



The London Gazette

EXTRAORDINARY.

Published by Authority.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 1, 1857.

Admiralty, August 1, 1857.

THE Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, at a late hour last night, received Despatches from Rear-Admiral Sir Michael Seymour, of which the following are copies:

OPERATIONS IN CANTON RIVER.

No. 133.
Sir,

*Calcutta, at Hong Kong,
June 10, 1857.*

I HAVE the honour to report proceedings in the Canton River since my letter by the packet of 25th May.

2. The arrival of the Tribune and Amethyst having enabled me to reinforce Commodore Honourable C. G. J. B. Elliot, the senior officer in the river, that officer at once commenced offensive operations against the junk forces; and on the 25th and 27th ultimo, he took the gun-boats and the boats of Her Majesty's ships under his orders, up the Escape Creek, against the fleet which has been so long stationed in its inner waters, where he had the good fortune to capture or destroy about forty Mandarin war-junks, in a manner which has called forth my entire approval. I beg to invite the attention of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to Commodore Elliot's enclosed report of his proceedings, and to the officers he has named for their conduct in the affair.

3. In my letter, No. 119, I signified my intention of proceeding up the Canton River. I accordingly embarked in the Coromandel steam tender, Lieutenant Sholto Douglas commanding, on the 29th May, and with the remaining gun-boats, and the boats of Her Majesty's ship Calcutta, under the command of Commander H. R. Rolland, arrived the same day at the second bar.

4. I was reluctantly under the necessity of depriving myself of the urgently proffered services of my Flag Captain, Wm. K. Hall, whose presence at Hong Kong has long, under trying circumstances, proved most beneficial to the colony.

5. Having now an adequate force at my disposal, I lost no time in taking the necessary steps

for an attack on the war junks, which have been visible up the Fatsham Creek since 4th January last, when they made so determined and well arranged an attempt to recapture the Macao Fort and block up the channel. The enclosed copy of a General Memorandum to the squadron, and abstract statement (numbered 2 and 3) will shew my arrangements and the disposition and nature of the force selected for the purpose, which proceeded on the 31st May to the upper part of the river.

6. Just before daybreak on the 1st of June I advanced up the Fatsham Creek in the Coromandel, the Haughty following, having in both vessels detachments of seamen, under the command of Commodore the Honourable Charles Elliot, and of Royal Marines in charge of Captain Robert Boyle, R.M., and the other officers and boats attached to the First Division, in order to capture a fort with outworks, mounting 19 guns, on an advanced elevated point, which commanded the approach to the position occupied by the junk forces. The flight of several signal rockets showed that the Chinese were fully alive to our proceedings. When within about 1500 yards of the fort the Coromandel grounded on a barrier of sunken junks filled with stones, and the enemy opened fire. The landing party of seamen and marines were immediately put in the boats, and sent ahead, and under a very heavy fire of round and grape, in which the junk fleet joined, the fort was almost immediately in our possession, Commodore Elliot setting the good example of being one of the first in it. The landing was partially covered by the fire from the Haughty. One or two of the guns in the fort were immediately turned on the war junks. Happily this important service was effected without loss. The position was a remarkably strong one, and, defended by a body of resolute troops, might have bid defiance to any attack. The Haughty, having landed her party, went on with Commodore Elliot and the boats of the 1st Division, to co-operate with Commodore Keppel. I ordered a portion of the Royal Marines, under