

News of the Week.

CHINA.

A Correspondent at Hong Kong, under date of June 5, communicates the following particulars of the attack on the Chinese War Junks in the Canton River:

Hong Kong, June 5, 1857.

The Chinese fleet has been destroyed in two decisive engagements, but the sentiment of our navy has undergone an entire change in respect of those "timid" barbarians. More Englishmen have been killed and wounded in these two conflicts, than were disabled before the walls of Acre.

The first expedition was under Commodore Elliott, and the operations lasted during the 25th, 26th, and 27th May. The second was under Commodores Keppel and Elliott, commanded by the Admiral in person.

About five miles up Escape Creek (a stream from the Eastward, running into the Canton river,) a large fleet of Mandarin junks had lain for some time, and here it was that the operations were commenced.

On the morning of Monday, the 25th May, Commodore Elliott, in the Hong-Kong gun boat, followed by the Bustard, the Staunch, the Starling, and the Forbes, and towing the boats and crews of the Inflexible, the Hornet and the Tribune, steamed into the creek and came upon 41 Mandarin Junks moored across the stream. Each was armed with a long 24 or 32 pound gun forward, and also with from four to six nine-pounders. The first shot fired after she got within range, struck the Hong-Kong, and for some minutes the shot came thick aboard of her. The other gunboats now came up, and forming in a loose order as possible, immediately opened fire. The junks stood for some time, and returned the fire with spirit. It requires no small amount of steadiness and courage to work that large exposed gun, rising in the bows of the junk, and without a scrap of protection to the man who fires it. After some little time, confusion seemed to increase. They are all swift vessels, impelled by oars or sails. Several of them got under weigh, and turned for flight up the creek. Immediately they did so, they were comparatively powerless, for their stern guns were of small calibre, and were not well secured. The steamers pressed on in pursuit, but the waters shoaled. The gun-boats drew from 7 feet to 7 feet 6 inches; those flat bottomed junks can float in three feet. One by one the steam gun-boats grounded, but the Commodore's cry was, "never mind, push on." They had towed behind them the boats of the larger ships. Quickly as a steamer got fast in the mud, the men swarmed into the boats, manned the gun in her bows, and rowed off in pursuit. At last there was not a steamer afloat, the junks were in full flight up the creek, the row boats were in hot pursuit. It was hard work, for these were swift vessels, with forty Chinese pulling for dear life—they pass deftly through the shallow and treacherous channels. The guns, however, in the bows of the pursuers told heavily, and when a boat did get alongside, the crew always fired a broadside of grape—jumped out on the other side, swam ashore, and were lost in the paddy fields.

Sixteen junks were thus taken and destroyed in the main creek. Thirteen escaped by dint of swift rowing. The sun was tremendous, and cases of sun-stroke were occurring among the men. One junk had, in its terror, turned up a little inlet to the right, and being followed, was politely led out. A squadron of ten went up a passage to the left, which is supposed to afford a shallow channel up to Canton. They were now, however, so utterly panic-stricken, that upon being approached by four boats, they were all abandoned and burnt upon the spot. This ended the first day's work. Commodore Elliott, however, was not satisfied about these thirteen junks.

The next day he steamed and rowed up the creek for 24 miles, between paddy fields, and at length rounding a point, found himself close in with the town of Tung Koon, and also with a fleet of junks, (one of them of great size and splendour) and under a battery. The Chinese were utterly unprepared for this sudden meeting. The English-boats fired all their guns, gave a cheer, and made a rush; the Chinese jumped overboard, without firing a shot.

Now, however, came the worst part of the affair. It was necessary to destroy these junks, and it was desirable to take away the chief junk. But the boats were in the midst of a city. The crews of the junks established themselves in houses, and fired upon the sailors with jingalls. The marines were obliged to farm and charge in the street. The Mandarin junk was found to have powder upon her deck, and trains communicating between her and the streets. Then a house close to her was set on fire, and up she went, nearly carrying an English pinnace up with her. Twelve large junks were here destroyed. The sailors who had no sails in their row boats, having now done their work, hardly cared to pull back again. Sails, therefore, were improvised out of the mats and other spoil of the junks, and they came sailing down Sawshee channel in guise which might puzzle the master of each ship to recognize his own boat. In this affair, one man out of every ten engaged, was hit—a large average even in European warfare.

Such was the result of the expedition of the Escape Creek. The battle of Fatshan is next described at great length. It was the most desperate cutting out affair that has happened

in those waters, and the writer was a spectator of the whole of it. The expedition passes the Bogue Forts, now in ruins, and he adds—

John Chinaman complains that we don't fight fair, when we from time to time take their forts. Instead of going up to them like brave men, we send a few smallships in for all the guns to fire at, and when the guns are all at work, some marines and blue jackets leap over the wall in the rear, and drive the gunners out. The Chinese are of a practical and reasoning turn of mind. When asked why they ran away from a storming party, one of them answered, in my hearing, "No can. Two piecy man no can stand all same place. 'Spose you must come in, I go out."

The expedition reaches its fighting ground—a channel leading to the city of Fatshan, called Fatshan Branch. There is a low island about two miles from the mouth of the channel, and a steep hill on the left, opposite to this island.

That hill has been converted into a fort.—Nineteen large guns are there mounted. Along the two creeks, and across the channel above the island, 72 junks are moored, with their large bow guns so placed as to command the channels on either side of the island. A six gun battery is erected on the fort opposite the fort. The fire of the 70 junks will sweep the narrow channels, and the fire of the battery and fort will plunge upon them from either shore. This is the position we have to attack.

The Chinese believe they are here impregnable. They know you cannot get at their junks without first taking the fort, and they believe that no man can go up the hill in the face of their guns.

On Sunday there was a large congregation on board the flag-ship, the solemn words of the prayer, before battle, fell heavy upon every ear.

It was scarcely three o'clock on the morning of Monday, the 1st June, when those who slept on the deck of the Coromandel wrapped in their cloaks, were aroused from their sleep. A hushed movement among the sailors had already begun. The steam was up. The vigilant young commander, Doyle, was already at his post, and looking through the darkness for the arrival of the boats containing the marines. They soon came and a long string of crowded row boats attached themselves to the stern of the steamer. The Admiral (Sir Michael Seymour) took his place upon the bridge, the wheels slowly revolved, and the Coromandel moved forth with the surrounding fleet.

The Admirals last words were, "Let no one up anchor until I am well in with the fort. Respect private property, and do no violence to unarmed people." It was an anxious thing to look forth from the paddle-box of that steamer, as she steadily advanced into the enemy's country—alone.

John Chinaman was not caught napping. As the little vessel proceeded, a rocket shot up from the right, and then another from the opposite bank, and a minute after, another from the fleet of junks. As she came within range the fire opened in earnest from the fort and battery. The steamer, however, kept on unhurt, until unfortunately she grounded on a line of sunken junks.

But now Keppel thought he had restrained himself long enough to fulfil the Admiral's orders. He came upon the baddle-box of the Hong Kong gunboat, which bore his pennant; and having, with his quick glance, noted the soundings and the result, stood in between the Coromandel and the creek. There he was, like a man thoroughly enjoying himself. His blue trowsers tucked up to the top of his Russian boots, his white pith hat, his small, active springy figure, his constitutional good humoured, devil-may-care laugh—there was a man who, without the least ostentation, was ready to go into any fire that gunpowder and iron could get up, around him were men who were quite ready to follow him. "May I pass sir? Yes, pass; we are aground."

The Haughty, Bustard, and Tribune, gunboats, speedily follow the Hong Kong, but the two latter got aground. Then came the Plover and Opossum, and soon all are engaged.

Several of the other gun-boats are aground astern; but the ships boats have taken to their oars. Crowded with men, cheering heartily, galley and gig, pinnace, launch, and barge came racing up. The scene is like a regatta, but death picks his victims as they pass.

But now the tide is making, and the Coromandel is free. As she steams up to the foot of the fort the fire slackens—only now and then an obstinate gun gives out. The hill is now comparatively free from smoke, and the scene is as plain from the paddle-box of the Coromandel as if it were enacted on a stage for our amusement. The boats crews and marines have landed and are mounting that steep hill. They have taken the precipitous side where the fat Chinaman who had prepared to receive them by the zig-zag path, never thought they would come. The Chinese gunners are trying in vain to deepen their guns, so as to sweep them with grape. Failing that they are rolling down 32 pound shot, and throwing stink pots which do not explode, and three pronged spears. They have not much time for this amusement. Commodore Elliott, with a midshipman by his side, is running a race with Capt. Boyle, who commands the marines, and is nearly up to the embasures. Capt. Boyle fires his revolver at a Chinaman, who is trying to fire his match-lock at him. He misses him, for the gallant Captain is too much blown with the race to shoot with accuracy. The Chinaman in return rolls a couple of large shot at the Captain, and then takes up a spear of prodigious length, and hurls it at the midship-

A shot from Commodore Elliott's revolver settles this brave man's career.

Mixed with the marines, and but little behind the fore rank, climbed the posts Captains and Commanders. We can recognize Corbutt and Forsyth, and Leekie, (and by his side Major Kearney) contending vigorously with the laws of gravitation. Edgell is hit; no, he has only slipped while dodging a round shot, and has rolled half-way down. He gets up and shakes himself and recommences. Mounting the same precipitous ascent with quick elastic step, his flag-lieutenant, Fowler, by his side, goes the Admiral himself. He has no weapon, not even a walking stick, to help him up, yet he outstrides many of the marines. He goes to see what next is to be done, and we will follow him.

This part of the affair is soon over. The gunners sulkily retire as the storming party arrive; but they fire their guns within 50 yards of their assailants.

From the top of the hill I have a most magnificent panoramic view of the operations below. Lieutenant Fowler has brought one of the Chinese guns to bear upon the junks and the junks fire up at us, but neither do much damage. Now Elliott and his Captains run down to their boats and follow the Haughty which is already clear of the island, and up with the junks beyond. The marines descend into the paddy fields and up to the waste in water, they take pot shots at the Chinamen.—The Haughty drives right stem on into one of the two large junks that have been sweeping the channel, and cracks her like a nut shell. Forsyth jumps first on board and their crew jumps overboard. It is the old story "spose you come I must go." The shots must be flying furiously down there, for 30 junks are blazing away their 12 guns each at the intruders, who rush into the creek from our side of the island, and 40 are equally rapid in their discharges upon the boats that have gone up on the other side. How any mortal thing can live in that hell of flying iron it is impossible to conceive. The secret, I believe, lies in the resolution of our men. They pull directly up alongside, and from the elevation of the gun the inevitable broadside of grape passes over their heads. I saw this happen in the case of Commodore Elliott's boat, which emerged unharmed from a discharge I thought had annihilated them.

The game was soon up. First came a rush of fire and then a loud explosion. A pillar of white smoke rises high into the air, and swells at the top like a doric column. Then another and another, and the guns cease, and the cannon smoke blows away, the boats crews are rowing from junk to junk, and in two large lines, almost as far as the eye can reach lie the junks—some kindling, some in full blaze, but all stranded and abandoned.

We have been looking down upon the junks which lay across the Fatshan Branch, and also along the winding creek that stretches away at right angles to the left. Right and left, covering an immense extent of narrow water, the junks lie, prizes either to us or the flames.—We have begun now to count them—they are 72.

While some are plundering and some are thinking of breakfast, there is heavy firing in the distance. People ask where is Keppel? we must follow his fortunes; for all is not over yet, and there is much to tell.

When Commodore Keppel passed us at dawn he steamed away up the channel to the right of Hyacinth island, until he came under the 6 gun battery, and within fire of the junks.—Here his vessel ran aground, and the Plover coming up, the Commodore transferred himself to her; but as she could not get up, he got into his own galley and followed by the row-boats of the Calcutta, the Tribune, and the Niger, pulled straight through the fire. The big junk that lay across the channel was boarded in her own smoke. As usual, as the assailants grew very near, the Chinamen fired a broadside and also a train, and slipped into the water on the other side. The boats were scarcely free of her when she blew up. Right in among the 35 junks dashed Keppel and his cheering dare-devils, receiving their fire and driving the crews away as they approached. Vain were the Chinamen's stink-pots, their three pronged spears, and their ingenious nets, so contrived as to fall over a boat's crew and catch them like herring, while they spear them through the meshes.—To utilize such ingenious inventions, John Chinaman must wait till the boats come alongside, and this he has not yet tutored his nerves to accomplish. "Never wait my lads," cried the Commodore, "leave those rascals to the gunboats and the fellows behind; push on ahead."

Through the wilderness of junks they pulled, driving out their crews by sheer audacity, and leaving little to be done by those who should come after.

The Commodore pressed on with his force of boats for four miles, until they came upon their prey and also upon one of those strong positions the Chinese have now learnt to take. At the part of the Fatshan Branch—which they had now reached, there is an island shaped like a leg of mutton placed lengthway in the river. The broad part is towards the British boats, and across the knuckle end 20 large junks lie moored to the shore and aground. The consequence of this position is, that to attack them the British boats must pass through one of two passages, both of which narrow to a funnel; and upon that narrow neck of water the whole fire of the 20 junks will be concentrated. One of these funnel passages has been staked and is impassable, the other has not water to carry two boats abreast. At this perilous passage

Keppel and his crew now dashed. The three boom-boats took the ground in attempting to follow.

No sooner did the boats appear in the narrow passage than 20 32-pounders sent 20 round shot and a hundred smaller guns sent their full charges of grape and canister at a range of 500 yards right among them. The effect was terrible. Keppel was sounding with the boat-hook for water for the boom-boats, and went back amid the storm to get them up. They start afresh and make another effort to get through. The Commodore pushes on a-head. There was Captain Leekie in his galley, with Major Kearney by his side. There was Captain Rolland in the launch of the Calcutta, and Lieutenant Seymour in the barge of the same ship. The Tribune's cutter was in among them. The Hong-Kong, who had worked herself up through the mud to within five hundred yards of the scene of action, had out her gig. If the gunners of the Excellent had been in those Chinese junks, and had worked those 32 pounder guns, they could hardly have thrown the round shot straighter. Keppel's galley, not a large mark, is hit three times in two minutes; a 32 pounder shot strikes Major Kearney in the breast tearing him to pieces. He must have died without a sensation. Young Barker, a midshipman of the Tribune, is down, mortally wounded. The Commodore's coxswain is killed, and every man of his crew is wounded. But the miracle is not that the men are falling, but that any escape. Capt. Cochran has the sleeve of his coat torn away by a shot, which leaves him unharmed. A round shot enters the Tribune's boat, and passes along her line of keel, from stem to stern without touching a man. "That was close, Victor," said Keppel to his flag Lieutenant, as a cannon shot passed between their heads. Fortunately for himself, Victor (Prince Victor of Hohenloe) was leaning forward and using his handkerchief as a tourniquet to stop the bleeding of a seaman, whose hand had just been shot off, otherwise that ball must certainly have taken Victor's head off.

The Commodore's galley was disabled, and the water being low, the boats were compelled to retire to wait for reinforcements. These speedily came up, and off they go again, dinnerless, but in high spirits, and under a fire so hot that the Calcutta's launch was sunk, and Capt. Rolland had to scramble into another boat.

This time they found water enough in the narrow passage, and dashing through the shot, find the enemy afloat and in movement. It has now become a chase. For six miles it continues, and there are now but eight junks uncaptured, when rounding a sharp point pursued and pursuers rush almost together into the city of Fatshan (population 200,000.) Three of the junks escape, the other five were headed and abandoned. The 'braves' of Fatshan turned out to meet the invaders, but the marines were soon landed, and a volley of minie balls sent them quickly back again. Keppel proposed to land his howitzers and pass the night in the city, a daring scheme, but a message from the Admiral recalled him. He had his five junks towed out before him, and as he left the city he stood up in the stern sheets of his boat and shook his fist good humoredly, saying—"You rascals, I'll come back again to you soon," and those extraordinary Chinese, they too, laughed—a broad, good-humored grin—and so they parted.

Thus ended this second expedition—eighty-nine war junks were destroyed with comparatively little loss. On the return the boats were all adorned with barbaric spoils; banners of every amplitude, some of them adorned with colossal pictures of the fat god Fo, floated upon the breeze. "Mandarin coats and Mandarin breeches were freely worn." Commodore Elliott's crew were equipped each with a Mandarin's hat and Foxes' tails. They had dutifully reserved one for the Commodore, but I must confess I did not see him put it on. In the two battles of Tung-Koon and Fatshan 84 men were killed or wounded.

Arrival of the "Columbia" at New York.

EUROPE.

New York, Aug. 17.—The steamship Columbia from Liverpool, 5th inst., arrived at this port at half past eight o'clock this morning.

Breadstuffs very dull with a slight decline on all sorts.

The general news is interesting. In the House of Lords, on Monday, Lord Palmers introduced a bill empowering government to embody and call out the Militia at any time before the 25th of March next, without having to call Parliament together again. He said that a state of things existed in India, which caused as great a drain upon the Queen's forces as if the country was engaged in a foreign war, and to meet this drain ten new battalions were to be raised, and the regiments were to be increased from 840 to 1000 rank and file, and those serving in India from 1000, to 12000. All this could be done without going beyond existing acts, and the charge would mainly fall on the East India Company; but as time would be necessary to provide this increase in the army, and the country would in the interim be drained of troops, the embodiment of the militia might become necessary—hence the proposition.

After some remarks from the opposition that the measure ought to have been brought forward earlier the bill was read a first time.

Lord John Russell's motion in the House of Commons for a Committee to inquire if Jews