

insist on exchanging the ratifications at the capital within the period stipulated in the Treaty, and on a personal reception by the Emperor for the purpose of delivering to him Her Majesty's autograph letter. I could not doubt that the task of extorting a reception at Pekin in a form implying a surrender on the part of the Emperor of his pretensions to national superiority, would be more difficult than obtaining a recognition of our equality on paper; and that the Chinese Government, in accordance with its usual policy, would endeavour, by prescribing the route I was to follow, by limiting the number of my attendants, and by bad arrangements during the journey, to put me in the degrading position hitherto occupied by foreign Envoys, and recover by this means the prestige it had lost by our successful *coup de main* of last year. To prevent such a result, and to receive free access to the capital in future on becoming terms, I decided, after mature reflection, on proceeding by the river, the natural highway to Tien-tsin, under the British flag, as its presence at that place would establish in the eyes of the Chinese that our visits to Pekin are a matter of right, not of favour.

M. de Bourboulon, whom I consulted before deciding on the course to be pursued, entertained views similar to mine, and wrote a despatch to the Commissioners in the same sense.

I could not, however, in face of the unsatisfactory information I had received, hope that the Chinese Government would agree to such a complete revolution of its mode of dealing with foreigners, unless I was backed by a sufficient force to inspire it with alarm. I accordingly consulted with Admiral Hope and Sir Charles van Straubenzee on this point. Several gun-boats and part of the squadron had been dispatched by Sir Michael Seymour to Shanghai, previous to my arrival in China, to be ready to accompany me to the north. This measure had been adopted before unfavourable intelligence had been received from that quarter.

We agreed, on consultation, that the force dispatched was not large enough to produce the desired impression. It was accordingly strengthened, particularly in the class of vessels that can cross the bar, and brought up to an equality with that which accompanied the allied Ambassadors last year. The larger the force, the less likelihood, judging from our experience of the Chinese character, there would be of a collision.

On arriving at Shanghai, where I proceeded as soon as my French colleague was ready, I found, as I anticipated, the Commissioners armed with pretexts to detain me, and prevent my visit to the Peiho. Their letters, though moderate in tone, alluded to the three principal clauses of the Treaty, and proposed to re-open discussion upon them. Had I accepted this overture, and abandoned the course laid down in my letter of the 16th May, they would have inferred that I was to be "soothed and controlled," and would have postponed the ratifications, with the intention of obtaining my assent to conditions which would have deprived these clauses of their practical efficacy. This view is confirmed by the fact that they were not in possession of the ratified Treaties, the Chinese Government having thus confined them to the task of gaining time, if nothing else, by renewing negotiations, reserving meanwhile in its own hands the power of exchanging the ratifications or not, as it might seem expedient, after the result of the interviews had been communicated to it.

I think that the Commissioners themselves were

acting rather in obedience to their instructions from Pekin, than in the expectation that their attempts to detain us here would be successful. For as soon as they received my letter, stating that I would not enter into discussions until the ratifications were exchanged, and declining any interview with them at Shanghai, the twelve-month allowed by Treaty for the exchange having almost expired, they changed entirely their tone. They acknowledged the propriety of abiding by the terms of the Treaty, and stated that they had memorialised the Emperor to send down a high officer to Tien-tsin, whom we should find on our arrival ready to conduct us in time to the capital. Though they hinted at a journey by land from the river's mouth, and wished me to anchor the squadron outside the bar, they did not state that orders had been given to prevent us entering the river, and making use of it to reach the town of Tien-tsin.

Admiral Hope left a day before the reply of the Commissioners was received, being desirous of making the passage under sail. The place of rendezvous was fixed at the Sha-loo-tien Islands, whence he was to communicate to the authorities the approaching arrival of the Ministers of England and France, en route for Tien-tsin, and inquire whether orders had been given for our reception.

I announced his departure the next day to the Commissioners, and suggested the propriety of their proceeding to the Peiho on board one of the steam-ships, owned by Chinese, lying here, by which means they would be able to reach it in time to receive us. They declined doing so, on the ground that they could not adopt so unusual a method of travelling without the Emperor's permission. This may be so, but I am inclined to think they shared in the feeling expressed in confidence by the most enlightened of their assistants, that he would not go to the North, as there would be trouble, and that the Emperor and his counsellors were so unreasonable that they could not be brought to terms without another lesson.

M. de Bourboulon and I left Shanghai four days after the receipt of the letter of the Commissioner, in order to afford time for the memorial to reach the Emperor, and for the necessary orders to be given, should he be inclined to accord us a friendly reception, and carry out the recommendations it contained.

Mr. Ward, the American Minister, accompanied us at their express invitation, having claimed, under the most favoured nation clause, the right to exchange the ratifications at Pekin and present his credentials to the Emperor.

My despatch of the 5th instant, which is forwarded by the present opportunity, gives in detail the events that took place at the Peiho. I have only to remark, in explanation of the course pursued, that we found ourselves off the mouth of the river, which forms the highway to Pekin, within a few days of the expiration of the period fixed by the Treaty for the exchange of the ratifications. On requesting a passage to be opened for us, and explaining the peaceful objects of the mission, we were informed that there was no authority on the spot; that the fort and barriers were not constructed by order of the Government, but by the people, who had built and garrisoned them for their protection against rebels, not to keep us out of the river. In proceeding to remove them we, therefore, violated no order of the Imperial Government, and, had we been successful, the Government could, and would, no doubt, have disavowed entirely the acts of those who opposed us. At the