

er's draught of water, and not broader than her own length, grounding occasionally on both sides; at 7-50 arrived at the large village of Hong-how, with a fort of the same name at the upper part, which flanked a strong and broad line of stakes twenty feet wide, completely across the river, filled up in the centre by large sunken junks laden with stones; on discovering the fort the Nemesis opened fire, which was instantly returned by the enemy; as in all the preceding actions they fled the moment the boats landed to attack them; they had evidently expected to be assailed on the opposite side to that by which the Nemesis approached, the walls being piled up with sandbags outside in that direction; nine guns were destroyed here, and the fort blown up; after the Nemesis had made good her passage through the stakes, which was effected after four hours incessant labour, assisted by the natives, who flocked on board and around in great numbers after the firing had ceased, all apparently anxious to aid in destroying the stakes.

At four P.M. they arrived off a military station, a shot was fired into the principal building, which drove out the garrison who had screened themselves in it; the boats were then sent on shore and the whole establishment, together with a mandarin boat, mounting one nine pounder and two ginjalls, were destroyed, and at six, the steamer anchored for the night.

At daylight on the 15th the Nemesis continued her course upwards, and at 7-30 arrived off the large village Zamchow, under the banks of which a number of soldiers with matchlocks were despatched endeavouring to conceal themselves, upon whom a fire of musketry was opened, which dispersed all those who were unhurt in less than a minute.

On moving up to Tsagnei, a large town on the left bank of the river, three forts were passed, all dismantled and abandoned, the Custom House of the latter place was destroyed as well as a war junk mounting seven guns, which the crew had quitted on the approach of the steamer. On proceeding up to Whampo, three more dismantled forts were observed, and at four P.M. the Nemesis came to anchor having (in conjunction with the boats) destroyed five forts, one battery, two military stations, and nine war junks, in which were one hundred and fifteen guns, and eight ginjalls, thus proving to the enemy that the British flag can be displayed throughout their inner waters wherever and whenever it is thought proper by us, against any defence or mode they may adopt to prevent it. This service has been performed without the loss of a single man on our side, and only three seamen slightly wounded belonging to Her Majesty's ship Samarang. The greatest praise is due to Mr. W. H. Hall, R.N. Commander of the Nemesis, for the cool, unwearied, and zealous performance of his duties (under circumstances of frequent danger and difficulty) at all times, more especially in thus traversing a navigation never before passed by a European boat or vessel.

On the 19th I was gratified by receiving a report from Captain Herbert, of Her Majesty's ship Calliope, commanding the advanced squadron, detailing the various operations of that force in the attack and capture of the forts, defences, and flotilla off Canton, and the hoisting the Union Jack on the walls of the British factory; the guns of the squadron commanding all the approaches to the city from the western and southern branches of the river, thus placing in our power the great provincial capital.

This was brought about by the Chinese having fired upon a flag of truce, sent with a chop to the Imperial Commissioner at the desire of his Excellency the Plenipotentiary. The flotilla of boats of the squadron formed into four divisions under the command of Captains Bouchier and Bethune, of Blonde and Conway; every arrangement having been completed, the force, as per margin,* moved

* Modeste, Nemesis, Madagascar, Algerine, Starling, Young Hebe, and Louisa.

in advance about noon, and engaged the batteries for about an hour, when the flotilla, with the marines, under the command of Captain Bouchier, was brought up in admirable order, and upon the signal being given, stormed and completed the capture of the enemy's works, notwithstanding a most determined resistance on the part of the Tartar troops; one hundred and twenty-three guns were mounted in the different forts; the loss of the enemy has been very considerable, (upwards of four hundred men); our casualties, I am happy to say, do not exceed six wounded.

This blow was followed by an agreement on the part of the High Commissioner to a suspension of hostilities, and afterwards by the publication of an edict, declaring the trade to be opened, and that all British and other merchants proceeding to the provincial city shall receive due and perfect protection.

I endeavoured to push forward to the scene of action in the Hyacinth's gig, but only arrived towards its close, in sufficient time, however, to be gratified by the hoisting of the British colours. Thus, for the first time in the history of China, have ships been brought under the very walls of Canton, and by channels and branches on which a foreign ship never before floated. I believe the Chinese were not acquainted with the capabilities of their splendid river; assuredly they had no idea that the second city in the empire could be assailed by ships of war on its waters; I trust that the fact will have its due influence on the authorities, and I have no doubt that the forbearance displayed towards a city so completely at our mercy as this is, will be appreciated by the better classes of the community, who have every thing to lose, and the benevolence of the British character more fully understood than it ever yet has been in this country.

The gratifying spectacle of our ships in this position is solely attributable to the unwearied exertions of the captains, officers, and men, belonging to them, in sounding the various inlets through which they passed, not a single Chinese pilot having been employed throughout.

In conclusion, we may on this, as on former occasions, congratulate ourselves on this service having been performed without any loss of life on our side, and only seven wounded, (severely), amongst whom is that gallant officer Lieutenant Stransham, Royal Marines, of Her Majesty's ship Calliope, Acting Brigade Major.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient humble Servant,
J. G. GORDON BREMER,
*Commodore of the 1st Class,
Commander-in-Chief.*

The Report from Captain Herbert of Her Majesty's ship Calliope, to His Excellency Sir Gordon Bremer, referred to in the preceding dispatch, is annexed:

Copy.

British Factory, Canton, March 18, 1841.

*Commodore Sir J. G. Gordon Bremer, Kt. C. B.
K. C. H., Commander in Chief, &c. &c. &c.*

SIR,

THIS day the force enumerated below* under my orders, carried and destroyed in succession all the forts in the advance and before Canton, taking, sinking, burning, or dispersing the enemy's flotilla, and hoisting the Union Jack on the walls of the British Factory, the guns of the squadron commanding all the approaches to the city from the western and southern branches of the river, thus placing in our power the great provincial capital, containing upwards of one million of inhabitants.

I found myself forced to make this attack without your instructions, for the reasons so strongly expressed in Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary's note, herein enclosed (17th March 1841), considering it my duty to resent, with all the promptitude in my power, the insult offered the day before to the flag of truce sent with a chop to the Imperial Commissioner, at the desire of His Excellency.

I forward the accompanying sketch, placing you in more immediate possession of the line of concentration which led to such an immediate result. In detailing the operations of the day, I feel myself inadequate to do justice to the gallant Officers and Men employed on this occasion.

* Vide subjoined list.

The flotilla of boats, formed into four divisions, was under the command of Captain Bouchier of the Blonde, Captain Bethune of the Conway assisting. Three divisions, under the immediate charge of the Commanders Barlow and Clarke, and Lieutenant Coulson of the Blonde. Her Majesty's sloop Hyacinth (to whom too much praise cannot be given for the exertion displayed by Commander Warren, his officers and crew, in getting her through the intricate and difficult passes of the river, piloted by Commander Belcher, to be in readiness for operation); and a division of boats, under the command of these officers, were placed at the southern entrance of the river, recommunicating with the main stream at Fatee, to meet any retrograde movement of the numerous flotilla, that had taken part in the aggression on the 16th instant.

Every arrangement having been completed and understood, the whole force moved in advance about noon, the vessels, marines, and three divisions of boats from the Northward of the Macao fort and within gun-shot of the enemy's advance batteries, engaging them for about two hours and a half, when all opposition ceased, and the factory within the defences were taken possession of.

The Modeste was placed within three hundred yards, in front of the principal battery, and shortly gave proofs of her well directed fire, flanked by the powerful guns of the Madagascar, Captain Dicey, with artillerymen under the direction of Lieutenant Foulis, Madras Artillery, and Nemesis, Mr. W. H. Hall, R.N., commanding, with artillerymen under the direction of Captain Moore, and Lieutenant Gabbett, Madras Artillery, who handsomely volunteered their services upon the occasion. The Algerine, (Lieut. Mason,) and Starling, (Lieut. Kellett) passing ahead, cutting through the rafts on the right bank, and engaging a part of the war junks, the Hebe and Louisa tenders taking part, at the same time, under cover of the ships' guns; the flotilla with the marines was brought up in admirable order by Captain Bouchier, and upon the signal given, stormed and completed the capture of this part of the enemy's works, notwithstanding a most determined resistance on the part of the Tartar troops. From this battery the vessels and flotilla moved forward, and carried the other defences in succession amounting in the whole to one hundred and twenty-three guns.

By the great care of Captain Nias, his officers, and ship's company, the Herald was brought over the flats, and entered the reach during the engagement, which must have had considerable effect upon the enemy, by dividing their attention, not knowing what other force might be in reserve.

Of Captain Bouchier, whose high character is so well known to you, Sir, and the service, I cannot speak sufficiently strong for the manner in which he conducted the forces under his immediate command, not only leading them into action in admirable order, but keeping them together in readiness for any outbreak of the immense population of such a crowded city, and I cannot refrain mentioning his conspicuous and energetic exertions in towing off the burning junks, which were drifting upon the suburbs of Canton, and soon would have evidently set fire to that part of the city, and involved the destruction of the whole, in which he reports he was ably assisted by the officers under his direction. My thanks are also due to that excellent officer, Captain Bethune, and to Commanders Belcher, Warren, Barlow, and Clarke, for their great zeal. The Royal Marines under Lieut. Stransham, of the Calliope, assisted by Lieutenants Daniel, Hewitt, Marriot and Polkinghorne, were as usual conspicuous for their gallant, steady, soldierly bearing. I have, however, to regret that Lieutenant Stransham, in exerting himself to destroy the works, was suddenly exposed to a heavy explosion, by which he has been considerably burned, but continues at his post; to Lieutenants Kellett and Collison and Mr. Brown, Master of the Calliope, every favourable consideration is due, for having made themselves particularly useful in sounding, and afterwards conducting several men of war safely to an anchorage off the city of Canton; indeed my sincere gratitude is due to every officer, seaman and marine employed on this service, for their zeal and spirited conduct, from which it is hoped the most beneficial results will ensue.

His Excellency, Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary, ever on the alert, has done me the honour to be with me throughout these operations, and to whom my best thanks are due for his support and assistance on all occasions.

By Lieutenant Paul, who you kindly attached to me, I enclose a return of casualties, which I am happy to say are inconsiderable, and bring before you the Officers employed in the flotilla on this service, with a return of ordnance destroyed in the defences near Canton.

Your presence at the close of the action releases me from going further into detail.

From the various reports brought in, we have been able to ascertain, that the enemy's loss has been about four hundred men.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) T. HERBERT, Captain.

List of the Ships, Steamers, Boats, &c. employed at the Capture of Canton, on the 16th instant.

H. M. ship Herald, Captain Nias; H. M. sloop Modeste, Commander Eyres; H. M. sloop Hyacinth, Commander Warren; H. M. brig Algerine, Lieutenant Mason. Tenders.—H. M. schooner Starling, Lieutenant Kellett;