

IS THE

WAR WITH CHINA

A JUST ONE?

BY

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LATE OF THE HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S SERVICE IN CHINA.

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IS THE WAR WITH CHINA A JUST ONE?

THE daily increasing interest, which attaches itself to our pending dispute with China, may plead as my excuse for adding one more to the numerous pamphlets which have already appeared on the subject. That we are now actually at war with China, no one who has read the recent despatches can for a moment doubt. The two questions which now have to be answered are—First. Is the war a just one? Secondly. How is it likely to terminate? The British public are now really beginning to appreciate the importance of the question, and when one considers at a single view the immense magnitude of the interests at stake, one is rather surprised at the supineness and indifference with which on all former occasions our intercourse and disputes with China have been regarded in this country, than that now, when the real danger of the total loss of that trade has forced itself upon the public mind, it should excite a deep interest even in the midst of that heart-stirring contest for

political supremacy, which is now agitating every part of the kingdom.

I will commence by briefly recapitulating the various points at issue. On the continuance of the trade with China, Great Britain depends for the supply of an article, which long habit has rendered almost indispensable to the comforts of all classes of society. From the sovereign in her palace to the peasant in his cottage, how few there are who do not, both morning and evening, indulge in the use of the fragrant Chinese herb, and how seriously would the privation of it be felt! Again, let us look to the revenues of the country, the deficiencies of which are year by year becoming more alarming. Here we see, that the one article of tea produces little short of four millions sterling annually, and in India the much stigmatized opium trade has of late years added no less than two millions to the national resources. Thus six millions sterling are actually at stake, being nearly one-tenth part of the entire revenues of Great Britain and her Indian empire. But beyond this, how deep an interest must the manufacturers and merchants feel in the speedy settlement of this great question, not only on account of the large amount of property placed in jeopardy by the recent acts of treachery and violence committed by the Chinese government, but shut out as they are from many of the markets of European nations by the increasing industry and active competition of their own native looms, it is to the remote countries of the East that we must

look for outlets to our manufactures, and in the whole world, where is there one which holds out prospects at all equal to China? There you have a country containing a population of three hundred and sixty millions of intelligent, industrious, commercial people, abounding in wealth, and possessing two great staples, tea and silk, to give us in return for our cottons and woollens.

I need not enlarge more upon the importance of the China trade: now that we fear its loss we are all alive to its advantages. The object of this brief pamphlet is rather to combat an opinion which is very prevalent among those who have not deeply considered the subject, or possessed adequate means of information, that in the primary causes, which have led to the present state of affairs, our conduct towards China has been characterized by injustice and wrong; in fact, that we have throughout been the aggressors, and that the misconduct of our countrymen has forced the Chinese into the severe though somewhat irregular method of retaliation and punishment which they have adopted, and therefore any measures of hostility and aggression against them on account of what has happened would be to add violence to injury. Such are the arguments which during the last few months I have frequently heard in society. I have always endeavoured to combat them by giving my reasons for a contrary opinion, and I shall now merely reproduce the same line of arguments on

paper which I have so frequently repeated in conversation.

Some years ago, in 1836, I published a short pamphlet on the subject of our relations with China subsequently to the death of Lord Napier, in which to the best of my power I urged the necessity of hostile interference to avenge the insults which had been offered to us, and to place our affairs in that country on a more secure and respectable position. I then tried to lay down a basis on which I grounded our claim of resistance, and as the case appears to me now still more applicable even than at that time, I will venture to quote my own words.

“ In advocating resistance to what I cannot help considering the unjust and oppressive system adopted by the Chinese towards foreigners, I am in no way prepared to dispute the general principle, that if a stranger goes to reside in a foreign country he is bound to obey its laws and conform to its regulations ; but, on the other hand, it always presupposes that your intercourse is with a civilized nation, that the laws and regulations to which your compliance is required are clear and defined, and that they give a reasonable protection to life and property.”

Now in every point of our present dispute the very reverse of this is the case. The Chinese government have always refused to give us any defined laws and regulations for our guidance,

and those highest in authority have always been the first to set the example in violating those laws which they professed to be most imperative. They have set at defiance all international laws recognized by civilized nations for the protection of life and property, by an indiscriminate seizure of all British subjects within their power, for an alleged infraction of certain laws, which for years had been a dead letter, or rather of which the chief violators had been those high functionaries who promulgated them. But these are vague accusations, let us come to particulars. There can be no doubt that the present crisis arises entirely from the decided steps which the Chinese government have recently taken to put a stop to the trade in opium. Against this trade, and those connected with it, a great degree of prejudice exists in the minds of many people in this country. Those who trade in it, and who are now claiming from the British government indemnity for the vast amount of property surrendered to their accredited agent, and by him delivered to the Chinese, are considered as lawless smugglers, who have no title to the protection of their own government. In the next few pages I shall, I trust, satisfactorily prove that the existence of this stigmatized traffic has not only been authorized, sanctioned, and approved of by both Houses of Parliament, with a thorough knowledge of all its anomalous features and its alleged illegalities, but also that it had attained its actual position under the pro-

tecting and fostering influence of all the highest officers of the Chinese government, paying its duties with equal regularity to that of any other article; and further, that this falsely called smuggling trade had for a series of many years been conducted with greater regularity, facility, and mutual confidence, than any trade of similar magnitude in any part of the world. People in England are naturally in the habit of associating in their minds the word smuggling with ideas of lawless violence. If, therefore, I can fairly establish the three points I have assumed, I think that I, in common with other British merchants in China connected with the opium trade, have a fair right to repudiate such a stigma on our characters. We feel that in our conduct there we have done nothing we have cause to be ashamed of; we seek for the closest scrutiny into our actions; and we trust, that we shall have an opportunity given to us of proving all that I am now about to assert, before a committee of the House of Commons.

In support and proof of my first proposition, I need only refer to the evidence taken before Parliament in 1832, in which every peculiarity of the opium trade had been stated in evidence, especially as regarded its nominal illegality in China. It was however decided, that "In the present state of the revenue of India, it does not appear advisable to abandon so important a source of revenue; a duty upon opium being a tax which falls principally upon the foreign consumer, and which appears

upon the whole less liable to objection than any other which could be substituted." The revenue then collected was less than a million sterling, since which it has increased two-fold. After this I think no one will venture to dispute that the opium trade was openly sanctioned by the British government, and that consequently it has a right to its protection.

But many will say, that the second proposition is not so easily established, for that although the venality of some officers of government might afford facilities for the infraction of the laws of the empire, yet that no prescriptive right is thereby established. This might be true were the charge of corruption only applicable to a few, and were it carried on with some appearance of secrecy; but when it is notorious that all the highest functionaries not only connive at, but participate in the profits of a trade, the existence of which is known to the sovereign, who in no way manifests disapprobation of the conduct of these officers, then I think I have some claim to support my position that such a trade cannot fairly be considered smuggling in the ordinary acceptation of the term. It is a well known fact, that for several years past the duty upon the importation of opium, paid by the Chinese purchaser, was from 60 to 80 dollars, say 70: upon 16,000 chests this would amount to 1,120,000 dollars or about 280,000*l.* annually, which was divided between the viceroy, the hoppo, the admiral of the station, and their

dependants. There is a singular fact connected with a small fee or perquisite of a dollar per chest, which especially belonged to the admiral. It would appear that this sum had not been very regularly paid, so in order to secure himself against being cheated by his own countrymen, his excellency, some years ago, sent a very civil message to the various depot ships at Lintin, requesting as a special favour that his perquisite might be collected on board the foreign ships and paid over to him monthly, which had actually been done so long as the regular trade lasted.

It is quite a mistake to imagine that there was any mystery or secrecy in the mode of carrying on the opium trade during its peaceful and regular days; I am especially alluding to the period between 1821, when it was forced to quit Whampoo, to 1837, when real measures for its suppression were commenced. During the greater part of that period I was in China myself in the Company's service, and although we as Company's servants had nothing to do with its disposal in that country, we still had ample opportunities of seeing and knowing the mode in which it was conducted. At that time there must have been from thirty to forty fine Chinese boats, each pulling from thirty to fifty oars, employed in the trade. These boats plied up and down the river in open day, passing to and fro, in front of the forts and government cruisers, without any notice whatever being taken of them. In Canton, boating was a favourite diversion, and we

had several first-rate six oared London wherries, in which we used generally to go out for a pull about four in the afternoon, and many a race have we held with these large opium boats, which generally used to arrive at Canton about that hour. For the honour of London wherries I must say, that I never saw a fifty oared boat which we could not beat. Several times, during the winter, certain large boats used to leave Canton bearing divers foreign articles for the imperial palace. These boats carried the imperial flag, which privileged them against all search or examination, and thus each flotilla carried away several hundred chests of opium for sale and distribution in the various towns along the road, forming another valuable perquisite of office to some functionary.

It is hardly possible to doubt the cognizance of the Pekin government in this trade, when we consider the publicity with which it was carried on. It is also notorious that the appointments at Canton were considered the most lucrative in the whole empire, chiefly on account of the opium trade. The *hoppo* was always a Tartar of the imperial household, generally a relative of some favourite sultana of the imperial harem, who was sent to Canton to enrich himself by participating in the golden harvest to be reaped there. I will here mention an anecdote which bears on the point, as proving the general publicity of the existence of the opium trade in all corners of the empire. When in the Amherst on the north-east

coast of China, in 1832, while staying at Shanghai. I had a public interview with several officers of rank, who were especially appointed to meet me and demonstrate the impossibility of our being permitted to trade there without previously obtaining the imperial sanction; and the chief mandarin made me a long speech on the inviolability of the laws of the celestial empire, to which I replied: "As to the inviolability of your laws, gentlemen, you must well know, that on all points, relative to foreign intercourse, there is not a day in the year in which they are not broken; and the reason is self-evident, their severity is such that it is impracticable to enforce their observance." I then quoted several points, and added, "I need not allude to the mode in which the laws are obeyed in regard to opium." This remark created a general smile, and the mandarin interrupted me in a good-humoured way saying, "Hush! say no more on that point, *we all know it.*"

Nor was there any more pretence of concealment in the way in which it was used. All conversant with Chinese affairs know, that the chief consumers were the officers and employés of government, from the highest to the lowest. The public smoking houses were open to all, and no one who has been in Canton can have failed observing opium pipes, with all the apparatus for smoking, publicly exhibited for sale, not only in shops, but by common hawkers in the streets.

I will now briefly explain the part which the

foreign merchant performed in selling the opium. On its arrival in China it was stored in one of the depot ships at Lintin. A Chinese, wishing to purchase, went to the office of the merchant in Canton; the price being adjusted, and the Chinese having paid the value in hard dollars, he received a simple cheque directing certain chests of opium to be delivered to the bearer. After this, the seller had nothing further to do with the transaction, the Chinese purchaser making all arrangements for its introduction. In this mode sales to the amount of no less than 20,000*l.* and more have frequently been made without either the buyer or the seller having seen the article, such was the confidence of the Chinese in the well known mark of the East India Company, and in the good faith of the foreign merchant. I again confidently ask, in what part of the world is any trade to this extent conducted with equal facility? Can such a trade as this be considered as smuggling? The trade on the east coast was carried on by well appointed foreign vessels, the commanders of which were instructed to avoid all collision with the authorities, and to maintain friendly intercourse as much as possible with the natives. They were generally on the best terms with the officers in command of the war junks, who were frequently their best customers in this trade. The dollars were always brought on board the vessels previous to delivering the opium, and the arrangements for introducing it into the country were left to the

Chinese purchaser. No collisions took place during the ten years and more that this trade flourished, although the Imperial Government had perfect knowledge of its existence, as is manifest from the numerous edicts issued against it.

I will here add a few words to correct a very prevalent impression that the Americans have had but little to do with the opium trade: on the contrary, with one or two exceptions, every American house in China was engaged in the trade. There were American depot ships at Lintin and on the coast. One of the sixteen hostages detained was the head of a highly respectable American firm; in fact, both in the acts which originated the dispute, and the insults and outrages consequent thereon, our Transatlantic brethren have had their full share.

In 1836 some interruptions took place. The question of whether the trade should be legalized or not was agitated in the Imperial cabinet, and most unfortunately, as results will show, was finally decided in the negative. About that time a boat with sycee silver having been seized after having paid the regular fees, all the Chinese concerned in the opium trade conceiving that the government had broken faith with them, threw up their engagement, and a temporary stoppage of the trade took place. Long negotiations followed between the leading opium dealers and the government, the result of which was, that the former feeling that they could no longer have confidence in the fulfilment of the

mutual compact, at once destroyed and burnt all the opium boats. The viceroy of Canton was thus reduced to a serious dilemma as to how the opium trade should be conducted, and the mode he adopted to arrange the matter was strange indeed. He built four of the largest sized boats, each pulling fifty oars, carrying his own flag, *and with these he carried on the trade himself, through the agency of his own son.* This fact was so notorious, that the whole of Canton was placarded with pasquinades in doggerel rhymes, about the viceroy, his four boats, and his hopeful son. About the same period, for the first time in the history of the opium trade, foreigners commenced actually to carry on a smuggling trade themselves in European boats.

I must however remark, that although the European smuggling boats, encouraged by the impunity with which for a long time they carried on their trade, increased in number until there were nearly thirty employed in the traffic, landing their opium by daylight in the very front of the custom houses at Canton, yet with a few exceptions, the leading mercantile houses in Canton refused any participation, direct or indirect, in such proceedings, justly considering that they were neither respectable nor safe, and that sooner or later they must lead to confusion and difficulty. As was anticipated this took place: a seizure was made of some opium landing in open day in the front of the factories; the trade was stopped, negotiations followed, and ended by Cap-

tain Elliot exerting his authority to compel all the boats to quit the river. This was in December 1838. The measures of the government had been gradually increasing in severity, and from June the deliveries of opium had gradually diminished till they came to a total cessation. In this state affairs remained till the arrival of the long expected Commissioner Lin, in March. I will not attempt to recapitulate his acts, they are so generally known, but I will proceed to question their justice.

Notwithstanding the support and encouragement which had been previously given to the opium trade, no one can dispute that the Chinese government were perfectly at liberty to put a stop to it whenever they thought proper; but I do utterly deny that they had any right to proceed as they did. Had they seized every opium vessel along the coast, and confiscated the ships and cargoes, foreign governments could not with justice have complained. But how do the Chinese act? Not a vessel on the coast do they touch or molest; but proceeding without examination or proof they make an indiscriminate seizure of all foreigners in Canton, many of them totally unconnected with the trade; deprive them of their liberty; debar them of food or water; threaten their lives, unless property is surrendered which was totally out of the power of the Chinese. Among these prisoners thus threatened was Her Majesty's superintendent. And here I must mention a fact, which has never been brought forward to the public in as prominent a

manner as the importance of the subject requires. Only three months previously, for the first time in the history of foreign intercourse with the Chinese empire, Captain Elliot, Her Majesty's chief superintendent, had been publicly recognised as a British officer of rank unconnected with trade, and by imperial authority permitted to reside in China to take charge of all affairs of the British nation. This important concession, which had always before been pertinaciously refused, was in December 1838 formally conceded to Captain Elliot. He was addressed by the viceroy as an officer of the fourth degree of rank, and an arrangement was specially agreed upon that on all occasions of importance, communications should be made to him through the Kwang-chow-foo and Kwang-heep, the one the civil governor of the city and district of Canton, the other the commander of the garrison, both men of rank and consideration, and who were selected as equals to the British superintendent. It really appears almost as if this long-contested point had been granted at this moment, merely by way of rendering the insult about to be offered to us more glaring and outrageous. Let a parallel case be drawn with any European nation, and for a moment suppose, that in Petersburgh, or Constantinople, on account of some alleged smuggling of British subjects, our ambassador and all our countrymen had been seized and their lives threatened, would one month or one week elapse without a declaration of

war? And why, I ask, should the Chinese enjoy an exemption from the rules which guide our intercourse with all other nations of the world? I never for a moment suppose that they are likely to enjoy such impunity; but in asking this question, I address myself to those who maintain that the Chinese have given no cause or justification for hostile measures.

These are the injuries and aggressions committed by the Chinese in the first stage of the question; and of themselves more than justifying, rather compelling, our Government to demand redress and reparation. What then shall be said of their subsequent proceedings? Every stipulation entered into by Captain Elliot regarding the surrender of the opium was fulfilled to the letter, every pledge given by the commissioner was shamelessly broken, as is stated in a very able document, published and circulated by that officer on the 21st of June, in public justification of his acts which had been so falsely represented. This paper is so important that I will here insert it.

PUBLIC NOTICE TO HER MAJESTY'S SUBJECTS

“The officer deputed by the Commissioner, and the Keun-min-foo, having caused certain notices to be publicly placarded at Macao, inciting British merchants, commanders, and seamen to disregard the lawful injunctions of the Undersigned, he has this day transmitted to those authorities the accompanying declaration.

A copy of the same will be submitted to the Commissioners.

“(Signed)

CHARLES ELLIOT,

“ Macao, 21st June, 1839.

Chief Superintendent.

“ Macao, 21st June, 1839.

“ Elliot, &c., &c., learns that official notices have been publicly placarded and sent to the ships of his nation, inciting the English merchants, commanders, and seamen to disregard his lawful injunctions, issued in the name of his most gracious Sovereign. But wherefore are these notices silent upon the causes which have produced the conclusion of trade and intercourse at Canton? The High Commissioner has published his own communications to Elliot, but where are the replies?

“ These proceedings are highly inconsistent with the principles of peace and dignity; and Elliot must now declare the motives which have compelled him to require the merchants of his nation to leave Canton, and the ships no longer to return within the Bocca Tigris.

“ On the 24th March last Elliot repaired to Canton, and immediately proposed to put an end to the state of difficulty and anxiety, then existent, by the faithful fulfilment of the Emperor's will; and he respectfully asked that he and the rest of the foreign community might be set at liberty, in order that he might calmly consider and suggest adequate remedies for the great evils so justly denounced by his Imperial Majesty.

“ He was answered by a close imprisonment of more than seven weeks, with armed men day and night before his gates, under threats of privation of food, water, and life. Was this becoming treatment to the officer of a friendly nation, recognised by the emperor, and who had always performed his duty peacefully and irreproachably,

striving in all things to afford satisfaction to the provincial government ?

“ When it thus became plain that the Commissioner was resolved to cast away all moderation, Elliot knew that it was incumbent upon him to save the imperial dignity, and prevent some shocking catastrophe on the persons of an imprisoned foreign officer and two hundred defenceless merchants.

“ For these reasons of prevailing force he demanded from the people of his nation all the English opium in their hands, in the name of his Sovereign, and delivered it over to the Commissioner, amounting to 20,283 chests. That matter remains to be settled between the two Courts.

“ But how will it be possible to answer the Emperor for this violation of his gracious will, that these difficult affairs should be managed with thoughtful wisdom, and with tenderness to the men from afar? What will be the feelings of the most just Prince of his illustrious dynasty, when it is made manifest to him by command of her Britannic Majesty, that the traffic in opium has been chiefly encouraged and protected by the highest officers in the empire, and that no portion of the foreign trade to China has paid its fees to the officers with so much regularity as this of opium ?

“ Terrible indeed will be his Imperial Majesty’s indignation when he learns that the obligations into which the High Commissioner entered, under his seal, to the officers of a foreign nation were all violated !

“ The servants were not faithfully restored when one-fourth of the opium was delivered ; the boats were not permitted to run when one-half was delivered ; the trade was not really opened when three-fourths were delivered ; and the last pledge that things should go on as usual, when the whole was delivered, has been falsified by the

reduction of the factories to a prison, with one outlet; the expulsion of sixteen persons, some of them who never dealt in opium at all, some clerks, one a lad; and the proposal of novel and intolerable regulations.

“ Can a great moral and political reformation be effected at the sacrifice of all the principles of truth, moderation, and justice? Or is it believed that these spoliatory proceedings will extinguish the traffic in opium? Such hopes are futile, and the Emperor has been deceived.

“ But is it asked, on the other hand, whether the wise and just purposes of the Emperor cannot and should not be fulfilled? Most assuredly they can, and they ought.

“ It is certain, however, that the late measures of the Commissioner have retarded this accomplishment of the imperial pleasure, given an immense impulse to the traffic in opium, which was stagnant for several months before he arrived, and shaken the prosperity of these flourishing provinces.

“ It is probable that they will disturb the whole coasts of the empire, ruin thousands of families, foreign and native, and interrupt the peace between the Celestial Court and England, which has endured for nearly two hundred years.

“ The merchants and ships of the English nation do not proceed to Canton and Whampoa, because the gracious commands of the Emperor for their protection are set at nought; because the truth is concealed from his Imperial Majesty's knowledge; because there is no safety for a handful of defenceless men in the grasp of the government at Canton; because it would be derogatory from the dignity of their Sovereign and nation to forget all the insults and wrongs which have been perpetrated, till full justice be done, and till the whole trade and intercourse be placed upon a footing honourable and secure to this em-

pire and to England. That time is at hand: the gracious Sovereign of the English nation will cause the truth to be made known to the wise and august Prince on the throne of this empire, and all things will be adjusted agreeably to the principles of purest reason.

“ Elliot and the men of his nation in China submit the expressions of their deepest veneration for the great Emperor.

“ (Signed)

CHARLES ELLIOT,

“ Chief Superintendent.

“ (True copy)

EDWARD ELMSLIE,

“ Secretary and Treasurer to the Superintendents.”

What was the conduct of the Commissioner in reply to this paper? He fulminates edicts threatening destruction to all the British shipping in the waters of China unless they instantly enter the port; but as it is more in accordance with Chinese tactics to threaten than to act against parties prepared to defend themselves, the actual operations of this great government are confined to the massacre of the unarmed and defenceless crew of a passage boat, under circumstances of such peculiar atrocity, that even those who thought worst of the government were inclined to attribute the act to pirates in the disguise of government cruisers; but now it appears that the Commissioner has recognised the atrocity by rewarding the perpetrators. The Chinese navy have also exercised the fire rafts which were preparing to burn the whole fleet at Hongkong, in the destruction of a defenceless Spanish merchant brig, which the blundering villains

mistook for an English vessel. In addition to which deeds of heroism, it appears that on more than one occasion the Chinese soldiery have fired upon unarmed parties of English who had been peaceably taking a walk. They have endeavoured to cut off all supplies of provisions from the shipping, they have expelled all English families, including women and children, from their peaceful homes at Macao, and to sum up the deeds of outrage and iniquity, they have poisoned the wells in the vicinity of the shipping with arsenic and deleterious herbs. All these facts have doubtless been fully detailed in the despatches which have been sent to the Foreign Office, and all of which will shortly be submitted to the House of Commons.

By the latest accounts it appears, that notwithstanding all that had occurred, negotiations were going on between Captain Elliot and the Commissioner for a compromise, pending the receipt of instructions from home, and that under certain restrictions he had actually consented to permit the British trade to be carried on outside the Bogue. But here again the treachery and duplicity of the Chinese manifests itself. No sooner is the treaty agreed upon than it is violated. Captain Elliot proceeds with the *Volage* and *Hyacinth* to deliver a remonstrance to the Commissioner, who sends out the imperial fleet commanded by the descendant of the Chinese god of war, the immortal *Kwan-footsze*, to take Her Majesty's ships and bring them back in triumph. Here the aggression was mani-

festly Chinese, nor was it until the thirty war junks, containing certainly not less than four thousand men, had clearly manifested their intention to close in with and board Her Majesty's ships, which might together carry three hundred men, that our fire was opened; and sadly must the luckless descendant of Mars have been amazed at the destructive effect of the broadside of a British man of war. Six of their thirty were sunk in the space of half an hour, and from compassion the discomfited residue were allowed to retire. After this can any one doubt that the Chinese have commenced war with us, not we with them? But their day of reckoning is at hand, and dearly will they pay for the insults and outrages offered to the British nation. The last edict of the Chinese admiral is such a rich specimen of grandiloquent bombast, that I make no apology for republishing it here although it has already appeared in the daily papers. It is so good in its way that it will bear repetition.

PROCLAMATION OF ADMIRAL KWAN.

“Kwan, admiral of the Canton station, and leader of the forces (maritime) of the province, hereby issues the following proclamation, that all may know and understand:—

“Whereas I have just received a communication from their Excellencies the High Commissioner, Lin, and the Viceroy of Canton, Taug, to the following effect:—

“The English superintendent, Elliot, after having delivered the opium, petitioned us, begging for permission to

load his ships off Macao, to which petition we at the time gave our flat denial. The conduct of the said Superintendent from that time has been outrageous and unreasonable in the extreme; he has not caused the empty opium ships to get under weigh; he has not caused the depraved foreigners, expelled by imperial authority, to return to their country; some of his people having beat to death one of our native people, he obstinately refuses to give up the foreign murderer; the merchant vessels lately arrived he has so arranged that he will not permit them to enter the port, but allows them to sell the new drug in our seas as before; and our edicts, which have been from time to time transmitted him, he has stubbornly refused to receive; he has even gone such lengths as in his own person to lead on foreign ships against our cruisers, specially placed for the defence of Kowlung, raising thereby disturbances, and taking advantage of our absence to fire off his guns, thus wounding our mandarins and soldiers! Our valiant troops however returned their fire with a noise like a thunderbolt, upon which the foreigners, routed and dispersed, returned again to Tseem-shatsuy, where they cast anchor. And although on the 7th day of the 8th moon (Sept. 14, 1839), he (Elliot) went himself to Macao, and begged of the Portuguese governor to present a note from him to the Tung-che, Keun-min-foo (or mandarin of Cazabranca), in which he said that 'all he desired was peace and quietness,' yet we find that he merely commissioned him to deliver so many unmeaning words, and that there is not the slightest proof of his sincerity or submission. On the 9th day of the said month, he departed from Macao and returned again to Hong-Kong, and on the 10th day came a foreign vessel stealthily standing in for Kowlung, prying and spying about her, by which we can sufficiently see that he still cherishes foolish and presumptuous thoughts, and has no sense of

fear or repentance at his heart. Now our mandarins and troops for sea and land service being all assembled ready for action at the Bocca Tigris, I therefore address this communication to you, the admiral, that you draw up your fleet and army, and appoint a day when you will attack and subdue them. You must not permit them to loiter about at Tseem-shatsuy, forcing off their opium, and deluging the central flowery land with their poison! — and other words to that effect.

“ This having been duly received, I find that I, the admiral, rule over the whole of these seas, and my especial duty is to sweep them clean of the depraved and reprobate. Since then I have received a button of a leader of the army. I ought forthwith to appoint a day for the great gathering of my troops, but I, the said admiral, am descended from a family that dates as far back as the Han dynasty (2000 years ago): the line of my forefathers sprang from Hotung. My ancestor was the deified emperor Kwan-foot-tze (commonly called the Mars of China). Splendid and luminous was his fame! bright and dazzling the place of his imperial abode! The god-like warrior's ardent wish was to practise benevolence and virtue! his mind was grand and powerful as the winds and clouds! his heart genial and refulgent as the sun by day, or the moon by night! Now I, the said admiral, fly like an arrow to recompense the goodness of my country, and tremblingly receive the admonitions of my great ancestor. I deal not in deceits and frauds, nor do I covet the bloody laurels of the butcher. Remembering that Elliot alone is the head and front of offence (or ringleader in crime), and that probably the bulk of the foreigners have been intimidated or urged by him, were I suddenly to bring my forces and to commence the slaughter, I really fear that the gem and the common stone would be burnt up together. Therefore it is that I again issue this procla-

mation, which proceeds from my very heart and bowels, that it may be promulgated everywhere. O, ye foreigners, if you belong to those opium ships which have already delivered up their opium, or if you are among the number of those who have been banished the country by imperial command, ye must instantly proceed to the wide ocean, and, spreading your sails, get ye far hence! As regards the newly arrived merchantmen, which are lying anchored here in clusters like bees, in swarms like ants, do ye try and reflect for a little, at a time like this, and under circumstances such as these, how can you continue to carry on your clandestine trade, aiming after unlawful gains, by forcing into consumption your forbidden drug. As for you, who are honourable merchants, and follow after a lawful calling, still more ought ye not to go near to or herd with the others, lest that ye along with them encounter the same blazing torch; but ye ought instantly to shun such company and behold. This may yet preserve your lives. I, the admiral, entertain for you a mother's heart. The words I speak are as true as if spoken by the lips of Bhud himself. If, indeed, Elliot can yet repent and awake to a sense of the error of his ways, let him not object to come before me, confess his sins, and beg for mercy, in which case I myself will intercede for him! But if he still persist in remaining obstinately doltish as before, indulging in foolish expectation and perverse opposition, then, considering the good fortune and grandeur of our Celestial Empire, united with, or depending upon all the gods of heaven, just as in the case of the robber Listing, when the lightning struck him at dead of night, or in the case of the rebel Chang-kith-urh (the Prince Jehangir), when the banners waved and the earth was covered with iron weapons, so, still supported by the special protection of my holy ancestor, will in your case a terrible display of our majesty

be made! We have often enjoyed his divine patronage! Thus, then, the very gods and spirits cannot interfere in your behalf! O, ye foreigners, do ye all of you lend an attentive ear to these my words! A special proclamation!

“Taongwang, 19th year, 8th moon, and 16th day.

“Bocca Tigris, 23d September, 1839.”

Leaving the unfortunate Admiral Kwan to the protection of his celestial ancestors, who on this occasion appear to have treated him rather scurvily, I will proceed with my subject.

The opium question in all its bearings, but more especially as regards the liability of the British government for the acts of their accredited agent, has been so fully and ably treated by Mr. Warren, that no further remarks are requisite from me, further than earnestly to entreat all those who will be called upon to decide on the case, to read the irresistibly convincing line of arguments brought forward by that gentleman in support of his position. I for one, from the commencement, never have entertained a doubt that when the case was inquired into, the same spirit of justice, which in the emancipation of slaves induced the British Parliament to grant no less a sum than twenty millions sterling, rather than sanction private wrong, in the carrying into effect a great national measure, will also induce them to see that justice is done to those British merchants who surrendered their property in compliance with the orders of their

national representative. I now mean to subjoin a few remarks as to the merits or demerits of the trade, and the policy of the Chinese government in having endeavoured to suppress it, not with reference to the mode in which they have proceeded, but as a simple question of political economy.

Opium and spirituous liquors must both be looked upon nearly in the same light: both are occasionally useful stimulants, but if indulged in to excess are injurious to the health and demoralizing to the mind. It were perhaps better for mankind did neither exist. From the personal experience I have had in both countries, I have however no hesitation in expressing a decided opinion, that the injury to health and morals inflicted by the use of gin in England surpasses those of opium in China. I do not, however, at all set myself up as an advocate for the use of opium, and if the Chinese government could be considered as actuated by a sincere wish for the benefit of their subjects in their endeavours to suppress its use, I would give them full credit; but how can we believe that to be the case when it is evident that for forty years no real measures were taken against it, until it appeared that the balance of trade was thereby thrown against China, and the sycee silver was, as they express it, oozing out of the country. This is the real ground of all the recent measures of the Chinese. Public morality is merely the stalking horse.

There is a fact connected with the use of opium in China of much importance, and which has been but little noticed in this country, I allude

to the extensive cultivation of the poppy in several of the western provinces. This was first brought to our notice some ten years ago by edicts against it published in the Peking gazettes. From these it appears, that the manufacture of native opium was carried on to a large extent, and the general ground of complaint was, that good land, fit for growing rice, was devoted to this purpose. This was not lost sight of when the expediency of legalizing the trade was under consideration in 1836, and one of the strong arguments used in its favour was, that if legalized, the opium of native growth would in a great measure supersede that of foreign importation, and that the export of silver would be further checked. It is a singular fact, that in all the recent proceedings against the opium trade we hear nothing of any measures for the extirpation of the poppy at home.

And what has been the success of these extreme measures, which have already involved China in hostilities with this country, and which may have such fearful results to the empire? The opium trade is actually the only branch of commerce which is prospering, and by latest accounts it appears that along the whole line of coast, the natives were flocking on board the opium ships, bringing bags of dollars to purchase it. A chest of opium, which during the brief period of effective stoppage was unsalable at 200 dollars, was in November last readily selling at 1100 dollars. Twelve months ago, during the height of the effective stoppage, I well recollect in writing to India on the subject to have made use of the fol-

lowing expression: "In spite of all which has been done, the trade never can effectually be stopped. The Chinese might as easily dam up the Canton river between the Bogue forts; and even were that done, ten channels would be found for the one that was closed." Results prove that my anticipation was correct. The opium trade in China never can nor will be stopped. It would be as reasonable and as practicable to endeavour to prevent the use of ardent spirits in this country by penal enactments. The course of events will teach the Chinese one useful lesson in political economy, even before we give them another upon international rights, and they will find that their only resource is to legalize the trade and make it a source of revenue, thereby providing a fund to meet our heavy demands against them. Articles of unnecessary or injurious luxury, such as opium and spirituous liquors, are those on which a wise and paternal government may impose the highest possible rate of taxation consistent with the prevention of smuggling, and to this sooner or later will the Chinese government be driven. As it is, nothing can be more injurious to the British character than the mode in which the opium trade is at present conducted. It now is real smuggling, accompanied by all its worst features of violence, and must frequently be attended with bloodshed and sacrifice of life. All the respectable mercantile houses in China have pledged their honour against any further connection with it under present circumstances.

The expediency of the general line of policy

adopted by Captain Elliot in conducting his negotiations has been much criticised in this country, and very general are the expressions of dissatisfaction which his recent measures have elicited. I approach this part of my subject with some reluctance; but no private feelings of esteem or regard shall prevent me from giving my candid opinion. I firmly believe Captain Elliot to be as zealous and conscientious a public officer as exists in Her Majesty's service. His brother officers, who have known him throughout his career in the navy, I believe will readily acknowledge, that as a captain of a frigate, a more daring and gallant officer will rarely be found, yet there can be no doubt that in his public acts he has committed some great errors, and shown a want of firmness. In the commencement, considering the very embarrassing position in which he was placed, I cannot but think he acted with spirit and prudence. Many blame him for forcing his way to Canton when he first heard of the restraint placed upon British subjects, and thus placing himself in the power of the Chinese; but what would have been said of him had he remained in safety at a distance during that period of danger and alarm? All the letters written from Canton at that time express the strongest sense of their obligations to Captain Elliot for his conduct, and their determination to support him to the utmost of their power. In the great and leading point of surrendering the opium to the Chinese government, I cannot but think he was right. We were a handful of defenceless

foreigners at the mercy of a despotic and arbitrary government. From the feeling of mutual exasperation which existed at the time, a collision might have taken place, and if blood had once been shed, a general massacre of foreigners might have ensued. Captain Elliot, upon whom the entire responsibility devolved, was not called upon to risk such an alternative: he yielded every thing to force and compulsion, thereby casting the responsibility from him to the Chinese government, which thus gained its point by setting all international law at defiance. I further consider Captain Elliot's conduct to have been wise and judicious in ordering all British subjects to quit Canton as soon as they were restored to liberty, and setting his face against any compromise of the question until the instructions of his own government had been received.

It is in the vacillation of purpose and want of any fixed plan of conduct, which Captain Elliot has displayed in his recent acts, that he has given just ground of complaint. It is more easy to find fault with what is done in times of difficulty than to act judiciously; but still nothing can be more glaring than the want of judgment displayed in attacking the Chinese junks and fort at Cowloon, without having previously made up his mind to carry the matter through. As it was, there can be no doubt the want of energy displayed was attributed to fear, and encouraged the Chinese to bolder measures; and if this was bad, still more so was the proclaiming a blockade of the port one day, merely

to take it off again four days after. Acts such as these could have no other effect than to lower us still further in the eyes of the Chinese, who already hold us low enough ; and no wonder, for in all our disputes with that country we have certainly cut a very contemptible appearance. We have been bold in declarations, but weak in acts ; and this it is which has at length encouraged the generally cautious Chinese to proceed to such lengths. Even in his last act, I cannot but think that it was mistaken humanity, which prompted Captain Elliot to interfere and prevent Captain Smith from sinking six and twenty, instead of six, of Admiral Kwan's squadron. In the end there may be greater loss of life caused by this forbearance, than had we at once given them such a lesson as would have effectually deterred them from ever again trying their strength with our ships.

There now remains but one more topic for me to dispose of, but that is the most important. What will be the result of the war with China, which may now be said to have commenced ? I not only sincerely hope, but confidently expect, that it will terminate in the reestablishment of friendly intercourse on a basis equally secure and honourable, and which will prevent the recurrence of all future disputes. The period of time within which this desirable result will be obtained, in a great measure depends on the instructions which have been sent out from our Government on the subject. If immediately on the receipt of Cap-

tain Elliot's first despatches in September, orders had been sent at once to India for the fleet to proceed to China with distinct and definite demands of reparation for the past and security for the future, operations on a proper scale might have commenced in January, and a speedy solution of the question might have been expected; but this I fear can hardly have been the case, as by the last accounts from India the squadron was still laying at Bombay, and the lamented death of Admiral Maitland will probably cause still further delay. Had the ships from England, destined for that service, been despatched in November, two months subsequent to the accounts arriving, they might also have been in China by the beginning of March; but as it is, here they are still in the Channel, nor can they be expected to arrive in China until June. Thus much valuable time has already been lost, to the great and manifest injury of all those important interests connected with the China trade.

It is, however, now so generally understood, that we may assume it is the intention of Government to send an armament to China to demand redress; and it can hardly be doubted that the following will be among the points to be demanded.

1. Indemnity for the value of the opium surrendered by Captain Elliot, and for all losses sustained by British subjects consequent on the stoppage of trade.

2. Satisfaction for the insult offered to Her Majesty in the person of her representative.

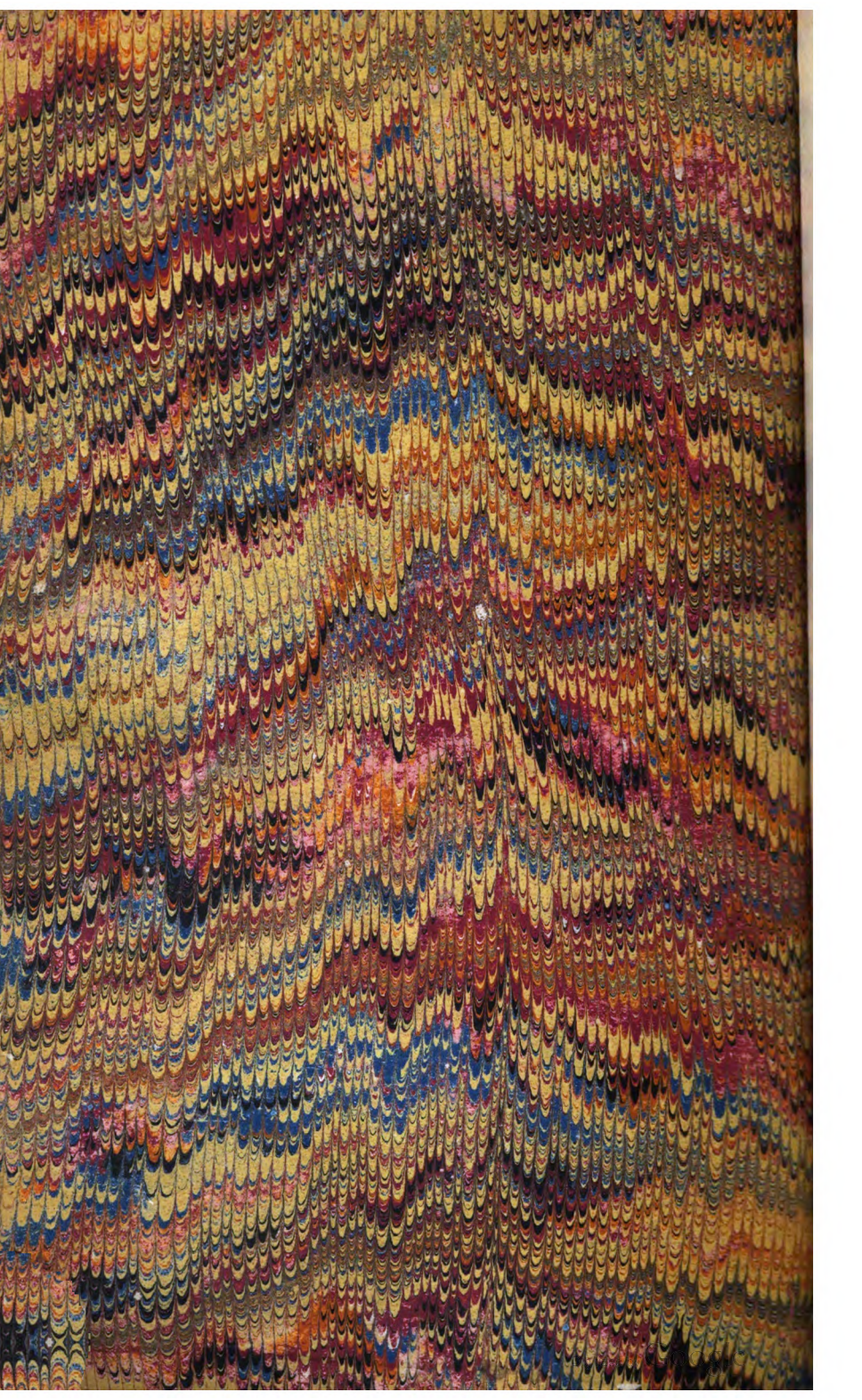
Thus much as reparation for the past: now as to security for the future. The first and foremost point for the maintenance of a good understanding, and the prevention of future quarrels, is free access to the Imperial Court, which can only be attained by the residence of an ambassador at Peking. This will be unpalatable to the Chinese, but as a precedent can be shown in the establishment of a Russian mission, which has for a long time resided there, the point can be conceded without degrading the government in the eyes of their own countrymen, which we should on no account do if it can be avoided. Let this point be gained, and a commercial treaty, opening one or more of the northern ports, and laying down a defined system of regulations for our future intercourse, would be the natural consequence; and this may be said to comprise all our demands. Many people are disposed to maintain, that some insular possession on the coast of China is desirable, where we might carry on our trade under the protection of our own flag. I confess, that in my mind I see great and serious objections to such a measure. Nothing would tend so much to degrade the Imperial Government before their own people, as demanding such a concession; and merely looking to our own interests, any thing having such a tendency is most seriously to be deprecated. Our object in China is mere commercial intercourse, not territorial aggrandizement, and I cannot help fearing, that if we once planted our flag and built a

fort within the Chinese dominions, circumstances would compel us to extend our limits, and our career of British India would be repeated in China. We wish to see the Chinese peaceful and prosperous. If we desired it, I firmly believe that nothing would be more easy than to throw the empire into anarchy and confusion. Much discontent exists, and the present dynasty holds its position by a very fragile tenure. In my opinion the Chinese are too clever not to feel this, and so soon as our power has been made manifest to them, they will at once be alive to the danger of the continuance of a state of affairs, which must so strongly exhibit their own weakness in the eyes of the people. Nothing will, however, be done until they have received a severe lesson. Let every fort at the mouth of the Canton river be blown up, which would be one day's work for an efficient British squadron, such as I hope will be in China by March. The commissioner Lin it appears is very frequently residing at the Bogue, could he be made a prisoner it would be a grand point. Any how it will be easy to obtain possession of some Chinese officer of rank, who should be then conveyed to the mouth of the Peiho in a steamer, and there sent on shore with a full statement of our demands, and a clear exposition of our intentions addressed to the emperor. I believe that we should find him ready to treat with us. And thus having shown our power, it should be our object to manifest our forbearance and moderation, which

could no longer be attributed to fear. Should the Imperial Government, however, not be sufficiently humbled to induce them to comply with our terms, then a rigid coast blockade, including the ports of Canton, Amoy, Ningpo, and Shanghae, must be resorted to. The temporary occupation of one of the islands at the mouth of the Canton river would serve as a place of security for our merchant ships, and I have little doubt but that considerable trade would there be carried on during the continuance of hostilities. It is, however, needless to enter further into speculative theories as to the result of hostile operations against China. My object in laying this pamphlet before the public has been to endeavour to prove, that in the pending hostilities, justice is on our side. I am not actuated by any feelings of dislike or revenge against the Chinese : far from it. I consider the government has always been unjust and oppressive in their treatment of foreigners, but I like the people, and feel convinced, that under a different system, such as I hope soon to see, the most friendly feelings will exist between us. In my intercourse with China I have known many Chinese intimately, in whose integrity and honourable feelings I would place as implicit confidence as in that of any of my own countrymen. The jealous conduct of the government has hitherto prevented much social intercourse between us, but were that removed, we should then see the more amiable features of the Chinese character in its natural light.

I will conclude this pamphlet by narrating an anecdote concerning a Chinese friend of mine, which is in some degree connected with the recent troubles, and which is so highly creditable to himself that I have much pleasure in mentioning it. This man was a very respectable and intelligent silk merchant, but who at the same time frequently dealt in opium. In 1837 he had entered into contracts with our house for the delivery of silk in the ensuing year at a fixed price, and had received a considerable sum of money as an advance. When the troubles began, my friend's name appeared in the governor's black list as one of the leading opium dealers, and a large reward was offered for his apprehension. The season advanced, and we heard nothing of him: at the same time the price of silk had risen, so that he could not have fulfilled his contract save at a loss of full fifteen per cent. Under these circumstances I confess we felt but little hope of seeing either our silk or our money. One night, however, in December 1838, at the time when the persecution of all concerned in opium was at its height, a Chinese called late at night, and said that my friend was in Canton, and wished to see me. I accordingly accompanied him to a small Chinese shop, where I found him disguised in the poorest garments. He said to me, "I have come to Canton, at the risk of my life, to fulfil my contracts to you and to Messrs. ——. The silk, which I promised you, is in the hands of such a Chinese. You must make arrangements to

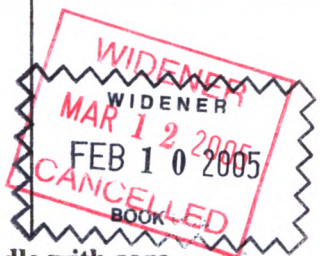
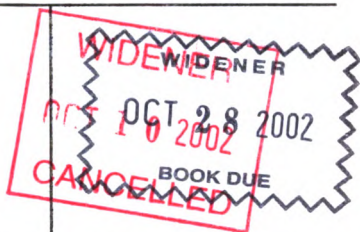
pass it through a Hong merchant without exposing me, for if seized my death is certain. Should my silk not prove equal to the quality I promised, my friend has more; you may select what you please, and I will pay the difference in value." I confess I was much affected at this truly honourable conduct, and urged him in the strongest terms to lose no time in returning to his secure place of concealment, which was in a distant province. The next day, however, I saw the Chinese to whom he referred me, and received from him every bale of silk for which we had contracted, and which on examination proved of the very best quality. I am happy to say that my friend escaped from the clutches of the Chinese inquisition, and was in perfect safety when I last heard of him. Such a trait of character confers honour both to the individual and to his country; and I firmly believe that many such men are to be found in China. Let us once have a free and liberal intercourse established, and great will be the advantages to both nations.



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