-school at Balsall Heath, but his chief delight was, in the holidays, to listen to his Uncle John's stories of England's victories at sea, and above all of the sailor's hero, Nelson. It was a fitting exordium for a career which was devoted heart and soul to the cause of England's imperial greatness. In 1837 another calamity befell him : his sailor uncle died, and the family was left in straitened circumstances. Nevertheless the child attended a day-school at Birmingham, and subsequently (1838) entered King Edward's Grammar School, then under the influence of a remarkable headmaster, James Prince Lee, afterwards Bishop of Manchester. Here for a couple of years he was the schoolfellow of the late and present Bishops of Durham, Drs Lightfoot and Westcott, and had not long left when the present Archbishop of Canterbury joined the school. Among all the influences that moulded his character in boyhood King Edward's School, in this period of its great master and great scholars, must rank highest. And though too young to distinguish himself in scholarship, he could not have belonged to such a school at such a time

without gaining in character and acquiring the spirit of work. 1838

Meanwhile the way was being prepared which led to the settlement of the brother and sisters in China. A first cousin of Harry Parkes the elder had joined the Ladies' Society and gone out in 1832 to help in the Missionary Native Schools in Malacca; and in 1834 Mary Wanstall married the Rev. Charles Gutzlaff, the Chinese linguist and explorer, who was soon afterwards appointed one of the secretaries to the 'Chief Superintendent of Trade,' as the highest English official was called, in China. When the news of her cousin John Parkes' death reached her, Mrs Gutzlaff was living in a large Portuguese house at Macao, close to the well-known cave where tradition avers that Camoens began to write his *Lusiads*. Macao was then the only European settlement on the coast of China, for Hongkong was not yet a British possession. Here Mrs Gutzlaff had made her home a refuge for blind Chinese children, helpless deserted little girls whom she had gathered around her in the purest spirit of philanthropy; and hither she invited two of her orphan cousins. Catharine Parkes at once accepted the kind offer, and, accompanied by her younger sister Isabella, sailed for China in August 1838. Among their fellow-passengers were the well-known Chinese scholar and missionary Medhurst, and his wife, and Mr William Lockhart, F.R.C.S., of the London Missionary Society, who afterwards did memorable work in China as a medical missionary. The acquaintance thus formed on the voyage led to the marriage of Mr Lockhart to the elder Miss Parkes in May 1841.<sup>1</sup>

It was a strange time for two very young girls to begin life in China: indeed, at that moment it seemed doubtful whether Europeans would be suffered to dwell in the

<sup>1</sup> Both are happily living, and this Memoir owes much to their cordial assistance and retentive memories. It is hardly too much to say that without Mrs Lockhart's help, both in supplying letters and giving authentic information, it could not have been written.



1834 Flowery Land at all. The transfer of the protection of British interests from the East India Company to the Crown at the close of 1833 had brought about a new stage in the relations between Chinese and foreigners, which had so far been anything but friendly. The Company's agents had accepted a position of humiliation, to which an officer directly representing the Sovereign could not submit. The East India merchants had been placed by the Chinese in that place of inferiority which it has ever been the persistent aim of official arrogance to force upon the people whom they contemptuously term 'foreign devils' or 'outer barbarians.' The Company's agents were allowed to address the local Chinese authorities only at Canton, and were not suffered to plant their foot on any other spot of all the spacious soil of China; and even at Canton they were compelled to approach the mandarins only in the form of a humble 'petition,' communicated through the medium of the body of native traders known as the Hong merchants. They had no *locus standi* as Englishmen: they were merely admitted to trade on sufferance by the good offices of their Chinese customers of the Hong.

Such a state of things was perfectly in accord with Chinese policy: it secured the trade which was fully appreciated by the people, especially in the great southern mart of Canton; it preserved the attitude of arrogant superiority and exclusiveness which the Chinese authorities have ever sought to maintain inviolate in face of all other nations; and it allowed them to pursue unchecked the course of insult and contumely towards foreigners which has been their consistent policy for a century and a half. It was the sort of treatment which our East India factors had to suffer at the hands of Mogul governors before the days of Clive. To the managers of a trading company such relations might for a time be endurable, but it was not a possible position for a representative of the Crown. Accordingly when Lord Napier came out in 1834 as Chief Superintendent of Trade,

with a rank almost corresponding with that of a Minister Plenipotentiary, he took up a totally different attitude. He was instructed by Lord Palmerston to deliver his letters of credence to the Viceroy at Canton, and to endeavour even to open up communications direct with the Court at Peking—so little did the Home Government then and for many years afterwards realize the invincible repugnance of the Chinese Emperor to recognize the very existence of other sovereigns. Accordingly to Canton Lord Napier went, and requested the interview with the local governor which every precedent in every civilized community prescribed for the reception of the envoy of a friendly foreign Power. The result is well known. His letter was rejected, and he was insulted and literally harassed to death by the Chinese authorities. 1834

After this, pending the long delay then involved in a reference to England, where the Government was profoundly indifferent to these remote disputes, matters returned to their old position, and trade was resumed on the former humiliating conditions. The merchants carried on their business through the Hoppo (or farmer of the customs) and the Hong merchants, and Sir George Robinson, who succeeded Lord Napier, was unable to obtain the smallest consideration from the official authorities. When he remonstrated in his most conciliatory manner upon the plundering of a British vessel and the imprisonment of her crew, his complaint was flouted with contempt. The Chinese had so far succeeded in getting their own way and keeping the foreigner at arm's length, and the foreigner had consequently to put up with every sort of affront. Nor were matters in the least improved when Captain (afterwards Admiral Sir Charles) Elliot took up the post of Chief Superintendant in 1837. He was indeed allowed by the Chinese to reside in the foreign settlement, called (as in the old Company's days) the 'Factories,' at Canton, but merely with a view to keeping order among the British sailors and merchants; he was permitted no access to the local authorities, and was

1839 treated pretty much as a supercargo. It was during Captain Elliot's tenure of office that the celebrated Commissioner Lin arrived upon the scene. He was specially appointed by the Emperor in January 1839 to report upon the strained position of affairs at Canton, where trade had been twice suspended and twice timidly resumed, and he was instructed to suppress the traffic in opium.<sup>1</sup>

The opium trade has been a vexed question for over half a century, and opinions in England are as sharply divided on the subject as ever. It has been made the war-cry of humanitarians, and members of Parliament of the most estimable and peaceful character are wont every year to excite themselves to a white heat of indignation over the Indian budget. We are told that England has forced this injurious drug upon the unwilling Chinese at the point of the bayonet, and our three campaigns in China are stigmatized with the opprobrious title of 'opium wars.' It is to be regretted that such questions should ever have been used for factious purposes, and that public opinion in England should be prejudiced by flimsy arguments based upon a misreading of history. Nothing is more amazing to those who have lived in the East than the cheerful assurance with which members of the House of Commons set themselves to decide grave imperial matters of which they are imperfectly informed; and in a long catalogue of similar *bêtises* no more signal instance of Parliamentary ineptitude can be cited than the anti-opium 'fad.'

The point of the whole question (so far as it relates to the China trade) is not whether opium smoking—the only mode in which the drug is used in China—is wholesome or injurious, but whether England has made war with China in order to force the drug upon the Chinese as a profitable article of commerce. We hear every variety of contradictory opinion on the effects of opium. We are told by some that to smoke it is a 'hopeless sin';

<sup>1</sup> See D. C. BOULGER, *History of China*, vol. iii. chaps. iv. and v., for an excellent account of these transactions.



by others, that its abuse is less injurious than that of alcohol, whilst its moderate use is even beneficial. All this is beside the point. Opium smoking is an ingrained habit of the Chinese people, and was in use long before the East India Company came into existence. In the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries opium was a recognized import in Chinese tariffs. In 1799 the drain of silver from the country in payment for foreign imports alarmed the Chinese Government, and the principal article of trade, opium, was prohibited, not because it was injurious in itself, but because it took away too much specie. The decree, however, remained a dead letter for forty years; the trade went on just as though no such prohibition had ever been issued, and it went on with the full approval of the Chinese themselves. 'It has been a confusion of terms,' wrote Captain Elliot to the Foreign Office, 'to call the opium trade a smuggling trade; it was a formally prohibited trade, but there was no part of the trade of this country which had the more active support of the local authorities. It commenced and has subsisted by means of the hearty connivance of the mandarins, and it could have done neither without their constant countenance.'<sup>1</sup> The people liked opium, the Chinese officials liked opium, large crops of the poppy were grown in China, and costly cargoes of opium were cheerfully imported from India. Opium was no more 'forced' upon China than brandy upon England; nor have the Chinese authorities ever charged us with compelling the importation. They even proposed (in 1837) to re-legalize the opium trade in the hope of checking the drain of silver, and this by itself is proof enough that the difficulty was one of finance, not of morals.

It is true we may read eloquent Chinese diatribes on the sin of opium smoking, for the argument of immorality

<sup>1</sup> For a *résumé* of the historical facts see the *Note on the Opium Question and Brief Survey of our relations with China* (1893), by H. N. LAY, C.B., who was formerly Inspector-General of Chinese Customs.

1839 began to be advanced as soon as it was discovered that public opinion among the English was sharply divided on the subject: but those who have made any study of Chinese edicts and despatches are able to discount their lofty sentiments at their proper value. It is no doubt a fact that there was an anti-opium party at Peking, which is another way of saying that there was a strong anti-foreign party at headquarters anxious to suppress all intercourse with the 'outer barbarians' and shrewd enough to fix upon opium as the most important and the most questionable article of foreign trade. But the same people who expressed the finest sentiments on the subject in public were found to indulge in the practice in private, and the official class generally throughout China were passionately addicted to opium smoking. The habit had become national long before England had anything to do with China, and it would have continued had there never been any British trade.

With Commissioner Lin's arrival at Canton in March 1839 the opium question immediately entered upon a new and acute stage. He ignored the Queen's representative, and addressed himself directly to the foreign merchants, requiring 'every particle of opium' to be surrendered. He adduced the loss of silver by exportation as the ground of his 'commands,' and by way of enforcing them blockaded the foreign factories at Canton, took away the native servants, and cut off supplies. Within the factories Capt. Elliot, the representative of the Queen, was, as he reported, 'forcibly detained, together with all the merchants of my own and other foreign nations settled here, without supplies of food, deprived of our servants, and cut off from all intercourse with our respective countries'; and in this duress 'constrained by paramount motives affecting the safety of the lives and liberty of all the foreigners,' he ordered the British merchants to surrender the opium, on the understanding that he and his countrymen would then be set at liberty. Over 20,000 chests of opium, valued at two million pounds sterling, were accordingly

surrendered, under threats of death ; nevertheless Captain Elliot was not set free until he had suffered a captivity of seven weeks. It must be noted that up to the very day of Lin's edict for the surrender of the opium, it was uncertain what policy the Chinese Government were going to adopt—legalization or suppression of a long encouraged traffic,—and that ten days after Lin's arrival the foreign merchants sent him a memorial in which they pledged themselves to deal no further in opium. There was therefore no shadow of excuse for the Commissioner's violence, and his treatment of Captain Elliot was properly stigmatized by the Duke of Wellington as wholly unprecedented. It was, as Elliot said, a case 'of wanton violence on the Queen's officers and subjects.'

It soon became manifest that suppression of the opium trade was but a fraction of Lin's policy : he aimed at the total expulsion of Europeans from China and the closing of all foreign trade. Like a true Chinaman he longed to make the 'barbarian' lick the dust. He claimed the intolerable right to arrest and punish British subjects without reference to their representative, and on their taking refuge in the Portuguese settlement of Macao he marched at the head of 2000 troops upon that innocent colony. To avoid complications with Portugal, Elliot considerably moved to the barren and almost uninhabited island of Hongkong, and the English took refuge in the ships in the harbour. Even there Lin's hostility pursued them. British subjects who landed to buy provisions were liable to be shot, Englishmen were captured, wounded, and killed, and the wells of Hongkong were poisoned. Finally, when two British men-of-war off Chuenpi refused to be threatened by twenty-nine war-junks, and summarily dispersed or sank them, Lin was authorized by the Emperor of China to declare all trade with England at an end, and to call upon every British subject to quit the country for ever.

The English Superintendent had stretched every point in order to conciliate the Chinese Commissioner. He had

1839 ordered the surrender of the opium ; he had repressed all but the mildest remonstrances when he and his fellow-subjects were exposed to gross insult and violence ; he had endured an unprovoked captivity ; and so far from retaliating he had endeavoured to meet Lin's views on the opium traffic in a degree wholly supererogatory in a foreign power. He had protested that 'the flag of his country did not fly in the protection of a traffic declared to be unlawful by the great Emperor,' in refutation of a charge that had never been made ; and he went so far as to proffer the assistance of his officers in the purely Chinese duty of searching vessels suspected of opium cargoes, and to promise his official sanction to the confiscation of such cargoes and the expulsion of the offending merchants from the country. Conciliation could go no further, and it was rewarded as conciliation always is rewarded in China, where it is invariably translated by fear. The olive branch was trampled in the mud of Hog Lane, and, the resources of humiliation being exhausted, the foreigner was banished from the land.

Lin's magnificent Sentence of Banishment amounted of course to a Declaration of War. The only alternative was to accept our dismissal humbly and leave China alone for all time. The possibility of the latter policy has been seriously argued, but the discussion is purely academic, and may be left with confidence to the professors of international law. There is no reason in the abstract order of things why a nation should not shut itself up within its borders, draw in its limbs and head like a tortoise, and decline to be disturbed by the outside world ; but in practice such isolation is never permitted, and it would be bad for the world at large if it were. Had it been attempted, the needs both of the Chinese and of the English would have soon broken down the artificial barrier, and an unauthorized trade would have surely led to international difficulties. Trade was there before any European government had official relations with China, and trade would go on between the people of the two

countries, whatever efforts governments might make to suppress it. But if it had to go on, it must be under such conditions as a European power could accept without dishonour. Therefore Commissioner Lin's proclamation was taken as a declaration of war, and England sent out a fleet and an army to enforce proper treatment of her representatives and subjects at the hands of the Chinese. 1839

Thus war was declared by the Chinese on the 6th December 1839, not because England insisted on 'forcing' opium upon the innocent natives, but because China resolved to rid herself for ever, 'bag and baggage,' of the hated 'barbarian.' The history of our official relations with China during the past fifty years has been one long incessant struggle to induce the Chinese Government to set aside the artificial barriers it has sought to set up between the legitimate commercial necessities of the two nations.

We must come back from the general history of the dispute to the particular events which bore upon the future of Harry Parkes. Mrs Gutzlaff and her 'nieces,' as she always called the two sisters, had taken their share of the perils and inconveniences of this disturbed time. When the commands of Commissioner Lin were carried out, and the Chinese servants deserted and supplies of food were cut off at Macao, they, like other English families, had to take refuge on the ships which lay in Hongkong harbour, and, after six weeks of this floating life, spent the rest of 1839 at Manila. Early in 1840, however, they were all back at Macao, awaiting the arrival of the British Expedition which was coming to put matters on a less unsatisfactory basis. Fifteen men-of-war and 4000 troops arrived in June, and the island of Chusan, opposite Ningpo, was occupied as a step towards opening direct negotiations with the Chinese Court in the North. To Chusan Mr. Gutzlaff went as Chinese Secretary to the General, followed by his wife and her 'nieces.' The presence of the British forces seemed to promise a more



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settled state of things in China, and this and other reasons induced Mrs Gutzlaff to accede to the wishes of the two sisters and send for their young brother from England.<sup>1</sup> Harry Parkes sailed from Portsmouth in the *Foam* on the 13th June 1841, and reached Macao, where his relations were once more settled, on the 8th October. Here he not only found two homes,—for his elder sister was now married to Mr Lockhart,—but also a career. John Robert Morrison, Secretary and first interpreter to the Plenipotentiary and Chief Superintendent of Trade, son of the lexicographer, and one of the most brilliant of our early Chinese linguists, was ready to welcome him into the Government service. ‘Knowing how your hearts were set on meeting again your dear only brother,’ he wrote on Harry’s arrival, ‘I cordially rejoice with you. I have already mentioned how much pleasure it will give me to bring him forward, if you should like to see him pursuing my line of life. We are sadly in want of interpreters . . . and the moment he can speak a little Chinese we shall be right glad to have his services.’ This was the first rung of the ladder which carried Harry Parkes up to the highest posts in the service of the Queen in China and Japan.

For the first six months after his arrival he stayed with his relations at Macao, then and always a sleepy old-world colony, but at that time disturbed by wars and rumours of wars. He began the study of Chinese with such application as might reasonably be expected of a boy of thirteen in the midst of arms and alarms, and his rapidity in acquiring the difficult language was extraordinary. It was not till May 1842 that he joined Morrison at Hongkong and entered upon official life.

Meanwhile a great deal had happened in China.

<sup>1</sup> In the urgency and perplexity of the moment his passage-money was advanced by a friend in Macao, the Rev. Vincent Stanton—who was soon afterwards made prisoner by the Chinese; and it is characteristic of the boy’s character that it was repaid, with the interest, out of his own small means within a couple of years, according to a letter from Mr. Stanton himself.

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Since the arrival of the British Expedition, the forts which guard the approach to Canton had been taken, and the city itself lay under the guns of the English fleet—to be released, unsubdued, on payment of a mere indemnity; a mistaken act of generosity for which England afterwards had to pay dearly. Demonstrations along the coast and the temporary occupation of Chusan had alarmed the Chinese Government, but had not conquered its obstinate refusal to admit the foreigner upon terms of equality; and a Treaty arranged at Canton had been repudiated by the authorities at Peking. The only permanent result had been the acquisition of Hongkong by Great Britain. When Sir Henry Pottinger, a distinguished and large-minded Indian officer, arrived in August 1841 as Plenipotentiary to the Chinese Court, he found matters in this anomalous position:—Trade had been resumed at Canton, but the Emperor at Peking remained unconquerably hostile; a troubled sort of truce had been patched up in the South, whilst in the North there was nothing but hostility at headquarters. It was obvious that such a state of things promised no security for British interests, and Sir Henry, satisfied that there was no use in attacking the enemy's limbs, determined to strike for his head: he sailed for the North. Amoy and Ningpo were taken and garrisoned, Chusan was again occupied, and the Plenipotentiary returned to Hongkong to await the impression which this exhibition of force might exert on the Emperor's mind. When 10,000 Chinese proceeded in March 1842 to attack the garrison at Ningpo, it was evident that the impression produced had not been of the right kind, and though the attack was easily beaten off, Sir Henry Pottinger resolved to come to close quarters with the central authorities. Next to forcing his way to Peking itself—which would have been the most decisive of all possible methods—an advance up the Yang-tsze Kiang to the great and sacred city of Nanking offered the best means of showing the Chinese that we were able to enforce our demands. The Great River would permit our

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ships-of-war to do execution on the forts and cities on the way up, and nothing, short of a voyage up the Peiho, could have a more striking effect on the Chinese Government than a water-invasion of Nanking. Accordingly to Nanking Sir Henry Pottinger resolved to go, and Admiral Sir William Parker received his orders to sail for the Yang-tze with his battleships and transports.

The Expedition was on its way northwards when Harry Parkes left his home at Macao to enter Morrison's office at Hongkong. He had but recently passed his fourteenth birthday, and looked younger even than his years. Those who remember him in those early days describe him as a bright intelligent lad, of a frank fearless manner, and a simple natural gaiety of temper which won him friends wherever he went. With his elders he was quiet and modest, for he belonged to a generation when 'manners' were taught; but he was neither shy nor awkward, and he took his place at the Plenipotentiary's table with a self-possession which belonged to maturer years. And with all his boyish gaiety, which he never quite lost even in advancing age and among ever-growing cares, there was a steadiness of purpose about him which convinced his elders that there was a future before him. Even before he left England, his friends had sagely predicted that he would make his way in the world; and six months in a strange country had not unsettled his mind, but left it still bent on work and duty. Yet his serious resolve to get on had no touch of selfishness. From a child he had been noted for his thoughtfulness for others; he would often refuse to play with boys of his own age when they tried, as boys will, to keep the smaller fry out of the fun; and as he grew older the instinct of unselfishness and willing warmhearted kindness to others, instead of becoming blunted by the rubs of life, grew stronger. No one was more ready to do a good turn to another, and if any troublesome job had to be done it was always he who volunteered to do it, and did it with the best grace.



At Hongkong, the boy soon found himself on excellent terms with his seniors. He was exceptionally fortunate in his immediate chief, for Morrison was beloved by all who knew him. No better and wiser master could have been chosen for the training of a boy whose natural education at school had been prematurely cut short. Morrison was as able and as hardworking as he was kind and considerate, and the few months spent under his eye were of inestimable value to his pupil. When he wrote to his relations that 'Harry wins golden opinions,' they knew that the beginning was good; for Morrison was not the man to spoil a promising boy. He kept his nose to the grindstone, and taught him the value of hard work. The lesson was not forgotten in after years, and few men have mastered the principle that labour is the great conqueror of difficulties more thoroughly than Harry Parkes.

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He found Hongkong a very different place from what it has since become. The island had been a British possession for a few months only when he arrived on it, and the European houses could be counted on one's fingers. Morrison had only just got under a roof, and his invitation to Harry did not promise much in the way of luxury. 'I have no comforts to offer,' he wrote, 'but we will manage somehow to knock up a bed, and having that and clothes of his own, he will be able to hold life together.' In his little rude shanty of three rooms in a row, Morrison toiled at despatches far into the night, and his young assistant copied them, worked at Chinese, and made himself generally useful. They usually dined with the military magistrate, Major Caine, who took a great fancy to Harry, and the boy found himself quite at home in the friendly circle of officers and civilians whom the war had brought to Hongkong. He used to watch the Major sitting in his court, sentencing pirates to one hundred lashes and eighteen months' hard labour, and he could see the rascals afterwards mending the road in chains. He saw much of Sir Henry Pottinger; for he

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chanced to be the first to bring the Plenipotentiary the news of the attack on Chapu by the British, and Sir Henry immediately asked him to dinner. The boy very soon became a prime favourite with the diplomatist, and was told to come to his table 'just whenever he pleased.' In return Harry entertained the warmest admiration for his chief: 'I like Sir Henry very much,' he wrote; 'he always talks, and is kind, to me,' and none of Pottinger's successors ever made so strong an impression on the lad, who had very early begun to take stock of the capacity of his leaders.

But this first chapter of Harry Parkes' official life was not wholly occupied with plenipotentiaries and military dignitaries. He was rather too much thrown among his elders, and was 'in danger of being temporarily spoiled,' as Morrison said, 'by the kind of life on which he is now fairly embarked,' and of becoming somewhat 'mannish' for his years. His judicious master, however, whilst convinced that Harry's own 'good sense' would correct his premature elevation out of his natural sphere, did not leave the matter in the boy's own hands. He kept him hard at work, and encouraged him in every form of physical exercise. A swim in the sea began the day; then followed Chinese, which the pupil found 'very difficult and rather disheartening,' till noon; then Latin 'in the *Selectae e profanis scriptoribus*,' and French; besides irregular work in the office, such as copying despatches, which often occupied the whole day to the exclusion of everything else. Morrison was trying to help the boy to make up what he had lost by his early exodus from school, but it must be admitted that the loss was never really repaired. As life wore on, Parkes picked up, as an able man will, a vast amount of information on a great variety of subjects; but he was too busy from the first in Chinese affairs ever to take up the threads of a classical education. He could never be described as a scholar, nor did his youthful attacks upon Cobbett's French grammar lead to very profitable results. In later years

it was a constant subject for regret with him that he never could find time to master the many studies for which he had both the will and the ability.

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The round of work in the house was often enlivened by a ride on Morrison's pony, on whose back Parkes learned the delight in horse exercise which he retained to his last days. If he never became an accomplished horseman, few men in an official career have spent more hours on horseback and enjoyed them more thoroughly. On other days he sailed in the harbour, or climbed Mount Victoria, where people now live in charming bungalows during the hot season, but where in 1842 there was nothing but bushes and grass, up which Harry crawled on all fours to be rewarded with a gorgeous view of the whole island and the encircling sea, and then tumbled down again as best he could, arriving at the bottom in a wofully torn and bruised condition. His description of one of these walks is worth quoting, as a page from the diary of a boy of fourteen :—

*Wednesday 1st June.*—Set out for Major Caine's at about half-past four o'clock. He was quite ready, and so off we set. There were a long train of coolies, with guns, swords, telescopes, grub, cold tea in many bottles, etc. etc. Our way lay over the high hills, at the foot of which we were to be joined by a few soldiers and our companions; but when we arrived there, the soldiers, consisting of five, were there, but not our comrades. However, we began to ascend, and after two hours' good tugging we reached the top. . . . The sun now began to rise. It was a very good thing we had started so early, or else it would have been terrible climbing the hill with the sun beating down upon us. This reminded us that we could wait no longer, so we began to descend on the other [side]. The valley in which we were now going was very beautiful, streams crossing each other in all directions; oh! the different views that we saw this morning were really splendid, by far the most beautiful that I have ever seen. We

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passed through a little village most romantically situated, and continued walking a long time through beautiful country till we came to Shekpaiwan. Here we had a remarkable adventure, for on passing through the village a furious bull that was tied with a rope broke loose and rushed amongst us. Oh! there was such a confusion! All those who had umbrellas opened them directly, and forming into a line with our backs against a house, we repelled him. But Major Caine, who had not an umbrella at the time, was a good mark for the bull. He ran right at him, and was just upon the point of goring him, when the danger gave him strength and he made a tremendous leap right over a hedge! When the bull was gone and all was right again, there was a general laugh, but there was no laughing when there was danger.

Well, on we strolled, beholding as I have before noticed most beautiful views, and having constantly a stream of clear water running by us. A little before nine we passed through Heongkong. Close behind the village there is a beautiful wood, where deers are and pheasants. Here in a suitable place we sat down to rest, and the coolies, who got chairs and tables from the village, spread out under the shade a good and substantial repast. We all made a good breakfast, for we were hungry after having had five hours' stiff walking. We were also very dirty, for the dews of the morning had stuck the dirt to our clothes. Well, we ate heartily of pigeon pie, cold fowls, cold beef, eggs, lichee, plums, biscuits, bread, porter, cold tea and hot tea, cheese, salt, etc. etc. etc. Our companions were very nice people indeed. One, Captain Keppel of the *Dido*, a most beautiful little frigate, which is going up to Chusan directly with transports, offered me a passage in her; but as the *Blenheim* will certainly be going soon I could not accept the offer, but I was much obliged to him for his kindness. . . .

We continued resting and waiting for a cloud that

we might set out . . . as the sun was very hot. About one o'clock, no cloud coming, we set out, of course a different way to that which we came. We had to ascend an enormous hill, a great deal worse than the one in the morning, and with the sun beating upon us. However, we succeeded, but we had to stop every twenty yards, so hard was it to get up. And then on the other side the descent was just as difficult, terrible in fact, so steep, so steep, I cannot describe ; but in two hours we were on the main road, and from thence we soon were home. Major Caine was tired, but I was not, though it is the longest walk since I left England that I have done, being about fifteen miles, and besides such hills to climb ; but I enjoyed myself exceedingly. After dinner, which I ate with an appetite, I went to bed early to seek sound repose, which I soon found.

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There is here an odd mixture of the precocious young official, with his fine words and his 'sound repose,' and the real boy with his portentous list of 'grub' at breakfast, and the zest of the four 'etc.,' after the truly fearful medley of food he has described. The boy predominates, however, and he was evidently a nice boy, or Captain Keppel would not have asked him to join him in his frigate. Captain Keppel was one of the most brilliant naval officers of the day,<sup>1</sup> and to be chosen by him was no small honour. We shall return to the journal again.

<sup>1</sup> Now Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Keppel, G.C.B. We shall hear of him again in the China war of 1858, and in Japan.



## CHAPTER II

### UP THE YANG-TSZE

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THE harbour of Hongkong was a busy place in June 1842. Troopships were coming in fast, to be convoyed away North by men-of-war. On the 2nd the *Belleisle* came in with the 98th Regiment, Colin Campbell's, and one of the officers of the 98th was Lieut. T. F. Wade, with whom Parkes and China had much to do during the next forty years. None could have foreseen in the boy looking down into the harbour on that 2nd of June, and the young officer who was to go North on the *Belleisle*, two future Ministers of the Queen at the Court of the Emperor of China. Strangers as yet to each other, the two became fast friends for life; but at the moment nothing could have appeared less probable than that the clerk in the Chinese Secretary's office and the lieutenant in the 98th should find themselves successively masters of the British Legation at Peking.

On the 5th nine transports sailed for the North, under convoy of the *North Star*, *Dido*, and *Serpent*. 'The two last,' says the journal, 'most beautiful corvettes, were whipping in; and it was so very pretty to see the *Dido* turning round and round, and bringing up the lagging transports.' Harry almost regretted he had not closed with Captain Keppel's invitation. But his own turn soon came. On Sunday the 12th he was busily engaged

in packing Morrison's boxes and putting them on board the *Queen*, and in the evening he went below to the cabin they were to share, 'and throwing myself on the boxes soon went fast asleep,' not, however, without an unaffected regret at having spent the Sunday in so 'unprofitable' a manner. Even then his journals and letters were marked by the tone of simple unostentatious piety which was part of himself.

The next day the *Queen* weighed anchor for the seat of war. Harry was in the best of company, for the vessel carried Sir Henry Pottinger, his private secretary Major Malcolm, Dr Woosnam, J. R. Morrison, and Adam Elmslie. No charm of society, however, has been known to avert squeamishness, and it must be admitted that Parkes never attained the ineffable complacency of 'a good sailor.' On the night of the 14th they anchored off Amoy, and discovered next morning that the anchorage they had chosen in the dark was just off the breakers, where a few fathoms further would probably have meant destruction. Amoy had lately been bombarded by our fleet, and was largely in ruins when Harry landed; but the harbour was crowded with 'hundreds of large junks,' and the adjoining island of Koolangsoo, where a British garrison had been left (and remained for three years more), seemed, at least by contrast with the barren rocks of Amoy, 'a beautiful little place.' On the 18th the *Queen* was among the islands of the Chusan archipelago, 'and certainly it was a most beautiful sight, for all to the very top were covered with rich verdure,' all the more striking after the barrenness of the coast they had left behind. Sir Henry was in a hurry, however, and there was no time to explore Chusan, beyond noticing the points where the recent assault had been made; but Harry was fortunate in making the acquaintance of Mr Robert Thom on shore—an acquaintance which afterwards proved of no little value.

By the 20th the *Queen* was treading on the tail of the fleet of transports, and at dusk they—

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Came in sight of the whole fleet anchored off Woosung batteries at the mouth of the Yang-tsze Kiang. The whole of the batteries were in our possession, and it was not long before we heard the whole story of their capture. Upon the fleet coming in sight, the whole of the batteries began a most destructive fire from 253 guns of an enormous bore (43 of which were brass) mounted on batteries in the shape of a half-moon, and which the ships had to enter, and were exposed to this destructive fire till they had taken their stations; but upon landing the troops, the Chinese deserted their guns and fled. However, they had served them well, for the *Blonde* had fourteen shot in her hull, Lieut. Hewitt killed by a cannon shot, and Mr Lay, who was standing by him, wounded; the *Sesostris* had eleven shot in her hull and lost her rudder; the *Tenasserim* had mainmast and foremast nearly carried away, and the other ships were proportionately damaged, together with a loss of upwards of twenty killed and wounded in all. The loss of the Chinese was about 200 in killed and wounded. The Admiral and General are not here, having gone up a branch of the river to Shanghai, whither the Plenipotentiary is preparing to follow them.

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June 21

After breakfast went on shore with some of the gentlemen and officers, in all five persons, well armed. I had on a beautiful little sword that well suited me. Upon landing we walked all along the batteries, and though it was nearly a week since the place was taken, and the people had been employed in clearing away the dead, I counted fifteen dead men in a short space. This is my first sight of the horrors of war. One young fellow was quite sick at the sight, and said he had had enough; but I was far from being so chicken-hearted as that. We went on till we reached a large fortified village and entered a large temple. It was curious to see all the idols, decked in their gaudy trappings, promiscuously mingled with pans, all kinds



of broken utensils, brick-ends, etc. etc. The place was quite deserted, excepting one very old man who could hardly move, but it was quite out of our power to help him. We had a good stroll through the country, which is very beautiful and well watered. It is quite flat and is richly cultivated, yielding a beautiful produce, of which fruit was in great quantities, though not yet ripe.

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The next morning he was on board the *Pluto* at half-past four, steaming up to Shanghai against a seven-knot tide in a storm of wind and rain. His impressions of Shanghai—the first thoroughly Chinese city he explored—were all *en couleur de rose*. He had come from a midland town with little experience of degrees in the picturesque, and had not yet learned to be critical of the beauties of nature.

At ten anchored in the river at Shanghai. It certainly is, as I have heard it before said, a most beautiful place, quite romantically situated in a richly cultivated country, being well watered, as it is low and flat: there are also many trees of considerable stature. We found it in our possession: it had offered but little resistance, being weakly fortified, although it is a very rich city and great quantities of valuables had been found in it. From Shanghai to Woosung, a distance of eleven miles, there were forts that mounted seventy guns, many of which were brass: they were all taken without loss and much resistance.

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June 22

Immediately on landing I went with Mr Morrison to try to find out my uncle [Mr Gutzlaff], which we at last did, after trying to find our way for more than an hour and a half. Indeed I never did see a place composed of such a labyrinth as a Chinese city, for if you are once wrong it will take you hours to get right again. My uncle received me very kindly. . . . He was surrounded by Chinese with petitions, but, happening to be a calm for a short time, he took advantage of it, and we walked out in the city together. The

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city is going to be evacuated to-morrow, after keeping it four days, and everybody going down to Woosung.

In the evening he went again on shore accompanied only by a young fellow who 'was dreadfully frightened of being kidnapped, although he is nearly grown up; and when I told him he was a coward, he said his *anxiety* was all because of me. At this I laughed heartily, which made him much offended. However, we managed to find our way down to the landing-place, where the boat being in waiting we soon got on board.'

On Thursday the 23rd the troops were embarked, and Sir Henry and his staff, of which Harry was now a recognized member, moved to new quarters on the *Medusa*, and sailed down to Woosung. Here they found that another score of transports had come up, so that no fewer than sixty-two British vessels now composed the Expedition, with the French frigate *Erigone* to look on. Eventually the total reached seventy-four ships. A fleet of junks tried to run through the fleet, 'and were of course captured.' A Chinese captain and another celestial who called himself 'Corporal White' came on board the *Cornwallis*, Admiral Parker's flagship, with proposals of peace; but as these gentlemen were not furnished with powers to treat from the Emperor, their offers of negotiation were rejected. It was only the usual Chinese expedient of delay, with the object of preventing our moving on. The attempt failed and the Expedition proceeded up the Yang-tsze Kiang towards Nanking.

The boy's journal now becomes very interesting. It was the first time that the warships of the 'foreign devils' had appeared up the Great River, and everything was new to the English. The novelty brought its own inconveniences, for the navigation was difficult and the vessels were frequently aground. The leisurely voyage, however, gave the lad opportunities for seeing a good deal of the people on shore, and of improving his Chinese. At Woosung, when trying to converse with the captain of

a captured junk, he had discovered that he 'could hardly say a word' of the dialect, and Mr Gutzlaff was far from satisfied with his progress. It was characteristic of the boy's resolution, that in the midst of all the distractions of this first experience of a strange country, and the excitement of a campaign, he steadily set to work, on board ship, to improve himself. He laid down a systematic plan of study :—

Made a plan to-day of how I should spend my time, namely : To have at least two hours of Chinese study before breakfast ; after that I take it in turns to study geography, history, and arithmetic, from ten till twelve ; then take a leisure hour, and at one sit down again to learn Chinese till three ; after that take a Latin lesson, and lastly break up for good about five. I cannot help feeling my backwardness in Chinese, and I can see that my uncle perceives it. He has promised Sir Henry that I shall know it pretty well in six months, and has also told me that if I do not know it in that time, I shall not stop with him. I do not know how it will turn out, but I trust I shall receive help from above, for I am sure I cannot do it without it, being just like beginning afresh.

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Journal  
June 27

Six months was, of course, a ridiculously short time in which to expect proficiency in Chinese, even with the desultory preparation Harry had had at Macao : but 'Uncle' Gutzlaff was determined to push the boy into the service as soon as possible, and it must be admitted that the result justified his somewhat sanguine expectations. Of course the plan of work sketched out was not strictly adhered to : such plans never are. It can only be taken as the aim which the lad set before himself, but which he could not possibly carry out day after day. He was not his own master ; he was liable to be set to copying despatches at any moment, when the mail was being hastily made up ; and he was often sent ashore to forage for provisions, which were not easily come by on the Yang-tsze Kiang. He must have already possessed more Chinese than his

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modesty allowed him to claim, for he was remarkably successful in his dealings with the market-people, and it was said that no one could manage to get so many bullocks out of coy vendors as the youthful volunteer of the Commissariat. It has always been one of the oddities of our wars in China that the people were friendly enough as a rule and quite ready to supply provisions to the very army which was assailing their Government; but the oddness of the proceeding was enhanced when the supplies were obtained by the energetic arguments in broken Chinese of a boy of fourteen who did not even belong to the Commissariat department and had but an indefinite official connexion with the Expedition. It was an excellent training for the future Interpreter, however, and his successful forays were rewarded with the unstinted approbation of the authorities.

Journal

*Wednesday 6th July.*—At eight o'clock this morning signals were made for weighing to us, as our division (the 3rd) was ordered to go first, the 1st division next, then the 2nd division, then the 4th, and lastly the 5th. We thought when we first set out that we should have a bad day of it, but we were very glad to see after about two hours the rain clear up and a fine day set in. The Admiral in the *Cornwallis* led the way, together with the *Vixen* steamer, leaving the *Calliope* to bring up the division. Our first part of the way lay up about the middle of the river, which at this place is about nine miles broad. The land on both sides is flat, not a hill to be seen, extremely fertile, and seemingly possessing plenty of wood. At noon the *Belleisle* signaled to us that she wanted to be towed, for she is a terrible old tub: even with a wind right aft and all her sails set she does not make above four miles an hour; and as the transports in the divisions are in no wise to go ahead of their leaders, many of them only had their topsails hoisted, while the *Belleisle* had hoisted all her sails, even to top-gallant studding sails. Accordingly we dropped alongside of her;

which having done, Captain Kingcourt told us he did not want us, and we might go on ahead. We had not left him above ten minutes when, steering too much to starboard, he got aground in nearly four fathoms water. We accordingly had to back again and go to his aid to try to get him off the shoal. . . . We could also perceive that the Admiral, who was about five miles ahead of us, was on shore and stuck fast, just like the *Belleisle*. Everybody seems much dissatisfied at these large ships coming up, especially at the Admiral leading the way in that monster the *Cornwallis*, because if he gets on shore, all the fleet would have to stay for him, even if it were for a week. However, we managed to get the *Belleisle* off about nine at night, being then high water, but of course could not proceed on our way then. It has been quite fine since the morning, with steady breeze. Altogether we have made about thirty miles. . . .

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*Friday 8th July.*—Weighed at nine this morning, and having taken the *Belleisle* in tow, proceeded on our way with the division, the Admiral keeping about three miles ahead. The little *Nemesis* came alongside of us several times to-day. She is very beautiful, but nearly knocked to pieces, having seen a great deal of service. About two we came to anchor off Fuh Shan, having Lang Shan on the opposite side of us. There are some very high hills on each side of the river, called by the Chinese the teeth of the river. On Lang Shan there is a large pagoda and a large collection of temples, enclosed with a wall: a lieutenant-general and four regiments are stationed there. On Fuh Shan there is also a collection of temples enclosed with a wall. Directly upon landing, which we did directly after we had anchored, the eclipse of the sun which had been expected came on: it was only partial, and not total as was expected. There was a large battery on the shore, but no guns in it. We did not wander far, as it was known that a number of soldiers were secreted in the



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place, which rendered strolling far dangerous. The place itself is scattered on the banks of a small creek, which large junks can enter ; but there is no regular town. We could get no provisions, as all they then had they had already taken to the ships. However, upon seeing three ducks, I darted after them ; one I soon caught, and another was caught by one of the men ; but the other fled into some water, in which I dashed after it, and after a long chase succeeded in capturing it, but of course I was covered with mud from top to toe. I also managed to pick up a very pretty little cat, a very good inkstand, a cup and saucer of very beautiful workmanship, and a bundle of papers, which, on handing over to Mr. Morrison, were found to be despatches, etc. We also fell upon a house in which there was a quantity of arms, which we totally destroyed. Pushed off for the ship again after an hour's good fun, but did not get above half a dozen ducks and fowls.

In such incidents of voyage the days passed, during the slow progress of the Expedition up the river. On the 14th they were warned that they were approaching two batteries which had shown fight to the reconnoitring vessels the day before, and 'the news put us all in good spirits, and every one looked forward to the skirmishing which we expected was coming on, with great joy, and I was as much pleased as any of them : judge of our disappointment, then, when we saw the *Jupiter*, all through her own fault, stick fast in the mud, and the *Belleisle* ordering us to turn back and assist her in getting her off.' When they came to the batteries, the following day, they found that they had been taken after less than ten minutes' firing, so they had not lost so much 'fun' as they feared. They landed to see what had been done, however :—

Journal  
July 15

Soon after breakfast, the cutter was manned and done out in fine style, and Sir Henry, Mr Morrison, Major Malcolm, Dr Woosnam, Captain Warden, two others,

and myself got into her, and we pulled off. Upon landing, the first thing that we saw was a party of marines destroying the batteries, works, etc., which were only on a small scale. We then began to ascend the hill, which was rather hot work as the hill was steep and the sun beat down on our heads with great force. We had gone a great way, having a fine view around us, when we heard some guns fired in the distance. By the help of a telescope we could see that the *Phlegethon* and *Medusa* were engaged by some batteries on Tsien Shan, an island near Kin Shan, and giving and returning in fine style. . . .

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*Saturday 16th July.*—Very hot day indeed; still lying at anchor. Learnt the history of the action yesterday: viz. the steamers *Phlegethon* and *Medusa* were quietly surveying the river close to Tsien Shan, . . . when they were attacked by a battery mounting twelve guns. The action lasted about a quarter of an hour, and ended by a shell being pitched in amongst the Chinese, which blew a number to atoms. This ended the business, and the Chinese were soon in full retreat, carrying their dead and wounded along with them. . . . About twelve the thermometer was 105° when exposed to the sun, 95° when in a cool shady place, and 80° in cold water. I felt it very much. About half-past four I went on shore for a little walk and also for a bathe: both these I had, and came off again about six. Major Malcolm and Dr Woosnam took a sketch of the place to-day on their daguerreo-type. I cannot understand it at all: but on exposing a highly polished steel plate to the sun by the aid of some glass or other it takes the scene before you on to the plate and by some solution it will stay on the plate for years. It is no use me trying to describe it, for to me it is quite a mystery. Slept on deck for coolness' sake.

The next day they passed Tsien Shan, 'a small island rising out of the river, covered to the top with green trees

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ÆT. 14 and containing some very pretty houses,' with the golden ball of the Emperor's pavilion just rising above the trees; the yellow roofs of the 'Golden Island,' beautiful Kin Shan, shone six miles away, and the walls of Chinkiang stood out in the distance. Lying at anchor just above Kin Shan at daybreak of the 18th they saw a number of junks trying to slip by. Shots were fired, but the junks declined to heave to, and the *Queen* accordingly got up steam and went in pursuit:—

Journal  
July 18

All hands were piped to quarters, bulwarks taken down, and all necessary preparations made for fighting. The junks knowing the passage got on at first better than we did, for we stuck once, but not for long: and about breakfast came up with an immense number lying at anchor off Iching. These we captured, and then proceeded after some others which had gone on: these we also captured one by one, after a good deal of firing. . . . Also we captured a beautiful little junk which Major Malcolm took possession of, and having got an officer and ten men to sail her, went all about through the junks, telling them to get under weigh and go back to Kin Shan again. I also offered myself as a volunteer, and being accepted, enjoyed myself very much. Every junk, amounting in all to nearly 300, we went on board of, examining their cargoes; and those that were in any wise obstreperous, we cut their moorings and set them adrift. Most of them were either partly or quite empty, but others had salt and coal in great quantities. . . .

The next day, 19th July, there was another exploring party up the creeks, accompanied by junk-catching, and of course Harry was in the thick of it, and jubilant over the fun:—

Journal  
July 19

I immediately dressed myself to get into the cutter, but just as she was shoving off, she was ordered to proceed in chase of a junk that would not heave to: so off we set. The junk sailed very fast, and we could hardly keep up with her, but as we rowed as well as



[sailed] we gained upon her, and when quite near fired into her several times ; but she would not stop, and we actually had to board her by force. We immediately proceeded to cut away the masts, toss the sails overboard, and cut her up so that she could not move. After this we left her and proceeded up the creek to find Sir Henry.

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We soon met them coming down the creek, and they told us to follow them, and then we found that we were going to land on Kin Shan. . . . Almost the first thing we saw was a very large temple full of immense idols. We went all round it, and I am sure I never saw anything like it before. The numberless rooms all full of these large idols, richly adorned, make a striking effect upon the spectator. We then visited the Emperor's rooms. They are all in ruins and falling down ; no furniture worth speaking of is in them, excepting one table and chair, which were of Japan ware inlaid with mother of pearl. These were very handsome, but, as all the rest of the things, were out of repair. We then set out to go to the top of the pagoda. This is also very old, and will not admit of many ascending it at a time. Much of the outward part of it is made of wood, painted and cut into fantastical shapes. We had a beautiful view of the surrounding country, which is intersected with numerous streams and canals which junks can go up.

These expeditions were of course made with the view of finding out the enemy's strength and positions. They could see that reinforcements had reached Chinkiang, where their camp was visible on a hill. But the Chinese were still endeavouring to delay the movement of the fleet by fraudulent negotiations, and 'Corporal White,' the go-between, brought another 'chop' from the Chinese Commissioners on the 19th, asking for peace: 'the answer returned was that they knew what our demands were, and if they were not willing to grant them, no negotiations could be entered into.' So on the 20th all was

1842 arranged for the attack on Chinkiang on the morrow,  
 ÆT. 14 and Harry records 'I went to bed in very good spirits,  
 full of anticipations of what I should see to-morrow, as  
 Sir Henry has promised to let me go with him, not to  
 the fight, but to see it from the distance.'

Journal *Thursday 21st July.*—At five o'clock this morning the  
 troops began to land at the N.-W. end of the suburbs  
 of Chinkiang, and at about half-past seven I landed  
 with Sir Henry, Mr Morrison, and Dr Woosnam, with  
 eight seamen and two marines. I have never seen  
 such a busy scene before as that of landing troops.  
 There they were, all muddled up together, officers  
 running backwards and forwards, men shouting and  
 looking for their comrades, etc. etc. etc. We chose  
 for our position the summit of a hill which overlooked  
 the city and the country all round, and at about two  
 miles from the city. It was a very beautiful view to  
 see the soldiers forming and beginning to wind through  
 the defiles and over the tops of the hills to their  
 destined positions in which they were to begin the  
 attack. We could also see an encampment a little to  
 the eastward of the city in a very strong position.  
 They were drawn up with their right resting upon the  
 city, and their left commanded by about 300 men  
 who were stationed on a hillock to defend a pass, which  
 led to Nanking. Thus, if they were defeated, they  
 were sure of effecting a retreat. In their rear was a  
 range of high hills, the defiles of which they could  
 well defend as they were very narrow; and in their  
 front were deep paddy [rice] fields and marshes, which  
 rendered it very difficult to attack them.

Lord Saltoun's brigade was to attack them, and  
 while they were passing the paddy fields to get within  
 range, a heavy fire was opened upon them from the  
 enemy's gingals, who kept gradually retiring upon their  
 left towards the defiles in the hills, as they saw some  
 of our men who were coming round the S.-E. side of  
 the city to cut off their retreat. Some few of our men

got within shot, when the enemy fled in all directions : some took to a wood which was by the hills in their rear, and afterwards rallied upon the top of them once or twice, from which they were driven away. This being done, and all the enemy having been dispersed that were posted outside the city, the attack was made in two or three points of it by escalade. The steamer *Auckland* was anchored off the N. side of the city, endeavouring to make a breach by which General Schoedde was to pass through and get possession of the walls, which would of course have prevented all opposition being shown to the troops on the S. side whilst storming their places allotted to them. The *Auckland*, though she threw shot and shells with admirable precision, proved unsuccessful, and the troops were obliged to go up in the face of a galling fire to escalade, which they were unable to do for the space of about two hours, as they had to go up a dreadful steep place and the enemy never ceased to pour volleys of musketry upon them, and at this place, as might be expected, we lost many men in killed and wounded. The North-West Gate was about the same time attacked. A canal, which runs east and west of the city and about ten yards from the walls, offered a good position for us to take, which was done by the *Blonde's* boats, which commenced a heavy fire upon the gate, which was returned by those upon the walls in a very spirited manner ; they succeeded in killing and wounding eleven in her launch, which was obliged to haul off, by which time some of her other boats came up and renewed the attack. . . .

The boats then continued a heavy fire of shell and shot, which greatly attracted the attention of the enemy. In the meantime a sergeant's party of sappers and miners crawled up to the gate and there dug a hole under it, in which they deposited three bags of powder of 60 lbs. each, and having lighted the fuse they got clear away without discovery, and almost

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instantaneously the whole of the gate was blown into the air, together with the magazine, a shot from the boats having pitched right into it, the explosion of which shook the very foundations of the walls. Our troops then began to pour in at this point and drive the enemy off the walls.

At about half-past one General Schoedde succeeded in getting his scaling ladders against the wall, which enabled a few of our gallant fellows to mount. Among these was Captain Cuddie of the 55th, who mounted the wall the very first, and immediately received a ball in his thigh. At this he was in nowise daunted, but seating himself upon the wall, handed the men's muskets up, thus exposing himself to the fire of all the enemy. . . . As our men increased upon the wall, the enemy retired into the houses, and there kept picking our men off, till they were entirely driven away by the houses being set fire to. All the gates were defended by the enemy with great bravery, and even after the escalading parties had joined, the walls were cleared but a little before sunset. In gaining the walls we lost a vast number of men and officers, but the loss of the enemy there must have been very slight, as they only showed themselves through the embrasures, and with the exception of once, our men never had an opportunity of meeting them: however, when they did so, a terrible example was made of them and very few escaped. . . .

The day after the assault, Harry went on shore to see the city. It was on fire in several places, and the houses were in ruins: 'one was a pawnbroker's: I never saw such a scene. All the rooms were full of beautiful silks, embroidery, lacquer boxes, hats, chinaware, and almost everything of all descriptions, kicking about and being trod on and passed over even in the courtyard and street. Amongst them was a man who had hung himself.' It was discovered that 'several of the Tartar gentlemen have committed suicide, and that the Tartar

General, when he found the city was taken, ordered all his valuables to be brought into the hall, sat himself down in the middle of them, and setting fire to them burnt himself alive.' His secretary, who was brought aboard, said that the enemy's force in the city had consisted of 3200 Tartars and 800 Chinese, and in the camp outside there were over 2000 Chinese.

The Expedition did not move on from Chinkiang till 3rd August, and meanwhile Harry had plenty to do. On the 27th July he was entrusted by Sir Henry with a 'chop' in reply to a communication from the Chinese, and went with an escort into the city to carry it with a letter to Mr Gutzlaff. 'We had rather a hot walk, and the streets were beastly dirty, and there was a dead man lying in almost every other house, which together with broken jars of oil and *samsu* made the stench almost unbearable.' After doing his business, and dining at the Artillery mess, he got a horse and cantered round on the top of the walls to see a bastion blown up, and returned to find a search party out after him, headed by Mr Morrison, who thought the boy had been captured. 'It gave occasion for a good laugh,' he says. Next day he was off to Golden Island, and found the priests there very amiable—the more so as the General had strictly forbidden any meddling with their property or their temples. The 29th was spent in copying information for the despatches, which went off on the 30th, and in interviewing some messengers who brought a defiant communication from the Governor-General of Kiang Su and Kiang Si. This worthy threatened to 'fight it out to the last and die in defence of his country,' but his messengers were quite ready to eat the good dinner offered them by the enemy; 'they showed Journal their approbation of the delicacies (although cooked English-fashion) by the quantity that they demolished; they also made pretty free with the liquor. I saw the Lieutenant drink off in a few minutes three wine-glassfuls of raw brandy and one of gin, and he did not seem to be at all affected by it.'

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Some days there was little wind, and the fleet could not move on; and meanwhile the heat was intense, and the nights sultry. Or else there was a head wind, which was pleasant enough, but did not conduce to progress. Several times the signal was made to weigh anchor, and as often it was annulled. Harry spent the interval of delay in visiting the Imperial library, which had been discovered at Kin Shan. Mr Morrison was with him:—

Journal

Although the house was falling down, so that we durst hardly go upstairs, yet the books were in a beautiful state, all packed and enclosed in camphor-wood cases, and having a quantity of camphor sprinkled amongst them. There were many thousand volumes, on all kinds of subjects. Amongst other things there was a collection of beautiful plates, evidently done by the French, representing the Tartars' victories over some of the north-west tribes. They were covered with yellow satin (as most of the books were) and beautifully preserved. The pictures themselves are full a yard square. There were also some Chinese plates representing the same kind of thing, very well done for the Chinese, but of course much inferior to the other ones. The priests had already taken a great quantity of the books away, but those proceedings were now stopped by a sentry being placed over them.

At last the 3rd division sailed on the 3rd August, and the 2nd with Harry on the *Queen* followed on the 4th and passed the other division. 'The river on both sides is very beautiful, and the banks are covered with green foliage: it is a little better than a mile broad.' At ten the next morning they could see a pagoda which was close to Nanking—doubtless the famous 'Porcelain Tower'—and at one they were up with the flagship, level with Nanking.

Journal  
Aug. 5

Nanking itself is three miles and a half inland, but it is surrounded by three walls. . . . Part of the outer wall faces the river at the distance of from 900 to 1000 yards from its banks. This wall the Chinese are fortifying

and making strong again as fast as they can. Already they have got about half a dozen guns to bear upon the fleet, and that they may have time to finish it they are sending off a parcel of low brass-button mandarins with chops from the Governor-General of the Two Kiang, who is in the city, talking about entering into negotiations, and that Elepoo is coming to treat, etc. . . . It will be rather a hard struggle, especially with the Tartar garrison, who are in great strength, and this part of the city very strongly fortified. Two brass-button mandarins, who were on board of us this afternoon, told me that there were 8000 Tartars, 6000 Chinese belonging to the place, 1000 Hu Peh soldiers, and 1000 Kiang Si men, together with others who were fast collecting. This account, which is supposed to be underrated, is an immense force to encounter, with such strong defences to back them. The cholera (which I have forgotten to mention before) has made its appearance among the troops ever since the taking of Chinkiang, and committing very great ravages among them; even now it is not abating; just at present we feel this more, as every man is wanted. Numbers of chops keep coming off from the inhabitants and Governor-General.

In the event the 'chops' turned out to be more important than the defences. The taking of Chinkiang had evidently made a considerable impression on the Chinese, and they were unwilling to risk a similar disaster at Nanking. Elepoo the Governor of Canton, a man of some diplomatic ability, was sent to negotiate, but it is clear the Chinese had not yet fully learnt the lesson of defeat and were hardly prepared for the consequences of surrender. On Monday the 8th August the following instructive passage occurs in the journal:—

In the afternoon Chang, a crystal-button mandarin, Journal and Elepoo's slave, came off with a whole train of inferior mandarins, announcing his master's arrival, and inquiring about our terms. He was in a great rage at



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our saying that the Chinese must pay the expenses of the war, and on Mr Thom reminding him of some of their underhand practices, he absolutely struck at him. He was not treated then with so much familiarity. He stopped about an hour and then went away. He is a fine fellow and very handsomely dressed, with two splendid watches at his side.

These feelers after negotiation did not arrest the preparations for the assault ; for the least sign of hesitation or compliance would have at once restored confidence to the Chinese. Among Harry's numerous avocations that of woodman seems now to have come into play. He went ashore to help to cut down trees, to clear the line of fire, and very nearly got himself killed for his pains. A tree that he was felling, in an amateur's unscientific fashion, crashed right upon him : ' I saw it coming and tried to escape, but it overtook me and knocked me down into a deep muddy place, where I was nearly suffocated ; but assistance coming immediately, I got out again with only my leg bone bruised and the flesh knocked away.' Reconnaissances went on gaily, and the General said he should be ready to attack in three or four days. These preparations had their due effect : for on the 12th a transparent-blue-button mandarin came to announce the High Commissioners' arrival, and to arrange an interview ; and in the afternoon Morrison, Thom, and others had a discussion with Kiying's subordinates, and brought back the information that ' they wished very much for peace.' Further meetings between the interpreters and secretaries took place on the following days, and Morrison announced that peace was a certainty. There were no signs of hostility on shore :—

Journal  
Aug. 14

Went on shore in the evening with Mr Morrison and had a very pleasant walk for three miles into the country, oftentimes walking close by the walls of the city. Everything wears a peaceable aspect. Red flags were hung out of many of the people's houses, which they told us were meant to welcome our arrival—though

the first words that they put to us were 'When will you be going?' also questions of the forthcoming peace. When we were returning, we saw a poor woman who was dying of hunger, lying in the mud and unable to move. She was almost gone. However, it was no use stopping and looking on, so we came and fetched some biscuits, rice, and cash from the ship, and brought them back to her. We then looked about for some living person to give her more relief, and after looking about for a long time, for it was quite dark, we found a Chinaman, who upon a promise of being paid brought some hot tea and saw her comfortably settled for the night. We then came away, promising to return in the morning—  
—a promise faithfully kept, in the midst of his many duties, by Morrison himself.

Harry was now quartered on board the *John Cooper* (an empty coal transport) with Thom, Elmslie, and Eastwick, and was kept a good deal below decks copying papers for Major Malcolm. On the 20th he went on board the *Queen* to deliver some copies, and was surprised to learn that a meeting was about to take place between the Plenipotentiaries of England and China on board the *Cornwallis*. Of course he determined to be present, and hurried back to tell Thom and dress for the ceremony. They went after breakfast to the *Medusa*, which was lying off a creek waiting to receive the High Commissioners:—

After anxiously waiting for about a quarter of an hour, a number of little boats decorated with flags made their appearance, and in a little time they were received on board the *Medusa* by Commander Richards of the *Cornwallis*, and after some few compliments had been paid the *Medusa* set off to take them on board the *Cornwallis*. They had a great number of servants and attendants, together with many mandarins of both high and low rank, which so crowded the decks of the little *Medusa* that there was no passing or repassing. I was publicly introduced to their Excellencies by Mr Morrison, and Kiyong, seeing that I was a regular

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'red-haired barbarian,' took a bit of a fancy to me. I tried to talk as much as possible, but could only stammer out a few words, while I could not understand Kiying in the least, who speaks the northern mandarin very broadly. Neither Kiying nor Elepoo the High Commissioners, nor Niukien the Governor-General, were dressed finely. The two former were dressed plainer than anybody. I could not account for this at all, though I was told afterwards by Mr Morrison that the dress of a Chinese Commissioner is always very plain, because they are expected to go out from the Emperor with all possible speed and in their haste not to take any of their ornaments or finery with them. I rather like Kiying's appearance, for he has a fine manly honest countenance, with pleasantness in his looks; but I cannot say the same of Elepoo or Niukien, for they look dull and heavy, with coarse features, which seemed to show that they were takers of opium, etc. Poor Elepoo has very sickly health. He is never well for long together, and the labour and anxiety which he has suffered since the arrival of our fleet off Nanking seem quite to have upset him.

Harry had easily managed to be present at the reception of the Commissioners on the *Medusa*, but it needed some diplomacy to get on board the flagship for the chief ceremony. He was told it was impossible—there was no room, and many mandarins had to be excluded. But he chanced to be holding in his hand some of Morrison's papers with the official yellow colour ('of course of very little consequence, but not being told I was not obliged to know it'), and on brandishing these with a consequential air before the officer in charge of one of the boats, he was allowed to go, to his great delight, and so, 'very joyfully and laughing at them in my sleeve,' pulled through a heavy sea to the *Cornwallis*.

Journal  
Aug. 20

On the quarter-deck and poop there was a splendid sight. An immense number of officers were assembled there, all in their full-dress uniforms, which made

a very showy appearance. There was also a company of marines drawn up, together with a good band who struck up some very beautiful tunes. When I got on board the Commissioners and Niukien had been received by Sir Henry and the Admiral and General, and had been shown into the aftermost cabin. I then went there and had a beautiful place from where I could see and hear everything that went on. I was standing close by the Admiral and General, who gave me his terrible large cocked hat and feathers to put down in some place for him. It was merely a visit of ceremony; no business matters were talked about. The Admiral had prepared in two rooms an elegant tiffin of sweetmeats, wines, and viands, and all kinds of delicacies. Almost everybody partook of them, which soon made a hole into most of the dishes. The Chinese showed their approbation of English fare this time also by the quantity that they demolished: but some of the common servants were very rude, and ate and drank to a degree, and even when ordered out in their own language snatched at the things still more voraciously and then laughed in your face. This was afterwards mentioned to Kiyung, who was very angry about it.

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After sitting for some time they arose and were shown about the vessel. They expressed much surprise at its size and number of guns, and more still on being told that it was by no means one of our largest vessels. Soon after this they made their departure, evidently much gratified with their reception and the attention paid to them. They were saluted both at their arrival and departure with three guns.

The return visit of the English authorities to the Commissioners was paid on the 24th at a temple a little way from the bank. Harry, after succeeding in planting his small self next to the General at the first interview on board the flagship, appears to have found his further attendance quite necessary to the due performance of all

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ÆT. 14 ceremonies with the Chinese. So far from opposing his wish, Sir Henry Pottinger laughingly answered some objection with the words 'He is my boy, and must come.' Accordingly Harry found himself walking with Mr Gutzlaff to the temple on the morning of the 24th, to make sure that all was ready for the return visit.

Journal  
Aug. 24 To get to the temple you have to go up the creek or rather canal some way, and then when you land you have not to walk much above a hundred yards through a little dirty narrow street before you reach the temple. When we got there we found everything in readiness, and their Excellencies Kiyng, Elepoo, and Niukien waiting for the arrival of our party. In two large open courts, through which you have to pass before you come to the rooms of the temple, there were on each side drawn up single ranks of Chinese soldiers with flags etc., and at each corner there were a few miserable men playing pipes and beating gongs, which made an horrible noise. In two rooms there was a tiffin laid out of all kinds of sweetmeats, cakes, fruit, tea, etc. etc., with low-button mandarins to wait as servants, instead of those on board the *Cornwallis* the other day.

We were received by the Commissioners in a very kind manner. Elepoo was better, but he still looked unwell. My uncle was soon in earnest conversation with them all. Kiyng took me by the hand and seated me by him. I sat by him for full half an hour, during which time he had been amusing himself with me, and I had been amusing myself with the sweetmeats etc. which he gave me.

About ten Sir Henry with the Admiral and General, with a very large party of officers, landed and were saluted with three guns. When they approached the court, Kiyng etc. rose to receive them. I ran into the second court and had a good sight of the whole. First came Sir Henry with the Admiral and General walking arm in arm. Sir Henry was in the middle.



They were in full uniform and looked exceedingly well. Then followed a large number of officers, then the band of the Royal Irish, with an escort consisting of a company of the same regiment. . . .

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When Sir Henry with the Admiral and General had been conducted into the banquet room and seated (the room was decorated all over with hangings and pictures; also the seats were covered with worked silk cushions) the Chinese band struck up from all quarters, making the most dreadful din I think I have ever heard, and so to drown this horrible noise our band began to play some very beautiful tunes, which pleased their Excellencies Kiying, Elepoo, and Niukien very much. Kiying and Elepoo were dressed very plain indeed, but all the other mandarins were dressed much finer than usual. This being a ceremonial visit like the former one, there were no business matters talked of. . . .

After sitting for about an hour, and everybody having taken what he wished, Sir Henry rose to depart. He was accompanied into the court by Kiying etc., where our band struck up 'God Save the Queen.' Everybody who was going away then stopped and took off their hats, and when it was finished then went on again. When their Excellencies on both sides had parted, Sir Henry and the Admiral and General then went arm in arm, the officers followed, then the band, playing very beautifully, and then lastly the escort; the Chinese in the meantime trying to rival our musical instruments by their nasty gongs, etc. Just as Kiying had parted from Sir Henry, as I was going past him, he saw me and catching hold of me would not let me go till everybody had passed. He wanted me to go away with him.

The events of the day were not over, however, when the Commissioners had gone home. There was some business to settle among the interpreters, and whilst Gutzlaff, Thom, and G. T. Lay settled it with the

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mandarins, Harry explored the temple and the idols by himself. A sumptuous dinner followed, given by the Chinese: 'There were a great number of dishes, which were changed for others almost immediately after they had been put upon the table. . . . I was not puzzled how to hold the chopsticks but was able to pick up anything; the dish that I preferred most was sharks' fins.' After dinner the party took to the boats, but instead of rowing to the *Queen*, 'Let us go to the Porcelain Tower,' said Gutzlaff, and thither they went, accompanied by Wu, the district magistrate. After skirting the walls for some distance on the canal, they landed and walked the half mile to the tower. It was eight o'clock at night, but still light, as Gutzlaff and Harry followed by some of the magistrate's servants hurried along, with Thom and Lay panting behind:—

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Aug. 24

Upon coming near the tower I ran on first, and was the very first Englishman that ever visited the Porcelain Tower. In a very little time a large mob was collected round us, and also some police who had arrived with lighted torches, and when the people pressed upon us, beat them with these torches. . . . Though we had only lamps to see it by, yet it looked exceedingly well. All round the walls there are images moulded and gilt all over, and in the middle of each story there is a large idol, also gilt. This gilt is in an exceeding good state of preservation, and we found out afterwards that it was mixed with oil, which accounts for its good-looking. The porcelain also looked exceedingly well, quite white; most of the inside coating is all porcelain of a very fine nature. All round about it was ornamented with moulding and carving of the most fantastical and beautiful shapes, painted, etc. . . . There are nine stories with four windows in each story. The tower itself is a hexagon and about 250 feet high.

They had an excellent supper with Wu in a neighbouring temple, where they were put up on good beds of



China blankets, and returned next morning, taking a peep through the great gate of Nanking as they passed. Before the Expedition went away the Porcelain Tower was again visited, but in a very different manner. A party of soldiers and sailors, armed with chisels and hatchets, began to destroy the tiles and mouldings in the ruthless manner of their kind. Sir Henry Pottinger was very indignant at this gratuitous vandalism; a guard was stationed to keep off intruders, and no one was thenceforth allowed to visit the tower without a permit from the Admiral or General. 'Such an act as this is shameful,' wrote Harry Parkes, 'and a disgrace to the British name. . . . Really some of the sailors and officers belonging to some of these transports are a lawless set of beings, and they may well be styled "barbarians" who could wantonly destroy a building of such celebrity.' But the real 'barbarians' who utterly destroyed the famous Porcelain Tower were the Tai Ping rebels of 1852.

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On the 27th August the news arrived that the Emperor had approved the Treaty, and Monday the 29th was fixed for the signing and sealing. The *Cornwallis* was the scene of this final ceremony, and at noon Kiying and Niukien were received on the quarter-deck to the strains of 'God Save the Queen.' Elepoo, who was ill, came rather later:—

The poor old man . . . was so ill that he was carried up the side in a chair. He was met at the gangway by Sir Henry, the Admiral, and General, who partly carried and partly supported him into the after-cabin, where he was laid on a sofa; and that he might not be wearied too much, business matters were proceeded to immediately. Firstly the Treaty was sealed by Mr Morrison as secretary to Sir Henry on the one side, and by Wang Tajin as secretary to Kiying on the other. There was the seal of the Imperial High Commissioners and Sir Henry's seal. This being finished and done, the table was drawn up to the sofa, and then Kiying, Elepoo, and Niukien

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signed their names. I could not make anything out of the signatures at all (Mr Thom told me it was a particular mark, which each mandarin has, and not letters). Then Sir Henry did his. There were four copies of the Treaty signed and sealed. They were bound in worked yellow silk, one Treaty in English and the same in Chinese stitched and bound together formed a copy. This being finished they all came out of the after-cabin and sat down to tiffin, and the different officers seated themselves all round the table, making plenty of guests. Almost directly after the Treaty was signed, a yellow flag for China at the main and a Union Jack for England at the mizen were hoisted, and at the same time a royal salute of twenty-one guns was fired. Some of the mandarins went to see this done, but soon came running up again much frightened. Soon after this they took their leave. Each party seemed satisfied and pleased with each other.

Thus was the Treaty of Nanking concluded. It provided for the security and protection of British subjects in China, who might 'carry on their mercantile pursuits without molestation or restraint at the cities and towns of Canton, Amoy, Foochowfoo, Ningpo, and Shanghai,' not with the Hong merchants of Canton merely, but with 'whatever persons they please.' British consular officers were to be appointed 'to reside at each of the above-named cities or towns to be the medium of communication between the Chinese authorities and the said merchants.' The island of Hongkong was ceded in perpetuity to the Crown of England, as a port where British ships might careen and stores be kept; and an indemnity of twenty-one million dollars was to be paid for the cost of the Expedition caused by 'the violent and unjust proceedings of the Chinese high authorities,' and for the opium destroyed by Commissioner Lin. Pending the payment of the indemnity, by instalments spread over three years, the islands of Koolangsoo and Chusan were

to be held by Great Britain. Entire equality between the two Governments was assumed throughout the Treaty, and 'Her Britannic Majesty's Chief High Officer in China' was to 'correspond with the Chinese High Officers both at the capital and in the provinces,' not in the old humiliating form of a 'petition,' but by a 'communication.'

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The Treaty of Nanking marked a vital change in our relations with China. For the first time in history the Chinese formally acknowledged themselves in the wrong and admitted their defeat by 'foreign devils' in a document of state. For the first time they consented to deal directly with England, as Power with Power, instead of treating her merchants as suppliants through a native commercial body at Canton. For the first time they threw open five ports to the general commerce of England, and hence to the world at large. All this was a tremendous revolution in Chinese ideas, and hopeful spectators prophesied the breaking down of the old barriers of exclusiveness, and the opening up of the whole of the Flowery Land to the influences of European enterprise and civilization.

But the Treaty did not go far enough. It was perhaps impossible at that early stage to ask for more, yet there were statesmen who then foresaw that unless England obtained the right of direct representation through a Minister at the Court of Peking, the advantages secured by the Treaty of Nanking might prove illusory. So long as British interests depended upon the temper of local officials, a door would be left open for humiliation and outrage. The right of communication with the capital turned out to be a dead letter, except when enforced at the point of the bayonet. And until the capital could be entered, and the Emperor's ministers personally approached by a British representative, it was impossible (without force) to bring the arrogance of the provincial authorities to account.

Nevertheless the Treaty was a notable step in our intercourse with China, and if it did not open up the

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country, at least it greatly enlarged our points of touch with the people. It was but the beginning of a rational basis of relations, yet it was a wise and solid foundation on which to build. It is interesting to note that Harry Parkes, who did so much to broaden that foundation, was present at the laying of the first stone. All our official relations with China date from the Treaty of 1842, and the man who passed through every stage of official life, from Interpreter to Minister Plenipotentiary, had the good fortune to be a witness when the curtain went up on the very first act in the drama in which he was to play so many parts. He was but a supernumerary then, though he was allowed to see almost as much of the action as the leaders; but he was on in every scene henceforth, and as he advanced his parts became more important, till at last he took the chief rôle, and died upon the stage.

Small as the share must necessarily be of a boy of fourteen in a momentous transaction of state, it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the bearing of those events upon his career. The extracts from his journal up the Yang-tsze Kiang have shown the unique position he enjoyed. He was thrown from the first among the very chiefs of the campaign, and his youthful charm of manner and willing energy of character won him a welcome among them which the mere recommendation of Morrison and Gutzlaff could not have secured. He must have possessed a singularly winning way with him in those days, or we should hardly find him standing beside the grave chiefs of war and diplomacy at the most critical moments of their work. To have been in such a position was a magnificent beginning for the lad's career. He was privileged to know every man of mark in the British establishment in China. Among the people he daily rubbed against were future consuls and ministers, generals and admirals, and from them he gained such a knowledge of affairs and of men as falls to the lot of scarcely one boy in a million.

Taken from school at an age when a lad has scarcely begun to measure his fellows, his education really opened on the decks of men-of-war, in the council chambers of plenipotentiaries, and on the field of battle. It speaks volumes for his character that he came through this strange experience unspoilt, a favourite with great and small, and, in spite of his premature entrance into the life of men of action, a humble natural boy, fully conscious of his own defects, and resolved to work hard to improve himself. Morrison wrote on board the *Queen*, 'Harry has spoken for himself. He continues the same good-dispositioned boy. . . . Harry wins golden opinions.' He had the good fortune, too, to meet with a golden opportunity, and he made the most of it.

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## CHAPTER III

### APPRENTICESHIP

1842-1844

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AFTER the signing of the Treaty much remained to be done before the fleet could leave Nanking. The Emperor's ratification had to be obtained, which did not arrive for a fortnight; and the first instalment of the indemnity, three millions of dollars, had to be paid into the *Blonde's* hold. Meanwhile Harry Parkes was fully employed. There was a mass of writing to be finished before the whole business could be duly reported to the home Government, and the boy was daily engaged on board the *Queen* copying despatches and reports—rather to his disgust, for he longed to be ashore in the strange country to which he had so recently and so curiously been introduced. Gutzlaff was strict about Chinese lessons, and as he and Harry were now quartered on board the same vessel the process of learning went on rather more regularly, as well as other duties allowed. Now and then he went on shore, but it was not so pleasant as before, for a large part of the country was now under water, and when he had to carry a letter to a mandarin at the temple where the Treaty was signed, he found the path four or five feet deep in water, and only avoided falling into deep places by sending a Chinaman ahead of him and noting where he fell into a hole. The swamps naturally bred fever among the troops and sailors, and Harry himself got his first touch of the curse of China.



On the 15th September the journal records that 'the Emperor had given his assent, but not with a very good will, and had made poor Kiyong responsible for the whole,'—a characteristic policy with which British officials presently became better acquainted,—and the final conclusion of the peace was immediately signalled to the whole fleet. As soon as Major Malcolm had been despatched to England with the Treaty, the Expedition came to an end, and on the 17th the ships began to drop down the river. Harry was on the *Teaser* with Gutzlaff, and this vessel did not sail till the 24th. The delay was not pleasant, for the marshy climate had brought on fever, and the boy suffered a good deal from daily attacks, accompanied by violent pains in the limbs and chest, and great difficulty in breathing. Gutzlaff attended him with skill and kindness, but his patient grew very weak, and his usually abnormal energy had fallen so low that he could only wrap himself up in a top-coat and lie on deck reading the *Conquest of Granada*. The worst of China fever, as of all malarial distempers, is that it never really leaves its victim, but is always liable to return to the attack, in one form or another. As soon as the ship sailed, however, he began to improve, and steadily set to work at his Chinese lessons with his 'uncle.'

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On 29th September the *Teaser* arrived at Chusan, and here Harry was to lay aside the privileges of an *attaché* and return to his routine of clerkship. Chusan was to be retained by the British until the indemnity had been paid off, which would not be finished till 1845, and a regular government had to be established there during the period of occupation. In the distribution of offices, Sir Henry Pottinger appointed Gutzlaff to the post of civil magistrate, and it was settled that Harry should remain with him and pursue the study of Chinese under his direction. The decision appears to have rested with the boy himself, and his reasons for preferring to stay at Chusan instead of accompanying his official chief, the



1842 Chinese secretary, to Hongkong, are given in his usual  
 .ET. 14 reasonable manner in the following extract from a letter  
 to his two sisters :—

To his  
 Sisters  
 Chusan  
 Nov. 13

After a great deal of correspondence it was at last settled that he [Mr Gutzlaff] should stay here till next spring, and then proceed to Foochow, and I also was to stay with him. I am now taken into the Chinese part of the office as some kind of assistant to the interpreters, for which I receive as a salary \$30 per mensem. As I am therefore under Mr Morrison's control, he could, if he had liked, perhaps [have] prevented me from staying up here ; but when I came to consider that I should certainly make more progress in Chinese under my uncle's tuition than anybody's else ; for though I know very well that Mr Morrison would do all in his power to get me forward, yet the quantity of business that he always has on his hands, while holding so many offices besides that of head interpreter, must hinder him from paying so much attention to me as my uncle could (this I know from experience, while living on board the *Queen*) ; and knowing that my future prospects in life depend upon my progress at this time, added to this my uncle's wish that I should stay with him : when I thought on all these things I came to the conclusion that I had better wait a little longer without seeing you, and so said that I should prefer staying up here to going down to the southward. Mr Morrison says I am foolish, but he does not know my reasons for so doing.

Before settling down to work, he enjoyed one more trip with Sir Henry Pottinger :—

The last week I have spent very pleasantly at Ningpo. This place, which is one of the five ports that are to be opened for trade, required the presence of Sir Henry to settle some affairs regarding it, so he went over there in the *Queen* and stopped there eight days. With his permission I also made one of the party, and really enjoyed myself very much. It is

certainly the finest Chinese city in every respect that I have ever seen.

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It was a real sorrow to part with Sir Henry, who now went south to Hongkong. The relations between the Plenipotentiary and 'his boy' had been almost like those of father and son, and Harry never forgot his chief's kindness. Sir Henry had known how to mingle affection with wise control; he had made Harry work hard, whilst he indulged him with unwonted privileges; and the lad had learned that to deserve the Minister's favour he must keep his shoulder to the wheel. In the result he was not spoiled, and his frank independence never grew into pert presumption; he bore himself with rare discretion, and came out of the trial much improved by his experience of the great world.

Another serious loss was that of J. R. Morrison, who had always been, as his pupil said, 'the very essence of kindness,' and whom he never saw again. The influence of two such men as Pottinger and Morrison over an impressionable boy was of deep importance, and it was no small advantage to him that he should have begun his public career under men of character such as theirs. In a letter to his sisters he writes very simply and feelingly of his regret at this parting:—

I was very sorry indeed to part with Sir Henry, whom I can never call a master, for he has always acted towards me with the greatest kindness, and so much advanced my prospects in this world, proving himself rather to be a father. . . . It was also not without feelings of deep regret that I parted with Mr Morrison and the others: they have always proved themselves kind and dear friends, and indeed wherever I have been I have never been in want of one, and for this I must not forget to be thankful to the Author and Giver of all good things.

To his  
Sisters  
Tinghai  
Jan. 1  
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He was now to remain for a year under the tuition of a very different man. The Rev. Charles Gutzlaff has received his full measure of detraction, and undoubtedly he had his faults. His specious manner and intolerable

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assumption of omniscience procured him the epithet of a 'humbug'; he was always posing as a genius; and those who knew him best put the least faith in him. He was not a man to be unreservedly trusted. Nevertheless his was a strong and original character, interesting as a study for the experienced, and certainly very impressive to his juniors. He had a masterful way of imposing his will which was marvellously effective with young people. Among these he was regarded with a sort of fascinated awe, which was dear to his self-esteem. It often took years to find him out. And he was not all sham. He knew the Chinese people intimately—better perhaps than any other man of those early days—and he had a considerable though not very scholarly command of the Chinese language. He pretended to speak in every dialect that China could boast, *et quibusdam aliis*; but he could really converse with the mandarins and people in a fluent and intelligible manner. The Chinese regarded him as their friend, and would throng around him with petitions, convinced of his protecting influence with the 'outer barbarians' whom he served. He was naturally kind-hearted, though irritable, suspicious, and thin-skinned, and his policy with the Chinese was to be extremely conciliatory. On the whole it was not a bad thing for Harry Parkes to take a turn at this line of action: he was soon to learn enough of the drastic policy from others, and it was well for him to see what could be done—or not done—by milder measures. And in Gutzlaff he found a man who was honestly anxious to help him. His conduct towards the boy who had come under his charge was always marked by affection, if not by judgment. At one time he even wished to adopt him as his son, but this transformation was happily averted by the advice of Pottinger and Harry's relations; yet it was a proof of the goodwill which subsisted between master and pupil, or, as they called each other, 'uncle' and 'nephew,' during the year they spent together at Chusan.

Gutzlaff did his duty in directing the boy's studies, though it may be doubted whether the main credit of Harry's astonishing progress in Chinese was due to his preceptor. Every day he read with his 'uncle,' it is true; but it was the stiff application to study in his own room that gave him his mastery over the language. Sir Thomas Wade remembers finding him toiling away by himself at a difficult Chinese book in a little shed at Gutzlaff's house at Tinghai, the chief town of Chusan, and envying the lad his energy and his opportunities. It was just what Lieut. Wade was eager to do himself—and did afterwards accomplish with a success that needs no confirmation in these pages. Harry himself was far from satisfied with his progress. He was impatient to get on, and the complexity of the language seemed a needlessly salient obstacle in his way. He wrote rather disparagingly of his work to his sisters, after he had been some months at Chusan:—

My Chinese studies continue, but it will not do for me to say how I get on. Suffice it to say that though I think I make some progress, which I ought to do under such good tuition, still it is not sufficient to satisfy me. I see that you have formed too high an opinion of my advancement in the language. . . . I am still reading the *San Kwo Chi*, and have not even thought about commencing the Four Books. . . . I have, however, lately commenced another book, called the *Yu Kiao Li*: it chiefly consists of conversations among the higher classes, and is therefore desirable to read. What I chiefly peruse are edicts, chops, etc., . . . copies of the correspondence between our plenipotentiaries and the Chinese authorities during the last three years.

Besides Chinese, he was learning China. He was living in a Chinese city, journeying about a Chinese island wherever Gutzlaff's magisterial duties led him, and conversing as best he could with Chinamen, when they could be induced to refrain from broken English. He was still a favourite with the authorities, and now that Sir Henry

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To his  
Sisters  
Tinghai  
April 1

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was gone, he made friends with old General Schoedde, who had commanded the 2nd division at Chinkiang, and was now Commander-in-Chief at Chusan. Every morning the worthy General and his young companion used to go marketing together, sometimes with ludicrous results, as appears in the following letter :—

To W.  
Lockhart  
Tinghai  
Jan. 8

I am passing my time very comfortably up here, having all along been free from any sickness or [in]disposition of any kind. Since the 1st January the weather has begun to grow rather cold, especially during the night ; yesterday we had a hard frost with ice about a third of an inch in thickness, but as yet we have seen no snow. Every morning at about half-past six o'clock I am out marketing with the General, Schoedde. The old gentleman always makes his own purchases, and the consequence is that he is often duped by the Chinese, who make him pay twice as much for the articles he buys as anybody else would. But if there is a fixed price to any thing, and the seller puts a little more on to it than is usual, he will bargain for a length of time, though it be for a few cash ; and in the end, if the man will not be convinced that he is in the wrong, he has him seized and brought up to the magistracy, and thus the business is settled. I have known such an occurrence take place because the man asked ten cash-too much, value in English a little better than a halfpenny. . . . But he is a fine, straightforward, upright, and gallant old man, as his escalading at Chinkiang will show, and, what is more than all, he fears his God.

Besides his friend the General, Harry had many acquaintances in the garrison and squadron, and took his share in the amusements without which no British army can support existence. The sailors got up theatricals in the harbour, and the officers retorted by turning the old joss-house into a theatre. Harry did not think much of these performances, but the officers' races excited his keenest emulation. He had a rascally old pony, endowed



with a noble spirit of independence, and him he resolved to enter for a race against a midshipman's mount. The animal, however, did not share his enthusiasm, but trotted off for home, and when Harry remonstrated somewhat too vigorously for comfort, the outraged beast threw him over his head. The boy was not to be beaten at the first trial, however, and by a 'middy' too, and demanded a fresh race. He was thrown again, and reports himself much 'cast down' at the catastrophe, but determined to try again. His mount proved intractable, and eventually he gave up the attempt to train him.

The months at Tinghai passed pleasantly enough, in hard work and long rides into the interior. It was one of the sights of Tinghai to watch Gutzlaff starting on horseback on one of his tours of inspection among the villages: 'The short squat figure,' as an eye-witness paints him, 'the clothes that for shape might have been cut in a village in his native Pomerania ages ago; the broad-brimmed straw hat; the great face beneath it, with that sinister eye'; and beside him the active little figure and gay young face of Harry Parkes on his cantankerous old pony.

I am very comfortable [he told his brother-in-law], and my time passes away very happily here. My uncle occupies the back part of the house . . . and Mr de Havilland the other side; the latter personage is the Military Magistrate and my uncle the Civil. Two or three times a week we take a long ride into the country, which trips, as you may imagine, I like exceedingly. I have [a military] saddle, bridle, and pony of my own, on which I always ride. . . . I can assure you I wear a very martial appearance when I ride out with my pistol-holsters, etc., before me, but if you were to examine the inside of them you would find that they did not contain those dreadful instruments of warfare, but a good supply of cold refreshments. . . . The more I go out, the more I am delighted with the island, and I must say that I think some of the spots in the interior of Chusan are as beautiful places as I have ever beheld.

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In June 1843 his sisters and Mr Lockhart arrived at Chusan, but he only enjoyed two months of their society ; for in August he went South to pass his examination in Chinese at Hongkong. He sailed on the 26th on board H.M.S. *Driver*, and in three days reached Amoy, which was before long to be his official residence for several years. His impressions of the place, which he had barely seen on the voyage up in the previous year, are recorded in a fragment of a journal which he kept from August to September of this year—like many other people he often had fits of spasmodic diary-making :—

Journal  
Aug. 29

The country and islands about Amoy are of the most barren description, consisting of nothing more than sand and rocks, which present a very different appearance to the fertile hills and valleys of Chusan. Some of the forts are still remaining, our troops not having time to blow them up, but all are more or less partially destroyed. We found lying there two brigs-of-war, and seven or eight merchant vessels, with two Spanish ships, who, I suppose, had come from Manila. Trade going on rather brisk. At daylight many boats came alongside with provisions of all kinds, which they offered for sale on very cheap terms. . . .

After breakfast I went on shore with some friends in order to see the island of Koolangsoo, where our troops are quartered, it being thought advisable to have them there in preference to the crowded city of Amoy, as it is not more than half a mile from the city. Notwithstanding this arrangement, however, they have suffered much from sickness this season, although the island consists of little else but rock and sand, without any swamp. Having fortunately procured some ponies we took a very pleasant ride ; found that on the western side of the island there were a good many trees, which had a much prettier appearance than the other side, where there are only large rocks. . . . I should have very much liked to have gone into the city of Amoy but the heat was too great to allow of anybody walking

about much in the middle of the day, unless you have a particular wish to get the cholera.

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On the 1st of September the *Driver* entered the harbour of Hongkong, where sad news awaited him:—

Found it full of shipping, the Admiral in the *Cornwallis*, seventy-four, still there. From what I could see from the deck the town had increased to nearly double the size it was when I saw it last, a year ago. Most of the houses are very large and constructed very well, affording a fine sight to persons just entering the harbour. The Roman Catholic chapel is by far the most conspicuous and is a great ornament to the place, though it is my opinion that it reflects great disgrace upon us, the more so as no Protestant church has yet been erected. I recognized many dwellings in which some very kind friends of mine lived, and I longed to step on shore to surprise them by an unexpected visit.

Journal  
Sept. 1

But how were these feelings damped when the Harbour Master coming on board reported the death of Mr Morrison, one whom I considered as one of my greatest benefactors, who was always nothing but kindness. It seems that a kind of yellow fever that has been prevalent at Hongkong during this season had affected him, and after about a week's sickness had carried him off. . . . He was buried at Macao by the side of his father and mother. Nearly the whole community followed him to the grave. It is certainly a great loss, for he was everybody's friend, and indeed a public one, which Sir Henry especially said in a Government notification which he issued immediately afterwards.

Harry learned that Sir H. Pottinger was absent at Macao, and determined at once to cross over to him. He had many friends at Hongkong, who warmly pressed him to stay with them: but his sense of duty was already keen, and he went straight off to his chief. The following day found him at Macao, where Sir Henry received him 'very cordially.' 'He seems very grieved on account

1843 of Mr Morrison's death, and speaks about it as a national  
 Æt. 15 loss.' After spending the night at Elmslie's house, Harry  
 went to see his friend Thom. The visit was productive  
 of an unexpected change of plans, and led to the boy's  
 initiation into the regular routine of a consular office, of  
 which he had so far had no experience:—

Journal He received me kindly, and put many questions to  
 Sept. 3 me about the North. Whilst talking over my own  
 matters with him, he made the proposition of my  
 accompanying him up to Canton to learn the business  
 of a consul's office, a branch of business which I  
 much needed to know, and to which I gladly acceded.  
 Sir Henry having also given his approbation, arrange-  
 ments were made for starting the next morning in  
 the Government lorcha. Rather quick work this!  
 Here one day, there the next,—as bad as campaigning  
 in fact. Friday finds me in Hongkong, Saturday in  
 Macao, and Monday at Canton. But never mind:  
 all for the best, say I. Certes, I gain something by  
 it—the art of packing and travelling.

The passage from Macao to Canton in a lorcha in  
 1843 was a rougher experience than modern visitors to  
 China are accustomed to. The boy evidently enjoyed  
 it:—

Journal At first we had a fine light breeze, but after we had pro-  
 Sept. 4 ceeded about four or five miles it fell a dead calm and we  
 lay just like a log upon the waters. The crew took to  
 the oars, but with very little effect, and they soon put  
 them by again. It was exceedingly hot; if one went  
 on deck, he got roasted, and staying below in the  
 cabin stewed us; in fact I was parboiled. We remained  
 in sight of the Monte and Guia forts for a considerable  
 time, and at four o'clock on sitting down to dinner we  
 had only progressed as far as the Nine Islands, which  
 are not above eight or nine miles from Macao. . . .  
 On getting up from dinner we found ourselves with  
 the tide in our favour going along at the rate of three  
 or four knots an hour. In the evening the breeze much

increased, so that our bonny boat could hardly bear the whole sail, and as she darted through the water she threw up the foam and spray on all sides. How delightful it was! There we all sat without our jackets on, enjoying the breeze, which gave us a thorough cooling and fully compensated for all the baking, boiling, and stewing we had just experienced.

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Between ten and eleven we passed the line of Bogue Forts. They are very extensive and I should have much wished to have seen them at daylight. They have a very fine appearance, the whole of them having been rebuilt, and with good defenders I should suppose that they could almost prevent any fleet from passing through them. I then turned in, but about twelve o'clock was awakened by a great noise on deck. On getting up I found that we had been overtaken in a very heavy squall, the rain falling in torrents, accompanied with heavy thunder and lightning. Having got the boat snug and anchored her safely, we rode out the gale, and in two or three hours proceeded on our way, but we had the tide and wind against us, which obliged us to be continually tacking, and our progress was consequently rather slow.

By the next morning we were nearly up to the anchorage of the opium vessels, which is some two or three miles below Whampoa, so notwithstanding our calm of yesterday we have got on exceedingly well and are now certain of not being hard up as to provisions. The river is fully a mile wide here, and the scenery on its banks is very beautiful. Its waters are rather muddy, which put me in mind of the Yang-tsze Kiang, though the latter is by far the muddier. Whilst at breakfast we passed through the shipping at Whampoa, which consists of from fifty to sixty vessels. Many of them are the Company's old East Indiamen of fourteen and fifteen hundred tons, painted like a seventy-four liner. They are certainly a very fine class of ships, and in time of war have often beaten off the attacks of

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an enemy, when they kept one deck entirely clear in order to use their guns well. There is also a French corvette lying there, near to the *Dido*, H.M.'s ship, but she is not to be compared to the latter in any respect.

When we had come to within a few miles of Canton the tide turned against us and we then went on but very slowly. About three miles from the city there is stationed in the middle of the river one of the ships that the Chinese have bought from the English; who have bedaubed her with paint and ornamented her in various ways to a frightful degree. By some flags hoisted at the vang she calls herself 'the Cruiser of the Canton waters,' but I suppose she will never move from her present position. Some small guns, matchlocks and wall pieces, gingals, etc. were mounted on her bulwarks, but I did not see a single large gun. She looks horribly; her topmasts and rigging are all struck, and ten to one if they are ever hoisted again. I was quite glad to get past her, on account of the dreadful stench that proceeded from her. Only one poor ragamuffin was to be seen on board of her.

As the lorcha made but slow progress against the tide, we took a small pulling boat, into which we put ourselves, and left our luggage to follow on behind. The collection of boats in the river at Canton is immense: they must amount to several thousands, and the people living in them must amount to a much larger number, as each little craft contains a family of four, five, or more persons. Indeed, they quite choke up the channel. I noticed two more of these European vessels bought by the Chinese; they were bedaubed and disfigured in the same manner as the preceding one.

Near to the city the river breaks off into two branches, which are not of great width, and the water is very muddy. On landing I went with Mr Thom to the Consulate, and having seen Mr Lay he took me down to the office and introduced me to the various gentlemen, of whom there are five. . . . I daresay I



shall be able to make myself comfortable, although Canton is such a dull place. Found my companions kind and talkative. . . .

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*Friday 8th September.*—During the last two days nothing has happened excepting the general routine of business. Yesterday I engaged a Chinese teacher who understands the mandarin dialect very well to come and instruct me in the mornings and evenings. A good one is not to be got here unless you pay them fifteen or sixteen dollars a month, and they will not come for less. After dinner I generally walk out in the American garden, which is in front of the factories. Though small it is neatly laid out and the walks are kept in excellent repair, but it is not frequented so much as the English, whither most of the merchants and young men repair, as in the former they are restricted playing at quoits, etc.; but this only makes it the more agreeable for those who merely go out for the purpose of taking a quiet walk.

The fragmentary journal stops soon after this, but an entry shows that on 11th October Harry was still at the Canton Consulate, 'very busy at office work, which, though there is plenty of it, has but the same routine day after day.' Probably there was little to record, except the monotonous grinding of the quill; for Canton was not like Chusan, and the foreign residents were closely restricted in their movements. The office work was the chief thing, and it was a necessary experience for one who was entering the consular service. It appears from a memorandum in Parkes' handwriting that he was appointed by Sir H. Pottinger Interpreter at Foochow in 1843, but 'the opening of this port having been delayed, Mr Parkes was in the meantime variously employed in H.M.'s Consulate at Canton and as Assistant to the Chinese Secretary at Hongkong.' He does not state when the appointment to Foochow was made; but we shall not be far wrong if we assume that he passed his Chinese examination and was made interpreter soon after



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his interview with Sir Henry Pottinger at Macao. Probably the Chief Superintendant waited a little to receive Thom's report of Harry's work at Canton before committing himself to the definite appointment; and it is likely that the actual step was taken after Sir Henry had personally studied the boy's capacity during the negotiations over the Supplementary Treaty which was signed at Hu Mun Chai on 8th October 1843, when Parkes was present. At one time it was proposed to send him as Interpreter to Amoy on the opening of that port, and he had even left Canton on his way thither when he was ordered back. We learn from the same memorandum that 'in January 1844 the Treasurer of Hongkong was despatched with Mr Parkes to Canton to take delivery from the Chinese Government of the instalment of three million dollars then due, when in consequence of the unavoidable absence of that officer the charge of receiving and shipping a large portion of that sum devolved upon Mr Parkes.' One more item of information, and the scanty record of this time is completed: he acted as Interpreter at Sir Henry Pottinger's final interview with Kiyong, the Governor-General of Canton, which took place in April 1844.

From these scattered notices a general idea may be formed of how the winter of 1843-1844 was spent. He was learning his consular duties at Canton under the admirable guidance of Robert Thom, until this able officer departed to take up his post of Consul at the newly-opened port of Ningpo.<sup>1</sup> He was also carrying on his study of Chinese, and learning the routine of the Chinese Secretary's office at Hongkong; doubtless passing frequently backwards and forwards between Hongkong and Canton as his duties called him. Sir Henry Pottinger had not lost sight of him, as his presence at the signing of the Supplementary Treaty shows; and Harry was again taking up the thread of official life in high quarters which had been interrupted during his stay

<sup>1</sup> Robert Thom died there two years later, 14th September 1846.

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at Chusan. He had mastered the elements of his duties, and had acquired a fair knowledge of Chinese; he was ready for his post, and impatient for responsible work. He had not long to wait, for in June 1844 he was Interpreter at Amoy.

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE INTERPRETER

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WHEN Harry Parkes arrived at Amoy at the end of June 1844 as Interpreter to Her Majesty's Consulate he was fairly launched upon his career. He might doubtless have elected to remain in the Chief Superintendent's office at Hongkong, and helped to direct affairs from headquarters, as Morrison had done, and after him Gutzlaff and Wade and others. But he preferred the more direct responsibility, the closer touch with passing events, of consular work, and the novelty of such duties at the ports which were then for the first time thrown open to foreign trade was an added attraction to a lover of adventure. A Consul's life may run through the whole gamut from the most dismal monotony to the highest pitch of excitement. At a European port his duties are limited as a rule to commercial routine; few cases of difficulty arise, and if they should occur, there is always a Minister within easy reach on whom to cast the responsibility. A Consul in Europe is apt to be suffocated with *ennui*. He has few opportunities for the exercise of his individual ability or judgment: he has merely to be discreet and follow rules and precedents. His duties vary, no doubt, in different ports; he may be very hard worked, or he may, like some American consuls, devote his ample leisure to the cultivation of the art of fiction; but his work is never

exciting and seldom interesting. But when a Consul is stationed at some Eastern port and has to deal with Asiatic officials and Oriental bigotry, his life is not uneventful. The Levant branch of the service has had its share of difficulties and danger, and Consuls in Turkey have enjoyed the privilege of responsible action in grave emergencies, though the delight of personal responsibility has been grievously curtailed by the telegraph wire. Levant Consuls in the old days were not merely commercial superintendants ; they were diplomatic agents.

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The Chinese branch of the consular service has always been a thing apart. It demands special linguistic preparation and involves peculiar relations with the local authorities. In the days when Harry Parkes joined it, there was ample opportunity for the exercise of individual capacity. The Consul in China had to deal with a people poles apart from him in race, language, and political ideas. His relations were with provincial authorities, instead of with the Foreign Office of the country, and these provincial authorities were singularly independent of the Central Government in matters of detail, and capable of causing serious mischief by the exercise of their personal tastes and dislikes. To them the Consul had to refer in all cases relating to his duties, which were tolerably extensive. His functions were not merely commercial, but political, judicial, one might almost say universal. His duty was to protect the interests and extraterritorial rights of his countrymen ; to see that the Treaties were carried out ; and in case of an infraction of Treaty rights to obtain redress as best he could. In European countries such infractions are extremely rare, and difficulties seldom arise ; but in China, according to the temper of the local authorities, such emergencies are always arising, and must be settled out of hand before they grow too big to be disposed of by diplomacy. Of course the five Consulates which were erected in 1843 had their official centre in the Chief

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Superintendent of Trade and Plenipotentiary at Hongkong; but it took six weeks to get an answer from Hongkong to an appeal for instructions from a Consul at Shanghai, and meanwhile the question in dispute would be hardening and spreading like a malignant tumour, till ordinary remedies would no longer suffice to remove it. Unless he wished to involve his country in a serious quarrel, the Consul was often bound to act on his own responsibility, and meet the difficulty before it grew intractable. It was frequently a matter of life or death; it always menaced the safety of the foreign residents—for the whole policy of China was to get rid of foreigners by any and every expedient and at all cost;—and the Consul had to take his life in his hand and act decisively. It was a splendid school for men who were not afraid of responsibility; but a purgatory for cowards. ‘The Consul’s position in China,’ said Sir Rutherford Alcock,<sup>1</sup> ‘is one in which the character of the officer most especially will make itself felt.’ He must be a man of firm will and unflinching courage, ready to ‘take the bull by the horns’ in a resolute fashion when called upon. The least hesitation or timidity would infallibly damage British influence and endanger our interests with a people who are keen observers and no mean judges of character. To degrade the Consul in the eyes of the people by petty affronts was a fixed policy with Chinese officials, for by so doing they believed they were degrading the whole race of ‘barbarians.’ In China a Consul was not merely the man who looked after the shipping: he was regarded by the people of the country as the head of his nation at his port. He was fully recognized as the representative of his country. He exercised political functions, and practically received the respect due to diplomatic rank.

He was something else, besides political agent. He was a judge. The Consul acted as police magistrate in hearing disputes between masters and seamen, cases of

<sup>1</sup> *Report, Parl. Papers*, 1858 [482], Evidence before Select Committee on Consular Service, 10th-14th May 1858, p. 125-164.

assault, and serious crimes among the foreign community ; he dealt as a judge with common law cases ; granted probates ; sat as coroner ; and generally conducted the legal affairs of the port. This he did by the light of common sense and the help of his law books, for he seldom had any legal training : yet it is remarkable how few consular judgments were ever reversed by the appellate courts at Hongkong. At Shanghai the judicial duties of the Consul became so heavy that it was at last found necessary to appoint a separate judge. And the Consul had not merely to administer the law, he had to execute it. There were then no consular police ; no Chinaman in the service of the Consulate could be expected—or encouraged—to collar an Englishman ; and if an arrest had to be made, Her Majesty's Consul was supposed to lay hands on the man in person. Sir Rutherford Alcock used to sum up his legal functions by saying he was 'everything from a Lord Chancellor to a Sheriff's officer.'

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In the early days of the service in China the Consul was seldom able to speak Chinese. He was generally 'an officer and a gentleman' who had claims upon Government, and however considerable his other qualifications might be, Chinese formed no part of them. His Vice-Consul, if he had one, was equally unversed in the language in which all negotiations with the local authorities had to be transacted. In China, it may be observed, French is not the language of diplomacy, and in 1844 it was rare to find a Chinese official who knew any tongue besides his own. Under these circumstances the Interpreter's office in the Consulate was one of great importance and responsibility. He had to conduct all interviews with the Chinese officials, and upon his readiness, tact, and address the success of a negotiation often depended. Without his aid the Consul was helpless. Nor was this aid confined to strict interpretation of the Consul's words. In a country where, it is said, 'the rules of ceremony are three hundred and the rules of behaviour three thousand,'



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there are a thousand little indications, in manner, phraseology, and tone, which the Interpreter alone could catch and appreciate and act upon, and there was no time or opportunity to explain such inferences to his official chief during a heated argument at a Chinese yamun. In all transactions with the natives the Interpreter's part was little inferior to that of the Consul himself. It was indeed a post of grave responsibility, especially for a lad of sixteen. But to Harry Parkes work without responsibility was like an egg without salt.

The young Interpreter began a new journal on his arrival at Amoy; and his opening sentences show the characteristically earnest way in which he took his duty.

Journal

*Amoy, 1st July 1844.*—Again for the fourth time I find myself commencing a journal, which I am determined, however, shall be a continuous one.<sup>1</sup> I intend to carry it on in a different way to any that I have hitherto done, not troubling myself to take down the occurrences of every day, but just as anything happens worth noting. I do not intend writing it as an amusement, or to give it away after having filled a book for anybody's pleasure or perusal, but always to keep it by me to serve as a reference. I think I shall also put down any information that I may pick up, thus making it also serve the office of a Memorandum Book: as far as taking notes of what passes on in the office, and matters relating to trade, it will be official, and in fact I mean to make something useful of it, a regular *multum in parvo*. It will doubtless be dry and stiff enough, and of no use to anybody but myself, but that will be a good fault.

So much for a preface, and now let me take a view of my worthy self. Here I am just arrived at Amoy in the office of Interpreter, a post that I have been expecting for some time, and which, by the bye, is worth holding. I think I shall have an easy berth enough, but that by no means pleases me, for so much the less

<sup>1</sup> He kept it for about a year.

chance of distinction. Sir Henry wanted very much to send me to Foochow, and so did Mr Lay, but Mr Davis, being rather contrarily inclined, determined to send me off here. I think that I might certainly have just as well been sent here when the port was opened, which in fact I was very nearly doing, having left Canton on my way, but was ordered back again. I am certain, however, that it is best to consider that all things are for the best, and perhaps I might have got into some scrape if I had come here before. Sir Henry has now left China, and in him I have lost a good master. Mr Davis I have not seen much of, as he lives much more secluded, but I am certain that he does not possess many of the frank, generous, kind and endearing qualities of his predecessor—but I forget I have now left Hongkong and all these high people, and am here alone with—*my journal*.

On Monday the 24th of June 1844, I embarked on board H.M. Str. *Spiteful*. This I think I must set down as an important day in the annals of my life ; for though I have twice or thrice set out much in a similar manner upon my own crook and hook, I have either not filled any important post, or have had some person or other to superintend my movements. But here I am now perfectly alone, holding a situation of some responsibility, but which suits me well,—at least I like it—sent forth by myself,—or having cast away the apron-strings, as some would say, but which I think are at times comfortable things for one to nestle under,—to battle against the potent and overpowering stream of the world, but which, if a higher Hand upholds me, I hope to oppose.

Again I find I have been wandering from the decks of the *Spiteful*, deep in my own thoughts. On board I found as passengers Mr Lay (going to Foochow as Consul), Mr Robertson, Vice-Consul for Shanghai, with Messrs Parish, Walker, Meredith, Hague, Hertslet, and Harvey, assistants. The first goes with me to Amoy,

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the next two to Foochow, the succeeding pair to Ningpo, and the last to Shanghai. . . . All newcomers are very disgusted with China, for, as they say, it is considered in England to be a splendid country, with lots of ridiculous stories, and above all that money goes as far again. I fear their visits to the North will not improve their ideas or disappointment. . . . On Thursday night, the fourth day after our departure from Hongkong, we anchored at Amoy, and that same evening I landed and reported myself to Mr Gribble, H.M.'s Consul.

Amoy is built on the west side of an island about thirty-five miles in circuit, separated from the mainland by channels of a mile or two broad. Parkes' earlier visits have shown the barren character of the granite hills on the south and west, which chiefly strike the first glance; but the prevailing naked rockiness is varied by some wide cultivated plains dotted with villages between the hills and the sea. Trees are scanty, except here and there round the villages, and all fruit and most of the meat is imported. Fishing is the chief occupation of the inhabitants, who in 1844 seemed poor and degraded. Their houses and temples were neglected and ruinous, and the whole place was steeped in squalor. 'Never do I recollect seeing a more dirty place,' was Parkes' comment: 'the streets being narrow and filthy to an extreme.' The people he describes as—

Journal

A most obstreperous race, caring nothing for their mandarins, but actually rising in rebellion against them when they make attempts to put them down. Cases of police and soldiers being killed are of repeated occurrence, but in an affray that happened the other day the mandarins themselves did not escape. . . . The whole coast of Fuh Kien, and especially from Amoy northwards, is completely lined with pirates, whole villages [of them] residing together and sallying out on cruises, when not following their normal avocations of fishermen. Villages often turn out and fight pitched

battles with each other with fearful animosity, so that many lose their lives. Clanship seems to be carried to a great height. Even in Amoy they are not quiet but quarrel fiercely with each other. For some time the coolies have been in the habit of firing at one another from the wharves . . . : but this is by no means pleasant as it interferes with the foreigners ; for during these fights cargo cannot be landed nor [are] the proprietors of the Hong facing the wharf able to go abroad.

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The consular office was at Amoy city, but the Consul and the English community, which included seven missionaries, lived for the most part on the little island of Koolangsoo immediately opposite, where the small British garrison was quartered as a material guarantee for the due payment of the war indemnity. Harry himself was at first lodged in the house of the late first clerk, 'a fine and airy one, with three rooms. . . . He has kept quite a farmyard about him, with a good garden, all of which I intend to keep up.' This hardy resolution he had eventually to abandon, for the journal records a grand sale of pigs and fowls and farm stock a few months later. From the cottage he had to cross daily to the Consulate at Amoy—a drawback in hot weather or when work was urgent.

At first there was little to do. For the first few years after the Treaty, whilst England still maintained her hold on Chusan and Koolangsoo, no open violation of its conditions was attempted—at least in the northern ports. Not that the Chinese ever meant to observe the Treaty. The Formosa massacre, the denunciations by placard, the riots and firing of the factories at Canton in December 1842, the persecution of Chinese in British employ, the systematic encouragement and arming of 'village braves' to annoy the foreigner, were all signs of the invincible repugnance with which the Treaty was held by the official classes—that hidebound body of pedantic literati, the grist of an irrational examination-mill, who represent alike statesmanship and clerkship in China. Trained in

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a rigid and narrow curriculum which takes its finality and infallibility from Confucius, but resembles his philosophy no more than medieval scholasticism resembled primitive Christianity; convinced that every detail of polity and conduct was settled for ever some twenty-four centuries ago, and that they alone possess the true and infallible code, the literati, mandarins, or civil servants of China offer an impregnable front to Western ideas. Whatever point may be urged, the appeal is immediately made to the so-called Confucianism which a series of senseless examinations has rammed into their brains; for whatsoever is not Confucian is necessarily bad. Against this stone wall of ultra-conservatism, politicians, philosophers, and missionaries batter in vain. There is no loophole for introducing a new idea into the mandarin's *kosmos*: every possible conjuncture is provided for by hard and fast rules, and evolution and progress have no place in the system. The much-examined Chinese civilian's brain is compressed by the Confucian Procrustes into the same mould as his great-grandfather's was, and as his great-grandson's will be, much as their women's feet are squeezed into the same-sized shoe. This it is which makes the Chinese politician so formidable an opponent: there is no flaw in his armour. Unless you can uproot the very foundations, and convince him that the system is hopelessly obsolete, you cannot shake a mandarin's self-complacency. We have not shaken him a jot in all the fifty years that have passed since the Treaty of Nanking was signed. As he was, he is, and doubtless will be *in saecula saeculorum*.

It will readily be perceived that the admission of 'red-haired barbarians,' *hung-mo-yän*, to a position of equality was no conceivable part of the mandarins' system, and of course they opposed the Treaty tooth and nail. But so long as English troops were at hand the opposition had to be veiled, and little open hostility could be attempted. What Sir John Davis termed 'attempts of an evasive or subdolous description' were frequently made to humiliate the Consul and hamper the foreign trade, but these could



be checked by a firm hand. The real importance of these early years at the newly-opened ports lay in the gradual formation of precedents and establishing the rights of foreigners in matters of detail, among a people peculiarly tenacious of precedent and observant of the minutiae of etiquette. Everything had to be begun *ab initio*. The very right of Englishmen to hire houses had to be diplomatically fought for at each separate port, and the establishment of a Consulate within the city was a source of general opposition, which, at Canton, was only settled by a war fifteen years after the Treaty had been signed. In these and minor points the Consuls had to proceed with equal firmness and prudence: for they knew that whatever they sowed their successors must reap, and a mistake might involve a long series of misunderstandings. He had to be circumspect in the paying and receiving of visits, exact in the phrasing of documents, and his suspicions must be always alert to mark a disrespectful engrossing of a name in the calligraphy of the mandarins' scribe, or a shade of contempt in the placing of a title. To Europeans these are trifles, but they form a serious element in Chinese diplomacy, and on the due observance of such details depends very often the estimate in which a foreign consul, and with him a whole foreign community, is held by the native population on whose temper their lives may depend.

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The business with the Chinese officials at Amoy—the *Taotai* (Intendant of Circuit), *Haikwan* (Superintendent of Customs) and *Haifang* (Maritime Sub-Prefect)—which was the Interpreter's special province, was limited to details, such as the acceptance of sycee money, the shipping of Chinese cargoes in Spanish bottoms, and the leasing of houses for foreigners. On one occasion the young Interpreter discovered the objectionable term *Yi* ('barbarian') applied to his countrymen in an official communication from the Haifang, and immediately returned the letter for correction. On another he interceded for some custom-house delinquents with the Haikwan, who had



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'worked himself up into a fearful rage with them, stamping and bellowing, threatening them with degradation; and as a finale called for the bamboo, determining to punish them there and then.' Parkes got them let off the bamboo, 'though the rascals deserved it all. The poor fellows were in an awful fright, and went down on their marrow-bones and kotowed at a railroad pace. I was glad to see the Haikwan behave thus promptly, but I do not think he would have done so had he himself not been materially concerned.' We shall find as we go on that Parkes was always kind and considerate to the Chinese people: it was upon the corrupt and arrogant officials that he made war.

The ordinary consular work in relation to shipping was light in those days. Three hundred junks often lay in the harbour of Amoy, but there was hardly any English trade. In the absence of any very severe routine work ('duties slight,' says the journal,—'employed in fads') the Interpreter was free to work at Chinese. He planned a regular routine: 'Rise at daylight (about six o'clock now); walk for an hour; dress by eight, read Chinese till ten. Breakfast and go to office. Be back by four. Dine and take exercise. Spend evening in light Chinese or English reading.' As yet he had no Chinese teacher; but he was making good progress in the spoken dialect, as is proved by his successful conduct of various negotiations.

A serious interruption in this quiet routine occurred in August. The journal contains frequent notices of fever and sickness at Koolangsoo, and at one time we read that—

Journal Half of the garrison are incapacitated for duty. It is a species of fever, much resembling that of Hongkong, but not quite of so virulent a nature. On Wednesday [23rd July] I moved into the Consul's house [his wife having gone South for change] and attended office again. I have a good airy room, and I doubt not I shall make myself comfortable. But we are just at the bottom of a valley which has a good deal of water and

swampy ground, so that the fine gentle breezes that sometimes sweep down upon us and feel so exhilarating are, I am afraid, not highly conducive to health. The Consul is a good deal alarmed, and has determined upon going over to the Consulate to live.

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The Consul used often to take refuge in one of the islands near Amoy, where he pitched a tent and slept in fresh air in the hope of escaping the malaria which was playing havoc with the garrison and had placed some of his own staff on the sick list. Harry does not seem to have taken similar precautions, which would of course be less easy in his subordinate position, and presently he took his turn at the prevailing epidemic :—

Up to 10th August business went on in the office Journal much in the same manner, but the fever noticed above had fearfully increased amongst the foreign community : indeed, it had also made fearful depredations amongst the natives, but considering the wretched, squalid, and crowded manner in which so great a proportion of them live, that was not to be wondered at. . . . Considering my own house to be situated in a more elevated situation, I removed back there, but notwithstanding this and other precautions I was also doomed to be a victim to this raging disease. In my case I think much may be attributed to the exposure to the sun which the officers of the Amoy Consulate have to undergo in going to and returning from office at ten and four o'clock, and the indifferent manner in which we are housed, whilst malaria doubtless has its share in the business.

On awaking on the morning of the 11th of August I found that it was upon me, fearful dry heat, parching thirst, and total absence of perspiration, notwithstanding the plentiful use of blankets,—stupor amounting almost to delirium. . . . Another two days saw me quite delirious and very ill, in which dangerous state I lay nearly a week, but of which I have little or no remembrance, and many entertained doubts of my surviving, though my spirits were very good. [A clergyman] how-

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ever, thinking my end was approaching, unwisely though doubtless with good intentions, came and told me of it, which much alarmed and agitated me, for though sorry to say so, I felt and knew that I was quite unprepared to die. As might be expected my delirium and fever increased, and for some thirty-six hours afterwards I was in a most dangerous state, but that was the critical time, and, it past, I was comparatively safe. . . . From this time the fever began to leave me, thanks to a gracious Providence, and a few more days saw me quite free from it, though so very weak that I could not lift my head from my pillow without assistance. With perfect veracity could I say that I could count all my bones, being reduced to a mere skeleton ; and Dr Winchester told me that, had I lost ten pounds more, I must have sunk through mere weakness. Captain Gribble behaved very kindly to me. . . . I shall be always obliged to Dr W. for the kindness with which he treated me, whilst lying perfectly helpless.

The narrowness of his escape made a profound impression on his mind. He was always earnest and devout, but this close contact with death brought the great facts of his religion home to him with intense force. He reflects frequently in his journal upon the need of preparation for the life to come, and makes many good resolutions, lest he be again taken unawares. It was months before he recovered from the effects of his illness ; indeed it may be doubted whether the victim to China fever ever wholly throws it off ; but a cruise to the North went far to set him up again. The port of Foochow was soon to be his scene of work. It had already been practically settled that he was to be transferred there when the new Consul, Mr. Alcock, came out ; and a preliminary visit to the place would be a useful preparation. Thither accordingly he went for a change of air. He started on board the East India Company's steamer *Proserpine* on 19th September and arrived at the mouth of the river Min on the following day. The reception of foreigners at the

newly-opened ports was then a matter of anxiety, and it is interesting to read Parkes' account of his experience at Foochow in 1844 :—

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The entrance to the river is very pretty : high hills surround and nearly close upon you, which are, however, green and fertile, cultivated in terraces to the summit, and in some places well wooded—pine chiefly, as usual. At the real or inner entrance as it were (Hufunan Pass), the river narrows considerably ; the remains of forts and batteries were noticed on either side, which if kept in repair and well defended would render the strait impassable. As we progressed the scenery became more and more beautiful, in some spots quite romantic. . . . When we had got a mile or two past the pagoda, we grounded, and although we backed off once or twice, found ourselves hard and fast again immediately, so that there was nothing left for it but to wait for the return of flood. As this would not be for some hours, Dr Startin, surgeon of the vessel, and myself determined upon a stroll on shore, taking our guns with us. We found the people, who evinced no little surprise at seeing us, bluff and civil, showing us if anything too much attention, following us in crowds, and often frightening away a bird when we had a chance of a shot, though if one was hit, they would not hesitate to wade knee deep in the water or mud to procure it for us. The women were strongly made and showed no shyness : all, even to the poorest, wore flowers, but suffered no paint to spoil their healthy, ruddy, and glowing faces. Saw nothing worthy to be called game, only land-snipe, pigeons, paddy birds, etc. ; and after nearly three hours' walk returned on board, well begrimed with mud, the whole of the country being under water, as the paddy is not yet in ear. . . . Though the shades of evening came over us we pushed on, seeing lights ahead, being anxious to get up to Foochow that night, and suddenly on rounding a point, the bridge opened to view close to us. . . .

Journal  
Foochow  
Sept. 20

1844  
ÆT. 16

The consular staff are wretchedly lodged in an upper story of a small Chinese house overlooking the river, accessible only by a filthy little alley. Mr Lay has not yet hoisted the British flag, thinking it might give offence to the people, and wishing to manage matters quietly and inoffensively—which, however, does not seem to answer very well, leaving him quite in the background; for show is everything with the Chinese.<sup>1</sup> . . .

The appearance of the steamer in the river was a source of great surprise to the people, who crowded round her all day in boats, to satisfy their curiosity. The quays and landing-places were also crowded with persons waiting anxiously to get a seat in a boat, and have their peep, for which they paid a few cash. The ebb tide runs here excessively strong, and the sound of its rushing through the bridge resembles that of a cataract. Of provisions, fruits, etc., we found neither plenty nor variety; that procurable was also far from cheap, and the people seemed not to know the value of foreign money, though they were all very poor. . . . At several times we took long walks into the adjacent country, the people without exception behaving well to us, and though rather too curious and attentive never offered any insults, so that I entertained a very good opinion of them. They are evidently of a hasty temperament and pugnacious, but if treated well are quite inoffensive.

<sup>1</sup> Mr G. T. Lay (the father of Mr H. N. Lay) did eventually hoist his flag, with the following curious result: 'Mr Lay continues to succumb very much to Chinese manners and customs, of which the following instance may be quoted:—He has at last hoisted the flag at Foochow, but after the Chinese fashion on a small transverse pole which does not reach more than half-mast high. Captain Hewitt of the steamer *Medusa* observed this whilst running up the river (the [new] Consulate being on a hill and visible for a great distance off), and immediately supposed that the flag was hoisted only half-mast in consequence of some death having happened at the Consulate. With no little consternation and trepidation he called on Mr Lay, and with a countenance expressive of the utmost concern inquired what had happened, as the flag was hoisted half-mast. It was with no small surprise that he heard Mr Lay say "Nothing; but I hoist the flag so because it is the wish of the Chinese." He thinks the people adore him.' (H. S. Parkes to Mr Lockhart, 1st March 1845.)



They were not always so guileless, as the following entry in the journal shows—a fair sample of the violence to which foreigners were exposed in China :—

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Journal  
Foochow

On the 1st October Dr Startin and Mr Pottinger the purser, together with Walker, who had followed us down from Foochow in a boat for a cruise, happening to go on shore [on Howkiang Island] for a stroll as usual, were on passing a village most brutally attacked by the people, evidently for the purposes of plunder, to effect which they did not mind attempting to take life. The whole mob of several hundred set upon them, but a few individuals, armed with hoes or mattocks, were most inveterate in their attack. When forced to do so, however, the doctor and party fought well, and did not take to their heels until disarmed. . . . To reach the bank of the river they had to run upwards of a mile through paddy fields and over hills, pursued by the mob, who followed them to the water's edge, attacking and sticking at them in a most brutal manner, whilst they could not defend themselves. The doctor, being very tall, waded out a good way into the water and thus partially got out of their reach, but Mr Pottinger, being rather the contrary, was felled by blows from a mattock, dragged by his hair through the mud, and stripped of everything. Fortunately we saw what was going on from the vessel and immediately lowered a cutter to their assistance, which when these brutes saw approaching they immediately all made off, and it returned bringing Mr Pottinger on board half dead. . . .

I am rather inclined to think that this is an affair that should have been made much of, being of no little importance to the future peace of the place when frequented by Europeans ; we being the first that have yet made their appearance, and this the first affair of the sort ; and I should think that a very severe example ought to be made of the offenders in this instance to deter them from future acts of the kind. . . . I should look upon it as a matter of real political importance,



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and should not wonder if Mr Davis said something about it.

On 10th October the new Plenipotentiary Mr Davis (he was not yet Sir John) arrived at the mouth of the Min on H.M.S. *Castor*, and went up river on board the *Proserpine* on the following day:—

Journal  
Oct. 11

H. E.<sup>1</sup> was surprised but rather pleased to find me on board, as he thought I had gone down to Macao. His manner is rather cold and distant, and [he] likes great deference to be paid him; notwithstanding, however, he made himself pretty agreeable to-day. I told him all about the attack made on our party ashore; he quite sided with the latter, and expressed his regret that they had not done more execution themselves, and seemed to think that Mr Lay had not been strict enough in following up the matter.

12th October.—Went to the Consulate to see what was going on. H. E. was not in a very good humour, being quite disgusted with Mr Lay's Consulate, which is one of the lowest class of even Chinese houses, as it afforded him no accommodation, and the mosquitoes had not failed to attack him. . . . Finding there were no movements being made, and rather an ill wind blowing, I returned on board. . . . Suddenly at about three we were surprised at hearing that H. E. wanted a boat immediately, which being sent he came on board. The Treasurer and Chih-fu [Prefect] had called upon him, but he would not receive them at Mr L.'s, being ashamed of it, but requested to meet them on board the steamer. The mandarins followed him closely, and they [the staff] had hardly time to dress allowed them; Mercer rushing on deck in his civil dress, but Captain Hough's cocked hat on, put on instead of his own in the hurry, and which he was obliged to hold on with one hand. . . . Treasurer Liu is very much like his fellow Hwang at

<sup>1</sup> It was and is usual in China and Japan to style a Minister Plenipotentiary 'his Excellency,' though of course the title is properly applied only to an Ambassador.

Canton not only in mien but in speech and manner, being affable and polite, though Hwang is his superior by some degrees. After being shown round the ship they went below to regale upon cherry brandy and biscuits, and talk over the affairs of state. I remained on deck, amusing their customary crowd of *attachés*. They stayed for upwards of two hours (a mandarin's usual stay, I find), much to my disgust—which is pardonable considering that I was waiting all that extra time with a good appetite for my dinner, and on Chinese mandarins above everybody else too!

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Governor Davis had reason to be very little satisfied with his reception. Liu Yun-ko, the Viceroy of the province of Fuh Kien (including Amoy and Foochow), who resided at Foochow, was notoriously prejudiced against Europeans, and did not call upon him, 'as it took him two or three days to make a movement,' and the Plenipotentiary did not choose to wait his convenience. Then the present which the mandarins brought consisted of meat which was 'perfect carrion,' and was quickly devoted to the fishes. The evident intention of the officials was to be as contemptuous as the people were hostile. Parkes' journal notices it:—

The mandarins certainly do not pay us here due Journal respect, which is the first step towards that complete arrogance and contempt that used to characterize them (nay, does now, when they can get an opportunity to show it, though fear compels them to be somewhat careful) and should be nipped in the bud; but Mr L.'s mild way of acting would never accomplish this: a high and tight hand is the *only* way to treat these gentlemen.

Davis, however, was not the man to put up with an affront. He had shown his insight into Chinese ideas by receiving the mandarins on board the steamer, rather than submit to the humiliation of giving them an audience in the 'very miserable dwelling' in which Her Majesty's Consul was compelled to lodge. He did not at all

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ÆT. 16

approve of Lay's accommodating compliance with Chinese notions, and when the Provincial Treasurer and Prefect of the city came on board, he did not mince words in pointing out to them 'the intolerable nature of the Consul's residence,' and declared that 'unless he was allowed to provide himself with something better, I would not permit him to remain at Foochow, considering his treatment as a violation of the Treaty provisions; that he ought to live within the walls, or at least on the same side of the river and below the bridge; that instead of remaining here to discuss the question with the Viceroy, it would be better to refer the whole matter to the Emperor's representative, Kiyng, who, no doubt, would be as ready to do what was right on the occasion, as he would be surprised and vexed to hear from me of the unworthy treatment of H.M.'s Consul.'<sup>1</sup> The result of these representations was that Mr Lay was at last enabled to secure an admirable site for the Consulate,—where we shall soon see Harry Parkes established. But the general impression which the Governor gained was not favourable to the new port: 'the visit to Foochow,' says the journal, 'has not pleased Mr Davis or given his Excellency a favourable idea of the place, and it is his opinion that it will not become a place of any trade.'

Parkes, on the other hand, was delighted with the picturesque scenery of the Min, and returned to Amoy on 15th October much revived in health and spirits, and ready for any amount of work. On his arrival fresh scenes of diplomacy awaited him, and he was in request to act as interpreter for 'his Excellency'—a somewhat nervous task, for Davis was a fair Chinese linguist himself.

Journal  
Amoy  
Oct. 15

The *Castor* had arrived the preceding afternoon, and as we passed under her stern Mr Davis descended into the barge and pushed off for the shore, and I had therefore to bustle somewhat, so as not to be behind

<sup>1</sup> Sir J. F. DAVIS, *China During the War and Since the Peace*, ii. 75 (1852).

him, and I was also on shore almost as soon as his Excellency. A guard of honour was drawn up at the landing-place, and all the officers had come down to see him. Found that the mandarins were also expected, and I began to wish myself out of my shoes, as it is a real ordeal to interpret for your superior who knows the language himself. In the course of an hour or two heard some pop-guns and perceived that the mandarins were getting into their boats to cross over the harbour. The cards showed the Admiral and his aide-de-camp, a post-captain, Haikwan, Haifang, and his assistant, the Seun-kien, a brass-button [the Taotai was absent]. Received them with all honours. The Admiral is old, wrinkled, and almost used up, but there still remains a good deal of jollity about him, and altogether I was quite agreeably disappointed in him. Captain Gribble gave an excellent spread of sweetmeats, fruits, cordials, wines, etc. The Haifang, a Shan Tung man, was very fond of the butter, and said that his countrymen consumed great quantities of it. Very little was said upon business; indeed these men are poor fellows indeed in that line; according to their report they can do nothing of themselves, and everything must be reported to headquarters. Mr Davis was much complimented on his knowledge of the language, which is really considerable. Got rid of them, after an hour and a half's jabber, promising to return the visit at the next day. Went over to the Consulate, and so did his Excellency, who expressed himself well pleased at the order and arrangements.

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Cards having been sent in, in we went, six of us, to the Oct. 16  
Haikwan's. Found the old Admiral and our friends all awaiting us. Meetings with mandarins are always the same. After chin-chining and bowing and at last bringing oneself to an anchor, tea is brought. That being sipped up comes the entertainment gradually, beginning with dessert, of which when the uninitiated has well eaten, thinking nothing else is coming, then

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come various soups in little bowls of the greatest variety, one to each person, and without end; then follow larger bowls laid on the table. He is obliged to eat of all these, till he is almost bursting, and then as a finale (judge of his amazement and horror) come solid large dishes of pork and mutton and other meats, last of all a bowl of rice, so that when he can at last with perfect propriety take his leave, it is a real release: but he does not recover his gorge (and forced, too) for days. Through experience, I now refrain from attacking the dessert too voraciously. Well, so it was of course with some of our party to-day. The mandarins were very convivial, and had borrowed Captain Gribble's knives and forks and wine glasses for the occasion, so that we might feel ourselves at home. Took leave after a two hours' stay.

The same day the Governor left for Hongkong, having completed his official inspection of the new ports. He summed up his conclusions in these words: 'Shanghai and Amoy, but especially the former, possessed all the elements of commercial success, and were likely to be flourishing emporia, if they had only freedom and fair play. Ningpo might improve in some degree after the evacuation of Chusan, but was too near to Shanghai not to be impoverished by it; while Foochow, with its dangerous river and numerous other drawbacks, afforded very little prospect of any European trade whatever.'



## CHAPTER V

WITH SIR RUTHERFORD ALCOCK

1844-1845

A FORTNIGHT after the departure of Governor Davis a new Consul arrived at Amoy. The change was fraught with important issues to the young Interpreter. The new Consul possessed just the qualities that impress the young most powerfully. Mr Alcock had been an army surgeon who had seen hard service with Sir De Lacy Evans in the Spanish wars which were waged by the Quadruple Alliance, and his breast blazed with tokens of the distinguished part he had played, till an injury to his hands closed his career with the colours. He had the courage, physical and moral, which is the first condition of success in China, and his fine manner and polished conversation of the man of the world were joined to a high and refined character and an unflinching devotion to duty. To serve under such a master was no small advantage to an ambitious boy. Harry had reason to be grateful to destiny for throwing him into good hands in the early days of his career. He was fortunate in the very beginning, in coming out to a sister's home, where good women did their inestimable work in moulding the character. He was fortunate in entering upon official life under the auspices of a man of so noble and refined a nature as Morrison. It was a unique advantage to go through the first China war under his guidance, and to be

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brought in contact with distinguished leaders in arms and diplomacy when he had but recently put on the breeches. The favoured pupil of Morrison became the favourite of Pottinger, and a new and encouraging influence came over the young life.

And now, under these fostering influences, the lad had grown to years of indiscretion, if ever indiscretion was to enter into his life. He was sixteen, and China to a lad of sixteen is capable of acting the syren and luring him to whirlpools out of which he shall hardly struggle without degradation. It was the critical moment, when he found himself, an inexperienced youth, set free from the controlling influences of home, cast loose from his old ties and associations, and left to take care of himself in a remote port, where the checks of public opinion and social intercourse had barely an existence. At precisely this vital moment, Consul Alcock came upon the scene, and a powerful influence entered into the life of the young Interpreter. For five years the two were closely associated in daily work and intimate friendship, and the association bred mutual benefit. In the refined home of Mr and Mrs Alcock, in their intellectual tastes and accomplishments, in their sympathy and encouragement, Harry found the pure element in which he could take free and wholesome breath. They helped him in his studies, associated him in their recreations, nursed him through fever,—in a word, they made him at home, in the best and heartiest sense.

To these happy influences, added to his naturally refined and healthy temperament, Harry Parkes owed the privilege of retaining his ideals. Brought up amongst good women he simply did not know bad ones. In a community where a single *liaison* was regarded as immaculate virtue, no breath of scandal touched his blameless life. He gave himself no austere airs and preached not at all; but he seemed insensible to vice, and conversation became purer in his presence. The piquant story of the jovial mess-room somehow appeared out of place when he was by. He never lost his chivalrous feeling for

women. 'What a rich blessing,' he said, 'has been vouchsafed to mankind in the society of good and intellectual women.' 'It grieves me,' he wrote some years later, when told of a lady's misconduct, 'because I love to think upon woman as a pure holy being, who should control the fiercer and worse passions of men, instead of ministering to them. In the latter case, instead of admiring (unless it be with an unholy admiration) she can only be thought of as a polluted thing—something to be shunned as one that would work your destruction, instead of saving you from it. Nothing can surpass the dignity of woman in the former case, as nothing can exceed her degradation in the latter. She both rises higher and falls lower than man': but, he adds, 'nothing a woman can commit is as bad or so vile as the baseness of man when he betrays innocence.' Of course this was not written by a boy of sixteen; but it is quoted here because the tone it indicates was a marked characteristic in every stage of his life. The man of thirty and the boy of sixteen felt alike: there was no lament in later years over 'lost illusions,' for to him the ideal ever remained true, and he never swerved from his loyal allegiance to that chivalrous spirit,—that

subtle master under Heaven  
 Not only to keep down the base in man,  
 But teach high thought and amiable words . . .  
 And love of truth, and all that makes a man.

In the purity of his character lay the secret of his charm for women. They felt instinctively that he revered them and that they could trust him.

In this impressionable epoch of life, it was an incalculable advantage to possess such wise friends as Consul Alcock and his first wife. It was also valuable to possess an exacting task-master. The Consul was something of a martinet, and 'being a new broom, swept clean,' as his Interpreter soon discovered. Harry was a little disposed to be desultory in his work, and it was just as

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well that he should pass five years of his novitiate under a superior who kept him steadily at the grindstone: the years of discipline bore good fruit in the growing capacity for concentrated labour. And whilst recalling the valuable results of the Consul's influence over the Interpreter, it is but fair to remember the important services which the Interpreter rendered to the Consul. Sir Rutherford Alcock's reputation rests primarily upon his bold and resolute policy as a Consul: his later promotions to the legations of Yedo and Peking sprang from the foundations laid at the Treaty Ports of China. How much of those foundations would have been successfully laid without the brilliant services of his Interpreter, it is impossible to say: but this much may be affirmed, that some of the notable triumphs of Consul Alcock over Chinese arrogance and obduracy could never have been won without the skilful and courageous co-operation of Interpreter Parkes. How far the determined policy which is associated with both their names in the annals of Chinese consular successes was due to the initiation of one or the other must remain a matter of speculation, but it is at least certain that in all such efforts Parkes was not a hair's breadth behind his chief in courage or steadfastness. As the two grew to know each other better, the Consul would naturally accept suggestions from his Interpreter, whose penetration and intimate comprehension of the Chinese character belied his youthful appearance. This much may be said in fairness to both, without going so far as those who would always discover the voice of Jacob within the hairy integuments of Esau.

Mr Alcock arrived at Amoy on 2nd November 1844. Parkes described him as 'tall but slimly made, standing about six feet in his boots . . . very gentlemanly in his manners and address, and exceedingly polite.' Sir Rutherford has also recorded his first impressions of the boy who was to do the most important work in his Consulate, in some notes which he kindly drew up for Sir Harry Parkes' biography:—

I remember well my first impression on meeting him at my landing at Amoy late in the year 1844,—  
 a bright, intelligent-looking youth of sixteen, and in appearance still more youthful both in face and stature. The description ‘small of stature for his age, with fair hair, a bright blue eye, and a fresh colour, with a quick and eager intelligence’ exactly corresponds with the first impression I received : to which I may add, as it remained characteristic in him to the end of his life, that there was always something of a nervous eagerness, both in speech and manner, reminding one of the straining of a dog at his leash in sight of the quarry ; and the peculiarly slow and deliberate circumlocutions and mode of conducting business with foreign officials in China must often have sorely tried his powers of control whilst acting as interpreter. This and his quickness of apprehension, whatever work he might be called upon to undertake, and his capacity for labour in mastering it, were all eminently characteristic.

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 Alcock

Parkes was very quickly called upon to display his powers as an interpreter, for the usual official interviews with the native authorities began a few days after the Consul’s arrival, and as Mr Alcock knew no Chinese the chief labour fell upon Harry. Sir Rutherford recalls to this day the relief he felt when he found that his young Interpreter could explain his meaning in fluent Chinese :—

Seeing that without this aid a Consul fresh from Europe would have been both dumb and powerless, it will be easily understood how great was that relief to my mind, and how much it would naturally predispose me to think well and favourably of my juvenile A.D.C. But the truth is, I feel, as I look back through the long vista of nearly fifty years to my first experience in so novel a field, that there was much besides his eager intelligence and self-reliant character to win him personal regard,—more especially from his chief, with whom he was so closely connected by a community of work and a common interest.

Sir R.  
 Alcock

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Some account of the portentous ceremonies which followed a change of Consuls is given in the journal ; and it will be noticed that in his dealings with the Chinese the new Consul took a stand on his dignity from the outset :—

Journal  
Nov. 6

Mr Alcock came over in a very flash style. Full uniform, cocked hat, blue coat with silver lace and gold buttons, and blue trousers with broad silver stripe. He also wore no less than six Spanish orders of knighthood and chivalry that had been awarded him in Spain. As usual we had to wait a long time for the arrival of the mandarins, and at one o'clock Mr A. sent to ask them, rather abruptly, whether it was their intention to come to-day or not, which soon brought them round. All came excepting the Admiral, who was away cruising after pirates. We gave them a very fair spread, and though still early the champagne was done ample justice to by our worthy celestial friends. Mr A. began at first to discuss business matters, but as usual they waived it altogether, and expressed their inability to do [any]thing of themselves. One point that Mr A. chiefly pressed was to get the Chinese to build houses for us, and we to rent them from them ; but it seems that there are but few large capitalists here, and trade is where they like best to invest their money. It seems however to be poor policy on the part of our Government. Why can they not at once build a good handsome substantial Consulate, and have done with the matter ?<sup>1</sup>

The return visit to the mandarins took place on the 8th, when they gave the foreigners 'a splendid dinner and were exceedingly jolly,' drinking the Queen's and the Emperor's healths with the honours. Among other things they had almond tea, which Parkes had only once seen before, 'at Hu Mun Chai at the signing of the Supplementary Treaty.' Next day the mandarins came, as promised, to pay their respects to Mrs Alcock.

<sup>1</sup> This was eventually done ; see p. 100.



These necessary preliminaries over, the Consulate settled down to its usual work. There was not much stirring: 'trade is now very dull,' according to the journal, 14th November; 'only two ships in the harbour, and those from Manila with rice and *chowchow* cargo, or from Bombay with cotton. Lorchas are beginning to come up from Macao, generally freighted by Chinese.' Amoy was a very out-of-the-way station for news, since it was difficult to beat up against the north-east monsoon, and weeks often passed without a fresh arrival or incident of any kind. The consular vigilance was mainly directed to the discovery of the perpetrators of numerous robberies, the burning question of sycee silver (which the reader will be thankful to be spared), and the kidnapping and imprisonment of the Chinese servants of Europeans. On one occasion whilst an official was paying a visit, his servant stole Mr Alcock's pocket-book, so little were the duties of guest and host respected; and it was a common thing for a servant or *comprador* (steward) to be carried off from his English employer, with the view of making residence in China impossible for 'barbarians.' The Chinese people, who were always willing enough to take service with good paymasters, began to grow frightened, and a decided step had to be taken. It is hardly necessary to add that with Consul Alcock and Interpreter Parkes on the spot the action taken was prompt and vigorous.

There was a circumstance which must have tended to diminish their interest in the work at Amoy: the post was merely temporary, since Mr Alcock's appointment was to Foochow, and he was only waiting to exchange ports with G. T. Lay until the latter could secure a suitable house for the accommodation of a married consul. This arrangement was understood from the beginning, and Parkes refers to it in a letter to his sister, Mrs Lockhart, of 4th November 1844, in which he announces the arrival of Mr and Mrs Alcock:—

He was originally appointed for Foochow, but a



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change will, I believe, be effected between him and Mr Lay. If he stays here, I do also, as Mr L. needs no interpreter. Foochow would have been fearfully dull, but it is exceedingly healthy, and the surrounding country beautiful,—the former of which I now view as a most important thing. If by next summer we are not provided here with good houses, I am resolved to get sick in the latter end of June, and spend the next three horrid months in a less malignant clime. . . . Taking all in all, we might be worse off, as we have some little society, but that is so much scattered about that we see but little of each other.

Whilst waiting for the completion of the negotiations for a better Consulate at Foochow, Parkes busied himself in small matters. The Consul set him to translate all the Chinese correspondence of the office since the opening of the port—a very necessary task, and excellent practice for the Interpreter, though he hardly enjoyed having to make up so much leeway in consequence of the neglect of his predecessors. He tried to keep more or less to his scheme of work, though he complained that he did not ‘get much Chinese reading, and felt the want of a teacher much.’ Still he must have been fairly proficient, for besides managing all the interpreting of his own office, where he was the only Chinese scholar, he was called in to act as interpreter for the mandarins when they paid a complimentary visit to a Dutch brig-of-war. He found a new incentive to study in the accomplishments of Mrs Alcock, who promised to help him in French and German, whereupon he purchased dictionaries and grammars. ‘She is quite literarily-inclined,’ he wrote, ‘and writes poems, sketches beautifully, and is expressly alert with her needle.’ After the day’s work they all rode out together in the evening, and the lad was generally invited to take tea with them on their return. These were his happiest hours, for he loved riding, and still more delighted in intellectual society. He knew nothing of sport and played no games, except in later years a quiet

rubber ; his life was always well filled without any methods for killing time. He was well content with his surroundings, and his satisfaction is expressed in his journal. Of Mr Alcock he writes : ' I like him daily more and more.' When work permitted they made excursions to the pagoda on Kesu Island at the mouth of the river, when the Consul and his wife sketched amid a crowd of inquisitive natives, and Harry sat and admired them. He had not much other society, for the English at Koolangsoo were scattered at some distance, and people do not call in China when the process involves much exertion ; but for a month or so he joined the mess of the 4th Madras Native Infantry, at the invitation of the officers, who were 'all gentlemanly fellows,' from whose conversation he hoped to 'derive instruction.' It is not recorded how much edification he derived at the mess, but he was certainly better fed than at his solitary meals in his own cottage—and his bill for a fortnight only amounted to six dollars. So economical a mess deserves to be chronicled.

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So the days slipped noiselessly by in a quiet routine of work. In December Parkes was the only subordinate in the office who was not ill, and though he grumbled a little at having to be man of all work, he admitted that he gained a great deal of useful experience of official business. Christmas came, and with it thoughts of the home country, which is never so sorely missed as at this friendly season. 'What would one not give,' cried Harry on Christmas eve, 'to hear a good carol sung in one's own native land!' On Christmas day, of course he dined with the Consul. 'The weather was true Christmas. Snow was only wanting to make the picture perfect. Blowing, bleak, and bitter, so that logs were never thrown upon a fire with better zest. . . . Wished that I could have heard a regular English congratulation of "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year." They were given and exchanged in this out-of-the-way place very monotonously in spite of all my exertions to the contrary.'

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On New Year's eve he reviewed the past year, and deplored with earnest sincerity his waste of time and opportunities. It is interesting to read the resolutions which the boy drew up for his future guidance. Some relate to devotions and meditation on religion, and such belong to their author alone: but others are less private, and deal with practical matters. They have the rare qualities of permanence, for every one of them was scrupulously observed in later life:—

Journal

My spare time, of which I have daily about five hours at command, I intend employing in the improvement of my mind by study, chiefly at present of Chinese, but also a fair moiety to English and other studies. For I conceive that to be unemployed or have nothing to do may be productive of much evil, especially in the unsettling of the mind.

Regarding my income, it is my intention [not] to be niggard or profuse, so that I may be enabled to save and put by some portion for future wants, never forgetting however that charity which I consider an especial duty to attend to.

To take plenty of exercise, and allow eight hours for rest. To observe a somewhat rigid diet, and to abstain as much as possible from wine or intoxicating drinks, conceiving an excess in either to be not only hurtful to the body but decidedly wrong.

To avoid all backbiting and slandering, and to constantly keep in mind and try to act up to the golden rule, 'Do unto others as you would be done by.'

By these few simple rules I should wish to have my conduct guided. If they give me some idea of my own unworthiness and littleness, in being unable to act up to them rigidly, they will have answered their purpose well. Pride and vanity are some of my great faults, but with grace from above I need not despair of repressing them.

New Year's Day [1845]. Here I am at the begin-

ning of another year, the sixteenth new year's day that I have experienced. May not this give me some idea of the fleetness of time? Certainly these sixteen years seem to me but 'as yesterday,' so quick have they successively flown. May this lead me duly to appreciate the pearl of ineffable value, and above all not to neglect that the time will come when I shall be called upon to render up an account of how I have used it.

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It should be remembered that this is a quotation from a journal written solely for his own eye. Harry Parkes seldom spoke of these things, and was the last man in the world to say prayers in the market-place to be seen of the people. These private reflections are the genuine expression of the boy's aspirations towards a high ideal of conduct; and he kept his resolutions ever fixed before his eyes. The last is specially to be noted; no one ever heard him speak an unkind word of an absent man. Backbiters were his abhorrence; and if he could not speak well of a man, at least he would speak no ill.

In the spring of 1845 the business of the Consulate at Amoy became more important. The British garrison was to be withdrawn from Koolangsoo in March, on the payment of the fifth instalment of the indemnity, and the change would involve the removal of the consular residences to Amoy itself, so soon as the protection of the garrison was removed. To find a suitable building or site in the city was no easy task, especially as the Chinese were disposed to place every difficulty in the way, as they had done at Foochow. Backed by Davis, the gentle Lay had at last overcome these obstacles at Foochow: the question was, would a similar success be attained at Amoy? The matter became urgent in January, as the following entry shows:—

We have received a letter from the Taotai enclosing Journal some correspondence between Governors Liu and Kiying relative to the giving up of Koolangsoo, in which the former advises that we should rent houses over at

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Amoy until other dwellings are built, and not let that interfere with the giving up of Koolangsoo [for Alcock had hinted that if proper consular buildings were not provided, it might be necessary to continue to occupy Koolangsoo somewhat longer than the Treaty provided]. Fearing that we may suddenly be told to move, I have been looking out for suitable houses in Amoy, but there is a great scarcity of good houses, and I have not been able to fall in with any save the Library or Examination Hall, which being a public building I do not think they will let us make use of.

A house was not to be found, but Parkes managed to secure a site, and then a new difficulty arose. But this may best be told in the words of his old chief Sir Rutherford Alcock :—

Sir R.  
Alcock

There were several occasions in this short period at Amoy in which I had ample opportunity of appreciating the sterling qualities of my young Interpreter and of forming a judgment, so amply borne out in after years, that these only required development by acquired experience to place him high in the consular service. I could scarcely anticipate in those days seeing him transferred to the highest post in China in the diplomatic service as Her Majesty's Minister at Peking, for at that day Peking seemed as unattainable as the moon, and no one had ever been allowed to pass the hitherto impenetrable barrier between the consular and diplomatic services.

One feat Parkes achieved at Amoy before we left which I have often felt surprised at his accomplishing on reflecting upon the inherent difficulties of the task. I was instructed to obtain a site on the Amoy side of the harbour, since we were about to surrender to the Chinese according to Treaty the island of Koolangsoo, previously occupied by our troops and the Consulate: and not only to obtain a site, but to take steps for building a Consulate. To do this necessitated the drawing of plans and entering into estimates with a Chinese



builder, who spoke no word of English, though I believe he had been at Canton and Macao and gained some knowledge of European (or Anglo-Chinese) kinds of structure and architecture for the accommodation of our merchant princes—as they might not be unaptly styled in those days, long gone by now.

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With the help of Mr F. L. Hertslet, Assistant in the Consulate, who had an excellent knowledge of architectural details, and a clever Anglo-Indian Officer of Engineers, Lieutenant Collingwood, I succeeded in getting out a plan, and not only a plan, but a model which was forwarded for approval to the Plenipotentiary at Hongkong. But this was the least part of the difficulty. It was further necessary to form on the plan a specification for a builder's contract; and having done this, for the Interpreter to find means of putting all the precise and technical terms of the English specification into intelligible Chinese! It was accomplished however; and in proof the Consulate was contracted for and built—and not only built but occupied by the whole consular establishment for several years. How the Interpreter's part however was achieved or by what *tour de force* or *legerdemain* he ever succeeded in bringing to the Chinese builder's comprehension the details of plans and specification I have never understood; and I am not sure that Parkes himself fully comprehended the steps by which his achievement was effected!



## CHAPTER VI

### FOOCHOW

1845-1846

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A GREATER contrast could scarcely be conceived than between the barren rocks of Koolangsoo and the vivid verdure of Foochow. The capital of the province of Fuh Kien lies about thirty miles up the river Min, and is approached through scenery which has been often compared with the upper reaches of the Rhine. The mouth of the river, girdled by bold promontories and islands, forms a broad circular harbour, where two or three opium ships are to be seen prudently anchored outside the consular jurisdiction, and a fleet of native junks of all cuts and rigs, from the clumsy high-pooped Shanghai barque to the long low tea-ship of Ningpo, lie moored, in a noisy cloud of immense flocks of wild-fowl. Steep banks, villages embosomed in trees, terraces of cultivated land, gradually lead up to the lofty range of hills, in some places 3000 feet high, with here and there a lonely watch-tower breaking the rugged line. Passing Pagoda Island, where a branch of the river, reaching in a great bend from above Foochow, falls in, we skirt beside villages and long lines of pine trees, and crossing the bar, where many junks are lying, and threading half a mile of a crowded fleet of native craft, we arrive at a dense low-lying suburb of dilapidated wooden houses.<sup>1</sup> The city and citadel are not

<sup>1</sup> This description refers to 1846 : see Notices by Captain R. COLLINSON,

visible from the landing-place ; but all around may be seen the ample green valley, often flooded by the swollen Min in the rainy season, and beyond, the giant barrier of the encircling hills. Close to the anchorage is the famous granite bridge of forty-five square arches, which connects a little island with both banks of the river by means of huge slabs laid from pillar to pillar and often supporting shops, like old London Bridge ; and hard by is the wretched shed where Consul Lay once represented Great Britain. From the overhanging gallery of one of the riverside houses you look down on the strange floating population who live all the year in house-boats, even when the roofs are shining with white hoar-frost ; and the view of the Chinese city, and beyond it 'the bold outline of mountains and wooded heights, the winding river covered with numerous gaily-painted junks, the green rice-fields, and the busy swarming population, is probably not to be paralleled in any part of China.'

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To approach the Consulate one interminable street, three miles long, has first to be traversed. It leads from the bridge to the city gate, and is like all other Chinese streets, narrow, dirty, choked with projecting stalls, stoves, trays, portable kitchens, and thronged by bawling crowds of a forbidding and pugnacious aspect. The bearers press on with your chair, upsetting and breaking goods as they go, and pursued by the curses and blows of the injured dealers, who have not yet grown accustomed to the ways of 'foreign devils,' and would dearly like to murder them if they dared. Still the street winds on, between rows of open shops, with flaring signboards and gaudy lanterns overhead, and cook shops, wine shops, tea rooms, orange stands, and sugar-cane vendors at every corner ; past the shroffs with their bunches of sham cash over their doors ; among groups of gamblers and boys tossing for sweet-meats, and here and there a sauntering Buddhist bonze, or an official gentleman carried in his chair, a culprit

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ÆT. 17

dozing in his wooden cangue, or an itinerant literary man spouting from a bench to a group of tea-drinkers.

At last the massive wall and gate of the city itself are reached, and the streets become wider, and the shops larger. Foochow was a finer city than Shanghai or Amoy, or even Ningpo in some respects, in 1845. The houses, of course, are at all angles out of the perpendicular, and one wonders they do not fall in, but they are often two-storied and look so gorgeous in their paint and gilding, that one forgets to notice that the doors will not open nor the windows shut. Red paint and gilt tablets and flowers and monsters in bold relief cover a multitude of architectural sins. The mandarins' houses are a labyrinth of passages, gateways, courts, temples, and shops: they cover acres of ground, and possess scarcely one comfortable room. But outside they do not betray themselves.

A mile more brings us to a fine sombre avenue, and then the Union Jack is seen floating over the rocks which surround the British Consulate—as it was in 1845. The site which Consul Lay had obtained with so much difficulty was called Wu-shih Shan, 'Black Stone Hill,' and was reached by a stiff climb up terraced paths. The consular buildings consist of a picturesque collection of detached temples, shaded by banyans and pines, and the priests who had occupied this sequestered monastery not only consent to let it to Her Majesty's Government for a few hundred dollars, but depute their chief bonze to act as a sort of head-gardener to the 'barbarian' invaders of their retreat. From the top of the hill stretches a view which it were hard to match in China. Below is the city, with its heavy battlemented walls and watch-towers, its sea of green tiles broken here and there by a joss pole, or the red patch of a temple or a mandarin's palace, and its ever-murmuring hum of busy life, its street cries, its din of gongs and tomtoms, and its guns saluting the mandarins as they pass out of the gates. The confused babel of sound rises up to the monastic solitude of the temple-

Consulate, and mingles on the hill with the scream of the buzzard hawk overhead. Beyond is the spacious undulating plain—an amphitheatre of twenty miles across—closed in by the girdle of the hills.

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Such was the picturesque setting of the spot where Harry Parkes exercised the duties of Interpreter in the years 1845-1846. Foochow, with all its beauty, had its drawbacks. It was entirely out of the road of visitors and news; ships seldom came over its dangerous bar; foreign commerce was at a standstill; and the people were thoroughly unfriendly. *Fan kow*, 'foreign dog,' was the Foochow mode of saying *fai' kwei*, 'foreign devil,' and the word was often dinned into the ears of Englishmen as they walked through the streets, jostled by an inquisitive and impudent crowd. The hostile attitude was partly due to race, for the Fuh Kien people are a violent stock, and partly to the presence of a large Tartar garrison. Being the capital of the province, with a population of over half a million, Foochow was favoured with the presence, not only of a Viceroy (*Tsung-tu*), but of a Tartar General (*Tseang-keun*), who commanded 2000 truculent Manchus. These had their own separate quarter in the city (where even the Chinese did not venture to penetrate till recently), and were a fertile source of danger and anxiety to the foreign community. From an official point of view, the presence of high provincial officers gave Foochow a special importance; but in the merely consular aspect, its want of foreign trade reduced it to insignificance. The Consul's work was diplomatic rather than commercial. He had to protect his subjects from the violence and insults of the population, and give them a fair chance of creating a trade where as yet no trade was.

Parkes' first impressions of his new Consulate were, it must be conceded, somewhat prosaic. Living in a temple might be romantic, but it had its discomforts. He announced his arrival in a letter to his eldest sister:—

We left Amoy on the evening of the 25th and

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To Mrs  
Lockhart  
March 31  
1845

anchored off Foochow on the 28th instant. Our voyage was somewhat prolonged and tedious in consequence of being surrounded during the whole time by heavy fogs which prevented us from seeing more than a few yards around us, and consequently leaving us in a state of uncertainty as to where exactly we might be. The third day, however, it all dissolved into rain, which has not yet ceased to fall, casting a gloom and comfortless appearance on all things around. . . .

We found that Mr Lay had greatly exaggerated the size and convenience of his present location. The scenery which the hill (on which the house stands) commands is certainly very beautiful, but the buildings themselves are small and inconvenient. In fact, they are a collection of small temples, which, though they cover a considerable portion of ground, really afford very little room adapted to English tastes. My quarters consist of a small house with three rooms, which I share with the First Assistant, a Mr Walker.

But later on the beauty of the place began to grow upon him, and he wrote in a different tone:—

Foochow itself is really a most beautiful place, and the country is the finest that I have seen in China. Fuh Kien is famous for its mountain scenery, and we have some here in perfection. The paddy in the extensive valley before us is now springing up fast, and is nearly a foot high, so that this wide expanse of fresh green has a very beautiful appearance.

He was very sensitive to the influence of nature, and though he could never describe what he saw and felt, he enjoyed the impressions of scenery in a rare degree. Before he left Foochow he became enthusiastic in his descriptions of such scenes as the moonlight effects from the Consulate:—

The beautiful effect of a bright moonlight witnessed from the Consulate hill at Foochow can hardly be described. It exceeds almost everything that I have ever witnessed. You can see the magnificent hills all



around very distinctly, on one side the valley with all its little hamlets, and above all the silvery river flowing in downward course between, and on the other side the extensive dark mass of crowded city. . . . Many successive moons have rose and waned since I came to Foochow, and each seems more beautiful.

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On his first arrival, however, there were other things than moons to be attended to. The officials of the Son of Heaven were to be visited with due pomp, and the consular staff had to be settled in their new quarters. Harry evidently took some pride in the consular 'turn-out,' when visits of ceremony were to the fore :—

Notwithstanding we are so confined as to change or society, time slips away very rapidly, which must be proof positive of itself that we are not so very monotonous. Suddenly I find that I have been a citizen of Foochow for a whole month, while apparently but a few days have passed since we arrived. During the last fortnight we have been busy paying official visits to all the High Authorities. Amongst these the chief are the Governor-General, and Tartar General,—the former governor of the two provinces of Fuh Kien and Che Kiang, the latter one of the Imperial kindred, and consequently both great men. The Governor is a lively hale man of fifty, chats vigorously, complaisant and affable in his manners, but the General, being older and suffering from sickness, is, as might be expected, somewhat crabbed and diffident [*sic*]. We go in great state on these visits, quite 'mandarin fashion' (*à la Chinoise* is becoming too common a term now). Mr Alcock, Walker, and myself have each a splendid chair, very large, covered with blue cloth, with tassels and braid to correspond, the lining and furniture inside of light blue silk, cushions violet. We are carried by four coolies, each in a kind of uniform, with the usual official cap, and before the first chair and after the last two police walk, whilst two of our private servants, all dressed out officially, attend each chair. Mr Alcock

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
April 27  
1845



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has a large umbrella carried before him, made of red silk with treble folds. Mr Lay was the first to introduce this custom, and I think it is proper and quite political to keep it up, as it raises one in the ideas of the people: besides you must in some degree accord with the manners and customs of the people where you may be, which is nothing more than a foreigner would do in London. You may then conjecture that we make no little show with this *cortège* and 'astonish the natives a few.' The gongs and lictors we have not patronized, deeming these horrible appendages unnecessary and very disagreeable. This being a provincial Government, I think it is somewhat right to act up to one's station and make some show, which the Chinese think so much of, even in a political point of view.

When the people heard that a foreign lady had come, it created no little sensation, and crowds collected daily to see Mrs Alcock land. . . . Numbers came running in every direction, in some places blocking up the streets, and rendering it difficult for the chairs to pass along. Mr Alcock looked after his wife, and I had charge of Mrs Bradford (her maid), both of us thus with our hands full, which gave me no little anxiety, and very glad was I to perform the last act of attention, namely, handing them out of their chairs when arrived at their own house. They also were not a little alarmed,—the maidservant of course ten times the worse—who, I thought, was going to faint half a dozen times, and I was more dead than alive with fright in consequence, having no smelling bottle in my pocket! However, Mrs Alcock has made herself a perfect heroine, being the first lady that entered the city of Foochow. The worst is that having now got in, there is no getting out; for as soon as she shows her head out of the gate, the crowd that instantly collects obliges her at once to return. . . . The city is very large, and, what is more, very clean, with fine streets; but the mob that is sure to attend

you whenever you go out takes away all pleasure whenever you attempt to walk in them.

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.ET. 17

The mob was like to do more than spoil the pleasure of a walk, if opportunity for mischief arose. We have seen how they treated Dr Startin and Mr Pottinger when Parkes was up the Min in 1844. Such outrages were the natural expression of the popular disgust at the sight of 'foreign dogs,' and might always be expected to recur when occasion offered. No doubt a good deal depended on the demeanour of the Europeans, and some provocation may have sometimes been given; but very often no possible excuse can be found for the violence and fanaticism of the people—a fanaticism all the more curious when contrasted with the toleration of the easy-going monks who let their sacred temples to the Consul.

An instance of the inborn truculence of the Foochow mob occurred in the summer of 1845. The little community of Englishmen were suddenly disturbed by a most unusual invasion of visitors. The Commander-in-Chief of Hongkong made his appearance, under somewhat untoward circumstances, in June :—

The arrival of General D'Aguilar and party quite excited us into a turmoil. . . . Arriving at Foochow rather late, they landed the same evening, reached the city gates—a distance of nearly three miles from the river—at dark, and were surprised to find them shut, despite of previous warnings, and had to return with a large mob as attendants. Foochow being the metropolis of the province, it is guarded by a Tartar General and a Tartar garrison; consequently there are garrison rules, which savour something of the nature of the Median and Persian laws, one of which is that the gates being once shut for the night can never be opened for anybody, whatsoever his rank—nay, not for the Tsung-tu [Viceroy] himself,—though if previous and formal notice be given, the closing of them may be deferred for a short time. This, however, had not been given in this instance, and the worthy General and suite

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
June 15  
1845

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returned in no very pleasant humour, and had at first some thought of going away at once without seeing Foochow. Their good humour was not enhanced on finding that there was nothing to eat on board [the *Medusa*], instead of the good dinner they had promised themselves at the Consulate; neither could they be supplied with a good bed, they themselves being a party of four, and Captain Hewitt having brought up several friends from Hongkong. By the next morning they had cooled down; sent a note saying that they would not come on shore till half-past ten; and when sufficient time had elapsed just to peruse the note, they contrarily made their appearance. . . . The General saw all the High Authorities, and the Che-hiens [District Magistrates] and Chih-fu [Prefect] called upon him. They made a stay of three days, and when well off, the waves of our agitation began to settle down into a calm.

Curiously enough, there is no mention in the letter of the rough treatment General D'Aguilar and his party received at the hands of the mob. Mr R. Montgomery Martin, who was with the General, describes<sup>1</sup> the conduct of the people as insulting and violent beyond endurance. They shouted *fan kow* at them, leapt on the chairs and opened the hanging fronts, threw a brick at Captain Hewitt, and even jumped on his shoulders to tear off his gold epaulets. Mr Martin complains that the distinguished visitors were received with studied rudeness and neglect by the Viceroy and Tartar General. Parkes acted as interpreter during these visits of ceremony, and it is strange that he said nothing of this discourtesy in his letter to his sister. It is possible that he did not wish to alarm her by dwelling on the hostility of his Chinese neighbours; and probably Mr Martin exaggerated the affronts.

There is, however, a reference to Parkes in Mr Martin's book (ii. 300) which is worth quoting, for it gives the pith of the political difficulty in China:—

<sup>1</sup> *China, Political, Commercial, and Social* (1847), ii. 296 ff.

Mr Harry Parkes, who is intelligent far beyond his years, says . . . the mandarins pretend friendship but they hate us ; they use all sorts of duplicity, and not a word they say can be believed. Does not believe in the high opinion expressed of Kiying—thinks him very artful. In state papers transmitted to Peking, the truth regarding us is never stated ; they seem to take a delight in deception ; and the people would treat us well but for their instigation.

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ÆT. 17

Harry himself writes in much milder terms to his sister, and makes light of the insults upon which Mr Martin laid such stress :—

We have been quite gay during the last day or two by the arrival of several illustrious visitors, viz. the *Medusa*, *Plover*, and *Hebe*, Captains Collinson, Bate, and Hewitt. The two latter have just looked in on their way to Chusan, to complete some surveys of the port, and the former has been sent by H. E. Mr Davis, in consequence of a rumour that was set afloat at Hongkong that we were in danger and ill treated. Nothing of the kind has ever occurred, excepting one or two instances of offence offered by some idlers, which were investigated by the authorities, and though foreigners remain still objects of curiosity we are rapidly emerging from experiencing the offensiveness of a continual mob.

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
Aug. 14  
1845

It was not long after this optimistic announcement that Parkes himself came in for a special share of the Tartars' malice :—

When the *Corcyra* first called in, she brought me your letters which you had written on hearing the report that Mr Alcock and myself had been imprisoned, which ere this you will have observed was fallacious and without foundation. No, the Chinese would not now dare to lay a finger on any of Her Majesty's authorities or impose any restraint upon them ; the days when they committed such outrages with impunity are now gone past, with very little probability

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
Oct. 5  
1845

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of their ever returning. Yet we have by no means been without our annoyances. Several instances of insult have been proffered by the people to our countrymen, which however were chiefly isolated acts, and had they met with summary punishment and coercion on the part of the magistrates, would have been matter only for a police court to adjust.

The grossest outrage that has yet been met with was towards me only but yesterday. I had risen early and had determined upon encompassing the walls of the city—at least eight or nine miles—as my walk before breakfast, but on passing through the division inhabited by the Tartars, who have always shown themselves to be the most turbulent and ill-disposed, and consequently least frequented, they immediately on espying me mounted the walls to nearly the number of a hundred, a dozen of whom were especially forward in assaulting me with stones, blocks of granite, and other dangerous missiles. They persisted in it in spite of my remonstrances, assailing me with such frightful weapons, though only at the distance of a few yards, that had they been true to their aim would have taken most serious effect upon me, if not life, from which I ultimately escaped by flight. . . . The Consul has strictly forbidden us carrying our pistols or arms. It was well for them, and perhaps for me also, that I had not the above means in my possession at the time, but my blood boils when I think of such numbers of these dastardly Tartars attacking a defenceless youth; and this was not a little enhanced when I found that they knew me to be an officer of the Consulate, but still persisted in the attack. Of course Mr Alcock has made it the subject of most serious correspondence direct with the Tseang-keun and Tsung-tu, and nothing short of seeing half a dozen of the rascals punished most severely and impaled in the cangue to public view, with general measures for future security, will satisfy him and cool my wrath.



The necessary vengeance was exacted by the firmness of Consul Alcock. Three of Parkes' younger assailants were severely flogged with bamboos, and three of the older men were exposed for a month with the cangue or wooden collar round their necks. The punishment was the more exemplary since the Tartars had hitherto enjoyed the privilege of entire immunity from this humiliation, and the sight of three haughty Manchus in the cangue was a perfectly novel spectacle to the astonished populace.

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These attacks on Europeans generally followed some similar outrage at Canton, from which centre of anti-foreign sentiment the other ports took their cue. At Canton in 1845 Vice-Consul Jackson and two other Englishmen had been pelted with stones, menaced with daggers, pinioned, struck, and robbed, amid shouts of 'kill them.' The Fuh Kien men took the hint and attacked the Interpreter at Foochow. In February 1846 Commander Giffard was assaulted at Whampoa on the Canton river, and when Governor Davis wished to exact reparation he was 'snubbed' by the most short-sighted of Foreign Ministers, Lord Aberdeen. Accordingly the excitable Fuh Kien men, 'the Irishmen of China,' followed the lead, stimulated by the presence of a rabble of Canton scoundrels hanging about the suburbs, and in April got up a most promising series of riots and outrages at Foochow. They managed to clear out the houses of two Englishmen before they were suppressed. 'The Consul behaved with the greatest prudence and firmness in the affair, and was on the best terms with the local authorities, who fortunately felt some alarm for themselves in the remissness which caused these troubles; undertaking to punish the ringleaders, and to make good the English losses.'<sup>1</sup>

The matter was not settled, nor the reparation made, when Parkes wrote the following remarks on the situation:—

<sup>1</sup> DAVIS, *l.c.* ii. 132.



To Mrs  
Lockhart  
May 1  
1846

We have been rather noisy in this quarter of the world lately, but all is now quiet again. The disturbances, of which you will have heard, assumed rather a serious aspect while they lasted, and will, it is to be feared, tend seriously to impair the commercial prospects of the port; for if, when everything went on smoothly and satisfactorily, persons were not wanting to raise the most unfounded reports, detrimental to the place, or to magnify and exaggerate any little aberration to criminal magnitude, what will they say now, when there really exist sufficient grounds for their virulent declaimings? It may, and I trust it will, be otherwise; for if the authorities do everything in their power, by the punishment of offenders and granting of full compensation for losses suffered, to restore the confidence of the mercantile community, this end may be gained, and our former good relations at this port be established on a firmer basis. Had the authorities been more prompt and energetic in their measures for affording the foreign residents efficient protection, it is to be supposed that less hurt would have been done, and in this particular they were doubtless to be blamed and will have to bear all the consequent responsibility; but this does not surprise me, for we know well that the boasted influence that the Government of China possesses over its subjects is almost entirely *moral*, and that they really do not possess the power to cope with a popular tumult, which is the object of their greatest dread. At present all kinds of reports are reaching us of affairs being in a very unsatisfactory state at Canton: the eyes of China are now fixed upon the struggle that is pending in that quarter, and whichever way the die is cast, its effects will be visibly felt at the other ports.

In June Sir John Davis (who received a baronetcy in 1845), finding that 'the provincial authorities seemed willing to substitute evasion for that indemnity which they had promised to the English sufferers,' sent

up stringent instructions to the Consul to demand immediate payment. Mr Alcock, nothing loth, put on the screw in good earnest, and in seventeen days the news came back to Hongkong that forty-six thousand dollars had been paid, and the condign punishment of the offenders had been ordained. In reporting this satisfactory arrangement, the Consul bore testimony to the—

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very efficient services I have witnessed in Mr Parkes the Interpreter: he has not only been indefatigable and zealous during the whole of these negotiations, but his ready fluency in Chinese, and his general knowledge of the forms of business, both Chinese and English, while they entail additional duties upon him, very frequently enable him to render valuable assistance when it could not strictly be expected or required.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from these public affairs, there is little to record of the young Interpreter's life at Foochow, which 'jogged on' in much the same routine as at Amoy. He took his meals with the Alcocks, and had cause to be grateful not only for their unvarying kindness, but for the care and skill with which they nursed him through a fresh attack of fever which lasted twelve days, and was due, he believed, to the unhealthy situation of his temple-house:—

During the whole of this time I was attended with the utmost assiduity and attention by Mr Alcock, who, under Providence, by his very skilful treatment, brought me round without resorting to any violent remedies, which are sometimes as bad as the disease. . . . Mrs Alcock was also particularly kind to me, would come and sit by my bedside from day to day, and read the Bible to me—which when I am ill I am always particularly desirous to hear, so much comfort is to be derived from it—or any other amusing book to divert my thoughts. No comfort or delicacy for

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
July 27  
1845

<sup>1</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1857, Correspondence respecting Insults in China, p. 54.

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ÆT. 17

body or palate could I fancy, or they think of, but what they did their best to supply. Under such care, you will not wonder that I have got round so quick; ten days ago I could count my bones, but now I am fat and waxing stronger every day. Tomorrow I intend to walk half a mile or more before breakfast. I can never repay the Alcocks the lasting obligations I am under to them, for if he had not been of the profession I should have had no medical attendant whatever. All I can do is to pray that they may be repaid tenfold, and praise God for His great mercies in raising me up such friends.

He was fully entitled to ask for leave after so severe an attack of fever, especially since he had not availed himself of his granted holiday the year before; but he disliked the reputation of an invalid, and feared the Governor would think he was always getting ill if he pressed for a change of air. At this time he wrote few letters, and those very brief. He grudged the time given up to correspondence, and 'positively detested' writing an epistle to any but his nearest friends. His usual habit—of which he never cured himself—was to put off writing till just before the mail started, and then to scribble what he called 'inane twaddle,' with profuse apologies. His plan of work seems to have been carried out with some approach to regularity; he was mastering Manchu and even Thibetan; and he took to studying French with assiduity, though he never learned to speak it well. There was scarcely any society to be cultivated at Foochow, and social gatherings were restricted by the circumstance that as the Consulate was inside the city an invitation to dine out with the Europeans in the suburbs involved spending the night out also. A hard cold winter did much to set up his health, and his new quarters, 'three little rooms away from the Consulate,' proved less malarious than his former temple. His spirits continued good, in spite of the dulness of the place, and he was often detected in the perpetration of

exceedingly bad puns—a sure proof of cheerfulness. He found some amusement in the performances of the Chinese on their religious festivals, which they celebrated on the top of the Consulate hill:—

1845  
Æt. 17

For once I am even at a loss how to fill a note of this extent, for of news—what am I writing? *News*, such a word not known in Foochow. . . . We jog along very samely, though not to me irksome, and when the weather getting cooler will admit it, a variety of excursions will enliven the routine. By the bye, we have *not* been altogether so quiet the last day or two, for the 16th was the *Chung-chiu chieh* [Mid-autumn Festival], and the top of the hill being one of those *fung shway* places, and dedicated to the worship of heaven and earth, numbers assembled to celebrate the day, or rather chiefly the night, and if clamour may be taken as a proof (though I believe we think otherwise) their devotion was certainly sincere and earnest enough. . . . On the 9th day of the 9th moon there is to be another feast or holiday, when numbers of the worthy citizens, old and young, will again congregate on the hill, and edify themselves with the simple amusement of flying paper kites.

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
Sept. 18  
1845

Two more extracts are all that can be given to illustrate this somewhat monotonous period of his life. They throw some light on his ideas about reading, and they show that, in spite of his early advancement and his prominent place in public affairs, he remained essentially humble in his self-criticism.

If I reflect for an instant, I find I possess few or no acquirements on which vanity would be permissible, but on the other hand much cause presents itself for shame. Indolence is my besetting sin, a most dangerous fault that everybody that indulges in will rue. Circumstances have so brought it about that apathy has laid hold of me, rendering voluntary exertion painful to me. This I did not notice when my duties occupied me from morning till night, at which I was

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
Nov. 5  
1845

1846  
ÆT. 18

obliged to work ; but as soon as there is some respite, the little that remains to be done is burdensome, completely testing the truth of the old proverb that 'the less one has to do, the less one will do.' I must make, however, some exertion this winter, but so often have my resolutions proved abortive that I am frightened to enter into any more. . . .

I shall gradually begin to gather an assortment of good books, though at present I do not want for any, as Mr Alcock allows us free access to his stock, which composes a nice library. In my box I got out a few books, though generally of a light description of reading, being bound volumes of periodical journals, Scott's and Byron's poetical works—a great part of the latter are, I am aware, very licentious and immoral, but these I shall not study, whilst some possess much purer sentiment and fine pathos. In my next box, which will chiefly consist of books, I shall have Chalmers, Ranke, Brougham, and other standard works.

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
May 1  
1846

I trust there will be some change one way or another at Foochow, for if little hope is left of the spread of commercial transactions, now most insignificant, our interest in the place will proportionately decrease, and the residence here become insupportably dull. A continuous settled life has no charms for me : and what is more, my pay—a most serious consideration—will be no more on the progressive than the port, for the Interpreter's emoluments are regulated by the amount of commerce done at a port ; people not understanding that there is much more arduous work to be done in striving against innumerable difficulties to establish a commercial system at an entirely new and unworked port, than in carrying on the steady routine of loading or unloading the cargoes of vessels, which only require the moderate attainments of a knowledge of the numerals and the names of the articles in the tariff.

The long-expected Mrs and Miss Bacon arrived about a month ago, and form a very agreeable addi-



tion to our society, which, though confined in extent, is as refined in quality as, I think, any place in China. If I cannot be experiencing the height of excitement, I like to be left in comparative solitude, and never to be alone is an evil I cannot bear. . . . Sitting at a desk quill-driving from day to day *I detest*.

1846  
Æt. 18

Miss Bacon (Mrs Alcock's sister) well recalled the appearance of the young Interpreter in 1846, when she heard the news of his death nearly forty years later: 'He came down the Min to meet us on board the *Daedalus*, and I can now see his youthful slim figure on the quarter-deck, politely but firmly refusing to take charge of the Consulate money, as he had no order to that effect.' The refusal was exceedingly inconvenient to Captain M'Quae, who wanted to get out of the dangerous anchorage: but he was inwardly delighted at the boy's tenacity, and confessed to Mrs Bacon that Harry was in the right.



## CHAPTER VII

### SHANGHAI

1846-1849

<sup>1846</sup>  
ÆT. 18

IN August 1846, when Mr Rutherford Alcock was promoted to be Consul at Shanghai, Mr Walter Medhurst, the Interpreter at that port, was given leave of absence, and Harry Parkes accompanied his chief as Acting Interpreter. The change of ports was an improvement in every respect. Shanghai, though it had only been opened to foreign commerce three years before, was already giving promise of that future prosperity which has since been amply realized. Its central position, its deep river, and secure anchorage close to the wharfs, pointed to a commercial importance which would in time cast even the old supremacy of Canton into the shade. The people were of a milder and more pacific character than the inhabitants of Foochow and Amoy; and the chief local authority during the critical period of the establishment of the foreign community was fortunately a just and well-disposed Intendant, who largely contributed to the success of the English settlement. But Shanghai owed still more to the firm and consistent, yet kindly, policy of Captain, afterwards Sir George, Balfour, the first Consul at the new port, who began by taking the right tone with the Chinese officials, and was rewarded by finding his position, and that of the community under his charge, properly recognized by the

native authorities. Merchants began to flock to the rising port, and one of the Consul's first achievements was to secure a suitable site for the English residents. A large open space of more than a hundred acres about a mile outside the city was obtained from the Chinese authorities, through the instrumentality of Parkes, and in 1847 some thirty English houses had sprung up on the river front; the English were rapidly deserting their former Chinese tenements for mansions on the Bund; and a church was being built, which was eventually to develop into a cathedral with a bishop and dean. Such was the beginning of the 'Model Settlement' which has long been the pride of European China, and which celebrated its jubilee on the 17th of November 1893.

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Æt. 18

Consul Alcock and his Interpreter took the lead in the development of the growing settlement; directed the making of roads, the control of the foreshore, and the creation of an active municipal council to manage the affairs of the community. Among other valuable improvements the erection of a beacon out at sea may be specially noticed, since it was 'only placed there by the united exertions of Mr Vice-Consul Robertson and Mr Parkes, the officiating Interpreter, who on two several occasions spent more than a week in the Yang-tsze Kiang in a Chinese boat, directing and urging forward the work,' which had become an urgent necessity in consequence of several wrecks.<sup>1</sup> The young Interpreter, it seems, besides superintending the building of a Consulate at Amoy, was expected to manage marine engineering at Shanghai; but work, so long as it was real and useful, was always welcome to his energetic nature.

Besides the interest belonging to the growth of a promising settlement, there was much in Shanghai, even in those early days, to recommend it in the eyes of Harry Parkes. Instead of the limited social circle of Amoy and Foochow, there were nearly a hundred English residents

<sup>1</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1848 [188], Returns of the Trade of the Various Ports of China for the Years 1847 and 1848, p. 47.

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at the port, and these included his two sisters—the very first ladies who came to Shanghai—Catharine Lockhart and Isabella, who had married the Rev. Thomas M'Clatchie in 1846. He had thus two houses which he might call home. The missionaries Medhurst, Milne, and Muirhead were among the best-known residents, and the great houses of Dent, and Jardine Matheson and Co., had their representatives in the plutocracy of 'merchant princes.' Communications with England had been greatly improved since the Peninsular and Oriental Company had arranged their contract for the mail service in 1845, and books and periodical literature reached Shanghai with a punctuality and profusion altogether unknown at Foochow. The result was an intellectual element in the foreign community for which Harry Parkes had hitherto sighed in vain. The society was as yet too small to suffer from the disintegrating process of cliques: everybody knew everybody else, and common interests knitted them together in a friendly whole. The British Consulate—a handsome Chinese mansion within the city walls—became a social influence under Mrs Alcock's reign, and Harry, who lived close by, had his full share in the intercourse which centred round the consular flagstaff. There are few records of his life during this time, for his chief correspondent was now at hand, instead of at writing distance. All we know is that he took a good deal of exercise in the rich well-watered country about Shanghai or upon the wide circuit of the ramparts of the city, whence he could survey the spacious plains on the west, and the orchards, perhaps in the delicate blush of peach blossom; or look down on the gardens, which filled up so much of the enclosure, and the scattered temples and roomy houses; and beyond these the dense city and crowded suburbs, the forest of masts in the river, and here and there a glimpse of the newly rising foreign settlement. Of his social life one hears that he was always gay and cheerful, always eager to help others and careless of his own comfort; beloved

by many and welcomed by all; and it is recorded that he was never known to say a harsh word of his neighbours.

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A.T. 20

How rapidly the British settlement was developing may be seen in the report of Consul Alcock to Sir John Davis, dated 10th March 1848:—

The position of foreign residents, and the local conditions under which trade is carried on, are highly satisfactory. Many facilities and advantages have been gained during the past year. The town on the banks of the river within the British limits is rapidly increasing. There are now located in it twenty-four mercantile firms (three American) with their houses of business and extensive godowns. There are in addition five shopkeepers' stores, twenty-five private residences, a church, an hotel, a club-house, etc., extending along the river front more than a quarter of a mile and stretching backwards double this distance, with intervening gardens, racing ground, cemetery, etc. 632,820 dollars are estimated to have been expended already in land and buildings within our boundaries. The climate has proved healthy, only three deaths in four years having occurred among the residents, and these are not fairly to be attributed to Shanghai, but to causes which would have produced death elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the prosperity of the residents was due to the character of the Chinese in Shanghai. They were naturally a peaceable race, compared with some of their neighbours, and the good relations which subsisted between them and the English had been fostered and strengthened by the obvious goodwill of the latter, and the real and tangible benefits they conferred upon the inhabitants, not merely by their trade and custom, but by philanthropic work. In this direction a very remarkable success had been achieved by the Medical Mission, which was represented by Harry's brother-in-law, Mr William

<sup>1</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1848 [188], Returns of the Trade of the Various Ports of China for the Years 1847 and 1848, p. 40.

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ÆT. 20

Lockhart. The Medical Missionary Society of China had been founded in 1836, chiefly by the efforts of the American Dr Parker (who became U.S. Commissioner), with the object of encouraging a friendly intercourse with the Chinese by means of gratuitous medical and surgical aid. Dr Parker's ophthalmic hospital at Canton was adopted by the Society, and a hospital at Macao was opened in 1838, over which Mr Lockhart, a Fellow of the College of Surgeons, and connected with the London Missionary Society, was placed in 1839. During the troubles at Canton these hospitals were necessarily closed, but Mr Lockhart carried on a similar useful work in Chusan during the first British occupation, and besides returning to superintend the Macao institution, took part in founding another of the Society's hospitals at Hong-kong. In 1843 he resumed his medical work in Chusan, during the second occupation, and at the close of the year proceeded to Shanghai, where he was present at the opening of the port by Consul Balfour in November, and where, after much difficulty, a house was obtained and regular hospital routine began early in 1844. 'As soon as the hospital was opened,' he says in his interesting work, *The Medical Missionary*, 'and its purpose known, crowds of people came daily to the house, urgently, often boisterously, requesting to be attended to. The applicants were not only residents at Shanghai, but many came from Soochow, Sung-kiang, and other cities in the vicinity.'<sup>1</sup> The people showed the greatest confidence in the skill and goodwill of the surgeon, and before long a larger building became necessary. A well-found Chinese hospital and dispensary, paid for by the foreign community and vested in British residents, was accordingly built in 1846, and the inhabitants flocked from all quarters to be healed. The building of numerous houses and 'godowns' for the ever-increasing mercantile body was a source of accidents, and these were successfully

<sup>1</sup> W. LOCKHART, *The Medical Missionary in China*, 122 ff., 240 ff., etc. (1861).



attended to by Mr Lockhart. This work went on till 1857, when he left for England, only to return to open a similar hospital later at Peking; and the Shanghai hospital was carried on by others and is still a useful and flourishing institution. It is hardly necessary to point out the good effects such practical services must have exercised upon the relations between the English and the Chinese, which, according to Mr Alcock, were singularly amicable :—

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Our relations with the people and the authorities leave little to be desired. The former care not to encounter the chances of a disadvantageous collision with us, being well satisfied of our national disposition and ability to exact the fair treatment and peaceable conduct which we may justly claim at their hands; more gentle than the population of the coast further south, they are also less disposed to express by overt acts any dislike or arrogance of feeling they may nourish. The large sums of money annually expended here by the foreign community, and which must circulate among the people of Shanghai, cannot fail to reconcile them to our habitual presence, which apart from such considerations may not be, and I believe is not, more agreeable in the abstract to them than to the rest of their countrymen. They are upon the whole a peaceably-disposed race, ready enough however to take liberties with foreigners if they see any reason to fancy such conduct will be tolerated, but not likely to give great cause of complaint at any time unless relieved from their present fear of consequences, or under grievous provocation. The junkmen of Fuh Kien and other provinces form some exception to this general rule: they are a turbulent and passionate race, much given to disorder and violence, and seldom allow an opportunity to escape either to quarrel or plunder.<sup>1</sup>

The last sentence bore an unexpected significance almost as soon as it was written. Whilst Mr Alcock

<sup>1</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1848 [188], p. 40.



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was despatching his favourable report upon the relations between foreigners and Chinese at Shanghai, these junkmen, whom he excepts from his general eulogy, were distinguishing themselves by an outrage of a peculiarly savage nature.<sup>1</sup> Some 13,000 of these fellows had been very unwisely dismissed from the Government employ, and no pains had been taken either to satisfy their just claims or to provide for their accommodation or peaceable conduct. They were 'left to create disorder and commit every species of depredation upon the peaceable inhabitants, while the Government authorities are discussing ways and means and haggling about the amount of bounty to be given on their dismissal to enable them to settle with their families and follow some lawful occupation when they are driven from their homes, the grain junks.' This had been going on for months, and in view of the extremely unsafe condition of the parts of the country honoured by their presence, Mr Alcock had issued a notification warning British residents against venturing upon extended excursions from Shanghai into the surrounding country.

Three missionaries, however, were not to be deterred from their duty by considerations of personal risk. The city of Tsingpu could be reached and returned from within twenty-four hours, the period to which the excursions of foreigners from the Treaty ports were restricted by the Regulations, and to Tsingpu accordingly Messrs. Medhurst, Lockhart, and Muirhead went on 8th March 1848, to distribute Testaments and tracts, as they had often done before. They were going from house to house engaged in this distribution, when a number of junkmen began to hustle them and throw stones. The missionaries showed a firm front and threatened to appeal to the magistrates, upon which they were suffered to complete their task and pass out of the East Gate on their return home. They had not got half a mile from Tsingpu, however, when they were pursued by an excited mob of

<sup>1</sup> See *Parl. Papers*, 1857, *Insults in China*, p. 90-185.

junkmen, armed with poles, swords, and other weapons. The missionaries 'began to talk quietly with the men and asked them what they wanted,' but in reply were furiously assailed. Two of them ran for their lives, but returned as soon as they discovered that Mr Lockhart was not with them. They found that he had been thrown to the ground and was being beaten with a heavy iron chain. Luckily he managed to get on his feet again, and all the three missionaries ran for their boat, which was moored five miles from the city. For a mile they fled, closely pursued, and then they could run no further, but gave themselves up for lost. The infuriated crowd belaboured them with rakes and poles; Mr Medhurst was struck down senseless, and beaten and cut whilst lying prostrate; Mr Muirhead was severely handled; and Mr Lockhart was badly wounded in the head. When they were all helpless, the ruffians plundered them of their watches and clothes, and then drove them back to the city. In vain the missionaries (two of whom spoke Chinese) reasoned with their captors and appealed to the passers-by: the junkmen declared that they would carry them on board the grain junks and demand five thousand dollars a head for their ransom or else kill them. As they drew near the city, however, some police runners mingled in the crowd, and more respectable people came up and tried to assure the prisoners of their safety, and it was clear that the sympathy of the inhabitants was with the victims and not with their assailants, whilst even the latter were ashamed when they recognized in Mr Lockhart their benefactor of the Shanghai hospital. The police runners gradually got the missionaries separated from the junkmen, who slunk away one by one as the city gate was reached. At the office of the Che-hien, or district magistrate, an inquiry was held and redress was immediately promised. The missionaries were provided with chairs and carefully escorted to their own boat, much shaken, bruised, and hurt, and so reached Shanghai.

Mr Alcock was not the man to pass over such an

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outrage. He immediately demanded prompt and full redress from the Intendant. It must be prompt, because the junkmen might be dispersed at any moment, and the criminals get off scot-free. There could be no safety or protection for a small band of Europeans living in the midst of an unfriendly population if such insults and injuries were not fully redressed with the least possible delay. If such violence were passed over on the ground of the inability of the Chinese authorities to control their own subjects, there might as well be no Treaty at all. Yet this was what the Intendant practically urged, when he replied that the missionaries had gone beyond the limits prescribed by Treaty for excursions, and that the junkmen 'pay no respect to laws.' The Chinese must be made to feel their responsibility, and no excuse of their inability to keep order could be accepted for an instant.

Accordingly [wrote Mr Alcock to Sir John Davis, 17th March] our resistance to this plea, and the difficulty of enforcing responsibility for the protection of life and property form the chief features of our intercourse since the peace, and the efforts of the Chinese on the one hand to establish the nullifying clause of irresponsibility, and our determination to enforce the opposite principle of responsibility as the essential condition of the Treaty, and of all treaties, is the whole question at issue with the Imperial Commissioner Kiyang, and one which seems at the present moment to threaten the necessity for recourse to active hostilities.

I trust I shall be excused if I dwell upon conclusions so obvious; but they are all-important, and require, especially at this distance from superior authorities, to be ever kept in view and acted upon unhesitatingly and firmly by the officer charged with the responsible duties of Consul. For theft and loss of property the plea of inability is generally so plausible from the nature of the circumstances as to be in almost every instance effective. Rarely indeed are

any efforts on the part of the Consul to recover stolen goods, or to procure the discovery and seizure of the offenders, followed by success, when either the one or the other depends upon Chinese authorities and their underlings. This is an evil of some magnitude ; vigilance and care, however, on the part of the British may keep it within some moderate limits ; but let the same rule be applicable to acts of violence or outrage to British subjects, in open day and frequented places, and a residence in China must be limited to the range of our own guns, and prove fatal to all hopes of improved commercial intercourse and prosperity in this country.

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These considerations were all forcibly impressed on my mind by the tone of the Taotai and the character of supineness and indifference which marked his proceedings. An outrage of the most aggravated and indeed murderous character had been offered in broad day to three inoffensive British subjects (one an aged man whose hair is gray) in the vicinity of a large city. The deplorable state to which they had been reduced by the brutality of their assailants was seen by many thousands. They had been led through the streets covered with blood, after they had been trampled in the mud and their clothes torn off. This outrage in all its revolting details had become known to the whole country round.

My urgent and reiterated efforts to obtain redress were equally known, and their inutility canvassed by the population which immediately surrounds us. What would be the probable effect of the ultimate escape of these criminals and the refusal of all redress at the hands of the local authorities? I do not think there can be a doubt in the mind of any one who has ever been in China that such a result was calculated, and that promptly, to exercise the most disastrous influence upon our position at this port. To restrict our limits within the narrowest bounds ; to expose us to similar outrage if these were

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ever exceeded ; to subject us to the insults and molestation of those by whom we are surrounded, from which the fear of consequences and the prestige of our power alone protect us, even at Shanghai ; and, in a word, to strip the port of all its advantages as a place of residence for foreigners and convert it into a second Canton : these were among the most apparent of the consequences which impunity to the offenders and triumph to the authorities in their miserable policy must bring.

In this vital crisis Consul Alcock took his responsibility in his hands with a courage and firmness beyond praise. There were no specific instructions to go upon, and it would have been fatal to wait several weeks for orders from the Plenipotentiary at Hongkong. To delay would have been to play the Chinese game. The criminals would escape, and British prestige would sink to zero. Six Englishmen had recently been murdered near Canton : were the like atrocities to be permitted at Shanghai ? Accordingly, when five days had passed, and nothing but ineffectual promises had been given, the Consul made the memorable announcement that he would stop all payment of duties by British ships until full satisfaction should be obtained ; that meanwhile not a single grain junk should leave the river ; and that if the chief criminals were not apprehended within forty-eight hours, he would take 'such other measures as the due enforcement of our Treaty rights might seem to demand.' To realize the full meaning of this spirited announcement it must be stated that there were no less than 1400 grain junks and 50 war junks in the river, backed by at least 13,000 discontented vagabonds in the neighbourhood ; and that, to overawe this host by sea and land, the Consul had to rely upon one single sloop - of - war. H.M.S. *Childers*, however, responded pluckily to the call, and her captain, Commander Pitman, instantly agreed to support the Consul's action, and summoned the brig *Espiègle* to his aid. The British residents one and all acclaimed Mr Alcock's policy,



and the foreign consular agents formally notified their entire approval.<sup>1</sup>

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At first the local authorities tried to intimidate the Consul ; they represented to him the danger of his violent measures and indignant language in the face of an excited and lawless populace, among whom he and his family lived wholly unprotected. The Consul and Interpreter, however, continued in perfect unconcern to traverse the crowded streets in their daily walks to and from the consular office outside the walls, and even the ladies of the Consulate made a point of getting into their chairs and making their calls upon the English community in the suburbs, just as though nothing unusual had occurred. The attempt at intimidation proved a miserable failure, and finding that he could not make the smallest impression upon the Consul's fears, the Taotai took refuge in his old plea of helplessness : he said he had not the power to restrain all the vagabonds of the neighbourhood, and could not be expected to discover unknown assailants out of a crowd at a moment's notice. He had formerly served at Canton, and the traditions of that hot-bed of anti-foreign feeling were strong upon him : he knew that so far Canton had held out against all our pressure, and he hoped to see Shanghai equally successful in keeping the 'barbarians' at arm's length. To test the Consul's firmness he ordered some hundreds of the grain junks to put to sea, but Mr Alcock instantly informed the masters that they would be stopped by the *Childers*, and the junkmen saw the wisdom of obeying the Consul rather than their own authorities. Delays, excuses, and sham arrests of pretended criminals went on for some days, and at last the Consul, feeling that the time had come for a trump card, took the unprecedented step of sending the whole correspondence to the Taotai's chief, the Governor-General at Nanking, with a demand that he would at once see justice executed. On

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that one of De Quincey's latest publications was a glowing narrative of this spirited affair (*China*, by THOMAS DE QUINCEY, Edin. 1857).



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the 20th March H.M.S. *Espiègle* sailed for Nanking, carrying Vice-Consul Robertson and Interpreter Parkes and a despatch box which contained very unpleasant reading for the Taotai's interests.

The local authorities did not yet give up the game. They brought people to personate the criminals; they tried to pass the Government grain out, covered with straw and bricks, and when detected and turned back, they sent down empty junks, and then tried to load them in the reach below the blockade. It was all of no use. Commander Pitman boarded every boat in the river, and let not a grain of rice go out. There can be no doubt, however, that it was not so much the stoppage of this vast quantity of grain destined for Peking, as the alarming intelligence of the appeal to Nanking, that brought the Chinese to reason. When it was definitely known that a British vessel of war had actually sailed up the Yang-tsze Kiang, with an appeal to the Governor-General, the authorities at last bestirred themselves. The Provincial Judge (Nieh-tai) was hurriedly despatched by the Lieutenant-Governor from Soochow to Tsingpu to seize the criminals, and on the 29th he brought ten prisoners to Shanghai, several of whom were identified in the Consul's presence by their victims. They were then placed in the cangue, and ordered to be thus exposed daily for a month on the Bund in front of the new Custom-House in the Foreign Settlement as a public warning. Reparation had at last been effected, and after fifteen days' strict blockade of the port, the *Childers* permitted the 1400 imprisoned junks to depart in peace.

It was a signal triumph—a triumph that restored our credit at the Treaty ports, which had been seriously weakened by recent outrages,—a triumph, it should be added, that was won by Consul Alcock at his own risk. Had he been within reach of rapid instructions from his superior at Hongkong his vigorous measures would have been emasculated, and the Chinese would have gained the day. Mr Bonham had just succeeded Sir John Davis as

Plenipotentiary, and whatever his private views may have been he started his official career with a very sharp curb from the Home Government. Lord John Russell's cabinet were obviously alarmed at Sir John Davis' high-handed proceedings in the Canton river in April 1847, after the Chesney expedition, and feared a repetition of misdirected energy which might bring on another China war. The Colonial Secretary, Earl Grey, nothing loth to reverse Lord Palmerston's policy, accordingly (24th November 1847) 'peremptorily forbad any further offensive operations to be undertaken against the Chinese without the previous sanction' of the Government. With this instruction on his table, it may readily be conceived with what alarm the new Plenipotentiary received Mr Alcock's announcement of his daring measures, the very day after his taking over the office from Sir John Davis. Of course he hastily counselled moderation, though he did not go so far as to order a downright retreat from the position taken up by the Consul. Fortunately the telegraph—the curse of diplomatic responsibility—had not been introduced in those days, and Mr Alcock finished his business in a thoroughly complete and satisfactory manner before his superior's instructions were able to check him. When all was over, Mr Bonham paid him handsome compliments for his courage and ability; 'but however,' he said, the Home Government were exceedingly anxious that this example should not form a precedent for the emulation of less capable persons.

Parkes' share in these energetic measures was of course subordinate, but by no means unimportant. Neither Consul nor Vice-Consul spoke Chinese, so he had to conduct all the interviews with the local authorities, draw up the notifications and official letters, and generally act as go-between; and one may shrewdly suspect that he did not limit his share to mere interpretation. He was also sent up the river by himself on a risky reconaissance to Tsingpu to discover what strength of junks lay there, in case 'ulterior measures' should have to be

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taken. Finally on 20th March he accompanied the Vice-Consul on the *Espiègle* to Nanking, and there conducted, as interpreter, the negotiations with the Governor-General. It was an important mission, and (so far as they knew) the safety and honour of the British community might depend upon their success. As the *Espiègle* went up the Yang-tsze (not without repeatedly grounding in the shallows) the various mandarins holding authority at places on the way came on board to pay their compliments and ask questions, and Parkes had to receive and answer them alone, as the Vice-Consul thought it best to reserve himself for the Viceroy. Some of them brought sealed instructions from the latter to ascertain the object of their mission, but as the letters contained the term 'barbarian' applied to foreigners they were ignored and their bearers were requested to leave the ship. After a while the officials, who were courtesy itself throughout, gave up the attempt to discover the business that brought the *Espiègle* up their river, and the vessel duly anchored off Nanking on the evening of the 29th.

No objection was made by the Viceroy's officers, who came on board next day, to the proposed interview with their master, but when they suggested as a suitable place for the meeting the very temple outside the city where Sir Henry Pottinger had met the Commissioners in 1842, Mr Robertson objected, and demanded to be received at the actual yamun or official residence of the Viceroy himself. Strange to say this also was granted, after some discussion, and the interview was fixed for the following day (31st) at noon. The official account of what now passed was probably partly drawn up by Parkes, who could alone have reported the Chinese speeches, but it was of course signed by the Vice-Consul, Mr Brooke Robertson.<sup>1</sup> The visitors were very courteously received, carried in chairs by four bearers, and escorted by a military escort and police runners, to the Viceroy's yamun, where his Excellency received them at

<sup>1</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1857 [2175], *Insults in China*, p. 153-158.

the third gate, led them to the Hall of Audience, and seated them, including the Captain and three other officers, in a semicircle. He received the Consul's letter standing and bowing, said it was a very reasonable letter, but argued that the best possible step had already been taken in sending the Provincial Judge to Shanghai. Mr Robertson pressed for an officer direct from Nanking, and named the Provincial Treasurer ; and then thinking enough had been suggested for one interview, begged to take his leave, asking for another interview on the morrow. This was granted, in the form of a return visit on board the ship, and after the usual elaborate meal, in which the Viceroy joined, the party returned to the *Espiègle*.

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The next day, 1st April, the Viceroy came down to the bank in order to pay the promised return visit, but the river was too rough, and he could not come on board. Parkes, however, who did not care if it blew great guns when there was work to be done, went ashore to his Excellency and arranged that the visit should be postponed for a day. On the 2nd accordingly the Viceroy came on board, when he was received with yards manned and due honours, and inspected the brig and had luncheon. The Vice-Consul and Parkes then accompanied him back to the shore and another interview took place in the temple which Parkes had visited with Sir H. Pottinger in 1842.

Finally, after some discussion as to the difficulties that existed respecting the employment of the Provincial Treasurer, his Excellency signified his intention of despatching that functionary immediately to Shanghai, as a delegate, in compliance with our request for one, there to act with the Provincial Judge in bringing matters at Shanghai to a satisfactory conclusion. . . . At one time the discussion relative to the appointment of Provincial Treasurer assumed a curious position, being a close argument between the Viceroy and Mr Parkes as to the stated impossibility of employing him, on the plea that that officer could never be detached from his office nor even be employed on any other but his

Vice-  
Consul  
Robert-  
son's  
Report  
(extr.)

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financial affairs. But Mr Parkes adduced precedents to prove the contrary, which doubtless materially tended to gain the object in view, for the Viceroy was obliged to relinquish this argument. [It may be added that the Treasurer duly visited Shanghai and displayed the utmost fairness in arranging what remained of the difficulty.] The interview . . . was attended with marked courtesy and politeness on the part of his Excellency. He expressed openly and freely in condemnatory terms his opinion of the event at Shanghai that had caused our visit, and his regret at the occurrence. . . .

I have now the pleasing duty to convey my deep sense of the services rendered during this mission by Mr Parkes, to whose exertions, tact, and zeal its successful termination is chiefly due, and I only hope that if in the course of my career in the public service in China I am again placed in communication with the authorities on matters of a similar nature, I may have the benefit of his valuable assistance. It is easy to speak well of the exertions of an officer in a general way, but it is not so easy to express the particular opinion you may entertain of the way in which those services are rendered, and, above all, of the tact and good sense brought to bear on the occasion. I beg, therefore, you will take my simple assertion that, if our communications with the Viceroy at Nanking have been effected in a manner worthy of our position in China, to Mr Parkes chiefly is due the success attending my endeavours on that point.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Viceroy's report to the Emperor on the subject of the mission to Nanking is an amusing example of the Chinese method of cooking facts. It was translated by Parkes, and published at p. 173-175 of the Blue-Book on *Insults in China*. From this it appears that 'three English barbarians' had gone to Tsingpu 'in defiance of Treaty regulations,' and there had 'a quarrel and fight' with the junkmen, in which they received 'some trifling wounds.' The Magistrate not having seized many of the culprits, Alcock had 'appointed a barbarian chief to proceed in a small barbarian vessel' to Nanking 'to make accusation and complaint.' The report recites the measures taken to preserve order, and the sending of the Provincial



This generous testimony to his services on the part of his superior officer was confirmed by the eulogies of the great men at Hongkong and Downing Street. Bonham reported the 'conspicuous and creditable' part played by the young Interpreter in the crisis, and Palmerston acknowledged that it had been 'very able and judicious.' A signal opportunity had presented itself, and Parkes had not let it slip. He had made his mark, not merely at the Consulate, nor only with the authorities at Hongkong, but in the Foreign Office. From this time we may date his steady progress. He was a marked man, and the keenest of watchful masters, Lord Palmerston, had his eye upon him. Nor was this an epoch only in his official career: it was a crisis in his ideas. To have gone through that strenuous fight with Chinese double-dealing and obduracy was a notable step in the education of the future Consul. He had fearlessly shared in Alcock's spirited policy, and seen the effects of courage and determination upon the Chinese. All along he had advocated a firm method of dealing with the arrogance of the mandarins, and now the policy had been fairly put to the test and had proved triumphant. Henceforward there was no doubt or hesitation in Parkes' mind as to the line to pursue towards the Chinese bureaucracy. He had taken their measure and knew precisely how and where to plant the blow when blows were needed. He had proved

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Judge to Shanghai, and mentions that the British ship had shown only peaceable intentions, had but a small number of men, and had landed none on their way. As it was 'but a solitary vessel that had come to state a grievance, the officers and soldiers in garrison at the various ports were all of them unwilling to attack her with their thundering cannon,' especially as the English 'were exceedingly respectful.' The report relates the discussions between the Viceroy and 'Interpreter Parkes,' according to the Chinese version, and says that he had removed the offending Taotai, who 'had been wanting in proper fear and promptness,' and at the urgent desire of the barbarians had sent the Treasurer to inquire further into the matter, conjointly with the Provincial Judge. 'At the same time I gave them a reply and bestowed upon them some provisions, at which the said chiefs were all rejoiced and satisfied, and Chin-peh-ling and others were again deputed to immediately escort them out of the port.' He sends this memorial by swift express, lest 'the appearance of the barbarian chiefs at the provincial city to make accusation and complaint may have caused anxiety in the sacred breast.'

1848 conclusively that the only way to gain respect in China is  
 ET. 20 to *command* it.

How quietly matters settled down after this demonstration may be judged by the fact that in December, with the special sanction of the Chinese authorities, Consul Alcock and his family, accompanied by Harry Parkes, spent a week or two in the hills at some distance from Shanghai, in perfect security, whilst the missionaries continued their evangelizing excursions unmolested. Indeed some Roman Catholics were allowed to establish themselves permanently in a village five miles distant from the city. The right impression had been made, and there was no further disturbance.

In April 1848 Parkes had received the appointment of Interpreter (not merely Acting Interpreter) at Shanghai; but in July of the following year he was named Interpreter at Amoy. Before taking up his new (or, rather, old) post he obtained leave to go home. He had long looked forward to seeing England again, and his services during seven eventful years fully entitled him to a furlough. When he returned, it was no longer to serve under Consul Alcock, who had been a wise master and a firm friend to him for five years. The accidents of the service took them in different directions, and though they came together again in later years, it was not in the old relation of chief and subordinate. How valuable had been those five years of discipline under a judicious leader has been abundantly shown in the preceding pages; and that the Consul fully appreciated the other side of the relationship, and duly appraised the important services rendered to him by his intrepid young aide-de-camp, is proved by the subjoined extract from a despatch addressed to the Plenipotentiary at Hongkong on the termination of Parkes' connexion with the Consulate at Shanghai:—

Consul  
 Alcock to  
 S. G. Bon-  
 ham, C.B.  
 July 14  
 1849

I have so often had occasion during the last five years to bring under the particular notice of Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary the zeal and especial aptitude so con-

stantly manifested by Mr Parkes as Interpreter that it seems almost a work of supererogation to occupy your Excellency's time by restating these arguments. . . .

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It is indeed already well known, I believe, both at the Superintendancy and the Foreign Office that not only here and at Nanking, but at Amoy and Foochow, in all of which places he has been called upon to officiate, he has upon various occasions shown himself equal to the discussion of the most embarrassing and novel questions with the High Chinese authorities. It was in no small measure due to his ability, tact, and ready fluency in the language, that I was enabled at Amoy to induce the authorities to undertake upon my own specification the large Consulate they built for our use at Amoy—the first instance of the kind in China. At Foochow, where the riot took place, forty-six thousand dollars were wrung from the authorities as indemnification to three or four individuals under circumstances of peculiar difficulty, in spite of the strenuous resistance of all the High Authorities and after long-protracted discussions both with the Viceroy and the Treasurer of the Province.

The value of his services at Nanking have already been fully recognized by Her Majesty's Secretary of State and your Excellency. And in reference to all these cases I need hardly say that although the Interpreter acts under the orders of others as to the steps to be taken in any negotiation, and the arguments and tone to be adopted, very much must of necessity depend upon the discretion, temper, and command of language in the Interpreter, and that if he is deficient in any one of these, the best-directed efforts of a Consul may be rendered nugatory. I cannot therefore but feel greatly indebted for the effective assistance I have at all times received from Mr Parkes, who has been with me from the first day of my taking office in this country, and take the warmest interest in his prospects.

## CHAPTER VIII

### AN INLAND MISSION

1849—1852

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THERE is nothing an officer in the East prizes so much as his leave home ; and yet the change is seldom so enjoyable in fact as in anticipation. He looks forward to rest and the society of old friends, and he finds his friends away or dead, and his time spent in hurried movements from place to place. Instead of feeling at home, he becomes almost *dépaysé*, and he is not sorry when the hour comes for him to step on board the steamer and return to the old familiar office. But Harry Parkes was too young to feel this yet. He had left England before he had grown to really know her, and he longed to see her again and learn her beauty and her friendliness. He had passed from Birmingham to London, and from London to China, and had seen almost nothing of his native land. Now, he promised himself a thorough tour of exploration, and he determined not only to journey over England, Scotland, and Ireland, but to make himself acquainted with as much as he could of Europe, and in short to see the world at large as far as it could be seen in a year and a half of busy idleness. For his idleness was a mere name ; he did not know how to be really idle ; and lotus eating was a branch of gastronomy which, to his loss, he never mastered. He took his holiday, like his work, hard.

Before he left China he did one of the kind acts of which so many are recalled by all who really knew him. After taking leave of his numerous friends at Shanghai, he went to Hongkong, where he stayed with Mr Gutzlaff, now a widower: for the good friend who had welcomed the boy and his sisters to China had died in April. Whilst there Harry met his two girl cousins, survivors of the family in which his childhood had been spent, who had come out on Mrs Gutzlaff's invitation after their mother's death. With willing helpfulness the lad not only arranged for their joining his sisters at Shanghai, but made them an allowance out of his salary. Many instances of his generosity to his kinsfolk might be cited; but this early example will sufficiently show his open hand and heart.

His journey home was an exhausting course of sight-seeing. He made his first considerable pause at Point de Galle, in October 1849; whence he drove in the old red coach of those days to Colombo and Kandy, delighting in the exuberant verdure of beautiful Ceylon. Then he crossed India in a 'transit-coach' drawn by bullocks, stopping at officers' quarters on the long journey from Madras, through Conjeveram, Arcot, Bangalore, Seringapatam, and Calicut, where he found a steamer to take him up the coast past Goa to Bombay. Sir Henry Pottinger, who was an old Indian, had given him introductions, and he found a welcome wherever he went. Indeed he found his social duties somewhat disturbing and grudged the time they diverted from the more congenial occupation of sight-seeing. After being presented to Lord Falkland, the Governor, at Bombay, he sailed for Suez, rode across to Cairo on a camel, sailed down the Mahmudiya canal to Alexandria in four days, disdaining the steamer, and reached Marseilles on 18th March 1850. His first enthusiasm on setting foot in England received a slight check:—

Arrived at Folkestone, I hurried to the best chop-house I could see, and ordered an English beefsteak with potatoes and ale as concomitants. I was in such

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To Mrs  
Lockhart  
April 19  
1850



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good spirits on finding English ground under my feet that I did not like to lose the pleasure of feeling that I was standing on it by sitting down, and I gave a cheer as I swallowed English beef, English ale, and English potatoes—though to tell you the truth, though a secret, the former was ill-cooked and the latter were underdone, owing doubtless to my hurry to obtain possession of the viands. But though I praised them and called them excellent, the insidious things waited until I got into the railway carriage, and then disagreed with me. The ale, however, was really a treat. There is no resemblance I declare between the fresh liquor and the bottled-up fermentation that we get in China.

In London he tried to crowd an impossible amount of sight-seeing and social and intellectual life into one season. He attended Faraday's and Baden Powell's lectures at the Royal Institution, worked a good deal at French, of which he foresaw his need in China, and provided for a different necessity by taking lessons in dancing. With his keen appetite for improvement, he got a Balliol man to draw up a scheme of reading for him, but found it was impossible to carry out any systematic course of study in the midst of the interruptions and engagements of his first London spring. His experiences of town lodgings were bewildering. He took rooms near Hanover Square, to be handy for his club, the Oriental, but left them hastily when he found that a peculiar sooty dust came in whenever he opened his windows. Such a phenomenon was unknown at Shanghai, and he concluded that something was wrong with the street. His next lodgings, however, only enlarged this extraordinary experience, and he began to make inquiries of scientific persons, who kindly explained that he had made the 'acquaintance of the celebrated London 'blacks.'

Another difficulty was the want of space in ordinary lodgings. He had been accustomed to expand his belongings in spacious airy rooms in China—not perhaps

very substantially built, but ample and capacious; and whenever he wanted anything done, any furniture moved, or baggage packed and carried away, there was always his Chinese 'boy' ready to do the work. In Princes Street all this was changed, and he wasted a quantity of time and energy before he became at all accustomed to the altered conditions of existence:—

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'One of the few *China comforts* that I have missed in England,' he told his sister, 'is the room that our houses there afford us.' His lodgings got choked up with the packing cases of Chinese curiosities, which he had innocently ordered to be sent there, and he was busily employed for days in giving them away, to clear a space to stand in. Even his own necessary belongings spread too much, and had to be repacked. 'This constant packing is a slight drawback to the pleasure of my travel. Then no *coolies* to help pack or to walk off with the packages when packed with merely a *chit*—no, the attendance of waggons and of self to every particular is necessary here, and becomes very tedious. Then the P. P. C. calls, perfectly dreadful, and alone sufficient to prevent me renewing one half of my acquaintances on my return to London.' 'Altogether,' he sums up, 'my life is an odd jumble: much comes before me, of which I trust I may digest a little.'

The authorities at the Foreign Office were not slow to take notice of the promising young Interpreter whose name had figured conspicuously more than once in the despatches from Hongkong. They were anxious to have a fresh opinion from one who had proved himself well acquainted with the problems of the China question. Among others Parkes was fortunate in making a strong impression upon Edmund Hammond. People used to say that Hammond was the embodied idea of the Foreign Office. He had joined it in 1824, when a young Fellow of University College, Oxford, and after serving under Sir Stratford Canning in one or two missions,

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became a fixture in Downing Street, where he was the best-known and grew to be perhaps the most influential figure for several decades. In 1854 he was promoted to be permanent Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and he kept his post till his retirement in 1873, when fifty years of prodigious labour were recognized by his elevation to the peerage as Baron Hammond. Foreign secretaries came and went, but Hammond was always at his post. Lord Granville, Lord Clarendon, Lord Malmesbury, Lord John Russell, Lord Stanley, might bring their individual views to bear upon foreign policy, from the office of the Secretary of State : but they had to reckon with the dead weight of half a century's tradition, and the man who represented that tradition was Hammond. It was rumoured that the cells of his brain were constructed of red tape, but rumour was probably, as usual, unjust to him. He was above all things a formal official, founded on precedent and the tradition of the office ; but he had worked under Palmerston, and had assimilated his principles. Foreign secretaries who did not agree with Palmerston's policy found an exceedingly obdurate obstacle in Hammond. And when it is remembered that foreign policy rests far more upon the accumulated experience of the permanent officials than upon the temporary chief placed over them by a party victory, it will be understood that to stand well with Hammond was a legitimate object of ambition with every *débutant* in the diplomatic and consular services. Parkes stood exceedingly well with Hammond, and after his return to China used to correspond with him before he became Under Secretary, and the favourable impression the young Interpreter had made was strengthened by closer official intercourse in 1855.

But there was one behind Hammond to whom above all others Parkes looked up as to a leader after his own heart. Lord Palmerston was Foreign Minister in 1850, and it was with no small pride and surprise that the young Interpreter received a summons to an interview

with one who had always been identified with a vigorous foreign policy. He had expected to meet a master, but with all his prepossessions he was astonished at the grasp of Chinese affairs which the Minister showed. Palmerston went straight to the point, and when he had discussed the leading questions relating to our policy in China he elicited from Parkes the opinion that the right of entrance into Canton was 'the key to the whole difficulty.' The Prime Minister repeated the phrase after his visitor, with evident approbation. He had long seen the truth of it, and the confirmation of his conviction, by one for whom he already foresaw a great future in the Far East, pleased him. To Parkes of course the interview was a stimulating source of encouragement and devotion.

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He frequently went into the country for short visits in the early summer, and in July, after his presentation at Court at the levee of the 3rd, he began his long-planned tour. First he went to Bath, then to visit his kindred in Worcestershire—and then he boldly struck out for the extremities, and went to Cornwall, Edinburgh, and Dublin. In two months he had travelled enough in Great Britain and Ireland, and the delights of a continental tour began. He went by Bruges, Ghent, and Antwerp to Brussels, for of course he could not go back to his conflicts in the Far East without seeing Waterloo; then to Namur and Liège by the Meuse, and Cologne and Coblenz by the Rhine; Frankfurt, Heidelberg, Baden, Strassburg were visited in turn; and then began the delight of a first vision of Switzerland. What he enjoyed most was an Alpine walking tour:—

Six days walking and climbing at a rate of twenty-five or twenty-six miles per diem. I found the exercise a little severe at first, but stepped out well after the first day or two, and felt myself more and more invigorated as I penetrated deeper among the wild rocks and snows. I was obliged to return to Bern for supplies and to look after my baggage, but I started off again, and had

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five more days mountain walking in the vicinity of Mont Blanc. The views there are most magnificent. This pedestrian mode of travelling took up a good deal of time, but I am sure I have been repaid by the health and strength that the exercise has given me. Having seen a great deal of Switzerland I crossed the Alps, over Napoleon's famous passage of the Simplon, into Italy—where the contrast between the rich vine-clad steeps and plains, and the ice and snow that I had quitted, was very striking. The change was rapid, too, for on a Monday morning I was at the Hospice of the Grand St Bernard, the coldest and most desolate place that can be imagined, and on the Wednesday following I was on the smiling lake of Maggiore, with the heights that I had left scarcely in view.

Parkes 'did' his Continent thoroughly. He may not have grasped much of what he saw, but he saw a great deal in a fearfully hurried way. Milan, Como, Verona, Venice, passed like a dream before his eyes; Vienna, Prague, Dresden, Berlin—but a catalogue of places conveys no idea of the rapid rush of thoughts and associations which crowded upon the young man's imagination as he tore—no other word expresses it—tore through Europe. He was back in London in the beginning of November after two months of tremendous excitement, longing the while for a friendly ear wherein to pour his impressions of all these new and wonderful sights:—

I had an exceedingly pleasant time of it [he told Mr Lockhart, 23rd November], rather lonely though at times from want of companions and ignorance of the languages. Still I saw a good deal, and the retrospection will always give me pleasure. My fourteen days in Switzerland were the pleasantest time. Such a noble country! The air of the mountains is so invigorating. I wish I had more of it, it did me so much good. Such glorious fun scrambling over the snows and glaciers which you meet with everywhere when you get high up, and I was several times at an elevation of upwards of



10,000 feet. When the trips were at all perilous the excitement was doubled.

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He went in November or December to visit his childhood's home, Birchhills, which he had not seen since 1833, and found the same Incumbent and his wife at Bloxwich who had been there when he was a child. And there he stood by his parents' grave :—

During my stay in England nothing has given me more real pleasure than this meeting of mine with Mr and Mrs Baylie. Birchhills is sadly altered. Pits and iron-works of all descriptions almost touch the house, or rather the remains of it, two-thirds of it having been taken down. . . . I did not at first recognize the place, but on close inspection I detected a few traces, such as the grassy sward in front of the dining-room, still intersected by the ditch in which I was one day nearly drowned. . . . All the trees and gardens are entirely removed, and the place is now desolate and melancholy.

His interest in Chinese affairs had not diminished with distance. Whilst in London he had heard of the death of the Emperor, and wrote to Mr Lockhart for more news (23rd June 1850):—

The death of the Emperor and despatch of *Reynard* to Peking relieves the monotony of China news. I shall anxiously await tidings of this new expedition. Medhurst may consider himself very fortunate at being employed on such a mission, though of course his seniority to the other interpreters entitles him to the preference. What would I give to be sent to Peking! Pray let me hear everything that transpires in regard to this expedition, which I trust may lead to movements of a more extensive nature. I am not sanguine, however, on this point, for from what I see of public matters here, I am sure the Government will be very slow to embroil themselves in a quarrel with any nation which might involve a recourse to arms; and we know very well that it is worse than useless to *ask* for anything in

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ÆT. 23

China, without we are prepared to *take* it if denied to us. . . .

With regard to our political circumstances, I don't like the state of affairs at all, and don't know which to be discontented with most, the Chinese or the British Government: I think the latter. When will they be persuaded to act in a manly determined manner? If they did so, the Chinese would not figure away in the manner they do.

So the hard-worked holiday passed away, and in January 1851 he set sail on his return to China. The year had not been wasted. He had gathered a fund of ideas which would serve him well for the long months of lonely meditation in Chinese Consulates. He had made many new friends, and had come to know a little of the native land he loved so well and had left so early, as well as of the nations around.

Of his residence at Amoy in 1851 there is little record: indeed he hardly resided there at all. He was at Canton part of the year; then at Formosa, distributing rewards to the Chinese for assistance rendered to the crew saved from the wreck of the *Larpent*; in November he was at Shanghai with the Lockharts, and only left for Amoy on the 29th. A month later he received his appointment to be Interpreter at Canton, whither however he did not repair till February 1852. During the three months of continued residence at that port, however, he was successful in bringing the Chinese authorities to a decision on a long-pending question.

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
Canton  
Feb. 27  
1852

The orders for me to come to Canton reached Amoy at the end of December, just at a time when Mr Sullivan was deeply engaged in a long tiresome negotiation, which after lasting for *three years* showed symptoms for the first time of being brought to a conclusion. As he could of course do nothing without his interpreter, he would not allow me to leave, and in truth I was not sorry to stay, as I hoped to be able to effect a satisfactory settlement of the matter in dispute and

naturally felt interested in the issue of an affair which had engaged much of my time and thought. However, all mandarins are like eels, and are procrastinating creatures, resorting to all kinds of evasions and subterfuges when beaten out of the field in fair argument. Thus it was in this case. Justice was on our side, and as our Taotai did not wish to award this and yet could give no satisfactory reasons for refusing to do so, he thought he could get out of the difficulty by keeping out of the way, and therefore retired to the furthest town in his Intendancy, and thus excused himself from meeting the Consul.

Now, such a case of humbug could not be endured, and as when the mountain would not come to Mahomet that prophet found it expedient to go to the mountain, so as the Taotai would not come to the Consul, the Consul determined upon going to him—that is, he despatched me up the country to stir up his Excellency. Of course I suggested the trip and was much pleased with the novelty. I travelled, in a strictly official capacity, 120 miles into the interior, found the Taotai and prevailed on him to come down to Amoy; and what was best, the matter was settled, very satisfactorily, three days after his arrival. My trip occupied twelve days. I had to journey all the way by land, and was very well received both by mandarins and people—probably because I insisted upon being so.

The process of catching the evading Taotai was not so easy as this letter would imply. It appears from Parkes' official report to the Consul that every effort, of a civil kind, was made to induce him to turn back; not unnaturally, since he had no right to be travelling so far into the interior without a special permit. Of course the answer was that consuls were empowered by Treaty to communicate with specified local authorities, and if such authorities declined to come within hail of the Consul, he was obliged to go in search of them. The acting Taotai at Hinghwa saw the force of this reasoning, and did not

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press his objection to Parkes' journey on the score of violation of Treaty. The report—the earliest important despatch he ever wrote on his own responsibility—will show the sort of obstruction he encountered and the steady way in which he overcame it. The extract begins at his arrival at Tseuen-chow :—

To G. G.  
Sullivan  
Amoy  
Feb. 5  
1852

. . . By direction of the Prefect [of Tseuen-chow (Chin-chew)] the Che-hien (a chief magistrate) called upon me at my inn to urge upon me the inutility of continuing my journey, as the newly-appointed Haifang at Amoy, who was daily expected to pass through Tseuen-chow, would be fully prepared in his additional capacity of Viceroy's *wei yuen* [deputy] to negotiate the land question with Her Majesty's Consul. I replied that my journey to Hinghwa bore no relation to the movements of the Viceroy's *wei yuen*, whose arrival had long been looked for, but to those of the Taotai (or Intendant of Circuit) for these Departments, who had refrained for some months from visiting Amoy, although his presence there was indispensable to effect a settlement of the matters in dispute. I only regretted that the despatch which my mission required would leave me no time for waiting upon the Prefect, and accepted with thanks his offer to appoint some police to accompany me during the remainder of my journey, if, as the Che-hien observed, their attendance was considered necessary for my protection.

On the 26th [January] I reached the town of Tu-ling, and the next morning, when about twenty miles from Hinghwa, met the new Haifang *en route* to Amoy. Having halted by his desire at a roadside inn, he urged, first as his own request, and then as the express direction of the acting Taotai (from whom he had parted only the preceding evening), that I should retrace my steps in his company instead of going on to Hinghwa ; since he, as Viceroy's *wei yuen*, held special authority regarding the Consul's demand for land, which

he would accordingly investigate and report on immediately on assuming office.

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ÆT. 24

I replied that his presence at Amoy, without that of the Taotai, would be of no avail, as it was required by Treaty that such matters should be settled by the Local Authorities, and their responsibility could not be transferred, at the Viceroy's option, to a *wei yuen*; and as to his reporting to his Excellency, one of the chief objects of my journey was to obviate, if possible, the delay which such references always occasioned.

He then argued that, being Haifang as well as *wei yuen*, he possessed as a local officer the necessary authority for proceeding in the matter, and further that, as the new and permanent Taotai had arrived at Foochow and might be expected at Amoy in the course of ten days, no result could be obtained by negotiating on the subject with the present Acting Intendant.

To this I answered that his local appointment being much subordinate to that of the Chief Authority, the Taotai, he would naturally be unable to accomplish more in that capacity than a reference to his Superior, which had already been made by the present Haifang; and, in short, that as my orders were to proceed to Hinghwa to see the acting Taotai, I had only to obey them, without questioning the expediency or probable result.

Seeing that I insisted on continuing my journey, he returned with me to Hinghwa, where we arrived the same evening, and were met in the suburbs by the Che-hien, who desired me not to enter the city, upon the plea of there being no places of public accommodation within the walls. To this request I distinctly declined to accede, being well aware that so derogatory a step would not only deprive me of all access to the city, but might probably prevent my interview with the acting Taotai, upon which depended the success of my mission. I therefore insisted upon passing the gates, stating that, in the event of failing to meet with suitable accommoda-



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tion, I should demand it at the residence of one of the authorities.

This declaration induced them to conduct me at once to a commodious house within the city, in which the Haifang also located himself. I then requested that the acting Taotai would favour me with an interview, and being informed by the Che-hien that he feared he was too unwell to receive me, I stated my intention to await his recovery, expressing great regret that I should be detained from such a cause.

The following day, however, at 8 A.M., I was invited to an interview, and proceeded with the Haifang to the yamun of the acting Taotai, who received me politely. As he appeared surprised that I should have come on to Hinghwa after having met the *wei yuen* of the Viceroy, I had again to explain my former argument, viz. that the Consul did not feel at liberty to treat with the *wei yuen* alone; and informed him that as the long delay which had occurred in the settlement of the matter was in great measure due to the continued absence of two acting Taotais, I was instructed by the Consul to impress upon him the urgent necessity of his presence at Amoy, the subordinate local officers having declared their inability to act upon their own responsibility. He replied that the duties of the Prefectures had occasioned the absence both of himself and his predecessor, an excuse which, I observed, could hardly apply to the latter, as he had upon one occasion visited Amoy but took his departure on the following day without communicating with H.M. Consul.

He then informed me that he was unable to entertain the Consul's request, as he was expecting to be relieved in three or four days by the permanent Intendant, who, he was certain, would proceed at once to Amoy, and as he would arrive there on or about the 5th February, he advised me to return at once with the Haifang. I admitted the justice of his reasoning, but replied that, as I was instructed to urge the presence of

the Intendant at Amoy, I could not possibly think of returning until I was satisfied that either the acting or permanent Intendant would certainly arrive there within a specified time.

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He then desired me to discuss the point further with the Haifang and Che-hien, but I observed in reply that my mission was addressed to him only, as the chief local authority, and that I must therefore decline to treat on the subject with any subordinate officer.

I therefore determined upon awaiting the new Intendant's arrival, instead of proceeding to Foochow, which I should have done, had I not had good reason to believe that he had actually left that city, and would arrive at Hinghwa on the day mentioned by the acting Taotai.

During the four days of my sojourn at Hinghwa my time was partly occupied in receiving and paying visits from and to various local mandarins, from whom, the Che-hien in particular, I received much kind attention. My liberty was not in the least restricted, and neither within the city, nor in the country adjacent, were my movements obstructed or the slightest molestation offered me by the people.

During these four days of waiting at Hinghwa Parkes kept a diary, which contains a curious picture of his brief residence in that out-of-the-way city. The authorities were extremely civil to him. The Taotai received him with all the respect due to his mission, and attended him through the courtyard of the yamun almost to the gate where his chair was waiting. When Parkes insisted upon passing through the chief central gate, instead of the side entrance, his wish was immediately gratified. At his inn, he was constantly supplied with delicacies sent by the authorities :—

I am treated very well. A good many people come Diary into the court to look at me, but they are very quiet and orderly, and do not therefore much annoy me. Nevertheless I found the afternoon wear away dreadfully

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slowly, an occasional conversation with the Haifang, Tan Tai-yay, or some other party, serving very little to enliven it. The three more days which remain to be passed here will be perfect imprisonment, unless I can take walks of some kind. Mentioned my determination to do so to the Haifang, who said that I had already taken exercise enough (walking up and down the room) to last him for a fortnight. He complains much of being separated from his baggage; but it is only just that the Chinese authorities should participate in the inconvenience which has been occasioned by their delay, and the chief object of my journey was to cause them to do so.

The Haifang presented me a dinner consisting of two large plates of cakes, baked and steamed, and a large pan of mixed meats and vegetables,—as a fowl, duck, ham, *bêches de mer*, bamboo roots, cabbage—all very nice and exquisitely cooked. This being heated was served up to me as my meal, as I thought; but when I had almost dined heartily of it, the accustomed entrées from the Che-hien began to appear as usual, and I had to commence *de novo*. One dish of fat pork was really a work of art, it was so well cooked.

The next morning at half-past six he put his resolution of taking a walk into practice, though somewhat uncertain of the temper in which it would be taken by the people:—

Diary Seeing the city walls close by, I mounted them, and continued my walk along them, observed by only one or two persons. I was on the west side of the city, from the wall of which, running along a ridge of heights, a splendid view can be obtained of the whole plain. I was much surprised to find that I was within ten or twelve miles of the sea. The view is really beautiful, and much resembles that from the Consulate Hill at Foochow. . . . I could easily have fancied that the sea before me was the Min, as the fog obscured

all but a small strip on which, out of rivalry as it were, the sun shone brightly and changed it into a line of silver. . . . What a relief this pretty scene was to my eye, after travelling three days through arid country with brown stony mounds, aggravated by my yesterday's confinement in a low court. And the wind, though from the north, was wafted so mildly and felt so refreshing after the steamy vapour of my native tenement, I really felt happy and quite adequate to a stay of three more days at Hinghwa. . . .

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After breakfast paid a formal visit to the Che-hien, who is a good fellow, and an active magistrate I should say. He was flattered at my having noticed on my way the repairs to the military stations executed by him in his district. I thanked him very sincerely for his kind provision for my table, and had a long talk about steamers and railways. The sparse nature of our apparel evidently excites their surprise, and I certainly have very little to say in its defence. Tan Tai-yay, who is a supercilious fellow, noticed in a slight tone of irony both the paucity and quality of our clothing, but I think I had my revenge in saying that we reserved our silks and satins and flowing robes for our women, as they tended to trammel the activity of the men.

Parkes persevered in his morning rambles as long as he stayed at Hinghwa. No one took much notice, even when he rode out to the ravine above the stream which he had noticed on his first walk, though—

The road was literally crowded with people, nine-tenths Diary women, bearing to the city the produce of their mountain villages,—in the shape of timber, in thick planks and spars, bamboos, firewood in stacks, rough fuel, branches, etc., charcoal, paper, also some good vegetables, the market for which is outside the gate, and the sellers being women the clatter raised by their voices was deafening. All wonderfully civil to me, many not even stopping to notice me. The women are evidently hard worked here, the scavengers' duties

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being theirs also. As a set they are small, some of the young a clear brunette, a colour not often seen.

The hours of waiting were beguiled by many visitors, the more intelligent of whom, like the Che-hien, carried on 'an animated conversation on thermometers, barometers, steamers, navigation, characters, dialects, diurnal motion of earth, etc.,' whilst others asked for specimens of English writing, which greatly astonished them, for they were under the impression that the only written medium was the Chinese. A whole family of sons and grandsons were brought by their teacher, and behaved charmingly, and went off delighted with Parkes' calligraphy, which they prized above cakes, though they appreciated bright English shillings. Altogether the inn must have been unusually frequented during the Interpreter's visit. In the evening he would go out on the city walls to smoke his cigar and study the inhabitants. One of his questioners asked him if black men were natives of Canton whose faces had been blacked by the English to debar them from distinction.

On the fourth day the new Taotai arrived, and speedily admitted Parkes to an interview. At first he tried the usual plan of talking the young man down, but on being informed that his visitor was not deaf he became quieter in his manner. 'I told him,' writes Parkes in his diary, 'he must not be surprised if, after the many prevarications we had met with from the local authorities at Amoy, we were now chary in receiving their assurances, of which there had been no lack hitherto, though made only to be broken.' When his Excellency stated that he could not definitely settle the matters in dispute without a reference to headquarters, Parkes remarked that the customs duties 'would probably be stopped to speed a reply from the provincial authorities,' since hitherto 'everything had begun and ended with references.'

'The old man has a quaint but pleasing style about him. I thought it necessary, however, to be firm with him, and he took what I said very quietly, asking after it was



over to look at my sword. He promised to be at Amoy on 6th February, and to settle the whole matter out of hand.' Parkes got the promise drafted in a formal letter, and on receiving it shortly afterwards, duly drawn up and sealed, agreed to start for Amoy with the Haifang at daylight on the morrow.

The new Taotai kept his word, and three days after his arrival at Amoy, the vexed question was settled. It may seem a small matter, this of securing a suitable plot of land on which the English colony might build their houses, but, apart from the serious discomfort involved in the long-continued refusal of the Chinese to allow the purchase of any site by the British merchants, the episode is instructive. It shows that Parkes had thus early acquired an ascendancy over the Chinese officials. He had learnt how to deal with them, how to make himself heard, even when alone and at a distance from help and protection; and his firm persistence in carrying out this comparatively small mission is typical of his whole conduct of negotiations with the Chinese. He knew that to get your way with them you must assert yourself; to obtain concessions you must demand them confidently; and to win their respect you must impress them with your importance. His chief, Consul Sullivan, fully appreciated the manner in which he had carried out his task. In officially reporting (10th February) the satisfactory termination of the dispute to Sir George Bonham, he observed with equal candour and generosity that 'the removal of Mr Interpreter Parkes to the Canton Consulate convinced me that if I did not succeed in getting this matter adjusted before his departure, I had little hope of accomplishing it after he left,' and that consequently he had sent him to Hinghwa, 'a measure which I am glad to believe has mainly contributed to the speedy settlement of this long-agitated question.' So deep had been the impression produced by Parkes' determined bearing at Hinghwa, that when the Taotai, during the subsequent negotiations, began to grow obstinate, Mr Sullivan had

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only to threaten to send his resolute young Interpreter direct to appeal to the Viceroy himself at Foochow to produce an immediate change in the Intendant's language.

I cannot conclude this despatch [added the Consul] without the expression of my acknowledgments for the valuable assistance I have received from Mr Parkes, and I trust that your Excellency will give that gentleman every credit, not only for the ability he displayed on the occasion of his mission to Hingwa, but also for his zeal and general attainments, which have enabled me to bring the subject of this despatch to so favourable a conclusion.

The Plenipotentiary at Hongkong was pleased to express much gratification at the result. He wrote to Parkes, 'It is clearly evident that it is in a great measure due to your zeal and activity that the difficult question of a site for our merchants is likely to be brought to a satisfactory termination,' and he ordered his approval to be recorded in the archives of the Consulate in testimony to the 'judgment' displayed. Lord Malmesbury's 'satisfaction' and 'appreciation' followed in due course.

## CHAPTER IX

### CANTON

1852-1854

WHEN Harry Parkes took up the duties of Interpreter at the Consulate at Canton, he entered upon a new phase in his relations with the Chinese. Canton was the residence of the Imperial High Commissioner, who, under the Emperor, exercised the supreme control over all relations with foreigners at the five Treaty Ports. It might be expected that the necessary business connected with consular work would be conducted with special facility at the city where this high official resided, and that difficulties, such as were constantly arising from the negligence, incapacity, or fanaticism of the minor officials, Taotais, Haifangs, and the rest, at other ports, would be wholly removed by direct contact with one of the most powerful, capable, and best-informed Ministers of the Empire. The Commissioner at Canton was always a picked man, carefully chosen for his ability, and he might be supposed to be above the petty jealousies and sordid motives of the inferior officers at the northern ports. It might reasonably be predicted that our relations with so intelligent and responsible a statesman would be conducted upon those principles of equality and mutual respect which prevail in European diplomacy.

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There is nothing more fallacious than to argue Chinese matters from European premises. What seems obvious

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enough here, is wholly preposterous there, and it would be easy to draw up a portentous list of blunders committed by English representatives merely because they imagined that what was logic in Europe was also logic in China. Again and again sensible men sent out from Downing Street to manage affairs at Hongkong have predicted with every apparent probability that certain steps would be followed by certain results, and again and again they have proved wrong. The one link missing in their reasoning was a knowledge of the Chinese character, and that one unknown quantity upset all their calculations. In this way it happened that, contrary to all reasonable expectation, Canton, instead of being the accessible centre of a wise and statesmanlike policy, was the headquarters of fanaticism, arrogance, and duplicity,—the focus of the anti-foreign feeling in China. After all, it was not so difficult to understand how this came about. Our mistake—the mistake of our Foreign Office and its agents who had not had experience of China—lay in imagining that the Chinese Government was honestly desirous of carrying the Treaty of Nanking into effect. With our limited European ideas, when Russia had not yet enlightened us upon the Oriental view of State engagements, we jumped to the conclusion that treaties were made with the intention of being observed. Nothing could have been further from the Chinese view of the matter. So long as our men-of-war were menacing their coast, and our soldiers were quartered in Chusan and Koolangsoo, the obligations imposed by Treaty were grudgingly carried out. But the moment the restraint of an armed occupation was withdrawn, the Chinese returned to their old policy of pretentious arrogance and exclusiveness. Dr (afterwards Sir John) Bowring, who was in temporary charge of the Superintendancy of Trade in China during the absence of Sir George Bonham in 1852, and who possessed a fair degree of penetration (which did not, however, save him from falling into the fallacies common to inexperienced Europeans when dealing with

Celestial matters), summed up the policy of the Chinese Government during the preceding ten years with accuracy, in his despatch to Lord Clarendon of 19th April 1852 :<sup>1</sup>—

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The Pottinger Treaties [he wrote] inflicted a deep wound upon the pride, but by no means altered the policy, of the Chinese Government. They were submitted to as a hard necessity. The motive which influenced our negotiations was the removal of the barriers which prohibited intercourse with the vast Empire of China, and the establishment and gradual expansion of friendly commercial relations with its multitudinous inhabitants. We sought to enable our merchants to avail themselves of the immense resources and the extraordinary producing and consuming powers of China, and to offer in return to the people of China all the advantages of an honourable and lucrative commerce. But this object never met with the concurrence or found the co-operation of the Chinese authorities. Their purpose is now, as it ever was, not to invite, not to facilitate, but to impede and resist, the access of foreigners. This policy is impressed upon all the high officers of the Empire, associated, however, with the most stringent commands to avoid collisions with foreign nations, and to take care that the public peace shall not be disturbed. These two conditions constitute the basis of the Imperial instructions to all the functionaries of the State, as regards their relations with strangers. . . .

It must, then, ever be borne in mind, in considering the state of our relations with these regions, that the Governments of Great Britain and China have objects at heart which are diametrically opposed, except in so far that both Governments earnestly desire to avoid all hostile action, and to make its own policy, as far as possible, subordinate to that desire.

It is true, the impressions made in the campaign

<sup>1</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1857 [C. 1173], Correspondence relative to Entrance into Canton, p. 3-9.



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preceding the Treaties by the victorious arms of Great Britain have somewhat passed away, and it was not fairly to be expected that any successor to Sir Henry Pottinger should wield the same amount of influence, when the instruments and representative of that influence were removed from the field. But enough is known and felt of the power of Great Britain to warrant the belief that she may, without any risk of war, insist on the strict observance of every Treaty obligation, and that such is the safest, wisest, and, in the long run, the most pacific policy. Our hesitation, our delay, our caution, are misinterpreted and misunderstood, and often render the settlement of questions and the redress of grievances difficult, which a prompt and energetic policy would have immediately secured.

The degradation and dismissal of every mandarin of rank who was in any way connected with the Pottinger Treaties is irresistible evidence of the retroactive policy of the Court of Peking. To the 'obnoxious and perfidious counsel' given by Kiyng 'on barbarian affairs' his downfall is attributed in the Imperial Decree which announces his disgrace. Muchangah, the then Prime Minister, Hwang, Kiyng's able adviser, and a number of other high functionaries, have been dismissed because deemed favourable to foreigners; while many mandarins, distinguished only for the violence of their 'anti-barbarian' policy, have been advanced to high posts of trust and honour.

I cannot but deem it an unfortunate circumstance that Canton should have been fixed upon as the spot to which, practically, are confined all negotiations with the higher authorities of China. May not the time speedily arrive for considering whether the enormous interests at stake in China would not be greatly served by the establishment of a regular Embassy at Peking? At the present moment China contributes nearly nine million pounds sterling of revenue to the British and Indian treasuries, and our commercial relations here are

undoubtedly capable of an immense extension. They cannot be adequately protected, still less, largely increased, under the existing system of exclusion. It may be doubted if, at the present moment, Her Majesty's Government has any means of access to the Emperor's Ministers at Peking ; if any despatch whose contents are unpalatable to the Imperial Commissioner ever finds its way to the Imperial presence.<sup>1</sup>

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Canton, the centre of our relations with China, was the most rigidly exclusive of all the Treaty ports. By the Treaty of Nanking, Article II.—

The Emperor of China agrees that British subjects, with their families and establishments, shall be allowed to reside, for the purpose of carrying on their mercantile pursuits, without molestation or restraint, at the cities and towns of Canton, Amoy, Foochow-foo, Ningpo, and Shanghai ; and the Queen of Great Britain will appoint superintendants or consular officers to reside at each of the above-named cities or towns.

In all the other four ports the Consul had his residence within the city ; but at Canton neither he nor any other foreigner, not even Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary, was admitted within the gates. The foreign 'factories' were outside, on the river bank, and the European community was restricted to the very narrow limits of the garden in front of the buildings. The restriction was objectionable in many ways. It diminished our officers' chance of meeting the several mandarins within the city who enjoyed the privilege of direct correspondence with the Emperor, and thus it withheld us from that close touch with the Government which the Treaty aimed at creating. It gave the Chinese a triumphant sense of superiority to see our consuls vainly demanding to be admitted to the great southern capital. And—a minor objection—it made the lives of our countrymen extremely uncomfortable, by

<sup>1</sup> This suspicion was strikingly confirmed in 1858, when the ratified Treaties were discovered in Yeh's yamun at Canton : see below, p. 273.

1852 hampering their movements, and making a walk or a ride  
Æt. 24 next to impossible.

The Chinese authorities did not dispute our right to establish a Consul within Canton, just as we had established one at Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Shanghai ; but they tried their utmost to postpone the execution of the clause, on the ground of the inveterate hostility of the Cantonese to foreigners and the consequent danger of a riot and possibly murder. This animosity had been displayed in various ways since the war. Every year instances occurred of insults and violence offered to Europeans, including even consular officers. The foreign community lived in dread of an outbreak of fanaticism, and the merchants kept their books and papers packed in preparation for instant flight.<sup>1</sup> It was not safe to enter a Chinese boat on the river. One could not walk through the suburbs in order to reach the open country without having foul words and very probably stones cast at one. It was impossible to make a short expedition up the river, within the limit of time prescribed by the Regulations, without running the risk of assassination. A long series of unprovoked outrages, rising now and then to brutal murder, had taught the Europeans at the factories to be careful how they ventured outside, and he was accounted a daring man who risked a five-mile walk from the Consulate.

Walks round the city walls [says a resident in 1846<sup>2</sup>] and into the adjacent country, as of old, are sure to expose one to more or less of insult ; and a large share of patience or of daring—to endure or to repel all this—is necessary to secure the adventurer from harm. Foreigners have been and are still much restricted in their excursions, except on the river. . . . We know of no one instance where a foreigner has ventured a whole or even a half day's journey into the country. In their

<sup>1</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1847 [654], Report of Select Committee on Commercial Relations with China :—Evidence of Alfred Wilkinson.

<sup>2</sup> *Chinese Repository*, xv. 59 (1846).

limited walks, they are seldom or never accompanied by native gentlemen. Few if any respectable Chinese are willing to be seen abroad in company with Europeans; nor is this strange when we bear in mind the fact that wherever the foreigner goes he is sure to be assailed with offensive language—not to say sticks, stones, brickbats, and so forth.

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The city was frequently placarded with broadsides calling upon the people to resist the 'schemes of usurpation' of the 'barbarian merchants' who wished to enter the city: for 'the injuries, the deceits, the cruel deeds, the evil and wicked acts of the English resident barbarians are like the hairs of the head innumerable; . . . born and bred in noxious regions beyond the bounds of civilization, having the hearts of wolves, brutal faces, the visage of tigers, and the cunning of foxes,' they meditate the conquest of the province, etc. These were the words of the 'literati and gentry' of Canton, and faithfully expressed their sentiments. Official tablets set up on arches recorded the triumph of the Cantonese in keeping the 'barbarian' outside the gates when the right of entry had been promised and evaded in 1849. And when Dr Bowring reported all this in 1852, and stated emphatically that the entrance into Canton was the main point—the key that would unlock most of our difficulties with China,—he was sententiously rebuked by that most sapient of Foreign Secretaries, the Earl of Malmesbury, whose appointment to his responsible office was said to be one of Mr Disraeli's practical jokes. It is only fair to add that Lord Malmesbury was not much feebler in his Chinese policy than several other Foreign Secretaries, both before and after him. The question of the entrance into Canton had been pressed and dropped repeatedly during the ten years which had passed since the first China war, with the natural result that the Chinese had come to the conclusion that we could not enforce our right, and had grown yearly more insolent and unyielding by virtue of success.

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Such then was the position of affairs when Harry Parkes joined the Canton Consulate :—a people hostile and contemptuous to a point never experienced at the other ports ; a high official who disdained to receive the Consul, and with whom, securely shut up within the city walls, our representatives were obliged to communicate by written messages ; a city inaccessible to foreigners ; a country-side where it was not considered safe to walk ; a society limited to the merchant community of the factories and a few missionaries. It was not an enjoyable state of things, or flattering to his national pride, and one is not surprised that he found it dull. Writing whilst on one of his visits to Hongkong he says :—

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
March 29  
1852

I am trying to wear Canton life into shape, but it ill accords with what I have been accustomed to in the North. Two circumstances—viz. the long summers and the confinement we are subjected to—will always make a residence there appear irksome and wearisome. Still, all things considered, it will, I anticipate, prove a better station for me than Amoy, and although disappointed in not obtaining the best appointment, Shanghai, I have got the next best, and therefore should not grumble. At Canton one is almost obliged to take to aquatic exercises, as most of those generally followed on land are denied to us ; and although until my arrival there I never set foot in a wherry, I now go out regularly every evening, weather permitting, in order to acquire, under the tutorage of a China boy, such necessary skill and knowledge as shall qualify me for forming one of a crew with other of my companions.

A letter to his friend Mr. J. C. Patteson, of Feniton Court, Honiton, gives an admirable picture of the conditions of life at Canton in 1852 :—

Canton  
Oct. 27  
1852

. . . I have had rather a busy time of it lately owing to the temporary illness of my chief. . . Dr Bowring, whose European reputation you are probably acquainted with, is our Consul, but since April last has been acting



at Hongkong as Minister Plenipotentiary in the room of Sir George Bonham, who is at home on eight months' leave. Our Vice-Consul has therefore officiated as Consul, and he it is who has lately been indisposed. During his sickness and absence, consular authority devolves upon your humble servant, and thus the number of our establishment is reduced from five to three. The position I hold however for only a brief space is by no means a subject of pleasure to me, as the complication of duties I have to attend to—some of them of an annoying and responsible nature—will only take up all my time and interfere with my other pursuits, until I again sink back to my old post of Interpreter, which will be the case in a couple of months when Consul and Vice-Consul will both have returned.

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This, though one of the two chief ports, is by no means the pleasantest residence. Under the old system, that is to say previous to the war, when British subjects in China were entirely under the thumb of the Chinese authorities, they were subjected to many vexations and restrictions which contributed in no small measure to the misunderstanding which followed and the subsequent declaration of hostilities. You would think that when we dictated our own Peace in 1842, one of the first things we should have done, would have been to have removed these annoyances; but by a very questionable policy we omitted to do this and have suffered material inconvenience in consequence. When the Treaty was being negotiated we consented to deny ourselves all access to the interior of China, and merely stipulated for the opening of four new ports with liberty to travel a day's journey (which in China does not exceed thirty miles) in their immediate vicinity for purposes of exercise and recreation. This and various other privileges are all obtainable at the new ports, but are denied us at Canton—this denial constituting in fact a serious infraction of our Treaty rights, which the British Government however very

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quietly submit to. Aware however of their own physical inability to enforce the denial of our privileges, the Chinese Government have done all in their power, as far as they could do so quietly and unobserved, to inflame the *people* of Canton against us, and thus therefore, although we have a perfect right to take jaunts into the country and breathe fresh air away from this crowded city, few attempt to avail themselves of it on account of the risk they incur by so doing; for it is no uncommon thing here to be attacked, stoned, or fired at by villagers; nay even in the very streets of the suburbs (within the city we are not admitted) we are apt to be abused or even spit upon—in fact treated exactly in the same way as Franks, in the last century, were at Constantinople—the term ‘foreign devil’ taking place of ‘dog of a Christian’ as a general mode of abuse.

All the foreigners here live entirely apart from the people in several contiguous blocks of buildings called ‘the factories,’ not *manufactories*, but a preservation of the old name for the residence of ‘factors’ or merchants. These buildings are erected on the side of the river on which this city is situated, and between them and the water is an oblong square or garden, the circumference of which comprises exactly one mile, which forms the chief spot where the foreign community, numbering altogether upwards of two hundred individuals, take air and exercise. The open country is only approachable by way of the dense suburb, the streets of which are at all times disagreeable to traverse, and therefore few attempt the passage: the river therefore affords to the younger and the major portion of the community the principal means of exercise and recreation, and to this reason must be ascribed the really excellent show which we possess of boats of all descriptions, from the single-pair wherry to the six-oared cutter or gig. You who have often rowed on the Isis will no doubt appreciate our imitation of this fine amusement on the *Chu Kiang* or *Pearl River* as this

stream is called—stream it is hardly fair to call it, for in the neighbourhood of Canton, fully forty miles from the sea, it is still a large expanse of water about five or six hundred yards in width. We get up very fair regattas, and one is on the point of coming off.

Life however is very monotonous here. I will give you a day of mine own as a specimen, which I take to be a fair specimen of that of most of the residents, allowing merely for the different nature of our occupations. I rise at daylight, say six o'clock, pound round 'the garden' for an hour. Come in, dress, and have a couple of hours with an old fusty mal-odorous teacher (Chinese), who strives hard to make me believe that Confucius (B.C. 600) was, and is at present (as he still lives in his works), the ruling genius of the world, and this dogma he continues to maintain despite an occasional reference on my part to one of our high-pressure river steamers (plying between this and Hong-kong—one hundred miles hence), which by its shrill whistle and belching forth of steam seems, it appears to me, to furnish a tangible contradiction to the *Sien-Sang's* argument. Having composed my muddled brains by breakfast, I descend to my office at ten, where I remain until four or five in the afternoon, occupied with a strange *mélange* of hieroglyphics and ships' manifests, Chinese and English vernaculars, and various matters at once political, commercial, and judicial—nothing however very intellectual or beneficial to one's understanding, but on the contrary so insipid that nothing short of a good pull on the river (which always follows) is sufficient to counteract their stagnant influences. Dinner at seven, and, if without any company, I have then a quiet evening, in which I am at liberty to have a little pleasant reading, or to take a peep by means of newspapers, etc., at what is doing in the busy Western World I have lately quitted. Our mode of life might be varied a little, if our community were of a more mixed description, but

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it is entirely composed of one class—merchants, and consequently the prevailing themes of conversation are mainly limited to the staples of their trade. English cloths and woollens are pitted against Chinese teas and silks, enlivened now and then with a dash of the sporting (or boating) topics of the place, which are still however redolent of 'the shop' from the names given to the boats, such as *Pekoe*, *Caper*, *Gunpowder*, etc. Now you can fancy how dull such subjects must be to a man who has little or no interest in the articles in question, and who has only to draw a fixed amount of salary (minus Income Tax and Superannuation Fund) on each quarter day. The officers of the vessels of war which we generally have lying in the port, two or three very secluded missionaries, and our own chaplain, are the only variations that our society admits of. By the way, as I think I referred in my last to the reverend gentleman who has hitherto been conducting the duties of chaplain, I will here mention the arrival of the party who has been appointed to fill the office from home, and whose ministry—judging from the only sermon he has yet preached—will I trust be a real blessing to the community. His doctrine, I am glad to observe, is deeply evangelical; he is young, and of very prepossessing manner and appearance. He has not been here a week, and I have been too busy to call upon him, so cannot tell you at which university he matriculated; his name is Gray.<sup>1</sup>

Now this is a barren tedious letter—but though doubtless in great measure, still the fault is not entirely mine, and I have already warned you that dulness will be an inevitable characteristic of my correspondence. I know however that with you the *will* will pass for the *deed*. Not an atom of matter have I to tell you that could be received by you as news, except I mention a single occurrence which ten days ago caused considerable

<sup>1</sup> The well-known Archdeacon J. H. Gray, author of an excellent work on China.

excitement among our small community. Four gentlemen—one of the Consulate—had started in a native boat on a shooting excursion to the mouth of the river. Their sport over, they had returned at dark to their boat to dine, and had just concluded their meal when a cry of 'Ladrones' was suddenly raised, and they rushed up out of their cabin only to see these desperadoes pouring in over the stern and sides, and already in possession of the greater part of the boat. They had their guns in their hands and poured in such a murderous fire upon their assailants, who almost touched the very muzzles of their pieces, that they fell back, only however to return their fire with a description of hand grenades very extensively used by the Chinese, which not only explode and burn everything they touch, but nearly suffocate with the noisome odour they emit. Three several times they rallied and charged (in the space of fifteen feet), only however to be again mowed down, and finally they sheered off with a loss as far as could be computed of seven or eight killed and some nine or ten wounded. . . . Fancy an attack of this kind occurring on a pitch-dark night—what a scene it must have been—our four friends fighting for dear life, the flash of their double barrels, the gleam of the fireballs, the groans and shrieks of the wounded, and the horrible yells of the pirates. Finally they sheered off, threatening however to return immediately with a larger force. The party however had fortunately taken with them two small punts, and quitting their larger boat they pulled away in these for the foreign anchorage distant twenty miles, which they reached in safety. Their coolness and unity, under Providence, saved them. They had an excellent position under cover of the cabin, which in these boats is raised about five feet above the deck, and occupies fully two-thirds of the boat's length. The pirates boarded over the cabin, and were therefore completely exposed, whilst the party were behind an excellent breastwork.

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Such attacks had been rare of late, for Canton had been abnormally quiet. Besides, these piratical affairs were always likely to occur when the Government of a country showed itself incapable of watching its own coasts, and could hardly be put down to the ill-will of the Cantonese themselves. The general tranquillity of the city encouraged Parkes to indulge his love of exercise in walks which would have been exceedingly risky a year or two before, and he even ventured to arrange a picnic for ladies at a monastery some miles out of Canton. It is true the sober merchants of the factories regarded these excursions with reprobation, and put them down to the wild humour of Christmastide: but that they should have been accomplished at all shows that the popular feeling against 'barbarians' had become less overtly hostile, or else that Parkes carried a special influence about with him. There was probably something of both, and there is no doubt that the hostility of the populace was made the most of for political ends by the mandarins.

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
Dec. 27  
1852

At Canton we have really been quite gay. Our only public amusement—a regatta—came off ten days ago, and as it attracted many visitors from Hongkong, both ladies and gentlemen, we had one or two very pleasant evening parties, graced by about eighteen ladies—a sight, I assure you, for Canton, which during a large portion of the year cannot boast a single petticoat! I also have enjoyed myself very much in another way—*walking*—a very ordinary mode of doing so, you will perhaps observe. Not so, I assure you, in Canton, where the square or garden (535 yards round) forms the precincts within which the perambulations of the foreign community are confined. It is unsafe, say they, to go beyond it. Well, I have proved it to be otherwise. Our weather is beautifully clear and cool, something like the October weather of Shanghai, rather less cold in the evenings, but still cool enough to enable you to enjoy walking until about nine o'clock. In such weather it is impossible to trudge backwards and

forwards on the hard pavement of the garden, and on some four or five occasions I have walked away into the country for four or five miles, met with pretty walks and a good reception on the part of the people—that is, good so far that I have not been ill-treated. . . . One of the walks is round the city walls, the circumference of which is about seven miles. A third of the distance is through pretty country, the rest through crowded streets, some of them of a vile description. You are fairly repaid, however, for the risk you run of being poisoned in them, by the beautiful view you have from the heights behind the city, from whence, if fine, you can see ten or fifteen miles in every direction. Beyond these heights and four or five miles from the city rise other hills nearly 2000 feet high. On one side they are prettily wooded, and the monks with the usual good taste of their order for the picturesque have selected this spot for a monastery. . . .

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Well, to these hills I undertook and accomplished a *ladies' picnic*, and had for my guests five ladies, nine gentlemen, and two children (the latter I did not bargain for). It was a very discreet party. The ladies were all of them missionary ladies, attended, with the exception of one, by their husbands. The other gentlemen were also nearly as staid and sober-minded as the latter. . . . Well, we got to the monastery by ten, had an excellent breakfast and lunch, and leaving again at three, reached home by dark, well pleased and well received. The undertaking and the execution of it are regarded as wonders, and I delight in speaking to our fastidious factory ladies of the surpassing beauties of the spot. . . .

These were exceptional excitements. As a rule the months passed very drearily at Canton, and it was a great relief to get away now and then from the 'cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd' factories to the placid old-world life and unrestricted freedom of Macao:—

I was delighted to have a run the other day from this monotonous place. I spent a week at Macao, where

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
July 22  
1852

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Medhurst met me; and as it was his first visit since we went North, we visited together old places and old scenes, and both enjoyed ourselves. I am always glad to go to Macao. The stillness that remains there, although it denotes decay, is very pleasant, and incites the memory to recall old associations. . . . Poor old Chinnery<sup>1</sup> is gone at last, the oldest resident in China, I believe; he and Macao were inseparables. His pictures are to be sold in a day or two.

Hongkong he never cared for, since Pottinger had left. He did not appreciate the solemn festivities of Government House, or the dances of the colony—partly because he was a very indifferent dancer himself: nor did he fall down and worship their latest idol, freemasonry. ‘I don’t think there is any harm in masonry, but at the same time I don’t conceive there is much good—or rather that Christianity renders all its tenets and practice superfluous. It seems to me to be the shadow, and religion the substance—an attempt on the part of poor mortal man to make the world better; and although the idea is in a measure laudable, any such system can work but little good (and none but what our own religion can do more effectively) on account of its sandy foundation.’

It is time, however, to turn from his mild frivolities to his work. In 1852 the attention of Government had been directed to coolie emigration to the West Indies, and the authorities on the spot were required to supply information on the subject. Among other reports, Dr Bowring considered that the views of Mr Interpreter Parkes, whose ‘knowledge of the Chinese people is very considerable,’ were sufficiently important to be communicated to Ministers. Parkes’ Report on Emigration, which occupies five pages of the blue book of 1853,<sup>2</sup> contains

<sup>1</sup> George Chinnery, the well-known portrait and landscape painter, who had exhibited as early as 1766. Two oil paintings of his representing Macao are at Knowsley (see *Dict. Nat. Biogr.*, s.v.).

<sup>2</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1853 [263], Correspondence with the Superintendent of British Trade in China upon the subject of Emigration from that Country, p. 23-28.

some interesting remarks on the causes and characteristics of coolie emigration :—

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Emigration from this province, Kwang Tung [he writes],<sup>Report</sup> and the adjoining one of Fuh Kien, dates from a very early period, and it is these two provinces alone that have sent forth the myriads which have reclaimed the islands of Formosa and Hainan ; introduced industry and various of the most useful arts into the countries of Cochin China, Camboja, and Siam ; settled many of the islands of the Indian Archipelago, and contributed more than any other race to the rise and prosperity of the European settlements in Java, the Philippines, and the Malayan Peninsula. Various circumstances, the most obvious of which are the redundant population and the poverty of the districts from whence this emigration has chiefly proceeded, have contributed to this result. . . . It is [also partly] to be accounted for by the different character of the southern Chinese to that of their countrymen of the centre and north. The restless and refractory disposition inherited by the former, and so condemned by the Chinese of the other provinces, is coupled with a spirit of enterprise which the latter do not possess, and hence their eagerness to avail themselves of the field for speculation and remunerative labour which the luxuriant but thinly-peopled countries of the Archipelago afford them. . . .

The absorbing aim of the Chinese emigrant is to better his condition. Of this object he never loses sight ; and as he often continues to retain it, even after he has gained the competency for which he first commenced to strive, it frequently happens that he finally adopts as his permanent home the locality in which he has reaped his profits, if adapted by climate and the presence of other of his countrymen to his native habits and mode of life. Unlike the negro, who works and denies himself for a time, with a view only to gain the means of maintaining himself for a corresponding interval in ease and idleness, the labour of the Chinese

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knows no cessation, and his savings are formed into a stock, which he is always endeavouring to increase, but never to exhaust. Different again from the coolie of Hindustan, the Chinese is ignorant of the blighting effects of caste, and is as strongly bent on raising himself to a higher position as he is on acquiring wealth. Instead however of their laboriousness being attended with servility, the feeling of independence enters strongly into the character of the lower orders of the Chinese, and is particularly noticeable in that of the agriculturists, who, from the estimation in which their calling is held at home, and the native system of tenure which divides the land into small holdings, are often led to consider themselves in their own country as on an equality with the proprietor of the soil they till, and in no way beholden to him for furnishing them employment, from which he derives equal or more benefit than themselves.

The report gives statistics of the average pay of a Chinese hired labourer in his own country. If hired by the year, the labourer gets three meals of rice and a ration of wine a day, and at the end of the year is paid for his work in kind—generally receiving from ten to twenty dollars' worth of grain or rice unhusked, which gives an average rate of pay of  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 3d. a day. Potatoes or garden produce are added as a bonus. At harvest time, he says, labourers may earn even the magnificent sum of 8d. a day without food.

The laws of China permitted emigration, with a due passport, but there was a stringent prohibition annexed to the permission: the Chinese emigrant was not allowed to take his family with him. The reason of this was—the strong repugnance of the Chinese to remove their families, not only to foreign regions, but even to different places in their own country. Women, in Chinese opinion, ought never to quit their homes, and even men are not wholly free from the bias entertained against wandering. Necessity in the case of the latter



has overcome prejudice ; but whilst they have emigrated by millions, women of respectable character are nowhere to be met with, not even in Siam or Cochin China, where the tastes and habits of the people are in many respects akin to and are influenced by those of the Chinese. Although when abroad they may live with native women, they never regard them as their legal wives ; but their objections do not extend to the daughters born to their countrymen by their concubines, with whom they freely intermarry.

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The report ends with various recommendations as to contracts, supervision during passage, and general treatment of emigrants, of which the last sentence may be quoted : ‘Although the Chinese will submit to and require a strict system of control, they become impatient under vexatious and unnecessary restrictions ; being accustomed in their own country to a system of government which interferes little with the mass, however arbitrarily and unjustly it may deal with individuals.’

Reading these remarks, one wishes that Parkes’ intimate knowledge of the Chinese had found more complete expression, and that he had written a book about the people amongst whom he spent so many years. But he never had time for literary work, and the process of composition was always irksome to him. ‘Oh that I had the pen of a ready writer,’ he exclaimed, ‘what a deal more work I might do, and with so much more ease to myself.’ Yet there was no one in the Chinese consular service whose reports were more highly commended at Downing Street. Referring to his report on the Russian caravan trade with China (written in September 1853),<sup>1</sup> Lord Clarendon wrote that it was ‘a most able and interesting paper ; and it showed great industry in procuring the sort of information that Her Majesty’s Government were most desirous to possess.’ The Foreign Secretary particularly selected for approval Parkes’ report of

<sup>1</sup> It was published in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, xxiv. (1854).

1853  
Æt. 25 Canton trade for 1852 as characterized by 'care and ability.'

In the spring of 1853 more responsible duties fell to his lot. Dr Bowring, who had surrendered his Plenipotentiariship in February on the return of Sir George Bonham to Hongkong, was once more Consul at Canton, but being unwell, and possibly a little disappointed at having to go down a long step, he went away for a holiday. The Vice-Consul Adam Elmslie, Parkes' companion up the Yang-tsze in 1842, 'who had no taste for Vice-Consul's duties,' made up his mind to go on long leave to England and get married. In the absence of both his superior officers, the Interpreter again became head of the Consulate, and combined the duties of all three, with only a single assistant to help him, and not always even that. He gained very little in point of salary by this combination, not more indeed than would pay his additional expenses, since as acting Consul he would be expected to entertain the local society: but he was keenly alive to the importance of his added responsibility, and foresaw (as he told his sister) that, 'if I acquitted myself creditably, I should gain something in point of character which might be of advantage to me hereafter.' At this time he entered upon his twenty-sixth year, and resolved to open it with a study of Foster's treatise on *Decision of Character*, 'the point in which I am miserably weak and deficient'—a self-judgment of which his whole career is one long refutation. He felt very deeply the want of a wise friend's advice and guidance:—

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
Feb. 22  
1853

I often wish that I could meet in this part of the world with a friend possessing superior intellect, . . . one whose advice and information would induce me to be diligent in the pursuit of knowledge and careful to form my own character and mind. But here I know none of this stamp, and dinners being very fashionable at this time of the year, and having no quiet sister's house to retire to as at Shanghai, my evenings are often

spent in what I cannot but feel to be a very unprofitable manner. I must make some firm resolve with regard to my reading, and eschew these dinners, or else I shall shortly begin to deteriorate : improvement, I fear, has already ceased.

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He began his duties as temporary Consul in March:— I am now in charge here [he told Mrs Lockhart], as Dr Bowring has gone away on three months' leave of absence ; but with only one assistant, and with an establishment of five reduced to two, we have our hands full. In my new capacity I shall have the honour of marrying the first English couple that [will] have been married in Canton. I must introduce you to the parties : Miss Augusta Fischer and Mr John Williams, tea-taster in Messrs Jardine Matheson & Co. The engagement took place a fortnight ago, and I think they will be married in two or three weeks. Courtings and weddings have hitherto been entirely unknown here, although a belle has been resident here upwards of two years. This may be in consequence of the inconvenient nature of the place. Everything here is so very public, and we are so very close together, with doors and windows opening into each other's houses, that the necessary retirement is not obtainable. If you wish to make love, there is positively no place to do it in. You can never meet a young lady alone at home, and if you walk with her in the garden it must be in the face of 275 witnesses, the number of the whole community. How Williams therefore managed the business I can't conceive. . . . It is quite refreshing to find that courting is not only known in the world, but also goes on at Canton.

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
March 10  
1853

I have been doing the judge somewhat during the past week, and had to hear a case in which lawyers for the first time were admitted into a consular court. A barrister and attorney trooped up from Hongkong to conduct proceedings on behalf of their clients, and although I assumed a bold front, inwardly I felt exceedingly small.

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
Oct. 9  
1853

1853  
ÆT. 25  
To Mrs  
Lockhart  
Nov. 10  
1853

I would have written you a respectable letter by this mail, had it not been for the old American Commodore Perry, who has visited Canton, and is slowly eating his way through a phalanx of dinners, one of which it fell to my lot to give yesterday, twelve persons at table. . . . If there is anything I cordially detest it is having to give a 'tall feed,' as my United States friends term it. I strive very hard to dine nine days out of ten by myself off a chop or steak, the deglutition of which occupies from ten to fifteen minutes. My servants quite approve of this habit of body, and are therefore as much put out as their master when occasion requires any gastronomic display. A dinner then gives me as much trouble as it does to old ladies at home; but I try to dodge the infliction by taking to my office at an earlier hour than usual, within which I forbid my servants to enter; not hesitating, however, with a most flagrant violation of justice, to hold them responsible for every thing that goes wrong.

There were more critical subjects for consular activity in 1853 than marrying, or dining, or even sitting in the seat of judgment. The all-absorbing topic of conversation from March onwards was the attitude to be observed towards no less important an object than—the French Flagstaff. Wars frequently arise from microscopic causes. A flip with a fan led to the French conquest of Algiers; an American flagstaff, suspected of causing a plague, produced a riot at Canton in 1844; and the erection of a pole in the factory garden in 1853 nearly induced international complications with our sensitive neighbours. What Lord Stratford used to call, rather disdainfully, 'French feelings of honour' were grievously lacerated by the rough and ready pugnacity of some of the younger merchants, and it needed all the young Consul's diplomatic skill to prevent an open rupture. He refers briefly to the matter in March:—

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
March 26  
1853

I have great trouble to prevent my countrymen falling out with the French, who fearing opposition landed sixty

men from a man-of-war to put up a flagstaff here. I prevented bloodshed certainly, but the *inkshed* which will follow and in which I am somewhat involved is dreadful. It was several months before the difficulty was sufficiently tided over for him to be able to give a detailed account of it :—

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I am just now breathing after three or four months of great worry, out of which, however, I have I believe escaped scatheless. When the French flagstaff affair came up, considerable responsibility devolved upon me in consequence of the absence of Sir George Bonham in the North, leaving me alone in my glory, without a soul to refer to for instruction or advice, and from the circumstance of there being no other authority on the spot (for the Government at Hongkong could take no cognizance of anything happening at the ports) I had to assume a grave deportment and try to play the *diplomate* with a French Minister, a French Commodore, and half a dozen Consuls. . . . The French Minister, M. de Bourboulon, took it into his head to hoist a flagstaff in the garden in front of the factories, which the community conceived belonged to them and he maintained belonged to nobody. When about to erect it, the community interfered, thereupon M. de B. immediately landed a force of marines and accomplished the work by force. When these had retired some unknown parties cut on several occasions the rigging of the flagstaff: the marines therefore returned to protect it and armed sentries were placed in the garden. These sentries one fine night seized and carried off two English gentlemen who were walking in the garden. I hearing of the affair claimed their delivery into my charge, but the French officers refused to give them up and took them away as prisoners to the French man-of-war lying fourteen miles away. As soon as circumstances would admit I started after them, but when I reached the frigate they had been released. I however had to require an apology for the affront offered to *my*

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
July 6  
1853



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(!!!) *consular authority* in not delivering to me *my* subjects when I claimed them, and an examination into the causes of the arrest. The first was the most important point, and Commodore Roquenaurel, not liking it at all, hummed and hawed and twisted his moustache and took so long to consider about it that I had to write him a twister in the shape of a letter, which produced a tolerably satisfactory explanation from him and a very ample one from M. de Bourboulon. The examination then proceeded, and though from want of evidence and witnesses and great contradictions some points cannot be cleared up, the truth I think is that the young men did slightly misbehave themselves, and the sentries acted somewhat hastily. Be this as it may, however, the French made a great mistake that any amount of misbehaviour on the part of the young men will not extenuate—that of carrying off the latter as prisoners in violation of all international law, instead of handing them over to me for trial. If they had done wrong it was I only who could punish them, and not the Frenchmen. You may fancy what excitement all this occasioned in a secluded community like this. At one time I greatly dreaded that the matter would lead to much trouble, as several foolish young men paraded the garden with pistols in their pockets; but, thank God—I speak reverentially—the cloud blew over, and I prevailed on the Commodore to remove the obnoxious guard from Canton. Sir George when he returned from the North would do nothing in the matter—indeed there was little for him to do—[more] than approve of what I had done, and refer the whole affair [to the Foreign Office], where it will die a natural death, for Ministers have enough on their hands to attend to without coining international trouble out of an affair like this which sprang from a very paltry origin. Both Bourboulon and the community have committed faults, both have deeply affronted each other, and the best they can do is to pocket what is past.

Parkes had played a difficult game with considerable skill. He had to maintain the dignity of his nation and his office in face of an unwarranted infraction of both by the French, and he had to do this without committing himself on the crucial point of the right to erect or to pull down a flagstaff. He had managed to keep his own countrymen in order (which cannot be said of some other Consuls at the time) whilst he was imperilling his influence with them by maintaining courteous relations with the very Frenchmen who in the eyes of the community had committed an outrage. He steered his way among all these rocks and shoals with consummate firmness, prudence, and tact, and not only retained the confidence of the community, by whom he was greatly valued and respected, but in the end received Lord Clarendon's warm approbation of the 'proper firmness and moderation' he had displayed throughout this irritating dispute. He saved the country a troublesome quarrel, and he did it wholly 'off his own bat': Sir George Bonham had taken no part in the business.

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The Foreign Office did not forget this service, and Parkes had very soon good reason to be glad that he had won friends in Downing Street. In spite of his admirable conduct of the flagstaff squabble, a singularly clumsy affront was put upon him. A shifting of posts took place, and Mr Brooke Robertson, whom we have already met on the *Espiègle* at Nanking, was promoted from the Vice-Consulship of Shanghai to be acting Consul at Canton—an exceedingly 'proper appointment,' as Parkes himself cordially agreed. It remained to appoint an acting Vice-Consul, during Elmslie's continued absence, and it will hardly be credited that Sir George Bonham passed over the Interpreter who had been doing nearly the whole work of the Consulate for several months, and promoted to the post the obscure assistant who had been under the Interpreter's orders. Parkes naturally demanded an explanation, and asked whether he had failed in his duty in any way. Bonham protested that he 'entertained very

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high opinions of Mr Parkes,' and assured him of the 'entire satisfaction' which his proceedings had afforded him during the whole period of his Consular work at Canton, 'and especially so in the management of that very delicate subject, the erection of the French flagstaff.' But he considered that the assistant deserved a rise in salary, whilst Parkes was well paid, and he would have promoted the former before, but for the difficulty that the assistant, as Vice-Consul, would have had to take charge of the Consulate, which Sir George admitted he was far less competent to do than Parkes. Now, however, the Consul was there, and the promotion would not carry with it any dangerous responsibilities; so the assistant might properly go up. There was something more than a personal slight in this: the official tendency of that time was against the promotion of Interpreters. In the interests of his rank in the service as much as for his personal advancement Parkes requested Sir George Bonham to forward a protest to the Foreign Office; and then assumed his inferior place with philosophic composure. As a matter of fact it made little difference to him, except in name; for he still did most of the work, whoever might be Consul or Vice-Consul.

He had not long sat under his former assistant when an amusing *contretemps* occurred. Mr Robertson had to be absent for a time, and some one must act as Consul. Sir George Bonham could not risk unknown dangers by placing the Consulate in the charge of an untried man, whilst the very officer was there who had carried it through a difficult period with credit and distinction; so he once more put Parkes in charge, and the extraordinary spectacle was seen of an Interpreter acting as Consul over the head of the Vice-Consul. The anomaly was soon set right, however. The Foreign Office had not forgotten their 'zealous and meritorious officer,' and a tolerably sharp despatch arrived from Lord Clarendon, reversing Sir George's promotion of the assistant, which the Minister entirely disapproved, and appoint-

ing Parkes to act as Consul until the return of the real holder of the office in the autumn, when he was to act as Vice-Consul. The 'Battle of the Interpreters,' as it was called in China, had been fought and won, to the great satisfaction of his colleagues in the service. The misunderstanding with Bonham was of little importance, especially as the Chief Superintendent was about to resign his post; but the reversal of his appointment by the Foreign Office is of some interest, since it shows how fully Parkes' work and character were appreciated at headquarters. To a young man who possessed no influence, in family or friends, to grease the wheels of his progress, such appreciation was priceless. A few months later it took the tangible form of his appointment to be full (not merely acting) Consul at Amoy, *'as a special mark of the satisfaction with which Her Majesty's Government have watched your conduct in the public service.'*

1853  
ÆT. 25

With the exception of the dispute with the French, matters continued very quiet at Canton during 1852 and 1853. The chief subject of anxiety was the progress of the Tai Ping rebellion. In March 1853 Parkes wrote that the rebels were at Nanking and the Chinese Government was in danger; and in September he had to record the fall of Shanghai:—

This mail conveys to you the startling news of the capture of Shanghai by a band of Canton and Fuh Kien men—the denizens of that Fuh Kien quarter which you will well remember—a regular set of reprobates and cut-throats, I believe. The circumstances attending its capture are very analogous to those of Amoy, but I sincerely trust that the scenes of bloodshed so common in the latter port will not be re-enacted at Shanghai. Indeed in such cases as these I fancy Foreign Governments will almost be obliged to interfere, both in the cause of humanity and to protect their own people. Look at Amoy, where human heads form the certificates that entitle the combatants on either side to claim rewards for their prowess: at least, I believe that now

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
Canton  
Sept. 26  
1853

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Æt. 25

*ears* are substituted in their place, as presenting a less accumulation of foul matter and being more portable. Surely such enormities are not to be borne with. It is one thing not to interfere in political struggles: it is another to countenance inhuman cruelties. The insurgents both at Amoy and Shanghai have no connexion with Tai Ping Wang and the main body, except such as they choose to claim. The same disorganization is doubtless experienced in many places unknown to foreigners, so that unless Tai Ping Wang is quick in his movements and is able to form a much stronger Government than that which he destroys (which I incline to doubt) there is little but anarchy and confusion in prospect. Our turn at Canton will probably come next, but a rising here is by no means a necessary consequence of the fall of Amoy and Shanghai, nor will it be conducted in the same manner. Here we have a Tartar garrison of between 3000 and 4000 men, who, although the Chinese troops may flee, will of course fight for their lives. In their case it will either be a frightful massacre laid by surprise, or else war to the knife.

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
Nov. 25  
1853

The longer this rebellion goes on the more serious the fighting becomes—a natural consequence among all people, but particularly so with the Chinese, who are at first as frightened as children at the sight of blood, and then revel in it. Amoy was retaken on the 11th by the Imperialists; the rebels were obliged to evacuate the place for want of provisions, in proof of which I was going to add they had eaten all their horses, but this does not betoken any intense distress in a Chinese stomach. Their plan was to retreat to their junks, but a fresh breeze and want of boats prevented their carrying out their plans, and they were overtaken by the Imperialists at the water's edge and were there massacred in a frightful manner—not merely killed outright, but cut and hacked about, stuck, prodded, sliced, etc., just in the way they paint native fiends



occupied with the damned in hell. The captains of our two men-of-war interfered from motives of humanity and checked this horrible carnage. I should not be surprised if the same scenes are not shortly seen at Shanghai.

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ÆT. 26

Parkes prepared a report on the Tai Ping rebellion for the Foreign Office, with a map showing the positions held by the rebels: but he could not foresee that ten years would pass before the insurrection would be suppressed by an English officer, and that he himself would be co-operating with 'Chinese Gordon' in the final stage of the war.

Towards the close of his first residence at Canton he was more than once attacked with fever and inflammation of the liver, and the great kindness he received from many friends drew him closer to the society which he had formerly found so cold. His chief friends were in the houses of the missionaries and in the family of Mr Gideon Nye, an American merchant who had ideas. A visit to Macao somewhat restored his health, but another spell of hard work during his chief's absence had pulled him down again, when in April he received the welcome news of his appointment as Consul at Amoy. The change to the North might be expected to do him good, and the promotion was a gratifying recognition of his two years of severe and responsible service at Canton. The British residents, who had learnt to appreciate him thoroughly, were very sorry to lose him, though they joined in cordial congratulations on his promotion. He went away just before the rebels began to attack the city,—rather to his regret, no doubt, for he delighted to be wherever matters were stirring,—and arrived at Amoy on 14th May 1854.

His stay there was brief, for he was summoned South at the beginning of 1855, and there are but few letters preserved of this period; but it is clear that he was warmly welcomed by the community, who were proud to have him as their Consul, and greatly regretted his

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ÆT. 26

departure. Amoy seems to have been much the same quiet secluded spot he had found it in his first residence there in 1844, though the trade of the port had improved.

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
Amoy  
Oct. 18  
1854

During the summer [he told his sister] our harbour is full of shipping, by which I mean you will find twenty or more vessels here, most of them engaged in a local trade of minor importance, but at the same time bringing crews who give trouble wherever they go. Petty offences are of course easily managed, but I have lately had in my gaol eight men, three of them charged with the murder of a Chinese, and five more with the attempt to drown another, and these being grave crimes, involving in the former case committal of the parties for trial before the Supreme Court of Hongkong, I have had some little trouble and anxiety. . . . In other respects I remain particularly quiet, waiting for the hot evenings to terminate before I give much time to visiting.

The isolation of Amoy during the N.-E. monsoon was petrifying. No news came in or went out with regularity, the monthly P. and O. steamer passed without calling, and all communications by sea were frequently closed. 'Letters that I send to Shanghai are brought back to me four or five weeks after date because vessels cannot make the passage. Letters from Hongkong reach me about the same time after date and tell us of movements of plenipotentiaries and other people already nearly as ancient as the intelligence that comes out from home. Sir John Bowring and the French and American Ministers are all gone up to Shanghai, bent, it is given out, upon some expedition to Peking;<sup>1</sup> but although one would wish to watch intently any step of this kind, the echo of their doings will reverberate here with little more strength or speed than those of the Baltic Fleet'—the only reference, by the way, in Parkes' letters to the Russian war, and a curious testimony to the isolation of his post.

<sup>1</sup> An abortive attempt to open direct communications with the Central Government.

‘I wish them success,’ he continues, ‘most certainly, and that I were there to see; but Sir John’s activity is somewhat akin to flightiness; he attempts too much, and consequently does too little.’

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This irregularity of communication [he adds in a subsequent letter] is the chief nuisance of this out-of-the-way place. If the steamer called in once a month it would contribute an altered air to the place and make it on the whole a desirable residence. Here we see no visitors, no strange faces or flying calls from old acquaintances to ‘tell us how goeth the world below.’ I need not follow the song further, and add ‘And whether the sou’ west wind doth blow,’ for of the presence of that or of its rival the north-east we have always very tangible demonstration. . . . Fancy the news that Alexander Selkirk could have communicated to the other world, and you will then realize my position in respect to intelligence. Here there is nothing to worry, and naturally the other concomitant, nothing to interest one. The condition agrees with me very fairly, I find, and without joking the walks I take here have quite set me on my legs.’

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
Amoy  
Nov. 23  
1854

The winter climate of Amoy was ‘not to be surpassed: a bright blue sky overhead, a sun whose warmth you are inclined to court, and a bracing north-east breeze, now and then increasing to a gale blowing in fresh from the sea, combine together to make a most healthy temperature, which gives you new vigour at every breath.’ In February, however, the rains set in: but before they came Parkes was called away and had entered upon a new and important negotiation.

## CHAPTER X

### THE SIAMESE TREATY

1855-1856

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THE duties of Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary and Chief Superintendent of Trade at Hongkong were not limited to China. He represented his country at various minor courts of the Far East, and his functions included those of Plenipotentiary to the King of Siam. So far this office had been something of a sinecure, for Siam declined to have anything to do with foreign representatives. The United States of America and the Governor-General of India had vainly attempted to establish diplomatic relations, and when Sir James Brooke of Sarawak was commissioned to visit the Menam and arrange a Treaty in 1850, he was received with hostile demonstrations, and broke off all communications with the Siamese Government under circumstances which augured ill for the success of any future essays in diplomacy.

Nevertheless, something had to be attempted. Siam possessed very considerable capabilities for trade, but a suicidal system of monopolies and a total absence of security for foreign traders crushed the spirit of all commercial enterprise, so that in 1855 there were but two vessels engaged in foreign trade. A hope of improvement had been raised by the accession of a new king, who gave promise of a less exclusive policy. Phra Bard Somdetch Phra Paramendr Maha Mongkut, the Major or First King

of Siam, (for there was, at least in name, a dual sovereignty,) was a singularly enlightened man, eager to improve his country, and personally devoted to the pursuit of knowledge. He was no ignorant savage, but a man of as much culture as his opportunities permitted. He had studied Latin under the French Catholic Propaganda, and learned English from the American Mission, besides devoting years to Sanskrit and Pali. He was a great reader, as well as a genuine student, and when he was tired of his scientific researches he took to the works of Sir Walter Scott, whose name he had given to one of his steamers. Mechanical science and engineering became the rage in Bangkok, and English was read and spoken by several of the princes and Government officials.

This phenomenon among Eastern potentates had corresponded with Sir John Bowring, who, it must be remembered, was a man of information first and a diplomatist afterwards. The King was attracted by Sir John's 'European reputation,' and if he had not read his edition of Jeremy Bentham or his treatise on the Decimal System, his naturally inquiring and learning-loving mind could hardly fail to be impressed by the magic letters after the name of a Plenipotentiary who not only signed himself LL.D., but could append the initials of thirty societies.<sup>1</sup> The King of Siam could not be expected to appreciate the honorary membership of the 'Schleswig-Holstein Lauenbürgische Gesellschaft,' the 'Hull Literary Association of the Friends of Poland,' or the 'Ancient Order of Foresters,' at its exact scientific value; but Bowring, with all this tag of diplomas, and with a very considerable amount of varied acquirements, represented to him the learned man of Europe, and as such King Mongkut was glad to correspond with him, and would even consent to receive him officially, if the prejudices of his Ministers could be overcome. There is no doubt that the doctor's gown (of Groningen) in which Bowring used to astonish the natives in China had a good deal to do with the

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<sup>1</sup> See the amusing list on p. 404 of Bowring's *Autobiographical Recollections*.



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success of his Siamese Treaty. A mere diplomatist or officer would not have appealed to the imagination of the literary king with anything approaching the majesty of this Admirable Crichton clothed in the flowing garments of an honorary doctor of letters<sup>1</sup> of the University of Groningen.

An official visit was accordingly arranged early in 1855, and in order not to alarm the Siamese, Sir John Bowring consented to waive the splendid naval display which he had contemplated and to approach the Menam with but two vessels of war. One of these conveyed his Excellency and his secretaries Harry Parkes and J. O. Bowring. Walter Medhurst was to have acted as secretary to the Mission, but at the last moment his wife's illness compelled him to ask for leave of absence ; and Parkes was then chosen to supply his place. In spite of confident predictions of failure the Mission proved a conspicuous success. Obstacles of all sorts were at first placed in the way of the diplomatists by the 'old and crusted' Siamese party, but one by one these were overcome, and after three weeks' hard negotiation the Treaty was actually signed on 18th April 1855. How far this happy result was due to the skill of Harry Parkes may be read here and there between the lines of Sir John Bowring's journal, published in his *Kingdom and People of Siam*.<sup>2</sup> Parkes was sent on to Bangkok in advance of the Plenipotentiary, and conducted all the preliminary negotiations, upon which the success of the Mission mainly depended. Parkes had to explain what was wanted, to remove the suspicions and prejudices of the Ministers, to show how each point he suggested would affect the commerce and local authority

<sup>1</sup> Bowring had no right to style himself LL.D. ; he was created not *legum* but *Literarum Humaniorum Doctor* by the Rector and Senate of Groningen Academy. The diploma of 1829 is printed in the memoir prefixed to his *Autobiographical Recollections*, p. 9, with the amusing concord humaniarum.

<sup>2</sup> London, 1857, 2 vols. : vol. ii. 248-337. The narrative is interesting, but it is needless to reproduce it here, especially as Parkes' share in the work is but slightly indicated.

of the Siamese, to make them understand consular rights and extraterritorial jurisdiction, and in short to pave the way for a reasonable Treaty with people who were ignorant of the very principles of such covenants. He had to do this under considerable difficulties. The prejudices of the leading Ministers were against him; the interpretation through Chinese into Siamese was complicated; and efforts were made to restrict his personal freedom and to prevent communication with the Americans at the capital. All these were overcome. Every detail that could conduce to the dignity of the Mission and its solemn reception by the King was insisted upon and carried, and it was made perfectly clear to the Siamese that they had to do with people who would not suffer an affront. Sir John Bowring grew despondent and began to doubt whether he should not have to go away without a Treaty: 'I doubt,' he wrote in his journal, 'whether any good will be done, and I am more out of spirits than I expected to be. The King is a man no doubt wonderfully self-instructed, but that he should appreciate the great truths of political science one could hardly expect.' Whilst the disciple of Bentham was grieving over his Majesty's inadequate appreciation of these 'great truths,' however, the King was doing his best to overrule his Ministers' objections, which Parkes was daily combating during long hours of keen discussion; and the result of the good-will of the one and the perseverance of the other was that a very sensible commercial Treaty was drawn up and signed, in spite of the forebodings of the Plenipotentiary and the neglect of the 'great truths.' Of course Bowring had the last word in the matter, and in the final arrangements he took an active and authoritative part: but due credit must also be given to his first secretary for the conduct of the difficult and delicate preliminaries and *pourparlers* without which the Treaty would never have been concluded. The Siamese Ministers were very strongly impressed with Parkes' energy and acumen, and, as they afterwards said, they valued his intellect and tact a good deal

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1855 higher even than the doctor's gown of the University  
Æt. 27 of Groningen.

It is true that even a doctor's gown could not completely hide the Minister's sword, and the Mission very nearly came to an untoward end when it was discovered that Siamese monarchs had a rooted objection to receiving people with swords. The King was accustomed to seeing all his courtiers, clothed chiefly in orange paint, crawling on all fours in his august presence, and it took all the doctor's learned eloquence to explain that Ministers' and naval officers' swords were just as much part of their dress as the turmeric with which Siamese aristocrats decorated their skins. Then another difficulty was raised. The King would not hear of a salute of twenty-one guns: it would frighten the Bangkokians out of their wits. Parkes explained, however, that it was physically impossible for a British man-of-war to come within hail of Majesty without exploding in this fashion, and the salute was finally conceded. Then it was proposed to receive the Plenipotentiary with the condescending ceremony proper to the humble envoy of the neighbouring State of Pegu; till Parkes luckily discovered a precedent in an embassy of Louis XIV to Siam, and made it clear that Sir John was the representative of a much greater Sovereign even than the Grand Monarque.

So eventually the doctor was received in full state in an audience crammed with crawling nobles, and accommodated with a high seat near the King, who, robed in blue satin, and surrounded by courtiers (heraldically) *passant*, described the presents for the Queen, which were enclosed in a box with a letter of his own composition written on gold leaf in Siamese and English with his own hand, and added, 'Now as I wrote to Her Majesty, Her Majesty will of course write to me.' A gold key to the box was then delivered to Parkes, to be conveyed to the Queen, and the box of presents was triumphantly carried on a golden throne borne by eight men, surrounded by an escort of officers, and played out

by the royal orchestra, to the barge which conveyed the Plenipotentiary back to his ship.

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The Treaty was signed on the 18th April, and Parkes was sent home with it, to obtain the Queen's ratification, and to deliver the King of Siam's letter and presents to Her Majesty. In his instructions, dated 8th May, Sir John Bowring requested him to use all possible despatch, and Parkes accordingly contrived with his accustomed energy to outstrip the Marseilles mail, and to deliver his bag at the Foreign Office on Sunday 1st July. On the 9th he was very graciously received by the Queen at Buckingham Palace, and explained to Her Majesty the result of the Mission to Siam.

The next six months were spent in England, but not in idleness. The Foreign Office wanted a quantity of information on Chinese affairs, and now that it had got Parkes at hand to refer to, it did not readily let him go. Several of his successes at Amoy and Canton had been very favourably viewed at the Office, and the young Consul was now recognized as an authority whose opinion was worth consulting. There were a number of minor points to be cleared up, and no one could do it so well as Harry Parkes. Instead of enjoying a holiday he found himself nailed to the desk, writing reports and opinions; and if he managed to run away into the country for a brief change of air, he was sure to be recalled by an impressive envelope 'On Her Majesty's Service.' It was flattering to so young a man to be treated as a Chinese oracle, and these six months in London formed an epoch in his career. The impression he had produced upon the permanent officials, and especially upon Hammond, who was now Under-Secretary, was confirmed and strengthened, and he had many opportunities of improving his relations not only with them but with his Chief, Lord Clarendon, and even the Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, himself.

The constant strain of work for the Office told seriously upon Parkes' health. He had come home looking far from well. 'He has altered much,' said his sister, Mrs

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Lockhart, 'and looks so fair and white and bleached: he thinks every one in England looks so ruddy.' An attack of fever at Singapore had greatly reduced his strength, and he complained of perpetual weariness and back-ache. He stood much in need of quiet and rest in the country, but he did not succeed in getting away from town and the 'insatiable requisitions of the Foreign Office' till September, when he went with his sister to Scotland, and read a paper on Siam before the British Association at Glasgow. He visited Arran with Sir Roderick Murchison and other members of the Association, and made a tour in the Highlands, as far as Blair Athole, pursued by official papers all the way. After a few days at Edinburgh he determined to spend three weeks at Malvern, and try what hydropathy would do for him, if the Office would leave him in peace. Of course it would not, for the presents for the King of Siam had to be bought, and no one but he had the least idea how to suit the tastes of that unfamiliar monarch; so to London he was called. In December he read some 'Notes on Siam' before the Royal Geographical Society.<sup>1</sup>

The change of scene and some walking exercise did him good; but there was another cause to account for his improved looks and spirits towards the close of the year. Among the houses where he was sure of an affectionate welcome was Stanmore Hall, near Edgware, the home of Mrs Robert Hollond, a friend of the Alcocks. In the intellectual circle which Mrs Hollond loved to gather round her Harry Parkes found the mental stimulus which he had long sighed for in vain in China, and his appreciative hostess had so thoroughly taken the eager *spirituel* young man to her heart that she delighted to call herself his 'mother.' Among the friends who came to Stanmore few were dearer to Mrs Hollond than the family of her neighbours, the Plumers of Canons, Edgware. Their grandfather, Sir Thomas Plumer, had been Master of the Rolls; their father, like the elder Harry Parkes,

<sup>1</sup> Published in the *Journal*, xxvi.



had been killed with appalling suddenness in a street accident. The widow and her children never quite recovered from the shock ; it broke up the brightness of their lovely and loving home. They lived at Canons, not in the great house which was occupied by their grandmother, Lady Plumer, but in a lodge within the park, a very charming home ; and here they became fast friends with Mrs Hollond. One especially among the daughters drew forth her closest sympathy. At the time of her father's sudden death Fanny Plumer, his fifth girl, was just of age.

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She was a beautiful girl [writes an intimate friend of Mrs Hollond's], tall, well proportioned, and graceful, her colouring rich and soft, her features expressing sensitiveness and the power of warm emotion ; her dark brown eyes full of intelligence and speaking earnestness of purpose. She possessed in a large degree the power of fascination in which all her family were remarkable. In a word one could not see and soon forget her. To Mrs Hollond her mind and character had an especial charm. She found in Fanny a kindred spirit, imbued, shall I say, with that sort of dissatisfaction with every-day life and small interests which spurs its possessor on to the acquirement of knowledge and gives a yearning for larger experience. Fanny had always been the industrious worker of the schoolroom : she came to be in after years the open-eyed observer of people and events.

During the sad mourning time which succeeded the father's death, Fanny had many soothing periods of congenial intercourse with her friend. It happened that during one of her visits to Stanmore (she was accompanied at that time by her mother and one of her sisters) another young friend of Mrs Hollond's came to renew the acquaintance which he had made with her six years before. This was Harry Parkes, then come over from China. To Mrs Hollond this young man's presence was always a very great delight, and she welcomed

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him warmly and introduced him to her friends. Of the first meeting between the two whose lives were to be one, the mother said that she was startled at the effect which one evening in the company of Harry Parkes produced in her daughter. Fanny had in other cases been hard to please, critical, sensitive, reserved. Yet in a few hours on that day it seemed as if her heart opened and let the stranger freely in. The surrender on the other side was no less rapid and complete, and their friends had to be startled and a little critical over the hasty love-making and engagement.

The lovers gave their friends little time to enjoy their surprise. Six weeks after the day they first met, Harry Parkes and Fanny Plumer were married on New Year's Day 1856, at Whitchurch, in the famous chapel where Handel used to play the organ to the splendid Duke of Chandos. Nine days later they started on their journey to the Far East. Two days they had allowed themselves for a pretence of a honeymoon; then the bridegroom was summoned to wait on the Queen at Windsor to take leave. On the 7th he was up writing all night for the Foreign Office, and the bride had not seen him all the day. On the 8th he wound up his work with a rush; and on the 9th they left England.

Their eventual destination was Canton, where Parkes was to take charge of the Consulate during Mr Alcock's<sup>1</sup> absence, instead of at once returning to his own post at Amoy; but on his way he had to visit Siam once more, to exchange the ratifications of the Treaty, and to deliver the Queen's letter and presents. It was an important and responsible mission, and to a young bride who had seen nothing of the East the prospect of visiting the Siamese Court in all the dignity of official state was full of interest. But her husband would have gladly gone straight to his Consulate. He was still far from well, and

<sup>1</sup> Mr Alcock had been transferred to Canton in June 1855, but returned to Shanghai in 1856. He was again at his post at Canton after the *Arrow* war, as will be seen.

the voyage had not removed all traces of his overwork in England. He confessed to languor and debility, and longed for the settled quiet of a home with his young wife. 'Life in a portmanteau,' he wrote, 'is certainly not the most pleasant.'

It is pleasanter, however, than life without any portmanteau at all, which was what the travellers had to put up with when accident separated them from their baggage on their way to Alexandria, and all the necessaries of travelling in the tropics had to be bought, as best they could, in Egypt. Nor were the *contretemps* of the voyage over when, once more reunited to their possessions, they arrived at Singapore; for here they had to shift to the man-of-war which was to convey H.M.'s representative with becoming state to the kingdom of Siam, and the transshipment was not accomplished without a serious mishap—

At this moment [Parkes wrote to Mr Lockhart, 3rd March] I have great cause for grief. This morning (Monday) I should have put to sea in the *Auckland*, and on Saturday I shipped off my traps, public ones first, consisting of the presents for the King of Siam sent by the Queen, and private ones later in the day. A gale sprang up as the former were going off, and the boat with difficulty obtained shelter under a hill, far from the point whence she started. News of this having reached us, carts, etc., were sent to bring off the packages up to town, but through perversity or misconception of orders the boat again ventured out, and this time *filled and sank!* Picture my distress, with all my presents gone! By dint of great exertion no less than thirty-six out of forty-five packages were recovered, but with the exception of three only, the contents were completely saturated and spoiled. My masters at the Foreign Office will be ill pleased to hear of the loss of about two thousand pounds' worth of property, and my misery on the occasion is very great.

One would not have cared to have stood in the shoes of the peccant boatmen after this disaster, for Harry

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Parkes, with all his Christian qualities, was master of an 'unsanctified vocabulary' in moments of strong irritation; and after bringing the Queen's presents all the way to Singapore it was excessively disgusting to see them destroyed by the carelessness of a set of imbecile watermen. To have to appear before the King with three pitiful remnants of a drenched cargo was intensely mortifying: but there was no help for it, and to Siam the *Auckland* accordingly bore H.M.'s Consul and the relics of the Queen's gifts. They arrived off the bar of the Menam on the 12th March 1856, after a rough voyage in a rolling vessel. Mrs Parkes' journal gives a vivid picture of the Court and manners of the Siamese, which she observed with a woman's faculty for noticing details that often escape the attention of men. The day after their arrival the Governor of Paknam, the town at the mouth of the Menam, made an official call:—

Mrs  
Parkes'  
Journal

On Thursday 13th I had my first introduction to a Siamese noble, the Governor of Paknam, who came to pay his respects to 'Mr Consul Parkes.' He was a funny fat old man, respectably dressed in a kind of jacket made of Indian silk and a paninny, which is a cloth two or three yards wide tied round the waist and so arranged as to form a kind of drawers coming to the knees. His legs and feet were bare. He could not speak English, but he came and sat down in the saloon, and we talked to him through an interpreter. I played on the piano and sang to him, with which he was delighted, putting his finger to his ear as an expression of pleasure. On his leaving the ship they gave him a salute. Harry had a curious letter from the King written in English, saying that he had ordered his little steamer (which has been lately built in Siam) to come down to the *Auckland* to fetch him. . . .

The little steamer, which does the Siamese great credit, was commanded by the Prime Minister's son Paninai, an intelligent young man who can speak a

little English. The Siamese have a great fancy for shipbuilding, and he directs all their undertakings in this respect, and takes the greatest interest in it. He and Prince Choukiatia came on board the *Auckland*, and examined her machinery and guns. They breakfasted with us, and conducted themselves very well, only every now and then forgetting the use of their knives and forks and availing themselves of their fingers instead. We soon after set off [17th]. The *Auckland* gave our illustrious visitors a salute. Before reaching Paknam two barges with about forty rowers in each, came to meet us and then preceded us as outriders to the landing-place. The men were all dressed in scarlet and rather like the pictures of Lord Mayor's show. At Paknam Harry had to go on shore and pay his respects and transact some business with the Governor. His landing was an amusing scene. He went forth in all the dignity of his consular habiliments, accompanied by the Prince and Paninai, and attended by Messrs Bell and Forrest, two junior Government officers. At the landing-place there was a body of about twenty sepoy (native soldiers) drawn up on either side to receive him. Their dress was most ridiculous: trousers reaching half way down the leg, bare feet, and red coats. As Harry approached they struck up what they intended to be 'God save the Queen,' but it was certainly rather difficult to discover the original air amidst the extraordinary variations they produced on their unmelodious instruments. The Governor and Minister for Foreign Affairs came out to greet him, and they proceeded to a little building not much better than a shed, where with many compliments and much ceremony they went through their business.

On arriving at Bangkok Parkes betook himself to the building called the 'British Factory,' where Sir John Bowring had been lodged the previous year. He found it swept and garnished, without a stick of furniture, and it was only in a series of relays that he was gradually



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supplied with table, chair, and bed. He had foreseen the primitive nature of this accommodation, and had arranged for his wife to stay with Mrs Mattoon, wife of one of the American Missionaries, who received her with the utmost cordiality, and made her feel 'at home.'

Mrs  
Parkes'  
Journal

I had not been located here ten minutes before the Prince Kroma Luang, a brother of the King, who lives close here, came over to see me. He was 'an old friend of Mr Parkes, and therefore came to see me.' He was most polite and brought a present of fruit and sweetmeats, which were tastefully arranged in little china dishes on silver salvers, or rather a kind of raised silver plate. The Prince is a curious-looking person, and very ugly, as nearly all the Siamese are; his head is enormous, and the hair all shaved off with the exception of a top-knot, which is allowed to grow on the crown about two inches in length and made to stand erect by being well rubbed with wax; his face broad and fat, with high cheek-bones, flat nose, and a mouth extending from ear to ear and rendered more hideous by the horrible practice the Siamese have of continually chewing the betel-nut, which stains the teeth perfectly black. His ugliness is, however, reduced by a very kind amiable expression, and he is I believe one of the best and most honourable among this uncivilized race. His dress consisted of a white jacket made so tight as to show off his enormous corpulent figure to the best advantage, and a paninny. Whilst he was talking to me Harry came in, and the Prince appeared so delighted to see him, and kept shaking him by the hand, although he assured him he had not come to see him but me, and that contrary to custom, and that he hoped Harry would go and call upon him.

The Missionary colony came to call on Mrs Parkes the next day. They were all Americans, very earnest simple people, with the air of having long lived out of the world (as indeed some of them had for twenty years), and

dressed—the ladies—‘very much in Lucy Fairchild’s style, and all carrying *reticules*.’ The quaint old-world manners were accompanied by equally old-fashioned courtesy and hospitality; for their kind hearts and active well-doing had not been soured by years of labour unrewarded by the conversion of a single man, though they boasted one woman convert, and had great hopes of the effects of their schools. On the following day there was an invitation to the Prime Minister’s palace:—

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We were received by the Prime Minister at the entrance of his audience hall. He led us through a number of rooms, some of them furnished in European style, with tables, chairs, looking-glasses, clocks, and other ornaments. One of these was quite a comfortable sitting-room, and there we remained and chatted with him through an interpreter, praising his house, which is just built—and of which he is very proud. It amused me to hear Harry acting the diplomatist and paying him all kinds of compliments. He then took us to see his favourite wife, whom we found crouching on the ground, for this is the position they are obliged to maintain before their lord and master; or if they sit, it must be lower than the seat occupied by their husbands. She was dressed merely with a cloth round her waist, and one over her shoulders. There was nothing very interesting about her; she evidently was afraid to speak and looked naturally heavy and stupid. She took us through her rooms, and we had coffee brought to us. After this we went into another room to have some music (native). There we found about thirty or forty girls assembled before their peculiar-looking instruments of all shapes and sizes; some of the girls were not ugly and looked picturesque in their dresses, which were all made of pink cotton. I enjoyed the *concert* very much; they play in excellent time, and their music is not at all unmelodious, sometimes melancholy, at others wild and exciting. When this was over, we made a tour of the palace, which occupies

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an immense space of ground ; it is quite a town, and is divided into streets with little houses on either side for his dependants. . . . The Prime Minister's household consists of a thousand persons, and every hole and corner seemed crowded with men, women, and children, who, when they saw their master appearing, all crouched down on hands and knees. This strange and servile custom is carried through the whole society, each inferior in rank has to kneel and bow before a superior.

The Prime Minister, 'a thin, small man with a clear intelligent though cunning expression of face,' was a very important personage, and even the King was believed to be a little jealous of his influence. Prince Kroma, whose palace was the next to be visited, was a very different character :—

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The old Prince received us in a large dirty-looking room, with a good deal of European furniture and ornaments, but all untidily arranged, presenting rather the appearance of a pawnbroker's shop. The Prince is however an agreeable kind old man, full of fun and jokes. How I wished I could have sketched him as he sat with nothing on but a cloth round his waist, grinning and smoking and chewing the betel-nut. He was very curious to find out how old I was, but I would not gratify him. A number of his wives were then introduced to me ; they were nearly all ugly, and came crawling into the room on their hands and knees ; some of them were very good-natured and took me round the rooms, showing me all the valuables, gold and silver boxes set with precious stones, and very handsome jewels, but coarsely set ; the diamonds and rubies were magnificent.

The ladies, after carefully inspecting Mrs Parkes' dress, were pleased to express a very flattering opinion of her : they said she would do for a dancing-girl. The Prince was most attentive, and every morning he sent her for breakfast three Siamese dishes made by his favourite wife,

of which the visitor appreciated the intention more than the taste.

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Parkes went down to the mouth of the river, where the *Auckland* was being lightened to cross the bar: for the Queen's letter must come up to Bangkok with due state on board a British man-of-war, and the bearer must be with it. Meanwhile the old Prince made himself very agreeable to the deserted bride, and invited her to see the shaving of the heads of three of his daughters: a ceremony invariably performed with much pomp and many religious rites as soon as they are twelve years old. These distractions passed the time away till a salute of twenty-one guns for the Queen's letter and eleven for Mr Consul Parkes announced the arrival of the *Auckland* on the 24th, and three days later the first reception took place:—

On Thursday 27th Harry had his interview with the King. He received him very cordially and for some time spoke English to him, although when they transacted business he was obliged to conduct it in Siamese. He asked all kind of questions about the Queen's letter and was delighted to hear that she had signed herself his 'affectionate Sister.' He did not appear concerned about the [loss of the] presents, as he said 'it was the kind will of the Queen which he valued.' Monday 31st was the day agreed upon for the public reception of the letter. Harry's interview with the King lasted four hours. It would delight you to hear how highly my beloved husband is thought of here both by the little European colony and the Siamese, though the latter are rather afraid of him. Mr Mattoon told me that when he was here before, one of the Siamese said that they did not care for the rest, meaning Sir John Bowring and his suite, but that they feared Mr Parkes. He is just the person to deal with them, for he has so much tact and straightforwardness that he is generally able to accomplish his wishes; and the Siamese are so dilatory, cunning, and deceitful, that they require a clever person to get through any business with them.

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The old Prince is very fond of him, and extremely kind to me; he chats away most cordially whenever we meet, and has always some joke or fun.

The ceremony of the formal reception of the Queen's letter was not unlike that described by Sir John Bowring on the occasion of the signing of the Treaty, but Mrs Parkes' description contains some quaint details:—

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Monday 31st at length arrived, and at about half-past eleven the procession to the Palace set out from the factory amidst the salute of twenty-one guns from the *Auckland*. The King sent down a magnificent boat, in which was a small throne with a vase on it for the Queen's letter, which thus travelled up in state; he also sent a very splendid [boat] for Harry, who wore his Consul's dress. Then followed a guard of soldiers, attired in different curious uniforms, half European, half Siamese; a band of music came next; and then all the officers from the *Auckland* in full dress; and numbers of boats filled with Siamese nobles brought up the rear. On reaching the landing-place at the Palace, which was thronged with thousands of Siamese, a salute was fired from the forts, the procession formed and walked under a triumphal arch which the King had caused to be erected with the words *Welcome Her Britannic Majesty* inscribed on it. They proceeded immediately to the Grand Audience Hall, which was filled with nobles crouching upon the ground. The King was seated upon a throne twelve feet high in a kind of recess; he was magnificently dressed, and covered with jewels. Harry presented an address to him and then presented the letter, standing on a stool and the King bending down to receive it. He read it aloud in English, and in the midst called out 'Mr Parkes, do you understand?' Of course Harry said he did perfectly, whereupon his Majesty looked pleased, for he prides himself much upon his knowledge of our language. He afterwards read it in Siamese. The silver inkstand was also then presented. After the audience, a dinner



was given to the officers, served in English style, at which the King of course was not present. I was not allowed to be a witness of this ceremony, and have only given this account of it from Harry's description. On Wednesday the same form was gone through in presenting the Queen's letter to the Second King, and on Saturday [5th April] the exchange of Treaties took place. In honour of this important event, the King gave a grand entertainment. . . .

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We started from here at six o'clock, the King sending one of his boats for me. On reaching the King's private landing-place we were received by a retinue of women, who were ready with lighted torches to conduct us to the Audience Hall; a strange scene it was; the little narrow streets and courts were thronged with Siamese men, women, and children, all eager to obtain a view of the strangers, and vying with cows, dogs, and poultry in making a noise. After quite a long walk, we at length reached the hall where the business of the day had been transacted. We found Harry still busily engaged comparing the Treaties, surrounded by the Prime Minister, the Pra Klang, and Prince Kroma Luang. The Siamese have got up the Treaty in grand style, bound in gilt; they have also imitated us in the Great Seal. Our Treaty was bound in crimson velvet, ornamented with gold, with the Great Seal attached to it. After refreshing ourselves with some coffee, we proceeded to the large open court where the play was to be held. We formed quite a procession with all the officers of the *Auckland* and *Saracen*. In the centre of the court the King had his throne erected, and there he was standing to receive us. Harry took me up and introduced me to him, the others following. He shook hands and said 'Good-bye,' meaning 'Good evening.' Harry brought with him some of the presents, a little gold watch, a pair of spectacles, combined with a gold chain. His Majesty took it as a matter of course, but I could see that he

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was very much pleased. He pointed out the seats that had been prepared for us, to which we retired, and the play began. The court in which we were was surrounded by buildings,—Audience Halls used for different occasions,—which were all brilliantly lighted up, and at the entrance were female soldiers, no man being ever allowed to enter that court unless specially invited by the King. The play was most amusing. The actresses, of whom there were about sixty, were beautifully dressed and loaded with jewels. They all have long finger-nails made of silver attached to their fingers, which they consider a great beauty. They use a great deal of turmeric and white powder to make themselves fair, and wear false hair plainly braided hanging in a tail behind. They certainly contrive to make themselves look, if not pretty, at least less ugly than the generality of their countrywomen. The actresses do not speak as well as act their parts: that is done for them, and very absurd it is to see a girl throwing herself into all kinds of attitudes, expressive of joy or grief, whilst another in a different part of the court is reciting her part. There is a good deal of recitation and singing in their play, and wild extraordinary music. The dancing was rather elegant, but there is a good deal of sameness in it. The King is very fond of these representations and has them frequently.

During the evening he sent us ladies an invitation to go up and see his Audience Hall, where the Queen's letter was delivered, and also to be introduced to his favourite wife. He received us himself, and conducted us round the Audience Hall, showing us many curious things, little vases and boxes. . . . He spoke English to us all the time, though I found it rather difficult to understand him. He asked me the usual question, how old I was. His wife, whom he introduced to us by the title of Queen Consort, is the prettiest woman I have seen in Siam. She wears her hair in the same strange fashion, and her dress differs in no way from

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an ordinary Siamese. The King allowed her to stand in his presence, which was a great mark of condescension ; but he appears very fond of her. She is only twenty-two, and has two little children. . . .

One thing amused me very much. In a kind of balcony overlooking the court the King had caused a throne to be erected, whereon he placed the Treaty and the Queen's Letter, as a kind of representative to be present at the festivities, and as the King said 'to do Her Majesty honour.' We soon took leave of the Queen and returned to our seats. All round the court the highest nobles of the land were lying down, being always obliged to maintain that uncomfortable position before the King. I think the nobles ought to have their rank inscribed on them, for it is very difficult to tell a noble from a slave. Prince Choukiatia is the best specimen of a Siamese noble, and is really gentlemanly in his manners. Unfortunately for him he can speak and write English, so the King keeps him constantly employed, and gives him a salary of about £10 a year. He told me that when he first learnt English 'he like it, but now he hate it very much.' Before leaving, the King presented Harry with a piece of the skin of the white elephant which has lately died, and which he has carefully preserved ; this is considered a great compliment, and is an honour rarely bestowed by His Majesty. He also gave me his card.

The King was evidently charmed with the young English lady, and was anxious to make her any present she liked. He wrote her the following letter, which, if somewhat curious in style, shows considerable intelligence :—

ROYAL CHAMBERS,  
GRAND PALACE, 23rd April 1856.

To Mrs Parkes

Madam,

*I think it is my duty to descript to you the name and place of the pair of birds which I have given you*

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*this evening. Their name called in Siam Salicadong, they are abundant at the jungle of Saraburg and Parathay far distant from hence, about 150 miles in north-eastern direction: their food chiefly consists of wild fruit and eggs of other fowls or birds, they when in confine in cage their providers give them boiled rice, potatoes, plantains, and eggs or other fruits which are articles of food for mankind. The black red stone headed your ring is a value production of Chantboon, properly Chandesssiam in Sanscrit name, where the other kinds of some precious stones are obtainable. The two statues are toys which I have sent you in pursuance by hand of the young lady Piamenah were made by one of the Princesses here, who is skilful in the manufacture of statuary according to woman's ability. I think all will be pleased to you for examples of Siamese production and manufacture with whom you now have friendship and acquaintance. Whatever you or your husband Honorable Harry Parkes Esq. may need to have from Siam, please to let me know without hesitation.*

*This from your*

*faithful Friend*

*S. P. M. Monghut*

*The First King of Siam and its dependences.*

The exchange of the ratifications was not the end of the business, for there were various points of detail to be arranged before the Treaty could be fairly set on its legs. Parkes had many a stiff encounter with the Commissioners appointed to settle the working arrangements before he could induce them to come over to his way of understanding the various provisions. What these details were may be seen in the Supplementary Agreement signed 13th May 1856, which is published in Sir John Bowring's *Siam*. It is sufficient here to say that the main points related to the exportation of rice and salt, extritorial jurisdiction, the establishment of a custom-house (an institution

hitherto unknown in Siam, where the farming system had been in vogue), the limits within which British subjects might build houses or purchase land, and the taxation to which they were liable. On each of these the Siamese evinced considerable obstinacy,—not unnaturally, since the provisions involved a complete change in the fiscal and revenue system of the country.

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Monday 14th,—we have now been here a month and do not expect to get away for another week. The Siamese are so very dilatory in all matters of business, and it is such hard work to uproot their old prejudices and customs and to introduce new ideas, that Harry says he has to go over the same ground over and over again before we can reconcile them to any change, even if it would prove beneficial to themselves; for they are so selfish and dishonourable themselves that they judge of others' conduct by their own, and consequently imagine that foreigners have some sinister design to their country in whatever they may propose; and none of the Commissioners appointed to arrange matters dare take a single step without referring it to the King. They generally meet at Prince Kroma Luang's for discussion, and it is often two or three A.M. before Harry gets away.

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The reference to the King was a source of delay but not of obstruction, for His Majesty was quite sufficiently enlightened to appreciate the benefits of foreign trade, however ignorant he may have been of 'the great truths of political science.' Mrs Parkes found him very large-minded:—

Since writing to you I have paid by invitation two or three visits to both the First and Second King's palaces, and had I been the Queen herself I could not have received a more courteous reception than I always did there. The First King I like especially. He is a very learned intelligent person and speaks English wonderfully well. He is very liberal and unprejudiced, quite acknowledging the superiority of our country, and



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anxious to imitate many of our habits. When we have visited him he has always been most courteous in adapting himself to our customs and not expecting us to conform to theirs. To Harry he has been particularly kind and friendly. . . . Our visits to the Second King were equally pleasant. His house is furnished quite in English style ; the walls of the rooms papered and hung with pictures ; tables, chairs, book-cases well filled, and everything one would expect to see in a drawing-room at home. His study too is quite a picture ; he has all kinds of specimens of insects and snakes that are to be found in this country preserved in bottles neatly labelled. He showed us his daguerreotype, which has been taken by a Roman Catholic Priest, and a most admirable likeness it is. He complains that it makes him too dark ; they all like to look as fair as possible. He is not a very ugly person, and is nearly the only Siamese who does not chew the betel-nut. In all the arrangements about his house he is most neat and methodical, and it would quite delight you, my dearest mother, to have a peep into his kitchen, which is the picture of cleanliness and very much like an English one, with a range, boiler, and dressers in it. He used to have a number of inscriptions, such as 'Thou shalt not steal,' 'A place for everything,' etc., engraved on the walls. Before he became Second King he was a great deal with a missionary family and learnt a great deal from them. He reads immensely, and has a great talent for mechanics, and is now building a large workshop. If any one can give him information on any subject he is delighted and asks all kinds of questions. His two principal wives, who are both rather elderly, are allowed to appear before gentlemen, but the young ones are kept quite out of sight. As I expressed a wish to go round the Harem, the King ordered a little carriage like a buggy to be brought for me to go round in. To my astonishment I saw that women were to draw it,—I suppose no

horse being accustomed to go in it, and men would not be allowed to enter the ladies' department. However I consoled myself with thinking that Mrs Mattoon and I were not a great weight for the twelve women to drag about. You would have laughed to have seen us in our triumphal car followed the whole way by some hundreds of women, who whenever we stopped surrounded us on all sides, and those who could get near were examining everything about me most minutely. If I laughed, they did so too, and seemed much amused by my white teeth. It was great fun and I am sure if I was an object of curiosity to them they were no less so to me. . . . After that followed a great spread prepared quite in English style and everything most tastefully arranged ; fruits, biscuits, cakes, English preserves ; you could hardly believe you were in a Siamese room with a Siamese host. He poured out coffee himself, sat down, and took tea with us ; and every now and then turned round and talked to his two ladies, who were sitting on the floor behind him. He appears very kind to them, and they laugh and chatter away without any restraint.

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At last the work was really over ; the boundaries of British habitation were mapped out, with the skilled assistance of Commander Richards of the surveying schooner *Saracen* ; the consular jurisdiction was securely defined ; a custom-house was promised ; and on the 13th May the Supplementary Articles were signed, and Parkes was free to depart. Before he went an American mission had arrived, eager to participate in the benefits obtained by the English Treaty, and very jealous lest it should not be received with the same honours which had been accorded to the British representative ; and three months later the French concluded a Treaty which stood to the Bowring Treaty much as their Treaty of Whampoa stood to ours of Nanking : that is, they acquired all that we had gained, and added a little on their own score, rather to the annoyance of the First King. No sincerer flattery

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exists than imitation, and France and America paid an involuntary compliment to the arrangements concluded by Sir John Bowring and Harry Parkes in adopting them almost in identical terms. Local opinion expressed itself warmly in admiration of 'the great tact and zeal displayed by Mr Harry Parkes, to whose steady determination, remarkable courtesy, and unabated zeal, much of the success of the late negotiations must be attributed. The necessary explanations of the Treaty obligations were scarcely less difficult or delicate than the drawing up of the Treaty itself; and Sir John Bowring exercised a wise discretion in confiding that part of the negotiation to Mr Parkes, whilst the latter, with his usual candour and modesty, attributes the chief measure of his success to the spirit in which the First King conducted the diplomatic duties incidental to the mission.'<sup>1</sup> Our own Foreign Office was well pleased with the success of Parkes' negotiation, and Lord Clarendon wrote officially (25th September 1856) that he had—

much pleasure in signifying the entire approbation of your conduct on the part of Her Majesty's Government. They are of opinion that you were perfectly right in protracting your stay at the Siamese Court until you could come to a complete and satisfactory arrangement with regard to the points of detail flowing out of the Treaty of 18th April 1855; and the ability, patience, and judgment which you displayed in your communications with the Kings of Siam and the Ministers are deserving of every commendation.

We have trusted to Mrs Parkes' journal for the narrative of the visit to Bangkok, partly because it is a fresh and vivid description of singular scenes, and partly because there are no letters from her husband of this period. Three weeks after his arrival at Canton, on 8th June, however, he wrote to his brother-in-law at Shanghai, and some extracts from this letter will give his own views upon the success of his work in Siam:—

<sup>1</sup> *Straits Times*, 10th June 1856.

My instructions from Lord Clarendon gave me great latitude as to time of stay and the nature of my proceedings, but I thought it best to secure if possible the effective *operation* of the Treaty instead of resting content with the simple exchange of the ratifications, and I think the result shows success. . . . I was fortunate in securing and maintaining throughout the friendship of the First King, who listened to several of my propositions even against the wishes of his Ministers. He is really an enlightened man. His knowledge of English is not profound, but he makes an excellent use of what he has acquired, and conducts his correspondence in it in a very creditable manner. It is scarcely a matter of surprise that he should be capricious and at times not easily guided ; but he entered into the Treaty well aware of its force and meaning, and is determined, I believe, as far as in him lies, to execute faithfully all his engagements, which are certainly of the most liberal nature.

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To W.  
Lockhart  
June 28

The subsequent progress of Siam, in trade and in many of the improvements of European civilization, has fully borne out the wisdom of the policy which brought about the Treaty ; and recent events at Bangkok accentuate, by contrast, the skill and tact which marked the negotiations of 1855-1856.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE LORCHA *ARROW*

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THE affair of the lorcha *Arrow* is among the two or three incidents in Chinese history which have fixed themselves in the memory of the public and disturbed their usual profound indifference to events in the Far East. The attack on the *Arrow* and its consequences formed the subject of a protracted debate in the House of Commons, ending in a vote of censure and a dissolution of Parliament. The incident thus acquired an historical importance far beyond its intrinsic significance. A single example of Chinese hostility became, in the popular imagination, the *belli teterrima causa*. With a superb disregard of the whole history of our relations with China, politicians seized upon this isolated contest and denounced it as the miserable pretext of a cruel and cowardly war; and Parkes, as one of the chief actors, came in for an ample measure of criticism. Thus the *Arrow*, by nature an unambitious vessel of commerce, sprang at a bound into unwonted notoriety, and carried Mr Consul Parkes with her into the full blaze of public opinion.

Into that searching light he was sure to come, whenever the *Arrow* or any other incident happened to bring into strong relief the essential incompatibility of British and Chinese policy in China. Matters had long been



working up towards a crisis. The day of reckoning for years of contumely had been postponed again and again by the weakness or timidity or mistaken leniency of English Foreign Ministers and Plenipotentiaries. Rights had been waived, and insults condoned; but it was easy to foresee that things could not go on much longer as they had been allowed to drift, that a stand would have to be made somewhere, and that the scene of the struggle would be Canton.

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In an earlier chapter we have seen that the great southern city was the headquarters of the anti-foreign policy; that it was the only one of the Treaty ports where the provisions of the Treaty were set at nought; the only port where the British Consul had no access to the Chinese authorities, and the British residents no security for life and property. When Parkes was stationed there in 1852-54, in a period of comparative tranquillity, he had been compelled to submit to a position which he felt to be intolerable, but which he had not the power to amend. In the interval, during his absence at Amoy, Siam, and England, matters had not improved at Canton. There had not been any serious outrages, but the new Imperial High Commissioner Yeh had carried out the exclusive policy of his predecessor Seu with even greater arrogance and obstinacy. We have seen how Sir John Bowring attempted in 1852 to convince the home Government of the paramount necessity of compelling the Chinese to execute the Treaty of Nanking by throwing open the gates of Canton: and how sourly his enthusiasm was damped by Lord Malmesbury, who bade him 'avoid all irritating discussions with the Chinese,' and 'abstain from mooted the question of the right of British subjects to enter into the city of Canton.'<sup>1</sup> But Bowring did not abandon his opinion: he merely postponed its execution. It was quite clear that the point which stood in the forefront of British policy in China was what was called

<sup>1</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1857 [C. 2173], Correspondence relative to Entrance into Canton, p. 10.

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the 'City Question,' the right of entrance into Canton ; and Bowring never lost sight of it. For a time he had to give way to Sir George Bonham, who returned to his post at Hongkong, and certainly 'avoided all irritating discussions' by doing nothing ; but early in 1854 Bowring received his appointment as Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary and Chief Superintendant of British Trade in China. The Derby Ministry had run its brief course, and Lord Aberdeen had placed the Foreign Office in the hands of Lord Clarendon, who, with all his nervous hesitation and exaggerated deference to the Prime Minister, had a grip of a sound foreign policy. His first despatch to Sir John Bowring contained these passages :—

The Earl  
of Clarendon to Sir  
J. Bowring  
Feb. 13  
1854

The Queen having been pleased to appoint you to be Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary and Chief Superintendant of British Trade in China, it is my duty to furnish you with such information as to the views of Her Majesty's Government with regard to China as may serve to guide you in the execution of the duties which you are called upon to discharge.

There are, unquestionably, points which it would be desirable to secure, and to which we have even a right by Treaty ; and among those I would mention free and unrestricted intercourse with the Chinese authorities, and *free admission into some of the cities of China, especially Canton.* The treatment of these questions requires, however, much caution ; for if we should press them in menacing language, and yet fail in carrying them, our national honour would require us to have recourse to force ; and in order to obtain results the practical advantage of which is not clearly demonstrated, we might place in peril the vast commercial interests which have already grown up in China, and which, with good and temperate management, will daily acquire greater extension.

The instruction is cautious and guarded, but the passage here italicized could only mean one thing, and Bowring did not fail to seize the hint and bring the 'City

Question once more before the Chinese authorities. In 1856  
 April he addressed the following communication to Com- Æt. 28  
 missioner Yeh :—

I am to remind your Excellency that various griev- Sir J.  
Bowring  
to Commr.  
Yeh, April  
25, 1854  
 ances have been, at sundry times in past years, the  
 subject of representation and complaint by my prede-  
 cessors ; and that, at this moment, an accumulation of  
 these grievances remains wholly unredressed, although  
 demand for satisfaction has in no case been made  
 except in conformity with rights acquired by the  
 Treaties which exist between our respective Sovereigns.

The following are some of the most important  
 subjects of grievance :—

*Non-admission into Canton city.*—This matter be-  
 came a topic of discussion in the year 1843, after  
 which time the right was incessantly urged by my pre-  
 decessors upon the Commissioners of His Majesty, who  
 as often put forward some pretext for evading its  
 recognition, until the 4th April 1846, when their  
 Excellencies Kiyng and Sir John Davis concluded a  
 Convention under their seals and signs-manual at Bocca  
 Tigris, in which the right of entrance was distinctly  
 acknowledged, and declared to be a privilege which,  
 though for a time delayed, should not be permanently  
 denied. In the following year Sir John Davis, finding  
 Kiyng manifestly inclined not only to treat this  
 obligation lightly, but to evade the arrangement of  
 other points in dispute, moved upon Canton and  
 obtained a written undertaking from Kiyng that, after  
 the expiration of two years, admission to the city  
 should certainly be given. When the time approached  
 for the fulfilment of this promise, Sir George Bonham  
 entered into a lengthy and voluminous correspondence  
 with Commissioner Seu on the subject, which ended in  
 Seu's first evading the claim, and then, under instruc-  
 tions from the Emperor, repudiating altogether his pre-  
 decessor's undertaking. In August 1849 Sir George  
 Bonham communicated the opinion of Her Majesty's

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Government in regard to this repudiation to Commissioner Seu, with a request that it might be transmitted to the Supreme Government, and Seu in reply engaged to make the reference at a convenient opportunity during the ensuing autumn. The result is unknown to us at this day.

*Personal intercourse between the officials of the two countries.*—To give effect to the provisions of the Treaty, personal and unrestrained intercourse between the officers of both Governments was indispensable, at all events for the transaction of important business, even if not necessary for exchange of the common courtesies of life. At those ports where the practice does happily exist, it is oftener exacted than willingly accorded. At Foochow and Canton either the error is committed of deputing inferior officers to meet the Consul, or he is refused an interview altogether, and, as regards Canton in particular, at this very hour no personal intercourse has place with the higher authorities.

Nothing would be more painful to me than irritating and unfriendly discussions, the consequences of which might be deplorable; nothing more gratifying than the amicable arrangement of any point of difference, and the establishment of a durable harmony; and I have, therefore, to invite your Excellency to an early interview in order that we may consider what can best be done to consolidate the good feeling which should exist between us and our respective Governments and countries.

There can only be one mode of reception, *i.e.*, within the walls of the city of Canton, and at your official residence. This matter, I am aware, has been a subject of long and vexatious discussion, which however may be terminated by your consent to receive me.

The chief points to be noticed in the correspondence that followed<sup>1</sup> are Yeh's assertion that Sir George Bonham had in 1849 finally and for ever buried the claim

<sup>1</sup> For which the Blue-Book, 1857 [C. 2173], may be consulted.

to enter the city,—an assertion wholly unwarranted by that officer's correspondence;—and the Commissioner's persistent evasion of a meeting with the Plenipotentiary in the manner and place demanded. In the following December, however, an opportunity occurred which seemed to promise a *rapprochement* between the two. The Tai Ping rebels were menacing Canton, and Yeh actually humbled himself so far as to ask for the support of the English forces. Bowring of course replied that it was no part of his duty to interfere in the domestic affairs of China; but he went up to Canton with a large naval force to protect the factories, and there is little doubt that the presence of the fleet had its effect upon the rebels. The Plenipotentiary was confident that in such circumstances, and after an appeal for help, Yeh would invite him to a conference at his yamun within the city. He did not yet know his man. No interview was permitted; Bowring was kept severely at a distance, like the consuls; and had to leave without making the smallest impression. In June 1855, the appointment of Mr Alcock as Consul at Canton suggested another effort. Sir John Bowring, finding that the new Consul had already experienced some of the embarrassments which necessarily resulted from imperfect official intercourse, offered to come to Canton and personally present the Consul to the High Commissioner within the city. Of course this was merely a diplomatic manœuvre for establishing a precedent for an intramural reception, but it was sound policy. As Sir John told Yeh in his letter (11th June): 'In every part of the civilized world, personal friendly communication is found to be the most satisfactory manner of settling all points of difference or controversy; and in all the other ports of China that amicable intercourse has enabled the high officers of the two countries to come to amicable arrangements and to terminate difficulties whose accumulation might otherwise lead to great future embarrassment.' The persuasions of the Plenipotentiary, however, had no more effect than his menaces upon the 'proud repulsiveness' of Commissioner

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Yeh. He was not to be enticed or threatened into a sacrifice of his position. He knew that he had the Emperor and the Peking anti-‘barbarians’ at his back, and so long as he was High Commissioner at Canton no ‘foreign devil’ should enter its gates. He left Bowring’s letter unanswered for a month, and then said that he was too busy to see his Excellency, whilst as for a personal interview with the Consul, there was no precedent for it, as Sir John very well knew. The latter would have gladly pushed the matter further, but he was checked by the absence of the fleet, and had to content himself with reporting to Lord Clarendon the failure of his attempt, with the following significant comment:—

I am still of opinion that, until the City Question at Canton is settled, there is little hope of our relations being placed on anything like a satisfactory foundation; and, moreover, that the settlement of the said City Question might be brought about without any risk or danger to our great interests in China. In my matured judgment it has been delayed much too long.

Such was the position of the City Question when Parkes arrived at Canton to take charge of the Consulate, in Mr Alcock’s absence, in June 1856. The right of entrance had been deferred in 1849, and again postponed in 1854, out of respect, as Bowring professed, for the internal difficulties of the Chinese Government. The more obvious reason was that Lord Clarendon’s instructions did not countenance downright hostilities. It had been raised again in 1855, and once more deferred,—this time avowedly for lack of adequate naval support. But the Question was always there,—it had never been renounced—and only awaited a fitting opportunity to be brought forward with renewed persistency.

The arrival of Parkes upon the scene, at the very spot which was the focus of the ‘proud repulsiveness’ of China, brought a new factor to bear upon the Question. Not only did Bowring now possess a lieutenant at Canton upon whose courage and determination, and thorough

comprehension of the Chinese character, he could absolutely rely, but this lieutenant came out girt with the armour of the gods—of Downing Street. Lord Palmerston had played the part of Hephaistos to the consular Achilles: Parkes came out almost straight from his presence; the new Prime Minister had of old taught him his ideal of what a Foreign Policy should be; and the Consul never forgot the memorable despatch which had been addressed to Sir John Davis some years before on the occasion of an affront from the Chinese, which that Governor, lately curbed by the Aberdeen bit, had been disposed to ignore:—

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We shall lose [wrote Lord Palmerston] all the vantage-ground we have gained by our victories in China, if we take a low tone. We must take especial care not to descend from the relative position which we have acquired. If we maintain that position morally, by the tone of our intercourse, we shall not be obliged to recover it by forcible acts; but if we permit the Chinese, either at Canton or elsewhere, to resume, as they will no doubt be always endeavouring to do, their former tone of superiority, we shall very soon be compelled to come to blows with them again.

Viscount  
Palmer-  
ston to Sir  
John Davis  
Jan. 9  
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Of course we ought, and by we I mean all the English in China, to abstain from giving the Chinese any ground of complaint, and much more from anything like provocation or affront; but we must stop on the very threshold any attempt on their part to treat us otherwise than as their equals, and we must make them all clearly understand, though in the civilest terms, that our Treaty rights must be respected. The Chinese must learn and be convinced that if they attack our people and our factories, they will be shot; and that if they ill-treat innocent Englishmen, who are quietly exercising their Treaty right of walking about the streets of Canton, they will be punished. . . . Depend upon it, that the best way of keeping any men quiet is to let them see that you are able and deter-

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mined to repel force by force; and the Chinese are not in the least different, in this respect, from the rest of mankind.<sup>1</sup>

That despatch should be put in the forefront of the instructions given to every Consul and every Minister in the East. Its tone is not that of bombast or of chauvinism: it is simply the only tone to take with Asiatics. So long as that self-respecting attitude is maintained and the rights of equality insisted on, there will be no difficulties with the Chinese. The moment a 'low tone' is adopted, and the 'susceptibilities' and fanatical arrogance of the Chinese are deferred to, the door is opened for insult. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, a man after Palmerston's own heart, had discovered this truth at Constantinople; Harry Parkes, another apostle of the Palmerstonian doctrine, recognized its virtue in China; and these two men did the work of fifty diplomatists in the East. There has never been an ambassador at Constantinople who exerted a tithe of the influence that Lord Stratford wielded in Turkey; and no other Consul or Minister in China has ever possessed such power over the most obstinate of all bureaucracies as Harry Parkes. He won his ascendancy mainly by never giving in, never allowing himself to be slighted, but always resolutely maintaining the dignity and honour of his country before the eyes of the Chinese. They knew that when he said a thing he meant it, and they had a deep conviction that what '*Pa Hia-li*' meant was exceedingly likely to be carried into effect.

There can be no manner of doubt that in 1856 the English, from Downing Street to Hongkong and Canton, were determined to avail themselves of the first fitting opportunity for pressing the City Question. It was understood that if the Chinese gave us a chance we should close with it. It may properly be asked, Why was not the Treaty right of entrance again formally demanded

<sup>1</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1847 [184], Correspondence relative to the Operations in the Canton River, April 1847, p. 2.

by Sir John Bowring under direct instructions from Lord Clarendon? That would certainly seem to be the most straightforward English way of doing the business. But the answer would probably be that the direct demand had frequently been evaded or refused; it had become almost ancient history; and some striking example of the inconvenience and danger of the exclusion from the city was needed to justify in the eyes of the British public its resuscitation and enforcement by more decided action. Canton had been singularly quiet during the past few years, and Ministers, living in dread of the many-headed monster of the polling booth, were afraid of being challenged by a pertinent proverb about sleeping dogs. People would ask, Why insist at the risk of war on a trifling detail, even though a Treaty right, when things were going on as smoothly and peaceably as need be? The public—the constituencies—knew nothing of the constant annoyances and humiliations which the British representative had to endure at a great China port where the authorities deliberately shut their gates in his face. They would have scouted the idea of spending their money in a war for a mere consular inconvenience. It was necessary to wait until the inconvenience developed into danger, and when Ministers could go to the country and say that there would never be peace or quiet, security for trade or safety for life, in China unless Treaty rights were respected down to the dotting of an *i*. There was no hurry, and least of all was there the smallest intention of forcing a quarrel. The act of hostility must come from the Chinese, and it was sure to come before long. Then the opportunity would not be let slip.

The Chinese on their part seemed bent upon playing our game. They appear to have got an inkling that the City Question was to be brought forward again. Rumours were certainly rife in Canton on this subject at midsummer, and the people began to openly taunt the 'barbarians' in the streets, and ask them if they wanted to be foiled again. At the beginning of July a hand-bill,

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1856 of which the following is a translation, was circulated in  
ÆT. 28 the city with the object of inflaming the populace against  
foreigners :—

*Hand-Bill.*

The absence of interruption to the peace of the country is of the same vital importance in our opinion as the maintenance of regularity in the avocations of its inhabitants. We now call public attention to the fact that in the province of Canton, from the earliest to the present times, barbarians have never been allowed to go into the villages. Recently, however, a set of unprincipled vagabonds have been met with, who, without any fear of shame or exposure, carry on a secret intercourse with the barbarian dogs, and combine with them in a number of ways for working out their crafty schemes. Night and day we see them entering the villages and occasioning so much trouble by their irregularities that gods and men must unite in detestation of their practices. To judge of the extent of the evil to which our provincial metropolis is thus exposed, we have only to look to Shanghai and Hong-kong, and take note of the iniquities that are there committed.

Hereafter, therefore, whenever any barbarian dogs come within our limits, we ought, by calling together our families, to maintain the dignity of our city (or province), and, bravely rushing upon them, kill every one. Thus may we, in the first place, appease the anger of heaven, in the second give evidence of our loyalty and patriotism, and in the third restore peace and quiet to our homes. How great would be the happiness we should thus secure !

So truculent a document could not be passed over in silence, and, as it was impossible to see Yeh personally, Parkes addressed him in a written remonstrance, in which he neatly echoed the first, second, and thirdly of the hand-bill. In calling the attention of the Imperial Com-



missioner to this anonymous placard, on 1st July, he observed that it 'could only be viewed with utter contempt by the parties against whom it is directed, but the local authorities cannot mark too strongly their disapproval of behaviour so extremely lawless, since it is calculated, by exciting the minds of the ill-disposed, to provoke a collision on some future occasion'; and he requested his Excellency to have the hand-bill suppressed,—'such a course being requisite to preserve, in the first place, the reputation of the Chinese Government, to avert from it, in the second place, the danger that might otherwise ensue, and, in the third place, to enable the local authorities to acquit themselves of the responsibilities and duties of their position.'

No steps were taken by the authorities to suppress the bill, and on the 2nd July the ill-will of the inhabitants was displayed in an unprovoked attack upon two Englishmen, who were stoned as they were riding near the West Gate. In reporting the affair to Commissioner Yeh, Parkes said it had arisen from the ill-feeling stirred up by the placard already referred to, and he regretted that 'the authorities should have apparently lent their sanction to so wrong and dangerous a proceeding by permitting the sale of the placard in the public streets.' 'If those acts of violence,' he asked, 'are to continue, and foreigners should defend themselves, as they cannot be expected to avoid doing, when thus assailed, where are these evils to end? Will the Chinese Government, bound both by Treaties and by their obligations as the constituted authorities of the country, protect them, or are foreigners themselves to devise means for their safety?'

Had the English authorities been anxious to pick a quarrel, these proceedings furnished ample grounds. The proof that no such forcing the game was contemplated is that whilst Parkes' proceedings were 'entirely approved' at home and at Hongkong, it was considered needless to press the grievances further, although no shadow of an apology had been offered; and in this conclusion he con-

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Æt. 28 curred. But the attitude of Yeh did not augur well for their future relations.

A month and a half after the closing of this correspondence the incident of the lorcha *Arrow* occurred. The details are fully narrated in the Blue Book,<sup>1</sup> but the following letter from Parkes (dated 14th November) gives a clear and succinct account of the whole transaction:—

Oct. 8 The outrage on the *Arrow* lorcha will, I presume, have been reported by the last mail. Lorcha is the name given to a class of vessels of partly English and partly Chinese rig, that is greatly in request in these waters on account of the facility with which these craft are worked by native crews. They, like other vessels, receive colonial registers, and are *bona fide* British vessels as much as the brigs, schooners, steamers, etc. that are built or fit out from Hongkong. The *Arrow* was one of them, and had a regular register which was in my hands at the time that her crew was seized by the Chinese officers. The seizure took place in open day in a crowded anchorage, and was conducted with unusual display and circumstance. Four mandarins and nearly forty men boarded the lorcha, hauled down her flag, and bound and carried off her crew to a war junk lying close by. The master was away at the moment they boarded in a vessel lying within hail of his own, but seeing what was going on he returned as speedily as possible, and endeavoured to stay the proceedings of the mandarins, but in vain. He then reported the circumstances to me; and I, in the hope of explaining away an offence which I at first imagined must have been committed by the mandarins in ignorance of the Treaty, which required them to make previous reference to me before seizing the men, went to the war junk, pointed out to the mandarins the course

<sup>1</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1857 [110], Papers relating to the Proceedings of Her Majesty's Naval Forces at Canton. It is perhaps hardly necessary to say that the account of these transactions in Mr Justin M'Carthy's *History of Our Own Times* is not in accordance with the facts, however interesting from a party point of view.

they should have pursued, and begged them to remedy the mistake by bringing the men in their own custody to the Consulate, where the case should be investigated and any guilty parties among them be at once given up. They refused to do so, laughed at me and the Treaty, which they said they knew nothing about, and that they had the orders of their superiors and of the Imperial Commissioner for what they had done; and on my telling them that I must claim the men until my jurisdiction over them were acknowledged, they threatened me with violence, and I was actually struck one blow, though to this circumstance I have never made official allusion, as I wished to keep every personal feature out of view, and not to make the case out to be worse than it was.

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Returning to the Consulate I addressed the Imperial Commissioner a temperate letter, begging him to restore the men to their vessel in a public manner, when I should at once be prepared to investigate, in conjunction with suitable Chinese officers, whom I requested him to depute for the purpose, any charge he might have to prefer against them. Instead of doing so he examined the men himself, decided that three were guilty and offered to return nine, whom I declined to receive, and was then directed by Sir John Bowring to require, in addition to my first demand that they should be publicly restored to their vessel, an apology for what had taken place, and an assurance that it should not occur again. The Commissioner, however, with the ninth article of the Supplementary Treaty before him, refused all satisfaction on the ground, as he alleged, that the lorcha was not an English vessel, and that her crew, being Chinese, were amenable only to his jurisdiction; and having once made this statement he ceased to take any notice of the applications addressed him by Sir John Bowring and myself, and would depute no officer to discuss the matter with me. Sir John Bowring then authorized the seizure of a war junk by

Oct. 8

Oct. 10

Oct. 12

Oct. 14

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Oct. 14 way of reprisal. This order was carried out ; but produced only a bad effect, for the Commissioner would not admit the public character of the junk seized, and in common with all the Chinese who had knowledge of the affair ridiculed the idea of coercion on so trifling a scale.

Oct. 20 The instructions I received from Sir John being ambiguous, I went to Hongkong, and advocated more active measures, for it appeared to me that a very important principle was involved, and that the insolence of the Commissioner had been carried too far. The Admiral and Sir John decided that reparation should be forcibly exacted, and there appeared no means of doing it except by attacking some of the river forts.

Oct. 21 An ultimatum was sent in to the Commissioner and twenty-four hours given him to make the apology and return the men, etc., failing which he was told that force would be resorted to. He then offered to return me ten men ; them I refused ; he then sent all the twelve, but not to their vessel in the way that had been required, by the officers who seized them, but in an underhand manner to the Consulate, demanding at the same time that two should be returned at once, and without deputing any officer to conduct with me their examination, and without offering a word of apology or disapproval of what had occurred. I replied that my orders being to require certain satisfaction, which had been clearly stated, it was not competent for me to receive a small portion of it only, and I again declined to receive the men without an apology. That never came, and the matter then passed into the hands of the Admiral.

Oct. 22 The operations now commenced which have lasted with various intermissions for three weeks—from the 23rd ultimo up to yesterday. To be brief, on the 23rd and 24th the Admiral entered and dismantled various forts in the vicinity of Canton almost without resistance. On the 27th and 28th he fired slowly on the

residence of the Commissioner, and on the [29th] breached the city wall. On the 3rd, 4th, and 5th November he fired on another official residence of the Governor and that of the Tartar General, and on the 6th another fort was taken and some war junks burnt. On the 12th and 13th the Bogue forts were taken and will be dismantled. After each operation communication was opened with the Commissioner, and every effort made to prevail on him to afford satisfaction, but he always refused to entertain the demands of the Admiral, which, though of the most simple nature at first, were increased by H. E. requiring, as the only safe guarantee for the non-recurrence of such misunderstanding in future, that foreign *officials* should in future have free access to the Chinese authorities, which of course involved their passage into the city, where all the latter reside.

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The Commissioner immediately merged this in the old City Question, declared himself at war with us, stopped trade, and set a price on our heads. He did all in his power to excite the people by incendiary proclamations, giving out that we were leagued with the rebels and meditated, in order to further their ends, an attack on the city, and, as of old, he called on his braves to attack and exterminate us; but his call to them has met with a very feeble response, for we have been as active as we could in representing to the people a true statement of the origin of quarrel, and I think they have now a just idea of the misrepresentations of the Commissioner. He, however, has preserved an indomitable obstinacy throughout, which, while it surprised us all, left the Admiral no alternative but to pursue the course he had commenced. I am glad, however, to say that the gentry are now moving a little in our favour, and in conversation at least do not hesitate to disapprove Yeh's proceedings. Whether, however, they can prevail on him to concede our demands, which, I trust, the correspondence will



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prove to you are most simple and just, remains to be seen.

Our position is certainly an embarrassing one, but it is one from which we cannot recede, and it is only by maintaining it and working on the fears of the people that we can be successful or escape defeat which would be most injurious to our interests. We ask only for free intercourse with the authorities, and Yeh could grant this if he wished ; but he is too proud to yield—though he might do so either if so advised by the gentry or if so instructed by the Cabinet at Peking, who, it may be inferred, would not wish to push the quarrel further. Lest therefore, on hearing *his* statement of facts only, the Emperor should approve of Yeh's proceedings, I strongly advocate the despatch of a steamer to the Peiho, not to make a *reference* of the question to the Court, but to convey *our* account of causes and occurrences, to let them know that we already hold 'material guarantees,' in the shape of the several forts we are occupying, for what we demand, and to let them see the danger of not putting an immediate stop to this state of things.

If the gentry fail to influence Yeh, or the Court do not remove him or disapprove his acts, the affair then becomes far more grave ; but, however deplorable a collision would be, it would, I am persuaded, be confined to Canton : it would be war with Yeh, not with China ; and the Cabinet would no longer uphold him if he lost his city, and our having to take this would doubtless be the extreme point to which we should have to go. The effect of even what has already occurred and what may follow will be to hasten on those negotiations for the revision of Treaties, etc., which have been held so long in prospect by all the Treaty Powers. Most fervently do I desire a speedy solution, for the responsibilities and anxiety now devolving on me are very heavy ; but Yeh must bend or we must bend, and as his pride had gradually risen to an un-

bearable height—past such as used to animate the mandarins before the war—it is not altogether to be wondered at that he will not yield without a struggle.

There are points for sincere congratulation in these our troubles—first, that our loss should have been trifling ; second, that in point of life the same may be said of the Chinese, for in firing shells into the city these have been thrown only into the large residences of the mandarins, surrounded by courtyards and plantations ; and, third, that the most perfect unanimity of opinion as to the justice and to the eventual benefit to be derived from our proceedings reigns among the whole community, both English and foreign. . . . The exercise of patience and perseverance in dealing with the most patient people on earth is eminently necessary on our part, and will, I doubt not, carry us through. If we succeed, and succeed we must, we shall then be in a far better position than we have ever yet occupied in China.

The preceding letter gives an accurate summary of the transactions up to 14th November, as the Blue-Book will easily show. The Consul claimed that the lorcha was a British vessel, whilst Yeh contended that she was Chinese ; and of course the whole rights of the question turned upon this. There is not a shadow of doubt that she was, and that the Chinese knew she was, a British vessel, in the sense that hundreds of similar craft were British : namely that she belonged to owners living in the British colony of Hongkong, and that she was registered in that port. Whether her owner were a Chinaman or an Englishman had nothing to do with her nationality : she had been granted a British register, carried a British master, and was entitled to fly the British flag. It was discovered after the seizure that her register, which had to be annually renewed, had expired a few days before : but that again was beside the question. For, first, she was on the point of returning to Hongkong to renew it ; and if a vessel happen to be at sea or in some other port at the moment

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that her annual register expires, it would surely be monstrous to deprive her of the protection of her flag, say, in mid-ocean, on a mere quibble of dates. Secondly, any irregularity of the sort was a question for the authorities of the nation under whose flag she was sailing; it was their business to look into her right to carry it, and no other nation in the world was entitled to do more than bring the matter to the notice of the Consul of that flag. And thirdly, when the Chinese seized her crew for pirates, they were not aware of the irregularity of her register. This last fact was mentioned by Sir John Bowring in his despatch, and his use of the argument was afterwards treated by some speakers in the House of Commons as a mean and miserable subterfuge. Nevertheless it was at the root of the whole question. The gravamen of an insult lies in the intention. The Chinese did not know that the register had expired; they believed they were hauling down the flag and seizing the crew of a vessel entitled to British protection; and this constituted the insult. If a man deliberately sets about stealing another man's watch, and after stealing it discovers that it did not lawfully belong to the other man, he is not the less a thief. The law was clear enough, and when Lord Clarendon laid the case before the law officer of the Crown he found Sir John Bowring's view of the case confirmed in every detail. As he remarked in his despatch:—

The Earl  
of Clarendon to Sir  
J. Bowring  
Dec. 10

. . . This act of the Chinese authorities constitutes an infraction of Article IX of the Supplementary Treaty.<sup>1</sup> The only possible defence open to them appears to be, that the *Arrow* was not 'an English merchant ship'

<sup>1</sup> Article IX is as follows: 'If lawless natives of China, having committed crimes or offences against their own Government, shall flee to Hongkong or to the English ships of war or English merchant ships for refuge, they shall, if discovered by the English officers, be handed over at once to the Chinese officers for trial and punishment; or if, before such discovery be made by the English officers, it should be ascertained or suspected by the officers of the Government of China whither such criminals and offenders have fled, a communication shall be made to the proper English officer, in order that the said criminals and offenders may be rigidly searched for, seized, and, on proof or admission of their guilt, delivered up,' and *vice versa* with regard to English criminals.

within the true intent and meaning of the Treaty ; but Article XVII, Rule I, in Supplementary Treaty, recognizes and includes this particular class of vessel ; she had a British master, British colours and papers, and even if her licence had been improperly granted in August 1854, this was a matter of British internal regulation, and to be dealt with by the British authorities. This point is evidently an after-thought on the part of the Chinese, and the only evidence of it is the uncorroborated assertion of one of the crew whilst in custody. No British lorcha would be safe if her crew were liable to seizure on such grounds. . . .

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The principle involved in this case is most important, and the demands made by Mr Consul Parkes appear to me to be very moderate under the circumstances. I consider that the redelivery of the three men still detained, and a subsequent formal demand for their extradition before they are given up again, should be insisted on as a *sine qua non*. They must be considered as having been forcibly taken in breach of Treaty, and without any justification or excuse, from on board a British vessel, and illegally detained in custody by the order of the Imperial Commissioner, with full knowledge of all the circumstances and in defiance of a formal demand by the British Consul.

Taking the illegality of the act as proved, the next question is, Did Parkes and Bowring make too much of it? Did they give the Chinese no chance of putting themselves right? Did they exact an excessive reparation? These questions are important, because, in view of the known anxiety of the English authorities to revive the City Question, it is desirable to ascertain, if the facts warrant it, that they were not trying to make a mountain out of a molehill in order to have a grievance on which to raise the larger issue. It would not have been creditable to deliberately drive the Chinese to extremities by needlessly irritating demands. But no such unfairness was contemplated. A study of the documents must convince

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any one that every possible loophole was left for the Chinese to effect an honourable retreat from an untenable position. In the first place Parkes gave the mandarins who effected the arrests an opportunity to right themselves : he explained to them what he believed to be their mistake, and invited them to bring their prisoners to the Consulate, where the charges against them would be legally investigated. They knew perfectly well that there would be no attempt to screen the criminals, yet they refused with contumely, and even struck the Consul. As they stated that they had acted under orders from their superiors, he then reported the case as 'an insult of a very grave character' to Yeh, but his letter was courteous and his demand moderate enough :—

To  
Commr.  
Yeh, Oct. 8

I have, therefore, to lay the case before your Excellency, confident that your superior judgment will lead you at once to admit that an insult so publicly committed must be equally publicly atoned. I therefore request your Excellency to direct that the men who have been carried away from the *Arrow*, be returned by the Captain, Liang Kwo-ting, to that vessel in my presence ; and if accused of any crime, they may then be conveyed to the British Consulate, where, in conjunction with proper officers deputed by your Excellency for the purpose, I shall be prepared to investigate the case.

When Yeh replied by stating the criminality of two of the arrested crew, keeping another as a witness, and offering to return the other nine, with the contemptuous comment, 'She is not a foreign lorcha and it is useless therefore to enter into any discussion respecting her,' the Consul could only refuse to accept his answer. As he remarked, the Commissioner's reply—

To Sir J.  
Bowring  
Oct. 11

is not only a denial of justice in this particular case, but it constitutes a rule which, unless the Imperial Commissioner finds it inconvenient to persist in it, he will follow on any similar occasion in future. It is, in effect, a declaration on his part that he will respect



neither British flag nor British register, whenever any Chinese states to him that a vessel so provided is not British owned.

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Moreover three British subjects were still in illegal captivity, and they must be surrendered. The offer of restoring the nine men was therefore properly declined. So far Parkes had acted on his own responsibility, and had acted with moderation. He had merely demanded his Treaty right to examine the accused British subjects at the Consulate, and his demand had been refused. He had not sought for an apology.

Then Sir John Bowring took action. He rose to the occasion with the spirited instinct of a man who recognizes an emergency. On the 10th he had consulted with Sir Michael Seymour, the Naval Commander-in-Chief, and the latter had instructed Commodore Elliot to discuss with Parkes 'the most appropriate means of obtaining redress': beyond conveying this suggestive piece of information, Sir John merely assured the Consul of his support in maintaining British rights. On the following day, however, after receiving a copy of Yeh's unsatisfactory reply to Parkes' protest, he instructed the Consul to 'inform the Imperial Commissioner that I require an apology for what has taken place and an assurance that the British flag shall in future be respected,' and to allow him forty-eight hours for compliance: failing satisfaction, Commodore Elliot was to seize an Imperial junk by way of warning and reprisal. The idea of an apology and a retaliation originated with the authorities at Hongkong and not with Parkes:<sup>1</sup> and had Yeh conformed to the Treaty and sent the men to the Consulate to be examined, he would not have been asked for an apology or witnessed a reprisal. He had brought the humiliation on his own head. He could not make up his mind to it, and he never apologized to the day of his death.

<sup>1</sup> This is proved by Sir John Bowring's letter to Parkes of 13th October (Blue-Book, p. 10).

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Failing an apology, the matter passed into the hands of the Admiral,<sup>1</sup> and it is no part of this biography to relate or to criticize the proceedings of the fleet in the Canton river, over which Parkes had no control. It must, however, be evident to any student of the Blue-Book that the authorities, one and all, greatly underestimated the tenacity of purpose they were going to encounter. It was not wonderful that they made the mistake, for they had no evidence to go upon beyond several precedents of successful naval demonstrations in the years before Yeh's appointment. It must be remembered that neither Bowring nor Parkes knew Commissioner Yeh : it was part of the system of exclusion illegally practised at Canton that the highest Chinese authority refused to meet the English representatives. Had Parkes been face to face with Yeh, one of two things would have happened : the Consul would either have discovered the right arguments to bring the Commissioner to reason, or at least he would have formed a clear judgment of his character and warned his chief that small measures would be of no avail against his obstinacy. As it was, no such interview was possible, and a great deal of time was wasted in ineffectual efforts to frighten Yeh into submission. After every blow, after the capture of each fort, Sir John Bowring and the Admiral expected to receive Yeh's appeal for quarter. But no such appeal was ever made. Yeh argued every point with a tenacity worthy of a better cause : he never dreamed of surrendering a jot of his position. He stuck to his point : the lorcha was Chinese, and he was perfectly right to board her ; she flew no flag, so how could it have been hauled down ? Facts did not disturb him : he reiterated his own version, which was not fact. And when he found that the English were as obstinate as himself, and, not content with taking the forts round Canton, had on the 27th even begun to shell his

<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that in his anxiety to come to a peaceable arrangement Parkes went beyond his duty in giving Yeh a *second* warning of the approaching expiration of the forty-eight hours' grace.

own yamun, Yeh damned his cause by issuing the following proclamation :—

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Yeh, the Governor-General, proclaims the following : Oct. 28

The English barbarians have attacked the provincial city, and wounded and injured our soldiers and people. Their crimes are indeed of the most heinous nature.

Wherefore I herewith distinctly command you to join together to exterminate them, and I publicly proclaim to all the military and people, householders and others, that you should unite with all the means at your command to assist the soldiers and militia in exterminating these troublous English villains, killing them whenever you meet them, whether on shore or in their ships. For each of their lives that you may thus take you shall receive, as before, thirty dollars. All ought to respect and obey, and neither oppose nor disregard this special proclamation.

The comment of the French Consul, the Comte de Courcy, on this savage document is worth quoting. 'Votre Excellence,' he told Yeh, 'sait bien que ce n'est pas ainsi que les nations civilisées se font la guerre, et que la raison et l'équité protestent hautement contre cet encouragement donné à la perfidie et à l'assassinat.' After such a proclamation no compromise was possible.

The immediate result was the breaching of the city wall by a steady fire from the ship's guns placed in the captured fort known as the Dutch Folly, opposite the city, and the Admiral's forcible entrance on 29th October into Canton :—

The landing was effected at 2 P.M., and the men having formed, were at once led to the attack (accompanied by two field-pieces in charge of Lieutenants Bushnell and Twysden), the seamen by the Commodore, Captain the Honourable Keith Stewart, and Commanders Bate and Rolland ; the Royal Marines by Captains P. C. Penrose and R. Boyle. The way was most gallantly shown by Commander Bate, whom I observed alone,

From  
Admiral's  
Report

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waving an ensign on the top of the breach. The parapet of the wall was immediately afterwards covered with the marines and seamen, who, diverging to the left and right, had, within ten minutes, complete possession of the defences between two of the gates, with the field-pieces in the breach. . . .

I had the satisfaction of entering the city through the gate soon after its passage had been secured, and accompanied by the Commodore, Her Majesty's Consul and a portion of the force, I visited and inspected the house and premises of the High Commissioner. We re-embarked at sunset, and the officers and men were returned to the respective quarters; my object, which was to show his Excellency that I had the power to enter the city, having been fully accomplished.

Before the landing took place, I assembled the officers and urgently impressed upon them (as I had previously done by written order) the necessity of restraining the men from molesting the persons and property of the inhabitants, confining warlike operations against the troops only; and I have pleasure in bearing testimony to the forbearance and good conduct of the seamen and marines. No straggling took place, and when the orders were given to re-embark the men returned to their boats with regularity and despatch.

It was with no little satisfaction that Parkes reported to his Chief that he had actually been inside Yeh's yamun:—

To Sir J.  
Bowring  
Oct. 29

I have been with the naval Commander-in-Chief since two o'clock, and thus shared with his Excellency the gratification of an entry into the yamun of the Imperial Commissioner. This humiliation is the more deserved as his arrogance would not allow him to concede the request for a peaceable admission made to him again this morning by his own deputy, as I have already reported.

The last sentence marks a new departure, or rather

the revival of an old question. The affair of the lorcha *Arrow* is now relegated to its original insignificance : for we are face to face with nothing less than the old City Question—in a modified form, but still the City Question.

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How this came to be imported into the dispute is matter for another chapter.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE CITY QUESTION

1856-1857

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THE Admiral had not made his forcible entry into Canton without warning. He had previously made a formal demand for admission. On the 27th he instructed Mr Parkes to make the following communication :—

Rr.-Adm.  
Seymour  
to Admir-  
alty, Nov.  
14

That to prevent the recurrence of evils like the present, which have been occasioned by the disregard paid by the Imperial Commissioner to the repeated applications for redress and satisfaction made to him by letter in the matter of the *Arrow* by Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary and the Consul,—writing, in consequence of the closing of the city to foreigners, being the only means of communication,—I demanded for all foreign representatives the same free access to the authorities and city of Canton (where all the Chinese high officials reside) as is enjoyed under Treaty at the other four ports and denied to us at Canton alone.

No answer being returned, he forced his way in, and on the following day wrote again to Yeh :—

Rr.-Adm.  
Seymour  
to Commr.  
Yeh, Can-  
ton, Oct.  
30

When the Prefect of Ling-chow-fu was sent yesterday to the British Consulate by your Excellency, for the purpose of ascertaining what demands I had to make, I instructed the British Consul to state to him, for the information of your Excellency, that, convinced as I am that, were the right of access to the authorities

within the city that has been invariably conceded at the other ports similarly in force at Canton, no such contingency could arise as the present, in which the impossibility of otherwise effecting any satisfactory arrangement had rendered necessary the proceedings of the last few days, what I had now to insist upon was simply this, that the foreign representatives should have here the same access to the authorities as at the other ports.

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Your Excellency sent no reply to my message, and according to the intention of which I had given notice to your deputy, I breached the wall of the city, and thus obtained access to your Excellency's official residence, which I visited yesterday afternoon. This object accomplished, I withdrew my troops.

I may observe, that it has been wholly with a view to the preservation of life that my operations have been hitherto so deliberately conducted. Even yesterday, when entering the city, no blood was shed save where my men were assailed, and the property of the people was in every case respected. The fires which have broken out during the last two days were not, either, designedly caused by us. They were but a lamentable consequence of the measures to which your Excellency's conduct has compelled me reluctantly to resort.

I have now one remark to make, to which I request your Excellency's particular attention. The lives and property of the entire city population are at my mercy, and could be destroyed by me at any moment that any event might impose upon me so sad a necessity. The prevention of any such necessity is entirely in the hands of your Excellency. I have been constrained to move onward, proceeding from one step to a further, by the pertinacity and discourtesy with which your Excellency has persisted in evading the just and simple claims advanced by us in the first instance. It is now for your Excellency, by immediate consultation with me,

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to terminate a condition of things of which the present evil is not slight, but which, if not amended, can scarcely fail to be productive of the most serious calamities.

These extracts show that the dispute had entered upon a wider stage than had originally been contemplated, and that the first simple demand had again been enlarged. Parkes had asked merely for the restitution of the captured crew. Bowring had stipulated for an apology. And now the Admiral had reopened the City Question, not indeed in its full force, but only so far as the entrance of foreign representatives was concerned. There was nothing surprising or unusual in the gradual enlargement of our conditions of peace. A quarrel that might be arranged with a bare apology at the beginning cannot be so economically settled after blows have been exchanged and injuries inflicted. 'Of course,' said Bowring, 'the magnitude of our demands grows with the growth of our success. All diplomacy is the exemplification of the Sibyl's story—all wise diplomacy.' As we have seen, the City Question had always been present to the minds of the English officials, and it was well known that the subject would be pressed when an opportunity occurred. What better opportunity could be sought than the destruction of life and property, which had been caused mainly by the want of a personal explanation between the representatives of the two countries? In the interests of the Chinese themselves the City Question had become urgent. Sir John Bowring saw the opening even before matters had reached their more serious developments. As early as the 16th October he mooted the Question in a letter to Parkes:—

From  
Sir J.  
Bowring  
Oct. 16

I am much pleased with the manner in which you have done the work, the results of which cannot but be beneficial. . . . You may tell them<sup>1</sup> that I am *determined* on obtaining redress, and that the step taken is only initiatory to others, if redress be refused or delayed.

<sup>1</sup> Certain of the gentry of Canton with whom the Consul was holding conferences with a view to bringing public opinion to bear upon Yeh.

You may say that I deem the matter so grave that I might probably be willing to visit the Imperial Commissioner *at his yamun in the city*, or to receive him here. Cannot we use the opportunity and carry the City Question? If so, I will come up with the whole fleet. I think we have now a stepping-stone from which with good management we may move on to important sequences.

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The question was, would the Admiral move with him? Sir Michael Seymour, according to a witness behind the scenes, did not entertain a very high opinion of Sir John Bowring: 'Our chief does not *impress* him or any one else with anything but a restless desire for movement round the centre of his own *kudos*, and you can see at a glance that the people in contact soon get their noses up.' Bowring had his doubts of the Admiral's co-operation, for he wrote on 19th to Parkes, 'It will be necessary to be very cautious, as we shall not obtain the aid of the naval authorities beyond a certain point. I do not think the Admiral will *make war*,—and we must consider not what we *might* but what we *can* do.' On the 21st, however, he wrote that 'the Admiral has left me in excellent dispositions and we must write a bright page in our history. . . . I hope you will not lose sight of the City Question. You will not demand it of course,—but you will have an opportunity of saying what may help its settlement. . . . I trust to your sagacity to get all that is to be got out of this movement. I will appear in the field whenever my presence may seem desirable. . . . I again assure you of the confidence I feel in the prudent and energetic action you will bring to bear on this occasion.' On 22nd he reverted to the point: 'I wish we could carry the City Question: that would be the crowning affair as regards *local* matters'; and on 23rd, 'No doubt Yeh will now be for giving way. I hope, however, you will be able to turn our position to the best account, and if you can arrange for my *official* reception I will come up.' On 24th he recommends 'that the present opportunity—we may

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never have one so auspicious—be used for settling the City Question—at all events as far as *our* reception at the Imperial Commissioner's yamun is concerned. I think there will be much, and reasonable, disappointment if this be not conceded. Hitherto everything has gone on admirably, and I hope all the *local* grievances will now be settled. . . . How excellently all has been conducted; but *finis coronat opus*'; and again in a second letter (for Sir John often wrote two or three times a day to Parkes at this time—it was but a twelve hours' post from Hongkong) he said he would be 'anxious to ascertain how far the Admiral and you concur in the opinion that the City Question may now becomingly be pressed. Of course entrance must not be *asked* unless insisted on'; and on the same day he officially recommended the settling of the *vexata quaestio* to both officers. The Admiral and Parkes evidently did concur, for the question of official intercourse within the city was mooted to Yeh by the Consul on the 25th. Mr Wade, who was at that time Chinese Secretary to the Plenipotentiary, went up to Canton on the 24th, and on his return next day he wrote to Parkes:—

From  
T. F.  
Wade  
Hongkong  
Oct. 25

The first question he asked was whether the Admiral was going to carry the City Question or not? I told him what had passed from me on the subject, the sum of which I believe to be this: That the original demand on our side was one that might have been satisfied by a simple act of correspondence. That satisfaction withheld, there had been entailed on us a great demonstration and certain acts of hostility, which latter—could we separate the present comparatively trivial question and all it has brought to pass from the antecedents of the great Canton question,—might be considered to have inflicted humiliation fully equal in value to the apologies and promises originally required; but that we could not, in my opinion, so merge the antecedent question, and that, viewed as our present proceedings would be by the Chinese in connexion with the past,



these, the present, would be insufficient unless more than we have got were obtained ; and that more would only be obtained in vain, unless when obtained we took material guarantee for the maintenance of our acquisition ; and this could only be secured by the continuance in position of a force, certainly on the water, and possibly on land. I was therefore strong for the settlement of the City Question, the more that the inaccessibility of the authorities which is on all occasions our chief matter of complaint had been in this case the direct cause of the misunderstanding which had obliged us to go to such a length. H. E. nodded and assented, and said that he was ready to go up whenever the Admiral and you said he was to come, etc. etc.

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It has been necessary to enter into these details, in order to show that Parkes was not responsible for introducing an element into the discussion which, though absolutely right and opportune, undoubtedly embittered the contest. It was after receiving the first intimation of the reopening of the City demand that Yeh made the reply :—

But I, the Minister, also know full well what you the said Consul have in view. For a certainty, it is nothing less than a desire on your part to imitate the course taken by the Envoy Davis in the spring of 1847. Little, indeed, you know that in China the people form the basis of the nation ; and that the people of Kwang Tung are very different from (other communities).

From.  
Commr.  
Yeh  
Oct. 26

And this was followed by setting a price on the heads of foreigners, the consequent breaching of the wall, the capture of the remaining forts, and the complete control of the river by the middle of November. But whilst vindicating the Consul from the charge of initiating what proved to be an additional element of difficulty, I am not contending that he did not agree, heart and soul, with every one of the forward steps taken by Bowring and the Admiral. The three were in perfect accord on every detail of the proceedings of October and November in the

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Canton river. And though Parkes, in his subordinate position, could not officially take the lead in pressing on the negotiations, it may be shrewdly suspected that Sir John Bowring rested a good deal upon his counsel. The Plenipotentiary was a man of a nervous, not to say fidgety, nature, and it may be doubted whether he would have kept a steady course if he had not had the constant support and counsel of Consul Parkes and Chinese Secretary Wade. Letters passed daily between Bowring and Parkes, and Mr Wade went three or four times to Canton to help his colleague and keep the principal actors in line. On the 20th October Parkes visited Hongkong to confer with his chief, and the vigour of the latter's instructions was considerably strengthened by the interview. How strenuously Parkes advocated energetic measures may be seen from the memorandum which he drew up at Bowring's request during this brief visit. It contained the following statement of policy :—

To Sir J.  
Bowring  
Hongkong  
Oct. 20

No remark is needed from me to point out to your Excellency that if this violation of the Treaty be permitted, there is no longer any safety for that small class of vessels belonging to this colony, and consisting of lorchas, schooners, and now of steamers also, which are specially protected and encouraged by the last Article of the Supplementary Treaty, and the crews of which, with the exception of their officers, consist almost wholly and invariably of Chinese.

Not so much, therefore, with the view of punishing the insolence of the Imperial Commissioner as of protecting our own immediate interests, and avoiding irreparable injury to our prestige, already more than once compromised at Canton, I now respectfully record my opinion that the recourse to reprisals, already authorized by your Excellency in this case, be persisted in with all the means and vigour that it is in the power of his Excellency the naval Commander-in-Chief to bring into operation. . . .

I advise, therefore, and I do so with all the deference

due to the superior judgment of your Excellency and the naval Commander-in-Chief, and with a deep sense of the responsibility which I, as the officer charged with the care of British interests at Canton, in offering this advice incur, that as we have searched the river, and found no war junks (and anything less than the seizure of a fleet would, I am now convinced, have had no effect on the Imperial Commissioner), our operations should now be directed against the forts between Whampoa and Canton. . . .

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When the City Question was raised, Parkes, though he did not originate the subject, was not a whit behind the Admiral and Plenipotentiary in advocating the necessity of pressing it. He saw the root of the present difficulty in the inaccessibility of the Chinese authorities, and that, he considered, constituted an ample reason for breaking down the barrier. In this sense he wrote to Sir John Bowring :—

It may indeed with truth be said, that want of personal access to the Government of Canton, which is denied to us by the gates of this city being closed against us, has been the occasion of the present trouble ; for could I have seen Yeh, or any influential authority, at the commencement of this affair, it is very probable that I might have convinced them of the injustice and danger of their proceedings, and prevailed on them to adopt a more politic and becoming course.

To Sir J.  
Bowring  
Canton  
Oct. 25

Throughout it may be affirmed that, whoever was responsible for the policy of 1856, it was the policy that Parkes believed in. And to the Chinese it was Parkes, and no one else, who was the head and front of the offence. In everything that happened they saw but one hand, the hand of the British Consul, who had made his name a synonym for uncompromising firmness and resolute maintenance of Treaty rights. To them the Plenipotentiary at Hongkong was a diplomatic expression : but Parkes in the Consulate at Canton was a formidable reality. When Yeh wrote to the American Consul on

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27th October he did not refer to Bowring or Clarendon; he said 'the British Consul' attacked the forts, 'Consul Parkes has opened fire,' 'Consul Parkes is alone responsible.'

It was not surprising that the Chinese associated every step in their disasters with the Consul, for whatever was doing, there he was sure to be seen in the thick of it. The amount of labour that fell to his lot was enough to break down a much stronger man. Nothing but an indomitable will could have carried him through those weeks of incessant and responsible activity. His correspondence at that time was enormous. He had to write frequent, often daily, despatches to the Plenipotentiary, the Admiral, the Commodore, and his fellow-Consuls, besides those innumerable private letters which are often more significant than the official communications. His correspondence with Commissioner Yeh was incessant, lengthy, and excessively laborious: for it was in Chinese, and demanded extraordinary care and accuracy in its phraseology. He had to draw up circulars for the European community, and statements of the true facts of the case for the information of the Chinese, who still continued to supply our ships with provisions, and had to be kept as far as possible in a neutral temper by having the rights of the question impressed upon them. These notifications, 'for the removal of misconceptions, by declaration of the truth, to the end that confidence may be restored to the public mind,' had to be drawn up in a simple didactic style, such as ordinary Chinese could appreciate, and involved no little trouble.

Besides issuing such notifications and broadsides, and personally distributing them among the people, Parkes caused printed copies of his correspondence with Commissioner Yeh to be circulated among the Chinese gentry, so that no one could fail to understand the true history of the contest. Not content with this, he encouraged a deputation of the gentry, headed by the merchant Howqua, to come to the Consulate and discuss the whole question

with him. They came on four occasions, from the 8th to the 15th November, and long and animated were the arguments.<sup>1</sup> It became clear that Yeh had not the support of the better classes in Canton, but that the gentry knew no method of overcoming his obstinacy. 'The Commissioner is immovable' was the invariable rider to every argument. A dramatic character was given to the interview of 15th November by the singular coincidence of diplomatic reasoning within the Consulate and the argument of cannon outside:—

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In the course of the conversation the *Encounter's* guns opened on some troops that had come down to attack a working party of our seamen and marines, and the sound of her guns at once made them more pliant and more eloquent. —, sinking his voice to a whisper, said most emphatically, that there was but one course, and this was to fire on the city (he and the rest, it should be observed, live in the suburbs)—in particular to fire on the yamun in which Yeh now resides; that there would be no change accomplished until he was killed, or until the people were so thoroughly terrified as to petition him clamorously to yield this point: he was very inaccessible; had no official of rank near enough to his own to insist on consulting with him, no relative or friend; was surrounded by 3000 braves, who were quite enough to scare any respectable body away from petitioning him; — said there would be nothing but woe in Canton until he was removed.

T. F.  
Wade  
Minutes of  
Conference, Nov.  
15 (extr.)

All this incessant work had to be carried on under conditions of positive danger. Parkes was himself absolutely fearless, but it was hardly pleasant to know that you could not put your head outside the factories without the chance of becoming a mark for the Chinese matchlockmen on the wall outside. It must not be forgotten that all the time the Admiral was shelling the Government buildings in Canton, Europeans were still living in

<sup>1</sup> The interviews are fully reported in the Blue-Book, p. 79, 85, 110, but are too long for insertion here. —



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the small enclosure of the foreign factories. Mrs Parkes, who was as plucky as her husband, could not be dissuaded from exposing herself on the housetop to see the shells flying over her head. Her letter to her sister-in-law (of which some passages are here quoted at the risk of repetition) gives a singular picture of the state of things at the factories during that anxious time :—

Mrs  
Parkes  
to Mrs  
M'Clatchie  
Hongkong  
Dec. 11

The Admiral sent a second letter to Yeh informing him that unless he yielded his yamun would be bombarded. One of the conditions that the Admiral now insisted on was having personal communication with Yeh inside the city in order to settle matters ; for he and indeed every one felt that, as Yeh had brought all this trouble upon himself and us, now was the time to enforce our right of entry into the city, for until that is the case matters would never improve and our position always be a most unsatisfactory one. Yeh only returned an involved reply, and the Admiral, after waiting a day or two, commenced bombarding the yamun, which is situated on the north-east side of the city. The shells were thrown as much as possible in this direction to avoid the destruction of life and property, as they wished Yeh to be the sufferer. It was quite wonderful to see the precision with which they fell. The *Encounter*, which was stationed just opposite the Consulate, throwing the shells almost over our houses, the concussion and noise were not particularly agreeable, but I could not resist watching the proceedings from the roof. The Admiral took up his position at the Dutch Folly and fired from there. This continued two days. A large fire broke out in the afternoon of the second, in a suburb, and one time we were rather afraid for the factories : however, fortunately, it did not reach so far. We were beginning to experience many inconveniences, as the shops were deserted and orders had been issued by the mandarins not to sell anything to us, so we could get no bread or milk, etc. The servants also left in numbers, and many of the

merchants had to trim their lamps and do everything for themselves.

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Harry had tried for some time to persuade me to go to Hongkong, but I was not nervous, and I felt I would rather stay and share anything with him. At last, however, he said that it would be a real relief to him to feel I was away. I thought it my duty to consent, and most reluctantly I accompanied the other two Consulate ladies to Hongkong. . . . Dear Harry, I am thankful to say, notwithstanding all his cares and responsibility, is wonderfully well and in good spirits, for he says with God's blessing he feels sure of a successful issue to this affair. Every one speaks in such praise of his conduct throughout, that it makes me quite proud. Sir John says he has done more than admirably. . . . Some of our servants have left, and the Consulate gentlemen have formed a mess in the house of one fortunate enough to retain his cook. Provisions of every kind and even water are sent up from here, so that they manage very well, although Harry says our house looks desolate enough. Nearly all the merchants have left Canton, for there was of course no business to be done, and they had no fancy for cooking their own dinner. All the treasure and a great deal of private property has been sent here, although I believe now the factories are perfectly safe both from fire and attack. To render them more secure against the former, many of the streets contiguous to their houses have been entirely destroyed and all the houses pulled down, so that there is a clear space, and we have strong guards with field-pieces which I think no Chinese mob would venture to attack.

After the two days' bombardment a breach was made in the city wall, and Captain Bate, with a strong body of marines, was the first to enter. They met with little resistance. The Admiral, Harry, several officers and civilians, entered afterwards, and gave

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three hearty cheers as one of the gates was destroyed. They afterwards entered the yamun, which apparently Yeh had only just left, for they found all his papers lying about on a table, and tea poured out. He seems to be proof against shells as well as everything else. Our force was not of course large enough to hold the position, and after remaining there some time, the men were withdrawn. As the last were embarking, the Chinese fired upon them and killed two marines and wounded several. This day's work, however, did not have any effect upon Yeh, who is the strangest mixture of obduracy and pride. I suppose he thinks he has gone too far to recede, and as for the suffering he causes amongst his own people, that never troubles him in the least, I should think.

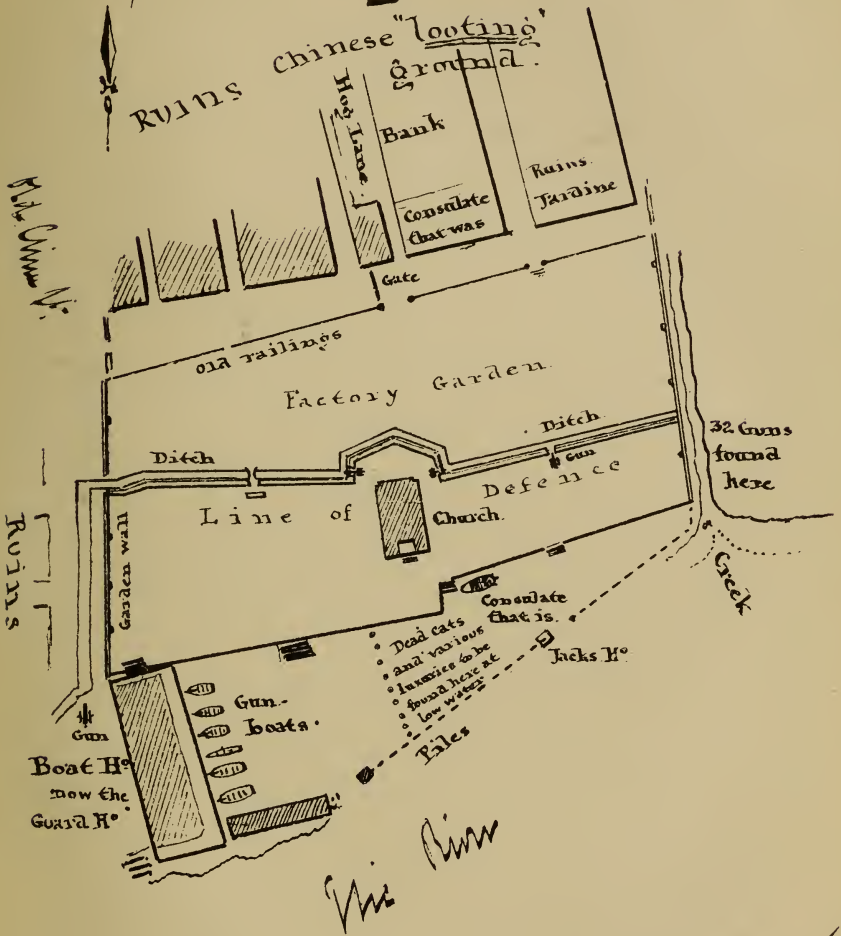
A few days ago the *Barracouta*, one of our ships, managed to destroy or capture [22] large war junks. They showed more fight than usual, and for some time the *Barracouta* had to stand fire from at least 220 guns. She was riddled in a hundred places, but wonderful to say only one man was killed, although the shot flew in all directions; fortunately the [Chinese] gunners are not very correct marksmen. But the whole affair was smartly managed, and is likely to strike the Chinese more than anything that had been done previously. . . . We have just received news of the destruction of all the Bogue forts, and that is a very good thing, for they so completely commanded the river. Now all the forts are in our possession. . . . Harry has no time to write to any one.

'Harry' did, however, manage to send a brief note to his sister:—

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
Hongkong  
Dec. 15

I am well and in the best of spirits. True, I am up to my neck in hot water, but I hope to use it in washing an immense amount of Canton filth that has been accumulating during years past. . . . We are just in this position that having taken everything but the city, we cannot *take* it (though we can *destroy* it,

If you have time to "look" you will get the  
 things *Wm. W.*



*Ann Hjer* *Wm. W.*

Honah  
 Shore





though we do not wish to be compelled to do that) unless we have a land force both for the attack and subsequent *occupation* which the former renders necessary. Better not to attack at all than to take and then retreat from it. I trust the Government will take the thing up spiritedly, and send us on some troops. We may not have to use them, but their *presence* will be necessary for a satisfactory adjustment of *all* difficulties; and I trust now that they will see the necessity of no longer making Canton and the Imperial Commissioner Yeh the channels of communication, but establish themselves at Peking at once. . . . As yet it is no war with China, but simply at Canton, and that because the Commissioner chose to *declare* it.

At the moment this letter was being written, the assumed safety of the factories at Canton was rudely disproved. Parkes had left them safe on the 14th of December to go to Hongkong, and on that very night they were blazing. In spite of all precautions the Chinese had contrived to set fire to them, nearly the whole European quarter became a heap of ruins, and one of the Consulate assistants, Mr. Lane, was killed by a falling wall. The English factory still stood, but two days later this too was set on fire, and among other sufferers Parkes lost almost everything he possessed. The characteristic plan, here reproduced, of the ruined site and the Admiral's line of defence was drawn for Mrs Parkes by Captain W. T. Bate, of the *Actaeon*, a very intimate friend and a most gallant officer. He had been the first to enter the city and the first to plant our colours on the Dutch Folly on 29th October, and was placed in charge of Macao fort after the command of the river had been secured. He was killed a year later in the assault of Canton.

To Mrs Parkes the chief feeling was one of thankfulness that her husband had been away at the hour of danger: to which had he been at Canton during the fire he would undoubtedly have exposed his life:—

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Mrs  
Parkes  
to Mrs  
Lockhart  
Hongkong.  
Jan. 14  
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You will I know be anxious for news of us, and will be glad to hear that we are both safe and well, although now rendered homeless by the destruction of the factories at Canton. Notwithstanding all the precautions that were taken to secure them against fire, the Chinese managed their work so cleverly that not one house remains standing. The amount of property destroyed was very great, and we of course among the rest came in for our share of losses. Harry happening to be down here at the time, we were unable to save those things that we most valued, such as books and papers, and all our pretty glass and crockery has also shared the same fate. Indeed, our worldly goods are not now very extensive, but I feel so grateful that my dear husband was preserved from danger that every loss appears but trifling.

Our affairs here remain in the same unsatisfactory state, the Admiral now awaiting reinforcements before he can take more active measures. He intends maintaining our position before Canton. The Chinese appear to imagine that our inactivity proceeds from fear, and they are consequently getting every day bolder, and annoy our ships in every possible way. . . . Harry, I am thankful to say, is now here, and will, I hope, remain, as there is nothing for him to do at Canton, and all Consular business will be carried on here, and an intense relief it is to me to be once more free from the anxiety I could not help feeling during his absence. People are getting much alarmed as to the safety of this place, and very stringent measures for our security are being taken. . . . In all our troubles Harry's cheerful untiring energy and unselfishness have shone forth brightly. The Admiral and indeed every one speaks most highly of his conduct, and very pleasant it is to me to hear such praises on every side.

Matters were indeed at a standstill. By the middle of November the Admiral had taken everything that could

be taken with the force at his command ; he was not strong enough to occupy Canton ; and nothing more could be done to bring Yeh to submission. Indeed Sir John Bowring, who had begun to grow vacillating, continued to hold out the olive branch to the indignant Commissioner and to propose amicable interviews—after all that had happened. He was clearly frightened at his own temerity, and did much to annul the good effects of his originally bold and determined attitude. Nor were the Admiral's movements, however necessary, calculated to bring down Yeh's defiant mood. After the burning of the English factory in December, there was no further object, and there was considerable risk, in holding any position on land, and Admiral Seymour accordingly withdrew his men from their intrenched position in the Factory garden, (shown in Captain Bate's plan,) and confined his defence to a line across the river and the Macao fort opposite Honan. Here he resolved to wait until the arrival from England of the reinforcements he now asked for. He and Sir John Bowring had deferred making this request as long as there seemed any prospect of success with the force already at command. In vain had Parkes and Wade pressed upon their superiors in urgent terms as early as 18th November the necessity of asking for military reinforcements in order to occupy Canton. Sir John said he knew that the feeling of the Home Government was opposed to the occupation of Chinese territory, and 'knowing how disagreeable to the Govern-  
 ment the proposition to send a land force hither would be, he could not take on himself to make it, especially as he regarded it not only as not necessary but calculated to embarrass us in our future relations.' Admiral Seymour supported the Governor's view, and said that 'so far as he was concerned nothing would please him better than to see ten thousand men there to-morrow ; but he knew himself enough of the antipathy of the Home Government to the occupation of territory and to military expeditions in general to be able to confirm the opinion of Sir J.

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Bowring, which was based on a personal acquaintance with members of the present Cabinet.' Parkes and Wade were right, however; and in January the application for reinforcements could no longer be delayed.

A weary interval of waiting had to be endured before the reinforcements, if granted, could arrive; and meanwhile the situation was disagreeable if not dangerous. The Chinese naturally regarded the gradual retirement of the British fleet as a sign of defeat, and were emboldened to carry the war into the enemy's country. Beyond burning the European settlement at Whampoa in January they did not effect any considerable damage, but their junks and fire-ships, concealed in shallow creeks, were continually molesting the English vessels, which could not pursue them into their retreats. Many conflicts occurred which called forth the courage of the English sailors, and as Mr Boulger has said, 'a volume might be written on the feats of valour and endurance wrought during this period by the officers and men under Sir Michael Seymour's command.'<sup>1</sup> At Hongkong, the streets were placarded with promises of reward—now raised to 100 taels (£33)—for English heads; the Chinese population received stringent orders to quit the island; and the lives of Europeans were threatened by a dastardly attempt to poison the bread with arsenic.

In the midst of these risks, and deeply chagrined at the delay in bringing Yeh to account, Parkes led what was for him an idle life: for though his Consulate was established at Hongkong, there was very little business stirring. He had, however, a domestic occupation which had all the charm of novelty. His first child, a daughter, was born in February, and the anxieties and happiness of the event diverted him from the dreariness of the political situation. He was as intent as ever on gaining the great point of direct diplomatic intercourse with the Chinese authorities, and he had now made up his mind clearly

<sup>1</sup> *History of China*, iii. 415.

that the time had come to insist on a representative at Peking. Writing to his sister he says :—

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The newspaper will give you the local occurrences. Nothing of very great importance : we continuing to hold our own, and the Imperialists not hurting us. We have what we believe to be the Emperor's instructions, which appear to me to suit us exactly. Yeh reports that he has thoroughly thrashed us : our submission therefore is to be received, the Emperor directs, when we are prepared to tender it, but explanations, if offered by us at any other place but Canton, are to be refused. Good ! be it so. It is well that we should be only heard, in the first instance, at Canton ; but in such a manner that the Emperor will be glad to hear us speaking to another tune elsewhere,—it should be in no other place but Peking. To do this we should reduce Canton, and *then* proceed to a peaceable settlement of difficulties if the Emperor be disposed to hear of this. If not, then let us hold Canton till he will be so disposed.

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
Hongkong  
Feb. 16

To her husband he spoke even more plainly :—

I trust that you and I will see great changes in this great Empire before very long. The issue of these troubles ought to be a *resident Minister at Peking and liberty to go through the length and breadth of the land*, and I trust it will be so.

At the end of March the news reached Hongkong that the Government had determined to take up the quarrel in earnest, and send out troops.

We are anxiously looking homewards [wrote Parkes], for the means to enable us to recommence active operations. I still see no other course than the capture and occupation of Canton. Yeh will not give in unless this is done, and we must have some such 'material guarantee' for the effective fulfilment of the engagements that must be exacted. But we must have troops, and these we hear are on their way.

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
Hongkong  
March 29

This was cheering ; but there was something else that



1857 was a very sour drop in the cup : the letter goes on to  
Æt. 29 say :—

I, however, shall probably be away and shall have nothing to do with active operations. Sir J. Bowring has given me my orders for Amoy, and though he says he shall call me back again if he sees occasion for my services, I am inclined to think that he will not take much trouble to find said occasion. I have not got on with him lately. . . . Little else than a sycophant's part will satisfy him, and that I am not content to play ; and therefore he tells me (putting it, however, solely on the ground of the growing importance of Amoy) to step aside, which for some reasons I am not sorry to do.

Of course he put a good face on the matter, but it must have been a severe blow to learn that, after taking a leading part and doing the hardest work of all throughout the autumn and winter, he was now to be set aside and relegated to a humdrum Consulate in the North, where tranquillity reigned undisturbed. In the eyes of the Chinese officials, who regarded him as their chief enemy, it meant disgrace. In the eyes of all Hongkong, of all the fleet, and (as it appeared afterwards) of the Home Government, it meant not merely ingratitude but fatuous folly. To send away the man who had shown that he possessed every quality that was called for in a critical emergency, and to send him just when a crisis was about to occur, certainly appeared to those on the spot an act of imbecility. Among those who had had ample opportunities of observing Parkes' work, Admiral Seymour had formed a very high opinion of him, and had brought his 'valuable services' under the notice of the Admiralty. The slight now put upon the Consul who had borne with him the brunt of the war was intolerable to his sailor's sense of fairness ; and he went to Sir John Bowring, and got the sentence of banishment reversed. 'The dear old Admiral,' wrote Captain Bate to Mrs Parkes, 'did it entirely himself, and on *public* grounds ; so that Parkes will not be in

the least compromised or placed in the position of a person receiving a favour.' In a letter to Sir John (18th April 1857) the Admiral recited Parkes' services in terms of warm appreciation :—

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From the 23rd October [he wrote], when I arrived at Canton, to the 16th December, the date the factories were destroyed by fire, I had the benefit of Mr. Parkes' advice and assistance, and I beg your Excellency will convey to him the high sense I entertain of their value, and of the cheerful co-operation he at all times afforded me for the benefit of the public service, during our complicated duties, in the performance of which his intimate knowledge of the Chinese language was all-important, and on several occasions exercised under circumstances of personal danger to himself.<sup>1</sup>

It was lucky for Sir John that he rescinded the order when he did, for definite instructions were coming out from the Home Government for the employment of Consul Parkes in the forthcoming operations at Canton.

Meanwhile the House of Commons had its say about the contest that had been going on in China, and said it with that superb disregard of consequences abroad which ever distinguishes our legislators when they try to meddle in foreign affairs of which they know nothing. Parkes' conduct was freely canvassed, and Mr. Cobden was good enough, whilst disapproving his action, to speak condescendingly of his abilities ; but Sir John Bowring, as the official chiefly responsible for the embroglio, was fiercely attacked. The onslaught, both in the Lords and Commons, was obviously a party move, and carried no weight whatever with those who knew anything of the subject. Nor did it influence the constituencies. When the vote of censure was carried in the Commons, Palmerston appealed to the country, and was again returned to

<sup>1</sup> Parkes had been injured by an explosion of powder in the capture of the French Folly fort.

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power with redoubled strength, whilst Cobden and Bright lost their seats. With characteristic courage the Premier had not waited for the verdict, but ordered out the troops and appointed the Earl of Elgin to conduct the negotiations that were to follow the war. Parkes had no cause to regret the debate: he had been splendidly defended, and the expedition was his best vindication. The delay alone was what he deplored:—

To Rev. T.  
M'Clatchie  
Hongkong  
May 9

The adverse vote of the House of Commons on the China question and the dissolution of Parliament did indeed take us by surprise; and to-day there has tumbled in the mail of 20th March bringing us the intelligence of Lord Elgin's appointment and of the despatch of the noble force the Government are so wisely and so promptly sending out. The moment I saw that our present force was inadequate to bring Yeh to terms—though previously we had all imagined it abundantly sufficient—I urged upon Sir John Bowring (in the middle of November) to get us troops, but he declined, because he knew, he said, that it would be unpalatable to the Ministers. The Chinese accordingly gained ground and grew stronger, and, *two months* after that, H. E. was obliged to send a very urgent demand for assistance. Humanly speaking matters might have been much mended by a timelier application—however, it is hard to say. The finger of One who rules the destinies of races is clearly traceable in the whole affair. He has brought about the crisis, and surely, may we not hope, for some good purpose. It is the cause of the West against the East, of Paganism against Christendom, and what may we not look to as the result? The opening of China indeed I trust. I confidently hope too that a satisfactory adjustment of all difficulties may be attained with a slight effusion of blood. Canton, it is true, must fall. I see no hope of any arrangement being arrived at without this primary step being effected; but I do trust that with the fall of that city—a punishment upon it long wanted—

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hostilities may end, and that the Emperor may then consent to receive a representative at Peking. I am truly glad that a man of such high calibre as Lord Elgin is coming, and may he receive such guidance from above as shall render his abilities transcendant indeed.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### CANTON TAKEN AND HELD

1857-1858

1857 THE history of Lord Elgin's mission to China in 1857-  
ÆT. 29 1858 has been so admirably related by his private secretary Laurence Oliphant,<sup>1</sup> and so fully recorded by the published despatches, that it would be a work of supererogation to recapitulate the course of events. Every one remembers how the China Expedition was met on its way out by an urgent appeal for help from Lord Canning, the Viceroy of India, then in the first grave alarms of the Mutiny; and how promptly Lord Elgin recognized the critical nature of the situation, and took upon himself the responsibility of diverting the force from China to Calcutta. How greatly this clear-sighted act contributed to the saving of the Indian Empire cannot be too highly appreciated, and nothing in Lord Elgin's distinguished career was more laudable than this sacrifice of the immediate success of his own mission to the paramount necessities of the Indian Government. The effect upon the position in China was naturally disappointing to those who were waiting at Hongkong to see Commissioner Yeh brought to reason; but it was felt that the delay was amply justified. They were not equally satisfied that the new Plenipotentiary understood the situation, nor did

<sup>1</sup> *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin's Mission to China and Japan.* Two vols. Blackwood, 1859.



subsequent events altogether remove their doubts. Lord Elgin was disposed to treat the opinions of the residents and old officials somewhat cavalierly, and it cannot be said that he produced a very favourable impression upon those who were best able to judge of the steps to be taken. He seemed to regard the whole affair—and especially its beginning, the *Arrow* incident—as a ‘wretched’ blunder, and his sympathies were apparently rather with the Chinese than with his fellow-countrymen. Nothing, in his opinion, was too violent or cruel for the authorities and residents at Hongkong to approve, and in the subsequent operations he was constantly taking credit for inducing the Admiral and General to employ the methods of common humanity towards their victims, the ‘poor Chinese.’ One would imagine that he had never seen the Blue-Book in which the careful precautions of Admiral Seymour to avoid slaughter are described, and that he had not read the reports of how Consul Parkes had gone in front, at the risk of his life, to beg the Chinese to retire before our men fired. His may have been a noble ideal to aim at, but it was hardly the policy suited to the situation, and Lord Elgin was perhaps scarcely the man for the work to be done.

That work did not begin till near the close of 1857—more than a year after Admiral Seymour had exhausted his resources of ‘argument by {artillery}’ in the Canton river. The delay had of course given the Chinese a totally false impression. They believed the English were afraid, and the belief encouraged them to be bold in molesting the white-livered ‘barbarians.’ The attacks on our shipping, and even on our men-of-war, became so annoying that the Admiral had to take serious measures; and in May, before Lord Elgin’s arrival, the blue jackets under Commodore Keppel, Parkes’ friend of 1842, had performed a series of dashing ‘cutting-out’ expeditions in the creeks, and had destroyed the large fleet of war-junks which the Chinese had collected. But Canton remained unpunished, and Yeh showed no sign of repent-

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ing. Lord Elgin, who arrived early in July, would have preferred going North and coming to terms with the Peking Government itself; but circumstances modified his policy. His troops could not be spared from India; the French Ambassador, who was to join him, was dilatory; the season grew too late for a voyage to the Peiho; and at last it was resolved to do what ought never to have been doubtful from the first: to settle the local quarrel by local chastisement, to avenge Canton insults at Canton. Even Lord Elgin recognized the fact that there would be 'no peace till the two parties fight it out. The Chinese do not want to fight, but they will not accept the position relatively to the strangers under which alone strangers will consent to live with them, till the strength of the two parties has been tested by fighting. The English do want to fight,'—and, considering the provocation, it was natural they should.<sup>1</sup>

To that end preparations were being actively pushed forward in October and November. Yeh seems to have doubted the resolution of the Allies to the last: for in a curious memorial to the Emperor of China, written early in December, he draws a melancholy picture of Lord Elgin's difficulties and hesitations, and says 'Elgin passes day after day at Hongkong, stamping his foot and sighing.'<sup>2</sup> The assembling of the forces was a welcome sight to Parkes, after the long months of necessary inactivity, confused counsels, and blundering delays:—

To Mrs  
Lockhart  
Hongkong  
Nov. 15

The only event with us is the gradual 'gathering' that is going on—Canton being of course the object. Another fortnight, perhaps even another month, may be necessary to complete all preparations, though I should think that the next mail should take you news of movements actually begun. . . . It has been decided, however, that we are to have allies in the French.<sup>3</sup> I for one am sorry for it. The Canton matter is our

<sup>1</sup> THEODORE WALROND, *Letters and Journals of James, eighth Earl of Elgin*, p. 211 (1872).

<sup>2</sup> OLIPHANT, *l.c.* i. 147.

<sup>3</sup> The French had the murder of a missionary to avenge.

particular quarrel, one which we commenced and have hitherto prosecuted alone, and we ought to have been allowed to fight it out. That point settled, the alliance of the French for general purposes, in which they and all Europe and America are as much interested as ourselves, would have been very acceptable. Arranged, however, as it has been to the contrary, we shall have for an attacking force about 2500 marines, 1000 troops, and 1000 French, total 4500, without taking into account the reserve of at least half that number of seamen which the Admiral would be able to land from our ships. The large fleet of, I believe, eighteen or twenty gunboats, exclusive of the half-dozen that the French have, enables us to hold the city on two sides in an iron grasp. . . . When, therefore, I contemplate the strength of the force I have above enumerated, I cannot but feel that humanly speaking there can be little doubt indeed as to the result. The *holding* of the city after it is taken will of course be a troublesome matter. A sort of military government will, I suppose, have to be established, and on such a footing, I trust, as will convince the Chinese that we are prepared to keep this said city for many a day until the pride of the Cantonese be most effectually humbled and we have gained a position in the Empire generally that will be the best guarantee against contumelious treatment, at least, in future.

Lord Elgin went up the river last week to look around him, and I accompanied him. We were away four days, and the trip did me good. I suppose I shall be employed in or about Canton, and I expect benefit from it, as, though I may have to work hard, I shall not have the load of anxiety that weighed upon me this time last year, when I was one of the chief actors in the scene, and had all sorts of responsibilities which now rest with other and greater persons. . . .

Our enemy has become much stronger since then [the first China war, seventeen years before], and

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we are obliged to employ more means and greater caution in proceeding against him, at least in this neighbourhood, where we, during the period named, have been doing all in our power to increase his strength, by the sale of guns and often munitions of war, which they have now in abundance. All the pirate fleets that we are continually destroying are in fact armed by our traders, and *thousands of cannon* are sold annually [to the Chinese] in Singapore and Hongkong!

The expedition with Lord Elgin was unofficial, but soon afterwards the Admiral applied for Parkes' services, and he was attached to his staff. Sir Michael Seymour had not forgotten how the Consul could work; he admired his character, his energy, and pluck; and he was determined to have him by his side when the attack on Canton should begin. Nothing could have been more gratifying to Parkes than this selection for a prominent post in the business to come. He was weary of inaction, and eager for the work: and if he could have foreseen how heavy a burden of risk and responsibility and unremitting labour would be laid upon him, he would only have gone forward with increased alacrity. It was all in the way of duty, and provided it was good honest resolute work, with no 'shilly-shallying,' he was delighted to do it.

On the 12th December the summons of the two Ambassadors, English and French, was delivered to Yeh, demanding the full execution of Treaty rights, and especially of the entrance into Canton, and the payment of compensation for British losses during the late disturbance. Parkes, of course, was present:—

To W.  
Lockhart  
*Actæon*  
near  
Canton,  
Dec. 13

I arrived here yesterday morning in time to join the party who had been deputed to deliver at Canton the letters of the English and French Ambassadors. Honan Point, which is scarcely half a mile from the south-west angle of the city wall, was the place named. The French had one gunboat, we another, the two being considered sufficient to guard against treachery; but nothing of that kind had been designed. An officer

deputed by Yeh to receive the letters pushed off to the gunboats, and while the parties interested were engaged in the short palaver, we took a survey of the river all along the south face of the city, which we had not seen since we abandoned the vicinity in January last. Nothing had been done during all this time by the Chinese to increase their defences—at least, nothing that we could see—all along this face of the city. They may have blocked up the river and put up a few masked batteries, but nothing on a formidable scale had been attempted. At the back of the city, where it is commanded by the forts and heights, they have been more or less busy; still I imagine the total amount of what they have accomplished is something very small.

The letters delivered, we came away. *Ten days* are allowed to Yeh to comply with the demands. . . . H. E., I presume, will show the first thing in the morning, and I suppose there will then be a general movement—gunboats going up to the west and north-west of Canton, while Honan is occupied on the south face, and reconnaissances are made preparatory to the landing of one or two brigades on the east side. The taking up the various positions will probably be a week's work, so we shall not be ready long before the time appointed to Yeh expires.

Yeh's reply was what his replies had always been: a lengthy argument, reiterating what had again and again been refuted. Even Lord Elgin called it 'sheer twaddle' and at last perceived that diplomacy was wasted upon such a man. An ultimatum was presented on 24th December, giving the Imperial Commissioner another forty-eight hours to think over our terms. Meanwhile the people of Canton, against whom nobody wished to make war, must be warned of what was coming, and placards must be distributed to a long list of 'notables, merchants, literati, and others' on shore, to make them understand that 6000 British sailors and soldiers had not

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come up the river merely for a picnic, as Commissioner Yeh, after consultation with his favourite idol, seemed to imagine. It was a dangerous task to go into the thickly-peopled suburbs and scatter 'barbarian' proclamations, and naturally it was Parkes who volunteered to do it. He and Captain Hall went to work with a will; landed a party here and there, and distributed the placards to the crowd; and then were off again before the natives had got over their amazement. Risky as it was, there were ludicrous incidents in this bill-sticking business:—

In one of these rapid descents Captain Hall caught a mandarin in his chair not far from the outer gate. The Captain pasted the mandarin up in his chair with the barbarian papers, pasted the chair all over with them, and started the bearers to carry this new advertising van into the city. The Chinese crowd, always alive to a practical joke, roared. These belligerent bill-stickers have brought off some Chinese counter-proclamations. Arrogant to the last, these papers say that the rebellious English, having seduced the French to join in this rebellion, it becomes necessary to stop the trade altogether and utterly to annihilate these barbarians.<sup>1</sup>

Yeh's final answer was as unyielding as ever. Not a jot did he recede from his old position. The question had now gone beyond diplomacy, and the Admirals took it up. On the 28th, the day of the 'Massacre of the Innocents,' as Lord Elgin sadly observed, the bombardment began at daybreak. The firing continued all day and all night. On the 29th the Magazine hill, which is the key of Canton, was seized after an hour and a half's fighting, and at 2 P.M. Gough's fort was captured. The city was now completely commanded by the English and French guns. It was very nearly a bloodless victory, for the resistance had been insignificant, and the fire of the ships had been concentrated on certain spots, notably on

<sup>1</sup> G. WINGROVE COOKE, *Times Special Correspondence from China*, p. 310, 311 (1859).

Yeh's yamun, which had been reduced to ruins. Then followed a curious pause. For a week the conquerors stood looking down from the walls, where they were now hutted, upon the 'plain of chimneyless roofs' of Canton, which lay beneath at their mercy:—

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People still ask, not what *we* are going to do next, but what the Chinese are going to do. These curious, stolid, imperturbable people seem determined simply to ignore our presence here, and to wait till we are pleased to go away. Yeh lives much as usual. He cut off four hundred Chinese heads the other morning, and stuck them up in the south of the city. Our leaders seem to be puzzled by the tenacious, childlike, helpless obstinacy—the passive resistance—of their enemy. When petitioners come up to complain of some plundering straggler, there is a buzz of expectation in the camp. Mr Parkes and Mr Wade, the interpreters, who, by reason of the general ignorance of the language, are become masters of the position, are looked to with ludicrous anxiety. There is an evident hope that the gentleman with the tail is a mandarin with an offer of submission.<sup>1</sup>

But no submission was thought of; and, since the Chinese authorities declined to come up to us, we had to go down to them. Parkes, of course, ventured into the city before any one else, and reported the people civil. On 5th January the troops entered the streets of Canton, and, traversing the 'Avenue of Benevolence and Love,' in a few hours captured the city Governor and the Tartar General, besides an immense store of treasure, which the inhabitants very willingly carried down to the ships for a small consideration. One more capture had still to be made—the capture of Yeh, and it was made by his special adversary. There were rumours that the great mandarin had escaped, or committed suicide, but Parkes had a strong impression that

<sup>1</sup> G. WINGROVE COOKE, *Times Special Correspondence from China*, p. 335 (1859).

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he was still in the Tartar quarter of the city, and he determined to find him. He had missed the exploring party which had captured the Governor and General, and feared he was 'out of the running.' Wondering what to do, he came across Commodore Elliot and Captain Key (now Sir Astley Cooper Key) of the *Sanspareil*. These officers knew that if any man could 'nose out' Yeh it was Consul Parkes, and they lost no time in putting themselves and a hundred blue jackets under his guidance.

What I first deplored [he wrote]<sup>1</sup> proved an advantage. Yeh was my *game*, rapidity of movement was essential to success, and the Jacks moved quicker than the marine phalanx could have done. Commodore Elliot gave me the party and came with me. We first made for a point near the centre of the city, where I expected to find Yeh, but we were disappointed. He had been there, but had left the premises three days before.

They found a Chinese student there who, after a close interrogatory, admitted that he thought he knew the Commissioner's retreat. They took him to the Governor's *yamun*, and there the information, 'after some admonition,' was confirmed by Pih-kwei himself:—

He was made to send a second guide, and the two Chinamen were placed in front of the blue jackets. These unwilling guides, as they were urged along the narrow streets of the Tartar city, did not cease shouting to the crowds which ran together, 'Good people, go about your affairs. These gentlemen have just had a respectful interview with Pih-kwei, and they are now going to have another interview with Yeh.' 'Very well,' said the crowd, habitually deferential to the cap of the small mandarin. As they got deeper and deeper into the maze of streets, some of the officers seemed to think they were doing an imprudent thing. 'If the

<sup>1</sup> The letter, dated 21st January 1858, is printed at p. 319, 320 of *The Memorable Year*, a curious work privately and anonymously printed at Macao in 1858 by Mr Gideon Nye, an American merchant, and a valued friend of Parkes. There can be no question as to the authorship of the letter, though the writer is merely described as 'an actor in the scene.'

worst come to the worst,' said Captain Key, 'we know the direction of the walls by this compass, and can fight our way to them'; so on they went. The longest chase must have an end. At last the guides called a halt at the door of a third-rate yamun, which appeared closed and deserted. The doors were forced open, and the blue jackets were all over the place in a moment. It was evident that they were now on the right scent. The house was full of hastily packed baggage. Mandarins were running about—yes, *running* about; and at last one came forward and delivered himself up as Yeh. It was a fine act of devotion, but it did not impose upon Parkes, who had a portrait of the great unseen.<sup>1</sup> The man was not fat enough, and was at once pushed aside, and hurrying on they at last spied a very fat man contemplating the achievement of getting over the wall at the extreme rear of the yamun. Captain Key and Commodore Elliot's coxwain rushed forward. Key took the fat gentleman round the waist [or neck], and the coxwain twisted the august tail of the Imperial Commissioner round his fist. There was no mistake now;—this was the veritable Yeh. Instinctively the blue jackets felt that it must be Yeh, and they tossed up their hats and gave three rattling cheers.<sup>2</sup>

Parkes' letter to Mr Nye records a singular discovery:—

Almost the first things found among the records were the *original ratified* Treaties of England, France, and America, which every one supposed to be deposited under the Imperial eye at Peking! Our party was too small to secure both Yeh and Records, so Elliot held the place until I could bring assistance. The Lieutenant-Governor's yamun is in the south-west corner of the old city, so—as we started from the extreme north

<sup>1</sup> This portrait had been given to Captain Bate by Mr Nye: see his *Memorable Year*, p. 321-323.

<sup>2</sup> COOKE, *l.c.* p. 341, 342.

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and performed various gyrations—we had a tolerable run. It is curious that Yeh should have fallen into Commodore Elliot's hands, seeing that he was the naval officer to whom I made the *first* announcement of the *Arrow* outrage. He began and ended Yeh's business.

When Parkes informed the great Yeh that he must accompany the guard to headquarters, the Commissioner said in his arrogant style, 'Who are you that address me in my own language?' 'There is no need to tell you my name,' answered the Consul, 'you know it as well as I know yours.' It was an added bitterness to be the captive of the famous Consul Parkes, whom he had hated and reviled ever since the beginning of the contest. The long duel was over, and it had ended in a dramatic scene. We shall hear no more of Commissioner Yeh. He recovered all his old insolence as soon as he was assured that his life was safe. He was treated with the studious deference which English men of honour make a point of showing towards a helpless enemy: but it was thrown away upon him. He went to Calcutta on board the *Inflexible*, escorted by Mr (now Sir Chaloner) Alabaster, and after two years' captivity he died.<sup>1</sup>

Parkes' conduct during the attack on Canton, where he had been repeatedly under fire, and had risked his life in all sorts of hazardous services, was warmly eulogized in despatches by Admiral Seymour and Commodore Elliot, and met with Lord Malmesbury's 'entire approval.' The Admiral generously admitted that he would not have known what to do without Parkes' knowledge of the people and language and his ever ready counsel and help. On all sides he was regarded as 'the man of the situation.'

The Chinese Government of Canton had been abolished. Its officials were captives, and its chief was

<sup>1</sup> A very interesting account of Yeh is given by Mr Wingrove Cooke, who sailed to Calcutta on the same ship.



exiled to India. The question arose, what was to be put in its place? Martial law under the Commanders-in-Chief of the Allied Forces was of course established, but how could these gallant officers maintain order, investigate charges of violence and robbery, administer civil law, and generally govern a city of a million inhabitants who spoke a language which was incomprehensible to their conquerors? Three men in all the allied camp could speak Chinese: Parkes, Wade, and the French interpreter. Without the help of one of those three nothing whatever could be done. Bayonets were useful enough as an ultimate argument, but there were endless details of administration to be attended to where a tongue and not cold steel was wanted. The Allied Commanders were at a nonplus. It was clear that some sort of native executive would have to be set up; but the difficulty was to arrange satisfactory safeguards. After many consultations a plan was devised which later experience proved to be workable if not quite satisfactory. The captive Governor Pih-kwei was reinstated in office, after a solemn lecture from Lord Elgin, on 9th January; and a Commission of Europeans was appointed, nominally to assist him in dealing with cases of dispute between Chinese and foreigners—really to keep a strict watch upon him and govern the city themselves. The Commission consisted of three members—Colonel Holloway, Captain Martineau des Chenez, and Consul Parkes, and they entered upon their duties on 10th January. They were at first quartered, along with a guard of marines and artillery, in the Governor's *yamun*, side by side with Pih-kwei, and immediately set about the work of restoring order and public confidence.

Parkes was now entering upon a wholly novel phase of his career. He was practically Governor of Canton. It is doing no injustice to his colleagues, or to his superiors the Commanders-in-Chief, to claim for him the most important part of the work that was to come, for they all willingly admitted that without him that work

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would have been impossible. General Straubenzee's<sup>1</sup> testimony will prove how highly his services were valued by the responsible authorities. He wrote to Lord Elgin just a year after the Commission was established in these terms: 'I must now in justice state to your Lordship the valuable assistance afforded me by Mr Parkes, for without his knowledge of the language and customs of the country I could have done nothing, and could not have gained any true information. *His energy is untiring, never sparing himself in any way; personal danger and personal comfort were never thought of when he could in any way advance the public service.*' Such praise from the General in command of the British forces at Canton speaks volumes: soldiers say what they mean, and say it without a flourish of fine phrases. And Parkes deserved it, for never had a harder task been committed to the energy of one man, and that man still under the age of thirty. His successive colleagues helped or impeded him, according to their tastes and characters. They came and went, as duty or promotion called them, and others took their places. Some worked hard, others tried to throw obstacles in his way. But whilst others were shifted, Parkes remained unflinchingly at his work, and he was the one indispensable member, for he alone could speak with the natives and understand their ways. Writing approvingly of Mr H. N. Lay's ('one of our best interpreters') accompanying Lord Elgin to the North, he explains his not being chosen himself for the post, to which he was obviously entitled, by the necessity of his presence at Canton: 'I was required to stay here in order to form the Commission, which could not have been instituted had I not remained. It is a peculiar arrangement, and one that must be wholly unintelligible to people at a distance. With a high title, we are wholly without powers or defined functions, and I have been

<sup>1</sup> General Sir C. T. van Straubenzee had seen plenty of service, in the Coorg campaign of 1834, that of Gwalior in 1843, and in the Crimea, where he commanded at the two assaults on the Redan, for which he got the C.B., which was raised to K.C.B. after the capture of Canton. He died in 1892.

simply a drudge or man-of-all-work to the force left here.' What manner of difficulties he had to deal with will be seen in the subjoined extracts from his reports. One thing, however, is not mentioned in these official documents: yet it throws a strong light on his fearless character. He was the mark for secret assassination; there was a reward of thirty thousand dollars on his head, and frequent attempts were made upon his life. But no one could have guessed from his manner that his daily patrols through the hostile city were not as safe as a saunter in Pall Mall.

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When Lord Elgin sailed for the North, to negotiate a peace with the Government of the Emperor, he instructed Parkes to keep him informed of the progress of affairs at Canton. The Ambassador did not consider himself absolved from responsibility when he left the city to the Commanders-in-Chief, and he relied upon Parkes to represent the diplomatic element, as distinct from the military, and promised him his support. Part of his letter on leaving Canton may be quoted:—

I think it due to you to state that it is at my instance that you have consented to act as one of the Commissioners named by the Plenipotentiaries and the Commanders-in-Chief to aid in the maintenance of order in Canton. So long as the city continues under martial law you will receive instructions from the Commanders-in-Chief for your guidance; but I must request that you will furnish me with full information on all points falling under your authority or within your cognizance which affect its peace and the well-being of its inhabitants. . . .

From the  
Earl of  
Elgin  
Jan. 22  
1858

If during the military occupation of Canton the affairs of the city, in so far as the allies are concerned, be wisely, temperately, and firmly administered, I am not without hope that the people at its close may regret our departure. In that event a result will have been achieved of great political importance, which will confer credit on all who have a share in bringing it about.

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In accordance with these instructions Parkes made various reports to Lord Elgin, the first of which is here given in extract, as it will serve to show the duties which the Commission had to discharge :—

To the Earl  
of Elgin  
Governor's  
Yamun  
Canton  
Jan. 27  
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Our principal duty, we are informed, is to watch the temper of the Chinese authorities and people ; and, acting in conjunction with his Excellency Pih-kwei, to maintain order, and support the rights of both foreigners and natives throughout this city and its extensive suburbs. To render ourselves familiar with the locality—to promote friendly relations with the authorities—to prove ourselves the friends of the people by redressing their wrongs, but, at the same time, to make known to all classes the supremacy of the Allied Powers—were, of course, our first objects ; and your Lordship will, I trust, be able to confirm the opinion that the progress already made towards the attainment of these objects is at least sufficient to encourage us to persevere in our endeavours.

Patrols made daily by the Commissioners themselves in different parts of the city and suburbs have furnished them with good means of judging the temper of the people and with excellent opportunities of collecting much varied information. The last one, made yesterday, proved to us that throughout the great western suburb the people have returned to their trades, their silk-looms, and their ordinary occupations, and this is fast becoming the case in both the old and new city, although it may naturally be expected that the eastern portion of the latter, which suffered more from the attack than any other quarter, will continue, for some time, to feel its ill-effects. . . .

On two occasions His Excellency Pih-kwei endeavoured to avoid the article of the agreement which requires that all proclamations issued by the Chinese authorities should bear the counter-seal of the Commissioners ; but the omission was discovered, checked, and remedied. At the same time the instructions of

the Commanders-in-Chief were carried out in respect to the interdiction of the sale of liquor to our men and the establishment of markets. Supplies of every kind are abundant and cheap. . . .

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The Court of the Commissioners has been thronged by the Chinese from the commencement, many of them making applications which it was, of course, impossible for us to entertain ; such as for relief from losses or injuries sustained either during the hostilities or immediately after these had ceased. It soon became apparent that a police corps furnished the only efficient means of putting a stop to the excesses or irregularities of our men, or of aiding the Commissioners in the carrying out of other objects ; and, after considerable effort, this force has been organized and is now in active operation. One hundred English and thirty French, distributed between six stations, are able to patrol, all hours of the day, the old and new cities and a great portion of the suburbs ; while others remain in the stations, ready to respond to any call for assistance. The men are well housed and well protected, and their efficiency and safety are greatly increased by an equal number of Chinese police being associated with them and taking part in the discharge of their duties. Our short experience of the plan is very satisfactory. . . .

Although the people are rapidly coming back to their homes in the city, they are not encouraged to do so by the example of their own authorities, all of whom still hold aloof and do not return to their yamuns. The fear of being molested by foreigners, which they allege as the reason of their conduct, cannot certainly be the true one in all instances ; and I feel convinced from various circumstances, which are known to your Excellency, that the presence of the late Governor-General Yeh in the river, and the belief that in some way or other he may shortly be released or regain his liberty, tends to unsettle their minds and



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makes them fearful of committing themselves by taking an active part in the new arrangements. . . .

To-morrow two important proclamations will be posted by our police throughout the city and suburbs—the one being a full and entire amnesty, declared by His Excellency Pih-kwei, to all Chinese formerly in the employ of the Allies or who have remained with us during the hostilities; the other, in the name of the Prefect and two chief magistrates of Canton, enjoining the people to assign to foreigners the same social position as themselves, and strictly interdicting the issue of hostile or disrespectful placards and the use in future of the opprobrious language with which foreigners up to the time of the present hostilities were always assailed in the streets of Canton. Having moved His Excellency Pih-kwei to issue these proclamations, he desired me to prepare the drafts, which received his approval yesterday. It may reasonably be hoped that substantial benefit will result from the publication of these two edicts.

A measure which did much to tranquillize the Cantonese was the reopening of the port to trade, at the urgent request of Pih-kwei, after it had been closed for seventeen months. Writing from the Tartar General's yamun, which had now been converted into a residence for the Commission, Parkes was able to report to Lord Elgin that the step had been taken without disturbance:—

To the  
Earl of  
Elgin  
Feb. 13  
1858

It is gratifying to be able to record in a few words that the peace of the place during this interval has remained entirely undisturbed, and that the experiment of superintending, through the agency of this Commission, the government of this city and suburbs continues, up to this date, to be successful. The arrangements rendered necessary by the opening of the port on the 10th instant have, of course, engaged much of our attention, and your Lordship will have seen that the fifty or sixty foreigners, who visited us during the last three days, have been able to traverse the city without any hind-

rance or molestation. The circumstance is noteworthy, when it is considered that the Chinese new year (which comes off to-morrow) is always, more or less, an unsettled season, and that several of these foreigners have been going through the streets alone, and, in some cases, unarmed. . . .

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I need scarcely trouble your Excellency with any allusion to the reports which have been so rife during the last fortnight, of the arming of the population in the neighbouring villages and districts. The matter is attracting considerable attention ; and, while regarded by many without concern, occasions serious misgivings in the minds of others, who think they see, in the unusual extent of these preparations, something more than measures of defence only. We still remark the absence of all the authorities from their yamuns, and find the higher classes of the gentry equally backward in returning to their homes in the city. The reply of the Emperor to the first Memorial announcing the capture of the city is anxiously looked for, and, if it has not arrived already, may now be daily expected. The opening of the port to trade furnishes us, however, with another means of testing the temper and disposition of the people ; and if, after the present holidays shall have passed, we find the old merchants again coming forward, and ready to undertake tea contracts for the ensuing season, we shall have another assurance (though not, altogether, a conclusive one) that we shall be kept free from disturbance.

Of course Canton could not be made as safe and orderly as the city of London in a month. There were still robberies and assaults to be dealt with. Pih-kwei gallantly offered to add a Chinese force to the night patrols of the allied police ; but the Commissioners ungratefully suspected a deeper motive than disinterested helpfulness, and declined the offer. He had made one or two attempts to assert himself before, and had been summarily but politely brought to his bearings. In the present case

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Parkes preferred to do the work himself. The fact that his life was threatened seems to have added to the delight he took in pervading all parts of the city by day and night. On one occasion Mr Alcock, who now returned to his Consulate (which was quartered provisionally in a hulk on the river), went to the Commissioners' yamun intending to accompany Parkes on one of his early patrols through the streets, but found that he had not come in. On inquiry it was discovered that a masked battery had been constructed among some ruined houses on his route and had been fired as he approached: the men around him had been wounded or killed, but Parkes himself came back unscathed. It was only one of many attempts that were made to assassinate the man whom the Chinese regarded as the cause of their disasters. A prisoner afterwards confessed that he had been sounded on the subject: 'His account is very interesting,' wrote Parkes, just as if it concerned some one at the antipodes: 'the mandarins who had him were particular in trying to ascertain by what means *I* could be shot, and whether he would undertake to do it. And as they appeared to inquire only after me, and never made the faintest allusion to the General or naval officers, French or English, it is quite in the natural course of the present current of feeling that they will be a little jealous at not having had plots laid for their lives.'

The trade at the re-opened port began to look more thriving in March. Eight million pounds of tea were purchased in a month, and cotton goods were imported in exchange. Ships were loading for England, and sailed early in April. So far there were signs of improvement. But Parkes did not like the general look of things. There were indications that the Chinese had not realized the capture of Canton in its full significance. It was doubtful whether the Peking Government had at all grasped the meaning of our policy. In a letter to Mr Hammond he says:—

The Canton people appear completely perplexed; not less with the policy of their own Government than that

of the Allies. That a city should be captured and then at once given back into the hands of its former Government is a circumstance wholly without precedent in their annals, and they scarcely know how to regard the fact. I doubt whether they consider it as a mark of strength on our part. It suits the Chinese Government well in one respect, as at a distance they are enabled to ignore the fact of our being in occupation; and in a report to the Emperor from Pih-kwei, which, wholly by accident, I obtained a glance of the other day, I observe that, in alluding to us, he speaks of 'since the date of the appearance of the barbarians in the river,' and 'as long as they remain in their present position in the river,' etc., etc., mention of their being in the city being studiously avoided.

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To E.  
Hammond  
April 12

Writing to his brother-in-law he criticizes Lord Elgin's policy:—

I am well and in good spirits, for though I have much to worry me, I have also very much to be thankful for. Fan's health is greatly improving, mine continues very fair, and Lord Elgin has been civil to me in point of my pay and so arranged matters that I am in pocket £300 a year by holding my present berth. I work hard enough for it, it is true, but that of course a man is ready enough to do while health will allow. The chief thing that disconcerts me is our China policy. Generally it is a weak one, and gives no promise of any great success. Lord Elgin I do not consider a *great man*. He may be a man that suits the Government well, very cautious, having ever before him Europe, Parliament, the World, the Public, etc. It is with him, What will these parties say to this or that? and not What is best suited to the emergency? Conciliation, mildness, etc., etc., is with him therefore the order of the day: it will quiet the House, it will satisfy the British Public, etc., etc.; and in truth, seeing how poor Sir John Bowring caught it by the said public and his Parliamentary friends for doing the best thing he ever

To W.  
Lockhart  
Canton  
March 14



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did do, (next to the Siamese Treaty,) and acting vigorously, a public man has not much encouragement in these parts. . . .

Here we have a slippery customer in Pih-kwei, and the good that should have resulted to us from the capture of the city is negatived in no small degree by what has occurred since. He is playing off the 'braves' and villagers against us as of old, and the consequence is that no one is safe a mile from the city. And how do you think this is met by *Plenipotentiaries*? By ordering that no one shall go a mile from the city! and by directing that a savage attack on a party of thirty-five officers and men which took place in a village six miles from Canton<sup>1</sup> shall be passed unnoticed!! Oh for the time when one may be able to bid adieu to official life, and take to growing cabbages!

It became clearer as time went on that whatever urbanity Lord Elgin might prefer to display, something more forcible was needed at Canton. There were rumours of an attack on the city:—

To W.  
Lockhart  
Canton  
April 21

We are not quite so peaceful at Canton as when I last wrote. People are disquieted and alarmed, and rumours are flying about as thick as hail and about as durable. Never was there such a place as Canton for the fabrication of reports, alarms, and lies. However, the people in the vicinity of Canton, being those amiable ones of the Ninety-Six Villages and similar confederations, are beginning to vapour and talk largely as usual, in anticipation, as I think, of the approach of the Imperial Commissioner, in order that they may cut a good figure in his eyes. They are bold enough to talk of attack: if they would only do so it might (under Providence) lead to a settlement of all difficulties, as these 'braves' have not yet got that thrashing they must some day get, and they are too great cowards to assemble in any numbers and show a front. Our naval force has been weakened by the despatch of vessels to the North, but

<sup>1</sup> Reported in Blue-Book, p. 218, Parkes to Lord Elgin, 21st February.



our land force is very strong, though of course not large enough to defend six miles of city wall at all points, so that if seriously pressed we might have to concentrate on Magazine hill, our Citadel, which is bristling with big guns.

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To a man of Parkes' unfaltering resolution it was intolerably exasperating to see the 'braves' swaggering outside the city, and even attempting to attack it, whilst the Allies did not venture to act on the offensive. The news of the taking of the Taku forts in May, followed by the conclusion of the Treaty of Tien-tsin on the 26th of June, brought no consolation, for Parkes was convinced (and he knew his men) that Treaties were utterly useless if the proper note of fear had not been struck; and he deplored the ominous omission that Lord Elgin had gone away to Japan without entering Peking, or having an audience with the Emperor of China. He wrote very despondently in August, during a brief visit to Macao, where his wife was staying; and his disgust at the turn of events, joined to the effects of overwork, led him to unduly disparage the conduct of the allied troops:—

My correspondence has been so completely suspended during the last three months that I scarcely know how to recommence it. The hostilities which had long been foreseen came upon us, and during June and July we have been a good deal harassed. On the night of the 21st [July] a midnight attack was made upon the city, but easily repelled. Unfortunately, however, that is all we do: make preparations for repelling attacks, instead of preventing attacks being made by dealing these wretches some hard blows a little distance off. While they, however, assumed the offensive, we have acted strictly on the defensive. News of the Treaty having been concluded has at last been received by Hwang, the Governor-General of Kwang Tung and Kwang Si, and so I suppose he will desist from further hostilities, and things will sober down a little. But I am sorry to think that we return to peace without

To W.  
Lockhart  
Macao  
Aug. 8

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having yet inflicted any signal chastisement upon the Canton 'braves,' who consequently remain to trouble us at a future time ; and I can assure you that the more the Chinese see of our troops and of our ships of war, the *smaller* will be the estimate which they will form of our military prowess. I, for one, have certainly lost all national conceit on this point, and could never have believed, until my eyes had seen what I have, how *little* our forces could accomplish. We must be more careful in future how we employ menaces, for the execution of them, even in China, is no easy matter. In the summer of 1841 we saw 2300 English soldiers and sailors dictate terms to Canton, compel the immediate payment of a ransom, and the ejection from the city of its army of 40,000 men. In 1858 we see 3000 English troops, with about half that number of English and French sailors within reach, bullied and harassed by some 8000 or 10,000 ragged 'braves.'

Parkes only expressed the universal feeling when he wrote in regret of the inactivity of the allied forces at Canton in face of the impudence of the 'braves,' and the Admiral's conduct in forbidding any movement of the gunboats during his absence in the North was severely criticized. Mr Lay wrote indignantly of our pusillanimity in allowing ourselves to be 'bullied by a set of long-tailed beggars,' and exclaimed, 'Oh for a Keppel, just for one month!' Others declared that our army was eternally disgraced, and General Straubensee was dowered with a number of uncomplimentary epithets from various quarters which need not now be disinterred from oblivion.

As the year drew towards its close the prospect became rather brighter in the eyes of the keenest observer in China. His work at Canton progressed admirably, and Lord Elgin expressed himself almost warmly about it: he 'never speaks of your head and administrative powers save in terms of emphatic admission of their worth,' wrote Mr Wade. Parkes was not reconciled to the policy of

Lord Elgin, but he could not deny that the cards had played beautifully for that amiable ambassador. The Treaty with Japan was a new and unexpected feather in the Bruce's cap, and Parkes began to cherish hopes of consular employment in the delightful climate of Yokohama instead of in the stifling 'Ditch' of Canton. 'I have a longing for Japan,' he wrote in November. He felt that after the prominent part he had played in recent events Canton was not the place for him: 'I must get away from this part of China,' he wrote, and yet he was not disposed to fall back upon the Consulate at Amoy, of which he was still the nominal chief. After all he had done, an insignificant post like Amoy would have been a retrogression. He wanted 'pioneering work at new places,' and he thought he should find it in Japan. He was feeling tired and ill, and the ceaseless office work seemed almost more than he could bear:—

I often catch myself thinking that I have had enough of this climate and of H.M.'s service too, and have a wish to earn my bread in a little more independent way,—free at least of Chinese, language and people, of both of which I am heartily sick—and in an atmosphere of healthy coolness; and having in consequence of the Wilsons' visit had New Zealand often in my mind of late, I am beginning to think that sheep-farming would suit my circumstances, and that time might be better employed in handling a spade or plough than in for ever subscribing on foolscap that eternal nonsense of 'having the honour to be' some fool's 'most obedient humble servant,' and suchlike rotten phraseology of the day. However, these are thoughts of July, with the weather at a high temperature, and they might descend with the quicksilver in a few months' time. However, the sense of fatigue and of being *ennuyé* altogether with one's public work is unmistakable.

Meanwhile he had his hands full enough at Canton, though the country around seemed to be quieting down—a very fallacious quiet as it turned out. At last he

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had his wife and child once more with him, to his great delight, and the two large rooms which belonged to him in the Commissioner's yamun (once the Tartar General's) had been partitioned into various cheerful subdivisions by screens six or eight feet high, which allowed privacy but did not hinder the pervasion of infantile merriment and the domestic sounds that he had long and sadly missed. The next letter is more cheery than those just quoted :—

To W.  
Lockhart  
Canton  
Nov. 13

You will be pleased to hear that matters are improving in Canton and China, and that I have again the happiness of having Fanny with me. It is now three weeks since she came back here, and I have again the comforts of a home about me. Fears of 'braves' and assassins have passed away, and though I never omit wise precautions, we feel we can go about and enjoy ourselves without looking out for an enemy at every corner, as was once the case. . . . What my movements may be it is impossible to say. I have an idea that the Governments at home would not think of losing the vantage-ground the possession of this city gives them by surrendering it before the ratification of the Treaty shall have been exchanged, as I trust, *in Peking*; and if so, we may expect to remain in it until May or June, and I think that as long as we hold it I shall have to stay in it. My duties here are in no respect *consular*, but all my authority is derived from the Commanders-in-Chief, who of course rule the place and a certain portion of the environs by martial law. Of course I have to be their eyes and tongue in everything connected with the Chinese, and I have found some considerable objection on their part to see through my spectacles. I must admit that there is much truth in the outcry that there has been a great want of vigour in our operations; but as to those at Canton, General Straubenzee is by no means wholly to blame. He could not move a man from Canton without naval aid, and Sir M. Seymour in leaving Canton for the North had also left an order that not a gunboat was to move

from before Canton! However, it is no use referring to what is past. Things on the whole are working well, and playing into Lord Elgin's hands beautifully. You will be interested to hear that he has started up the Yang-tsze with three steamers and two gunboats. I am right glad of it. . . . When I hear of such expeditions I deplore being in this Ditch, but it can't be helped. I must do that which is given me to do, and I have a great blessing in having my family about me again. Alcock is up here, but his jurisdiction is confined to Honan, which is the Birkenhead of this Liverpool, and is opposite the city across the *river*, which is also under consular jurisdiction, and all parts of the port, except the city and suburbs.

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It was pleasant to have his old chief back at his side again, though their positions were altered, and it might have been a little trying to a less staunch friend than Mr Alcock to see his quondam interpreter lording it over the big city to which the former had been denied access in former years. Sir Rutherford's recollections of that time are full of admiration for Parkes' able conduct in an embarrassing situation. Speaking of the Commissioner, he says, 'It was an arduous and perilous position, with a French colleague and the *ingérence* of French officers in command—not always easy to reconcile with the equal rights and legitimate interests of the English forces,—and perilous from a fierce vendetta carried on by the surrounding village "braves." . . . When I returned to my post in 1858 I found the Consulate and factory once more in ruins, little but the ashes remaining: but with them the lower part of the city lay prostrate; and a corporal with a switch kept order in the few crowded streets still left, without the slightest sign of resistance or animosity, where no foreigner could before pass the gates or even walk in the suburbs or outskirts without suffering insult and contumely from the very children.' So great was the change which had come over the temper of the Cantonese under the rule of Harry Parkes and his Commission.



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE WEST RIVER EXPEDITION

1859

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ALTHOUGH order had been established in Canton with marvellous success during the first year of Parkes' rule in the Commission, the country outside was far from settled. The celebrated Ninety-Six Villages were as turbulent as ever; the Fayuen and other bodies of disaffected 'Commissioners,' who had put a reward of thirty thousand dollars on Parkes' head, were perpetually plotting against the 'barbarians'; and the province was distracted as much by the license and extortions of its so-called 'braves' as by the serious incursions of the rebels, who remained in possession of a large part of China and were destined to give still more trouble in the future. A more than usually impudent attack led to a punitive expedition in January, and the success of this move induced the Allied Commanders to abandon their former policy of keeping to the camp at Canton, and to make various military progresses through the country. These expeditions formed an important branch of the work of the allies in the South, and as Parkes was mainly responsible for suggesting the new departure, some account of the movements in which he took part may fitly be introduced here. A letter to Mr Lockhart opens the subject:—

—We have had a little 'Brave Expedition' to stir us up lately, and you will be glad to hear that we have

at last succeeded in giving these pests a sharp blow, that may have the effect of making them more respectful. Some two or three hundred of these dirty vagabonds had the temerity to attack nearly the whole Marine Brigade, about 700 men, when out in the country on the 4th inst. taking a little walking exercise. That is to say, the dastards took ground along the road they knew our men would have to return, and fired upon them from behind copses and villages as they passed. A few skirmishers kept them at a distance, and the brigade reached the city without hurt. General Straubenzee determined to punish the fellows: even he could not stand such a gratuitous piece of impertinence; and having for form's sake demanded the ringleaders through Pih-kwei, of course without effect, he regularly took the field with 1500 men, resolved to beat up their stronghold, known to be about seven miles from Canton, at a place called Shektsing. We accordingly moved out on the 8th, and when we came in sight of Shektsing were saluted by the braves, who opened upon us from three batteries, mounting in all twenty guns. We took cover and advanced under cover of our artillery (only three pieces) and rockets, but should have had some trouble in turning the fellows out of their position, as the approach to it lay along a single causeway (on both sides a swamp), had not the Naval Brigade found their way up a creek in the very nick of time and taken the enemy in flank. Of course braves under those circumstances take to their heels, and we got into the place with only five casualties, none serious. The same afternoon the General marched through several villages, and the next day made a wide circuit, being out from 7 A.M. to 9 P.M., but we nowhere found any enemy to contend with, and were received with great civility and respect by the people. From what I saw, I doubt whether the braves are held in favour by the latter, and [believe] that the little flame of

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patriotism which the Fayuen Commissioners and men of that faction have been trying to fan is already flickering, and that the people of Canton may be got into order, if treated with firmness, nearly as readily as other Chinese.

General Straubensee is so much pleased with the result of his trip that he will probably endeavour to explore the country further. He should do so while he has still a month, but only a month, of fine weather to depend upon; for by showing his troops around Canton, instead of keeping them shut up within the walls, he will do much to extend our influence and weaken that of the so-called patriotic faction.

'Ever foremost when work was to be done, or risk met,' Parkes accompanied this Expedition, and on his return was 'very warmly thanked' by the General for his 'invaluable services.' His zeal and energy were no less remarkable than his perfect coolness and fearlessness in danger.<sup>1</sup> He was delighted with the success of the little excursion to Shektsing, and encouraged the General in his plan of exploring the country further, and thus bringing our presence and strength more prominently before the people, and diminishing their dread of possible ravages from the 'braves.' Expeditions northwards to Fayuen, and up the West River, were discussed, reported to Lord Elgin, and strongly approved by him. The ambassador, who had previously written contemptuously about 'a parcel of ridiculous stories about arming of braves,' had at last realized the serious state of the country round Canton, and not only remonstrated with the Imperial Commissioners who were negotiating the new tariff with him at Shanghai, but came south himself to give his support to Parkes' vigorous counsels. In a

<sup>1</sup> He 'knows not what fear is,' wrote Lord Elgin in 1860; and Admiral Sir Michael Seymour, when he retired from the China command in 1859, sent Parkes a very flattering letter of thanks for his services in the two attacks on Canton, in the course of which he said: 'In addition to the regular duties of your profession, I have also to mention your gallant conduct under fire on many occasions.'

despatch which he addressed to Lord Malmesbury on 12th February from Canton, he explains the objects to be attained by a military progress into the country :—

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During the months which immediately succeeded the capture of Canton, neither braves, nor troops of any denomination, disturbed the allies in their occupation of the city. To have carried war into the surrounding villages at that time, under the pretence of searching for enemies who never showed themselves, would have been, even if the forces at the disposal of the Commanders-in-Chief had sufficed for the service, a measure of very doubtful policy. At a later period, when the braves made themselves troublesome, the climate was unpropitious for operations in the country. No such objections, however, apply to military expeditions into the adjoining districts undertaken at the present time. The climate is as healthy as it ever is in this part of China. The Emperor has agreed to terms of peace, although he has failed to take the requisite measures to put down the war faction. Ample proof of their moderation has been given by the allies. Under these circumstances, when they present themselves in arms at different points in the province, with the announcement that they come, not to levy war, but to enforce peace, and put down its disturbers, they are believed. They are thus enabled to give evidence of their power, without exciting among the pacifically disposed inhabitants of the country exasperation or alarm. While these important operations are in progress, however, Canton and its vicinity will necessarily continue to be the sphere of most active duty in China. . . . A variety of circumstances have come to my knowledge, which satisfy me, not only that our difficulties in this quarter are, in a great measure, the fruit of promptings from Peking, but also that in their turn they react upon Peking itself, and supply food and strength to those retrograde and anti-foreign influences which are constantly at work in the councils of the Emperor. . . .

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I have some hope that I may succeed in dispelling the illusions respecting the relative strength of the braves and the allies, which certain untoward occurrences of last summer seem to have fostered in that quarter, and thereby not only secure the adoption of a pacific policy in this province, but also, perhaps, pave the way for the becoming reception of Her Majesty's Ambassador at the capital.

Short excursions had already been made by the Allied Commanders to Fatshan, and by Parkes on 18th January to Kong-tsun. On this last, escorted only by Captain Pym and fourteen men, Parkes distributed proclamations in several villages, tore down hostile placards, conversed with the principal inhabitants and officials, and was throughout treated with civility. But after Lord Elgin's arrival a more considerable expedition to Fayuen, some thirty miles from Canton, was made in February—the longest march inland yet made by English troops in China. Some extracts from Parkes' memorandum of this march are here reprinted from the Blue-Book (p. 480):—

The allied column, consisting of upwards of 900 English troops and about 130 French, left Canton on the morning of the 8th instant. . . . Fayuen was entered at 11 A.M. (on the 10th). The Chief Magistrate had anticipated the wish of the Allied Commanders to lodge in the public building which had formed the residence of the three Fayuen Commissioners, and on arriving there they were received by him and the other officers already named, and refreshments were at once served. The military officers then accompanied General van Straubenzee while he inspected the town, to determine the most suitable places for encamping or quartering the troops, and of their own accord offered several temples for the latter purpose. The greater part of the men were encamped on high tableland, outside the north gate; but about 300 found accommodation within the walls. The people, both within and without the city, showed no sign either



of fear or displeasure ; but, on the contrary, evinced a desire to be on friendly terms with their foreign visitors, some of whom took long walks into the country without meeting with any molestation. The people at the same time gave a proof of their confidence in the justice of the Allied Commanders, by arresting and bringing to the public hall four coolies of the military train, who had attempted to pilfer or affront females, and the men thus arrested were at once publicly punished. . . .

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In the course of conversation with the authorities and a few of the gentry of the place, the following observations were made by them: Fayuen having been taken by the rebels in 1854, when its defences were in a very dilapidated state, the people of the district were induced to rebuild the wall (which is less than a mile in circumference), at a cost of thirty thousand dollars. The three Commissioners, Lu, Lung, and Su, made it their residence in the spring of the past year ; and it was at one time said that the Imperial Commissioner and Governor-General Hwang would also use it as his seat of government, on his first arrival in the province. The little city certainly possesses insufficient accommodation for such a purpose ; and it may have been this circumstance, or a wish on the part of Hwang to avoid close contact with Lu, Lung, and Su, that induced him to stay at Hwuy-chow instead of at Fayuen. The three Commissioners held constant communication with Hwang, by letter or by messenger ; but visited him only on one occasion. All three of them, but Su and Lung in particular, constantly visited Kong-tsun, Shektsing, and the one or two other places at which their braves were stationed ; but most of their time was spent at Fayuen, where they were constantly attended by about a score of the gentry of the different districts. It was through these men that they transacted their business ; and they affected great secrecy in the mode of conducting

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it. The number of the 'braves' they collected at Fayuen was variously stated at from 300 to 1200 men; but it was admitted that at Kong-tsun and Shektsing they were, at one time, in larger force. When the news of the Peace of Tien-tsin was confirmed, they gave out that because it was the Emperor's wish they would desist from further hostilities against the allies, and they accordingly proceeded gradually to disband their 'braves,' a few only of whom remained at Fayuen at the time the Shektsing collision occurred. These were at once dismissed, and the Commissioners themselves broke up their establishment, and went at first different ways, being apparently alarmed by a rumour that the allies intended to come on from Shektsing to Fayuen. . . .

The Chief Magistrate remarked that although it was to be hoped that they would shortly retire into private life, or be employed at Peking, he was afraid it would take them some time to wind up the affairs of their Commission, as they had to bring to the Emperor's notice the contributors of the money they had collected from the people (which amounted, he said, to about three hundred and fifty thousand taels), and in doing this, they would also have to show how this money had been disbursed. The amount actually expended by them exceeded, he had heard, five hundred thousand taels (£170,000), and the deficiency had been raised by loans.

The West River Expedition, which immediately followed that to Fayuen, was an important step towards opening up the country, and no apology is needed for introducing here some extracts from Parkes' official report to Lord Elgin, which, beyond a single paragraph, has never been published. We begin at the point where the expedition left Yung-ki and entered the West River on 19th February:—

The route now lay through the principal silk-growing districts of Canton, which in appearance present an agreeable contrast to the monotonous flats lying between

it and the sea. The pilots having in this case indicated correct channels, the West River was reached at 3 P.M.

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The busy town of Kum-chuk is situated close to this junction, and that of Kow-kong about a mile further on. The river is here a mile in width, and more traffic was observed than on the streams we had hitherto traversed, which were almost deserted of boats. Kum-chuk is about fifty miles from that mouth of the West River which opens into the roadway near Macao. The Expedition at once pushed on, and anchored in the evening abreast of the Sai-chew or Se-tseaou hills, to which point the river, on its left bank, is lined with large and populous villages.

Report  
on West  
River Ex-  
pedition  
March 12

Proceeding the following morning, the junction of the North and West Rivers near Sam-shway, the highest point previously visited by gunboats or any foreign vessel, was passed at 10.30 A.M. . . . The magnificent gorge of Shao-king was entered at 4 P.M. It is about three and a half miles in length, and the city, which lies four miles beyond it, was reached at nightfall. Messengers, who proved to have been despatched by the Chief Magistrate of the place (Kaou Yaou Hien) with civil inquiries, soon boarded the leading gunboat. From them it was ascertained that Chow Kepin, the Judge of the province who in the past summer had proved himself an active supporter of the anti-foreign policy of Hwang the Governor-General and the Fayuen Commissioners, was staying in the city, being charged by Hwang with the superintendance, in a civil capacity, of the operations against rebels on the West River, and that there was also present Li Tsung-Hang, the Taotai or Intendant of the Shao-So Circuit, of which circuit Shao-king is the chief city. The Judge, Taotai, and Chief Magistrate were accordingly informed that the Allied Commanders would receive a visit from them on board a gunboat the following morning at ten o'clock.

21st February.—A reconnoitring party landed at

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daylight to gain information respecting the locality. They traversed the city and reached the Marble Rocks, a point three miles beyond on its north face, encountering no obstacles and being civilly received by the people. The city lies on the north side of the river. It is surrounded by a wall eighteen or twenty feet in height, by about twelve in breadth, and in form is a parallelogram, its length from east to west being about 1200 yards, and its breadth probably being not more than 400 yards; on the east side is a large suburb containing better streets than those within the city. Shao-king was at one time the capital of the province, and those who looked to this circumstance for some trace of past importance were disappointed. The city now appears to possess only one good street, which runs from east to west, and has in it all the yamuns and public buildings of the place. Most of these were destroyed or much mutilated by the rebels when they held possession of the place for eight months, in 1854-1855. The unsettled condition of the surrounding country, which has continued ever since that time, has evidently told upon the population of the city, and given them a poverty-stricken appearance. And although that disturbed condition continues, and Shao-king is supposed to be the seat of operations for the suppression of rebellion in the districts along the West River, no preparation, either for the support of distant points or even for the defence of the city itself, met the eye; one or two soldiers were observed in the gateways, but these, on seeing the reconnoitring party (which numbered about twenty men), seemed only anxious to relieve themselves of their uniforms and to run from their posts. The most prominent object noticed in the streets was a joint proclamation, lately issued by Hwang the Governor-General and Pih-kwei as Governor of Kwang Tung, declaring an amnesty to all those rebels who would now lay down their arms, and reiterating the old threats of instant extirpation to those who fail

to comply. Such a document appearing on the part of the Government, amid such manifest signs of weakness and of inability to give effect to their declared intentions, is only another proof of the mock assertion of power, in which the Chinese are so prone to indulge. . . .

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Shortly after ten o'clock the Judge, the Taotai, and the Chief Magistrate called on the Allied Commanders. The Judge spoke at great length, and in a desponding tone, on the subject of the rebel troubles. All the country north of Shao-king . . . was described by the Judge as being infested with rebels, who find secure shelter in the various mountain ranges, and suddenly descend upon unprotected points. The Government plan consisted, he said, in endeavouring to keep the principal lines of communication open, and to guard passes or defiles forming the approach to cities. But these passes were so numerous that it was difficult to guard them all effectively, and thus the Government never knew in what direction to look for the rebels. The mountains served them as a warren where they ran in and out very much at their pleasure. They had always resources at hand, as they could force the people on the spot to pay contribution, failing which they would appropriate their crops, while the Government had to draw their supplies from a distance, and these were often not forthcoming when wanted. The danger would be more imminent, the Judge thought, in the spring, when the rebels might take advantage of the use of the waters and the impetuous current of the West River, to make a descent along its course ; and if so they might again be expected under the walls of Shao-king. He considered that he had in Shao-king a garrison of 2000 men, but evidently placed little reliance on their ability to make a good defence.

The interview having terminated, the Allied Commanders landed the whole force, and having marched through the city, the column proceeded to the Marble Rocks, while the Allied Commanders returned the visit



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of the authorities at the residence of the Judge, a number of sedan chairs having been provided by the Chief Magistrate for the purpose. The Allied Commanders stated to the Judge their intention of leaving the whole land force at Shao-king, while they proceeded on with a few of the gunboats up the river. They inquired if he could assist them with guides or pilots for the latter purpose, and at the same time explained that although the troops would land daily for marching exercise, they would continue to live on board their boats, and thus no inconvenience would be caused either to the authorities or people.

The Judge willingly promised pilots, and added that, on his part, so far from objecting to the presence of the troops at Shao-king for the short time proposed, he would be glad to see them making a more permanent stay there, provided in case of emergency they would assist him in defending the city. . . . In the afternoon the Judge, the Taotai, and the Magistrate sent presents, consisting for the most part of provisions, to the Allied Commanders; this act of attention was subsequently repeated at all the places visited, but in each instance the presents were respectfully declined.

*22nd February.*—The Allied Commanders left Shao-king in three forty-horse-power gunboats, and continued the ascent of the West River, two guides professing a knowledge of the river as far as Tih-king having been supplied by the Judge. The country, judging from the numerous villages observed on the banks, appeared thickly populated; the town of Luh-pu was passed at half-past nine and Yueh-ching two hours afterwards. The former is a place of some commerce, having good internal communication with the districts of the North, and producing in its own vicinity timber, bamboo, lead, and saltpetre. It is a salt station, as well as the seat of a Deputy Magistrate, but the yamun of the latter was destroyed by the rebels two years ago; and the three principal pawnshops having been at the same time

rified and closed, the trade of the place has received a check from which it has not recovered. A few Kwang Si boats were lying off the town, but the general absence of traffic and of shipping gave the river a melancholy air of desertion. . . .

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*23rd February.*—The Expedition proceeded at daylight, the river continuing to wind, as was the case yesterday, through a highly mountainous country, the scenery of which as seen from the stream was frequently of a very beautiful character. During the day's journey, however, the views were often saddened by the devastation observable in nearly all the villages that were passed. The town of Fu-ching wore a particularly dilapidated aspect, most of its houses being in ruins or roofless. In answer to inquiries it was stated that all the towns and villages in this part of the country had been repeatedly entered and occupied by the rebels, who burnt the houses for the want of fuel, or when the inmates hesitated to pay the contributions demanded of them. At 5 P.M. the three gunboats reached Fung-chuen, the distance from Tih-king being estimated at twenty-eight miles. . . . A party landed to visit the place. It presented the most deplorable scene of desolation yet witnessed. Although noted as a city of the third class, and surrounded by a wall in the usual style of Chinese fortification, it is entered only by a single gate, and has an enceinte of probably not more than 600 yards in circumference. Nearly all the houses within the walls were in ruins, and only feeble attempts had been made to keep the sites of the one or two yamuns free from the dark tangled thickets that were overgrowing them. Symbols of magisterial authority were placed in a temporary shed on one of these sites. . . . The road round the ramparts is choked with jungle, and the guard of six men at the single gate were admitted to be the only soldiers in the place. The suburb presented the same scene of ruin. Scarcely a house had escaped destruction, and such of the popula-

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tion as continue to hang about their old homes, for want of a better place of refuge, shelter themselves for the most part in rude mat huts. The fields in the neighbourhood are left untilled. Rebels, said the magistrate's officer who accompanied the party, have been here every year since 1854. All the people who can do so have left the place, and those who remain are starving. It was found almost impossible to purchase provisions, and for the few articles met with extravagant prices were demanded. . . .

*24th February.*—Half the day was occupied in the passage from Fung-chuen to Woochow, a distance of only twelve miles, but containing more intricacies of navigation than had been encountered all along the route previously traversed. About three miles above Fung-chuen a small stream, called by the Chinese the Kai, runs into those districts which are now overrun by rebels. To guard therefore against an irruption from this quarter a rude battery of twelve guns has been thrown up at the mouth of this stream, and four war-boats lie off the entrance. A village stands on either side, but all the houses appear roofless as usual. Shortly after passing this stream, and when the junks lying off Woochow could be seen in the distance, the frontier line of Kwang Tung is passed and Kwang Si is entered. Here one of the three gunboats took the ground, but to avoid delay the Allied Commanders at once pushed on in the two others to Woochow. A large fleet of about seventy sail of west coast war junks were found drawn up in line opposite the city, being moored close in shore, and further protected on the river side by chain cables floated on a line of low flat boats made fast at about fifty yards outside the junks. The armament of the junks averaged ten guns each, many of the pieces being of heavy metal, and all the broadsides being trained up the river, this indicating the direction from whence danger was apprehended. As the two gunboats approached the whole fleet

hoisted all their flags and streamers, and each junk beat the usual gong salute. The flags showed that the fleet was under the command of Kwan-show, the Commander-in-Chief of Kwang Tung, a general officer well known in these parts from his successes against rebels, which have won for him his present high rank and reputation, and the honorary title of guardian of the heir-apparent. Almost before the gunboats could cast anchor messengers had boarded them, bringing the cards of Kwan-show and of several of the other principal authorities. . . . Kwan-show expressed himself highly gratified with the visit of the Allied Commanders ; dwelt much on the friendly feeling he had always entertained for the English since he had first made the acquaintance of several of their authorities in 1847-1848, when serving as a colonel at Canton. He expressed regret that an illiberal policy, which he assured the Allied Commanders had never received his support, should have recently led to misunderstandings between the two countries, but that these had now happily ended, never as he hoped to occur again. He readily conversed on the subject of the rebels, but in a far more hopeful tone than the Judge at Shao-king. He had retaken Woochow from the rebels in the spring of 1858, and his present charge appeared to be principally limited to the defence of this important city. He described the rebels as holding entire possession of the departments of Seu-chow, Leu-chow, Yung-gan, and Siang-chow, in the centre of Kwang Si, and as having concentrated their fleet, numbering about 400 boats of various sizes, at the first named place, which is situated on the West River about a hundred miles above Woochow. Although the rebel fleet might be numerically superior, he considered that his junks were much more powerful, and in every respect better equipped than those of the rebels, and therefore quite equal to maintaining their position at Woochow in the event of the latter attempting a descent. . . . These rebels are the same as those

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spoken of by the Judge Chow, and are a different party to those above mentioned as occupying four of the central departments of Kwang Si. He could have wished, he said, for more concert of action on the part of the several commanders sent against the border rebels. As it was, the movements of the Government were limited almost entirely to defensive operations. There was not more unity, however, he added, on the part of the insurgents. Each of the places mentioned had one or more rebel chiefs, who only appeared to act together according as it served their particular purposes. Some of them wore long hair, and some red turbans, while others adopted neither long hair nor the turbans.

The Allied Commanders returned Kwan-show's visit directly suitable conveyances were provided by him for that purpose. All the yamuns in the city having been destroyed by the rebels, he at present inhabits a large private house outside the walls. After paying this visit the Allied Commanders rode through the town in various directions, and also ascended the heights which command it on the north side. It was too evident that the once large trade of this city had nearly forsaken it. All the yamuns and many of the houses were observed in ruins, and while want and squalor pervaded the place, the people themselves also wore a very demoralized appearance. The defences of the place were in no respect better than those of Shao-king, and its protection was evidently entirely entrusted to the fleet anchored under its walls. It has been taken three times by the rebels since 1854. . . .

*25th February.*—The gunboats started at 8.30 A.M. on their return, and as they moved off all the junks beat gongs and hoisted their flags, as they had done on the arrival of the Expedition. Kwan-show's yacht came out in front of the line and fired a salute. . . . Shao-king being reached at 4 P.M. in the afternoon, a visit was paid to the Judge Chow Kepin, to announce



to him the departure of the whole Expedition on the morrow, and to present the compliments of the Allied Commanders. He again said that the presence of the foreign troops had caused him no inconvenience, and wished it to be understood that he desired as far as lay in his power to promote a good feeling between his Government and the allies. Bad news had just reached him of successes obtained by the rebels at Sze-hwuy, and though affecting to treat the intelligence as a light matter, he only partially concealed the agitation which it occasioned him. . . . He could not help feeling uneasy at the thought that there were 20,000 rebels between Kwang-ning and Shao-king, who might some day be induced to leave the vicinity of the former city and fall upon Shao-king. . . .

*27th February.*— . . . Accompanied by the Commandant of the city he [the Magistrate of Sam-shway] escorted the Allied Commanders to the commercial town of Sainam, distant three miles from Sam-shway. It was found to be of great extent, the main street being upwards of two miles long, and the wealthy-looking shops and stores giving unmistakable proof of the large capacity of the place for trade. It is in fact the depot through which the traffic of the North River, and much also of that of the West, passes on its way to Canton. Being pressed for time the Allied Commanders could do no more than take a very cursory view of this important place, of which it would be desirable to gain more information than that which we now possess. The river in front of the town was thronged with boats and timber rafts. The city of Sam-shway itself has no trade, but it is kept in excellent order and its walls maintained in a complete state of repair by the present authorities, who throughout the visit conducted themselves most courteously towards their foreign visitors. . . . On the 28th February, after being detained until noon by a dense fog, the Expedition left the junction,

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and reached the same evening the channel leading from the West River to the Bogue. . . .

On the 2nd March the whole English force marched into Shuntuk, having been met by the French detachments, who had passed the night in a temple outside the city, and had had every attention paid them by the Chief Magistrate. This morning also he and the other authorities met the Allied Commanders in the suburbs and conducted them to his yamun within the city, where refreshments were served in a handsome style both to the Allied Commanders and to all the officers of the force. Bearing in mind that two of the Fayuen Commissioners, Lung and Lu, are townsmen of this place, and that their influence had enabled them to draw considerable support from hence when engaged in their operations against the allies during the past summer, the Allied Commanders thought the occasion an appropriate one for pointing out<sup>1</sup> to the Magistrate, who was attended by a large auditory of the civil and military functionaries and the gentry of this wealthy city, how mistaken had been the policy and how foolish the proceedings of that faction who, represented by the Fayuen Commissioners, had attempted to harass the allies, after the latter had declared their intention of abstaining from further hostilities in the neighbourhood of Canton, and thus, by so unnecessarily reviving hostilities, had been the cause of considerable mischief being inflicted upon the people of this vicinity, while they had also brought themselves into general contempt. Fortunately, however, the Tien-tsin Treaties had placed relations on a new and satisfactory footing, and the peaceable character of the visits now being paid by the Allied Commanders to the places around Canton showed how desirous they were to promote friendly feelings and goodwill. But it was well that the authorities and people of Shuntuk should know that those Treaties gave also to the subjects of the Treaty Powers a distinct right to

<sup>1</sup> Of course this was Parkes' speech, both in idea and delivery.

go all about the country wherever they desired, and this right would doubtless be constantly practised, not in the manner now seen with a military force, which, of course, ensured for itself respect, but in parties probably of twos and threes, the responsibility of whose safety would rest upon the authorities of the place visited. The example of Shektsing was referred to as a proof that flagrant outrages would be visited with signal punishment, and the proclamations of the Allied Commanders, in which these principles are notified at length, were shown to the Magistrate and read by him and his auditory. He expressed an unqualified approval of all that was stated in these documents, and himself suggested that they should be thickly distributed throughout the city. . . . It was evidently the wealthiest and the most populous place that had been visited, and, being in the centre of that plain which produces the raw silk of Canton, commands the trade of that production and other valuable commodities. . . .

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Leaving Shawan at 10 A.M. [on 3rd March, the day Lord Elgin left China, as he thought, for ever], the Expedition returned direct to Canton, arriving there in the course of the same evening. Thus, during an absence of sixteen days, the West River had been ascended to a point nearly 200 miles from its mouth, ninety-five miles of which, viz., from the Samshway junction to Woochow, had never before been explored by a foreign vessel, nor had any of the places throughout the distance last named been openly visited on any former occasion by Europeans. The six cities of Shuntut, Samshway, Shao-king, Tih-king, Fungchuen, and Woochow, and the three important towns of Shawan, Yung-ki, and Sainam, had been entered and traversed, and the Expedition had passed in sight of numerous other large towns. The marked courtesy and respect which, whether required or offered voluntarily, characterized at all these points the reception given by the local authorities to the Allied Commanders,

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could not have escaped the notice of the people, who, it is to be hoped, will learn from this altered tone of their authorities that foreign relations of a new character have been entered on in this province, and that the ill-treatment of foreigners has now ceased to be regarded as a means of gaining public honours and reputation.

It is a singular comment on the extreme deliberation that characterizes the progress of each step in the opening up of China that a whole generation has passed since this Expedition proceeded up the West River, and yet on 26th October 1893 we find the following paragraph in the *Times* :—

The Hongkong Chamber of Commerce has addressed a letter to Lord Rosebery asking him to open negotiations with the Chinese Government for the opening to navigation by the steamers of all nations of the West River, which, after rising in Yun Nan, flows through the provinces of Kwang Si and Kwang Tung and enters the sea below Canton. The Hongkong Chamber also asks for the opening of the cities of Woochow, Tsun-chow, and Nan-ning, on the West River, to foreign trade. In the course of the letter to the Secretary of State the chairman of the Chamber says that foreign trade at the existing treaty ports in Southern China has now reached its utmost limit, and cannot possibly be extended until new fields are opened by improved means of communication with the interior. The foreign trade of Southern China is really confined to a very few ports, consisting of Foochow, Amoy, Swatow, Macao, Canton, and Pak-hoi, and from these the interior marts of the provinces of Fuh Kien and Kwang Tung are scarcely reached. The great inland provinces of Kwang Si, Yun Nan, and Kwei Chow are, from a commercial point of view, not touched at all. The advantages that would accrue to foreign commerce generally, as well as to Hongkong, by the opening to steam navigation of the West River and its tributaries would certainly, the chairman says, be very great. Hongkong, situated as it is at the mouth of the

Canton river, would not only be a larger distributing centre than it is now, but it would benefit greatly by the increased passenger traffic which would necessarily follow upon increased facilities of transport. The opening of the West River would also be of great advantage to the Chinese population in the neighbourhood. It would secure to the Chinese Government increased revenue through the custom-houses in the several districts through which the river passes, it would give an impulse to inland production by bringing produce within reach of a market, and it would augment and enrich the population of the villages and towns throughout the route.

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## CHAPTER XV

### WAITING FOR WAR

1859-1860

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WHILST the Canton Commission was quietly but surely restoring peace and prosperity to the South, a breeze from the North wrecked all hopes of a speedy settlement of the China question. The Emperor had agreed to the Treaty of Tien-tsin in 1858 in order to get the allies out of their threatening position near his capital, but he had not changed his policy a hair's-breadth, and he and his Ministers had not the smallest intention of allowing the 'barbarians' to break down the old barriers which excluded them from intercourse with his Government and Court. Lord Elgin, in his ignorance of the Chinese character, was completely duped. Instead of demanding an audience of the Emperor, such as befitted the Queen's Ambassador, he did not even enter Peking. Instead of leaving an army at Tien-tsin to guarantee the fulfilment of the Treaty, he went away with his whole force; and afterwards, at Shanghai, where he arranged the details of the tariff with the Imperial Commissioners, he committed the fatal blunder of retreating from the position of the Treaty, which established a resident British Minister at Peking, and sanctioning the suggestion that our Minister would only occasionally visit the capital. The result of this weakness became apparent when, three months after Lord Elgin's departure from China, his brother,

Mr Frederick Bruce, came out as Minister, to exchange the ratifications of the Treaty at Peking. The Chinese had taken Lord Elgin's measure, and identified it with the dimensions of the British Government. They had extorted a vital concession, and they resolved to press their advantage. As soon as the fear of the allied armies was removed, they had recovered all their former arrogance, and with a view to making a visit of a 'barbarian eye' to Peking impossible, they had strengthened the Taku forts at the mouth of the Peiho, which Lord Elgin's force had dismantled in 1858. What happened was easy to be foreseen. On reaching Shanghai on 6th June 1859 Mr Bruce found that every obstacle was to be placed in the way of his approach to Peking; but his instructions were positive, and he had no alternative but to go on. He knew the Chinese better than his brother, and he was aware that 'anything which looked like hesitation or irresolution would encourage the Chinese and render the object of my mission more difficult to attain without a fresh appeal to force.' So to the Peiho he sailed, accompanied by the French Minister, M. de Bourboulon, and a considerable naval escort. On arriving at the mouth of the river on 20th June they found the channel staked and barred with a boom, and an armed rabble prepared to resist their landing. No mandarin was there to explain the situation. Persisting in their advance, they were beaten back with heavy loss.

Admiral Hope had calculated on no greater resistance than had been met with in 1858, when an hour and a quarter had sufficed to take the forts: he forgot that the Chinese had learned a bitter lesson, and had spared no pains to prevent its repetition. They had contrived their boom admirably, and trained their gunners to hit it: and the result was that when the gunboats brought up against the obstacle they were exposed to a deadly fire. A land attack failed to carry the batteries; and when night fell the Taku forts were still in the possession of the Chinese. Admiral Hope could not venture upon a second attempt. He had lost three gunboats and several hundred

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killed and wounded. Nothing remained but to retreat and meditate vengeance. The Treaty had been deliberately broken, and all Lord Elgin's cautious policy had done was to bring matters back to the state in which they were when he first arrived in the North. 'As you were' is an irritating word of command to a squad of raw recruits: but it merely implies unproficiency in the beginners. In statesmanship it means failure in the commander.

The following letters accompanied the bad news:—

From  
Horace  
Rumbold  
Hongkong  
July 19  
1859

This very sad news from the Peiho will reach you at the same time as these few lines. There never was, I believe, a more complete piece of treachery than that practised by the Chinese Government since the *very day* of the signature of the Treaty. A document which you sent home (or rather a *précis* of which went home) last January goes far to prove this. It is a letter from a spy of Hwang. The document I take home with me *in extenso* by this mail.

I am going home to fight the battle to the best of my ability, and if we can only get Government to take the right view, this affair—however melancholy the losses attending it—will be a very good thing in the end by forcing us to settle this monstrous question of Chinese arrogance and stolidity where it ought to have been settled ages ago—at Peking.

From T.  
F. Wade  
Shanghai  
July 14

I suppose our bad news will have reached you time enough to prevent your wonder at seeing Shanghai in place of Peking at the top of my page. A nice mess, ain't it? At the same time what could have been done to prevent it I can't see. The Chinese knew we were coming to Peking. If the Government had said, You don't go by such or such a route, which is closed for military reasons, I don't see how, professing peace, we could have forced the door; but they carefully kept all officials out of the way. The villagers who met our marine at Taku maintained that none were near, and that the works were all the work of the people for the

exclusion of pirates, etc. I am much puzzled and believe that pride, vindictiveness, treachery, and yet great cowardice are all jumbled together in the producing causes of the collision. Our Admiral came out in character a splendid fellow.

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No one felt the blow more bitterly than the man who had always been opposed to the weak policy of 1858. He had dreaded failure, and had always doubted whether Mr Bruce would be received at Peking. He had discovered at Shektsing and forwarded to the Foreign Office<sup>1</sup> a remarkable Chinese document, which showed that the Emperor was determined to break the Treaty; and now his worst fears were surpassed by the disastrous facts:—

I write you a line under very unfavourable auspices, tired in body and sick at heart. The news of the terrible disaster off the Peiho reached us on the 19th, and this morning at 10 A.M. I left Canton to have a word with Mr Rumbold,<sup>2</sup> the Secretary of Legation, who goes home with the despatches. . . . The defeat could scarcely have been more complete. Four hundred and sixty-four English and fourteen French *hors de combat*, out of a total of 1300 engaged; three vessels sunk and many more disabled; and worst of all, the gulf abandoned and everything at a standstill until reinforcements arrive from England, or India by orders from England. Thus we are just at the point we had arrived at in the spring of 1857.

To W.  
Lockhart  
Hongkong  
July 21

Poor Admiral Hope is much to be pitied. His dispositions, I fear, will be mercilessly condemned, and in the face of a European enemy deservedly so; but he did no more than act upon all past experience. Never have the Chinese fired so well before. In truth, as we had only nine gunboats which have only one long gun apiece, and the forts numbered some eighty or ninety pieces, we had only one gun to their ten, and those ten

<sup>1</sup> Published in *précis* in the Blue-Book on Lord Elgin's Special Mission, 1857-1859 (*Parl. Papers*, 1859 [259], p. 475-477).

<sup>2</sup> Now Sir Horace Rumbold, Bart., G.C.M.G., H.M. Minister at the Hague.

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well served. Apparently to retrieve the repulse of the gunboats, the men were landed to storm, to do what the fire of the gunboats could not effect; but, sad to say, they were landed in *mud*, which they found a worse enemy than the dreadful fire. Many, no doubt, were drowned or smothered. The attempt to regain the boats in the dark night must have been a sad scene. In one case some score of wounded had been conveyed with infinite labour across the mud and out into a boat, when a round shot passing through the latter made her into a coffin for the living freight she had received.

Three months later he writes :—

To W.  
Lockhart  
Canton  
Oct. 27

We shall have to wait another fortnight to know whether the Government have determined upon reading the Chinese another lesson and once for all putting their relations on an intelligible and durable footing. I cannot conceive their taking any other resolve than this, and when they hear the results of American conciliation and see how little this obtains, doubts as to the necessity of our proceedings being dictatorial would be removed, I should think, from every mind. . . . On the coming occasion it would not do to make fresh mistakes. It is indispensable that we have a large force and above all resolute, energetic, and intelligent commanders. A Sir C. Napier (I mean the Sind one) would begin and close the campaign in a couple of months.

Mr Bruce himself wrote to Parkes (16th August): 'I regret much that when the permanent residence was waived [by Lord Elgin], it was not laid down in detail what the reception of the Minister at Peking was to be. It would have soon appeared that the Chinese thought, when we abandoned the exercise of the former right, that we had virtually consented to accept the American article on the visit to Peking and go back from what was accorded to Lord Macartney.' What the 'American article' meant was clearly explained, when Mr Ward, the U.S. Minister, soon after the British repulse at the Peiho, consented to go up to Peking by way of Peh-tang—the way the Chinese



wanted Mr Bruce to go. The American mission was treated exactly like 'tribute-bearers' from Lewchew: compelled to journey to the Peiho in rough springless country carts, which tortured every nerve in the body; shut up in a yamun at Peking and forbidden to stir a step outside, or to see a soul beyond their prison-house. The Chinese Commissioners appointed to negotiate disdained to sit at the same table with the unfortunate Americans, and when they spoke of an audience with the Emperor, the *kotow* or prostration, as before a deity, was declared to be absolutely indispensable. Though they had eaten a fair amount of dirt, their sturdy republican knees would not bend to this; and so they returned, without an audience, to Peh-tang, where they finally consented to exchange the ratifications of their Treaty.<sup>1</sup> So much for the policy of conciliation. As Mr Wade (who was Chinese Secretary to Mr Bruce's Legation) remarked, 'Ward's return quite clears *our* chief.' A singular piece of evidence as to the Chinese view of the American Mission was discovered a year later. During his captivity in Peking, Parkes noticed a label pasted on a chair in his room: the inscription stated that the chair had been returned to the Government store after having been supplied for the use of 'the American *tribute-bearer* Ward.'

It was to induce Mr Bruce to submit to humiliation à l'Américaine that the arguments of Ho, the Viceroy and Superintendent of Trade at Shanghai, were directed: he would have the British Minister go up to Peking, by the Peh-tang route, in all docility, as though nothing had happened. Mr Bruce's reply was that he had best confine himself to matters of trade, and leave policy to the higher authorities. Of course to have accepted the humble attitude of Mr Ward would have been to give up all that the Treaty aimed at securing, to renounce our claim of equality, and to have reverted to the old position of the East India Company. If we went to Peking at all, it must be as a Sovereign Power to a Sovereign Power. Mr

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<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of Dr S. Wells Williams*, by his Son, p. 314 ff. (1889).

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Bruce was perfectly right, and the Ministers at home, whose instructions he had obeyed, could do nothing less than support him.

As soon as the British Government had assured themselves that the repulse at the Taku forts had been ordered and approved by the Emperor of China, and that no apology was forthcoming, they decided on sending out 10,000 troops under Sir Hope Grant, a distinguished officer, who had been Brigade-Major to Lord Saltoun in the first China war, and had since commanded his regiment, the 9th Lancers, at Sobraon and Chillianwallah, and served with great credit throughout the Indian Mutiny. As before, the English were to have the support of the French; and in order to mark the gravity of the measure, Lord Elgin was instructed to repair once more to China to complete the work he had begun, and see his brother properly instated as British Minister at Peking. People who did not approve Lord Elgin's proceedings said that as he had made the mess it was his business to mend it: but that is not the language of official despatches. These decisions were taken in February 1860, and it was easy to foresee that nothing would be done at the Peiho till the autumn. It was one of the inconveniences of the geographical conditions that it took about a year before an insult could be punished.

Meanwhile affairs in Canton continued tranquil. The vast size of China has this advantage, that war may go on in one part without disturbing amicable relations in another. As far as the work of the Commission was concerned, there might never have been a repulse at the Peiho at all: so little was the hostile act felt down in the South. The garrison of Canton was strengthened, however, and preparations made for defence in case of a rising. Parkes' energies during the autumn of 1859 were chiefly directed to two objects, one of the utmost importance to the mercantile community, the other no less vital to the peace and happiness of the Chinese inhabitants. The first was

the selection of a site for the new British settlement, which was to take the place of the burnt factories. There were conflicting views about the best place to build on. Merchants and officials and Chinese differed, and a vast deal of correspondence passed on the subject. The potential convenience of the muddy flat by the site of the Shameen forts on the river side above the city had struck the authorities, and when Mr Bruce placed the decision absolutely in Parkes' hands (by a despatch of 31st May) this site was chosen, in spite of the objections urged at first by the English merchants, and of the difficulty and delay involved in recovering it from the water. It was leased on a quit-rent, and the Chinese themselves contracted to recover it, as the following letter explains:—

Just at this moment I am very busy, as I have all the business of the Shameen site upon my hands. This, as you will have heard, has been selected as the place for the future factories, and when *recovered from the waters* it will be a noble building ground. But this recovery has yet to be made, and it will take eighteen months fully to complete the work. I had the negotiation of the business with the Chinese authorities and have got *kudos* from Mr Bruce for having succeeded 'under untoward circumstances.' It is to cost about 280,000 dollars, to be paid for by us out of the Indemnity; that is, we take the site over from the Chinese in lieu of the above sum, but we only do this when it is fit for building on, and thus they have to sustain all the risk of the recovery and of the contractors failing to perform their obligations, etc. Of course it would never have done for us to have borne the risk, or we might have lost half a million of the Indemnity before we should have done with it. Now, the Chinese authorities and gentry are directly interested in the success of the work; but if it had been differently arranged, their interests would have lain in the opposite direction. Although nearly all of it is a muddy flat, still a part of the site goes through a populous suburb, and many

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To W.  
Lockhart  
Canton  
Oct. 11

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huts and cabins are erected on the flat itself. All these people have to be ejected, but I see also that they are properly compensated, and the trouble that some three hundred old women give me is beyond description. However, I hope I shall have got the whole of them out by the end of the month.

We shall hear of the Shameen settlement later :<sup>1</sup> it is enough here to say that the site was satisfactorily recovered during our occupation of the city, thanks mainly to the vigilance of Parkes, and that results have fully justified the wisdom of the choice.

The other subject that engrossed his attention was the cruelty and illegality which disgraced the emigration system—or want of system—at Canton. An extract from a despatch of Consul Alcock will show the state of this abominable traffic in the spring of 1859 :—

Consul  
Alcock to  
Sir J.  
Bowring  
Canton  
April 12

The acts of violence and fraud connected with the coolie trade at this port have lately reached such a pitch of atrocity that a general feeling of alarm spread through the population, accompanied by the degree of excitement and popular indignation which rendered it no longer possible or safe for any authority interested in the peace of the place to remain inactive. The intolerable extent and character of the evil has thus tended to work its own cure. When no man could leave his own house, even in public thoroughfares and open day, without a danger of being hustled, under false pretences of debt or delinquency, and carried off a prisoner in the hands of crimps, to be sold to the purveyors of coolies at so much a head, and carried off to sea, never again to be heard of, the whole population of the city and adjoining districts were roused to a sense of common peril. That under such circumstances the people should attempt to protect themselves, by administering a wild justice of their own upon the persons of any of the nefarious gangs of crimps that fell into their hands, was a natural consequence of the supineness of

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 445.

the authorities. And accordingly, within the last ten days, several of the kidnappers have been killed by the mob with the vindictive cruelty to which the Cantonese, under less provocation, are well known to be addicted.

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The Commander-in-Chief and the Commissioners of Canton did their best to check these outrages, but proclamations and police effected little change; the river and even the streets were not safe from the native coolie crimps, who were highly paid by American and other agents, and would risk a good deal for their reward of thirty dollars a head; and some complete reform in the method of permitting emigration was loudly called for. At Shanghai the proceedings of the crimps led to a serious riot, in which Mr H. N. Lay was dangerously wounded. To Mr John Gardiner Austin, who was charged by the home Colonial Secretary to arrange for a supply of coolies for the West Indies, belongs the credit of initiating a complete change in the system. He put himself in communication with Parkes, and found a zealous coadjutor. Parkes brought his influence to bear upon the new Governor-General Laou, who had succeeded Hwang, and was pleased to discover a corresponding eagerness on the part of the Chinese officials and leading gentry, without whose co-operation it would have been difficult to carry out the reform. The suppression of the pernicious system of crimps was agreed upon, together with the abolition of depots for coolies on foreign vessels which defied control; and an Emigration House, directed by Mr Austin, was established at Canton for the reception of all coolies who wished to emigrate to the West Indies. 'The distinguishing feature of this emigration,' wrote Parkes, 'is that it has the earnest support and co-operation of the local Chinese Government, and that the regulations under which it is to be conducted, and the rigorous surveillance of the Allied Authorities to which it is subject, provide the fullest protection for the emigrants and render all coercion in their engagement or shipment impossible.'

To Hon.  
F. Bruce  
Nov. 10



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The Emigration House was opened in November, and worked admirably. The Minister, Mr Bruce, expressed his warm approval of the plan and reported it in terms of high commendation to Lord John Russell (5th December). Referring to Parkes' share in it, he said that his 'energy and knowledge of the language and habits of the people have enabled him to render great service to this good cause'; and commenting later on the working of the plan he added, 'the scheme has hitherto been successful beyond anticipation.' Man-stealing gave place to free emigration, and although clandestine kidnapping could not be abolished by a stroke of the pen, so far as England was concerned the abuses of the coolie traffic were things of the past.<sup>1</sup> Few subjects had so thoroughly engrossed Parkes' interest. He felt that, in his wilderness of official quill-driving, here at last was an oasis of pure practical benevolence.

To W.  
Lockhart  
Canton  
Nov. 28

I have been very busy during the last month in establishing a system of Chinese emigration with the full sanction and also co-operation of the Governor-General of these provinces. It will I trust be the means (with God's blessing) of putting a stop to the infamous practice of man-stealing which has been carried on here to a great extent during the last two years, and which was fast gaining for the foreigners a worse name than any they have hitherto held in the opinion of the people. Vessels have been lying at Whampoa, six or seven at a time, receiving the Chinese brought to them by coolie-brokers or crimps, many of whom were kidnapped owing to the premium offered by the foreigners for every Chinese that the brokers brought them. The foreigners may affect all ignorance of their being thus kidnapped, but morally they are as criminal as their wretched Chinese agents. I have got the Chinese authorities to put the traffic under strict prohibitions at Whampoa, but to throw it open at Canton under

<sup>1</sup> See the interesting Blue-Book, 1860 [168], Correspondence respecting Emigration from Canton.

certain regulations, which provide for the registration of every emigrant before Chinese officers, and for the inspection of the depots by allied officers. In this mode it will be impossible for emigrants who are thus engaged to be taken off against their will, and I am in hopes that the system will prove so much *cheaper* than that of man-stealing that those foreigners who do not adopt it from motives of morality will do so with a view to economy. I am glad to say that an Englishman has led the way, in the person of a Mr Austin, who is a special agent of the West Indian Colonies for the collection of Chinese labourers, specially appointed by the Colonial Office. . . .

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During the preceding four or five years the most valuable of all biographical materials, private letters, have been scarce: but from 1860 there is no such deficiency. In March of that year Mrs Parkes left China to return to England. She was not in good health, and the climate was not suited to her little girl, and this, more than the disturbed state of affairs and the prospect of another war, determined her husband to send his family home. From this time until their happy reunion in England in 1862, the biographer possesses the advantage of an ample and intimate correspondence. If proof were needed, these letters would be evidence convincing enough of the perfect happiness and union of these two. Every letter breathes the fondest and most devoted affection, and tells that the lover still lived in the husband. But this part of the correspondence may not fairly be exposed to the general view; the sacredness of this love poured out in letter after letter belongs to her alone to whom it was given. It is enough to know that it existed in the highest and purest degree, without seeking to inquire in what terms it was expressed. Harry Parkes and his wife, however, were blessed with that union of mind which is almost as essential to perfect sympathy as union of heart. She was deeply interested in everything that he did; she understood the problems with which he had to deal, and was

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eager to learn every step he took in the political complications of the time. Hence his letters are not merely love-letters—though they are that in no ordinary degree: they are also full of his views on all the events that were agitating the Far East, and they contain a minute record of his thoughts and acts during a momentous epoch in the history of European relations with China. This it is which gives so high a biographical value to the letters to his wife in 1861-1862.

The very first letter of this interesting correspondence notices an important step which was taken at Parkes' suggestion: <sup>1</sup> this was the lease of the Kowloon peninsula opposite Hongkong by the British Government. Kowloon was the invariable refuge of the pirates, robbers, and criminals in general who infested the Bogue, and its possession was almost essential to Hongkong on military as well as civil grounds. Its sandy plain was also wanted immediately for quartering the troops which were destined for the attack on Peking; and nothing could be odder than that the local Chinese authorities should lend it for such a purpose. It needed an intimate knowledge of their notions to conceive such a scheme, and the commanders from England would never have dreamed of it; but to Parkes it was the most natural and practicable thing in the world, and far preferable to exciting animosity by forcibly taking possession of the land. He was in consultation on 16th March, he tells his wife, about the Kowloon project with the General and Sir Hercules Robinson, who had succeeded Sir John Bowring in 1859 as Governor of the colony of Hongkong: 'after hearing what I had to say both Sir H. Robinson and Sir Hope Grant came round to my way of thinking as to the desirability of getting a *lease* of Kowloon, although they had already begun to land troops. . . . Sir H. Robinson is all eagerness that it should be settled forthwith and that I should get back to Canton to arrange it as speedily as possible.'

<sup>1</sup> This is proved by a letter from Sir H. Robinson to Mr Bruce, dated 12th March 1860.

Accordingly ten days later we find that the Chinese authorities had proved as amenable as his Excellency to Parkes' arguments. Writing to his wife from Hongkong, on 26th March, he says :—

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On Monday [19th] I had to go to work in earnest, and from that day to this I have been at work without intermission, partly because I have had to settle one or two important matters—one of which was the leasing of the Kowloon peninsula—but chiefly because I have arranged the trip [to Shanghai] we had also spoken of, and I have come down here to join Mr Dent and go up with him in the *Yang-tsze*. You will understand that many a thing had to be put in order before I could get away. I could not have left had not everything been squared up and no important question on the *tapis* to be closely watched. The appointment of a third Commissioner enabled me to get off, but I had to induct him into a knowledge of his duties. . . . General Grant came up to Canton on Monday with Lady Grant and stayed there Tuesday and Wednesday. During this time I settled the Kowloon matter, much to his satisfaction and that of Sir Hercules Robinson.<sup>1</sup> I have also carried an important point, that of closing all emigration at Canton during the south-west monsoon. . . . You will be very glad to hear that I have got away and shall have so thorough a change. It was certainly worth an effort. I expect to be away fully three weeks. The time is a very interesting one in the North as we shall know up there whether the ultimatum is accepted or not.

To his  
Wife  
Hongkong  
March 26

Another and longer letter of the same date gives a good picture of a week's work in the Commission :—

<sup>1</sup> Sir H. Robinson, who had not at first approved of the plan of a lease, on the ground that the charter of the colony made no provision for such an arrangement, wrote to Parkes, 24th March, to thank him for 'the very satisfactory arrangement you have succeeded in carrying out as to Kowloon. We are now in the best position we can be in, short of a cession, and in forwarding the official correspondence to the Duke of Newcastle I shall not fail to point out that we are indebted for this to the tact and skill with which you have conducted the negotiations.'



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To his  
Wife  
Hongkong  
March 26

On Monday, 19th, I set to work. It was a most disagreeable hot day and I was very poorly. Mayers and Douglas<sup>1</sup> took up their new quarters and I moved into my old office. . . . At work early on Tuesday with one of those letters that are the plague of my life. This one was to Laou, communicating the proposals as to the lease of the Kowloon peninsula. I was anxious that General Grant should see the draft before I despatched it. Got up to the Heights with said draft at one o'clock, and at once saw General Grant, who fully approved the latter. I also talked with him about the police, etc., and got him at once to authorize the formation of a strong mounted corps, to be raised from thirty men, as at present, to seventy or eighty, if a hundred could not be given. Took tiffin with the two Generals, their respective ladyships, and staffs, and back to office. In the afternoon to Laou with my letter in my pocket, and got him to agree to the whole of the scheme, whereat I felt jolly in mind though seedy in body. . . . After coming from Laou I went to Shameen, and did not get back till seven. Thus to-day was one of my twelve hours' days, *i.e.* if running about be also included in work.

Wednesday.—Had to draw up a deed of lease and a proclamation relative to Kowloon and in a word to carry into execution the arrangement of yesterday. These matters occupied me the greater part of the day, but I was rewarded in the evening by signing, sealing, and delivering, I to Laou and Laou to me, the desired deed of lease, which settled the Kowloon question, until the peninsula can be altogether ceded to us, which will be the next step, I doubt not.<sup>2</sup> To dinner with the General. . . . General Grant was very wearied and had to be up at six, so was doubtless glad when I finished my conversation.

<sup>1</sup> Mr R. K. Douglas, Keeper of Oriental Books and MSS. in the British Museum, was then an assistant in the consular service in China.

<sup>2</sup> The prophecy came true in 1861. Kowloon is now part of the colony of Hongkong.



Up at six myself also, prepared a few papers for General Grant, and met him at the Commissariat landing-place at half-past seven, where I said good-bye. Rode back with General van Straubenzee, and urged him to name at once a third Commissioner. He asked me if I knew any one, and I suggested Major Pownall. The General evidently had the same man in mind himself. . . . In the course of the day it was arranged that he should have the appointment. I now broached my plan of going to the North, and found it met with no opposition. . . . Friday and Saturday were hard days indeed. Pownall came and I put him up in Major Taylor's room, who had returned to Hong-kong. I had a great discussion with Martineau, the General, and D'Aboville on emigration, which I wanted to see closed altogether for several good reasons on 30th April. Encountered opposition on the French side, but eventually carried the point, with a loss of about five hours' time, during which I had to pay two visits to the Heights and to go through the usual ordeal of being taken by the General to D'Aboville. That little man cannot look upon me with favour, for whenever I go to him it is to take the opposition in the discussion of business. Every minute of Friday and Saturday was engaged, and much of Sunday also:—so many things had to be put in train to give Pownall a fair chance of understanding what was before him. . . . Took to my despatches after dinner of dire necessity, Cooper the faithful keeping me company. This done at twelve I then began to pack and put away things. Got all done by half-past three and then to bed. Up at half-past five, had my hair cut, and got on board the *Willamette* in good time after calling on Winchester on the way. Thus you will see how every moment of the past week was occupied.

The change to Shanghai, and complete rest from the duties of the Commission, were urgently needed, and when Mr Dent offered to take him up in his steamer, Parkes felt

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that 'the opportunity we had often wished for' had really come in the nick of time. 'If I am to feel always as I have done to-day, I shall certainly need a change, for there is a weight upon me which I feel I must be relieved of, or I cannot stand it.' Accordingly he gladly accepted the invitation, and sailed on the *Yang-tsze* on the morning of the 27th March. Everything of importance had been settled at Canton, and he 'felt as blithe and joyous as a schoolboy.' Off Woosung, he says:—

To his  
Wife  
Shanghai  
April 4

We had already passed into a different climate. Glad to have a fire in the cabin, while on the deck it was no easy matter to keep up the circulation. At Hongkong, on the other hand, it was that heavy thick vapoury warm weather that is so disagreeable. The change was most welcome, and you will understand how gladly I drew in each breath of fresh vivifying air, and how thankful I felt for the opportunity of culling, as it were, new health and spirits. . . .

You cannot imagine with what interest I gazed on Shanghai as we drew near to it, and saw for the first time the Consulate, which may be our home<sup>1</sup> in years and for years to come. The place is immensely changed. Those houses that have not been pulled down have almost all been altered, the Bund has just been widened twenty feet, and the foreign town stretches over ground that was covered with Chinese buildings when I was here. Dent had invited me to Dent, Beale, and Co.'s, which is one of the few houses that have not been altered, being as you know one of the best, if not *the* best, in the place. Called at the Legation and then came back to tiffin. The news brought by the mail has not pleased Mr Bruce, as by publishing his instructions, which the Government at home have done, they have completely shown his hand to the Chinese

<sup>1</sup> He had already been appointed Consul at Shanghai in February 1859; but the post was temporarily filled, during his absence on the Commission, by T. T. Meadows. The Consulate was no longer in the city, as it had been in 1848, but in the British settlement.

at a critical moment, just when the latter are hesitating as to accepting our terms or not. . . . Then back to the Legation, as Wade had promised to take a good walk with me. Called first on Meadows. The walk was a dirty affair, as they have had nearly six weeks' continuous rain here, and you know what the Shanghai roads are in wet weather. Went all about the settlement and round the racecourse. Home to dress and then to dine with Mr Bruce. . . .

Affairs are approaching a crisis. The Plenipotentiaries sent in an ultimatum on the 8th ult. The Chinese have until the 8th April to make up their minds whether to accept it or not. It is very moderate, requiring merely an apology and the prompt execution of the Treaty ; and now by the printing of the afore-said instructions the mandarins will know likewise that we are not prepared to insist upon our Minister having an audience of the Emperor. . . .

3rd April.— . . . Mr Bruce conversed with me very confidentially on the position of affairs, told me various things I should not otherwise have known, as to his instructions, and how he had endeavoured to carry them out. In some points he had been compelled to depart from them, and he was not at all certain how the Government might view the deviation. A report is current that Lord Elgin is coming out again, and although Mr Bruce has not a word on the subject either from his brother or the Government, it is evident that both he and Wade look upon such a contingency as possible. With the prospect, however uncertain, of *supercession* before him, you can understand that he is not in the best of spirits, and the crisis that is now drawing close at hand, as the Chinese must either accept or refuse the offers made them, adds to his anxiety. I could soon see from the tone of his conversation that he did not think it advisable for me to absent myself from China for three or four weeks [on a projected visit to Japan] at such a moment, and more-

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over that he was desirous to have me near himself until he could see a little further through the mist before him. We were interrupted after an hour's conversation, but as I walked away I began to see that I must abandon the trip that was so full of attraction to me. This threw me into a truly moody spirit. . . .

Much as one would deplore conflict, I am sure that matters cannot be satisfactorily settled until the defeat of last year shall have been counterbalanced by a corresponding success, and that the war party at Peking will never be quiet, or even allow the execution of the Treaty, until they know that we are more than a match for them. What has been done with the 'braves' of the south of China will have to be done with the Tartars of the north. If, however, it be true that Lord Elgin be returning, I doubt not he will again attempt negotiation. There will then be no end to the Chinese troubles, and all speculation will be at an end.

The visit to Shanghai was much more, in reality, than a mere holiday trip. The port was to be Parkes' Consulate after he had done with the Canton Commission, and it was interesting to look at the place which he had not seen for many years, and to speculate on the life he would lead there with the wife who was continually in his thoughts. He planned all sorts of pleasures and comforts for her—'no more of roughing, as in the little house at Canton'—took stock of the Consulate, talked of a carriage, and made the best of the ruinous extravagance of the place. Small houses were rented at £300 and £400 a year. The style of living was very luxurious and prices were exorbitant. People like Mr John Dent and Mr Webb could afford to keep their French cooks and live *en prince*, for Messrs. Dent and Co. had already made nearly a quarter of a million out of the newly-opened Japan trade. But it might be difficult for a Consul to keep up his position in so expensive a place. Parkes, however, made light of the drawbacks, and drew nothing

but sunny pictures of their future life at Shanghai to cheer his wife in England.

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But Shanghai just then possessed more than a personal interest. It was the centre of the political situation. In coming there for change and rest, he had really taken the best possible step for his public career. It had put him again in touch with the political leaders, and brought his remarkable powers prominently before the eyes of the Minister, from whom his isolation at Canton had hitherto separated him. Mr Bruce was much impressed with Parkes' clear insight into Chinese affairs, and begged him to be his guest in the Legation, that they might discuss the situation at their leisure ; and it was doubtless due in some degree to the opinions then formed by his brother that Lord Elgin afterwards discovered the necessity of calling Parkes to the front in the ensuing campaign.

Though a quiet day to me, it has been an eventful one *politically*, for the reply from Peking to the ultimatum has been received and is *very unfavourable!* There is therefore only one course now open to us, and that a hostile one. But as our forces are not yet up, we are not ready to do anything, and if we are to wait for the French it may be six weeks or two months before we are ready to begin. Mr Bruce is placed in a very trying position, and anxiously looks for the next mail to find how the Government keep their ground on the China question, and whether there is any truth in the report of Lord Elgin coming out again. Chusan will doubtless be at once occupied, but that will be a peaceful affair. The Government have directed Mr Bruce to commence a blockade of the Peiho, but such a measure would be wholly useless : it would lead to no result except that of inflicting misery upon the people, who would be deprived of their commerce and means of livelihood. Besides it would put it into the heads of the Chinese to attempt reprisals of the same kind at the less protected ports. My idea is that we should do nothing until prepared to go in in trenchant style, and

To his  
Wife  
Shanghai  
April 8



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that we should direct our warfare against Sangkolinsin and his arrogant Mongols, and not against a few poor trading junks. Mr Bruce is also of this opinion, but it is always awkward for a man not to follow out his instructions. . . .

Mr Bruce's views are very sound. Further negotiation is out of the question. The real animus of the Chinese Government is shown in the reply, which is that they never intended nor do intend, if they can avoid it, to carry out the Elgin Treaty. It was granted by them against their will, and we omitted all precautions necessary to ensure its being [carried] out—I mean in quitting Tien-tsin as we did in July 1858 instead of remaining there until the Treaty had been actually carried into effect. You will recollect in what a hurry the Admiral and Lord Elgin one and all were to leave and run off to recreate in Japan and elsewhere. By that step they just undid all they had previously done, and having once got us out of the river the Chinese proceeded to take steps to prevent our return, and to rescind all the provisions of the Treaty (the residence in Peking in particular) to which they objected, but without which the Treaty is not worth a straw, and our relations would always be imperilled.

To his  
Wife  
Shanghai  
April 15

I have been partially employed by Mr Bruce during this time, but though he has given me very little to do, he has taken up no small amount of my leisure in talking over the state of affairs. He is fond of asking me alone, or as often with Wade, to come to his room, and then he talks over every move in the Chinese game of politics from the first negotiations at the Peiho to the present date. As we often talk to little result, this appears to me an unprofitable employment of time: it may help, however, to keep up both his spirits and resolution. I myself consider him to be possessed of excellent common sense and very sound judgment, but he is not prone to much exertion, and a continuation of troubles evidently distresses him. Just now he is

both worried and nervous, and would very gladly take any opportunity that might be offered him for effecting peaceable arrangements. He is indeed most anxious for such an opportunity, but the replies which the Chinese Government sent to the ultimatum of the French and English Governments offer no opening for negotiation. It is possible they may change their tone when they see our preparations for war advancing, and that, not wishing to lose a card, they are trying in the first instance the effects of brag. I think, however, that they have other cards in their hand which they will play before they are convinced that they are playing a losing game, and that a resort to force will certainly be one of their movements. Under these circumstances it is a matter of congratulation that we are so well able to oppose force to force, and that our expedition is on such an extensive footing as to leave little doubt in our minds as to what (with God's blessing) will be the issue of the contest.

All this past week Mr Bruce and M. de Bourboulon have been well weighing the real meaning of the letters they received from the Chinese Government just this day week, with a view to determining their next step—namely, whether they are justified or not in placing matters in the hands of the Commanders-in-Chief and calling on them to use coercion. I have no doubt in my mind that the said letters contain no approach whatever to the acceptance of the allied demands, and there seems to be a perfect unanimity of opinion on this point. This being the case, the Plenipotentiaries have only one course to pursue, and that is to tell the Chinese that force will be resorted to to compel compliance. On Thursday—no, Friday—replies of that character were accordingly forwarded to the Chinese authorities, and yesterday Commanders-in-Chief and Plenipotentiaries held a council at this Legation, and the matter has now passed into the hands of the former. At least they agreed to take this step by writing

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in the course of to-day ; so no doubt the point is disposed of and we enter on a new scene in the proceedings from this date.

It is greatly to be pitied that we are not able to commence action at once, but our own force will not be complete at Hongkong until the beginning of May, and the French probably not until the end, so the first week in June is the earliest we can look to for the concentration of the force off the mouth of the Peiho. This being the case, it is further to be regretted that an ultimatum (which always implies war if not accepted) should have been sent in so soon. But this was the wise idea of the Home Government. Indeed, had Mr Bruce carried out this instruction the moment he received it, he would have had to act upon it three months ago. . . .

The programme will I think be this. First we shall have to take the Taku forts, and then move on Tien-tsin. Between Taku and Tien-tsin we may expect to fall in with the main Chinese and Tartar army, and if they can be brought to a pitched battle, that will probably prove decisive. We then march into and occupy Tien-tsin, the whole operation having probably occupied a fortnight. It will then be raging hot and unwise for us both from sanitary and political reasons to move on further, and negotiations—the Chinese making the overture—will set in. Matters will be settled, the Plenipotentiaries will go on to Peking, we holding Taku and Tien-tsin as guarantees for their safe treatment and the eventual execution of the Treaties, and in that position we shall have to remain for fully a twelvemonth after. May a good Providence grant these or similar results, and then we may hope for a final settlement of all differences, and of our becoming the friends of the Chinese, which [it] is so much to the interest of both parties we should be : but they will never give us their confidence or their friendship, or even behave to us with common civility and allow us

the enjoyment of our rights, until they are convinced that we are dangerous to them as enemies.

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Meanwhile the 'gathering of the clans' continued; Shanghai was filling with officers, and the marines voted it 'a very dull hole.' Parkes nevertheless found as much gaiety as he cared for. He describes a dinner party at the Legation, where the wife of the French Minister, an inveterate smoker, picked out 'the biggest of big cigars' and rattled off French and Spanish songs, 'while Lady Grant sat very quietly on the sofa and made only mental remarks. Sir Hope Grant is a great musician, and plays beautifully on the violoncello and on the piano.' Indeed it was his 'cello playing (besides his soldierly qualities) that so strongly recommended him to Lord Saltoun when that musical general was looking out for a brigade-major in the first China war. Parkes took few walks, contrary to his habit, for he found the country around Shanghai uninteresting, and by the end of his stay he felt he had had enough of the place, and would 'return to my own shop at Canton with the reflection that I might be worse employed.'

The first step in the new campaign was (as usual) the occupation of Chusan: it was considered a useful base, and its loss disheartened the Chinese. Parkes assisted in the invasion:—

I go on board the *Granada* to-morrow morning, and accompany General Grant first to Chusan and then to Hongkong. This little deviation will be very pleasant to me, as Chusan is very fair to look upon, and Shanghai is quite the contrary. . . . The mail brings a confirmation of the reports of Lord Elgin's return. I am sorry for it, and I think the Government are throwing the fat in the fire by sending him. With the force he will have, I could have thoroughly trusted Mr Bruce's management, if *backed by the confidence* of the Home Government.

To his  
Wife  
Shanghai  
April 17

In the course of the 19th the French Admiral, our four vessels, and the French steamer *Saigon* (old *Peiho*)



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To his  
Wife  
Hongkong  
April 29

with troops from Canton, all came in [at the appointed rendezvous at Silver Island]. On the morning of 20th the whole fleet weighed for Chusan. The transports came to an anchor outside the harbour, while the two Admirals in their frigates and the *Granada* appeared off the Joss-House Hill, on which the principal defences of the place are constructed. Our gunboats had met us outside, and reported that although they had seen troops landing from Hangchow to the number of 500, these appeared to be men returning from the relief of Hangchow lately attacked by rebels. No preparations to resist us could be seen. After a consultation held between the chiefs, when a memorandum which I supplied to General Grant as to the mode of summoning the place, etc., was adopted by them all, three officers, one from each Admiral and the General, were sent ashore with a flag of truce to deliver this summons. I went with them as interpreter. We landed without being met by a soldier or official of any kind, but the people gathered around us in a very friendly way, and told us they had been expecting us for some time, and asked us what they could do for us: could they open shops of supplies or small trades, etc.? Getting a guide from among them, we proceeded to the yamun of the Chin-tai or principal military authority of this island, who has under his orders seven regiments (which should number about 500 men each), four of which are stationed on the island. We told him we came with an important message from the Allied Commanders, and requested him to send for the principal civilian on the island, who is the Chin-tai's inferior in rank. He complied, and both being assembled, we called on them to give us peaceable possession of the island, which they could do without dishonour to themselves, seeing that the force brought against them was far greater than their own, and which they should do out of consideration for the lives of the people. At the same time we told them that all the mandarins, civil



and military, would be allowed to remain on the island, though the troops would of course be disarmed and must become simply private citizens; but the civil mandarins might be continued in their functions subject to such control as the allies might see fit to impose. It would have been useless and unnecessarily harsh to have expelled the soldiers, who in China are more militia than regular troops according to our ideas, and who have their little homesteads at the place where they are quartered, and trade there in little shops or cultivate the ground.

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Having seen the first step of the war taken, Parkes returned to his duties at Canton at the close of April, where the progress of the rebels in the neighbouring country caused no little alarm. The following letter gives his views, as Commissioner, on the steps that were necessary for the defence of Canton in the event of an attack :—

I have written two memoranda and put them in the hands of General and Admiral, one on the subject of military and naval patrols, the other on the present position of the insurgents in this province. On the former subject the military are acting very well, and Sir Hope Grant is quite in favour of patrols, but I do not like the action of the Admiral. In his endeavour to get the whole of his force up North, and to make as great an appearance there as possible, he is denuding the South too much of naval support. A couple of tiny gunboats at Canton, one despatch vessel at Whampoa, and one large ship at Hongkong is all the strength he would like to leave us. I have pointed out that the occupation of Canton to be effective must be a joint naval and military affair—or at least the military must be supported by the navy. The military can garrison and defend the place (*i.e.* the city) against any foe, but we need the action of the navy, if we are to keep our enemy (should we have one) *at a distance*. I have advised therefore (what I have so

To his  
Wife  
Canton  
May 20

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often advised before) that the gunboats should patrol the rivers and creeks, which in China are the roads and highways of the country. The military patrols can do very little compared with what the navy can accomplish in this respect, and yet the latter do nothing. To this in my opinion may be attributed in a great degree the state of things in 1858, when Admiral Seymour gave his notable order that the gunboats were not to move from before Canton. . . .

The rebels are making a more serious movement than they have done for some time past, and Laou is raising levies in all directions to keep them down. He is of course suspected of sinister intentions, and the massing of these levies to the number of 30,000 men within a day's journey (or say forty to fifty miles) of Canton is looked upon by the alarm-mongers with suspicion. But as yet I see no cause for suspecting him of trying to do more than hold his own against the insurgents, and I know enough of their proceedings to see that it will require no small effort on his part to enable him to do that—but of course other ideas might find room in his head if he saw that by our imperfect arrangement or weakness we ourselves invited attack. I think our garrison is of very fair strength—one good European regiment of 1080 men; two native regiments of 1000 each, with a handful of engineers and artillerymen, making with the police perhaps 500 more Europeans; while the French promise a strong battalion of 800 men, but in reality only keep what they have always had, a paltry force of about 300. All this is well enough for the city and suburbs, or even five or six miles from it on the north side, but on the three other sides all the approaches are by water and should be well looked after by the navy.

In the disturbed and anxious state of the public mind, Parkes thought it desirable to extend his system of patrols, and organized a service of long beats in the

neighbouring country. A letter to his wife describes one of these rounds in which he himself took part :—

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I had an outing myself yesterday. The Commission boat has been launched, and I wanted to test the capabilities of the boatmen and see a little of one or two places near us at the same time, so I determined to explore that branch of the river that leads to Kong-tsun and which still remained unknown to us. The boat being very light will not accommodate many people, so I took with me only Douglas and old Liu. I had arranged, however, with Rokeby (who, I don't think I have before mentioned, is one of the police-officers) to take a patrol of half a dozen men to Kong-tsun overland and meet me there. I started at nine, and arrived at Kong-tsun at 12.30, and you may imagine how pleasant the weather was to enable us to travel at that time of day in an open boat without inconvenience. The distance was eighteen miles, the last four of which was up a narrow but pretty stream, full of sandbanks. The sun came out as we reached Kong-tsun and we were glad to be under shelter in the little yamun of the Deputy Magistrate until 3.30 o'clock, when Rokeby started off in the boat, and Douglas and myself mounted and took the escort back with us. Before finally quitting the river Douglas and myself had a bathe, swimming across the river and back again. We came home through Shektsing, where, as at other places, I held communications with the elders and head gentry who have the charge of the enrolment movement which is going on among themselves for purposes of defence, but which might be directed against us as in 1858. I think however they have learnt wisdom since that time, and it is gratifying to see that in Shektsing, which was the head and front of the hostile movements of those times, foreigners are now treated with respect, and I found the elders etc. obsequiously attentive. . . . Douglas is a fine young fellow, not by any means so clever and industrious as Mayers, but a

To his  
Wife  
Canton  
June 3

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finer character in various other respects. He is every inch a gentleman, and very ready to do anything I wish him. I hope I may be of some use to both of them.

He was too busy to be able to spare much time for change of air and scene ; but he had to go to Hongkong now and then to confer with the naval and military authorities on the question of the defences of Canton, and though he confessed he 'had no affection for the place,' the island had become much more pleasant to him since Government House had changed hands. He always enjoyed his visits to Sir Hercules and Lady Robinson. Of course he had no direct official connexion with the Governor, whose authority was now limited to the Crown Colony. Mr Bruce, who exercised the functions of Plenipotentiary and Superintendent of Trade from Shanghai, in default of Peking, was Parkes' chief. Still there were many points of common interests and policy to be discussed between the Governor of Hongkong and the Commissioner of Canton, and it was a relief to talk them over with a man of large views and wide experience such as distinguished Sir Hercules Robinson.

A greater than he was now coming on the stage of Chinese politics, for the second act :—

To his  
Wife  
Hongkong  
June 23

Tumbling on shore as speedily as possible, I learned from Mr Wiener that the mail had come in, . . . that Lord Elgin had come and was at Government House, and that the *Malabar* [the ship on which the ambassador had embarked] had been wrecked in Galle harbour. . . . After breakfast [on the 22nd] I went up to Government House and amid many interruptions remained talking to the Earl for upwards of two hours. He was very confidential and sensible in all his remarks : admits that he has come out chiefly because by doing so he found that he could close a number of mouths that would otherwise have been clamorous and troublesome to the Government ; but appears by no means disposed to give in to the Chinese, and wishes

that the Commanders-in-Chief had made greater advances and had already taken the Taku forts. The chances of this job having to be undertaken do not diminish.

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Parkes had hitherto found no cause either to like or believe in Lord Elgin. The Ambassador had treated the interpreters very much *de haut en bas* during his first mission, and there was hardly one who did not resent it. Moreover Lord Elgin identified Parkes personally with the violent and domineering policy which he attributed to Anglo-China, and owed him a grudge for the *Arrow* affair, which he never saw in its true perspective. Parkes on his side thought 'the Earl' supercilious and essentially weak: he disliked and deprecated his cautious perfunctory policy, and augured no good from his return. Had he seen the ambassador's journal during the voyage out, he would have found his worst apprehensions confirmed: for there Lord Elgin confessed<sup>1</sup> that 'what is desired is a speedy settlement, on reasonable terms—as good terms as possible;—but let the settlement be speedy. This, I think, is the fixed idea of all.' Nevertheless it was not to be quite the old story over again. In the interval between the two missions Lord Elgin had discovered that there was more in the Chinese problem than was accounted for in his philosophy, and he recognized in Parkes, apart from personal predilections, the man who could best fill in the blanks in his political science. He took some pains to make himself agreeable, and, what Parkes valued far more, he took him into his confidence. It is very evident that the interview on the 22nd June produced a favourable impression on the uncompromising Commissioner, and this was strengthened by further intercourse on the following day:—

I went up to Government House, where I lunched and remained for three hours. Lord Elgin received callers, and I slipped in whenever he was left alone and discussed affairs with him. He was very kind,

To his  
Wife  
Canton  
June 29

<sup>1</sup> WALROND, *l.c.* p. 317.



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and seemed to enjoy his conversation with me. He said that the way in which affairs had been managed at Canton had given satisfaction at home, so much so, indeed, as almost (strange to say) to occasion him some embarrassment: for when he, being opposed to a march upon *Peking*, had pointed out the difficulties of our holding and governing a city of that immense extent, the advocates of such a movement quoted *Canton*—its good order and the beneficial results that had followed on its capture—as an argument in favour of our attempting *Peking* if necessary. . . .

Lord Elgin has no easy task before him. These Chinese questions instead of reaching a settlement have only attained a greater growth, and now give promise of greater trouble than ever. Our mild undecided policy has had much to do with this, and Lord Elgin must feel that matters must now be promptly arranged or they will become very serious. The Government at home appear ready to do anything almost to get the matter off their hands, but the evil that they have to take in hand is not one that can be dealt with rapidly. It is not sufficient—as we have so often seen—to make engagements with the Chinese: we must also see them executed, and this latter is a slow process. I am surprised and concerned to see how confidently the men who come from home speak of a rupture being imminent between England and France.<sup>1</sup> Should such a calamity occur, the position of the two forces out here would be very awkward, and we should have to turn our attention from making war on the Chinese to warring upon each other. With even a faint prospect of such a thing occurring, the Governments must naturally feel anxious to bring combined operations to a close as soon as possible. But in China *occupation* for a longer or shorter period must follow any advance. To take a place to-day and give it up again as soon as you have

<sup>1</sup> Referring, no doubt, to the uneasiness caused by the French annexation of Savoy.

a written promise to carry out a compact is of no avail, and therefore it is difficult to see how the Government can possibly attain their aim of getting this affair entirely 'off their hands,' and the French troops also out of the country. Besides we may find that the French troops are not so desirous as we are to leave China, and we cannot allow them to remain here by themselves. They, the French, have a strong notion that China can be made to support any expedition, and it is only a fear of expense and consequences that deters them from making war on the World. . . . Then there is another great complication—in the rebellion, especially in view of the recent advances of the insurgents in the neighbourhood of Shanghai. They continue to hold Soochow and to advance upon Hangchow, and if they got both those cities the injury done to the commerce and general resources of the Empire will be very great. Already is trade at Shanghai at an end, and the mandarins are at their wits' ends.

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Thus Lord Elgin has a threefold difficulty to contend with—(1) Our own questions with the mandarins; (2) The rebellion, which is now beginning to affect us so directly that we must have something to say to it shortly although we have so long striven to have nothing to say to it; (3) The French alliance, which hamstrings all our movements both in respect to present and future operations.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE MARCH TO PEKING

1860

1860 WHEN Parkes returned to Canton after his conversations  
ÆT. 32 with Lord Elgin at Hongkong, he fell into the routine of his work without any expectation of being called away to the seat of war. The campaign would, he believed, be waged without his aid; the Ambassador had Mr Wade to interpret for him; and nothing remained but to wait patiently at the old yamun for news from the North. He forgot that, whatever Lord Elgin's personal wishes might be, there were two men at Shanghai (whither his Excellency had repaired) who were extremely anxious to have the advantage of Parkes' counsel and energy in the serious business to come. Mr Bruce was full of praise of the indomitable commissioner; and Mr Wade was unselfishly eager to have him for a colleague. The result is told in the following letter:—

To his  
Wife  
Canton  
July 8

The arrival of the Canton mail on the evening of the 6th brought me a surprise in the following order from Lord Elgin to join him in the North! It is nicely worded, and I think his Lordship's troubles have had the good effect of making him more courteous and more considerate. He wrote it the day after he arrived at Shanghai, and I suspect Wade has had something to do with the arrangement, as I could see when up at Shanghai that he wished that we should work together.

Neither B.-Gen. Crawford<sup>1</sup> nor Major Pownall likes the arrangement, and would gladly detain me if they could, but there are no sufficient reasons for doing so. You know my feelings on the subject, and that it is not an appointment that gives me any elation. All that I am anxious now for is to see something like a settlement effected, that I may have a prospect of relief. Ambition wanes, either with an accession of right feeling, or a failing of physical strength and with it mental energy. I trust in my case a little of the former mixes with the latter feeling, and though still willing, I trust, to do my duty and keep at my post as long as I am required to do so, I confess to a strong wish to make room for some one else to act for me. In short I am a little weary of the skirmishing sort of life I have led since I came out this time, and would be glad of a change of scene to produce change of thought and afford healthful exercise for mind and body. How delightful it would be to spend twelve months in such a place as Canons, with plenty of books, and London at hand to see as much of as would be good for one when inclination prompted! But whatever is good for one will come in time, and the best way to enjoy the future is to make the best use of *to-day*. But for Lord Elgin's letter:—

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SHANGHAI, 30th June 1860.

SIR—I am aware of the great importance of the office which you fill at Canton, and I should be very sorry to invite you to take any step which would interfere with the proper discharge of the duties appertaining to it. At the same time I cannot but feel that your ability and experience would be of great value to me in the North if at the present critical moment in our relations with China I could have the advantage of your services in that quarter.

<sup>1</sup> General Crawford had succeeded Sir C. van Straubenzee in command of the garrison at Canton.

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Should you therefore be of opinion that you could absent yourself from Canton even for a limited period of time without prejudice to the interests which are there entrusted to your care, I venture to request that you will at your earliest convenience join me in the Gulf of Pechihli.

The application which I now address to you has Mr Bruce's sanction, and he desires me to say that he will take into consideration, and if he deem it feasible give effect to, any arrangement you may suggest for facilitating your temporary departure from Canton.

I have the honour, etc.,

ELGIN and KINCARDINE.

Of course on receiving this letter I told General Crawford that to go North was my only course, unless he thought that interests in Canton would be seriously prejudiced by my absence—a view in which I myself could not coincide. He would not take the responsibility of requiring me to stay, so I am now in the fever of winding up some affairs, putting others straight, and packing for the field.

He sailed on 21st July in the trooper *Urgent*, carrying stores to the North, and took 'old Chang' with him as attendant. A box and portmanteau held all his clothes, another box his papers, a third his books, and a package of two blankets, pillow, two saddles, and a gun and pistol completed his outfit for the campaign. 'I am glad,' he wrote, 'that we are going direct to the Gulf of Pechihli. I am in that frame of mind that cares nought for greetings in the market-places. I care little for whatever would divert me from the work that is set me to do. What that work will be, I know not, but I am anxious to get at it speedily, that it may be the sooner concluded. It appears to me as if we were entering on the third and last act of the Chinese drama, which when finished will give opportunity to the actors large and small to step on one side and



recover from the toil and turmoil. So let us go at it with a will, and get it over as soon as we can.'

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Overwork, anxiety, and the long loneliness of his separation from his beloved wife, had told upon his spirits. He had got into a depressed state which was unlike his old self. The truth is, he had begun public life too early, and eighteen years more or less filled with responsible labour had told severely upon his health. His nerves had suffered grievously under the perpetual irritation of Chinese diplomacy. A few years before he would have hurrah'd at such an invitation as Lord Elgin's: but now life and work seemed grey and cold. But he deceived himself in fancying that he was not glad of the chance of playing a part in a big drama. His weariness and ennui soon passed away when he was actually in the field, and in spite of all his dangers and privations, in spite of a narrow escape of a Chinese headsmen's sword, he would not willingly have foregone the experiences now to be related.

The story will be told in Parkes' graphic letters to his wife. During each day's work he jotted down in pencil brief memoranda of what took place, and in the evening, in tent or hut, under a dim light, and surrounded by talk and joviality, squatted on the ground with his knees for a desk, he scribbled these vivid descriptions of the campaign.

The English had been ready for the attack by the end of June, but the French were behindhand—as they were henceforward throughout the campaign,—and General Montauban (afterwards Comte de Palikao) actually proposed amusing his force at Shanghai by retaking Soochow from the rebels in the interests of the very Imperial Government which he was about to attack in the North. Of course Mr Bruce put a stop to this, but the mere plan had delayed the French preparations:—

Lord Elgin and Baron Gros were annoyed when they found on their arrival not only that the Peiho forts had not been taken, but that the allies were not ready to commence the attack. On finding out who was in fault, he [Lord Elgin] intimated to General Montauban

To his  
Wife  
on board  
*Urgent*  
July 25

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that unless the French arrangements could be speedily completed he would authorize the English force to act alone. This had the effect of sending Montauban off to the Gulf *chop chop*, and Lord Elgin started himself on the 5th July and was followed by Baron Gros on the 7th. Our force has rendezvoused in the Bay of Talien (or Talien Wan, *wan* is 'bay' in Chinese), on the north side of the Gulf of Pechihli; the French in the harbour of Chefoo on the south side. . . . The forts will be summoned, the Chinese will refuse to surrender them, they will then be taken, Tien-tsin occupied, and when the Allies will have returned to precisely the position which they quitted with such unwise haste in June 1858, they will find the Chinese quite as ready to negotiate, and in a month after the forts are taken Lord Elgin will probably find himself, as a friendly visitor, within Peking. The great puzzle is what guarantees can be taken that will ensure good faith on the part of the Chinese when matters again wear the appearance of being settled. . . .

I am now glad that Lord Elgin and Baron Gros have come out. The French require a good deal of keeping in order, and until Baron Gros arrived their naval and military commanders ranked *above* M. de Bourboulon, who had consequently very little influence with them and could do little therefore to restrain their acts and opinions, which were and are often very ill judged. This dreadful alliance is a very very great reason for our devoutly desiring a speedy settlement of the question. They do us no good and act in fact in every respect just like a drag upon our coach. They use our stores, get in our way at all points, and retard all our movements. . . . It is well that we have Lord Elgin here, as he has unlimited power, and of course the full confidence both of Government and people as well: anything he does will be approved. . . .

One might imagine that Parkes was telling the history of the Crimean war, so parallel are the cases: there was

not a man in the army or in the Embassy who did not wish the French away, and as the campaign went on England had every reason to regret the renewal of the alliance which had been her bane in the Crimea.

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The next morning [28th July] we ran into Talien bay, the place of rendezvous for our squadron prior to moving on the Peiho. We found that the fleet had left on the 26th. It is a magnificent bay, Talien Wan, but I cannot stay to describe what we did not stay to look at, for the fleet not being there we did not anchor, but after receiving a visit from the senior naval officer started off again and pulled fast to catch up the fleet. I should mention that on the 27th we overtook the *Iskendar Shah* transport and found on board the headquarters of the marines from Shanghai. They prayed us to take them in tow, and with this vessel in company . . . we reached the fleet anchored about fifteen miles off the Peiho on Sunday afternoon, 29th. The appearance of the fleet was very imposing—stretching over seven miles of ground, or water rather; but there was nothing else but ships and water, as from the shoalness of the latter and the flatness of the shore we were altogether out of sight of land. Captain —— started off to report himself to the Admiral, and I went with him, as a means of getting on board this vessel, the *Ferooz*, which is set apart for Lord Elgin and suite. . . . I told the General that if he had work for me and Lord Elgin had not, I was of course ready to do what I could to aid him until wanted by the latter. Thence to Lord Elgin, whom I found not very well. . . .

To his  
Wife  
on board  
*Ferooz*  
July 31

At daylight, 30th, we moved, as did the whole fleet, to this anchorage, where we found American and Russian vessels of war. Visits and salutes were the chief business of the day on board *Ferooz*; elsewhere, General Grant and Admiral were as busy as they could be preparing to land the next day. It appears that nothing less than a division of English and a division of French will do to take this small Peh-tang fort, and

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as this involves landing some 5000 men a small job is made a very large one. I wonder that half a dozen gunboats don't run in and take the place and then let the military land their whole force as convenient.

During the morning General Grant came on board and asked Lord Elgin if he could have me with him, which was assented to on Lord Elgin's part and my own, when it was given me distinctly to understand that I was to accompany the General *on duty*, and by no means as an amateur. I have no taste for going into frizzling affairs in the latter capacity, but when duty requires me to go I can of course have no hesitation. It was arranged that the landing should take place at daylight, but when dawn broke it was found that there was too much sea to render this practicable, so everything had to be postponed until to-morrow. . . . Colonel Crealock,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Loch,<sup>2</sup> Wortley,<sup>3</sup> and myself go on to-morrow morning, leaving Lord Elgin only Wade and Mr. Thurlow.<sup>4</sup> It is no use telling you what we expect to do. . . . Simply I may say that the plan is to *land* and *form* at Peh-tang and then to make a combined attack by land and sea on the six forts and Tien-tsin.

To his  
Wife  
Peh-tang  
Aug. 4

It was nearly ten [on the 1st inst.] when the Admiral came up in *Coromandel* and took us [General and staff] on board ; and as we moved in, a small swarm of gunboats came steaming out of the fleet at various points, each having boats filled with troops or stores in tow, and took up the stations the Admiral assigned them. The Admiral then led in slowly, often having to stop for some stray vessel to come up. The French had also their flotilla, which followed Admiral Hope's directions also. At about twelve we sighted the Peh-

<sup>1</sup> Military Secretary to the Embassy. He had served through the siege of Sevastopol, the 1856 attack on Canton, and the Mutiny.

<sup>2</sup> Private Secretary to Lord Elgin ; now Sir Henry Brougham Loch, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Governor and High Commissioner of Cape Colony.

<sup>3</sup> Hon. J. F. Stuart Wortley, attaché to the Embassy.

<sup>4</sup> Hon. T. J. Hovell Thurlow, attaché to the Embassy ; now Lord Thurlow.









tang forts and those of the Peiho also. . . . At 2 P.M. *Coromandel* anchored at about 2000 yards below the forts of Peh-tang, the plan being that the troops should be landed at this point, wade across a mud flat to the shore, and take the forts in reverse as the gunboats moved up in front. As we approached the forts hoisted their flags, and a small force of about 100 cavalry turned out on a road or raised causeway which we concluded formed the line of communication between these forts and those of the Peiho, distant about six or seven miles. The object of coming to Peh-tang was, first, to obtain a spot where our landing might be effected without molestation, and secondly, to take the Peiho forts in reverse by marching from Peh-tang across the country to the rear of the said forts.

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The flotilla being up, the question [was] how were the men to be got on shore. We had in face of us the forts, one (the northern) mounting [eleven] and the other (the southern) [thirteen] guns, with two mamelons or towers in the former and one in the latter, all on the principle of the Peiho forts which are so strongly constructed. These forts, as I say, were looking us in the face; but on both sides of us there was nothing but a long mud flat, and the practicability of landing on the latter seemed doubtful. The possibility indeed depended on the character of the mud, whether it was hard or soft, and it was necessary also that something should be ascertained respecting the approaches to the forts. So it was determined that a party should land to reconnoitre. Generals Grant and Montauban being themselves of the party, I accompanied the former. We pulled over the flat until the boats stuck aground, when we had to take to the water, which was at first about knee deep (with the generality of men, but a little higher in *my* case), and were rejoiced to find a comparatively hard bottom, and about four or five hundred yards of wading brought us to dry land. But instead of advancing their reconnoitring party, the

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Generals, being well pleased with being able to get on shore so easily, passed the word for all the men to land, and as this was a work of time, we having three regiments and the French the same, we did not move forward until about half-past six. We then went across the flat to the causeway, distant about two miles, having at times firm sand, at others mud and water to push through. There was a little confusion at one time in consequence of the French having fouled our track and crossed to the right, instead of keeping on the left as they should have done. There was a little difference of opinion also between Generals Montauban and Grant as to these movements. The former, when he found that we were allowed to land without opposition, wanted to rush in and take the place that evening, while General Grant opposed this movement on the ground that it would be dark before we could get in and that he could not expose the people to the misery of a night attack. The disorder among the men would doubtless have been great, and many atrocities would have been committed by them under cover of darkness: so I think General Grant's decision was good; and Montauban had to conform to it.

But pending the discussion, which involved much rushing backwards and forwards, I lost the General, as did others of his staff, and having found a dry sandy patch of ground we halted there, and those who had blankets prepared for a bivouac. We had nothing to eat or drink, nor had I anything to sleep on, so the precaution of a double breakfast and a snack on board *Coromandel* came in useful. Still it is astonishing, when one has really hard physical work, how very thirsty if not hungry you become, and I would gladly have eaten and drunken again if I had had the means. Fortunately Major Taylor spared me a biscuit, half a glass of water, and half of his blanket, so I was tolerably well off.

I had composed myself when Biddulph<sup>1</sup> came riding up saying that he had found the General, who had gained the head of the column on the causeway and was near the town and wanted an interpreter. So I got up and with Biddulph, who had to relinquish his horse, recommenced the wading process, and on this occasion, having had to cross a soft nullah, got rather muddier than before. Reached the General at about 9.30, just as Frank Grant<sup>2</sup> came up to him with a report that he and young Mr Gibson (a student interpreter attached to the troops) had reached the town, found the people friendly, and that all the troops had left with the exception of seventy or eighty men who had shut themselves in the fort and resolved to defend it. I forget whether I said before that the forts hoisted their flags at our approach, which is understood to indicate fight, and the horsemen I referred to kept galloping backwards and forwards in the direction of the Peiho forts for the purpose, as it seemed, of bringing up force. Still we were not attacked by horsemen or by forts, although once or twice within their range.

My impression on hearing the above mentioned report of Grant's was that something might be done by reasoning with this handful of men, and that at all events an opportunity of surrender might be afforded them by which means the place would be saved the horrors of the bombardment that was in preparation for them. So I said to the General that if I went into the town I might make an arrangement with them and prevent the lives of thousands being risked by a slight stupid resistance to an overwhelming force. The General said 'Go, by all means, and do get the forts for me in a quiet way, for it will save a deal of trouble.' As I was starting, up came a man with a small packet of refreshments, a sandwich or two, and a couple of

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<sup>1</sup> Military Secretary to Sir Hope Grant; now General Sir Robert Biddulph, G.C.M.G., lately High Commissioner of Cyprus and at present Governor of Gibraltar.

<sup>2</sup> 5th Lancers, on the staff.

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bottles of claret. I got a glass of the latter before starting, and some water also, which was nectar.

Passing our outpost I asked the officer for a file of men, and two officers also came with me in the hope of getting water, for which the men were calling out. They were lying or sitting on a narrow [bank] with a salt water swamp on either side of them, with water, as it were, to their lips which they could not taste. On entering the town I found myself surrounded by a crowd, and told them that I had brought them a message from the General, which if attended to would be the means of saving the lives of many of them; that the place would be attacked the next morning both by gunboats and troops at 4 A.M.; and that they would be very foolish if they allowed their interests and lives to be imperilled by the act of a few soldiers who probably cared nothing for the people. They heard my speech with acclamation, declared, in reply to my demand whether they wanted to live or to die, that they preferred the former, and also that *all* the soldiers had left the place. In proof of this they were willing, they said, to take me to the forts and give them over to me, only I must be very careful of the *mines* with which they were filled.

It did not do to shrink from the transaction, so having got water for the officers and sent back one of them with two men of the place, who, I said to the people, would be hung if I did not return at twelve o'clock; and with the other officer,<sup>1</sup> who volunteered, young Gibson, and my three soldiers, I proceeded to take possession of the principal or southern fort. We had to traverse a populous but most filthy town, and though well accustomed to Chinese stench I confess that this surpassed all that I had before experienced. The streets were unpaved and nearly knee deep in mud. Arriving at the fort, closed and barricaded, I insisted upon the people breaking open the gate, and

<sup>1</sup> Captain Williams, 1st Royals, D.A.Q.M.G.



on entering it I found the fort, which is of very large size, empty alike of soldiers and artillery, except six guns of a very old structure—*wood* and iron. The mines, however, were more numerous.—I am called off, and find that I have had a whole hour to myself, so can't complain. (To be continued.)

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*August 6th, Monday.*— . . . I think when I left off my last note we were standing in the Peh-tang fort, examining the mines or the places where they were laid. We then took down all the flags from the ramparts and the mantlets or masks from the embrasures—those wretched things which they threw down just before they opened that dreadful fire upon the gunboats last year. This revealed to all those outside (when daylight permitted them to look) that in these forts there was no armament whatever, saving six wretched guns which scarcely admitted of being fired off. By when we had done this it was past eleven, and I thought of the two poor beings who had been threatened with hanging at twelve (although they were never safer than at that moment), and to save their feelings, as well as to report success, our party toddled back as fast as we could, I taking away with me, however, six of the best men I could pick out of those around to represent the people of the place in whose name the surrender of the forts could be made, and whose presence with us might prevent mischief during the night in case any soldiers or others took troublesome ideas into their heads.

On reaching General Grant I found him lying on the causeway asleep, but he did not think it worth while to send a party at once to the fort to hoist our colours there, but merely communicated the fact to the French General. The fear is that the gunboats might at any time open fire, for according to the plan they began to move slowly up at midnight, with guns run out ready to pour in a storm of shell if the fort had shown the least sign of hostility. At this time, too,

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an eclipse of the moon came on, and all the circumstances combined made a very impressive scene :—

First there was an army of 4000 or more men lying stretched on a muddy causeway of about fifteen feet broad, which twined its way like a snake through a salt-water lagoon. Nothing could be seen of the ground we were upon but mud-flats on either side of us, which became covered with water as the tide rose, and emitted a pestiferous stench. Of course not one of those 4000 men had a bed of any kind, but lay on the ground in their clothes and arms. On one side rose the forts and town of Peh-tang, as grim and obscure as mud (of which the place is constructed) can make such buildings. Then, as I said before, at twelve o'clock the gunboats, some ten or a dozen, began creeping slowly up to the town and then passing behind, each of them dragging behind it its long train of smoke, which refused to rise in the damp atmosphere, and made them look like some dark monsters going forth with no good intent. And then the moon began to veil her face, as if ashamed to look upon what might have been going at that moment to occur—a bombardment with a vast destruction of human life.

I remember, as I said, that the whole scene seemed very impressive, but I confess that after a minute and a half's contemplation it passed entirely from my gaze, and I can't say what passed until 4 A.M. [on 2nd]. I then, with General Grant's approval, got hold of Fisher,<sup>1</sup> and took him to examine the mines of the fort; but we had been forestalled by the French Engineers, who were already employed on the same job. I brought in the eight men I had taken out last night, and examined them as to local information, direction of roads, force of the enemy, etc.

<sup>1</sup> Major A'Court Fisher, R.E., C.B., who led the storming party at the assault of the Redan at Sevastopol on 18th June 1854, commanded the Engineers in the taking of the Peiho forts in 1858, and was associated with Parkes in the Canton Commission in 1860.

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One old man, evidently from his bearing and language a man of intelligence and respectability, told me a good deal that was very useful. From his account, we may expect to meet about 15,000 men at the Taku forts, or possibly 20,000, made of Mongol Tartars, Manchu Tartars, and Chinese troops. The former, the Mongols, are considered the best troops, and are said to number about 6000 men. They are all mounted, and described by Chinese even as disgustingly filthy, living chiefly upon raw mutton, and not being able to speak Chinese are as much foreigners to the people as we are. Sangkolinsin, the prince who fought the forts last year, commands there still, and has been preparing for our reception for some time past. He is one of three princes who appear to have the Emperor, a weak effeminate young man, under their control, and is considerably inflated, first, with the victories he has gained over rebels, and secondly with the success of Peiho last year. It is said that he is determined to fight again in spite of the wish of the Emperor to the contrary. . . .

About nine I ran into a Chinese house and made my toilette, having the luxury of a jar of water ; soap, towel, brush and comb, etc., I carried in my haversack. But I was at a loss with respect to a covering for my feet, for when I drew off my boots I found it impossible to get them on again ; they had become saturated with mud and wet, and my feet had swelled and blistered. I prevailed on the owner of the house to sell me a pair of his shoes, which though certainly ill-looking enough were at least comfortable to the feet ; and thus attired I proceeded with General and Admiral up the Peh-tang river to reconnoitre the country round the town in the hope of finding some other place where men and stores could be landed and marched across the country, and thus save our having to pass all our men through the filthy town, and give us another line of communication besides the causeway. We also wanted to find where

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the water of the river became drinkable, for sad to say there is *no fresh water* at Peh-tang ; the river is quite salt at flood tide, and it is useless to think of sinking wells, as that water would be salt also. In the first object we were unsuccessful, and found to our regret that Peh-tang is situated very like Venice, with nothing but water or marsh all round it, and the causeway therefore is the only means of egress or ingress. The river, however, proved to be fresh, five or six miles from the mouth, at low tide, and two gunboats were accordingly stationed there to protect the water boats which were set to work at once. . . . While we were making our observations we found that the enemy on the other hand were taking a look at us, a party of about 200 horsemen having shown themselves on one bank.

We dined at eight, the General having selected as his headquarters the *mamelon* or bastion, upon which our colours fly ; the French having hoisted theirs on a second one. This bastion presents a surface of about forty feet by thirty, and the wall being very thick the three embrasures form three little covered rooms : these and two tents pitched on the open part form our whole accommodation. Being about thirty feet high, we have a capital view of the surrounding country. General Grant has one tent ; Captain Biddulph (secretary), Lieutenant Johnson (*aide-de-camp*); and myself put up in the second ; but we are nearly as full as a sausage, and in the daytime when the sun comes out strongly the tent is perfectly uninhabitable. . . .

I found that General Grant had determined to send out a thousand men to see what the force observed in the afternoon were doing, as it might be that they had schemes upon our causeway upon which everything depended. The French General was also to send a similar force. It seemed a good opportunity for collecting information, so the General said he would be glad if I accompanied the column, and I on my part was nothing loth. Laid down on my blankets at 10 P.M.,

and rose the next morning [3rd] at 3 A.M., Major Réboul and Loch going also. Four o'clock had been named as the hour at which the troops were to move off, and we encountered them in the streets proceeding to the rendezvous. What work it was to get along! Streets full of mud and men, and nasty slippery mud too, which would give you a purl and bring you down in the slush before you knew where you were. The difficulty on such occasions is to know how to accoutre yourself. It might be an affair of a few hours or it might be one of days, for supposing the column had found it necessary to occupy a place I should have stayed there, for a time at least. So one has to put on a haversack containing necessaries, a pistol and pouch full of ammunition, a glass, a water bottle, a mackintosh or something of the kind, an umbrella (indispensable either for sun or rain), all of which combine to make a man feel loaded and to find it heavy work in the mud, which from its tenacious clayey character is always disputing for the possession of your boots or shoes.

However, off we went, I feeling as if I had not had half enough sleep. Ponies could not be got, as they had not been landed; so we were on foot. After two hours' march we found the enemy at the end of the causeway, that is, a picket only, which fired at us, and then fell back upon an intrenched camp about a mile beyond. Sangkolinsin may be a brave man, but happily he can have but a very imperfect knowledge of war, or he would never have allowed us to land at Peh-tang without opposition, or erected no fortification upon this causeway. A few guns posted at the end of it would have given us a great deal of trouble. When attacked the French were in front, but as soon as we could get to the end of the causeway we formed up and threw out skirmishers, who began exchanging shots with the enemy. They were all cavalry and manœuvred very prettily and with much precision, sometimes extending on both flanks at a gallop as if

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they intended to sweep round us, and then as rapidly concentrating again. When just within range of the gingals, our force was halted, and two small French three-pounders opened fire, but without much effect. The result was that the enemy expecting an attack prepared to repel it: but it was no part of the two brigadiers' instructions to attack, but simply to make a reconnaissance; and so they sent into the town to say what they had found and to ask whether they were to retire. Of course it took about two hours to get an answer, and during that time the two parties simply maintained their respective positions, exchanging shots—they giving us gingal shot for our small cannon,—but neither did much mischief. In our force we had five wounded and the French had the same. . . . Altogether the scene was a very lively one and our men were very well handled. They had to form in line, in square, to take up several positions, to go through the movements in short of a little battle, with just enough of reality about it to make it interesting.

The two Generals sent out orders that having effected what we were sent to do we were to retire, and the enemy let us do this without any trouble, in which again they were rather foolish. . . . Waded back with Thompson<sup>1</sup> and arrived at headquarters at twelve, very much gruelled and fit only to eat, drink, and sleep. . . . The town, I am sorry to say, is in a sad condition, for it has been thoroughly pillaged by our troops: when I say *ours*, I mean the whole force, for I must say that though our men have misbehaved, their excesses have been far surpassed by the French, for the reason that the latter make no attempt to prevent license of any kind, while our Provost Marshal does not spare the whip in the case of our people. The coolies of the military train<sup>2</sup> are again far worse than either

<sup>1</sup> Deputy Commissary General.

<sup>2</sup> It was one of the curious anomalies of war in China that we had no difficulty in organizing a corps of Canton coolies to carry our guns and bag-

French troops or our own, and have been going about breaking into houses, ill-using women, and plundering the people of everything. The affair has been mis-managed, and really, so long as we have to work with the French, it is almost hopeless to look for good management. It is useless for us to tell the people that we will protect them (as *we* did tell them by proclamation when we entered the town), for we don't, and with the French in company I don't think we can. . . . Peh-tang just now presents a wretched spectacle. The people have all left it, and I regret to say that a good number, I daresay as many as forty or fifty people, for the most part women, have made away with themselves, by poison or suffocation. If we are to leave such terrible traces of our course as this, we shall do ourselves a great deal of harm.

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The saddest instance that came to my knowledge is that of one of the men who took me over the forts and came out with me on the night of the 1st. His house was entered on the 3rd. no less than eight times by coolies. Three times he used my name and they left without injuring him ; but after that they had become excited by other pillage and by wine, and they completely ransacked his house. He received four visits also from French soldiers. The coolies threatened personal violence, and reduced him and his household to such a state of fright and terror that he and his wife and daughter and four women living in the same quadrangle all took poison. They were found dying and three were taken to the hospital ; but the man alone recovered. All the six women died.

Usher told me that in one day he had flogged thirty-nine men who had been caught looting. The French I believe have not inflicted a single punishment :

gage : they took an impartial delight in watching with broad grins the effects of shot and shell upon their own countrymen. But Chinamen of one province hardly reckon Chinamen of another province as fellow-countrymen at all.

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they seem to think that pillage is a soldier's right. They have even crossed the river and gutted a large village on the opposite side. At night they steal out, cross into our quarter of the town, and have brought that half of the place into as bad a condition as their own. . . . Unless we get out of the place speedily we may expect a pestilence. . . .

I am glad that I am at headquarters, for General Grant is a frank friendly man, who makes you quite at home, and his staff are all fine gentlemanly fellows. To be with them is better than to be alongside of Lord Elgin, who is by no means in the best of humours just now, as he has to spend day after day in perfect idleness, and evinces a disposition to carp at those about him and at whatever is going on around. . . .

Yesterday [7th] a council of war was held . . . and our movements were determined on. From the French we experience only difficulty and delay: so General Grant told them yesterday that, however he might regret their being unprepared, he must move on his men, as it was simply sacrificing an army to keep them inactive. The French are ill-found in the first place, and their means of transport are very defective. . . . Friday the 10th has been named for the advance. We lead and the French follow—they were obliged to come into our arrangements and follow our lead, because we said it could not be otherwise. Indeed Lord Elgin, who is beginning to deplore the alliance, would have authorized General Grant to have gone on alone if the French had declined to move. I hope we shall keep the lead we have now taken. . . . General Grant is very cheery. The enemy are evidently preparing to give us battle *in the open*, which (humanly speaking) is the great thing we have to desire, as our cavalry will then have full play.

On the 9th, however, heavy rain came on, and the troops were 'in a sea of mud.' An advance was impossible until the weather changed, which it fortunately did

in a few days. The armies marched out of Peh-tang on the 12th, took Tang-ku, a fortified place in the rear of the Peiho forts, on the 14th, and set to work to bring up provisions, reconnoitre, and throw a bridge across the river. The slowness of the progress was little to the taste of so energetic a nature, but Parkes admits that 'we cannot afford anything like a reverse, the forts are evidently too strong to be taken with a rush,' and the cautious game was the safest. 'For myself,' he told his wife (21st August)—

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I see war now made in a different way to that which I have before witnessed. Every place that we have hitherto taken in China has been carried by assault, and a single day has always sufficed to see an operation commenced and finished. But I must allow that the work now before us involves a different mode of proceeding. The fortifications are very extensive and very heavily armed, and in a skirmish which we have had this morning we have proved that our light artillery and even the Armstrong guns (which are meant to act upon masses of men and not upon walls) are not sufficient to silence the far heavier metal of the forts. So that I cannot see how matters could have been expedited more than they have been.

Patience was soon rewarded by a signal success:—

The 22nd was by God's blessing a glorious day for us. The whole of the forts, contrary to all expectation, fell into our hands on that day. . . . [On 21st] I rode out with Biddulph to the front to see General Napier's<sup>1</sup> arrangements for the attack on the nearest northern fort (marked A in enclosed plan).<sup>2</sup> The General kindly explained many things to us, and the thought that many dead men must be lying almost on the ground on which we then stood (under cover) within a few hours leant a painful interest to the scene. I had been up to this same fort in the morning with a flag of

To his  
Wife  
Tien-tsin  
Aug. 26

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Field-Marshal Lord Napier of Magdala.

<sup>2</sup> See map opposite p. 348.

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truce to summon them to surrender, but also to find out in what condition the fort was, and the character of the ditches, palisades, abattis, spikes, etc. etc. which we found defended it. The Chinese observed to some extent the behaviour of last year. All the mantlets (or masks) of the embrasures were down, and not a man was to be seen (from a distance) in any of the forts. As I and my single companion (Major Graham<sup>1</sup> of the Engineers) drew near, we were warned off, and the officer in command would not receive any message; so I did not deliver it, but yet managed, by not understanding what he said, and being obliged to go close to hear him, etc., to give Major Graham time to make many useful observations. I am afraid this was scarcely fair play, but if they objected to our approaching the fort they ought by the rules of war to have sent people out to meet us. The glance we had showed that the fort was as full as it could hold of men, although they were carefully kept out of view. Hardly had our reconnoitring party retired, before they opened fire upon us, and they did the same with our working parties as they formed batteries within 1000 and 800 yards of the fort during the night.

The next morning they again commenced the engagement, but by that time our arrangements were complete and we opened fire from six batteries. They returned from both the northern forts and the nearest southern fort (A, B, and C) with much spirit, and occasionally fired from D and E, but a few guns only of those forts were within range. We were to start from camp, four miles off, at 5 A.M., and just as we were mounting we heard firing commence. In half an hour we were on the scene. My post was, I considered, near General Grant until the *assault* was ordered, and with that I considered that in my character of a married man I had

<sup>1</sup> Now General Sir Gerald Graham, V.C., K.C.B., G.C.M.G., the distinguished Crimean officer, whose Suakin expeditions are fresh in every one's memory.



nothing to do. Our batteries were gradually advanced up to 500 yards of the fort, and the scene as the engagement warmed up became one of great interest. I had never seen fighting done in such a *regular* way before, or such masses of men moved. I think we had about 1200 artillerymen and 2000 infantry engaged. The French had also some 1500 men. Notwithstanding our large guns, however (though the enemy's were larger), we did not do much in the breaching way, and it was not until a heavy firing had been kept up for two and a half hours that the assault was ordered. We were full of admiration for the way in which the Chinese fought their guns. At 6.30 their magazine blew up with a dreadful explosion that for some time hid the whole fort from view and caused a lull in the battle; and yet for an hour after they remained steadily at their guns. In the end we had to run up guns almost to the gate of the fort to cover the working party who laid down the bridge. The marines had the honour of forming part of the assaulting party, and they also carried the pontoons. The French attacked at a different point, and the emulation among the troops to see who, French or English, should be first on the wall, was very great. It is difficult to say who was first. Our flag was the first *hoisted*,<sup>1</sup> but a Frenchman had waved a minute or two previously a French flag as he got on the wall, but was shot down. I was 500 yards distant from the fort at the time of assault, so could see it all very clearly. It is my business to be in forts *directly after* they are captured, to seize papers, examine prisoners, etc.

At two or three minutes past eight, that is after a stiff engagement that lasted just three hours, the fort was won. The enemy suffered fearfully. The General commanding-in-chief under Prince Sangkolinsin was shot,—Lieutenant-General also,—and above 1000 men killed and wounded. The horrors of the scene

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<sup>1</sup> The Queen's colours of the 67th, planted by Ensign Chaplin, who was twice wounded in the assault (BOWLBY, in *Times*, 3rd November 1860).

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defy description. No one had been suffered to run from the fort by the Chinese—men being told off to cut down any who attempted to run: indeed all escape was prevented by the fort being barricaded; so they fell where they fought.

Fort B took an active part in the engagement, pitching into us with effect, and receiving a good return not only from us on land side but also from gunboats. We had also to keep up a sharp fire on Fort C, because it flanked us as we approached A, and occasionally to give D a gun; so that the cross-firing was really something on a grand scale. General Grant had always maintained that Fort A was the key to the whole position; but the French general had protested *in toto* against the attack. Events prove General Grant perfectly right and General Montauban all wrong. Scarcely had we been in the first fort half an hour and thrown out skirmishers, etc., and begun to advance on Fort B, when *all* the forts hoisted *white flags*. I was sent to Fort B to ask if it had surrendered, and to my surprise was told by the officer commanding that *he had not*, but had merely followed the example of the big fort [D] on the other side. I then went to the big fort, which I reached with difficulty as I had to cross the river, and was told by the officer commanding there that he had *not* surrendered. This fellow was very impertinent and said that the sooner we recommenced the fight the better.<sup>1</sup> *He* had hoisted white flags, he said, because the Viceroy had told him, but by way of truce only, and not as surrender. I told him that we should recommence at 2 P.M., and at one we moved out of Fort A, but when we reached Fort B, no resistance was made and we occupied it.

Their allowing us to occupy this fort appeared most incomprehensible, so again I volunteered to cross to the south side of the river, find out the Viceroy, who we knew

<sup>1</sup> Rumour said that Parkes boxed this gentleman's ears for his insolence; but rumour possibly lied.

was somewhere in that direction, and settle the point as to whether fighting was at an end or not. You see it was no small point to decide this, as it was then 3 P.M. and we could have done nothing more that day in the way of *capturing* forts, and at the same time, if they had given in, it was important to *secure* the success in one and the same day. So, as I said, I volunteered to go on this service—not altogether an inviting one, because my experience of the morning showed that the men in the south fort were brutes, and might do uncomfortable things. Anson, one of the aides-de-camp, a fine fellow, came with me, and Loch of the Embassy begged me to take him instead of the sowar and he would carry the flag of truce, which consisted of the piece of white cotton cloth taken off my pith helmet. We got to the river, but couldn't get across. Eventually a shaky old boat turned up and tried to come to us; but by this time a gale had come on, accompanied with torrents of rain, and heaven's artillery opened as ours ceased. The boat could not reach us and was perceived by some French officers 200 yards down the bank, who seeing us going across the river thought we were proceeding to hoist the English flag, and tried to start themselves first for this purpose. By wading through the mud we managed to get to our boat, but they stuck to us, and, although it was wrong on their part, they accompanied us. We landed at the fort, found it hermetically sealed, and although by looking through the chinks we could see that it was full of men standing at their guns, they would not speak to or notice us. This was inconvenient, as we could not get into the road behind the fort without passing the latter, and were on the point of returning, when we found a big plank which we placed over the fosse and thus succeeded in getting into the rear of the fort. *Then* an officer came rushing out to know what we wanted—the same one who had been insolent to me in the morning. I told him I was going to see the Viceroy, and would have

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nothing to say to him, with whom I had no business whatever, etc., and if he dared to stop a flag of truce he did it at his peril. Eventually he let me pass, and we trudged on a weary three miles through mud up to our knees to the town where the Viceroy was. I cannot tell you all that passed, as I should require hours for the purpose. The Viceroy used all sorts of tricks and evasions, but at last agreed to surrender the forts. I made him draw up a capitulation in writing, and started back to the fort through the same muddy road, but this time mounted on a pony. It was now pitch dark, and on nearing the fort we were challenged by the Chinese garrison, as I supposed. I answered in Chinese, and was challenged again, when Loch recognized the hail and answered in English. Another moment and 120 rifles would have been discharged at us.

It appears that after we had passed this fort, the garrison evacuated it, and this being observed from the opposite side, a hundred and a few men were thrown across to take possession. It was dark when they got into the fort, and seeing us approach with half a dozen Chinese lanterns they thought we were Chinese and were going to act accordingly. To our distress we found that our friends on the other side had made no arrangements for our return, so after spending half an hour in the mud hailing them, we went into the fort, which was by no means a pleasant place, as the Chinese before quitting it had laid all sorts of trains and slow matches leading to guns, etc., one of which went off and took off the legs of two Frenchmen. As many of these matches and bedevilments as we could find were put out, but the fort was of immense extent, the night was pitch dark, and it was little that could be done to set things right. Very glad was I to get a biscuit from the officer of the party and to lie down in a hut for the night.

The next morning got across the river, but I had to walk for three and a half hours before I could join

General Grant. Our horses, like everybody else, had bolted during the evening, and we had to trudge on foot through mud. Hardly had I got home when I had to start off again to the Viceroy to notify acceptance of his terms and to take him to the forts to make delivery to the Generals. Employed on this service till past 8 P.M. Home again, and at ten Lord Elgin came in and said that the Admiral was anxious to see if he could not push up to Tien-tsin and wanted me to go with him. Ready at daylight for this duty, and at 7 heard from Admiral that he was ready. Joined him and started. We knew that several forts were in our way, but we did not know whether they would fight or not. At 7 P.M. we had got up to within ten miles of Tien-tsin, having passed nothing but empty forts. Some people came down to us from Tien-tsin and told us that the authorities entertained no idea of defending the very extensive defences that Sangkolinsin had thrown up. This determined the Admiral to push on the next morning to 'occupy' Tien-tsin with his five gunboats—his whole available land force being eighty-seven men. With this we put parties into two forts and one of the gates of the city, called on the authorities and told them the city was ours, not theirs, and issued a Proclamation to the people. Admiral then left, to hurry up supports, leaving Captain M'Cleverty and myself in charge of the city. Fortunately, although there might have been many military fugitives from the Taku forts in the city, the people were evidently very friendly, and before the evening I had succeeded in establishing a committee of supply who are ready to provide all the provisions we require.

Yesterday [25th] we were glad to find that a regiment had arrived. I spent eight hours in the saddle, riding everywhere and trying to find out everything. At night the General arrived, and this morning Lord Elgin. This forenoon, from 5 to 1, I was riding or knocking about. Since then I have [had] to

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write a report for Lord Elgin, and recopy it, and I had only done this an hour before he closed his despatches. Then I wrote the note I sent you two and a half hours ago, and here I am scribbling by an expiring light, and very tired.

But I am very cheerful, and with good reason. Every one must feel thankful to have obtained in one day the whole of these formidable forts at so cheap a cost. We lost 201 men in killed and wounded, the French 140 odd, total about 350 men. The enemy must have lost 1200 or probably 1500. We marched out of Peh-tang on the 12th and we marched into Tien-tsin on the 25th, and I do not now expect to hear another gun fired. Imperial Commissioners are posting down from Peking, and with proper management on our part, Diplomacy, which will now come into play, will, we should hope, be as successful as the sword. By the next mail I trust I shall write you that we have seen the interior of Peking. . . .

I have never had so much knocking about in the same space of time. Seven or eight hours per diem of riding has been my usual allowance, but I am vastly improved in health with this rough work, as I have but comparatively little head work with it. The climate is really very fine: very hot in the middle of the day, but cold enough at night for a blanket. I wear blue flannel all day, and though much exposed to the sun, have not suffered from it at all. It is a very different sun to that of the south of China. Now we have reached Tien-tsin we have lots of luxury—fine beef, particularly fine mutton, and fruit and vegetables that make one's mouth water,—grapes, peaches, pears, apples that (if we except the latter) we should consider very fine in England. This after living a good deal on meat and bread only is very delicious. I am very much pleased with what I have seen of the people and climate of this part of China. Both are incomparably superior to those of the South. The country is very

flat, not a hill in sight, and therefore monotonous, but very green and fertile, and *no* paddy cultivation.

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The Imperial Commissioners arrived, and immediately (2nd September) signified their acceptance of Lord Elgin's terms. It was, however, a strictly Chinese acceptance, for when the draft of a Convention embodying these terms was submitted to them on the 6th by 'Mr Parkes, who,' the Ambassador observed, 'has exhibited in the conduct of these proceedings his usual zeal, ability, and tact,' they revealed the fact (or excuse) that they had no power to sign without a reference to the Emperor. Lord Elgin's reply to so patent a pretext for delay was to break off negotiations with Kweiliang and Hang-fuh, and request the General to march on Peking.

It is just fifteen days since I last wrote, but I have been exceedingly busy during that time. The first few days I was chiefly engaged in obtaining army supplies. Then, when the Imperial Commissioners arrived I had to go to work with them. Wade and myself have so divided the work that we have each our separate functions. We are called joint-secretaries, and he does most of the pen work, I the mouth and outdoor labour. It is a division that suits us both. *Interviews* with Commissioners devolve upon me, while *letters* to them are managed by him. Then the General also finds work for me to do in reference to the varied wants of the army; and the applications for assistance in small matters from all sorts of people who naturally cannot make their wants known to the people are incessant. We have five junior interpreters with the force besides Wade and myself, but all of them have plenty to do, and two of them are already out of sorts. However, the work is doing me no harm. . . .

To his  
Wife  
Camp  
Yang-tsun  
Sept. 10  
1860

At one time we thought matters were going on well, as the Convention that was to have been signed was agreed to by the Commissioners and ready for signature. At the eleventh hour we found (as usual to Chinese negotiators) that they had been deceiving us; and hence

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the determination to treat only under the walls of Peking. This determination was taken on Friday 7th, and on the 8th our first column of about 2000 men marched out of town and made a fair start yesterday. I accompanied this party, the place assigned me being in advance of everything, and I have *carte blanche* to call upon Commanding Officers for any escorts that I may require.

My business on the march is to collect all the information and all the supplies I can, and during yesterday and to-day I was very successful in both regards. So also at Tien-tsin I established capital markets and kept the Commissariat in everything they required.

He did more than assist the Commissariat : he provided for the transport. On the night after this letter was written the native drivers bolted with their animals. It looked as if the army would have to stop where it was : but Parkes arranged for transport by the river, and the march was resumed. His indefatigable energy and extraordinary influence over the Chinese throughout the campaign were amazing. Lord Elgin, who had taken time to appreciate him, wrote at last in terms of unqualified admiration : ' Parkes is one of the most remarkable men I have ever met ; for energy, courage, and ability combined, I do not know where I could find his match ; and this, joined to a facility of speaking Chinese, which he shares only with Lay, makes him at present *the* man of the situation.'<sup>1</sup> Sir Hope Grant, in a despatch to Mr Bruce of 17th November, stated that ' when the army advanced upon Tien-tsin, Mr Parkes discovered the contractors for the supply of the Chinese army and turned their means and services to the account of the British commissariat. . . . All these duties and many others Mr Parkes performed with the indefatigable energy and activity which characterize him.' And the Chaplain to the Forces, the Rev. R. J. L. M'Ghee, repeated the verdict of the mess-room in

<sup>1</sup> Ho-si-wu, 14th September : WALROND, *l.c.* p. 353.

these words: 'There is no man in China so fit to deal with the Chinese as Mr Parkes. He sees through their double dealings (if any man can fathom their deceit) with an eagle glance; he is as plucky as a true British bulldog, and meets their treachery and falsehood by open, honest, straightforward boldness and determination. . . . Mr Parkes is thoroughly polite, but does not scruple, if he finds the highest official in the realm dealing falsely, to tell him so; hence the mingled hatred and fear which his name inspires in the minds of all the governing powers in the country. . . . I much wish that every one of our officials in China were of the same stamp; we should then have little more trouble with the country.'<sup>1</sup>

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On this occasion Lord Elgin marches with General Grant, so Wade and myself share a tent. He is a right good fellow, is Wade. . . . I have to be in the saddle at daylight, and my only chance therefore is to scratch these lines to-night. We have no table or chairs in our tent, so I am sitting on the ground, paper on knees, and my back aching much, as is natural from such a position. I have also had to write four notes to Canton on business subjects and thus altogether I am very tired. But taken altogether this outdoor work agrees with me and is making me fat! The climate is far superior to the South, although the sun is very hot. On our march of yesterday several men were struck down by *coup-de-soleil*. A day or two [ago] thermometer in tents was 106°. To-day we have had a grateful fall of rain, but it has turned our roads into quagmires. . . .

To his  
Wife  
Sept. 10  
(continued)

I enclose you the cards of the three Commissioners. Kweiliang you will remember was the old Commissioner of 1858. Hang-ki, now a Minister of the Household, was at Canton as Hoppo in same year, and went through a good schooling there, from which we have derived advantage up here. Hang-fuh is the Viceroy of this province. Three princes at Peking are our chief obstacle to a settlement of affairs, and as the Emperor

<sup>1</sup> M'GHEE, *How we got to Peking*, p. 121, 122 (1862).

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is very ill, they have it their own way pretty much. It is necessary therefore that we get nearer to them.

While we were negotiating it was settled that I should be sent up to Peking a week ahead of every one to arrange for the reception of the Ambassadors—a trip I should have liked highly: but though it is put off, I still hope to be at the head of the first English party that goes into Peking.

The hope was realized: he *was* the first Englishman to enter Peking—but he entered as a prisoner.



## CHAPTER XVII

### A PRISONER IN PEKING

1860

IF one were writing a history of the Peking campaign various questions would have to be discussed which form no part of the biography of one who, however important and even essential might be his share in the proceedings, could in no case be responsible for their general direction. It would be necessary to inquire why the discovery of the traditional policy of evasion on the part of the Chinese on 7th September was not followed by a resolute march on Peking, interrupted by no hearkening to further overtures from our wily opponents. No doubt a variety of causes would have to be considered. For instance, there was the Alliance, which was a perpetual drag upon the wheels of our advance, for the French were amazingly deficient in transport and stores; there was the delay caused by the flight of our coolie carters and their beasts; there was the risk of finding our army embarked upon a siege without either siege-train or a sure supply of provisions. Many urgent reasons for deliberation, which a soldier would appreciate, might very possibly appear altogether inadequate to a civilian. Lord Elgin threw the blame on the General, and gave Sir Hope Grant's recorded opinion, that it would be 'inexpedient' to press forward without waiting for guns, stores, and reinforcements, as his reason for entertaining fresh proposals from the Chinese three days after he had announced that he

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would not negotiate except at Tung-chow, almost beneath the walls of Peking. No one, however, was more eager to get on than Sir Hope Grant himself, though he felt his responsibility and had to take his precautions; and probably, if the opinion of his staff had been taken, they would have declared that they would have easily managed the business themselves, if they had not been hampered by the diplomatists. Whatever the causes, there was a want of dash about the campaign which puzzled and disappointed Parkes, whose impetuous and masterful spirit disdained obstacles, and whose vocabulary did not recognize the word 'failure.' 'One would think,' he wrote, 'that the British soldier was a creature that should be wrapped up in tissue paper and put away in a glass case!' He did not, perhaps, sufficiently bear in mind that the British soldier was there to retrieve a national defeat, and that it was all-important that no blunder should be made, no risk unduly run. He thought we were employing too large a force, and taking too much care of it; and Lord Elgin said much the same thing to Lord Palmerston: but they did not weigh the terrible result which would follow if the force should prove too small for its work, and rashness lead to disaster. To judge the issue aright, the soldier's view must have its full weight, and it would be unfair to quote Parkes' somewhat trenchant criticisms of the campaign without stating the case for the defence.<sup>1</sup>

All that need here be said is that, whether Lord Elgin's passion for diplomacy or the General's unpreparedness were the cause, a month passed between the breaking off of the Tien-tsin conferences and the arrival of the allies in force before Peking, and that in the meanwhile the negotiations which had been abandoned were resumed. At first the allies, determined apparently to 'stand no more nonsense,' pushed on their advance guard to Ho-si-wu, a place some thirty-five miles from Peking, as the crow flies, or about half-way between Tien-tsin and the

<sup>1</sup> This is best stated in Lord WOLSELEY'S *Narrative of the War with China in 1860* (1862).

capital. On the way Lord Elgin received fresh overtures from the Chinese. New Commissioners had been appointed to conclude a Convention, one of whom was no less a personage than Tsai, Prince of I, a nephew of the Emperor and one of the three princes who practically governed the country, whilst the other was the President of the Board of War. These fresh diplomatists, armed with plenary powers from the Emperor, tried to induce Lord Elgin to return to Tien-tsin and resume the interrupted negotiations; but although he declined to go back he did what was almost as bad: he consented not to go forward. First he said that the army would march to Tung-chow (ten miles from Peking) 'crushing all opposition' on its way; and then he added that it would halt at a stage short of Tung-chow, whilst he and an escort of a thousand men would enter the town to sign the Convention, and then go on to Peking to present the Queen's letter to the Emperor. The Chinese naturally drew the conclusion that one concession might be followed by others, and that the allies were not confident of their strength. The Prince of I took advantage of the pause to arrange a plot, as dishonourable and perfidious as even Chinese duplicity could devise. Whilst calling up the Mongolian troops and preparing a trap for our army, he sought to gain time by apparent conciliation. He and his colleague promised to sign the Convention which had already been submitted to their predecessors in the Commission. On the 16th September they had a long and amicable interview with the two secretaries, who brought back a formal letter in which the Commissioners engaged to execute the Convention of which they had approved the draft. They fixed a point about five miles from Tung-chow for the final camp of the allied army, beyond which no advance should be made. Parkes and Wade came back thoroughly satisfied, and completely deceived. 'The earnestness and even vehemence,' wrote Mr Wade, 'with which the Prince had discussed, first the question of powers and lastly the position of the force,

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ÆT. 32

induced us both to believe that his surrender at last was *bona fide* for the purpose of preventing further hostilities.' To have imposed upon two such shrewd diplomatists is a sufficient proof of the exceptional ability of the Prince of I, whose career, however, was abruptly cut short just a year later by the silken cord, nominally on account of the treachery which he now perpetrated.

On the 17th September Parkes returned to Tung-chow to complete the arrangements for a meeting between the Commissioners and the Allied Ambassadors, and among other things to mark out at what was known as 'the five *li* point' the ground for the camp. He was accompanied by Mr Loch, Lord Elgin's private secretary, Mr de Norman, attaché to Mr Bruce's Legation, Colonel Walker,<sup>1</sup> Quartermaster of the cavalry brigade, Mr Thomson, Deputy Commissary General, Mr Bowlby of the *Times*, and Lieutenant Anderson commanding the escort of five King's Dragoon Guards and twenty sowars of Fane's Horse. On the way nothing unusual was remarked, and a Chinese lieutenant-general, whom they met, cordially congratulated them on 'the conclusion of peace.' They found quarters in a temple at Tung-chow, and Parkes spent seven hours with the Imperial Commissioners, arranging details. He found that they strongly objected to the proposal that Lord Elgin should personally present the Queen's letter to the Emperor,—it appeared that a convenient law of the realm, invented for the occasion, compelled his Majesty to go to his hunting-lodge at that season,—but this detail was reserved for Lord Elgin's consideration. The other matters were settled; and the meeting ended in the exchange of apparently sincere congratulations on the conclusion of the preliminaries of peace. But the letter<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Now General Sir C. P. Beauchamp Walker, K.C.B.

<sup>2</sup> In relating the capture of Parkes and his party on 18th September, and the imprisonment which ensued, I rely upon his letter to his wife of 9th October (cited in margin as 'Letter'), his official report to Lord Elgin, printed in the Blue-Book (*Parl. Papers*, 1861 [66], p. 226-244, cited as 'Report'), and Sir H. B. LOCH's vivid *Personal Narrative of Occurrences during Lord Elgin's Second Embassy to China*, p. 131-238 (Murray, 1869; cited as 'LOCH'), which, however, presents some slight discrepancies with Parkes' Report.

which Parkes wrote to his wife when it was all over will best tell what followed these treacherous civilities :—

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On the 17th September I was sent from the camp Letter at Ho-si-wu into Tung-chow, twenty-five miles distant, with a flag of truce, to notify to the Imperial Commissioners (the Prince of I and Muh-yin) Lord Elgin's acceptance of the terms they had themselves proposed at a previous meeting on the 14th between said Commissioners on the one part and Wade and myself on the other. I now believe that after making those proposals, they either wished or were instructed to modify them, and the famous Sangkolinsin was directed to try the issue of another engagement. This, however, they kept secret from me; and though they met me at first with a variety of objections, which were not encouraging, still I succeeded (as it appeared to me) after a long interview in overruling these, and they worked away with me (with apparent good-will) in making those arrangements upon which peace or cessation of hostilities depended. Thus they appointed one set of officers, to mark out with me the ground that our troops (expected the following day) were to take up; other officers to manage matters of supply; the publication of a peace proclamation was commenced; and carts for the transport of Lord Elgin's baggage were ordered. All this on the 17th.

At daylight on the 18th I went with said officers to the place of encampment (five miles from Tung-chow), and was surprised to find it occupied by a considerable force of Chinese troops, while other bodies could be seen approaching from other directions. Failing to get any explanation from the officers who commanded these troops, and fearing that our advanced column might come up at any moment, in which case a collision would have been inevitable, I despatched Loch (Lord Elgin's private secretary) to General Grant with the intelligence, begging him to halt his column, until I could bring him an explanation of this un-



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expected state of things. I then galloped back to Tung-chow, first, to look out for the Commissioners and see if they would immediately direct the withdrawal of these troops, and failing this, then secondly, to get my party out of the place as quickly as possible, that I might be on the right side of the hedge when the engagement began : said party consisted of about fifteen sowars (native cavalry), Mr de Norman of the Legation, Mr Bowlby (*Times* correspondent), and Lieutenant Anderson who commanded the escort.<sup>1</sup> On returning to Tung-chow I found all the gentlemen out ; I despatched messengers in quest of them, warned the sowars to be ready to start at a moment's notice, and with a couple of them went in search of the Commissioners. It was a long time before I found them :—no one would tell me where they were. They told me that they would not withdraw the troops, and in such a tone that I soon saw that the sooner I withdrew myself from them the better, as they were surrounded by a host of men whose manner was very different to that of previous occasions. I made them give me, however, categorical replies to two categorical questions, which to prevent mistake I took down before them in writing, and then, wishing them a very good morning, hoped I had seen the last of them for a little time, as I could see a fight had been determined on.

These replies were : (1) that the Imperial Commissioners would *not* direct the troops to retire, because (2) the peace had *not* been determined on, in consequence of the audience question remaining still unsettled. When Parkes repeated that he could only refer this question to Lord Elgin, they said, 'You can do much more if you like. You can settle the point at once yourself ; but you won't.' It is evident that the Commissioners looked upon Parkes as the chief voice in the negotiations and did not believe him when he asserted Lord Elgin's supreme

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Walker and Mr Thomson had left the party before now, and managed eventually at considerable risk to get through the Chinese lines.

power of decision. Nothing remained but to make good his retreat :—

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Got back to my party, who were three miles off, and had been rejoined by Loch<sup>1</sup> with an urgent message from the General desiring me to come out as soon as possible, as the enemy were on both his flanks and were threatening his baggage, thus rendering it difficult to delay engaging them. We had a good six miles to go, and the whole Chinese army (since estimated at many thousand men) between us and our people ; but I relied upon our flag of truce carrying us through, if we could only get out before the battle began. We rode hard, and had only about half a mile more to go to place us in safety, when we got amongst the masses of the Chinese troops. Boom ! boom ! went a line of guns in their front, which showed that the action had commenced. We held on our way, but as soon as [we] were discovered, horsemen filed off to the right and left of us, and meeting in front, stopped our way. Riding ahead, I called on their officers to allow me and my flag of truce to pass out, but they refused to do this without the order of their General or some superior officer. As the latter did not appear, I with Loch and one sowar with white flag left the party, and rode to the spot where he was said to be. I then after passing through some [tall millet cane] found myself in the presence of a body of matchlock-men, who levelled their pieces and would have fired, had not an officer, who galloped up simultaneously, persuaded them to desist. In quicker time than it takes me to write, we were surrounded by them, and when I called out for the officer I wanted to see, I was pointed to a fat fellow on horseback some distance off on the other side of a creek, and told to dismount and cross over to him.

<sup>1</sup> Mr Loch had loyally ridden back through the Chinese lines in the hope of hastening the escape of Parkes and his party, and Captain Brabazon had volunteered to accompany him, when it was found that Lieutenant-Colonel Wolseley (whom the General named for the duty) was at some distance engaged in his special work of surveying the country.

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I now saw that I must be prepared for foul play, but resistance with only three of us (two of us without swords) being useless, my only hope (and I confess it was a faint one) rested on my flag; and I dismounted and endeavoured to cross the creek to the said officer. While doing so, a greater man appeared, even Sangkolinsin himself, the Chinese Commander-in-Chief; and as he had sent in flags of truce to us on various occasions, I hoped that he would respect mine, and for a moment I felt it was well to be taken before a man of such high rank. But the illusion was soon dispelled, for as I approached I was seized by his attendants and hurled down before him, because I had not instantly obeyed their order to kneel. Loch and the sowar (a Sikh) as they were brought up were treated in the same way.

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The moment the Prince gave me an opportunity of speaking to him, which he did by asking me my name, I at once clearly informed him who I was, and of the whole character of my mission to Tung-chow, adding that I was returning to my Ambassador when I was stopped by his troops. I was proceeding with a remonstrance against the treatment I was receiving, when the Prince interrupted me by saying—

‘Why did you not agree yesterday to settle the Audience question?’

‘Because I was not empowered to do so,’ I replied.

The Prince then continued in a very forbidding tone—

‘Listen! You can talk reason: you have gained two victories to our one. Twice you have dared to take the Peiho forts; why does not that content you? And now you presume to give out<sup>1</sup> that you will attack any force that stops your march on Tung-chow. I am now doing that. You say that you do not direct these military movements; but I know your name, and that you instigate all the evils that your people

<sup>1</sup> Referring to the proclamation of the Commander-in-Chief.

commit. You have also used bold language in the presence of the Prince of I, and it is time that foreigners should be taught respect for Chinese nobles and ministers.'

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I endeavoured to explain the mistakes of the Prince; told him distinctly what my functions were; that I had come to Tung-chow by express agreement with the Imperial Commissioners, and solely in the interests of peace; and I again begged him to show the same respect to an English flag of truce that we had always paid to those so repeatedly sent in by the Chinese. The Prince, however, simply laughed at all this, and, going to a house that was close by, directed the soldiers to bring me after him. On arriving at the house I was again thrown on my knees before him, and the Prince . . . said—

'Write to your people and tell them to stop the attack.'

'It would be useless for me to do so,' I replied, 'as I cannot control or influence military movements in any way. I will not deceive your Highness by leading you to suppose that anything I might write would have such an effect.'

'I see you continue obstinate,' he said, 'and that you will be of no use to me.'

His suite came round and joined in taunting me, and made remarks which indicated very plainly the treachery they had practised, and their own exultation at finding that our army had fallen (as they thought) into their snare. In a few minutes the three of us were put into a cart with two Frenchmen (who turned up as prisoners also at the same moment) and sent away to the Prince of I. . . . Until you have tried it, you can form no idea of the pain and anguish of this conveyance when it goes along a paved road. The Prince of I could not be found, so we were taken to another notable, and again hurled on our knees. Feigning faintness [to avoid useless questions] I was

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removed into the air, and the three of us were surrounded as before by a throng of brutal and excited soldiery, taken thence to a house, searched, then brought before another mandarin, an officer on the Prince of I's suite, again made to kneel and again examined [buffeted, and kicked]. While the examination was going on, he suddenly rose and went out, and immediately afterwards a number of soldiers with drawn swords rushed in, bound us, and carried us away, as I really feared, to execution.<sup>1</sup> I cannot stay to dwell on these moments of horror, although prayer came to my relief. But instead of being murdered, we were again (all five) put into a cart and started off, as we soon found, to Peking. I could now see that the camp to which we had been brought was being broken up, and was in full retreat, in consequence doubtless of our having gained some advantage in the engagement. The soldiers however were savage in consequence of their defeat, and called out that they would revenge the deaths of their comrades on us. The journey [which lasted five hours] gave us dreadful suffering.

Report

The road was so much blocked up by men and vehicles retreating, whilst others were advancing, that we were often obliged to halt. The Prince of I, Muh-yin his fellow Commissioner, and Hang-ki passed us in large sedan chairs, but would not deign to notice us. We could see that we were in the charge of Tsing Tajin, the officer . . . on the suite of the Prince of I, and our first solicitations of relief from pain and thirst afforded him so much cruel gratification that we made no second appeal to his humanity. Fortunately one of the four soldiers in the cart with us was less relentless and gave us a little water.

Letter

It was sunset before we reached the east gate of Peking, and 8 P.M. before our cart halted in a court

<sup>1</sup> They were run out of the house in the way that Chinese prisoners are hurried out to execution. 'We said a few sad parting words to each other, for we now considered our deaths as certain' (LOCH, p. 164).



of which it was then too dark to see anything. Lanterns were produced and again I shuddered, as I found that we were in the hands of the Board of Punishments, who may be classed with the officers of the Bastille or the Inquisition of Spain. Soon we were loaded with chains and carried before these inquisitors, who after a short examination ordered us to imprisonment in the common prisons, each prisoner to be confined in a separate prison, but among sixty or seventy of their own wretched felons.

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As he clanked along the courts and passages on his way to the prison, he heard the sound of other chains, which told him that Mr Loch was passing: but his ruffianly gaolers would not let the two prisoners converse, and with a last 'God bless you,' they were hurried off in different directions. To each it seemed as if this silent farewell might be the last. 'Poor Parkes,' wrote Mr Loch, 'suffered much in mind and body, and yet maintained outwardly an appearance of calm indifference to all that could be done to him': but the old Sikh was the least perturbed of the three. When Mr Loch bade him keep up his spirits and fear not, Nal Singh answered with the stoical courage of his race: 'Fear! I do not fear. If I do not die to-day, I may to-morrow, and I am past sixty; and am I not with you? I do not fear.' So the three parted, and the next thing Parkes saw was a massive door, which opened and closed on him, and he found himself in the common gaol. 'It was like entering a pandemonium.' Some seventy wild-looking felons, foul and diseased, crowded round to gaze upon him, and he was fastened to a beam overhead by a long heavy chain, to which his neck and hands and feet were linked by an iron collar, handcuffs, and fetters. To his great relief the cords were taken off his wrists, which had been bound so tightly that his hands had swollen to twice their natural size. His chains were long enough to allow him to lie down, and such was his weariness and hunger (for he had not tasted food for more

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than twenty-four hours) that, in spite of the horror of his situation, the exhausted man fell sound asleep on the bare planking which formed the common bed of all the prisoners. But he was not long suffered to taste forgetfulness, for at midnight he was again dragged before the Board of Inquisitors, and subjected to a long and severe examination, in which the argument of threats and the indignities of the torturers were used without scruple. Four men gripped him, and, on a sign from the examiners, repeatedly twitched his ears and hair as he knelt on the stone floor. A great many questions were put to him as to the strength of the British army, the military resources of India, and the like, to which Parkes gave straightforward answers; and the inquisitors waxed very wroth when he referred to the Queen by a term which also applied to the Emperor of China.

‘What do you mean by using such language?’ they said. ‘You have yourself shown that you have been long in China, that you can speak our language and read our books; and you must know, therefore, that there is but one Emperor, who rules over all lands.’

Parkes tried vainly to make them understand his position as non-combatant; they only replied by asking why he was always in the front of the army, and refused altogether to listen to his reasoning that whatever his offence it was not one which could properly land him in the common gaol, as if he were a Chinese criminal. To that den he was accordingly sent back, where his name was stuck up as a ‘rebel.’ There many high mandarins, and even the President of the Board of Punishments, came and scoffed at him, while he protested against their treatment and warned them of the inevitable consequences. Only the prisoners showed him fellow-feeling, and even from thieves and homicides it was a balm to his misery:—

Report

Many of these unfortunate men were glad, when so permitted, to come round me and listen to my story, or any description that I would give them of foreign

countries. . . . They were seldom disrespectful, addressed me by my title, and often avoided putting me to inconvenience when it was in their power to do so. Most of them were men of the lowest class, and the gravest order of offenders—as murderers, burglars, etc. Those who had no means of their own were reduced by prison filth and prison diet to a shocking state of emaciation and disease ; but those who could afford to fee the gaolers, and purchase such things as they wanted, lived in comparative fulness and comfort.

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After four days of the common gaol, he was removed on 22nd September to a separate room, eight feet square, which he shared with his four special gaolers. The cause of this slight improvement, though Parkes knew nothing of it, was probably the supercession of the Prince of I and Muh-yin, as Imperial Commissioners, by the Prince of Kung, a brother of the Emperor, and a sensible man according to Chinese capacity. The Prince was not a man to encourage needless cruelty, nor was he deaf to the diplomatic threats of Lord Elgin ; and it was doubtless his influence that procured Parkes the privilege of a prison to himself. But the Prince of Kung had other motives. He was convinced that Parkes could arrange the terms of peace and sign the convention *proprio motu*,<sup>1</sup> and he brought pressure to bear upon him in the hope that the imprisoned Consul, who represented the whole policy of England in Chinese eyes, might be induced to stop the advance of the British army, which was now threatening to attack Peking itself. Accordingly Hang-ki, the Assistant-Commissioner of the Tung-chow conferences, who had learned more than most Chinamen of the power and intentions of England during his residence at Canton, was sent, with other officials, to discuss matters with Parkes in his cell. At first he objected to enter the

<sup>1</sup> 'The British Consul Parkes is well versed in the Chinese language, written and spoken, and the Prince is now in the act of sending an officer to settle with him all matters necessary for the sealing and signing (of the Treaties) at a conference. Why then do the British still thus abound in doubts?' (Prince of Kung to Lord Elgin, 1st October, Blue-Book, p. 185).

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prison on account of the stench ; but he overcame his fastidiousness after a while, and had long conversations with the captive on the 22nd, 26th, and 28th. His great object was to induce Parkes to write to Lord Elgin or somebody and stop hostilities, and he dropped sinister hints as to the consequences of refusal. The prisoner, however, stoutly refused to have anything to do with the question of peace or war. Send your messengers, he said, to the camp, and send me and Mr Loch with them, and we will be responsible for their safety, and they shall have a hearing ; but as to interfering in the negotiations which he now heard were going on, or trying in any way to influence Lord Elgin as the price of his own life, nothing could induce him to attempt it. When they threatened him, he replied that he could be surprised at no cruelty, and was prepared for the worst ; for he knew his fate was in God's keeping. At the interview on the 28th Hang-ki brought a message from the Prince of Kung, reprobating the ill-treatment to which the prisoners had been subjected, and promising justice and courtesy : ' Mr Parkes,' he said, ' shall have no cause to complain of his treatment now that he is in my hands.' Parkes replied that justice and courtesy would doubtless be met by the like on the part of the English : whereupon Hang-ki turned round with a dramatic air to the mandarins who accompanied him—

' Listen !' he said, ' he declares that his nation will act according to justice. Take off his chains !'

So, after eleven days of the iron collar and heavy fetters, the prisoner was at last relieved of his galling burden. Nor was this all. He was told that he would probably be taken out of prison on the following day. ' Not unless Mr Loch goes out too,' was his staunch reply. The man who had risked his life eleven days before to save his companions was not likely to accept any favour which was not shared by his fellow-prisoner, especially when that prisoner had also voluntarily put his head into the lion's jaws on the 18th September in the hope of

saving Parkes. He had heard nothing of the fate of his partner in misfortune since the day of their capture; he did not even know whether he was alive; and it was a great relief to find from Hang-ki's manner that Mr Loch had not yet been executed. A pathetic attempt had been made by each of them to attract the other's attention by singing 'God save the Queen,' but after the first note their voices had broken with uncontrollable emotion.

At last they met, and neither liked to say much of the joy of that meeting. The imagination must be left to picture the scene, and divine the solace they felt in each other's company. Parkes found that his companion's sufferings had been as severe as his own: indeed Mr Loch had been nearly strangled one night when his gaoler tightened his chain to the beam overhead; but now all that was over. They were removed under guard, on the 29th, to a temple outside the prison, and supplied with excellent food, baths, and all needful comforts. Here many more conferences took place with Hang-ki and other officials, and Parkes consented to write to Lord Elgin that he was now being well treated, and that he hoped hostilities would be suspended in favour of negotiations—to which Loch added a postscript in Hindustani to warn the Ambassador that the letter was written by order of the Chinese. Again and again the mandarins tried to extort a pledge from Parkes on the subject of the terms of peace: they could not shake his determination to do nothing that could bind or hamper Lord Elgin.<sup>1</sup> Among the thrilling incidents of these days of anxious expectation was the discovery, in a package of clothes sent by their friends at the camp, of a worked handkerchief and embroidered dress shirt: such strange articles for two prisoners aroused Mr Loch's suspicions, and he discovered a sentence in Hindustani, almost invisibly worked round in the embroidery,

<sup>1</sup> Lord Elgin fully appreciated Parkes' public spirit. 'Mr Parkes' consistent refusal,' he wrote, 'to purchase his own safety by making any pledges, or even by addressing to me any representations which might have embarrassed me in the discharge of my duty, is a rare example of courage and devotion to the public interest.'



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announcing that the bombardment would begin on the third day and asking for the exact position of their place of captivity. One may conceive how the hopes and fears of the prisoners rose and fell as they read: how the zeal of their friends was weighed against the risk of instant death on the sound of the first gun: 'that shot,' said Hang-ki, 'will be the signal for your execution.' It was made very clear to them that British bombs would be answered by prisoners' heads. On the 3rd October a letter from Mr Wade was brought in, in which he told Parkes that if any harm befell the prisoners Peking would be 'burnt from one end to the other'—a post-umous consolation which did not greatly raise their spirits. The thought of the misery that would ensue was more painful to Parkes even than their own position.<sup>1</sup> If the Chinese believed that the threat would be carried out, it might save their lives: but would they believe? The one hope lay in Hang-ki, who had discovered that the English had 'a curious habit of speaking the truth': if he could convince the Prince of Kung of the genuineness of the threat, all might yet be well, and for his own sake he would try to save the destruction of his own house and possessions. At first Hang-ki failed to bring the Council of State over to his view, and on the 5th he told the prisoners that they were to be executed that evening.<sup>2</sup> They wrote their farewell letters and felt almost glad that the suspense was over. Then an order came to relieve them till the morrow, and in the morning Hang-ki arrived with an altered countenance and told them that he had been up all night with the Prince of Kung, who had finally agreed to accept Lord Elgin's terms. At last it seemed that the calamity was overpast, and Parkes wrote a note to the effect that if all the prisoners were safely returned no revenge would be exacted. But even then a new event brought back the old peril. The sound of heavy guns was heard on the morning of the 7th. Had the bombardment begun? The Chinese were in great

<sup>1</sup> LOCH, 213.

<sup>2</sup> LOCH, 218-220.

alarm, and eyed the prisoners in a manner that boded no good. Their danger was now from the populace, not from the Government; but Parkes held to his argument, that the Chinese had brought it all upon themselves by procrastination, and that the only chance of peace lay in the immediate surrender of all the prisoners. The argument went home, supported by the sound of the guns (though they were not shotted) and the fact that the allies had seized the Summer Palace, and all but captured the Empress and the Prince of Kung, who left the Palace on one side as the troops entered on the other. Hang-ki went away in search of the Prince, and the prisoners anxiously awaited the morrow. The events of the 8th may be told in the words of Mr Loch's *Narrative*, which presents a most detailed and graphic account of the captivity:—

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*Monday 8th.*—At daylight we sent to inquire at his house if Hang-ki had yet returned; we received a message that he had come back about four o'clock this morning, much exhausted, but would call about nine. Shortly after that hour he came; he said he had succeeded in seeing Prince Kung and also Wade; that the latter had said the surrender of one of the gates into the hands of the allies was a condition the Allied Commanders-in-Chief insisted upon, before they would stay further military operations. This, Hang-ki said, was a demand which could not be complied with; then, dismissing the subject, he changed the conversation, and began to discuss a dozen indifferent subjects, amongst others, whether the earth revolved round the sun or *vice versa*. He had been joined by a good number of mandarins; all of them quietly drank their tea and joined in the conversation,—Parkes maintaining his share in it with as much calmness as if our lives and probably the future fate of China were not hanging on each moment of valuable time thus slipping away. Not even having the excitement of knowing what was passing, except when Parkes from time to time told me, and yet to appear utterly indifferent, was

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a great trial of both nerves and temper. About noon a mandarin called, who had a long whispered conversation with Hang-ki. Hang-ki then returned to his seat, and after quietly drinking a cup of tea, said to Parkes that Prince Kung had decided upon releasing us at once, and that we should be sent about two o'clock that afternoon into the allied camp. Parkes merely bowed in answer, and when he told me, said, 'Don't exhibit any pleasure or feeling.' I suggested that as the discussion about the sun and earth must be by this time nearly exhausted, he should ask their opinion as to whether the moon rotates on her own axis, which I believed was a doubtful point in Europe. Without saying one word respecting our release, Parkes quietly began on this subject and continued until Hang-ki's patience was exhausted, when he exclaimed, 'You appear to be alike indifferent as to whether you are to die or live.' Parkes replied, 'Not at all; but we have now had considerable experience of the vacillation and the deceit of the Chinese Government, and therefore until our release becomes an accomplished fact, we venture to doubt it.' Hang-ki had now risen and was walking up and down the room; he suddenly went up to Parkes, and leaning forward, whispered in his ear, 'There are many difficulties to be overcome; you cannot leave before two o'clock, but you cannot be more anxious to hurry forward the arrangements than I am. If we ever meet after to-day, remind me, and I will tell you my reasons.'

We were told that six other prisoners would be released at the same time, but we could not ascertain who they were. Our servants now busied themselves and packed up our very few possessions, and Hang-ki presented a cloth cloak to each of us. We waited anxiously for two o'clock;—it came at last. Hang-ki, who for the previous hour had been passing backwards and forwards, then came and led us by the hand into an outer court, where we found three or four covered

carts—the curtains round them were closed, and prevented our seeing who were inside. Parkes and I got into the one prepared for us; the curtain was then drawn, and we were told to be careful not to show ourselves. Some little time was occupied, apparently in forming the escort: when all was in readiness, the gate leading into the street was thrown open. A dense crowd had assembled outside: the escort cleared a way for the carts, and men went in front with whips to keep the people back. It is impossible to describe our feelings—our hopes were raised—and yet we felt how much still lay between us and safety. . . . It seemed as if we should never reach the gate; at last we had a good view of the heavy massive doors, which, with a sinking feeling, we saw were closed, but when within thirty yards they were thrown open, and we heard the heavy bang of their being shut behind us with a sensation of intense relief. The outer gate was opened, and closed, in the same manner, and we found ourselves once more outside the walls of Peking and in the open country.

Oh the delight [wrote Parkes] at finding ourselves Letter really being taken away from the horrible place, at passing out of the tall dark gate of the city, and being able again to look around. Directly we sighted the first English sentry we could not be longer restrained, and (not being bound) we jumped from the cart and made for the red coats, leaving our Chinese guard to their own devices. We then found that we were in company with an old Sikh (who was captured with us) and the two Frenchmen above referred to, and three other Frenchmen. The Chinese acknowledge to having made some twenty more prisoners, but these were sent away to a great distance into the interior, and it will be two days before they can arrive; some (five or six) have died of wounds, fright, and ill-treatment, so I, who was perhaps looked upon as their worst enemy, have escaped with least injury.

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The meeting with one's friends was no small part of the trial; but I soon got over that, and felt very very happy and very thankful for the extraordinary mercies extended to me. Lord Elgin gives me credit for having acted courageously, and he has just come with a note which I enclose congratulating you on my escape. . . . I don't believe I am any the worse for what I have gone through. I suffered a good deal during the first eleven days, but the good treatment of the last ten has enabled me to recover in body, and God in His mercy preserved me sound in mind and enabled me to keep up good hope to the last. I was anxious about Loch, for he is not at all strong, and weakness of body is naturally sometimes attended with depression of mind; but he behaved like a noble good fellow, and agreed in all I did. So, my dearest, you have nothing to do but rejoice, and see in my escape an answer to prayer and a proof of how mercifully our Heavenly Father preserves those who put their trust in Him.

It is altogether a remarkable adventure, and you may depend upon it that it is the last opportunity the Chinese will have of playing us such a trick. The Ambassadors are determined not to expose themselves or their people to any similar risk; and hence their determination to hold a position which commands the city—or else the city itself. We are preparing therefore to breach the wall and assault, unless the gate chosen by us be placed in our hands in two days' time. These days will be most critical ones for the Chinese. If they still hold out, there is nothing before us but the capture of Peking; but as the Emperor, all the offensive princes, and chief men of the war party, have already run out of harm's way, those who are left behind and who are probably in favour of accommodation, may yet do something to bring this about. To Hang-ki I shall always feel under great obligations. He proved himself . . . a sincere friend, and under Providence I think we owe our release to his counsels.



Later, when Hang-ki explained his mysterious whisper, Parkes learned how narrow had been the escape. It appeared that the war-party had persuaded the Emperor at Jehol to issue the order for the immediate execution of the prisoners, and Hang-ki's spy at Court in the very nick of time sent him the tidings that the order was on its way. The mandarin succeeded in getting the captives out of Peking by order of the Prince of Kung barely a quarter of an hour before the Emperor's messenger arrived. Had there been fifteen minutes' delay, nothing could have saved them.

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During these twenty-one days Lord Elgin had been doing what he thought best to obtain the release of the prisoners. To return to the beginning: at ten o'clock on the morning of the 18th September the sound of a brisk cannonade was heard from the artillery in the distance, and at noon a Sikh brought in a letter from Parkes which had been written at 4.30 A.M. at Tung-chow, 'six miles from the proposed place of encampment for the army, four miles from Chang-kia-wan, and twenty-four miles from Ho-si-wu where I was residing.' He writes, says Lord Elgin, quoting only one characteristic paragraph of the letter:—

I am now starting with Colonel Walker and a Chinese officer to attempt the arrangement of the . . . camping ground for the army. I then go to Chang-kia-wan to start supply work (also for the army); then come back to Tung-chow to get out the proclamation, upon which block-cutters have been at work during the night: and if time and physical strength will then admit, I shall ride back in the evening to Ho-si-wu that I may know your lordship's views on the question of audience, which the Chinese authorities will, I am sure, again recur to, the moment they see me.

After midnight Lord Elgin received a pencil note from the General reporting the occurrences of the day, the trap that had been laid for the army, the defeat of the Chinese, and the capture of Parkes, Loch, and

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the others. The Ambassador sent a reply by Colonel Crealock at four in the morning of the 19th, advising the General to push on towards Peking, and followed himself an hour later, feeling that these were matters in which 'I should take my share of responsibility.' There is no doubt that the first impression in the army was a feeling of indignation that the diplomatists should have been so completely deceived, and that the troops should have been led into a trap. The feeling has not entirely evaporated in the generation that has passed since September 1860, and Parkes' conduct is still regarded as over-rash by military critics. There is always a good deal of this sort of mutual recrimination when soldiers and civilians have to work together. The several branches of the service naturally look upon the transactions from different points of view. That Parkes and his colleague Mr Wade were completely tricked by the Chinese Commissioners is obvious; but when an Imperial Prince solemnly pledges his word and sign-manual that there shall be peace the most suspicious of diplomatists may well lay aside his doubts. Parkes and Wade were sent to Tung-chow by Lord Elgin to negotiate the terms of peace; they succeeded, and brought back a written agreement. There was nothing rash in this, nor after such agreement was there any temerity in Parkes' going again to Tung-chow to make preparations for the camping of the army and the reception of the Ambassador. Some one who spoke Chinese had to go, and previous experience had shown that the advance of interpreters under flags of truce was understood and respected by the Chinese. The previous interview on the 16th had been perfectly amicable, no hard words had been spoken, the pledges had been given in apparent good faith, and no single act or word pointed to treachery. It was said, indeed, that Parkes was warned by one of his companions on the ride to Tung-chow that treachery was intended, but no such warning was ever given. Mr Loch, who was at Parkes' side on the occasion, refers to such statements

with some amusement in a letter written to him from London on 26th March 1861, and adds, 'I have contented myself by simply contradicting them and by both publicly and privately exonerating you from any charge of rashness that might be founded on such statements.' It was also rumoured that (presumably after the discovery of the deception) Parkes taxed the Prince of I with his treachery in disrespectful language, and that this aggravated the catastrophe. There is absolutely no evidence to this effect, for no one who was with Parkes could understand Chinese; but had he used all the terms of contempt which the Prince richly deserved, it could have made no difference. The treachery had been laid long before; the interviews and concessions were all arranged, in accordance with the time-honoured principles of Chinese diplomacy, to gain time; the Mongol troops had been massing for days in the neighbourhood with a view to a last effort of resistance; and whatever Parkes said, or did not say, could have had no effect upon the result. And when it is suggested that the diplomatists, by their overconfidence, led the army into a trap, the reply is obvious: a general is bound to be on his guard against treachery in an enemy's country, let the diplomatists say what they may; and considering that peace was not signed, but only the conditions determined, Sir Hope Grant would have been mad to trust to incomplete negotiations for the safety of his army.

Whatsoever criticisms may have been passed in the army upon the breakdown of diplomacy, the main and immediate thought was how to rescue the prisoners. On Lord Elgin's arrival at Chang-kia-wan on the 19th a consultation took place, and Mr Wade was sent out with a body of cavalry to Tung-chow to inform the Chinese that all English and French subjects must be allowed to return to their respective headquarters, or else 'the city of Peking would forthwith be attacked and taken.' Mr Wade's flag of truce was ignored and he was fired upon, but he managed to deliver his message at Tung-chow.

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ÆT. 32

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ÆT. 32

At first nothing could be learnt of the prisoners' fate, and it was feared they had been cut down by the Tartar army in the first exasperation of defeat: but at length news came that some of them had been seen in a cart on the road to Peking. Still there was little in the information to reassure.

The armies still advanced, and on the 21st attacked and captured the Tartars' camps, after a sturdy engagement, in which Sangkolinsin himself commanded, at the bridge of Pa-li-chiao between Tung-chow and Peking. On the 22nd, after a silence of four days, a letter from the Chinese authorities was brought to the Ambassador. The Prince of Kung, brother of the Emperor, informed Lord Elgin that in consequence of the mismanagement of the Prince of I and his colleague, he had been appointed to treat for peace, and accordingly proposed an armistice to that end. Lord Elgin of course replied that the prisoners must first be given up. A delay of more than a fortnight followed, during which Lord Elgin entertained Prince Kung with discussions of the terms of peace, whilst still making the unconditional surrender of the prisoners a first requirement. Meanwhile the army pushed slowly onward, and on the 6th of October the Summer Palace was occupied. Three days later Parkes and Loch arrived in camp with six companions. It is perhaps hardly worth while to speculate whether a more rapid march, even if practicable, might have procured them a speedier release. The position was exceedingly difficult, and the ambassador acted with prudence, and was rewarded with partial success.

Two letters of Lord Elgin to Mrs Parkes are here subjoined. He and Mr Wade took every means in their power to allay the anxiety of the wife and sisters at home, which, in the days before telegraphic communication, and with only a fortnightly mail, was naturally overpowering:—

Others are writing to you who will give you full details respecting the present position of Mr Parkes.

I only add a line to assure you that no one feels a warmer interest in his welfare and safety than I do. His services during this campaign have been of the greatest value both to me and to the army, and have raised him in the estimation of all who have had an opportunity of appreciating them. I earnestly hope that within a few days we may have him among us again.

1860  
ÆT. 32  
The Earl of Elgin to Mrs Parkes Six miles from Peking  
Sept. 20

You will no doubt receive by this mail more conclusive evidence than any which I can furnish of Mr Parkes being again safe among us. I must, however, write a line to congratulate you on this happy event, and to assure you that he seems to be none the worse for the hardships which he has gone through. We shall take care that he does not run any such risks again.

Near Peking  
Oct. 9

Parkes and Loch were safe ; but the other prisoners' fate was still uncertain, and the allies did what they might perhaps have done earlier : they demanded the surrender of one of the city gates of Peking as a guarantee for the observance of that good faith which the Chinese had so wantonly broken. The surrender was negotiated by Parkes himself, who went into Peking, not bound in a cart this time, but riding beside the divisional General, Sir Robert Napier, afterwards Lord Napier of Magdala :—

I am rejoiced to have the means of telling you that the Chinese yesterday surrendered one of the gates of the city to us, and thus we may conclude that we have seen the end of hostilities. Had they not made this surrender, our batteries would have opened at twelve o'clock upon the city, so that a very great weight is now taken off our minds, for although, humanly speaking, we could have taken the huge place without great difficulty, still we should have destroyed at the same time the government of the country and would have been left without people to treat with. It is even now difficult to say what course negotiations will take, for

To his Wife  
Camp Peking  
Oct. 14



1860  
ÆT. 32

since I wrote you on the evening of the 9th we have received very sad information as to the fate of the rest of the prisoners. Eight Sikhs of the escort that took me into Tung-chow were given up yesterday, and one Frenchman; two more Sikhs came in to-day; and yesterday we were told by the Chinese authorities that these were all the prisoners that remained alive. The statement still requires confirmation, but we fear it may prove to be true. If so, then out of my party of nineteen Sikhs, one dragoon, and six gentlemen,—viz. Major Brabazon, Lieutenant Anderson, De Norman (of the Legation), Bowlby (*Times* correspondent), Loch, and myself,—the two last and nine Sikhs alone survive. Fifteen dead and eleven only saved! What a miraculous preservation I have had, and how grateful I ought to be to the great God who hears and answers prayer for having so mercifully spared me to you. . . .

Oct. 14

The fate of our other poor countrymen causes one common feeling of horror throughout the army. They were foully murdered. Tied hands and feet together, they were exposed in that state in an open court for three days and nights, very little food and water given to them, but blows in abundance. Delirium set in in some cases; the ropes cut into their flesh and mortification ensued—but I cannot go on with the description. We are certain of the deaths of Lieutenant Anderson and De Norman, two noble fellows, especially the latter, who had become well known to me. He is the only son of his mother the Baroness de Norman. Anderson had greatly signalized himself in the Indian campaigns. Particulars of Major Brabazon's and Mr Bowlby's fate are still unknown to us: indeed we have not yet been distinctly told that they are dead, but we fear this must be the case. We are to have the bodies of every one surrendered. The French lose three officers, several men, and poor Abbé de Luc. . . .

Yesterday I had the satisfaction of going into

Peking in a very different way to the former occasion. I rode in with Sir Robert Napier, to whom the gate was surrendered. It was literally at the eleventh hour, or at 11 A.M., that the Chinese assented to *unconditional* surrender at a meeting which I conducted just under the walls. From that meeting we adjourned to the gate itself, some two miles off, and marched through its lofty portals as the clock struck twelve.

1860  
ÆT. 32

Then followed the punishment. To make the Emperor and Government feel it in the most sensitive quarter, Lord Elgin ordered the burning of the Summer Palace. It was given to the flames on the 18th and 19th October. 'The clouds of smoke,' said Mr Loch, 'driven by the wind, hung like a vast pall over Peking.' The reasons which dictated this act are clearly stated in the following letter from Parkes, who was not consulted in the decision. From the dilettanti's point of view it was an act of vandalism :<sup>1</sup> from that of sound policy in China it was statesmanlike.

We have passed since I last wrote you on the 14th from a state of war to a state of peace, and have signed our Convention, exchanged the ratifications of the Treaty of 1858, and our people are now walking about Peking in small parties of threes and fours very much in the way that we do at Canton. . . .

To his  
Wife  
British  
Embassy  
Peking  
Oct. 27

On the 13th, as I told you, a gate of the city was placed in our hands, which gave us of course a great command over the place and would have terminated hostilities had it not been that the treatment of our prisoners was too atrocious to be passed [over]

<sup>1</sup> The French, however, had looted or destroyed almost everything of value in it, and had already set fire to the Emperor's private apartments; so there was less vandalism than is imagined by writers like Sir William Butler, who, in his biographical sketch of General Gordon, is led into serious errors of fact by excessive sentimentality. Most of the relics of the Imperial treasures which found their way to England were bought from French soldiers. Our men were not allowed to loot, and the little that some officers took was given up to the prize fund. There are excellent accounts of Yuen Ming Yuen before the burning, and of the looting that went on under General Montauban's eyes, in Lord WOLSELEY'S *Narrative* (1862), R. SWINHÖE'S *North China Campaign* (1861), and Rev. R. J. L. M'GHEE'S *How we got to Peking* (1861).

1860  
ÆT. 32

without exemplary punishment. But the difficulty was to know what punishment to inflict. Some advocated a heavy indemnity; others the burning of Peking; others the destruction of the Imperial Palace in the city. I think Lord Elgin came to the right decision in determining to raze to the ground all the palaces of Yuen Ming Yuen, the Emperor's Summer Palace, five miles outside Peking, where the Emperor and whole Court have lately spent two-thirds of their time, and where our poor countrymen were taken in the first instance and put to torture by direction of the Court itself. The allied troops had already plundered these palaces, or several of them, and some said that it was an ignoble sort of revenge on that account; but there appeared to be no other choice than the destruction of the palace within the city (which had not been looted), and considering that Yuen Ming Yuen was the scene of the atrocities committed on our countrymen, I consider that it was the proper one of the two to make a monumental ruin of. To have burnt Peking would have been simply wicked, as the *people* of the city, who would in that case be the sufferers, had done us no harm. At Yuen Ming Yuen we could only injure the Court. This palace has with the Chinese very much the position that Buckingham Palace has with us, as compared with St. James's. To have exacted a *national* indemnity for the murder of our countrymen would have been to make money out of their blood. So Yuen Ming Yuen was doomed, but an ample compensation of half a million of taels was demanded for the families of the deceased.

The last scene in the Chinese drama took place on the 27th:—

To his  
Wife  
Peking  
Oct. 28

The Embassy took up its quarters in the city of Peking on the afternoon of the 27th, escorted by the Royals and about fifty cavalry.

The residence we have chosen is no other than the palace of the Prince of I—that false wretch who with

Sangkolinsin planned and compassed my seizure at the time he was treating with me. He has accompanied the Emperor on his flight into Tartary, so his house was vacant.

1860  
ÆT. 32

The representative of the Queen was at last within the walls of Peking. The long struggle of twenty years had ended in victory. Half measures had been tried, and failed, and tried again. At length the only step that could decide the issue for ever was taken, and what ought to have been done in 1842, what was obtained and then abandoned in 1858, had finally, after a treacherous tragedy, been accomplished. And the boy who had stood by whilst the Treaty of Nanking was signed eighteen years before, who had stood in the front rank of the contest ever since, took his part in the crowning act.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE OPENING OF THE RIVER PORTS

1860—1861

1860  
ÆT. 32

A BRITISH Embassy was at last established at Peking, and Parkes was enjoying the comforts of Lord Elgin's well-appointed household and excellent French cook with the keener relish from the memory of a very different experience as a prisoner in the same city. The residence at Peking, however, was to be but brief, for the present. Preparations would have to be made for the suitable housing of the new Minister and his establishment, before a permanent occupation could be made, and meanwhile it was thought undesirable to emphasize our triumph by keeping our representative conspicuously before the eyes of the hostile faction at the capital. It was also apparently considered unnecessary to insist on an audience of the Emperor to deliver the Queen's autograph letter, and for the second time Lord Elgin left the neighbourhood of Peking without being received as every ambassador ought to be by the Sovereign to whom he is accredited. All succeeding Ministers to China have suffered for his mistake, and the audience question is still on an unsatisfactory footing. But haste was as much the order of the day in November as delay had been the rule at the end of September. The General was in a hurry to remove his troops. Indeed he 'wanted to be off the moment the Treaty was signed: to have done so,' as



Parkes wrote (28th October), 'would have been to have made that Treaty almost valueless, to have removed with one's own hand the impression we have been labouring so hard to make—in short to defeat the object of the Expedition.' Lord Elgin agreed in this view, and 'a great fight' ensued between him and Sir Hope Grant. The General positively stated that 'he would not stay a day after the 7th November, fearing if he did so that the Tien-tsin river would freeze and prevent the embarkation of the army. He came to this determination without consulting the Admiral, who afterwards said that he would undertake to embark in December.'<sup>1</sup> Eventually the whole British force, Legation and all, turned out of Peking on 9th November, followed by Parkes a few hours later. 'I was therefore,' he wrote, 'the last man to leave Peking, as I had been the first to enter it, and it was with no ordinary feelings that I passed under the same portals on going away as I had entered by, when brought in with Loch, bound in a cart, on the memorable 18th of September.' He did not approve of the hurry, but believed that the danger of re-enacting the failure of 1858 by a premature withdrawal had been averted by staying at Peking long enough to see the Treaty and Convention<sup>2</sup> published to the whole Empire, and by continuing to hold Tien-tsin as a material guarantee for the fulfilment of the conditions. He would have liked to have seen our Minister permanently established at the Legation, as a visible sign of our successful official entry into the Chinese metropolis; but Lord Elgin feared a recrudescence of animosity on the return of the Emperor and the anti-foreign party to Peking and possible ill-treatment of our

1860  
ÆT. 32

<sup>1</sup> The event proved the General to be in the right. The river was thickly frozen at Tien-tsin the day the Headquarters left.

<sup>2</sup> The terms of the Treaty of Tien-tsin and the Convention of Peking may be read in Mr BOULGER'S *History of China*, iii. Appendix. The chief new principles secured (besides the opening of new ports for trade) were the residence of a diplomatic agent at Peking, the recognition of the Christian religion, and the permission for travellers to visit all parts of China if provided with consular passports. In the new tariff, opium was legalized and taxed, instead of being, as before, openly smuggled with the connivance of the Chinese Government.

1860 representative at their hands. Parkes and Wade urged  
 ÆT. 32 that we should—

To his  
 Wife  
 Tien-tsin  
 Nov. 17

on no account leave Peking without stationing there some one to show that we had taken up the post. I advocated a small officer—that is, one whose inferior rank would have been his protection—rather than in the first instance the Minister himself. Wade advocated the latter, and, finding that that would not do, volunteered—as I also did, and so did Morrison—to stay. While this point was under debate, Mr Bruce, who we had been hoping would appear, arrived on the morning of the 7th; the subject was rediscussed with him; we got another twenty-four hours out of the General; and in the end it was determined against the Minister's staying, and against either Wade's, Morrison's, or my staying, but on securing a residence, which I had spent a week in hunting for, and leaving in it Mr Adkins, one of our junior interpreters. By this arrangement we have just managed to 'save our face':<sup>1</sup> that is, have prevented, I hope, the Chinese thinking that we have not established our Minister there out of *fear* of them. I draw a distinction, which Wade is not so ready to admit, between not fearing them and not trusting them, and altogether therefore I thought it well that until we have proof of their bad faith being succeeded by real good-will, it is not well for us to put our Minister in their power. The difficulty of our procuring a house is a good reason for our Minister not taking up his quarters there at once. Peking is in a wretched state of dilapidation and ruin, and scarcely one of their palatial buildings is not falling into decay. We have obtained one of the best, and yet it is quite uninhabitable according to our notions, and we therefore tell the Chinese that the Minister is obliged to postpone taking up his residence until the residence is fit to receive him. Mr Adkins is therefore charged with the task of repairs, and in

<sup>1</sup> A Chinese phrase for preserving appearances.

March of next year or possibly even earlier Mr Bruce expects to take up his quarters there. His arrival at Peking before we quitted it was a happy hit. Formal interviews took place between Lord Elgin and Prince Kung at which the former introduced his brother and abdicated in his favour; so that before we quitted Peking Mr Bruce had commenced his business with the Chinese authorities, while that of the Special Embassy terminated.

Parkes acted as interpreter at the formal introduction of Mr Bruce to the Prince of Kung on the 8th November, when Lord Elgin resigned the seat of honour to his brother in token that henceforward the Representative of the Queen at Peking would take precedence of all her other subjects; and on the 9th he followed the Ambassador on his journey to the coast, the last man of the Expedition to leave Peking, as he had been the first—involuntarily—to enter it. From Tien-tsin, where 5000 English and French troops were left in occupation, he rode alone to the Taku forts on the 26th, thirty-five miles over snow, and slept on the Admiral's ship, the *Coromandel*, which was surrounded by floes of ice; and on the 28th he sailed for Shanghai with Lord Elgin on the *Ferooz*.

Perhaps you can imagine my feelings on reaching the *Ferooz* again in safety, the ship from which I had landed on the 1st August. I could then realize that the campaign was ended. It felt almost like returning to a home, and earnestly indeed did I return thanks to God for His great mercy in having thus brought me through such great dangers. The rest and quiet of this ship was very grateful and made a pleasant change from late shore life, where we were seldom put up so comfortably. . . .

It is possible that my next trip will be up the Yang-tsze Kiang. The Admiral will go up there with a part of his squadron in about two months from this date, and if it be necessary to send a Diplomatic

1860  
ÆT. 32

To his  
Wife  
H. M. S.  
*Ferooz*, off  
Woosung  
Dec. 2

1861  
ÆT. 32

Agent with him, I daresay I shall have the job. It would occupy six weeks or two months, and would prove a very interesting voyage. We are going to place consuls at Hankow and Kiukiang, the first about 600, the latter 400 miles up the river; but we have a difficulty in the rebels, who hold, as you know, Nanking and some 200 miles of the river from its mouth.

He spent a month at Shanghai with Lord Elgin, who expressed a wish for his assistance during the concluding arrangements which he was making with regard to the opening of the Yang-tsze Kiang to commerce, and the intercourse between the two was more friendly than it had ever been before. 'Lord Elgin makes himself very pleasant,' he wrote, 'and so does each one of his party.' The Ambassador was gradually unbending towards the 'sinologues,' as he called them, and his admiration of Parkes' abilities was now quickened by a genuine esteem for his character. Their relations were soon to be ended, however. They left Shanghai on 4th January 1861, and after a short stay at Hongkong and Canton, during which Lord Elgin was pleased to see the progress that had been made in recovering the Shameen site for the factories (which he had himself chosen in opposition to the wishes of the merchants), and after formally proclaiming the annexation of the peninsula of Kowloon to the Crown of England in accordance with a provision in the new Treaty, the Ambassador with unfeigned relief departed for home. Parkes never met his Excellency again; but he encountered his old ship the *Ferooz* in the Red Sea in 1862, when she was bearing Lord Elgin out to his Viceroyalty of India; and, strangely enough, two years later he met the same vessel at almost the same spot, when the widowed Countess was returning from her husband's lonely grave beneath the Himalayas. He writes to his wife from the Commissioners' yamun at Canton describing the farewell:—

I have scarcely yet made myself at *home* in our funny little old domicile. And for a good reason. It is not

the *home* it was to me, and never could be so again unless all the old occupants were here also. The greater part of the 14th was spent in walking about Canton and Honan with Lord Elgin. On the 15th Laou visited the Earl at the Heights, and was received with a good deal of ceremony. At 2 P.M. Lord Elgin started for the *Ferooz* which we had left at Whampoa. At 4 P.M. we were on board and again under weigh, and at daylight on the 15th we were in Hongkong. . . . 16th, 17th, and 18th were occupied in business, the chief thing on board being the formal taking possession of Kowloon, which came off on the 19th. 20th was Sunday, and on the 21st Lord Elgin again embarked on board the *Ferooz* and steaming out of Hongkong the same afternoon bid what he hopes may be his last farewell to China. Fervently do I hope so too, as we may presume that it is nothing but trouble of a serious kind that could ever bring him back here. I went on board with his lordship and remained with him until the paddle wheels began to move. He evinced some feeling in bidding me good-bye. The event did not add to my good spirits and I came on shore feeling a little downcast. . . . Although very sorry for some reasons to part with companions so excellent in themselves [as his staff], and with whom I had passed six months of no ordinary life, I felt in a measure relieved when he had left. I do not at all like being in a great man's *train*—not that the Earl ever causes you to feel yourself dependent or subordinate ; but still when in such a position you have work *set* you to do—you are certainly not the master of your own time—you are at all times of the day at the beck and call of your chief, and you are sensible of a feeling of restraint, which to me is very unpleasant. Then there is the difficulty of doing any work under such circumstances—when you have nothing about you that you want, and yet are liable to be called upon for papers, memoranda, or information. . . .

1861  
Æt. 32  
To his  
Wife  
Canton  
Jan. 29  
1861



1861  
ÆT. 32

Your letters are my fortnightly bread and I go along but heavily without your budget. I now feel, however, that I know the worst, and I think I shall now take a fresh departure and go about my work cheerfully. I shall be glad to be out of Canton. The Yang-tsze expedition will be a pleasant one, and I would much sooner be at Peking than here.<sup>1</sup>

The Treaty of Tien-tsin, now at last ratified in 1860, besides opening the river port of Tien-tsin and five new ports on the coast, had provided for the opening of the Yang-tsze Kiang to British trade, and the establishment of three ports with British consulates for that purpose.<sup>2</sup> Lord Elgin had taken a special interest in carrying through the necessary arrangements for putting this concession into effect, and had obtained the Prince of Kung's consent to the immediate opening of Chinkiang and two ports higher up the river. The next step was to select the two most favourable places for trade and secure sites for British settlements. Admiral Hope was accordingly instructed to take a small number of gunboats up the Great River, and Parkes was appointed to accompany him as Diplomatic Agent. Lord Elgin's instructions will best explain the nature of his duties :<sup>3</sup>—

The Earl  
of Elgin  
to Mr  
Parkes  
Hongkong  
Jan. 19  
1861  
(extr.)

I have to request that you will hold yourself in readiness to accompany Vice-Admiral Sir James Hope, who is about to proceed up the Yang-tsze to Hankow with the view of opening the river up to that point to British trade.

In consequence of the disorganized condition of the country through which it passes, great interest and importance attaches to the expedition which His Excellency is about to undertake, and in withdrawing you for the time from your duties at Canton in order that you may join it, Mr Bruce gives you a proof of con-

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 410, 437.

<sup>2</sup> Five more ports were added by the Chefoo Convention negotiated by Sir Thomas Wade in September 1876.

<sup>3</sup> They are published in the Blue-Book, 1861 [190], Correspondence respecting the Opening of the Yang-tsze Kiang River to Foreign Trade, p. 3.

fidence which I venture to think is thoroughly well deserved.

1861  
ÆT. 32

The supreme direction of all matters connected with the expedition will of course rest with the Commander-in-Chief, and I am sure that you will always be ready to render to His Excellency that intelligent and zealous assistance which I have invariably received from you when you have stood in a somewhat similar position to myself.

It is not possible to anticipate with certainty the reply which the rebel leaders may give to the communication which the Admiral is about to make to them, although there is, I think, reason to hope that they will not receive it in an unfriendly spirit; nor, if it were possible, would it be necessary that I should attempt to do so on the present occasion, as you are already fully acquainted with the views that I entertain respecting the policy which it is expedient to adopt towards them, and the objects which we ought to endeavour to accomplish under the provisional arrangement for opening up the Yang-tsze which has been entered into by Mr Bruce and Prince Kung. You are aware that it is my desire that the privilege thereby acquired for British vessels should not in practice be limited to a permission to trade at certain specific ports, but that it should, if possible, be carried out in such a manner as to throw open to them the general coasting trade of the river, and that I consider it to be very important to this end—

1. That attempts on the part of foreigners to introduce into the disturbed districts munitions of war and recruits should be vigorously repressed.

2. That the dues of the Chinese Government on foreign trade, both inwards and outwards, should be collected at Chinkiang or Shanghai.

3. That we should maintain an attitude of strict neutrality between the Imperial Government and the rebels. . . .

1861  
ÆT. 32

Mr Bruce's instructions, as Parkes' official chief, were as follows :—

I think it will be desirable that the opportunity afforded by the expedition up the Yang-tsze river, of gaining information of the state of the country and of the disposition and demeanour of the authorities and insurgents, should not be neglected. It is my intention to call you up to Peking, to act for Mr Wade, as soon as you can be spared from Canton, and it may be of great use in our intercourse with the Imperial authorities at the capital that you should be able to speak to them on these subjects from personal observation. It will moreover be an assistance to the Consuls that they should be accompanied on their first introduction to their posts by a person specially designated by Her Majesty's Minister to see that they are properly received, and to report to me at Peking should the attitude of the authorities not be such as we have a right to expect.

As you have been in constant communication with the Earl of Elgin on the subject of this mission you will do well to be guided in its discharge by the views His Excellency expressed to you. I am quite of opinion that care must be taken not to give to the expedition a character of hostility to the insurgents. What we desire and are prepared to insist on is the free and unmolested passage of vessels under the British flag up and down the river for the purposes of legitimate traffic. We cannot allow this right to be subject to any conditions on the part of the insurgents, but we shall take care that our intercourse is strictly commercial.

I think that the best title for you to adopt in Chinese will be that of Consul and extra or joint Chinese Secretary. My object is that the designation should constitute you a member of Her Majesty's Mission in China and should convey the impression of your being in a confidential relation to myself. . . .

The main obstacle to the opening of the Yang-tsze to trade lay in the disturbed state of the interior. The

1851-53

rebellion which had now devastated China for more than ten years has been referred to already more than once ; but before we can understand the position of affairs which Parkes discovered in his voyage up the Great River it is necessary to take a brief survey of the progress of the rebels. The movement began in the inaccessible districts of Kwang Si to the west of Canton, which had been in a disturbed condition for a very long time before the Chinese authorities took any notice of it. In 1851, however, the rebellion assumed more serious proportions, partly because the secret societies of China, which were pledged to the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty and the restoration of a native Chinese empire, found the anarchic condition of Kwang Si a suitable soil to work in, and partly because in Hung Siu-tsiuen, or the Tien Wang, 'Heavenly King,' as he styled himself, the rebels had found a leader whose pretended visions and revelations gave a superstitious character to the movement. Henceforward the subjects of the 'Heavenly King' were known by the name of Tai Ping or 'Great Peace'—at least to outsiders, for the name was not generally adopted amongst themselves. Under their inspired king the insurgents captured various cities, made the West River or Si Kiang their own, and pushed forward into the neighbouring provinces, massacring and plundering wherever they went. Commissioner Yeh made a show of opposition at Canton, and the rebels for a time avoided the great city of the South ; but the whole country south of the West River was in their hands, and the Imperial troops were powerless to suppress them. In 1852 the Tai Ping marched north, and in a short time seized most of the cities on the Yangtze Kiang and established their capital at Nanking. They did not seek to hold all the country they had overrun, but abandoned most of the towns they had taken. Then, restricting their central domination to the rich and populous districts between Chinkiang and Kiukiang, and fortifying Nanking, they proceeded in May 1853, with 80,000 fighting men, to march upon Peking itself, with the intention

1853 of putting an end to the Manchu supremacy. They got within eighty miles of the capital ; but the campaign was a failure. Tien-tsin would not hearken to them ; step by step Sangkolinsin and his Mongol horsemen drove them back ; and by March 1855 they had abandoned all attempts to possess themselves of the country north of the Yellow River.

Meanwhile the Treaty ports had not escaped the contagion of the insurrection. The British Government adopted a policy of strict neutrality, treated the rebellion as a purely internal matter, and even went so far as to open formal official relations with the Heavenly King at Nanking. Sir George Bonham was prepared to recognize any government that might exist in China, rightly or wrongly, and there was a very general impression, justified in some degree by the history of previous rebellions, that the Tai Ping might very probably become the masters of China. Some of the missionaries were led to believe that the success of the Tai Ping religion, in which at first they recognized Christian elements, would be synonymous with a vast extension of the true faith ; and they brought all the pressure they could to bear upon the British authorities to give the rebels a fair chance. But the proceedings of their pseudo-Christian allies at the Treaty ports at length opened their eyes to the true character of the rebellion—which turned out to be nothing better than a general riot of unmitigated ruffians and brigands. Amoy felt the effects of the insurrection in 1853, when a revolution was suppressed with excessive cruelty by the Imperial forces. The foreign community at Shanghai had already prepared to defend itself. Consul Alcock had organized a scheme of defence and a volunteer force was enrolled. When the rebels seized the city in September 1853, the foreign settlement was placed in a state of siege, and though an attack by the French, who forgot their neutrality, ended in disaster, the steady defence of the foreign quarter was successful, and the rebels abandoned Shanghai in con-



fusion. At Canton they were still less fortunate. They captured Fatshan, but on approaching Canton itself they soon discovered that the inhabitants were able to protect themselves, even without the aid which Commissioner Yeh begged of Sir John Bowring, and by the beginning of 1855 the Tai Ping had ceased to threaten the southern provincial capital. 1855-59

The movement had not been the success that was anticipated. The Tai Ping had gained some victories; they had incurred almost as many defeats. They had captured the towns on the Yang-tsze; every other walled city had repulsed and defied them. They had sent two armies to the north; their standards had been flaunted within a hundred miles of the capital; but of these armies a mere fragment ever regained the main body. They had proclaimed their chief King not merely of China but of the earth, under a celestial mandate; and the reputed sanctity of their mission, the proclaimed purity of their purpose, had not availed to keep out the dissension of worldly objects and individual ambition. Prince had murdered prince; the streets of Nanking had been flooded with the blood of thousands of their followers. The presence of a common peril could not avail to preserve union and fellow-devotion among a band of uneducated and unprincipled adventurers, drawn from the lowest orders of the people and from the most profligate temples and monasteries of the Buddhist religion.<sup>1</sup>

What they had accomplished was to spread anarchy and bloodshed over a large part of China, and to crush under a reign of terror the fertile valley of the Yang-tsze with its teeming population. In 1858 and 1859 they held their own in this central region, mainly in consequence of the energy and ability of their general Chung Wang, the 'Faithful King,' who held the Imperial armies in check, and kept the control of the Yang-tsze from Nanking to Ichang — without, however, continuously

<sup>1</sup> D. C. BOULGER, *History of China*, iii. 377.

1861  
ÆT. 32

occupying the towns. More than once Nanking was in vain besieged by the Emperor's troops: the skill and courage of the 'Faithful King' saved it. In 1860 the successes of this distinguished commander, who had now taken Soochow, so alarmed the Imperial authorities that they actually sought the military aid of the very 'foreign devils' who were about to invade Peking. It apparently did not strike the Chinese as incongruous that the allies should help them at Soochow on their way to attacking them at the Peiho. The French were anxious to join in the scrimmage, but Mr Bruce resolutely maintained the attitude of neutrality prescribed by his Government, and the foreign forces at Shanghai were not permitted to march against the Tai Ping. The merchants were not, however, bound by the policy of their government, and in despair at the loss of trade occasioned by the rebellion they subsidized in 1860 a foreign legion, paid two American filibusters, by name Ward and Burgevine, to command it, and sent this motley force against the disturbers of their commerce. Ward, a man of much energy and courage, was signally successful for a time, but eventually was forced to retreat. The 'Faithful King' followed him to Shanghai, in order to crush the foreign legion at its head, but his attack was valiantly beaten off by the defenders. The Imperial troops began once more to take heart, though the 'Faithful King' was meditating new and extensive campaigns with four distinct armies, at the time when Parkes ascended the Yang-tsze in February 1861.

The narrative of this expedition may best be told in his own words. His letters to his wife give a sufficiently detailed account of the journey, and his official reports describe his interviews with the rebel Wangs. Admiral Hope had started with his gunboats a few days before Parkes arrived on the scene; but the latter, following in a small gunboat, which had been ordered to wait for him, caught him up on 21st February:—

The Admiral has kindly allowed a considerable

party of merchants and missionaries to accompany the expedition, so we shall have society. I fear the weather will be cold and raw, and the end of February brings us into a rainy season. One very interesting party accompanies the expedition as far as Hankow—Major Sarel [17th Lancers], Captain Blakiston, R.A., Dr Barton, and a Russian gentleman with an unpronounceable and unwritable name [W. Scherewsky].<sup>1</sup> They are bound to India *viâ* Thibet, crossing China, and doing something towards tracing the source of the Yang-tsze. It will be the great travel of the period, and if they succeed their names will be a great deal before the public. I know Sarel and Blakiston—the latter at Canton (he is in the artillery), the former as an aide-de-camp on General Grant's staff. They are both very fine fellows and I cordially wish them success.

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To his  
Wife  
H.M.S.  
*Chesa-  
peake*, off  
Woosung  
Feb. 19

When we were within twelve miles of Nanking, we met *Coromandel* returning. I went on board and returned with the Admiral that night to Chinkiang. He had reached Nanking on the previous day, the 20th, had sent his Secretary with a verbal message into the city to the rebels, and had received a reply that morning. This communication was sufficient to satisfy the Admiral that the rebels were well disposed and wished to be friendly—the first point to be ascertained, as if it had been otherwise (though we did not expect a different result) he would have had to bring up a large force from Shanghai and drubbed civility into them. I then decided to remain at Chinkiang while the Admiral returned to the mouth of the river to bring up the missing vessels. He placed a steamer at my disposal, the *Attalante*, on board which I found Major Sarel and companions, . . . so I had pleasant company. I stayed at Chinkiang two days, acquainting myself with the condition of that place and its vicinity, and installing a youngster in the

To his  
Wife  
H.M.S.  
*Coro-  
mandel*,  
March 5

<sup>1</sup> See Captain T. W. BLAKISTON'S *Five Months on the Yang-tsze* (1862).

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service, Mr Phillips,<sup>1</sup> in the charge of the Consulate, which we established there and then. . . . It was at one time a noble city—as Chinese cities go—being at the entrance to the Grand Canal and a sort of half-way house between the southern and northern Provinces,—but during the time the rebels held it—from 1853 to end of 1857—they reduced it to a heap of ruins, and indeed evacuated it only because there was nothing to hold and because it had ceased to be of use to them. It was not an easy matter to find a shelter even for young Phillips, and we had to get some ‘braves’ to turn out of a temple used as a military station on the top of a hill which was almost the only roofed tenement left near the waterside. We would not have used such a place for a stable in England—as a cowhouse it might have been utilized, but for no other purpose in our land of comfort and peaceful hearths. Men were set to scrub and clean and carpenters to knock up a few planks and provide windows—a flagstaff was put up and a Jack hoisted under a salute [22nd February]. Other accommodation was then hunted for and bespoken in the event of Sinclair coming up and wanting shelter likewise, and with a view to more permanent arrangements I selected a site suitable for locating the foreign community and a Consulate, and large enough to provide a dozen good building lots, and secured this to the Queen under a lease, and she can sublet it to her loyal subjects when they want it.

This work and calling on the authorities and receiving their visits gave me close occupation for two days (the 22nd and 23rd), and on the 24th I proceeded on to Nanking in my vessel the *Attalante* in order that I might be familiar with that place and its circumstances by the time the Admiral returned. Nothing can be more sad than the appearance of Chinkingang. Its population when I saw it last in 1848 must at least have been 500,000; now probably it

<sup>1</sup> Assistant at the Consulate at Kiukiang.

does not contain more than 5000 or at most 10,000<sup>1</sup> independent of the troops who number about 15,000 more. The troops or 'braves' are the lowest class of ruffians, and the people little else but followers to the troops—or idlers and beggars, so that the demoralized state in which the place is cannot well be worse. And this is only one of the *hundreds* of cities that have been reduced by this rebellion to a similar condition.

It is now absolutely without commerce of any description; the only lay residents consisting of a few small shopkeepers who gather round the military and drive a small trade by supplying their wants.

It took us a whole day to get up to Nanking, though only forty-five miles from Chinkiang, as the current is against vessels, and *Attalante* is not a clipper. The Admiral had left behind him at Nanking Colonel Wolseley,<sup>2</sup> who accompanies the expedition to make a military survey of the river, Mr Hughes the Vice-Consul for Kiukiang, one of the new ports that we are about to open, Mr Michie, of Lindsay and Co. at Shanghai, and Mr Muirhead, who was in Nanking when the Admiral arrived there, having set out some weeks before to visit the rebels and ascertain whether they were willing to receive religious instruction. . . . On the morning of the 25th we moved up close to the city, although you see very little of this from the river, and I waited until the afternoon before I left the ship for any distance in order that some of our friends might come aboard and I might have the benefit of their knowledge. . . .

Next morning . . . we made up a party to visit the city, and this time I took some bedding with me in order that I might pass the night in Nanking and thus have a whole day for exploring it on the morrow. Succeeded this time in finding Mr Muirhead. Wolseley gladly quitted the city and I took the bench he had occupied

<sup>1</sup> In his official report Parkes gives a somewhat higher estimate.

<sup>2</sup> Now General Viscount Wolseley, K.P., G.C.B.



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as a bed. The rebel leaders, or 'princes' as they call themselves, had put up their visitors very indifferently in a summer house in a garden, with only a table and a stool or two as furniture, and ill adapted to keep out the cold which at night was under those circumstances intense. It was little better than sleeping in the open air, and the thermometer was some degrees below freezing-point. Our fare was of very rude quality—a fowl boiled on the spot, some salt beef from the ship, a Chinese ham and chupatties (bread) made by Mr Hughes' servant. Fortunately we had beer to wash this down, and cigars to warm our mouths with. I was glad of the opportunity of learning Mr Muirhead's experiences. He had obtained during his stay among the rebels a good deal of information about them, and, while sympathizing with them to some extent, is very moderate in his opinions. He is well known to several of the 'princes,' and has had better opportunities of judging of and becoming acquainted with the character of the movement than most of the other missionaries. We planned a long walk on the morrow, and accordingly the next day, as soon as we had made a rough breakfast, we started off at 8.30 A.M., and did not reach home again until six in the evening. I managed this long walk, which must have been twenty-six or twenty-seven miles, without being at all distressed, so you may imagine that I am in tolerably fair condition. . . .

The day after my long walk—March 31st—I returned on board ship that I might be at hand when the Admiral arrived. I had seen Nanking pretty thoroughly and found that it presented altogether a deplorable sight. The city walls are no less than *eighteen miles* in circumference, so you may imagine what an immense area they enclose—more than three times the size of the Canton enclosure. For many years past, however, even before the rebels came to the place, not a fifth part of this large area was built over, and now I may

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say that not a fifth of the most recently habitable portion is occupied with houses—the rest is either waste or taken up with rude cultivation, and as several hills are contained within the walls, you might take long walks almost without knowing that you are in a city. Such houses as are left are tenanted by the insurgent soldiery—for mistrusting the people and being wholly unable to govern a large population, they get rid of the difficulty by getting rid of the people, and not a single shop, with the sole exception of a few *druggists*, is allowed within the walls. Everything therefore looks dreary and poverty-stricken, and for one inhabited street you see ten that have fallen into ruins and are now nothing but mounds of tiles and bricks.

The absence of population was partly accounted for by the statement that they had lately sent out several armies, and the large proportion of *women* to *men* would seem to confirm this statement. The women indeed cannot fail to strike the attention of the visitor—they were so numerous, so well dressed, and so good-looking. They are the spoil, I fear, of the country—nay of provinces around—and once brought into Nanking they cannot return again. They evidently imitate Sisera and his host in the way in which when on their incursions they appropriate ‘to every man a damsel or two and a prey of divers colours’; for not only are the women in all the colours of the rainbow, but the men also. Generally speaking the Chinese dress in good taste, and the men in quiet sober colours, but these insurgents take delight in the most flaring habiliments, and scarlets, blues, and yellows are worn by their men as well as by the women. They look exactly like what they are—a pack of robbers who have just looted a city.<sup>1</sup> . . . I cannot (from what

<sup>1</sup> A very minute account of the state of Nanking under the Tai Ping may be read in Parkes’ official report to Mr Bruce of 10th May, published in the Blue-Book on the Rebellion, 1862, already referred to. It is too long to quote.

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I have yet seen) see in them a hope that they will be able to reconstruct what they are now destroying or be an instrument of restoring order to this miserable land. They may be destined to be a scourge—and that they doubtless are,—but how long they will be suffered to afflict the country it is impossible to say. If the Imperial Government were not also wretched and contemptible in the extreme they might, one would have thought, have been long since suppressed; but such deplorable weakness on the part of the Government holds out but a poor prospect for the future.

At noon on the 31st the Admiral arrived at Nanking with the *Centaur*, a large steamer, my friend the *Snake*, the *Cooper*, *Coromandel*, and two gunboats—a very tidy little squadron. After hearing my report he decided to make a communication to the rebel chiefs telling them in decided terms how we expected them to behave, and then pass on up the river. I put this communication into Chinese, and on the following day accompanied Captain Aplin, the Senior Naval Officer after the Admiral, into the city to see two of their ‘princes’ and deliver the Admiral’s message.<sup>1</sup> It told them in plain terms that we had acquired the right of navigating the Yang-tsze and that they must not interfere with our merchant ships in the enjoyment of this right;—that a ship of war would be stationed at Nanking to protect British interests and see that our people behaved themselves;—and informed the rebels that if they attacked Hankow, Chinkiang, or any of the new ports of the river, they must not molest British subjects or their property.

Our interview with the princes was interesting and amusing. Being common men,—Canton coolies, in short,—they did not know how to receive the foreign officials, and were not a little embarrassed by their own attempts at a State ceremony, which commenced by keeping us waiting outside their gate for twenty

<sup>1</sup> The interview is described in detail in the official report, p. 35-37.

minutes, and then ushering us through lines of soldiery armed with drawn falchions and other horrible and barbarous weapons, all which of course had been got up for effect and in the hope of awing us into behaviour that would have suited their pretensions. Of course we had to commence by removing them from this high perch, wringing their insufferable conceit out of them, and bringing them down from the skies (for these 'princes' are all following in the wake of their leader who claims affinity with Heaven itself) to an intelligible mundane position. And certainly they came down low enough before the interview was over, and made amends for keeping us in the mob outside the door when we first arrived by attending us to the same door at our departure and putting us upon their own ponies and sending us down to our boat respectably attended, with all sorts of protestations of friendship, and assurances that if we came again we should be received properly.

When we had got them into this frame of mind (and there were only four of us who did it, Captain Aplin, myself, and two of his men), we found these 'princes,' of whom we saw two, reasonable enough, and if they will keep their hands off our ships as they pass up and down, our principal object will be attained. We would prefer that our people should not have intercourse with them, but this cannot be prevented unless we turn ourselves into policemen and preventive officers; for the insurgents are most anxious to buy opium and arms and ammunition from the foreigners, and where purchasers of these baneful articles are, there surely will sellers of them be found also. However, it is the fault of the Chinese customs if arms do reach the insurgents' hands, as our regulations for the river trade require all vessels to clear from Shanghai, and to be again examined at Chinkiang before they pass into rebel territory. It is the same, however, on the side of the Imperialists; opium and arms, opium and arms, is the one cry we hear from mandarins, soldiers, and

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people, at every place we have yet come to, and the satisfaction we feel in opening up this grand river to foreign commerce is not inconsiderably lessened by the reflection that much harm as well as good may result from the intercourse. . . . That much good may be effected I have no doubt, for when we go we shall give increased employment and security to this fair land,—or a land that once was fair but is now laid waste for the want of these advantages.

A characteristic anecdote is related of Parkes' interview with the rebel 'princes.' When Admiral Hope submitted his proposal of stationing a gunboat to protect the river factories, the matter was referred to the decision of the 'Heavenly King,' who affected to rule by direct communication with the Almighty. Parkes and a deputation waited on the 'princes' to receive this inspired decision, and were informed that the king had seen a vision which forbade his sanctioning the presence of a foreign ship near Nanking. This was embarrassing, as the expedition was in a hurry to go on, and the matter had to be settled off-hand. Parkes settled it with his usual promptness. When he was told of the vision, he burst out in his most impatient manner (which he sometimes assumed in lieu of argument), and with his slight stammer, 'Tut, tut, tut! Won't do at all. *He must have another vision!*' and his 'lightning of blue eyes' flashed from one Chinese official to the other, till they were completely disconcerted. The vision was duly amended by a fresh revelation.<sup>1</sup>

To his  
Wife  
March 5  
*contd.*

On the 2nd March we weighed and proceeded on our voyage. It was the only day on which the whole of our way lay through rebel territory, and we could know it to be so chiefly from its scathed and seared condition and the absence of population. At night we anchored at Wuhu, which once was a very notable city, but is now a ruin. The next day Sunday (3rd) we remained at anchor and on that day I began this

<sup>1</sup> I have the story from Mr. Alexander Michie, who accompanied the expedition.



letter. On the 4th we again proceeded and enjoyed ourselves as the scenery and condition of the country improved. The rebels, although having the run of the province to within a short distance of the river, do not care to hold the banks, and thus the river for the most part remains in Imperial possession. The arrangement is an odd one and quite the reverse of our notions as to the importance of this great highway. But in truth it has ceased to be a great highway: you no longer see on it the fleets of junks that used to navigate it in former times, but only a few little boats, few and far between. As I cannot give you a good description of the river, you cannot do better than turn to Oliphant's book—as the pictures he draws are as well suited to the present day as to the time of his visit. Imperialists and rebels continue to occupy almost precisely the same position, and with the exception of a little high colouring when he describes scenery, his account is as accurate as it is vivid and interesting.

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ÆT. 33

We got on a little faster than Lord Elgin's party because we had only four small light vessels and had the charts which Captain Ward made on that occasion, with Captain Ward himself to pilot us, so that our progress was only restricted by our steam power which in small vessels is not very great. We averaged however about seventy miles a day and on the night of the 6th anchored at Hukow, at the entrance to the Poyang. I had to examine that place as to its capabilities as a port—it being a question whether we should choose that or Kiukiang—fifteen miles away from the lake. We remained therefore on the 7th at Hukow, and on the 8th came on to Kiukiang and spent that day in the examination of that place—to-day we left it again and anchored to-night at about forty-five miles from Hankow—to-morrow Sunday 10th, we shall remain at anchor, and on Monday 11th expect to arrive at that celebrated place—the principal inland emporium of China.

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An important duty now devolved upon Parkes. The river was opened as far as Hankow, but no regulations had been framed for the trade which was to follow the Admiral's flag there. It fell to Parkes to draw up Provisional Regulations by which British vessels would be guided until orders should be received from the Legation at Peking. These Regulations<sup>1</sup> dealt in a careful and minute manner with the issue of river passes, the carrying of arms, paying customs, reporting to consuls, port clearances, manifests, and all the other details of merchant shipping.<sup>2</sup>

To his  
Wife  
H.M.S.  
*Cooper*, off  
Hankow  
March 17

I had to send down by her [the *Yang-tsze*] the Regulations under which the river is to be opened to trade—regulations the conditions and framing of which devolved upon me and therefore gave me some anxiety and trouble. Lord Elgin had touched them, but only to drop them again, and Mr Bruce in Tien-tsin could not be communicated with at this time of year—not in time at least for this purpose,—and thus I had to try my unskilled hand at a bit of legislation. I had only finished my notification on the subject the day before (9th) *Yang-tsze* made her appearance. The following day, 11th, we arrived at Hankow at 3 P.M. I saw the Viceroy of the two Hu provinces, whose metropolis is at Wuchang on the opposite side of the river, the same afternoon, and the Admiral made a formal call the following day, 12th. On the 13th he started again to explore the river some two or three hundred more

<sup>1</sup> These Regulations were accepted at headquarters; but at the close of 1862 they became the subject of correspondence between Mr Bruce and the Prince of Kung, and were somewhat modified. These authorities were under the impression that Parkes had endeavoured to stretch the powers given by Treaty and to open, not merely three ports, but the whole river to British trade. That a good deal of smuggling went on along the banks is well known; but I cannot discover any grounds for assuming that Parkes intended his regulations to cover anything larger than trade at the new ports authorized by Treaty. But if he had, Lord Elgin's instructions (*supra*, p. 409) clearly warranted him in so doing (see *Parl. Papers*, 1863 [63], Further Papers relating to the Rebellion in China, p. 147 ff.).

<sup>2</sup> Published in *Parl. Papers*, 1861 [190], Correspondence respecting the Opening of the Yang-tsze Kiang, p. 18-21.

miles up, having in the meantime filled up with coal obtained at Hankow. I had also made the arrangements necessary as to boats, letters, etc., from this Viceroy to the Viceroy of Sze-Chuen province for our gallant little band of travellers—Major Sarel's party. . . .

I stayed behind, for although I should have been delighted to have gone on with the Admiral I could be more usefully employed here in making arrangements for the opening of the port, putting the Viceroy in proper train, and inoculating him with suitable ideas as to foreigners and the best mode of dealing with them. As Gingell the Consul for this port had not come up with us it was necessary that I should attend to matters that might otherwise have been taken in hand by him, among these the selection of a site for the foreign settlement, a matter of some moment and in respect to which no time should be lost. I was engaged on this subject and that of the Consul's residence the whole of 13th, 14th, 15th, and part of 16th, and had to go over a great deal of ground, and look at a good many houses, etc., as I had no less than three cities to explore,—Wuchang, Hanyang, and Hankow. . . . However on said two points I have made up my mind and at a meeting which I shall have with a posse of mandarins to-morrow I shall settle both questions, I trust. They involve some responsibility as I am acting without instructions, but *good* arrangements I expect will be approved, though if I make bad ones I shall be smitten hip and thigh. Yesterday I had a pleasant ride into the country, which is almost entirely taken up with lakes and presents therefore some pretty scenery, but to-day, with the exception of some interruptions from mandarins, I have spent very quietly and have had two or three hours entirely to myself.

Another week has passed with me as busily as usual. The Admiral when he went up the river beyond Hankow led me to expect that he could not return before

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To his  
Wife  
H.M.S.  
*Bouncer*  
Hukow  
March 24

eight or ten days. Consequently I did not look for him until 21st or 22nd, and was surprised therefore when he suddenly turned up on the evening of the 18th. He had not gone beyond Yoh-chow—a city at the entrance of the Tungting lake about 160 miles above Hankow—though I had hoped he might have been induced to go on as far as the first rapids which are about 200 miles beyond Yoh-chow, and where we presume steam navigation would necessarily cease. But he is in a hurry to return to Shanghai and cares only to undertake work of necessity. He is a man who always likes to be on the move. . . .

The past week has been in some degree an exciting one, and we have seen more of the misery so rife in this poor country owing to the weakness and wretchedness of the Government which in the first place gave rise to the rebellion and now cannot put it down. Suddenly on the evening of the 18th it was known in Hankow and Wuchang that a body of rebels had appeared at or near Hwang-chow, two days' march (or fifty miles) from Hankow. One sole idea, that of flight, seized upon the whole population of these vast cities, and when day broke dense masses of boats were leaving the place conveying away the people as fast as they could embark. The panic spread and increased and amounted at the close of the day to a stampede, especially at one moment when a cry was raised that the rebels had reached the town. Then the people no longer walked but rushed frantically to the boats, and many threw themselves into the water and were drowned. The alarm that caused this rush proved eventually to be a false one. It was truly sad to see women and children abandoning their homes and starting off they scarcely knew whither, often with very scant provision for a journey. Those who could not get boats sat down on the river's brink, the women laden with babies and the men with the few chattels that they could most conveniently carry away.

I talked to many of them and asked them why they should be in such haste to leave the place—would not the mandarins defend it?—at all events why should they leave until they knew the rebels were moving on the place? Why lose their property by such undue haste? Property, they said,—we care little for that; we only want to save our lives, to do anything to get away from this city which attracts the rebels. The event proved two things most indisputably—(1) The utter inefficiency of the mandarins and their inability to protect the people; (2) The perfect horror in which the people hold the rebels. I was very sorry for the people, and I also sympathized with the old Viceroy [Kwan Wan, who had received Lord Elgin at Wuchang in 1858], who is a very gentlemanly man, and suffers as much as the people from a wretchedly corrupt system that one man probably could do very little to alter. I finished my business with him, the chief item of which was the site for an English settlement. I had leased a very valuable lot 2750 feet long by 1210 feet broad, the length being all frontage which will allow room for about sixty lots and if properly laid out will make a very handsome settlement.

At first the Viceroy endeavoured to insist on the old Chinese exclusiveness, but Parkes hastened to explain to him 'that ideas of this nature had long ago been set aside, that relations of a really friendly nature between the officials of the two nations were the great point to be arrived at; and that all restrictions that stood in the way of such relations should be carefully avoided. . . . Kwan Wan distinctly understood that no condition of the Treaty obliges British subjects to live in factories, as was the case at Canton, or on any particular spot.'

On leaving Hankow on the 22nd Parkes made a call at Hwang-chow to see what these rebels were about who had caused the panic. His report is worth quoting for its vivid picture of a city recently captured by the Tai Ping:—

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Her Majesty's gunboat *Bouncer* anchored at Hwang-chow at 11.15 A.M., and I landed with Messrs Hamilton and Ballance. An officer dressed in a long red silk gown, and accompanied by an attendant, who held a light blue satin umbrella of foreign shape over his master's head, received us on the beach, where we were soon surrounded by a crowd of rebels, who came running from the suburbs and the intrenchments at which they were at work to look at us. On mentioning to the officer that I wished to see their principal leader, and should enter the city for that purpose, he simply stated that the leader's name was Chin,<sup>1</sup> and thought that he was absent in a camp outside the city. This officer was not very communicative, but gave the number of the rebels in Hwang-chow at 20,000 or 30,000, and stated that they had taken the city on the 18th instant without fighting. The suburb through which we passed was full of rebels who were busy foraging in the houses, which already bore the appearance of having been gutted, and were entirely deserted by the people; while other parties were engaged in demolishing all the buildings near the city wall, in order to clear the approach to the latter, and to obtain timber for a triple barricade which they were throwing up around the walls. At the gate by which we entered I observed a Proclamation in the name of the Ying Wang assuring the people of protection, and inviting them to come and trade freely with the troops. Another Proclamation addressed to the latter prohibited them from that date from wandering into the villages and plundering the people. A third notice, appended to the heads of two rebels, made known that these men had been executed for robbing the people of their clothes while engaged in collecting grain for the troops. The very

<sup>1</sup> Chin Y-ching, the name of the Ying Wang or 'Heroic King,' also called the 'Four-eyed Dog.' He was the Tai Ping Minister of the Interior and a famous warrior. He was betrayed to the Imperial generals in 1862 and executed.

motley garb of those rebels who surrounded us suggested the idea that many among them must have shared in the same offence; few of them wore any distinguishing dress, and while most of them had allowed their hair to grow, they all appeared to have preserved their tails. In reply to the inquiries I put them, I found them to be men collected from at least six or eight provinces; those from Hu Nan and Hu Peh probably predominated, and the large proportion of young lads attracted our attention.

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Following the main street we soon came to the building which had been the *yamun* of the Prefect, where we found preparations being made to give us a formal reception. We were saluted with music and three guns, and were received by several officers dressed in yellow gowns, who conducted us through two large courts lined with troops, armed for the most part with spears or halberds and carrying a large number of very gaudy flags without any definite emblem. The doors of the principal hall, which usually stand open, were kept closed until we put foot upon the steps, when they were suddenly thrown back, and we saw seated in state, in the middle of the hall, a young-looking man, robed in a yellow satin gown and hood embroidered with dragons. A number of officers, dressed in long yellow gowns with yellow handkerchiefs on their heads, stood by him, but the crowd of men in coolie or menial garb who pressed into the hall interfered somewhat with the theatrical effect that it appeared intended these arrangements should produce. The principal personage seemed at a loss to know how to receive his visitors, and was evidently relieved when I drew a chair from a somewhat distant point to the table at which he was seated, and broke the silence by entering into conversation with him.

He informed me that he was the leader known as the *Ying Wang* (or Heroic Prince); that he was charged from Nanking to relieve Nganking, and had

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undertaken a westward movement with the view of gaining the rear of the Imperial force besieging that city on the western side. So far he had been completely successful. . . .

He had taken three cities, and had accomplished a march of 600 *li* (say 200 miles) in eleven days, and was now in a position either to attack in rear the Imperial force which he had just turned, and draw them off from Nanking, or, postponing that operation, to occupy Hankow, from which he was distant only fifty miles. He added, however, that he felt some hesitation in marching upon the latter place, as he had heard that the English had already established themselves at that port.

I commended his caution in this respect, and advised him not to think of moving upon Hankow, as it was impossible for the insurgents to occupy any emporium at which we were established, without seriously interfering with our commerce, and it was necessary that their movements should be so ordered as not to clash with ours. In this principle he readily acquiesced, and said that two of his leaders who had pushed on beyond Hwang-chow should be directed to take a northerly or north-westerly course, and go towards Ma-ching or Tih-ngan, instead of towards Hankow.<sup>1</sup> . . . Returning to the subject of Hankow, he observed that although he might desist from occupying that place, the other Wangs being uninformed of our position there, might still continue to carry out the above plan, and he suggested that both the English and insurgent interest might be accommodated by our taking Hankow and Wuchang, and allowing him to occupy Hanyang.<sup>2</sup>

I explained to the Ying Wang that our objects in

<sup>1</sup> As Parkes wrote afterwards, 'We arrived just in time. A week later and the rebels would have been [at Hankow] before us, and then, adieu to commerce.'

<sup>2</sup> The beauty of this proposal will be seen when it is remembered that these three places really formed one city.

coming up the Yang-tsze were strictly commercial ; that our recent Treaty with the Imperial Government, with whom we were now at peace, gave us the right of trade upon the Yang-tsze, but as the insurgents utterly destroyed trade wherever they went, they would render this right nugatory if they occupied those ports that had been expressly opened to our commerce. Hankow was one of three cities connected with each other, and forming one great mart, commonly called Hankow. The rebels could not take any one of these cities without destroying the trade of the whole emporium, and hence the necessity of their keeping away altogether. . . . The Ying Wang seemed to concur entirely in what I urged. He computed his own following at 100,000 men, but considered that scarcely half of them had reached Hwang-chow. . . .

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I was favourably impressed with the modest manners and the intelligence of the Ying Wang, and he appeared to be respected by those around him. His literary attainments are probably limited, though his pronunciation of Mandarin is better than that I have hitherto heard spoken by Tai Ping leaders. He gave his age at twenty only, but this is probably five or six years under the mark.

After leaving him we walked round the city. This has long been in a decayed state, and when we visited it on the 10th instant, might have contained, in the small portion of its large area that is built over, including also the suburbs, a population of about 40,000. The whole of these had fled from the place, but every house was now filled with rebels, of whom we saw in all, probably, from 20,000 to 30,000. Working parties swarmed outside the walls, engaged in the construction of the triple row of stakes above mentioned, and in which they had already made considerable progress. Other parties, whom we saw arriving, seemed greatly fatigued with their march, and many of the men threw themselves down in the streets

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and slept without taking the trouble to remove their burdens. These consisted chiefly of clothes and provisions of all kinds, as rice, pork, poultry, etc., obtained on the line of march. Many of them seemed also in a sickly and diseased state, and appeared to be of the mendicant class. Their strength may have been tried by their long and hurried march, or the force may have been joined by the poor and destitute of the country through which they passed. We saw few weapons but knives and spears upon them, and these only on the persons of the parties just arriving. Those who had already been quartered, or were at work on the defences, had already returned their arms (as we were told) into store. They did not seem to possess a single piece of artillery, but had a considerable number of ponies, those in best condition having belonged to the Tartar camp they recently surprised, and they stabled these animals in the houses they themselves occupied. They had no females with them, and stated that they had left all their women at Nanking.

The general appearance of the whole force was that of a mob, or probably that of a Pindaree host; but while no discernible steps were taken for preserving order among them, they all appeared on the best terms with each other; and although engaged in the exciting work of the division of plunder, or of accommodation, no instance of fighting, dispute, or drunkenness came under our observation, nor did we see any of them indulging either in gambling or in smoking tobacco.

One more picture of the rebels may be quoted from Parkes' official report: this time he is describing a visit to Wuhu and Tai-ping on 28th March:—

Report  
*l.c.* p. 30  
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Wuhu, or its remains, lie about a mile and a half from the river. The whole of the intervening space between Ning-kiang and Wuhu formed, prior to the rebel occupation, one continuous town, and owing to its excellent situation, Wuhu has long been known as



one of the principal emporia on the Yang-tsze. The site of its extensive suburbs can now only be traced by brick heaps, and the same may almost be said of the city itself; all the gates and portions of the wall have been removed, but on the south face, which leads into the country, the remnants of a few streets still serve as a market place for the supply of necessaries to a small and ill-conditioned population. Straggling parties of a few men each, coming in from the country, formed the only appearance of troops that we saw. . . . Ponies were plentiful in the camps; and several better-dressed men, probably rebel officers, were riding about armed with foreign pistols and rifles. Beggars were very numerous, and we noticed many of them lying in the streets or roads in a deplorable state of destitution.

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Tai-ping, which is less than twenty miles from Wuhu, presents the same scene as that town. As in the case of the latter, the 'kwan,' or trading town is on the river side, while the site of the city is about two miles inland. It has a larger traffic, however, than Wuhu. I attracted a little more attention in this place, and rebel officers were anxious that I should sell them opium. Tobacco, both here and at Wuhu, was freely sold and smoked. Beggars were as numerous as at Wuhu. I noticed the body of a youth, not ill dressed, and with his face much gashed, lying in a ditch by the roadside, but the circumstance did not appear to attract public attention. I saw also that the people collected the weeds in the ponds for food; and an old man and his wife, who were wandering homeless over the country, seeing that for a few moments he was out of the hearing of other people, told me a piteous tale of his own sufferings, and of the desolation of the country round. He drew little distinction between Imperial troops and rebels—he had suffered alike at the hands of both. . . .

The city of Tai-ping is obliterated. For some time I walked by a high bank without knowing that it was the remains of the city wall. The stone facing of

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the wall, and the bricks of most of the houses within the city, have been used for the construction of walled camps outside. I was told by a rebel that the city was razed to the ground in consequence of the resistance it had offered when first taken in 1853. Prior to its destruction Tai-ping was a place of some note. . . . The area formerly enclosed within the city walls has a circumference of nearly four miles, the whole of which is now a complete blank.

Before returning Parkes had several interviews with the rebel leaders at Nanking, with the object of inducing them to promise not to approach within 100 *li* of Shanghai; it took five days to gain their consent, but at last the promise was given and a general order issued on the authority of the 'Heavenly King.'<sup>1</sup> These visits to the rebel quarters were not encouraging, and the outlook for China seemed dark and stormy. As Parkes himself said :—

To his  
Wife  
Shanghai  
April 7

It is impossible to look far ahead just now in China. Now that the foreign troubles are over, the domestic ones are becoming more serious, and the whole condition of the Chinese Government is so 'sick' that I have grave doubts whether it can recover itself. What is then to become of the country? The Nanking or Yang-tsze rebels, who are and have been for the last eight years preying upon the very vitals of the land, are powerful to destroy but not to construct. They can and are doing much to overturn this dynasty, but I doubt altogether their power to establish another government in the room of that which they destroy. But they are not alone. Other provinces close to Peking are also overrun by formidable swarms of rebels, and I should not wonder to see these men take Peking and then commence war with the rebels of Nanking, or *vice versa*. Again there is a movement, subordinate to neither of the previous ones, going on in the western,

<sup>1</sup> See Parkes' Report, *Parl. Papers*, 1862 [130], Papers relating to the Rebellion in China, p. 10-15.

and again another one in the southern, provinces. Alas, poor China! I do not doubt that eventually the country, if left to itself, will recover itself. It is now in the position of a diseased man whose whole system has to be cleared by violent remedies: they tear him and leave him prostrate; but then there is a reaction, which, if not checked, works out a recovery.

The opening of the Yang-tsze to foreign trade was the most practical result, after the entry of the Legation into Peking, that was gained by the Treaty, and the opportunities thus afforded for commerce were immediately seized by British merchants in spite of the rebels. Writing to Mr Hammond a few months later Parkes comments with satisfaction on the results of the new departure:—

You will be glad to hear that, notwithstanding the disturbed state of the Yang-tsze, there is a fair prospect of a thriving trade being established at Hankow. I found on passing through Shanghai the other day, that about a dozen vessels, nearly all steamers, had loaded for Hankow in the course of six weeks, and I hear of no less than three English companies being formed for the steam navigation of the river. I cordially wish these movements success, for a warm stream of commerce passing through the main artery of this sickly country would do more to reinvigorate it and restore life to its palsied energies than the march of guns and troops. But this flow of expectation in one quarter is attended with a corresponding ebb in another, and thus, while prosperity is looked for at Hankow, stagnation is predicted at Canton. A falling-off of trade in the latter quarter is only the natural result of the opening of new ports, but as long as the country continues in its present disturbed condition, there is a great advantage in our having numerous points of access. When one port does not answer, another will. . . .

The opening of the river ports was a difficult and delicate task. No one, probably, could have succeeded so admirably in its accomplishment as Parkes. Mr

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To E.  
Hammond  
Hongkong  
June 12

1861 Bruce testified to his 'tact and ability,' and Admiral Sir  
ÆT. 33 James Hope reported :—

I cannot conclude without expressing the conviction that to Mr Parkes' thorough knowledge of the language and habits of the Chinese, and to the unwearied zeal with which his aid was on all occasions placed at my disposition, I owe such success as may have attended my communications with the Chinese, whether Imperialists or Tai Ping.

How important this extension of the boundaries of commerce was to England may be judged from the report of the delegates of the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce, published in 1869. It is there stated that whilst the opening of the four new ports in 1843 was a gain of at least £2,000,000 a year in English imports, the opening of the river and other ports in 1861 produced a further increase of £3,500,000 in the export trade of Great Britain.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE END OF THE CANTON COMMISSION

1861

ALMOST immediately after his return to Shanghai from the Yang-tsze expedition in April 1861 Parkes went up to Peking. The Chinese Secretary Mr Wade had been in need of a rest and had applied for leave, and Parkes had been requested to take his place for a time. He had left his old colleague Brooke Robertson as his deputy on the Commission at Canton, and now that the river ports had been successfully opened he was free to assist Mr Bruce at the capital. He was perhaps a little disappointed at not being able to go home after the war. Not that he had the smallest wish to enjoy the popularity which his appearance in London would have secured him at a time when his imprisonment had made him the talk of the town, for he shrank from the process of 'lionization'; but he had been seriously overtaxed with his duties at Canton and the labours and hardships of the campaign, and a quiet year or two in England among his own people would have been a welcome interlude in a career of unmitigated labour. He took his disappointment philosophically, however, and began to discover many excellent reasons why he should remain in China a little longer. Writing to his wife in March, whilst up the Yang-tsze, he pointed out some of those compensations:—

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I want to see whether you have quite recovered your



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To his  
Wife  
March 3

disappointment at my not coming home. It was natural that you should look for me, but I had nothing to complain of in seeing Loch sent. It is quite in keeping with the practice of the service that the Secretary of the Mission (and as Lord Elgin had no Secretary of Embassy he sent his Private Secretary) should be the Treaty bearer, and as the men who serve casually on these missions have no claim whatever to further employment after the mission ends, it is natural that they should enjoy such advantages as their temporary position gives them a sort of right to. But the fact is my work lies for the time out here, and knowing *who* assigns me this work I must not murmur but diligently endeavour to discharge its duties until He sees fit to relieve me from the task. All things considered, however, I have little cause to consider my lot as a hard one, I could scarcely expect to get away until the work of the last few years has been brought to a close, and I am beginning to think that employment in the Mission will be better for me in many respects than at a Consulate, especially at my own Consulate—the only one of course at which I could serve—namely Shanghai. I do not very much like that place—the scenery is so very monotonous and the air so damp. The climate of Peking is I am sure far superior. . . . At headquarters I shall know all that goes on in China, and shall have access to despatches and records—the perusal of which may be [of] considerable use to me, while my everyday work will be more interesting than the humdrum routine of consular employment—the judicial part of which is particularly troublesome. Medhurst will act for me, and this delights him well on his wife's account as well as his own, for the little lady it seems is fond of society and looked forward with horror to a banishment to the new port of Tung-chow [Chefoo].

And again (5th March):—

Wade and Mr Bruce write down delightful accounts of the climate and the winter they have just passed.

Wade says, 'I could not have believed that the thermometer would fall so low as seven degrees without my feeling it more. When there is no wind, I don't know a more charming climate, when there is, as to-day, I know nothing more detestable.' Wade can't bear wind, but we could keep you out of that and only take you out on the beautiful days,—which are indeed beautiful. . . .

You show your wisdom in saying that it is well I did not come home. It might have done me harm in various ways. It certainly would have quite unsettled me, and I now feel very strongly the necessity of pulling up and correcting loose habits of mind and business into which the excitable nature of the occupations of the last few years have thrown me. I feel that I am solid in few respects, and that my character and habits and abilities are very unsatisfactory. If I can correct these in the course of the next year or two, I shall find that having remained at work will have been a great blessing to me. I could then go home in greater comfort and with greater benefit to myself than I should do now, and how I should delight in a calm steady peaceful residence of two whole years at home. This is what I shall try for. Eighteen months at the headquarters of the mission, though it will be eighteen months of hard work, will give me experience and preparation of a better nature than I could have acquired elsewhere in China, and I hope to feel a better man for the training. Only I want you by me to help me to get through. I did not know at the time you were with me how much you helped me, and what a stimulus and support loving words and looks are to a man of limited strength, and who has to fight with his business to enable him to get through it. How sadly from the first have I wanted training and mental discipline. But all may be made good to me if you will undertake the direction of me and I promise not to be the disobedient wayward pupil I was before, while you will be the

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affectionate and patient mentor and guide. I don't know what the Government think of doing for me, and I try not to think about it. They can only reward me by *honours*,<sup>1</sup> and there are difficulties in the way of their doing that. K.C.B.'s are seldom given away to men of my rank. . . . This mail brings me through Lord Elgin this extract of a despatch from Lord J. Russell which may be the reward intended: 'I have had the opportunity of expressing to Mr Loch in person my gratification at his escape, but I must request your Excellency to convey to Mr Parkes the fullest assurance of approval on the part of Her Majesty's Government for the constancy and devotion he exhibited in difficulties and trials of no ordinary description.'

Later on, referring to the position he might take in society after his prominence in the campaign, he wrote:—  
Publicity suits some people but I confess I am not one of them, not because I am more humble than other persons, but because I am not up to the thing—am not sharp enough or with a sufficient growth of intellect. But I am sure that happiness is oftener to be found in quietness than in parade, and I believe that you prefer the former to the latter, and have therefore the same feelings as myself on the subject. To some one quality is given to others another.

His anticipations of work at Peking were doomed to disappointment. Mr Wade was better and decided to remain at his post, and Parkes was not wanted there. Perhaps the Minister was a little afraid of the consequences of employing in the most important office of his Legation (in relation to the Chinese) the man who was indelibly impressed upon the imagination of the native officials as the embodiment of an uncompromising policy of resistance to their favourite pretensions. Parkes did not relish the vacillation which had compelled him to take a troublesome

<sup>1</sup> Parkes (with Loch) had refused to participate in the compensation exacted from the Chinese Government for the prisoners or their families; but eventually accepted a sum offered by the British Government.

journey for nothing and to bring up all his furniture to Tien-tsin, and then sell it at a loss to avoid the cost of moving it again ; but he was glad to have an opportunity of seeing how foreigners were received at Peking, and of revisiting the spots which were associated in his memory with the most critical moments in his life. 'You may imagine,' he told his wife, 'the interest with which I gazed on old sights, the remains of the forts, the point at which I had been twice sent across the river on 21st August, Sinho and Tang-ku, with their respective battle-fields.' As he rode along the old line of march, the country was a mass of snowy peach blossom, where it had formerly been covered with camps and mud. He slept the first night, after his forty-mile ride from Taku, at the temple at Ho-si-wu where Lord Elgin had been quartered. The next day, riding on to Peking, he turned aside and visited alone the scene of his capture by Sangkolinsin's soldiers.

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On the 19th April he was at the capital, explaining to the Prince of Kung the lamentable state of affairs on the Yang-tsze which he had himself witnessed. He found everything quiet at Peking :—

We go about the streets entirely at our ease, attracting no attention from, and being always civilly treated by, the people. This is a great fact. . . . I feel that our work of the last and previous years is not without its fruits, and that we have attained what we have been striving for—immunity from insult from the authorities and people of this land, from the highest to the lowest. The worst is that we have brought the Government into proper order only at a time when it is beginning to crumble to pieces, so that much of our labour may be thrown away and we may soon have to indoctrinate another party.

To his  
Wife  
Peking  
April 21

There was a very general impression at that time that the dynasty of the Manchus was doomed ; and certainly the persistent refusal of the Emperor to return to Peking and take the lead in repressing the rebellion looked like inviting his own destruction.

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Mr Bruce received Parkes with many encomiums on his work in opening the river ports, and Mr Wade was of course delighted to welcome his old comrade. But the general aspect of the Legation did not satisfy the visitor. He found its chief too easy-going and indolent, and more disposed to play his daily rubber at the Bourboulons than to impress the dignity of his office upon the Chinese. The Legation struck him as badly managed, the establishment 'dirty and ill dressed,' and the whole effect 'mean.' The duties of the Chinese Secretary did not attract him, and he was not sorry that he had not to perform them. In spite of the interest he took in riding about Peking and the neighbourhood, he was glad to leave. If he stayed in China it was for work, not for amusement.

On his way back to Shanghai he stopped at Chefoo, where he indulged his love of nature :—

To his  
Wife  
Yellow  
Sea, June 1

I had a nice walk over some hills and lay down for half an hour under some trees, enjoying a beautiful view of hills,—rather too barren, perhaps, but wooded in some parts where they sloped gradually into the sea, which was blue and calm and beautiful. And my thoughts were of the same happy peaceful nature and were directed mainly towards one who will, I think, be able to guess the most of them when she receives the little bit of ugly weed which I enclose. That weed, however, was pretty and bright enough when I picked it, and caused a gleam of joy to shoot up in my dull old mind as I saw its little bright spark of blue shining among the emerald leaves, and I knew that it was a *forget-me-not*. I was quite struck with the number of wild flowers,—violets, crowsfoot, vetch, strawberries, the latter having a delicious scent, and others that I cannot name, groundsel, docks, and other weeds, which being *home* weeds are dearer to the sight than foreign flowers. At Peking, too, we have a vegetation that is much akin to our own, and many wild flowers also. I went twice to hills about twelve miles from the city, and derived as much delight from this particular, as from the charm of



the general view. The blue iris is a very common flower, and in the place of cowslips we have oxlips, a flower of the same character but of a brownish hue instead of bright yellow. Dandelions and thistles are plentiful, but I discovered nothing like a daisy or buttercup, for which I would have given any money. The country around Peking and between Peking and Tien-tsin is in some parts not at all unlike park scenery at home, in consequence of the fondness of the people for large burial places, and the care they take to have these surrounded with trees. It was indeed a relief to gaze upon country and vegetation which, if not the same as our own, was a vast improvement upon that tropical muddy paddy flat country either of Canton or Shanghai. And pleasant it was to see people ploughing in the fields or harrowing or digging, to see thatched cottages, and pieces of scrub or copse.

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He had no sooner arrived at Shanghai in June than he had again to go up to Nanking and talk to 'twenty ignorant, arrogant, stiff-necked, and stupid rebel leaders' to prevent them attacking the British settlements. At length he got back to his old yamun at Canton, where he was much wanted, and felt happier in the regular routine of his work—always, however, keeping his eyes fixed on the longed-for return to England. In July he was cheered by a visit from his brother-in-law Mr Lockhart, who was then on his way out to open the hospital at Peking, which was destined to a remarkable success. Mr Lockhart found him—after ten years' separation—

Well and cheerful—he has his old laugh and chuckle that you remember so well. He is a dear fellow. . . . He will finish his work here in October, and (God willing) will then arrange his affairs in China, go to Shanghai to put his work to rights there, and then hopes to go to England. . . . He needs a change. He is well, but he feels all his work, and ought to be relieved from all the anxiety and fret of perpetual labour. He is hearty, eager and active in his work,

W. Lockhart to Mrs Lockhart Canton July 26

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but the everlasting strain on him will do harm if kept up too long. . . . At present the office work he has is not heavy, but it is a very responsible office, and this he feels. . . . He and I talk and talk and talk, as you may suppose, and make the most of our time in every way.

Just before my arrival there was a business, with the Pwanyu, a superior officer in the Canton Government. He has charge of the prisons, out of one of which some men tried to escape. They were seized and cruelly beaten, and their legs were broken with a club. This became known to the Commissioners, who had decreed again and again that they did not permit torture in the Chinese prisons. So the Pwanyu was brought before them and sentenced to forty days' imprisonment, which is now being carried out. . . . The step was a necessary one.

It is a great thing to wander in the city of Canton without let or hindrance. The people do not call names, but are civil and as far as can be seen do not seem malicious. After all that was said of the Canton people, they are as quiet and well-behaved as the people of Shanghai. We can go into the shops and chat with the people, who are glad to see us. The shops are very fine, the streets are full of business, and all work is at its full swing. The suburbs are much burned, but in the city, except in certain parts, trade and work are in full progress. Shameen, the new site for the factories, is a fine place. This is in great degree Harry's work. A portion of the river bank has been cleared, filled up with sand that is raised well from the water; a heavy stone river wall built about five or six feet above high water; and this makes a beautiful site for the foreign buildings. This great work is just finished, and the lots of ground are to be sold immediately to the foreign merchants, and houses built.

Harry and I are like two schoolboys, rejoicing over each other immensely. We have talked over heaps of

things and have always much to say to each other. . . .  
 He is greatly respected here: he is felt to be a power  
 in himself—an intelligent power—and he has been  
 made the instrument of great good to this people. . . .  
 He is truly one to be proud of and to rejoice in.

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One great object of Parkes' anxiety was realized in  
 September when the sale of the Shameen site took  
 place:—

The grand Shameen sale has come off. The tendency  
 on the part of the merchants has been to depreciate  
 this position, and it appeared uncertain therefore  
 whether they would care to reimburse the Government  
 for the cost of preparing the site for them; and of  
 course I felt that if none or only a limited use were  
 made of the site much time and trouble on my part  
 would have been thrown away. There is no doubt  
 that the opening of the Yang-tsze will tell in some  
 degree unfavourably on Canton; Hankow, the chief  
 Yang-tsze port, having hitherto been supplied from  
 Canton and sent the produce, which it will now sell to  
 our people on the spot, to this port. We gave nearly  
 six weeks' notice of sale, and when the time came the  
 work was only just completed. To effect this I had  
 been obliged to hurry and worry the contractor, who  
 had fallen all behindhand, in consequence, as he said,  
 of heavy rain, but really I believe because I have been  
 so much absent from Canton (I mean in the North);  
 and during the last few days he had about 600  
 men at work both night and day.

To his  
 Wife  
 Canton  
 Sept. 8

On the 2nd, a *White Cloud* [steamer] day, all the  
 merchants came trooping up from Hongkong, all more  
 or less in a grumbling mood—a sign to my mind that  
 they were going to buy, as it is a peculiarity of John  
 Bull to growl when he is about to pay out money. The  
 site is divided into eighty-two lots. Robertson has re-  
 served no less than six for the Consulate and consular  
 officers and offices, and one for a Church, so we had  
 seventy-five to put up. Our expenditure had amounted

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to 280,000 dollars, say nearly £70,000, and this we wanted to recover by the sale. The auction came off in the hut which I have built on Shameen. . . . There the lieges assembled, and we were glad to see that the bidding became fast and furious, and the end of the first day's sale showed a very good result. The Parsees bid right royally against our first-class merchants for front lots, which were put up at four thousand dollars, and realized five, six, seven, and eight thousand dollars. For back lots however we did not get any bids. The sale closed on the second day when we had sold fifty-five lots for 248,000 dollars, leaving a balance of 32,000 dollars still wanting, but against this we have twenty lots valued at double that sum still remaining, over and above the six Consulate lots and the Church lot, all of which will thus be obtained gratis. I have no doubt that the remaining twenty lots will be eventually sold, and it is an advantage to have some ground still on hand for the supply of future wants.

Thus Shameen may now be considered a complete success, and you will understand the satisfaction I feel that such is the case. Mr Bruce will doubtless be well pleased, for he has hitherto been left to sustain the responsibility of the scheme,—the Government, not knowing how the project would turn out and probably not being over well pleased to see Government money spent upon it, having never yet given him a word of encouragement or approval. However, now I daresay they will tell Mr Bruce that they are satisfied with his proceedings in the matter. I have still a few accounts to wind up and then Shameen will be entirely off my hand, and on Robertson's.

Important news has reached me to-day. . . . It is nothing less than the death of the Emperor of China. To-morrow I hope I may receive some letters from Peking that may enable me to judge of the effect this event is likely to produce on the capital. It may lead

either to the renovation or the downfall of the present Government. I am inclined to take the brighter view, for we have long felt that the late Emperor and the clique of bad favourites by whom he was surrounded stood in the way of all improvement, and that this could not be looked for while he remained alive and they in power. If their influence has died with their late sovereign, we may hope that all will go well. It does not appear to be known who will succeed the Emperor, but as his son is very young (only seven years of age) one of his brothers will probably receive the crown,—say the Prince of Kung or another one who was with the Emperor at Jehol. It is to be hoped that it will be the former one, and that the true statesmen of the country who have been keeping in the background for years past will now step forward and assert their right to aid in the Government, in the place of those wretched favourites above alluded to,—wretches who hearing that the Prince of Kung was in negotiation with Lord Elgin in October last sent orders for the *execution* of all the prisoners in the hope of thereby extinguishing all chance of that accommodation being effected [to] which they were opposed. A merciful Providence so willed it, however, that this bloody order did not reach Peking until after we were liberated, or I should probably not be writing you this note of the circumstance.

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I went in and told [Viceroy] Laou of the news. It agitated him a great deal at first, which is remarkable as the Chinese generally conceal all show of feeling ; but he also is inclined to take a hopeful view of the event and to believe that it will tell to the advantage of the country. He has a great admiration for the Empress, who from his account must be a woman of great energy and courage. When our army was approaching Peking she opposed the flight of the Emperor, and, when he fled, staid behind in Peking and was there until we quitted it. Then she started off to Tartary (Jehol) to



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prevail on the Emperor to return ; but not succeeding, she insisted upon bringing her son, the heir apparent, back with her to Peking, where both of them now are. Instances have been known in the history of China of the throne being given to an infant with the Queen-Mother acting as Regent. In this case the Empress appears well able to fill such a post, but with brothers of the late Emperor at hand it is not probable that it will devolve upon her. What a grand thing a noble woman is ! Here is the Empress of China, the Queen of England, and another queen that I could mention, who unlike the two others has certainly a very very small realm to rule over, but yet governs it in a manner that all other queens of affection might take pattern by. I would far rather stand in her court just now than in that of the other two.

I was not sorry to get back from Hongkong. Holidays by oneself . . . one soon gets tired of, and as quarters I prefer my little yamun home to any of the mercantile mansions. Its snug cottage character, or more probably its associations, endear the odd little house to me, although I shall be very glad when the day comes for me to take a final adieu of it, provided always that my head be then turned homewards.

He entertained a warm liking for the Governor of the Colony, and wrote that 'Lady Robinson has done a great deal to improve the sociability of the Hongkong people, and Government House presents a very different sight in these days to what it did formerly ;' but happy as he was among a few congenial friends, Parkes was not at his best in general society, spoke little, and was ill equipped with the resources of small-talk. He used to devote himself unselfishly to the entertainment of neglected wall-flowers, and many an old lady sitting out in the cold had a grateful memory of his attention. Formal society 'bored' him, as they must a man whose whole soul is in his work, and whose interests are centred in his own immediate duties.

One subject, then much discussed at Hongkong, had a great attraction for him. He was continually meeting people who had been visiting Japan—then almost an unknown country to Englishmen—and their reports of the magnificent scenery, the delicious climate, the extraordinary ‘feudal’ system among the clans, increased his longing to see the enchanted land of Dai Nippon. Sir Hope and Lady Grant brought back a glowing account of their experiences; and Laurence Oliphant, whom Parkes had seen at Shanghai in June on his way out to Japan, was at Hongkong in the autumn, after the attack on the Legation which nearly cost him his life. ‘I won’t attempt to repeat what he has told me,’ wrote Parkes to his wife (11th September), whilst announcing Oliphant’s intention of going to see her in London:—

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It would be like telling the plot of a novel to one about to read it; and indeed it is almost impossible to convey in writing all that he can say of the peculiar condition of affairs. I am glad to say that we need have no apprehensions about Alcock’s safety. He has determined to retire to Yokohama until a fortified residence for the Minister which the Japanese Government are now building shall be completed, so that we need not think of him as being in danger. It is quite clear to my mind that it is a mistake for European nations to attempt to conduct diplomatic relations with a Government of such an unusual nature as that of Japan in the form and manner that they would do in Europe, or even in China, which is at all events a *centralized* Government with a plain and palpable head to it, and in which you are able to tell where the responsibility lies. In Japan, on the other hand, what with their spiritual Emperor and secular Emperor and independent princes and councils and regents, etc., it is most difficult to know where the governing power is vested, and who is responsible for the despatch of business, for protection and redress, or anything else you may be in need of.

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Alcock has gone to work exactly as he would have done in China, and representing as he does at least *three-fourths* of the foreign interests in Japan, the Japanese look upon him, the British Minister, as the embodiment of the foreign element, against which, it appears, the whole court of the spiritual Emperor and most of the independent nobles are violently opposed. Oliphant is quite confident that we must cease, for a time at least, to be the thorn in the side of the Japanese that foreigners and foreign treaties have been during the last three years; that they, the Japanese, must be allowed time to digest these treaties, which were crammed down their throats too hastily in the first instance and which are evidently disagreeing with them;—that, in a word, we must slack the strain, or the string of our connexion with them will snap. . . .

Alcock is determined to leave in the spring. . . . Oliphant asked if I aimed at the appointment and I owned that I had made up my mind to *ask* the Government for nothing; that to be grasping and striving for appointments was not the way to secure one's true happiness; and that I should prefer that any course of duty I might have to undertake should be *given* to me by the Government, and not be of my own seeking. . . . I think Oliphant himself would not hesitate to accept the appointment if the Government offered it to him; indeed he told me himself that he would not do so, because it would look as if he were refusing a post of danger, and on the other hand the preferment is such that he could not despise. But Lady Oliphant, I think, will be very averse to his coming out again. For myself, I think he would be the right man in the right place. He is very able and has already mastered a most complicated and difficult subject.

Parkes wrote a good deal more on the subject, and his letters give one the impression that he would like to be offered the post of Minister in Japan, but that he would rather wait a little, in order to study the various Euro-

pean questions which must come to the front in the new post. He was resolved not to move in the matter himself, and he writes of Oliphant, and Brooke Robertson, and other possible candidates without the slightest tinge of jealousy. He was delighted to see honours bestowed upon the men amongst whom he had served, and nothing pleased him more than to be one of the first to congratulate Mr Wade on his C.B. in 1861. He always saw the best of his colleagues' characters and abilities; and if he found them wanting, he did not speak of it. Four years later he was able to test his theories about Japanese policy in his own Legation at Yedo.

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The great work of the autumn of 1861 was the evacuation of Canton. Lord Elgin had urged the withdrawal of our troops at the earliest practicable moment; but the French were decidedly averse to relaxing their hold, and the European community in China was generally desponding as to the results of leaving Canton to the mercy of the Tai Ping rebels.

People are all prophesying the downfall of Canton directly the troops are removed; but whether this be the result or not—and it is not likely to occur immediately—it is impossible for our Government to go on garrisoning Canton, not for purposes of our own, but for the defence of the Chinese. We have long ago attained all the objects we originally had in taking the place, and now the sooner we get out of it the better, before fresh complications arise. One source of apprehension—viz. that the French when once they had an army in China would not readily withdraw—promises to be removed. They have already had to call off nearly all their troops to reinforce their expedition in Cochin China, and yet they have not sufficient force there to subdue the Cochin Chinese, and are now resting on their arms there, waiting fresh orders from France. Admiral Page, writing from Saigon, says that their only occupation lies in counting the sick, the dying, and the dead. They have only a couple of hundred

To his  
Wife  
June 12

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men at Canton and less than a thousand at Tien-tsin, and these will be removed in the course of a few months I should think. The alliance in this part of the world will then have terminated, which is also desirable.

In October the allies left Canton:—

✓  
To his  
Wife  
Canton  
Oct. 13

The evacuation is going on but will not be completed before the 21st inst. Of course I could not leave in the middle of it, as this is the time in which one is most wanted—not in embarking troops but in winding up the affairs of the Commission. All sorts of matters crowd in always at such a moment and give plenty to be done. Then there is private packing and the chief of nuisances—the looking over and destruction of papers. I have been therefore very busy since I last wrote, besides having had a troublesome matter on hand—another case of the kidnapping of Chinese at a remote point on the South Coast in which French and Peruvians are concerned, and we also, because they brought their cargo of slaves into Hongkong. The Hongkong authorities acted very well, seized the ship and did what they could to proceed against the foreigners. But the grave offences were committed out of our jurisdiction and we could not therefore act very decidedly in the matter. However the French came forward and declared their readiness to prosecute their men, the Peruvians are still on Sir H. Robinson's hands, and the 240 poor kidnapped Chinese have been given over to Laou and sent back to their homes. The atrocities committed in this matter come up to anything we have heard of the horrors of the slave trade. But with foreigners—and those foreigners our sensitive allies—the firm handling of such questions, when you have only a limited right of interference, becomes a delicate and difficult matter. However I believe enough has been done to break up said slave trade.

If I live a few days more, I shall be away from



Canton and the long and troublesome and at times perilous service that I have been engaged on will be at an end. How much cause have I for gratitude for the great mercies vouchsafed to me during this period—how much cause to regret that the talents and time and opportunities given to my charge have not been better improved. Often do I find myself wishing that I was not in official employ and that I had more time and quiet at my own disposal;—but all these are false ideas. Whatever position we are placed in in the world we have opportunity sufficient, if we choose to seek it, to love God and become wise unto salvation; and probably a life of ease and retirement is less conducive to earnest Christian work than one of toil and harass. Still I may rejoice in the opportunity now afforded me of going home and taking a retrospect of the past that ought to be useful for the future. How much there is to correct, and shall I ever be able to command strength to do it? With me both mind and heart are wofully ill-disciplined—my life consequently ill-lived and my work unsatisfactorily performed. And when bad habits are of long growth they are not very easily amended.

The following is from the official account of the evacuation of Canton on the 21st October 1861:—

The evacuation of Canton was completed on the 21st instant, and after three years and ten months of occupation by foreign troops, the authority of the Chinese is once more supreme in the city. Nearly all the troops and stores having been previously removed, the ceremonies attending the restoration of the city into the hands of the native authorities commenced on the morning of the 19th, when all the chief authorities, headed by the Viceroy, called at the Allied Commissioners' yamun to take leave of the Commanders and Commissioners. They were received in state, with English and French guards of honour and the band of Her Majesty's 99th Regiment, together with salutes

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from a battery of Royal Artillery. . . . The Viceroy expressed his gratification at the mark of confidence displayed by the contemplated rendition of Canton, together with his regrets at the severance of ties cemented during several years of friendly intercourse ; and after some conversation the authorities withdrew, shaking hands with the assembled officers. In the afternoon the visit was returned, the Allied Commanders and Commissioners, with their suites, proceeding to the Viceroy's yamun, the courtyard of which was lined with the troops of his brigade of guards ; and in his reception-hall they found not only the authorities assembled, but also a collation in the European style laid out with the utmost elegance. . . .

The final ceremonies immediately preceding the evacuation commenced at 7 A.M. on Monday the 21st instant, when the Chinese authorities proceeded to the Heights, for the purpose of accepting the formal rendition of the city. After all had assembled, a battery of Chinese artillery saluted the allied flags with twenty-one guns, which were returned by Captain Twiss's battery, under Lieutenant Hannen ; and as the last shot resounded the flags of England and France were lowered from the pinnacle they have occupied since 1857 ; and the Commanders, rising, announced to the Viceroy that the occupation of Canton had ceased, and that from that moment they resigned into his hands the civil and military government of Canton. In reply, the Viceroy, rising with all his suite, expressed with evident feeling his gratitude for the confidence shown in the good intentions of his Government, and his conviction that friendly feelings between the three nations must be cemented from that hour.

The scene at this moment was decidedly impressive, and worthy of an historical event such as it signaled. The long line of the Chinese authorities, in their half-mourning garments of black serge, presented, it is true, a sombre appearance, but this was relieved by the

glitter of the naval and military uniforms, occupying the opposite side of the late Garrison Church, which had been fitted up for the ceremony of the day. While the formal rendition was taking place, the Chinese banner, of yellow silk decorated with an Imperial dragon, was hoisted from the English flag-staffs on the Heights and at the landing-place, as well as at the mainmast-head of Her Majesty's ship *Sphinx*, from which vessel a royal salute to the Chinese flag was fired, in response to which the Imperial junks likewise fired twenty-one guns. The native authorities hereupon left the Heights to prepare to receive the Allied Officials at the place of embarkation. . . . While the troops, artillery, etc., were embarking, the band of the 99th Regiment played its last airs in Canton, and the native authorities, the Commanders, and Commissioners, took farewell of each other. The Viceroy was understood to say that he had no sincerer wish than that he might be appointed Ambassador to England and France, in order that he might not only see those countries, but also contribute further to that good understanding which so happily prevailed, and of which the cloudless weather might be considered as both typical and as a striking mark of Heaven's approbation.

Parkes' despatch on taking leave of his Commissioner-ship deserves to be quoted :—

I have the honour to report, for the information of Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that the evacuation of Canton by the allied troops was completed on the 21st instant, and that on that morning possession of the city was restored to the Chinese authorities.

To E.  
Hammond  
Canton  
Oct. 27

The arrangements for this event had been previously announced to the Chinese in the proclamation issued by the Tartar General-in-Chief, the Viceroy of the two Kwang provinces, and the Governor of the Province of Kwang-tung, . . . recording in a few true and forcible words the manner in which the occupation

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has been conducted, and the good effects resulting from it. It is a well-merited tribute to the behaviour both of the allied troops and the Chinese population, and affords evidence of the necessity and the success of a measure which is now happily terminated.

A remarkable proof of the good feeling that has been maintained between the allied troops and the people may be seen in the fact that during the three years and ten months that the occupation continued, only two instances occurred in which attempts to take life were committed by the Chinese upon our men. I except, of course, from this general statement the frequent attacks made by hired assassins during the hostilities of the summer of 1858, when, following their usual mode of treacherous and cowardly warfare, the Chinese Government set a price, rising in the case of certain individuals to an immense sum, on the head of every man or subject of the allies. It should also be noticed, as a proof of the mildness of the military rule of the latter, that the two offenders in the instances above mentioned were the only Chinese who suffered capital punishment at our hands during the whole period of the occupation.

The same respect evinced towards the troops has been likewise shown by the Chinese towards all foreigners. Prior to the occupation, the foreigner passed through the streets of the suburbs only—for, as is well known, within the city he was not allowed to set his foot—at the risk of being insulted, or assailed with stones and the vilest invective. This tone and language was laid aside from the moment of the capture of the city: and the single foreigner may now walk about its streets or suburbs, or penetrate, as many have done, into remote parts of the province, with the same degree of security as is enjoyed at those other ports where the Chinese authorities have insisted on proper behaviour on the part of the people, or have not incited them to oppose or annoy the foreigner. The occupation has at



least proved that most of the professedly popular opposition which we encountered at Canton prior to its capture was the effect of official instigation, and as the political end which the mandarins then attempted to serve no longer exists, we may hope that any repetition of this double-dealing on their part will not be experienced.

Much of the credit of the present friendly disposition of the people is due to the orderly behaviour and the efficiency of the allied police, five-sixths of whom were taken from the British force. To these men the people would run for aid and protection under all circumstances, and applications for the interference of the Allied Commissioners in strictly native matters, which in most cases were reserved for the action of the Chinese tribunals, were also constantly pressed with the same degree of eagerness. The confidence of the people in a strong and inoppressive Government, added to their own governable character, materially facilitated the task of maintaining order in a vast and most intricate city, containing a population of upwards of 1,000,000 inhabitants.

The satisfactory change in the conduct of the authorities and people towards foreigners, and the consequently improved position of the latter, is doubtless the principal result of the occupation, and the one that was most to be desired; but other monuments of the event will remain in the Shameen site, and the introduction of an organized system of emigration. The former work has set at rest a long-vexed question which has formed an element in many of the old Canton misunderstandings. The community have been provided with most commodious building ground, obtained without any encroachment on the public or private interests of the Chinese, at an outlay proportioned, it is true, to the great extent of the accommodation obtained, but which, although undertaken, in the first instance, on Government responsibility, has already been nearly repaid by the community. The latter



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measure, emigration, being now confirmed by Treaty, has secured a new and unlimited supply of labour for the British West Indian and other Colonies, and the present is now the third year in which advantage has been taken of the arrangement.

Earl Russell's official approval of Parkes' management of the duties of Commissioner was conveyed to Mr Bruce (Dec. 30) in the following terms :—

I have received from Mr Parkes a despatch reporting the termination of his duties as one of the Allied Commissioners for the government of the city of Canton, and I have to instruct you to convey to Mr Parkes Her Majesty's entire approbation of the tact, judgment, and ability which he has shown during the whole period that he has acted as British Commissioner.

So ended a memorable epoch, not only in Parkes' life, but in the history of our relations with the Chinese. The establishment of the Commission was a risky experiment, but it had proved a signal success ; it had made the Cantonese familiar with British methods of government, and, contrary to the adage, familiarity had bred respect and even esteem. That this was mainly due to Harry Parkes no one who knows anything about the working of the Commission will doubt. He in fact was the Commission. His British colleague followed his lead, and his French colleague as often as not tried to thwart him : but neither had much influence in the result. Whatever was done was done by Parkes. His untiring energy, his attention to details, and above all his inflexible justice and intimate knowledge of the people with whom he had to deal, accomplished the extraordinary success which attended the administration of a great Chinese city under European influence.

At last the longed-for homeward journey was at hand. He had applied for leave, on medical certificate, in August, being really worn out with his work, and had strenuously resisted the invitation to take Mr Wade's place which was once more offered to him. He would go home, and

nothing short of a command would induce him to become temporary Chinese Secretary at Peking. Everything was prepared, and farewells were being said, when he was suddenly ordered up to Shanghai on pressing business connected with the rebellion. He was naturally annoyed at being suddenly obliged to change his plans; but of course he went north.

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I am wanted at Shanghai or Nanking to help the Admiral in conducting a negotiation which has for its object to get rebels and Imperialists to agree to the neutrality of the consular ports. . . . How happily and lightly had the few last days at Canton passed with me! Every day brought me so much nearer to the time of embarkation, and though I had to work hard to get everything finished I saw that I should be able to manage in the end and get away by the 1st November mail. I had to ask the Naval Authorities for a gun-boat, and in that little craft I bid adieu to Canton on the 27th, last Sunday. I crossed to Honan in the morning and attended Mr Gray's church, then said good-bye to my last friends, had tiffin, and got away at half-past two. How thankful I felt to see the last of Canton, to pass under the portals of those old city gates for the last time. Mr Robertson<sup>1</sup> was with me and offered the remark that I ought indeed to be grateful to God for having brought me safely through the occupation. My heart was indeed light—I was homeward bound. Work was done, my long-wished-for holiday had begun! . . . The next day I came on here, arrived at one o'clock, landed, and found these letters from the Admiral and Mr Bruce. My first impulse was to tear them up, and it was some time before I could bring myself to think calmly on the subject and decide how I would act.

To his  
Wife  
Hongkong  
Oct. 30

On his arrival at Shanghai he received the Admiral's instructions:—

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Brooke Robertson: Parkes' old colleague at Shanghai in 1848, and the first British Consul to hoist his flag at the Commissioners' yamun, now the Consulate, *within* the city of Canton.

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Shanghai  
Nov. 23

I have found as I expected that the instructions sent here by the Admiral are such as I will not undertake and be responsible for at the same time, and so I cannot get to work until he arrives. . . . Corbett handed me an official letter from the Admiral empowering me to proceed at once to Nanking and deliver certain peremptory demands to the rebels, requiring them not to approach within thirty miles of any of the consular ports, and threatening them with force if they refused to comply. If the Government at home have determined to come to an issue with the rebels and crush the movement this is just the way to get up a cause of quarrel. But until I am informed that such is the case, and feel assured that I am carrying out the wishes of the Government, I will not give the world the chance of condemning me for bringing about a war with the rebels, now that that with the Chinese Government has been terminated. . . . We shall not be alone in the matter; the French are to join, and that is another reason for my acting only in the presence of a superior officer, as all sorts of questions arise when you have foreign colleagues. . . .

We have very important news from Peking. A marvellous *coup d'état* has been executed by Prince Kung's party and the Empress-Dowager. For several years prior to his death, the late Emperor had been in the hands of a set of men of very profligate character who did all they could to ruin their misguided sovereign and their country. We had experience of their vicious counsel in the affair of the Taku forts of 1859 and the war which followed last year. The leading men of this party were Tsai Yuen (or Prince of I), Twanhwa (or Prince of Ching), and Sushun, brother of the latter, but who held no princely rank. The one first named was sent to Tung-chow when the allied armies were marching on that place, and planned that treachery which resulted in the capture of myself and party. After their last defeat they fled from Peking as you know, carrying off the Emperor to Jehol; the Empress, who is now acting

so decidedly, protested against the Emperor's flight, and failing to persuade him, remained herself at Peking. She must indeed be a noble woman, and it only shows what you [women] can do when you get a fair chance. Having carried the Emperor away into Tartary and rendered him almost insensible by ministering only to his dissipated habits, they easily succeeded in keeping all better influences away from him, and the opposite party headed by the Prince of Kung were unable to effect the Emperor's return, which they were striving to bring about when I was at Peking.

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In the end he died ; and now it would appear from the State papers just published that the Council of Administration, consisting of the above three and five others, was *self-elected*, and not appointed by the Emperor as they gave out. One story is that the Emperor, stung with remorse when he found himself on his deathbed, confided to the Empress, and to her alone, at his last moments, a plan for ridding the throne and the country of these traitors. However that may be, the Empress and the Prince of Kung, or both together, persuaded the council of eight to bring the young Emperor to Peking, and as soon as they arrived (the peace party being strong at the capital, while the war party was all-powerful in Tartary) they were all arrested. A week sufficed to try them all ; the three were sentenced to death—one, Sushun, in the common market-place, the two others (including my capturer) by their own hand,—while the others have been degraded or banished. The Prince of Kung being himself only a young man of thirty-one has probably had to exert himself in the matter more than he wished, and had been urged to take this grand measure by the party of which he was the head, all of whom probably did not feel their own heads safe so long as the other party were in power. The man who has probably had most to do in the matter is Wanseang, a very promising statesman of



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about eight-and-forty, of whom I have seen a good deal during both the visits I paid to Peking.

If the Prince of Kung and his advisers will now use their power aright a new era may dawn upon this distracted land. Vigour on the part of the Government is all that is wanting to restore order. The rebellion owes its protracted existence solely to the weakness of the Government, for it is in no respect a popular movement and does not carry with it the sympathies of the people. This year has been a disastrous year for the rebels, as the last was for the Government. They are very troublesome in this neighbourhood just now, because it is necessary that they should make some places their prey, and Government forces to the westward are pressing them just now towards the coast. Consequently they have taken an important city near to Ningpo and have threatened the latter place also. Here within sight of Shanghai we can see villages burning, but whether these are small marauders or the principal rebels it is difficult to say. They have also threatened to attack Shanghai, but this threat does not occasion alarm. It is time certainly that we should be relieved from such a state of things, and the Admiral's expedition to Nanking advances us a step on towards that intervention which we have long tried to keep clear of, but in which I doubt not we shall eventually have to engage.

Mr Lockhart was actually a bystander at the execution of Sushun, lately the most powerful Minister in China. The condemned man had brushed past him as he walked to his death :

To W.  
Lockhart  
Shanghai  
Nov. 22

How marvellous [wrote Parkes] that any foreigner, and *you* that foreigner, should have witnessed such a scene. . . . Surely we may trace the finger of God in these events, and trust that they augur well for the future of China. I am sure that they will infuse new vigour into the provincial authorities, if at least they see that the Prince of Kung proves equal to the situation, and



with new vigour and less corruption we yet may see peace or order return to this poor torn country.

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The Admiral arrived on 7th December, and entirely approved of Parkes' decision to wait for him. He had really asked him to go on alone only to save him further delay, and was glad to find he had not taken advantage of the permission. He now determined to send him up to Ningpo on the *Scout* to see what the rebels were about, but not to protect the place.

His plan [wrote Parkes], which I think is the right one, is now to maintain the present position of affairs until the Government shall have time to consider the whole question, and the information I shall obtain and take home will perhaps be of good use to them in cabling their determination as to the future. At Ningpo I shall learn all I can as to the rebel forces, and the manner they are behaving, etc. Any influence that we are to exert there is to be moral only, and we are to employ no force against the rebels. If they can be persuaded to keep away from the place, well and good, but that is not at all likely. Their conduct will turn the scales on one side or the other: either we shall have to decide on going against them in the protection of our own interests, and because they prove themselves to be simply brigands; or else we shall continue neutral, because their behaviour will be good and civilized enough to allow of this.

To his  
Wife  
Shanghai  
Dec. 7

Before Parkes reached Ningpo on the 9th December the city had fallen. According to the detailed report<sup>1</sup> which he drew up for Admiral Hope after several lengthy interviews with the rebel leaders, the population had fled on the approach of the Tai Ping, who had behaved with moderation, and the capture had been attended with the loss of scarcely more than twenty lives. He adds:—

The Ningpo rebels have shown the utmost desire to be on friendly terms with foreigners. Outside the south gate, which formed the point of attack, stands

<sup>1</sup> *Parl. Papers*, 1862 [130], Rebellion in China, p. 92-96.

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the establishment of the Sisters of Charity, which, if occupied, would form excellent cover for an assaulting force, as its upper windows commanded the city walls; yet, although they crouched underneath its enclosures, as they collected for their rush on the gate, they did not trespass for a moment within the premises. Another large Roman Catholic establishment was one of the first buildings they had to pass, as they poured into the city flushed and excited with their success, but they only stopped to welcome a small knot of foreigners who were standing underneath the porch, and to charge their people to offer them no harm. Roman Catholics and Protestants they hailed indiscriminately, as being of the same religion and fraternity as themselves.

To his  
Wife  
Shanghai  
Dec. 22

As I foresaw before I left Hongkong, the Admiral is not prepared to conduct this rebel question to an issue, and therefore can do very little in it. He will make some propositions to the rebels, and if they don't choose to accept them he must put up with a refusal. It is a mistake I think going to them at all under such circumstances. . . . The position of affairs is curious just now. If we did not protect the place [Shanghai] it would be taken by rebels to-morrow. This capture of Ningpo will excite some attention. Hitherto the rebels had kept away from Treaty ports, and if we are to prevent Shanghai falling into their hands, some more efficient arrangements than those made just now will have to be entered into.

At last he was free to depart, and January 1862 found him aboard the *Columbian* on his way home.

## CHAPTER XX

### SHANGHAI

1864-1865

THE two years' leave passed rapidly in a whirl of visits, and public and private engagements. Parkes returned to England a marked man, and his distinction involved the usual social penalties. Receptions and meetings of all descriptions, from Lord Palmerston's dinners and the Lord Mayor's banquets, to the assemblies of learned societies and the delivery of a lecture at Leeds, occupied his time. He was *bien vu* in society, and at the Athenæum Club, to which he had been elected by the Committee *honoris causa* in 1858, he met a number of the people he most cared to see. He went a good deal to country houses, and his energy found its exercise in two tours in Scotland and one in Switzerland, where he revisited the scenes that had impressed his imagination in 1850, and made the ascent of Mont Blanc. He joined the 3rd Middlesex Volunteers, and attended the Easter Monday Review at Brighton in 1863. But all this restless activity was not good for his health. He had come home in a nervous shattered condition, and repose was what he needed. His wife's health was also a source of anxiety, and his first son (and third child), born in November 1862, began life in a diffident and tentative manner which excited his parents' constant apprehension. Altogether, though he enjoyed much domestic happiness

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in the house he took at Hampstead, he did not get the rest and quiet he needed, and when he set sail for China in January 1864, his friends felt that he was scarcely equal to the strain of heavy office work.

He returned to Shanghai with an added honour. In May 1862 he had been promoted to be a Knight Commander of the Bath. He wrote that the honour quite took him by surprise: he had not solicited it, directly or indirectly, and had imagined that it was most improbable that he should be thus distinguished when his old chief Mr Alcock and his present chief Mr Bruce had not yet received the K.C.B. which was afterwards bestowed upon them. It was certainly rapid promotion for a man still so young. In recording his many years of work and his frequent successes one is apt to forget how young he was; and to be made a K.C.B. at the age of thirty-four was at that time almost a unique distinction. But, apart from the prominent manner in which he had come into public notice by his imprisonment and by his services during the campaign of 1860, the Government fully appreciated the admirable work he had accomplished in the Canton Commission—the best work he ever did in China—and it was universally felt that he had fairly won his honours.

It was difficult for a man who had thus been picked out from among older public servants for exceptional distinctions, and had been unmistakably a 'lion' of a London season, to settle down to the ordinary routine of a Chinese consulship. Personally Sir Harry was not puffed up, and his correspondence will show that he felt the necessity of some years of steady office work as a preparation for the Legation in Japan to which he looked forward. The excitement and constant change of the last few years had unsettled him, and he was fully conscious of his need for a course of official discipline to restore his mental balance. Yet it was impossible for a young man who was known to be looked upon with special favour by Lord Palmerston and the Foreign Office, who was regarded on all hands as the rising officer in China, and whose

eventual promotion to the Viceroyalty of India was confidently predicted by outsiders, to return to his consulship in quite the same frame of mind as he had left China. His ambition, which never slumbered, must necessarily have been stimulated by the favour and honours he had received, and the routine of office work, even in the best of all the Consulates of China, must have appeared even more irksome than before.

There was another difficulty in his new post. Shanghai, with its growing trade and its position in relation to the newly-opened Yang-tsze ports, was unquestionably the most important Consulship in China—so important that Mr Bruce recommended that its holder should be raised to the rank of Consul-General,—but it was also the hardest worked. Had Parkes gone there straight from his consular work at Canton in 1856 he would have fallen into the routine with little difficulty. But since the regular work at Canton had been suspended by the war he had been performing duties of every description except consular work. He had been interpreter for Admirals, Generals, and Ambassadors; he had taken his part in bombardments and campaigns; he had helped to negotiate treaties; he had governed a great Chinese city; but he had not kept up the thread of a consul's functions. Now, after an eight years' interval, he found himself beginning the old routine again; and it is not strange that at first he found it hard to accustom himself to the work he had so long abandoned. The state of his health, which his two years at home had not restored, added to the difficulty, and we find him frequently complaining of a nervous irritability which had grown upon him during the long years of stress and strain. 'I am afraid I do not take things sufficiently easily,' he wrote, 'for I am frequently in a gale'; 'I *can't* take things quietly, and the worry they occasion me destroys all my peace very often'; . . . 'nervous irritability sets in and makes me feel what a limited degree of strength of any kind I have'; and again, 'the work has spoiled my temper, if I had any to spoil.'

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1864  
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He looked upon the office work as 'a course of discipline that had been prescribed.' 'I must take my turn at what is the drudgery of the service, at work that does not tell publicly. Of work that brings in honours I have had a fair share, and now have to take my turn at the hewing of wood and drawing of water, which I think is as hard as the former, with less credit. However, all these things are arranged for us. The extreme monotony of the life is very irksome.' 'I am still "pegging along," as Mr Lincoln would say; almost stupefied with the drudgery of the office, both the quantity and quality of it,—but still getting on, though in faith it is dull enough.' 'I sometimes wish I were a cleverer man; but contentment would be a far more valuable gift.'

His days passed in steady grinding at the official mill, in the uninteresting details of merchant shipping, in manifests and clearance passes, in constant interruptions, in endless correspondence, in getting his staff into order; but very often all his routine work had to be set aside and allowed to get behindhand while he was compelled to sit for days together on the bench to try cases in his capacity of judge. Sometimes these trials, which were 'the worry of his life,' lasted more than a week, and the sittings began at nine and were often not over at four. He called himself 'an old 'bus horse,' and protested that he had 'no time for calls and never saw a lady':—

I seldom put my foot out of doors before six o'clock in the evening and then I mount my nag and trot down the same road, being back by a quarter to eight—dine, and get to bed as soon as I can. Dining out I avoid in this weather for I cannot stand the late hours it involves. Gordon<sup>1</sup> who is just now with me has similar feelings to mine in this respect and goes nowhere.

His life at this time was a monotonous course of official routine, varied by few social relaxations. He did not

<sup>1</sup> 'Chinese' Gordon, of the Ever Victorious Army, of whom we shall hear more.

care much for Shanghai society, unaccompanied by his wife, whose health and the care of her children compelled her to stay in England till 1865. 'People,' he told her, 'are so hard up for conversation here that unless a lady sings or plays, or can get up some fun of some kind, the parties are wofully dull.' 'The dancing contagion is very strong among the women here, and as long as music will play they will dance. . . . It is very slow work for the husbands. Many of them don't dance at all, and have to form a little throng simply looking on for hours while all the young men of the place are whirling their *cara sposas* round the room.' He was out of tune with ball-room gaiety, and found little of the intellectual society for which he always craved. He made few new friends: 'although intimate with no one, I have yet fallen out with no one,' he writes; 'I am terribly lonely.' There is of course a great deal of exaggeration in this, and if Sir Harry's bright and cheerful temperament was ever capable of it, one would say he had become morbid; he certainly was passing through a phase of gloom and dissatisfaction which pointed to overtaxed energies and nervous exhaustion. Trifles, such as the disorder of the Consulate repairs and alterations, annoyed him: 'I am in the most intense discomfort,' he wrote in September 1864, 'with the roof off and the rain and the elements making complete sport of me.' Had he been in good health and spirits, and doing work which he liked, he would have laughed at the invasion of the workmen; but he had got into a crooked angle of his life, everything seemed an obstacle, and he was never really happy again till he left Shanghai for Japan, where his wife joined him and the loneliness vanished away.

Some extracts from his letters to Lady Parkes will give a sufficient picture of his daily life at Shanghai, where he arrived on 3rd March 1864:—

Every day I have found myself in my office until half-past five or six o'clock, after entering it at nine or half-past nine, and so each day has been fully

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To his  
Wife  
Shanghai  
March 20  
1864

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occupied. And this I have no doubt will continue to be my experience. By and by, perhaps, when I understand the work better, and have mastered it to some extent, I shall be able to methodize it better than I do just now and despatch it more promptly; but I am sure my office hours will always have to continue from ten to five, and I must take the evenings for my despatch work or for any preparations that I have to make before I go into office. . . .

The weather, if I had had much time to notice it, would have made the period which has elapsed since I last wrote most melancholy, for it has poured incessantly, reducing to a state of liquefaction the whole settlement. Had you a rainy and therefore a muddy time when you were here in 1858? If so you will know what Shanghai becomes during a rainy month. Every road is almost knee-deep in mud, and impassable for pedestrians unless accoutred in knee mud-boots, which however are worn by all the residents. . . . Without a mount of some kind it is literally impossible to get about this settlement, which as yet I have done little to explore. I have made my visits to the mandarins and received their return calls; to do the former I had to go into the city, which is in a deplorable state of filth and mud; indeed I have never seen any place to beat Shanghai in this respect unless it be Peh-tang when the Allied Expedition landed there in 1860. The consular premises generally are in a state of dilapidation and dirt, and you can understand that the restoration of them to order, combined with the general question of accommodation for Consul and officers, naturally engages a good deal of my attention.

May 5

The past fortnight has, like its predecessors, been crammed full of work, but I hope that in future I shall be able to methodize time better. It is of little use I find to put on an excessive strain. What you take off at one end you have to put on at the other, and in the end time is not saved. . . . I shall have a

great deal to do I can see, but at the same time, though pestered with much that is petty and disagreeable, there is a good deal that is of considerable moment, and if I can contribute to the well-being of an important port like this, I shall be engaged in a useful and important work and one that I need not look down upon. I think I feel now that my time is being better spent than when in England: the trial will be when the work palls upon one's senses and becomes tedious. At present I of course import a certain amount of fresh feeling into it, but this may ooze out when the oppressive weather comes round. The way however to reconcile one's self to one's work and all around you is not to do it as to one's self alone or from selfish motives only. When I can look upon my position in this light I find its cares greatly alleviated and it should be sufficient for me to do all I can to fulfil my duty in a station in which I have been placed—to which God our Father has called us, and to do all as to Him and not unto men.

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In June his feeling of isolation was increased by the departure of his brother-in-law for England. Mr Lockhart had been busily engaged, since the establishment of the Legation at Peking, in organizing a free hospital of the Medical Mission at the capital, in the same manner as he had founded similar institutions at Shanghai and elsewhere. During the two and a half years which had passed since he opened his hospital in the autumn of 1861 over 30,000 patients had been treated for all classes of disease. Parkes had keenly sympathized in his brother-in-law's labours, and expressed the highest admiration of their results. In a letter of an earlier date (10th May 1862) he wrote:—

I have felt the greatest interest in your proceedings at Peking, and see with thankfulness the marvellous extent to which your work has been blessed. . . . The *political* good which your proceedings must have will be very great, and *your Mission* will achieve more

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than the Diplomatic in impressing the masses of Peking in our favour. Surely with you in your present position, we may say that China is really opened to the missionary, and perhaps the circumstance of your not being connected in any way with our officials leaves you all the more independent. Your hospital I look upon as the most marked incident in our relations with China that has occurred since the signing of the last Treaty, and most sincerely do I pray that you may go on and prosper.

Later experience only confirmed these first impressions, and Parkes was sorry when Mr Lockhart felt that the time had come to return to England and his family, after a quarter of a century of hard work in China. In July another departure took place. Sir Frederick Bruce left China, never to return. A year later he took up the post of Minister to the United States, in succession to Lord Lyons, and died of cholera at Boston in 1867. In his absence Mr Wade, who was now Secretary of Legation, took charge of the Mission, until the arrival of the new minister, Sir Rutherford Alcock, in 1865.

To his  
Wife  
July 4

I am closing my mail after such a day — of work, heat, thunder, lightning, rain and *row*. Being Independence Day all the American ships through the night and through the day have been firing cannon, until everybody is ill with the perpetual shocks. I have protested to the American Consul-General, and he has sent out a circular to stop it. I have just come from my last business chat with Sir F. Bruce. He is mighty civil to me in word and most complimentary on the work I have done since I have been here — approves everything. . . . He dines with me to-night: we sit down twelve — General, Gordon, Dent, W. Keswick — in short military and civilians are well represented, and four of my own staff. I am trembling, for I have to leave everything to Awang and the cook, reserving my right to object to everything that goes wrong. I have convinced Sir F. Bruce of the mass of work that



has to be done here, and I think he will represent this at home. He will recommend the appointment of a legal officer to assist me in the judicial work. . . .

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I can't write more, but wish I could:—there goes another monster gun right through my brain;—it is most childish and most melancholy, rather like minute guns than guns of rejoicing. Perhaps the former is not an inappropriate symbol under present circumstances [the war between North and South in America].

There is a little stir going on in Japan. The com- July 20  
bined fleet after a long time of preparation is about to sally forth into the Inland Sea to drive the great daimio Chōsiu from the batteries which at present seal it to foreign navigation. The departure of the fleet leaves Yokohama with limited means of defence, and the Colonel who commands the single regiment there has represented that his force is not sufficient to protect the place against the hosts of Japanese who under the name of friends appear to be actually investing the place. At least there they are in large numbers, and the foreigners of course cannot place much reliance on them. We are accordingly sending from this garrison a small reinforcement of about 300 men, including half a battery of artillery. This is all they asked for, or I think we might have sent more, as we have two regiments here—one native and one English and are in no danger of disturbance. Alcock writes me frequently and thinks that if Chōsiu be overturned the hostile party in Japan will receive a salutary check to their unmistakable design of excluding us from Yokohama. If that design be really entertained and persisted in war sooner or later must ensue. All things considered I am very well content that I am not in Japan at this time.

Poor Boxer has just returned. I think I told you Dec. 7  
of the loss of his vessel [the *Racehorse*] in my last. It is one of the most terrible shipwrecks that you can hear of—such an one as occurs only now and then in

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the history of the world. The last one of the same nature was the *Orpheus* in New Zealand, and the *Royal Charter* prior to the latter off the Welsh coast. His vessel took the ground about 8 P.M. in fine weather, and in smooth water would have sustained little damage, but the flood tide made the sea set in with heavy rollers, which are not unusual in certain localities in the finest weather, and these rollers broke over the vessel with such violence as to sweep every man from her, and utterly to destroy the vessel. A heavy sea sets in with three waves, at intervals of about five minutes, and from about an hour after she struck until daylight roller after roller continued to sweep over the ill-fated wreck, carrying away several of the unfortunate men on each occasion. They were only half a mile from the shore, but believed they were much further. However, those who tried to swim perished. The cold was as great an enemy to them as the sea, and contributed to the exhaustion which killed so many of them. Knowing the danger of the position at the commencement Captain Boxer mustered all the hands, told them to be calm and to obey orders, and advised each man to make himself as fast as he could by any rope or means within reach. This was after the first roller had made its appearance which he knew was the prelude to many others. Then he gave each man a glass of grog and cut away the masts. Unfortunately the vessel rolled over with her deck *towards* the sea, and thus every roller swept over her without any cover being afforded to a soul. . . . When daylight broke *eight* only of *one hundred and twenty* still clung to the wreck, and were saved chiefly by the aid of the crew of a Chinese junk who behaved most nobly, and took as much care of the poor fellows as if they, the junk men, had belonged to the Royal Humane Society. They rubbed their limbs—applied ointment to their wounds—administered warm remedies—put dry clothes on them, wrapped them up in

blankets etc., and after having saved their lives, sailed away, without taking any reward—indeed would not allow one of the men, who had a few dollars, to offer them as compensation. When we have much to record against the Chinese, this noble act, which could not have been exceeded by the most Christian and civilized people, should be told as a memorial of them. Poor Boxer will have to be tried for the loss of his vessel and I don't know how he will get off. . . .

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I have two Vice-Consuls, one Interpreter and three Assistants—then, as these six cannot put through all the work, I am authorized to employ three supernumeraries, but these are rated as copyists only, and are not on the officers' list. However in all we are ten hands, and four constables, and the native staff-writers, messengers etc., are twenty-five more, so the whole establishment costs something—but certainly works in proportion to its numbers. . . . The nature of consular work requires so much to be done by the chief—every important case, civil or criminal, has to be heard by him, every despatch to England or the Minister written by him, and any local letters also. It can't be helped—it has to be done, and I feel also that I ought to be able to do it, and I believe that many another man would do it with less effort than I do, who am always tugging and pulling to keep my head above water. I am in hopes that I may sail along more easily next year. The Government are becoming alive to the necessity of having a regular judicial officer here to attend to the judicial duties which are increasing rapidly and are sufficient to engage the attention of any one man, and next year I believe they send out a Judge to take this work on his hands. He will probably be appointed as Consular Judge for all the ports, but he will find when he gets here that he will have to give at least three-fourths of his time to Shanghai. I have heard close upon a hundred stiff cases, since I have been here, and

Christmas  
Day, 1864

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although every decision is open to appeal to the regular Supreme Court at Hongkong, and lawyers are engaged in every case, I have only had *one* appeal, and have little doubt in that case that the superior court will confirm my judgment—though I say it who shouldn't. . . .

As I work on I care less I think for advancement. Japan, which is almost the only thing I can look to, will always be a most troublous post. If called upon to fill it I might hope to be equal to the occasion, but it is not an appointment to be sought. Here there is plenty of useful work to do—an important post to fill with plenty of opportunity of serving and influencing your fellow-men. That influence would be vastly increased if you were here, and in fact until you come, I feel I do nothing whatever to assist society—however much I may accomplish for the public in the office. With care I think we may do a little in the way of receiving friends and yet not exceed our modest income. *That* I am determind I will not do. I will spend my pay but not more.

No man was more happily domestic than Sir Harry Parkes, none more devoted to wife and children. To be separated for whole years from them was a sore trial ; but another girl had been born in May 1864, and it was unadvisable for Lady Parkes to leave her little ones, and still less practicable to bring them out at once to China. The following letter shows the unselfish spirit in which the separation was borne by the lonely and much-tried husband :—

To his  
Wife  
Jan. 8  
1865

I wish you to know that I look upon your love as the primary source of my happiness—as the chief thing given me in this world (apart from that faith which should lead us to feel that we live only for the world beyond) to enable me to do battle with its toils and troubles. Wife and children certainly should constitute a man's principal delight and give him constant satisfaction and refreshment—be in a word the guiding stars

of his existence. I am sure I am fortunate in my wife and children, and if I estimate them rightly I shall receive from them more than what I deserve. It is hard to be absent from them so long, but I feel that this is all arranged. We must husband all our resources and take care of all the gifts given to us, and as our lot is cast in this distant land it is necessary, in order to secure the well-being of our darlings and provide for their being the stay and blessings to us that we hope they will be, to give up the satisfaction of having them much with us in their earliest days. . . .

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I have broken the neck of my work, understand it, and feel that I can master it. To gain this result however I had to work hard myself and also insist upon others working. Everything for years past in this Consulate had been done in a very slip-slop style, and the difficulty of getting things into order, of introducing method, and letting each officer know his duties and how to do them, was very troublesome. With work of all kinds rapidly increasing, method (which as you know I am not celebrated for) became essential. It was harder for me to introduce method into a large office like this (or rather a series of offices, for there are no less than six beside my own—working hard all day), because I was entirely out of practice myself—having had no consular experience since 1856. . . .

However, now I know what these several men ought to do, I can if need be show them how to do it. I shall keep them at it—only the supervision has to be constant and each day must as far as possible bear its own burden. The general direction is sufficient employment in itself, and I find therefore the judicial work which has greatly increased during the past twelve months specially burdensome. I try to confine it to monthly sessions of about a fortnight each, but it is difficult to keep it within these bounds. . . .

Parkes was disposed to attend too much to the details of the office, and his own conscientious minuteness,



1865 added to almost feverish restlessness, led him to drive  
 ÆT. 36 his subordinates rather hard. But no master was more really kind, when sympathy was wanted, none more loyal and staunch to his men; and they knew it. 'We were one and all proud of him,' said one of them to the writer; 'and I never heard a man in the service say a word against him.'

Among his visitors early in the new year was Sir Rutherford Alcock on his way home from Japan.

To his  
 Wife  
 Jan. 8  
*contd.*

Alcock and Lady Alcock are looking very well I think. . . . He is full of talk and feels very jolly, because satisfied that he is in the right and the Government in the wrong, in which I entirely agree, and they will have to indemnify him in some way for his recall. He left home with full sanction of the Government to employ force to bring the recalcitrant daimios to book whenever he could get a chance and force. A battalion of marines and a regiment of infantry, in addition to the whole navy of the station, were furnished him for this express purpose. But when the Manchester party raised an outcry against the first symptom of force being employed, the Government would not declare that they had authorized the course, but as a sop to Bright and Cobden recalled their Minister. It is . . . unlike Lord Palmerston, who has always backed his men; but he is not in the Foreign Office and has to give way to his colleagues occasionally, I fancy. . . .

The French Consul-General's family are very nice people, and fortunately know a good deal of English, or it would be little that I should see of their society, I fear. I am as backward as ever, but I must do something to improve. But how am I to get the time? You ask me what books I read. I scarcely ever open one. The newspapers in the evening are almost my sole literature, for which I am sorry. I would willingly read in the mornings between seven and nine, but I almost always want that time in preparation for the day's work.

It was always a subject of regret to him that he found so little leisure for reading and study. No one was more keenly alive to the interest and importance of self-culture, or more eager to stimulate Oriental research. He took the leading part in reviving the North China branch of the Royal Asiatic Society at Shanghai in 1864, delivered the inaugural address in May, and presided over every meeting of the society up to the time of his departure. When he was leaving a special meeting was held and an address was presented to him, thanking him for his indefatigable exertions in the re-establishment of the society, to which he imparted some of his own energetic vitality, in the hope that by the study of Eastern languages and peoples he might witness 'the overthrow of the policy of prejudice and exclusion, and the mutual understanding of the Eastern and Western nations.' When he went to Japan he became President of the Asiatic Society there, with similar objects.<sup>1</sup>

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X— has arrived here and has tried what he could to make me dissatisfied with my post, but I have told him that having come out again I mean to stand by it—that I realized all its inconveniences before I returned, and now feel that the time to demur is gone and that my duty and interest is to make the best of my position. It is not easy for men who like myself have passed so much of our time in the East, and whose experience is limited to the business we have so long pursued, to find employment at home; and if I were living at home idle, and on limited means, I know I should not be happy. Better much to be out here earning one's bread by the sweat of one's brow—in the most literal way—than be in a state of utter unproductiveness at home. . . . I hope I may some time hence have a chance at Japan, because I feel that I shall want to change this exhausting climate, and that certainly is a very fine one. . . . New scenes, new people, new duties would be an agreeable change to

To his  
Wife  
April 22  
1865

<sup>1</sup> See P. J. HUGHES, in *Journal of the China Asiatic Society*, N.S. xx.

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the monotony of Chinese work of which I often feel a little tired, or bedulled by it. . . .

Another and pleasanter event since I last wrote is the celebration of Easter Monday as a volunteer day, as at home. Mr Keswick of Jardine's invited the whole corps to Woosung with guests and some fifteen ladies. We went down in steamers at twelve o'clock, had a sumptuous lunch, and after that a review—the force consisting of about 100 infantry and 40 cavalry—the latter attacked the former in squares, and went through several manœuvres very creditably. Some of the ponies however objected strongly to being fired at right in their faces, and unhorsed their riders.

In the preceding extracts we have somewhat anticipated the course of events, in order to present a picture of Parkes' daily life as a whole. We must return to the beginning of his residence at Shanghai to consider two subjects which specially engaged his attention: one was the internal government of Shanghai; the other, the use to be made of the 'Ever Victorious Army' after the Tai Ping rebellion had been suppressed and 'Chinese Gordon' had given up his command. The former was a delicate matter to handle. The site of the European settlement at Shanghai was in no sense foreign property; it had not been conquered, bought, or rented from the Chinese Government; it was still as much Chinese territory as the Chinese city at its side. The English merchants of the flourishing young community had, however, adopted the theory that the British settlement was a sort of separate kingdom of their own. They established a Municipal Council, a most necessary and useful body, to raise taxes from the community in order to pay for the police, for keeping up the roads and foreshore, and generally maintaining the settlement in good order. The Council, however, were disposed to go beyond their proper and legal functions, and to assume powers which belonged to the Chinese authorities, whom they practically ignored; and as the foreign settlement was crowded with Chinese, who had fled thither

before the devastating advance of the Tai Ping, it became a serious question who was to keep order and punish crime amongst them.

Parkes had perceived the difficulty the moment he arrived on the scene, and with his usual courage attacked it forthwith. It needed some resolution to bring the Council of 'merchant princes' back to what he called 'their proper position,' and to do so without wounding their pride was perhaps impossible. One who was there at the time, and who did not agree with Parkes' view, writes that no one but he could have carried out the task he had set before him, in opposition to the leaders of the British community. His prestige, his personal popularity, and his indomitable persistence won the day without losing the good feeling of his subjects. Had any one else attempted to bring the Municipal Council of Shanghai to book, it is probable that reasons would have been discovered by Government to transfer him to a less high-stomached port.

He refers to the matter in one of his earliest letters from Shanghai :—

Improvement in the government of the settlement is the great subject which attracts attention just now and will give me a good deal of work before it is settled. I shall have to call a public meeting to-morrow for the 16th April when the subject in all its complicated bearings will be fully discussed. Many of the people here entertain the erroneous notion that we can treat the settlement as foreign territory and ignore the Chinese jurisdiction over the several hundred thousand Chinese who have flooded the place. At present these swarms are without government, for the Chinese Government, thinking that they might encounter opposition from us if they interfered, and being also incorrigibly indifferent, have hitherto done nothing, and the Municipal Council who think they govern the settlement are unable, from their having no Chinese police or machinery, to undertake such a task although

To his  
Wife  
Shanghai  
March 25  
1864

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they are disposed to flatter themselves that they are doing it now. A better and different system will have to be introduced, though I have not yet heard any feasible plan suggested. I think I see my way to proposing one, but it will involve more trouble and cost than the Municipal Council are at present incurring or taking. . . .

He found his chief quite of the same opinion. The following letter from Sir F. Bruce is a good example of the common sense which that easy-going Minister brought to bear upon Chinese questions:—

From Sir  
F. Bruce  
Peking  
March 29  
1864

. . . I think our policy ought to be based on two principles: Respect for Chinese authority, and efforts to make their authorities do their duty towards us as by Treaty. We ought therefore to insist on their punishing Chinese offenders, and force them, if possible, to deal with unrepresented foreigners. We ought to make no arrangements with local authorities in contradiction to these principles, for they are not entitled to abandon their people to our jurisdiction nor are they competent to hand over foreigners to our tribunals. . . . The Chinese inhabiting within the settlement must not be taught to believe they are not under Chinese authority. If they are to be emancipated, how is the Chinese Government to be held responsible for the security of British property in Chinese ports? I look forward to increased confusion and difficulty if we cannot make the Chinese exert themselves to do their duty, and if we cannot keep our own blackguards in order. We must work with the Chinese officials, and not be perpetually in antagonism, if we wish to found anything permanent.

At the meeting of the land-renters on 16th April Parkes propounded his plan of dealing with the Chinese population within the settlement, and with foreigners who were unrepresented by consuls and were apt to form a rowdy class. For the former he called in the judicial authority of the Chinese officials, whilst for the latter he established—



a court for the trial of foreigners who have no consuls, and who have hitherto been allowed to commit iniquity with impunity in consequence. I insist upon the Chinese authorities proceeding against these men, who are of course amenable to Chinese law as they belong to nations who have not made treaties with China; but as Chinese procedure is conducted in a manner repugnant to foreign ideas I guard against this by requiring the mandarins to sit with consular officers as assessors. The mandarins decide and pass sentence, but if the assessors consider that the sentence is unjust or too severe, they protest, and the sentence is not carried out until the case is referred to Peking. In practice I expect that the mandarins and assessors will always agree. The Chinese authorities have in part come in to my arrangement which if carried out will furnish a solution—as Sir F. Bruce wrote me the other day—of one of the most difficult questions in China. By the bye Sir F. Bruce has been very civil in writing me long private letters on the subject of business. I write little to him officially and he sends few despatches to me, but everything has gone very smoothly so far.

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To his  
Wife  
Shanghai  
May 22

Shanghai just now is not prospering—trade is very bad, the rebellion has gradually done its work, and now whole tracts of country in this the most fertile province of China lie waste and depopulated. The silk trade which was usually from 70 to 90,000 bales, or from eight to ten millions sterling, will this year be about 15,000 bales or about a million and a half; import goods are unsaleable, partly because the cotton famine makes them so dear, but the disordered state of the country interferes with every branch of trade. Many of the smaller merchants are in a shaky condition and insolvency is heard of in various quarters. It will be two years I think before Shanghai becomes as prosperous as it has been. Then the people here have got the settlement into abominable order. . . . The European part of the town was fairly looked after but

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the Chinese part not at all, and the latter are so dissatisfied with the want of order and efficient protection, and high rents, that, directly the fall of Soochow enabled them to return into the interior, they did so, and now some seven-tenths of the population—perhaps more—have quitted, leaving empty many a row of the houses that were meant to repay the high prices given for land. Some parts of the settlement look miserable and deserted.

Since I have been here I have been trying to remedy this state of things by weeding the system or no-system which had been pursued here of a false growth of ideas and measures that choked real progress, and in doing so have had to bring down the said Council somewhat from the pedestal on which they had been placed. . . . All legislative measures must continue in the hands of the Consul and the Chinese authorities, but the Council aimed both at legislative and judicial powers. In my opinion it is not desirable that a body of irresponsible gentlemen holding office for a year, and only attending to their duties to the degree that their other business will allow, should be invested with such functions, and I have already nearly established a Court in the settlement for the trial by a *Chinese authority* under certain effective checks of Chinese offenders and also of foreigners who have no Consul here.<sup>1</sup> The latter among whom most of the rowdies are found have hitherto committed crime with impunity, because they had no Consul, and in his absence the Chinese authorities shirked their duties, and would not exercise their undoubted authority over them.

To show how this wrong state of things works—A scamp was brought up before me the other day who had threatened to shoot a man, and claimed to be an

<sup>1</sup> The Mixed Court, which is still in existence, worked very well. A good deal, of course, depended upon the character of the Chinese judge, and the tact and temper of his foreign assessor; but the experiment, on the whole, has proved distinctly successful.

American. I therefore could not punish him and sent him to the American Consul, who refused to recognize him. The fellow then thought he would get off; but I told him that if he was not under English or American authority he was under Chinese law, and I should hand him over to the Chinese and insist on their dealing with him, and I doubted not he would find their treatment much worse than mine. He then at once declared he was British, and I gave him three months' imprisonment with hard labour!

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The Council are moving to get a Charter of Incorporation, hoping that this would give them the powers they want, but it cannot possibly answer, and I think they are beginning to see it, for two days ago one of the committee for this purpose . . . came to me and asked me to be the mover of whatever could be accomplished, as this could better be done by the Consul than by themselves. The Council have got into a sad mess in their money matters. Their money, while they had a large frightened Chinese population of refugees willing to pay heavily for their protection, came in readily enough, and was as readily spent, and now with a falling revenue they find themselves 90,000 taels in debt. The whole business of the government of the settlement will have to be looked after more closely by all concerned, and our periodical meetings will offer a field for debate to all the orators of the community.

Yesterday I held a great meeting to receive the revised Budget of the Council. . . . All ——'s extravagant schemes have had to be withdrawn and practical and moderate ones substituted. . . . They imagined that they might raise a large revenue from *vice*, but I have opposed this:—one section, gambling shops, I want to suppress; another, which I must not mention, I object to see licensed—and they have accordingly had to forego 150,000 taels from these two sources. At least, I do not believe they would ever

To his  
Wife  
Shanghai  
Aug. 19

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have raised this amount, though they expected to be able to do so. . . .

Dec. 7

In the shop I have had rather a piece of work in carrying out a measure of mine for the suppression of gaming houses which infested the settlement to a dreadful extent, and made it the haunt of robbers. After considering various ways of dealing with the evil it was evident that suppression was the only course, but to make this step efficient it was essential that the restriction should be equally enforced everywhere in Shanghai throughout the place—native or foreign. The French in their part of the settlement have for some time pursued a *licensing* system, and opposed my views, which could not be carried out so long as they retained theirs, for it was useless to put down gaming houses in one part of the settlement, and to keep them open, indeed to collect a revenue from them, in others. I called a meeting of all the Consuls to consider the question, and the meeting passed a resolution in unanimous accord with what I had proposed. The French Consul-General kept away from the meeting, but in the end the necessary enactment, ordering all those places to be shut up within a month has appeared, and the Frenchman has unwillingly found himself obliged to acquiesce. Our Council have been wrong in allowing matters to reach their present pitch: they have allowed the settlement to become an Alsatia, and vice has thronged in, because it was thought by the *Chinese* that among the foreigners it would enjoy perfect immunity. The result is that the native population that reside in our limits are of the worst classes, and the wealthy and respectable are beginning to avoid the place. I have shown the Council that I shall not trust to them to *police* the settlement, and I have given the powers of the mandarins much greater scope than they have hitherto been allowed, to the great benefit of the place. Upwards of a score of ruffians and cut-throats have been

beheaded during the last six weeks, and short shrift given them. Many of the foreigners—and the Council in particular—entertain ridiculous ideas as to protecting the Chinese against their own authorities, and this protection amounts frequently to shielding villains from just punishment. I think I have put a stop to this; the warrant of the Chinese magistrate will now run among the Chinese in the foreign settlement without let or hindrance; and I think we shall pass through the winter, which is our dangerous time (as it is in England with garotting) without difficulty. I think I have brought about a co-operation between the foreign and the Chinese police which will be mutually beneficial, and realize that security which neither would be able to effect alone.

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The reaction of the past two years of unnatural excitement is now being felt, carrying with it not only the smaller houses but large ones also. Two great failures have made many a long face in the place. . . . As I go on, I see reason to be thankful that my lot is what it is: I have often thought the merchant's a fine career, but it is not altogether what it seems. It was reported that even John Dent would have to come out again, this chiefly because of the want, not of funds, but of *hands* to carry on the business. Insolvency extends to public affairs. A week ago we held the usual annual meeting to receive the report and accounts of the retiring Council and elect a new one, and those accounts presented a deficit of 30,000 taels, instead of a surplus which is needed to pay off a debt of 100,000 taels that they contracted two years ago for drainage. . . . I had unfortunately found myself opposed to them from the first on a question of gambling houses which they wished to license, while I supported the Chinese authorities in insisting on their suppression. They seek to attribute the present deficit to this policy of mine—whereas it is really attributable to their lavish expenditure.

April 22  
1865



1865  
ÆT. 37

Another point of difference between us has been that I would not permit encroachments upon my authority, or even that of the Chinese, and insisted upon the Council confining themselves to their proper duties, which are simply those of a committee of the community appointed by the latter to collect the taxes that they voluntarily impose upon themselves, and to disburse the same upon roads, jetties, drainage and police. In addition to these duties they would like to combine those of a magisterial character, but to this I object, and have insisted upon the recognition of myself and other Consuls as the seat of all magisterial powers in respect to foreigners, and the Chinese authorities in the case of Chinese. — had fostered the idea that we could exercise jurisdiction over the latter, and had rather encouraged the assumption of power by the Council—so you can imagine that the latter do not look upon me very approvingly. They would insist that things were getting into a desperate state, and drew such a melancholy picture that nobody felt inclined to serve in their place.

Nevertheless a new Council was elected pledged to retrenchment, and with this testimony to the success of Parkes' onslaught upon the old system we may turn from the internal government of Shanghai to a matter of external policy.

## CHAPTER XXI

### CHINESE GORDON

1864-1865

IT will be remembered that when Parkes left China at the beginning of 1862 the rebels had possession of a considerable tract of country along the Yang-tsze Kiang and were menacing Shanghai. When he returned in the spring of 1864 he found the situation completely changed. Colonel Gordon had taken command of the Chinese irregulars who under Ward and Burgevine had failed to subdue the Tai Ping, and in his hands this rough and semi-disciplined force had achieved wonders. The rebels had been repeatedly defeated and driven back, Soochow had fallen in 1863, and Gordon, who had resumed the command which he had resigned after the execution of the Wangs on the surrender of Soochow, was engaged in completing his work in April 1864. The news reached Parkes on his way out: 'Gordon has overcome his griefs and is again doing the Imperialists good service;' and by the time the Consul had settled down to his duties at Shanghai, the rebels had been driven out of nearly all their positions except Nanking, which was closely besieged (and fell in July). Thus Parkes had nothing to do with the campaign which first brought 'Chinese' Gordon's extraordinary powers into prominence, though his first letters from Shanghai show how he followed the progress of the campaign and appreciated the splendid qualities of the leader: for example—

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1864  
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To his  
Wife  
Shanghai  
April 7  
1864

News will perhaps reach you of a second defeat sustained by Gordon, but it is not serious, except to the seven unfortunate officers who fell on the occasion. These officers are not officers in our or any other army, but the roughs that join Gordon as such, and whom he has to work with, for he can get no officers of our service to enter Chinese employ. Gordon is a very fine fellow, and it is perfectly marvellous what he achieves with such limited and indifferent means. I had a letter from him only this afternoon, dated the 4th, which gives a very cheery account of himself, as far as spirits are concerned, and he intended to attack again the next day. There is little doubt that the day is going against the rebels, who are being gradually closed in upon on several sides. When Nanking only remains to them I shall expect to hear of their making a rush to a more remote province. The Imperialists have lately recovered Hangchow, which is a great success.

Gordon and Parkes corresponded frankly and frequently. The letter referred to gives a characteristic account of the repulse at Wai-su, and Gordon's views on the situation :—

From  
Colonel  
Gordon  
Siangchow  
April 4

I received your kind letter of the 25th March to-day with Sir F. B.'s despatches, which I have asked Hart to hand to you for perusal.

I send you a sketch showing the rebel districts and the position of their Expeditionary Force, which is now in front of me.

You may have heard that it was my intention to have taken Kin-tang and Ta-yan and thus worked round Chung-chow-fu. But it happened that the refugees from Ye-sing and Li-yang, with other rebels who had been driven out of other cities, thought it a good time to make a raid into the settled districts. They accordingly started from Ta-yan numbering some 20,000 to 30,000 men, old rebels, greater part of them Kiang Si men and Cantonese. They could not take Kong-yin and therefore advanced on Chan-zu, taking Fu-shan. My attacks on

them near Kong-yin on the 25th and 26th March brought them back, and at the same time the Imperialists stockaded themselves along their line of retreat and cut them off from returning to Ta-yan or Chung-chow-fu. Other troops also came up and prevented their advance towards Chan-zu. As I found my driving them from west to east was likely to drive them on Shanghai and the quieted districts, I changed my position and took post so as to drive them against the Imperial stockades at Kong-yin. I had hitherto directed the operations from my boat, but having seen 300 of my men drive the rebels headlong over the country, I trusted two of the oldest and most experienced officers to move against the rebels while I turned their flank with some artillery in boats. To cut a sad history short, these officers got led on by the rebels, got surrounded and driven back, seven officers being taken. I withdrew after this, some little way back, and repaired damages, and D.V. will move against them to-morrow, my leg being almost well.<sup>1</sup> I was very nearly caught myself, never dreaming that the infantry would have got into such a mess. My getting out of my boat enabled me to see the state of affairs and to make the best of my way back.

I am now going very cautiously to work, and, as good fortune would have it, have every chance of causing a split between the Cantonese and Kiang Si men on one side and the other rebels on the other. Chung Wang's adopted son Se-tsun is with the Expeditionary Force. He is a Hu Peh man, twenty-four years old, and his brother shaved his head<sup>2</sup> at Soochow, and is with me. I shall get this young fellow to see his brother, who has on one side no road to run away, and must see eventually that he will be caught, while on the other

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<sup>1</sup> He had been shot in the leg in the assault on Kin-tang on 21st March, but went on giving orders till he fainted from loss of blood.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.* surrendered: the 'long-haired rebels,' *chang-mao tsei*, resumed the Manchu tonsure in token of submission.

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Æt. 36

I can offer him a fair place and safety. The rebels all know me, and the most of the chiefs have my photograph. I believe they would toast me if they caught me, but at the same time think they trust me to some extent. If I can get the Hu Peh and Ho Nan rebels to attack the Cantonese, whom they cordially detest, it will be the Kilkenny cats, and we shall have no trouble. What my difficulty is, how to attack such a mass of men with such a small force as I have. It is very difficult. The Imperialists are licking their chops over the fix the rebels are in, and Po Tajin (a very high mandarin of Tsang Kwo-fan's army, who was before Li-yang) is now moving on Chew-yong and Ta-yan, which are almost denuded of rebels, the same having come out to swell the Expeditionary Force. The Hu Wang or Cock-eye is in Chung-chow-fu; he has sent out proclamations to say that the country belongs to the Tai Ping and that his troops are going to take Wu-sieh, Chan-zu, Soochow and to march on Shanghai. To give the rebels their due, they are now fighting most desperately, and mind no more being mowed down than if it was an amusement.

I will write regularly to you and give you the news: if I do not write to you, I will get Colonel Hough to send you my letters to him. I have not a soul here who can write a line. I am delighted to see that the authorities are looking after the arms traffic: that is what I mostly fear. I quite agree with you, that the moving of troops to support the Imperialists without their *begging for the same* is injudicious, as it makes the Fu-tai think we are deeply interested. What makes me wish Colonel Hough to let me have Kingsley's or Cardew's men is that I do not see that if the Chinese pay for the troops they should be deprived of their support, and as the quartering of the Chinese troops at Shanghai or Quin-san is a mere question of place of residence, there can be no objection; but to move English troops out would be bad. Another



reason which is more serious to me is that I know Burgevine well and think him capable of conspiring with others to seize Quin-san, which is weakly garrisoned with my men,—a thing he would not try if Cardew's men were there. My position is not a feather-bed and I am weary of it, but equally determined to persevere. Officers of our army hold aloof. I cannot in my conscience recommend them to join such a dangerous service with such associates, and I am thrown on my own resources. I hope to be able to give you good news of my friends shortly, and can assure you that face to face to them is my happiest time: then I hear or think no more of the quarrelsome devils who officer the Force and who worry my existence out with their petty jealousies and squabbles. I am sorry to inflict such lamentations on you but hope you will excuse them. The principal part of the men killed by the rebels were Li-yang rebels who had entered my service; they fought like demons, but got sadly cut up. Perhaps it was a just retribution on them for past misdeeds. The rebels have treated the country-people most cruelly: women, children, and old men lying in all directions with their throats cut and otherwise mutilated. When you write to Sir F. Bruce will you thank him most cordially for me for his kind letters, which I will answer shortly. I am not in a mood to write just now. The rebels have very little rice now and are not likely to get any till the autumn. A letter I received from Kin-tang says that it has shaved: so much the better, even though they licked us. I only hope it is true. I really think that if we are ordinarily successful, this year will see the finale. From the chiefs at Li-yang who came over, I found out that there is a complete split in the Tai Ping, the Kiang Si and Canton men robbing the others and slipping away by degrees. If this is the case, it cannot last long.

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On the 18th April Gordon announced the fall of Kin-tang in the following laconic epistle:—

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Dear Sir Harry Parkes—

*Kin-tang shaved its head* and came over on the 15th April. This will make an alteration in the map I sent you down.—Yours truly,  
C. G. GORDON.

Please tell Colonel Hough. The rebels at Chung-chow-fu will be in a sad state. They have got now only Nanking, Ta-yan, Chung-chow-fu, Wu-chow-fu. General Ching died at Soochow on the 13th April.

On the 4th May, in a letter to Parkes, Gordon announced his intention of breaking up the 'Ever Victorious Army' as soon as Chung-chow-fu and Ta-yan should have fallen:—

These Imperialists [he explained] are well able to hold their own now, and I do not think any one would counsel the retention of the Force thus officered. Hart thinks different, although he agrees it would be absolutely necessary to get other officers. Will you think over the matter? I should of course feel myself responsible if the rebels made any headway after I had dissolved the Force, and should make myself acquainted with the state of affairs at Nanking before doing so. D.V. by September the rebellion will be over.

Parkes viewed the proposed disbandment with some dismay. He regarded the Force as the nucleus of an organized army for the protection of Shanghai, from which the allied troops would soon be withdrawn; he was loth to see the material so carefully disciplined by Gordon completely dissipated, and he knew that Sir Frederick Bruce shared his opinion. He replied to Gordon's letter as follows:—

I am much obliged to you for allowing me to see the enclosed, and I sincerely trust you will allow yourself to be guided by the excellent counsel which it contains. While there is work for your Force to do it is essential that you should be at the head, and if a bullet removes or disables you I anticipate nothing less than its dissolution. All those who take an interest in you are

To Col.  
Gordon  
Shanghai  
May 11

thankful that you have been so marvellously preserved hitherto—and our hope is that the same protecting Arm which took you into this affair will bring you out of it safe and sound. It would be idle to say that you must take care of yourself; some degree of danger, indeed a very considerable degree of danger you must run; but still you would scarcely be justified in exposing yourself unnecessarily. It is contrary to all the rules of your profession that a general officer (which you are) should do so; it is bad economy, and in fact would not amount to so faithful a discharge of your trust as if you took every proper—and I will add, possible—precaution. Don't think me an impertinent fellow for writing to you in this strain, and let the object of them excuse the remarks.

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I am glad to hear you say that you will act deliberately, cautiously, in respect to the breaking up of the Force. It is a serious step, and the Chinese Government, supreme and local, should have full opportunity for consideration. Hart's approaching visit to Peking will enable him to press his views in that quarter. The question presents a disagreeable dilemma. I should be afraid to recommend the dissolution of the Force, for I have no faith in the Imperialists keeping matters straight when once made smooth for them; at the same time I do not shut my eyes to the serious objections that may be taken to the Force when constituted as it at present is. Nanking is not yet retaken, and a friend who arrived from Hankow yesterday informs me that a large body of Ho Nan and Sze-Chuen rebels were endeavouring to cross the north of that province (only about 100 miles above (north of) Hankow) in order to fall upon Ngan-king, and if the object were attainable make some diversion in favour of Nanking. In the present condition of China it is impossible to say what a day may bring forth. You have done a great deal in separating the body of the burning materials in this furnace, but the embers are still alive, and they might

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again unite, unless a force sufficient to check this continue to be maintained. Wade leaves England on 10th April, and will pass through here at the end of this month. Sir F. Bruce may be looked for in the middle of June on his way home. Could you not possibly manage to come down here and see him to talk over the future?

Changchow fell on the day the preceding letter was written, and the storming of this city was the last exploit of the 'Ever Victorious Army.' It was difficult to maintain the Force with its existing officers, at their rate of pay, in the reduced state of the Viceroy's exchequer; and there might have been some risk of the army becoming a danger instead of a protection if left without efficient supervision after Gordon had resigned the command. He had done his work; the rebellion was practically suppressed—for Nanking fell in July; and although Sir F. Bruce had made it clear (in a letter to Parkes, dated 23rd May) that he would uphold Gordon if he *postponed* obedience to the Order in Council of 4th March, which withdrew permission for British officers to serve with the Chinese Government, the Colonel saw no reason for prolonging his command when the task he had set himself was accomplished. Accordingly he wrote Parkes a despatch explaining his views, and enclosed it in the following letter:—

From Col.  
Gordon  
Quin-san  
May 17  
1864

I send down an 'official' respecting the Force, and also a memo. of what I think would be an advisable measure, and one which I have no doubt the Fu-tai would accede to willingly. This would form a nucleus, and it would be easy to increase it to any size if necessary; the officers being non-commissioned officers of the regiments at Hongkong, who are quite as good as any officers I have here. I do not intend going home for some time—till the autumn in all probability—but I mean to get rid of the officers of the Force as soon as possible. If I happen to be at Quin-san when Sir F. Bruce arrives, I will endeavour to come down. I am

very sorry that Sir F. Bruce should have taken the trouble to express his approval of my late course of action. I asked him to leave it unnoticed either one way or the other when I wrote to him to acquaint him with my reasons for what I did ; and I can assure you that it would be by no means disagreeable to me to see my recent promotion<sup>1</sup> cancelled. I have never asked anything from either this Government or our own, and certainly have never worked for the same. At the same time I shall be only too glad if by any exertion on my part I can facilitate the pacification of this province.

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In despatches addressed to the Viceroy Li Hung-Chang and Gordon on the 18th and 19th May, Sir Harry protested against the disbandment of the 'Chinese Disciplined Force.' He reminded them that this force had been originally formed for the defence of Shanghai and the circuit of thirty miles round ; that it had been placed under Gordon's command for this purpose by an agreement between Li and General Staveley, then commanding the British troops in China, in January 1863 ; that this agreement could not be rescinded without the consent of both parties ; and that so long as there were any rebels in arms, the original purpose, of protecting Shanghai, dictated the maintenance of the army, which ought, now that the campaigns were over, to revert to its primary duties as part of the garrison of the port and surrounding district. Ever since the rebels had taken Soochow in 1860, the allied troops had defended Shanghai, and the 'Chinese Disciplined Force,' first known as 'Ward's,' had been organized to relieve them of part of their responsibility. The allied troops were soon to be withdrawn, and 'after all the cost and inconvenience incurred by H.M.'s Government in defending Shanghai for four years they may naturally require, in order to avoid a recurrence of this trouble, that the native force which relieves them

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor promoted him to the rank of Ti-tu, and gave him the special distinction of the Yellow Jacket.



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of the charge of the place should possess an organization and character that will attract their confidence.' If Gordon's force disappeared, what guarantee was there that the Chinese army would be able to prevent a repetition of the three sieges of Shanghai which they had failed to avert during the past ten years?

Parkes undoubtedly had reason on his side, and Gordon agreed with him in the main, though he could not very well take sides against Li. General Brown, who was in command of the British troops, wrote, 'I am not for disbanding any portion of the Disciplined Force until we see the fate of Nanking and the retreat of the rebels. I am also for keeping up a corps of disciplined Chinese at Shanghai. . . . It is a great strategical point and should be made the place of a regular cantonment.' Under all the circumstances it was clearly right to require a reference to the British Minister before taking a step at once so serious and irrevocable. Li, however, took offence at the demand, and complained of the tone of Parkes' letters; and meanwhile the disbandment went on. Gordon came himself to Shanghai to smooth over the difficulty, which was partly due to his own somewhat precipitate action; and Parkes was induced to pay a visit to the Viceroy at Soochow, which ended in the establishment of a Camp of Instruction where Chinese troops were to be formed into a disciplined body for the defence of the port. The plan was warmly supported by Gordon, who suggested the formation of several such camps, where the Chinese might learn under British officers to dispense by degrees with their help.

Parkes describes the plan in the following letter:—

To his  
Wife  
Shanghai  
June 21

I have had a trip to Soochow, and been absent from Shanghai for three days. Some correspondence had passed between the Fu-tai [Li Hung-Chang] and myself and we were at issue on a point, to settle which he invited me to a conference and sent me his steamer to bring me up. I went from motives of policy and think I have done some good by doing so. A weighty

question at this moment is the necessity on the part of the Chinese for military organization of a permanent character, which could be relied upon for the protection of Shanghai, and thus enable us to withdraw our troops, and be free in future from a recurrence of rebel troubles. The first step towards the organization would be the formation of a Camp of Instruction, where British officers should teach Chinese officers the principles of European drill and discipline, and the Fu-tai told me he would form a camp of this kind if he could obtain the services of a few good English officers. I shall urge Gordon to undertake the task, who is an excellent man but very peculiar—highly sensitive and somewhat uncertain. He put up with me for a week, and then passed on to Nanking to visit the Imperial army before that place. Although the rebels have been expelled from the vicinity, we cannot feel at all sure that they may not return; for although the Fu-tai talks in the boastful strain common to Chinese of the army he has formed, I doubt exceedingly whether it is to be relied on. We had a sort of alarm the other day caused by a report that Burgevine had returned again to Shanghai and had started with a number of rowdies to Nanking. An accession of foreign strength either at that place or at Hu-chow, which are the two positions remaining in rebel hands, would have the effect of protracting the struggle, and when I returned from Soochow I found that Markham<sup>1</sup> had been out all one night with one hundred soldiers, trying to intercept a body of forty-five rowdies said to be on the point of starting. They found nothing, and it would have been well if he had obtained better information before proceeding to take out the troops. So you see in various ways we have been in a somewhat bubbling condition of late, though the excitement I now consider as past, and so also a greater trouble, namely, the sickness that assailed us during the last month. Cholera came among us and

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<sup>1</sup> Vice-Consul at Shanghai.

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carried off a good many victims, two ladies among the number.

July 3

Again referring to the camp of instruction, he writes :—  
I had then to get the approval of our own big wigs, to wit Sir F. Bruce and the General, Brown, and both these personages have met here this week. They agree as to the expediency of the measure, so all that remains to be decided is how it should be carried out. . . . It happens to be one that few officers are competent to undertake, and Gordon—much to his own annoyance—has volunteered for the work rather than let the measure fall through. All perhaps that will be required is that he should start the thing, and then some fitting officer may be found to take it off his hands, as he is very anxious to get away. He has been up to Nanking, and further on to see Tsang Kwo-fan, who is the highest authority out of Peking that the Chinese have, and he has been back a week. He stays with me whenever in Shanghai and is a fine noble generous fellow, but at the same time very peculiar and sensitive—exceedingly impetuous—full of energy, which just wants judgment to make it a very splendid type. . . . We have seen a good deal of each other when he is here, for as he is very shy I try as much as possible to dine alone, and we then tattle on on Chinese affairs all to ourselves. I am worried a good deal with my work, but still I feel that it is of a useful character. Now to have the management of two such measures as the formation of a Court of Justice, carrying with it as this measure does the order of the settlement, and the establishment of this camp which will be for 3000 men, are big affairs, therefore doubtless my time is as far more usefully employed here, as it would be more pleasantly, perhaps, in England.

To W.  
Lockhart  
Shanghai  
Sept. 3

Hu-chow is taken, or rather evacuated, so I hope now the rebels have left our doors and will keep away. They are an unmitigated nuisance, throwing everything into confusion, and demoralizing every one, native or

foreigner, within their influence. I should not be sorry to see a real reformer and patriot rise up and go in and win, but the men we have yet seen in arms against the Government have nothing of this character about them.

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After the fall of Nanking, matters were still on an unpleasant footing with the Viceroy. 'Of course,' wrote Gordon, 4th November, 'in fact the Fu-tai has done what I imagine we require, but it has been done in an unpleasant way. . . . I hope to get down to the coast and to catch the mail of the 29th November. . . . I am convinced of one thing, viz. that it is far better to leave the matter in your hands than for me to try and accommodate our views with those of the Fu-tai.'

The preceding extract shows that Gordon was of the same mind as Parkes: indeed the two had become fast friends. Each was able to appreciate the other's energetic qualities: both knew a *man* when they saw him.

Gordon goes home by this mail and will make a point of seeing you, even if at Tunbridge Wells. He had grown tired of his last job of forming a Camp of Instruction, which is far too *slow* an occupation to be suited to his active and somewhat erratic tastes, and being unsuited he has not made a very good job of it. The matter therefore passed into my hands, and after some fighting with Li Fu-tai (the Governor of the province) who withheld the support that Gordon should have received, I have reorganized and reinvigorated the scheme, and it is now passing into the hands of Major Jebb and half a dozen other officers whom I made Li Fu-tai apply for. Gordon had not received assistance enough either from our Government or the Chinese, and what is now arranged must be regarded still as experimental. I trust, however, it is the germ of something effectual, and that we may secure from it the organization of such a force as will keep rebels from this neighbourhood. They are to be met with elsewhere, however. Amoy and Swatow have been thrown into alarm, and Hankow also, by the approach

To his  
Wife  
Shanghai  
Nov. 20

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of marauding hordes, and it will be some time before China loses the pest altogether; in fact, without a reformed Government she will not part with them—and that again is a very great question. Perhaps years hence we may have a divided empire—a North and South—in the oldest country in the world as well as in the youngest.

Shanghai  
Nov. 24

I was writing—very late on this occasion I am sorry to say—when Gordon came in to wish me good-bye, and he has just left me to go on board. Of course we closed in round the fire and had a chat and a cigar—or rather *he* smoked, for *I* am off my tobacco just now, as I have caught a cold and am out of sorts. But I joined him in a glass of port wine—your port,—the first bottle of which I opened three days ago, and I have thought of you and drunk your health over every glass I have yet taken. The taste of the wine always brings back to me Hampstead with great vividness—thus do trifles waken up past associations. But to return to Gordon, who is now gone, I told him he has reason to be thankful that he has been permitted to leave this country alive, or with a whole skin. He is a very shy man and when at Shanghai will not call upon a soul; but I am glad to see that the community on hearing that he was off, have marked their respect for him by an address of which, when I caught sight of it, I took a copy and sent it to Earl Russell with a covering letter pointing out that such acknowledgments were the only reward he cared to take in the country he has so greatly benefited. . . . He has refused money whenever it has been offered to him, and has served throughout on a very low rate of pay. . . . I have no doubt he will find you out, for he is not a man to spare himself trouble, and he will not allow himself to be involved in a London whirl, which will possess little fascination for him. He is a reserved retiring man, and avoids glitter and bustle of all kinds. I hope he may have recovered his health before he

Dec. 7



reaches England, for he left us very poorly and much shaken.

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The two men did not forget each other when they parted at Shanghai. I have before me a letter of Gordon's written from Gravesend, 4th January 1867, when Parkes was Minister in Japan, in which he says :—

Many thanks for your kind letter and remembrances of me. I feel very much honoured by your naming your little son<sup>1</sup> after me. I have been reading with much interest all the movements in Japan and must congratulate you most sincerely on the great success which has attended all your proceedings. It was most fortunate that you arrived when you did. How very interesting those late proceedings would be if we knew the details ; but the Foreign Office seldom publish anything, and when they do they do not string the despatches together to make them comprehensible by the public at large.

I do not know much of what goes on in China, having but few correspondents. Mayers writes rather despondingly of our interests, but I do not think we need fear any great move from the French. The Emperor is too much occupied with his versatile people to trouble himself in the matters of the extreme East. We are all of us in trouble, or as it were on the eve of it, and it will be wonderful if we pass through this year without a war on the continent. More serious still are the struggles in Parliament, in which we may expect great changes with result to the army. We are I think not effective as present organized. There is little or no homogeneity between officers and men. . . .

The Chinese are just the same as ever they were, sending home here and there for this machine or that, without system or method. . . .

Thanking you for your kind thoughts of me and

<sup>1</sup> Douglas Gordon Parkes, born at Yokohama, 16th September 1866. Gordon's letter is dated, by a slip, 1866.

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assuring you that I have have not forgotten you or yours,—Believe me ever yours sincerely

C. G. GORDON.

The Camp of Instruction at Fung Hwang Shan was a subject of considerable anxiety to the British authorities, in view of the approaching withdrawal of the English troops from Shanghai, when the foreign settlement would have to depend upon Chinese protection. About the New Year Parkes went up to see how the work of drilling and disciplining the force was going on :—

Jan. 8 I took a holiday of four days last week, or very nearly a holiday. I went up to the Camp of Instruction to see how Jebb was getting on, and then passed on to Sungkong six miles off and inspected a force of about 5000 Chinese troops there. The weather was very fine but exceedingly cold—so cold the last day that my boat was frozen in, and after making ineffectual attempts to force it through the ice, I had to abandon it and walk back to Shanghai, then eighteen miles off. During those four days I was in the open air all day. . . .

On the 14th February he paid a visit to the Fu-tai, Li Hung-Chang, at Soochow (under instructions from Mr Wade, who was in charge of the Legation at Peking), with a view to impressing upon the Governor-General the importance of providing for the safety of Shanghai on the departure of the British garrison. Li appears to have received him with scant courtesy, and referring to Sir Harry's Order of the Bath took the opportunity to mention 'by the same name,' as his visitor indignantly reported, 'the nondescript ornaments which he has himself invented and issued to the foreigners in his employ.' The Fu-tai had not approved of the Camp of Instruction from the first, and regarded it as an interference with his government of the province, which he professed himself perfectly able to manage in his own way. Instructions from Peking, however, compelled him to promise his support to the institution, and after some discussion he was induced to pledge himself to some further improve-

ments in the military organization in view of the defence of the port.<sup>1</sup>

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A point to which Sir Harry attached considerable importance, as bringing the Disciplined Force within a few hours' reach of Shanghai, was the construction of a road between the camp and the port. To this Li assented, and requested Parkes to arrange the matter with the Chinese General-in-Command. An amusing sequel to this concession was related by Gordon's interpreter, who accompanied Sir Harry in his subsequent visit to the General. When they reached his headquarters they found he had moved on some dozen miles, upon which, after merely inquiring whether the ponies could do the distance, Sir Harry pushed on in pursuit. When they came to the yamun it was shut up, and some time passed before they could make any one open the door of the court. Evidently the General had heard of the projected visit, and was resolved to avoid it. At last they got in, but the servant declared that his master was seriously ill and could be disturbed for nobody.

Sir Harry quietly dismounted and entered the house, where he announced his intention of remaining till he saw the mandarin, ill or well. Finally they were shown into a room where they found the General, looking very sulky. He began at once to abuse the Consul for his intrusion, and asked if he thought it good manners to force himself upon an invalid who could not attend to business. Sir Harry paid no attention to all this, but told him to apologize on the spot for his rudeness in keeping Her Majesty's officer waiting, on pain of being reported to the Governor-General and instantly disgraced. Whereupon the General became not only convalescent but remarkably obliging; made a handsome apology, provided an excellent luncheon, and promised to make the road forthwith.

It was a good example of Sir Harry's method of dealing with elusive mandarins. No one else could manage them as he did; and it is worth noticing that, as he was

<sup>1</sup> H. S. Parkes to T. F. Wade, despatch of 20th February 1865.

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ÆT. 37 called away to Japan soon after, the question was not pressed as he would have pressed it, and consequently the road was never made. After a while the camp was also abandoned.

In May, Parkes went for the last time up the Yangtze to examine the state of the country after the late rebellion :—

To his  
Wife,  
May 21,  
1865

I must tell you of a trip that I have made to Hankow—a holiday of nine days which I have enjoyed very much, and which came very opportunely, for this season of the year is a trying one. The spring, or rather the month of May, when freshness has already gone and yet the great but dry heat not yet arrived, is the time in which malaria seems most active, and systems that are not strong or prone to aguish attacks are apt at this time to feel a good deal of enervation. I fancied this was my case and had planned a week's trip to Pootoo or Ningpo, when it suddenly came on so hot that I thought hill-climbing would be unenjoyable, and a quiet lounge in a steamer on the river preferable ; and as the perfection to which the navigation of the river is now brought enables travellers to go to Hankow and back in eight days I found this trip as practicable as the shorter one. Leaving here on Wednesday midnight 10th May in a storm of rain, we arrived the following day at five o'clock in the afternoon at Chinkiang—the run being close on 200 miles. Here we staid a couple of hours, which afforded me time to go on shore and see Harvey. He has not profited I think by the change from Ningpo, for Chinkiang is at present a most dreary place, and has done so little to recover from the rebel ravages. Only one or two European residences have yet been erected there, and the small community limited to half a dozen individuals live afloat in hulks. Ningpo on the other hand has largely increased of late, and its duties also. . . .

From Chinkiang we sped along to Kiukiang, and arrived there on Friday at midnight. I went on

shore at that inconvenient hour and roused up Hughes, who has that port, because at Chinkiang we had heard alarming reports that Kiukiang was in danger from a threatened descent of 'braves,' who had mutinied and threatened to come down and sack the place, and in consequence of this report I had warned the officer commanding the gunboat stationed at Chinkiang that if I found things as serious as were represented I should urge him officially to move up to Kiukiang. Was glad to find however that the threatened danger had passed away, and that the 'braves' had gone off in another direction. Our stay was again limited to two hours and then we passed on to Hankow the last stage, which we reached at five o'clock on Saturday afternoon. . . .

The river ports I look upon as chickens that I had something to do in hatching. The settlements at all of them are built on ground that I selected and on my own responsibility leased for the British Government, who have sublet to the merchants. Had I not been thus prompt other foreigners would have secured this ground, which is admitted to be the best at each port, and thus our people are comfortably provided. The French and other Governments are crying out for similar advantages, but have not attained them yet. At Hankow, some disquiet was also felt on account of mutinous 'braves,' and the two Consuls, of Hankow and Kiukiang, were striving for the presence of the single gunboat that has to divide its attentions between the two ports. Young Webster, who has been acting as Consul for eighteen months, kindly took me in during the four days of my stay. On Sunday I was quiet, and attended the single service they have there, conducted by the missionaries. . . . On Tuesday I crossed the river to the Chinese city, but got little but a good sunburning for my pains. On Wednesday I explored the Chinese part of Hankow, which is far more flourishing than the Chinese city (Wuchang) on the opposite side, although

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that, like Canton, is the capital of a Viceroyalty. At five o'clock we left and at four o'clock on Friday were again in Shanghai.

One of the missionaries at Hankow, the Rev. Griffiths John, wrote (26th May) of this visit :—

Sir Harry Parkes was here last week. He looks remarkably well, and like myself wants nothing but his wife and children to make him feel quite happy. He called on me twice, and we had about three hours together. He went with me to see the chapel and schools, and seemed quite pleased with what he saw. I enjoyed my chat with him very much, and do think him a first-rate fellow. I was much pleased with his interest in the missionary work. He seems to believe in it, which very few out of the missionary circle do.

During his period of official discipline at Shanghai Parkes had never ceased to buoy himself up, amid the monotony and irksomeness of his duties, with the hope of a change. Sometimes he talked of a speedy retirement from public life, and a placid old age (he was now thirty-seven!) in some rural retreat in England, where, if he could not sit under his own vine, at least he could delve the ground, which in depressed moments he was wont to declare an infinitely preferable occupation to quill-driving and winding up useless foolscap sheets with meaningless 'obedient humble servants.' But generally his thoughts turned to Japan. For years he had longed to visit the beautiful islands, and his letters are full of references to the chances of his being appointed to succeed Sir Rutherford Alcock as Minister there. He watched the progress of the struggle going on in Japan with breathless interest. Alcock's difficulties made him exclaim sometimes that he was glad he was not in that Minister's shoes : but he was not really glad. In his dreary routine of office drudgery he pined for excitement, responsibility, and even danger. It may be imagined, therefore, with what delight he received the news that he had been appointed by the Queen to the Legation at Yedo :—

The mail of the 27th March has brought me the great news of my appointment to Japan as Alcock's successor, of which you had not heard at the time the mail left. Nor had Alcock, for in writing to me to tell that he had been appointed to Peking, he observes that nothing had yet been decided about his successor, though he kindly adds a wish that I may obtain it. I think too that it is probable that he may have spoken in my favour at the Foreign Office,<sup>1</sup> though the fact of his being unacquainted with Earl Russell's decision shows how very close they keep matters. It reaches me privately in the first instance from Earl Russell in the following note which you will be glad to see:—

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To his  
Wife,  
May 21

Dear Sir Harry Parkes—

March 27  
1865

The appointment of Sir Rutherford Alcock to China leaves the Mission to Japan vacant, and there is no one I can think of so well qualified to succeed him as yourself.

I have accordingly recommended you to the Queen as her Envoy and Minister to Japan.

As it would take a long time to get an answer from you, I have desired that, upon the Queen's approval, which has been at once graciously given, the appointment should proceed.

You will I trust be able to go to Japan within a month or six weeks after receiving this letter.

Mr Winchester will succeed you at Shanghai.—I remain yours truly

RUSSELL.

A satisfactory note to commence a correspondence with, for with the exception of one or two official letters nominally addressed to his lordship I have hitherto never had anything to say to him, and the whole note is penned by himself. Hammond and Mr Alston also write kindly to the same effect. Official instructions will doubtless follow by the next mail.

<sup>1</sup> The supposition was correct. Sir Rutherford was as cordial in recommending Parkes for Japan as the latter was in hoping that his old chief would be rewarded for his long services by being appointed to Peking.

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I am very glad that I have not to leave at short notice, as I have a good many matters on hand that I should not like to leave in their present unfinished state for my successor, and hurry on such an occasion is exceedingly bewildering and uncomfortable. The news reached me when I was *away* from Shanghai, for . . . at Chinkiang I got my mail letters which Markham had forwarded to me there, and these contained the startling news of the Japan appointment. I say startling, because although I had felt that I might be thought of in connexion with it, still I fancied that Colonel Neale, and possibly also Wade, both of whom have served on the diplomatic side (while I have not, except on the occasion of Lord Elgin's Mission) might be held to be higher claimants. I had not sought the appointment, had made no application, nor the least effort to obtain it. . . . I saw that I could be well and usefully employed at Shanghai—that the work was of a high order, and the place and the society much more agreeable than I had anticipated—that in short it is a place in which we might make ourselves comfortable and useful if we chose to do so. Japan I knew presented a higher and more important field, but its responsibilities are heavier, and as I find that the strain of anxious work tells upon and tries me, I should not care to seek more than I can dispose of. But as I am to go to Japan, I trust I may be given strength sufficient for any duties that may devolve upon me.

The appointment is particularly gratifying to me, as it lifts me at a stride into the higher branch of the service; and it is not often that a man of my age, without any advantages of birth, has the opportunity of representing the Queen and country at another nation. I only trust that I may be able to fulfil these responsibilities, and that our interests may not suffer by being confided to my charge. The first few months will be trying ones, as I shall have much to learn, as

was the case when I arrived here, before I feel myself well in my saddle, and although it is just on an occasion like this that my heart aches for the solace and encouragement that your presence would afford me, perhaps it is as well that I should get the first efforts over before you come out, as you know the uncomfortable struggle that I have to go through with new work in order to obtain the mastery over it. I do not know what trials may be in store for me; some of course I must expect; but I feel now, and trust I may continue to do so, great thankfulness for all the mercies bestowed upon me, coupled with a trust in that good Father who has hitherto so signally watched over me and protected me. You will have to share my responsibilities, but I have no fear for your acquitting yourself well of these, for you have far better tact than I have—as indeed is the case with most women as compared with men.

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I have spent a dull fortnight since I last wrote you Shanghai  
—an unceasing drive to try to get through work in June 5  
order to be ready to leave, but in reality accomplishing very little. When I do get away, I have no doubt I shall find that, whatever I may have done that I ought not to have done, I shall have left much undone that I ought to have done. The fact is I have only begun to feel that I understand Shanghai and its requirements, and it takes a long time to give your ideas the form and substance of measures. I was just thinking of doing this, when I got my orders to quit, and I must now leave several not uninteresting subjects to my successor.

Towards the end of June 1865 Sir Harry Parkes left China, as he believed, for ever. A few years of Japan, and then retirement, seems to have been his forecast of the future :—

One advantage at all events of our new post is To his  
that we may make it a *home*, for if all goes well with Wife  
us—*i.e.* if we keep our health and are able to keep June 5

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at work, I may expect to find that my sphere of duty for some time to come; for I do not think they would transfer me to Peking on Sir R. Alcock's departure, as it would probably be considered only fair that Wade, who has laboured as hard as I have, and is a far more clever man, should have a chance, for which he will have waited long enough. If, as I say, therefore, I retain my health, and the state of the country permits, I hope to remain in Japan for a term of four years—by which time I daresay I should be tolerably pumped out and glad enough to come home and lie fallow.

The expected four years expanded into eighteen: but I must leave it to another hand to tell the story of that eventful period in Japanese history. We have seen the boy who stood beside Pottinger at the signing of the Treaty of Nanking pass through all the stages of his consular career and distinguish himself by indomitable work and courageous maintenance of British rights at every point. We have seen him performing diplomatic and administrative duties that far exceeded anything that could be expected of a consul; governing a Chinese city, and taking a high part in the negotiation of treaties. His progress had been ever forward, and one cannot point to a single opportunity thrown away. He had received the approbation of his Government, the admiration of the public, and the honours which the Queen herself bestows. And now he was raised out of the consular service in which he had spent twenty-four busy years, and entered diplomacy, in name as well as in fact, as Her Majesty's Minister to Japan.

END OF VOL. I







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Lane-Poole, Stanley  
The life of Sir Harry  
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