

suitable preparations may be made for his reception at Tien-tsin, and his journey to Peking with the ratified Treaties and the autograph letter of Her Britannic Majesty, reached the Commissioners on the 27th, and their proceedings from this date are deserving of close attention.

Mr. Bruce found at Shanghai, on the 6th June, three despatches from the Commissioners, the first dated the 27th May, the day on which the second admits his letter of the 16th May had arrived; also admits that Lord Elgin's last letter, announcing his departure, had reached them on the 29th March. They had remained, nevertheless, because his Lordship had said he would return to discuss various questions, which they do not enumerate. His successor, who is, of course, equally competent with himself, is bound, they think, to take up the pending discussion with them, and with all speed, as the day named for the exchange of ratifications draws near.

The second, which is dated the 28th May, acknowledging Mr. Bruce's of the 16th, urges that an important affair like the exchange of ratifications cannot be hurried through as he proposes; repeats that Lord Elgin's letters had kept them at Shanghai, the journey from which place to Peking would take two months; none but they themselves could represent the Chinese Government in the matter; there was no one to receive Mr. Bruce at Tien-tsin, and nothing ready; they therefore propose that Mr. Bruce instead of waiting "up there," where he will find it very hot, should put off his departure, and grant them an interview. This is accompanied by another of the same date, in which, insisting again on Lord Elgin's engagement to return and discuss various questions, they beg to enumerate those of which he had disposed and those left unsettled.

He had agreed, they say:—

1st. That the coming visit to Peking was to be exceptional; the Minister was not constantly to be at Peking.

2nd. That his visit to Hankow was exceptional; our movements were henceforth to be in accordance with the Treaty stipulations.

3rd. That none but respectable persons were to obtain passports, for the issue of which regulations must be devised. The Canton question was not settled, and Lord Elgin had promised to go further into this.

To take the last first, Lord Elgin had expressly told the Commissioners that the Canton question must be settled, and promptly, according to the Separate Article, which prescribes payment at Canton to be arranged by the Canton authorities. Before he left the south, Mr. Bruce had ascertained in May that the Canton authorities had no knowledge of this stipulation, or, if they had, were without any instructions to give it effect.

The other three are the ever-recurring clauses of difficulty; the original modification of the first being further modified by total omission of the conditions on which Her Majesty's Government, as the Commissioners had been duly apprised in Lord Elgin's last letter, would consent to modify it. The other two are stated as they stand, I can only suppose to draw from Mr. Bruce some such acquiescence in what it would have been literally hard for him to dispute, as might preclude the possibility of his suggesting any arrangement for the anticipation of the Treaty terms, the far receding extinction of the rebels, before which no British subject can by Treaty claim to enter the region they infest.

Recalling the pertinacity with which the Commissioners have revived their objection to our enjoyment of the privileges here adverted to, the statements in the Canton letter, and in other quarters, of the Emperor's violent opposition to

the concession of them, when we see them now, we should have said needlessly, reproduced once more, we can only infer that some further limitations were contemplated.

A Chinese, last year my head clerk, but promoted, after the Treaty, for his supposed knowledge of foreign affairs to a mandarin of the fifth grade, and now attached to Kweiliang, called twice on Mr. Lay in the spring, first to ascertain whether we would agree to exchange ratifications at Shanghai; secondly, if we would consent to proceed, overland; thence to Peking. The latter, be it observed, is the time-honoured form of introducing the periodical missions from Anam, Lewschew, and other dependent States, into Peking; the form which enables China to maintain before her subjects that show of surveillance and patronage by which she has ever sought to negative a barbarian State's assumption of equality with herself. The American Treaty enables China to give the United States' Minister such a reception. So long as he does not insist on an audience, no tradition will be violated. It does not practically secure him access to Peking for any diplomatic purpose.

The above proposal accepted, our circulation under passports would infallibly have been infected by the precedent. No one would have travelled except under an official protection, resembling that proposed years ago by Kiyung for the neighbourhood of Canton—a protection so irksome and profitless to the few who availed themselves of it, that travelling, if it were to be under such auspices, was soon foregone altogether.

This is, of course, speculation; nor is it more when I declare my belief that the Commissioners rather hoped than expected that we should halt at Shanghai, as they proposed, within three weeks of the day we were by Treaty required to be at Peking. They were, I imagine, acting under orders to try everything that might prevent our visit to the capital.

On receiving Mr. Bruce's peremptory reply of the 8th of June, followed by his supplementary note of the 11th, the Commissioners laid down their arms. His letter of the 8th, they wrote, had been sent to the Emperor, who would receive it in some nine days. They had moved him to send a high officer to Tien-tsin to meet Mr. Bruce, whom they recommended to leave his ships of war outside the bar, and proceed in light marching order to Peking. They cannot themselves take steam as Mr. Bruce proposes, as the Emperor has not authorized them to do so, but in obedience to His Majesty's commands (when received does not appear), they will go north with all speed. The suggestions respecting the anchorage of his squadron, is brought in, as it were, casually: "The Commissioners would wish," &c. There is no hint that the route by the Tien-tsin River is *condamnée*, or that the attempt to ascend it will be opposed.

Yet they must have known that opposition was imminent. The high authority, cited before, assured my informant that so certain was he of a collision, that he should keep himself out of the way. The Court, he said, was not disabused of its invincibility, nor would it be without another defeat. It was for all that not too proud to be treacherous, as we have found to our cost. Admiral Hope had sailed before the Commissioners' last letter was received, but his first proceedings, it is worthy of observation, actually filled the measure of their requirement. He approached the bar on the 17th, with only one steamer and two gun-boats, and the officer sent in to communicate with the forts crossed the bar in a ship's gig.

On the 20th, finding that the people on the