

promise given, named Mr. Oliphant and myself as his deputies.

Up to this time they had not breathed a word regarding the real matter of their mission. They were doubtless in much embarrassment as to the mode of introducing it; and the opinions of Ho, who drew his inspiration from Wang and Sieh, the two chiefs of his provincial staff, both able, and intimately *liés*, had, I feel satisfied, in no way diminished their difficulty in approaching the retraction of a Treaty concession.

At length, on the 22nd October, reassured by the favourable progress of the Tariff and its concomitants, they, with evident delicacy and diffidence, declared the true object of their coming. Moralising briefly on the end of negotiations, they pointed out that those at Tien-tsin were conducted so completely under pressure of an armed force as to leave no place for deliberation; the Emperor had, accordingly, specially commissioned them to come to Shanghae, "earnestly to press a matter which could be the common advantage of both parties." Among the conditions extorted there were some of real injury to China, which there had been no opportunity of explaining; of these they name one only—the residence, in permanence, of a British Minister at Pekin. As the Queen of England has an option, by Treaty, they beg Her Majesty may be prayed to decide that the Minister shall only visit Pekin on occasion. They avow that this condition is most irksome to China, and, in Chinese fashion, they strive to show how irksome it will be to us. A rude and numerous Tartar soldiery; the unacquaintance of metropolitan officials with foreign affairs; the temper of the population—these are the dangers which should incline us to forego this one—to us useless, and, for the reasons enumerated perilous—privilege; the more readily to forego it, as, on the other hand, we are gainers to a considerable extent in the many which we should still retain.

Looking back to the Tien-tsin period, we call to mind that the Commissioners, although committed in their letter of the 11th June, 1858, to the declaration, that "to a Minister's permanent residence there was properly no objection," and to the proposition that, the recent collision considered, the Minister had better live at Tien-tsin—an official residence being assigned him at Pekin—had attempted on the 21st June to recede from these proposals.

They had, they said, received a Decree, desiring them to do their best to persuade Lord Elgin to give up this invidious privilege, "the north being cold, and excessively dusty;" also with it the right to open Chin-kiang, the right to circulate in the interior before the people should have been duly warned, the right to navigate the Great River, by which we should drive the Chinese out of the field.

On all these points they again made a fight at their conference with Mr. Bruce on the 24th June. On the evening of the 25th they made a last effort, through Count Poutiatine and Mr. Reed, to dissuade Lord Elgin from insisting on the residence of a Minister, and the right of British merchants to circulate in the interior, pleading that, unless his Lordship gave way on those points, their lives would be forfeited.

Lord Elgin standing firm, they urged, even on the morning of the 26th itself, a modification of the text, by which the Minister might be authorized to be constantly in residence at Pekin, instead of entitled to reside there, without moving, a change which, as liberty of his movements is secured in another Article, was adopted.

These, with the addition of the surrender of Canton, are the questions on which, according to the Canton letter, the Emperor instructed the

Commissioners to stand out, and it is upon these I gather, from their letters of the 27th and 28th May, the Commissioners would have engaged Mr. Bruce in discussion, had he accorded the interview they proposed. They had, withal, another end to gain.

Lord Elgin met their request of the 22nd October by an emphatic declaration that it lay not with him to abate one tittle of the Treaty. He pointed out the real object and advantages of diplomatic relations as established in Europe, and briefly adverting to past misunderstandings between our countries, expressed his doubt that the Imperial Government could provide guarantee for the maintaining of peace, equivalent to that supplied by the presence of a Minister at Pekin.

The Commissioners, on the 28th October, admit that our Minister's right to permanent residence is incontestable, but the exercise of it will humiliate China in the eyes of her subjects. They therefore again pray Lord Elgin to move the Queen to use the option the Treaty leaves Her Majesty in their favour, and there is no satisfactory arrangement they are not ready to make.

Lord Elgin undertook to submit the correspondence to Her Majesty's Government, and to recommend that if Her Majesty's Minister were properly received next year, and full effect given to the Treaty in all other particulars, the Minister should be directed to choose a residence elsewhere, and to visit the capital either periodically or when business required it.

The Tariff negotiations were now brought to a close, and Lord Elgin announced his intention to proceed up the Yang-tze, to see what ports it would eventually be desirable to open.

The Commissioners acquiesced with a good grace, promised to send an officer to wait on his Lordship, and to advise the authorities of the provinces he would have to traverse of his approach.

This was partly in fulfilment of their undertaking to make any satisfactory arrangement, partly, I feel sure, from words that fell from the Judge, in the hope that we should have a profitable collision with the insurgents at Nankin.

At Hankow we found a proclamation announcing that the English, French, and American nations were come to look at at the place, but not to trade, so the people need not be alarmed. There was not, it is scarce necessary to observe, any sign of alarm, except that produced by the official runners and such persons, who at first insisted on forming our escort, and in that capacity unnecessarily thrashed the crowds that assembled round us, and used every effort to prevent the tradespeople from taking our money. The people themselves were here, as throughout the whole 600 miles of our journey, civil, inoffensive, and eager for trade.

I regard the policy of the Government in this to have been the same it has long adopted at Canton—to promote an aversion to foreign intercourse among the people, and to impress on foreigners that the people are hostile and hard to control. The doctrine finds its place, as we have seen, among the arguments against a Minister's residence at Pekin.

On his return to Shanghae in January, Lord Elgin found the news from Canton still far from satisfactory. Just as he was about to start for Hankow, the Commissioners had mooted the question of that city's rendition, and the payment of the indemnity, but had received no positive answer as to the course his Lordship proposed to take. They had also requested us, by letter, to adopt the same arrangement as the French. They had written, besides, a circular to the British, French, and American Ministers, regarding the future issue of passports, and various other points