

The Second Opium War

The Anglo-French Expedition to China, 1856 – 1860

Essay by Peter C. Perdue & Ellen Sebring

Global
Forces

Course of
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Soldiers &
the "Other"

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Views

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COURSE OF THE WAR

This chapter gives an overview of the Second Opium War (1856–1860) in the form of a timeline, with imagery drawn mainly from the British *Illustrated London News* and the French publication *L'Illustration*.

1856

February 29, 1856: Execution of a French Missionary

The French missionary, Father Auguste Chapdelaine, is arrested in December 1855 while traveling in Guangxi province, a restricted area. Accused of preaching a prohibited faith, he is tortured and killed. The incident eventually leads France to join Great Britain in an Anglo-French military alliance against China.

October 8, 1856: Chinese Authorities Seize the *Arrow*

Port officials in Canton (Guangzhou) harbor board the *Arrow*—a small boat that claimed British registration—on suspicion of piracy. The Chinese haul down the boat's ensign and arrest the crew. The British claim their flag has been insulted. More importantly, the arrests appear to violate the 1842 Treaty of Nanking, signed after the first Opium War (1839–1842). Within weeks, the "*Arrow* incident" is used by Britain as a pretext for attacking Canton. Their aim is to force the Qing court into a favorable renegotiation of the 1842 treaty, thereby gaining trade and other concessions.

October 23, 1856: Britain Attacks – U.S. Lands in Canton

Rear-Admiral Sir Michael Seymour leads British warships up the Pearl River estuary to engage the Boca Tigris forts that protect Canton. Many of the Chinese forts are subdued by bombardment, seized, and burned.



"The Boque Forts." (Boca Tigris Forts)

Illustrated London News, *January 10, 1857 (p. 4)*

Illustrated London News Group

[ILN_1857-01-10_04_boque-forts_BL.jpg]

At the same time, about 80 American officers, sailors, and marines from the sloop-of-war USS *Portsmouth* land unopposed in Canton. Acting at the request of Consul Oliver H. Perry, they take positions on rooftops to guard the American factory (warehouse) district. The foreign factories were all located outside of Canton's city walls.



Translated from French:
“Factory Street, in Canton. — After a Sketch by Mr. A. Borget.”

*The foreign factories that lined the Canton waterfront
were easily recognized by their nations' flags.*

L'illustration, *Journal Universel, Paris,*
May 15, 1858 (p. 309)

University of California
[illustration_1858-05-15_309_canton]

October 24, 1856: British Secure Factories

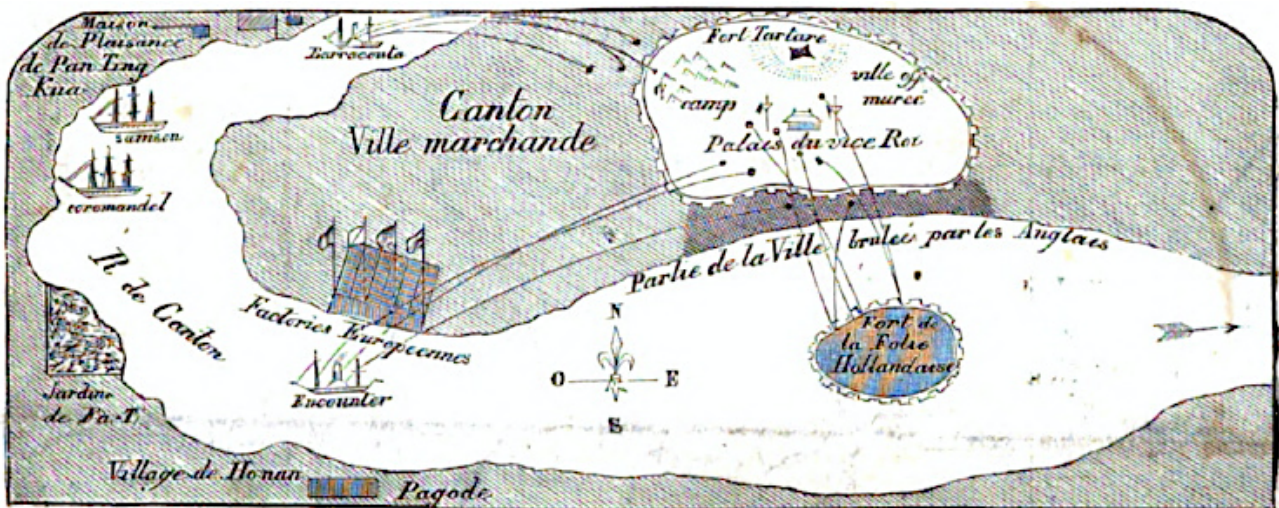
Royal marines occupy the British districts, and gunships easily seize Chinese defenses that could threaten the factories. Many of the foreign merchants flee.

October 25, 1856: British Warships Blockade Canton

After capturing all of Canton's defenses, Admiral Seymour sends Commissioner Ye (Ye Mingchen, governor general of Guangdong and Guangxi) a message: trade will resume when Ye agrees to negotiate. Ye sends no reply.

October 27, 1856: Bombardment of Canton

In the morning, a fresh ultimatum is issued but there is still no reply. At 1:00 pm British ships begin the bombardment of Canton by destroying Ye's official residence. Attacks like this continue through November, but the British fail to breach the city walls or enter Canton.



Plan du bombardement de Canton par les navires anglais.

Translated from French:

"Plan of the Bombardment of Canton by English Ships."

Bombing of Canton:

We receive from an eyewitness the account of the deplorable events which have just bloodied the city and the surroundings of Canton: the character of our correspondent is for us a guarantee of his perfect truth.

(L'illustration, Journal Universel, Paris, January 10, 1857 (p. 17))

University of California

[illustration_1857-01-10_017_canton]

November 15–22, 1856: U.S. Destroys Boca Tigris Forts

On November 15, a Boca Tigris fort fires on American boats in the Pearl River. In retaliation, U.S. forces destroy four of the five forts between November 20–22.

December 1856: Factories Burned in Canton

The few remaining merchants—Chinese and foreign—are driven from the city when the factory districts are burned, presumably by the Chinese. There are many skirmishes, and both sides commit aggressions. The *Illustrated London News* presents a full-page illustration of the fires with the following account, putting the blame on the Chinese, despite Ye's claims that it was the British:

You will have heard how the factories were burned, and how the Viceroy Yeh had the audacity to charge the English with having themselves caused the conflagration, and that he actually wrote a letter of expostulation, showing plainly enough that he knew "a day of reckoning" would come sooner or later. ... Although driven from their homes, the Cantonese merchants behaved in an admirable way, encouraging the Admiral and strengthening his hands as far as they could. ... (Illustrated London News, March 14 1857, p. 251)



“Canton and Part of the Suburbs, Sketched During the Conflagration of the City“

Illustrated London News, *March 14, 1857* (p. 250)

Illustrated London News Group

[ILN_1857-03-14_250_canton-burns_yale]

1857

Early 1857: U.S. & China Agree on Neutrality

The November destruction of the Boca Tigris forts by the Americans results in an agreement with China, keeping the U.S. out of the conflict. Both sides honor it, until U.S. warships participate in the June 1859 attack at Dagu (Taku).

January 8–17, 1857: British Forces Leave Canton

Lacking a clear military objective and short of men, the British commanders in Canton decide to retreat down the Pearl River to the Portuguese colony of Macao.

The harrying tactics of the Chinese, who seldom left the squadron alone for many hours together, annoying it almost every night with rockets, fire rafts, and all sorts of devilments, led Rear-Admiral Seymour to doubt the possibility of keeping the river communication open with the small force at his disposal; and, learning from India that no troops could be spared thence, he was disposed partially to withdraw from his position. ... it was finally determined to hold Macao Fort, and to keep at least the lower reaches of the river open. (Clowes, William Laird. The Royal Navy, A History From the Earliest Times to the Death of Queen Victoria, vol. vii. London, Sampson Low, Marston & Company 1903, pp. 93-136.)

March 3, 1857: Parliament Votes Against China War

Prime Minister Palmerston advocates new military action against China, but the House of Commons considers the attack on Canton unjustified. Member of Parliament Nicholas Kendall points out: "The hostile acts committed by Admiral Seymour ... could not be justified on the plea of necessity, and were worthy of the heaviest censure."

April, 1857: New Government Reverses Course

After a snap election, Palmerston has the votes in Parliament to defeat what he calls the "anti-English" opposition. Britain invites the U.S., Russia, and France into an alliance against China. Only the French—who stand to gain from renegotiating the 1842 treaty—accept, using the execution of Chapdelaine as the cause. The Anglo-French alliance becomes central to British war plans in China.

May–November, 1857: Allies Plan Joint China Expedition

The *Illustrated London News* reproduced from a photograph a scene of British troops mustered in Malta preparing for the campaign in China, which is described in patriotic tones:

The War in China. We have to thank Captain Inglefield, R.A., for the original of the accompanying Illustration, a photograph, taken by him of the garrison of Malta, when upwards of 7000 troops were reviewed by Sir John Pennefather, K.C.B., in the presence of Major-General Ashburnham, and Major-General Garrett, and staff en route to China. ... The parade of so large a body of fine troops beneath the walls of the noble fortress is a scene of no ordinary interest. (The London Illustrated News, Supplement, May 16, 1857, p. 471)

By October, Allied war planners decide that Anglo-French forces will first re-take Canton, then attack Beijing.



“Sir John Pennefather, K.C.B., reviewing the troops in the presence of Major-Generals Ashburnham and Garrett, on their way for the China Expedition—from a photograph.”

The Illustrated London News, *Supplement*, May 16, 1857 (p. 471)

Visualizing Cultures

[co2_ILN_1857_0516_471s_pg_b]

May 10, 1857: Indian Uprising Begins

In India, an uprising against the British East India Company preoccupies Great Britain for most of 1857. Britain's control of India will not be fully regained until the following year.

June–July, 1857: China War Delayed

In June, High Commissioner Lord Elgin (James Bruce, son of Thomas “Elgin Marbles” Bruce), learns of the uprising in India: he diverts many reinforcements intended for China to the uprising. On July 15th, Admiral Seymour orders two warships with 300 marines aboard from China to Calcutta (Kolkata). By November the British will have held down the “mutiny” well enough to send a large force from India to join the war in China.

The French also suffer logistical problems. In July, Minister-in-Command Baron Gros is ordered to China to meet with Lord Elgin, but Gros will be delayed until October. The French naval squadron will not reach the mouth of the Boca Tigris until December 10th, too late to take part in the blockade of Canton.



Mouillage de la division française à Boca Tigris, le 11 décembre 1857. — D'après un dessin envoyé par M. Deslandes.

Translated from French:

“Mooring of the French division in the Boca Tigris, December 11, 1857.

— From a Sketch Sent by Mr. Deslandes.”

L'illustration, *Journal Universel, Paris, February 6, 1858 (p. 82)*

University of California

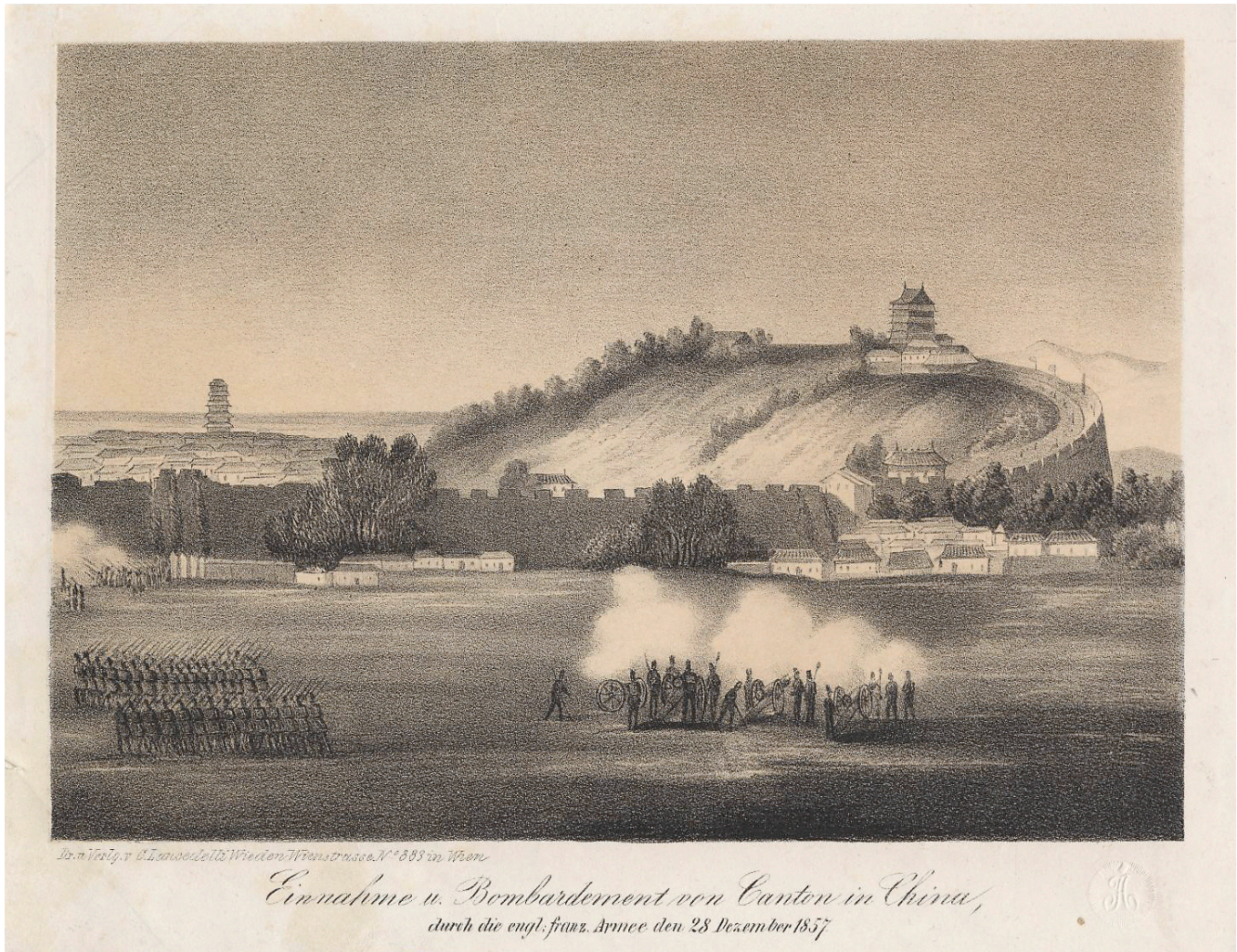
[illustration_1858-02-06_082_macau]

December 10, 1857: British Warships Blockade Canton

On December 10, Canton is blockaded. New demands are made, among them compensation for the *Arrow* incident and the murder of Chapdelaine. Commissioner Ye refuses. Hesitant to be the bearer of bad news, he writes to the emperor and assures him that things are under control: “The English barbarian is now begging us for peace, trading should be allowed to resume soon.”

December 28–29, 1857: Anglo-French Forces Enter Canton

On the morning of December 28, the city is bombarded by British and French warships. Allied troops land about two miles from Canton. The following morning, they bring ladders to the city wall: the French beat the British over the ramparts by minutes. The north-east gate is opened and the main city is occupied. On December 30, flags of truce appear but Ye refuses to discuss terms with the Allies.



Translated from German:

*“Conquest and Bombardment of Canton in China, by the English and French Army,
December 28, 1857”*

Published by Carl Lanzedelli, Vienna, ca. 1859

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library

[1857_12-28_conquest-canton]

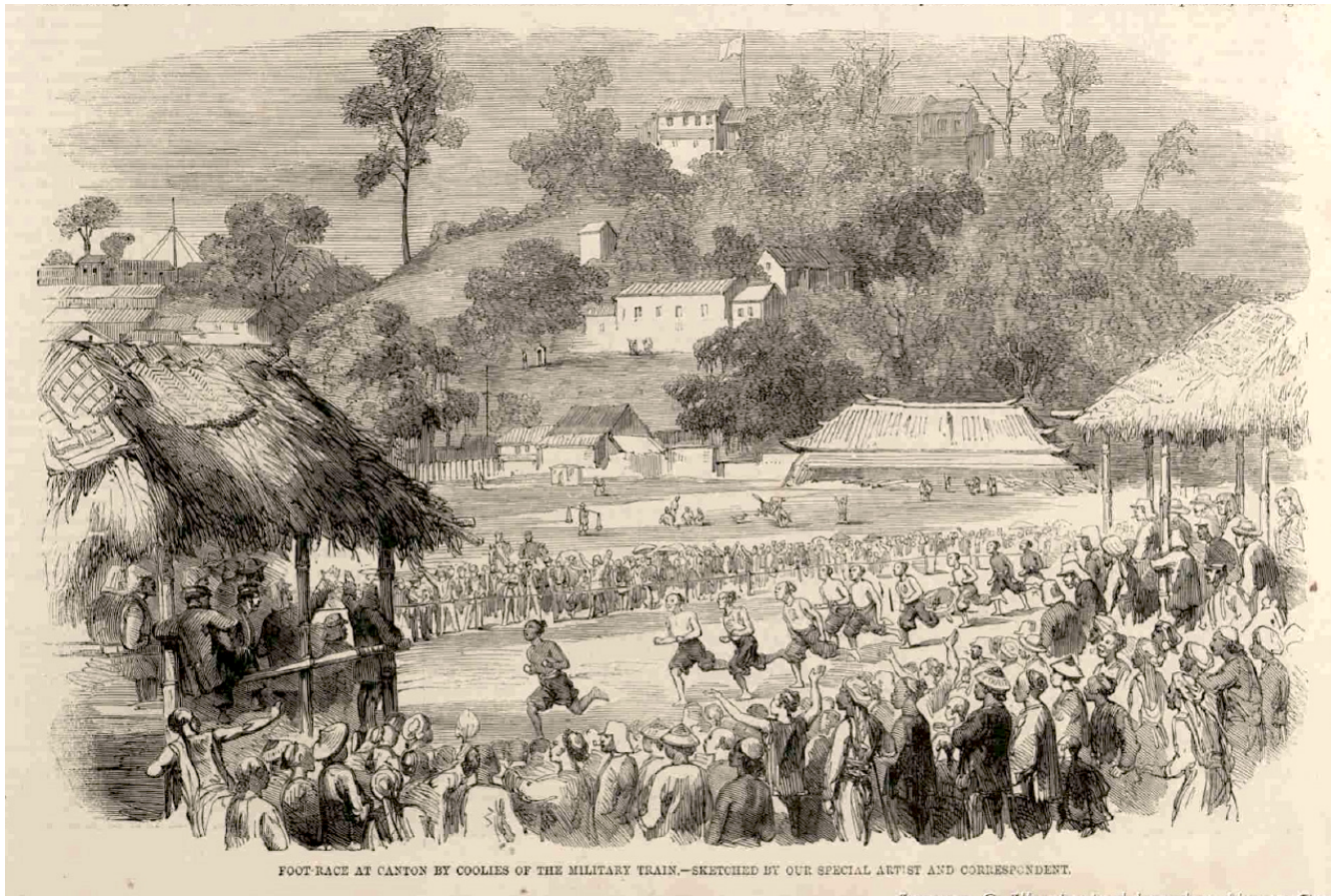
1858

January 5, 1858: Allies Abduct Chinese Officials

At daybreak in Canton, French troops capture the Tartar general Muh, while the British kidnap the governor and Ye, who is designated as a prisoner of war. The general and the governor are released: both agree to help the Allies maintain order in Canton, and the blockade is lifted on February 10. Ye dies imprisoned at Fort William in Calcutta in 1859.

1858–1861: Anglo-French Occupation of Canton

The Allies face considerable resistance in Canton and its suburbs for the length of the occupation. In reports from *The Illustrated London News*, Europeans in Canton keep a stiff upper lip as they go about the daily task of political and military control.



FOOT-RACE AT CANTON BY COOLIES OF THE MILITARY TRAIN.—SKETCHED BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST AND CORRESPONDENT.

*“Foot-race at Canton by Coolies of the Military Train
— Sketched by our Special Correspondent.”*

*In honor of Queen Victoria's birthday, British occupiers
held a military review and sporting events.*

THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY KEPT IN CANTON.

On the Queen's birthday the English at Canton had a review in the morning, and wrestling matches, footraces, &c. Among others, the coolies of the Bamboo Regiment (Military Train) had a run. (*Illustrated London News*, August 14 1858, p. 143)

Illustrated London News Group

[ILN_1858-08-14_143_attack-canton_BL]



THE "SANS-PAREIL" NAVAL BRIGADE LANDING AT CANTON.

"The 'Sanspareil' Naval Brigade Landing at Canton"

*The Allies faced frequent attacks by "braves"
in the suburbs of Canton.*

LANDING BY THE NAVAL BRIGADE.

Writing in reference to this subject, our Correspondent says – Yesterday (July 3) above a hundred men of the Naval Brigade landed, and marched up to strengthen the position of the besieged head-quarters, which is becoming more unpleasant every day. Sharp work this! We pitched shell and rockets the other day from headquarters into the midst of an army of Braves who were advancing with lanterns. What a rich notion to fight with lanterns! (*Illustrated London News*, September 18 1858, p. 267)

Illustrated London News Group

[ILN_1858-09-18_267_fire-canton_BL]



“The Burning of Telesio's Store”

In the following account, Telesio's store, where Europeans in Canton bought familiar food and sundries, has burnt down in the night. Arriving at the scene in small boats, the French swiftly retaliate:

BURNING OF TELESIO'S STORE

Last week his old store was set fire to, and it burned quite splendidly ... [Telesio] arrived at the scene of destruction in time to witness the lively Frenchmen with drawn swords, running about in the red glare, making havoc of all Celestial tails that came in their way, and firing every house near the store, which operation having been performed they returned, leaving the fire to go out when it liked. (Illustrated London News, September 18 1858, p. 267)

Illustrated London News Group

[ILN_1858-09-18_267_fire-canton_BL]



“Demolishing Houses in Canton”

“Bamboo Rifles” push down the remains of burnt houses in Canton.

DEMOLISHING HOUSES

An orderly is saying “Figtee, figtee” (make haste!), and they are singing out “Ly, ly, ly: ly, ly, ly!” by way of keeping time. The dust of the falling wall, the smoke of the yet smoldering rafters, the glare of the white-hot sun, and the unpleasant footing of loose brick render this task rather an unpleasant one. (*Illustrated London News*, September 18 1858, p. 354)

Illustrated London News Group

[ILN_1858-09-18_267_fire-canton_BL]

April 14, 1858: Lord Elgin Arrives—China Plays for Time

Lord Elgin anchors his squadron in the mouth of the Peiho River (Hai He) on April 14th. After meeting with a local commissioner, Elgin decides the Chinese aren't serious about negotiating. Allied warships prepare to attack the Dagu forts that guard access to Beijing.

May 16, 1858: Russia & China Accord on Manchuria

In the 1858 Treaty of Aigun, China cedes to Russia over 600,000 square kilometers (231,660 square miles) of Manchuria (north-east China). The treaty stipulates that only Russian and Chinese vessels will be permitted to navigate certain rivers. It takes until 1860 for China to ratify the treaty, which it does in exchange for Russian diplomatic intercession at the end of the Second Opium War.

May 20, 1858: Allies Take Dagu Forts, Threaten Beijing

British forces under Lord Elgin, backed by French troops, capture the Dagu forts. They destroy many of the forts and river defenses, exposing Beijing to attack.

June, 1858: China Signs the Treaties of Tianjin

Negotiated under the threat of overwhelming force, the Treaties of Tianjin give the Allies many concessions. Signed by Russia (June 13), the U.S. (June 18), Britain (June 26), and France (June 27), the provisions include new treaty ports, foreign travel in the interior, and missionary access. Kowloon is ceded to Britain. Though the Dagu forts are returned to China after the signing, the Qing court refuses to ratify the treaties.



*Translated from French:
"Baron Gros Visiting Hai-Kuang Pagoda for the Signing of the
Treaty With the Emperor of China, June 27, 1858.
(See the Story of the Week.)"*

*L'illustration, Journal Universel, Paris,
October 2, 1858 (p. 213)*

University of California

[illustration_1858-10-02_213_baron-gros]



Les attachés à la mission française.

SIGNATURE DU TRAITE. — D'après les croquis apportés de Tien-Tsing par M. G. de B.
 Houâ-Châ-Nâ. Le baron Gros, Kouei-Liang, L'amiral
 2^e commissaire chinois. plénipotent. français. 1^{er} commissaire chinois. Rigault de Genouilly.
 M. Duchesne de Bellecour, 1^{er} secrétaire de l'ambassade.

Officiers français assistant à la signature.

*Translated from French:
 "Signing of the Treaty. — According to the Sketches Brought
 From Tien-Tsing by Mr. G. De B."*

*L'illustration, Journal Universel, Paris,
 October 9, 1858 (p. 233)*

University of California

[illustration_1858-10-02_213_baron-gros]

November 8, 1858: China Legalizes Opium Trade

Further negotiations legalize importation of opium, with an 8% tariff. The British support legalization in order to regulate the trade: at the time, opium is legal and sold openly in Britain. China gives in. A Chinese commissioner later explains,

China still retains her objection to the use of the drug on moral grounds, but the present generation of smokers, at all events, must and will have opium. (Friend of China. The Organ of the Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade, vol. xi, no. 3, July 1889. London, Samuel Harris & Co.)



Chinese Opium Smokers

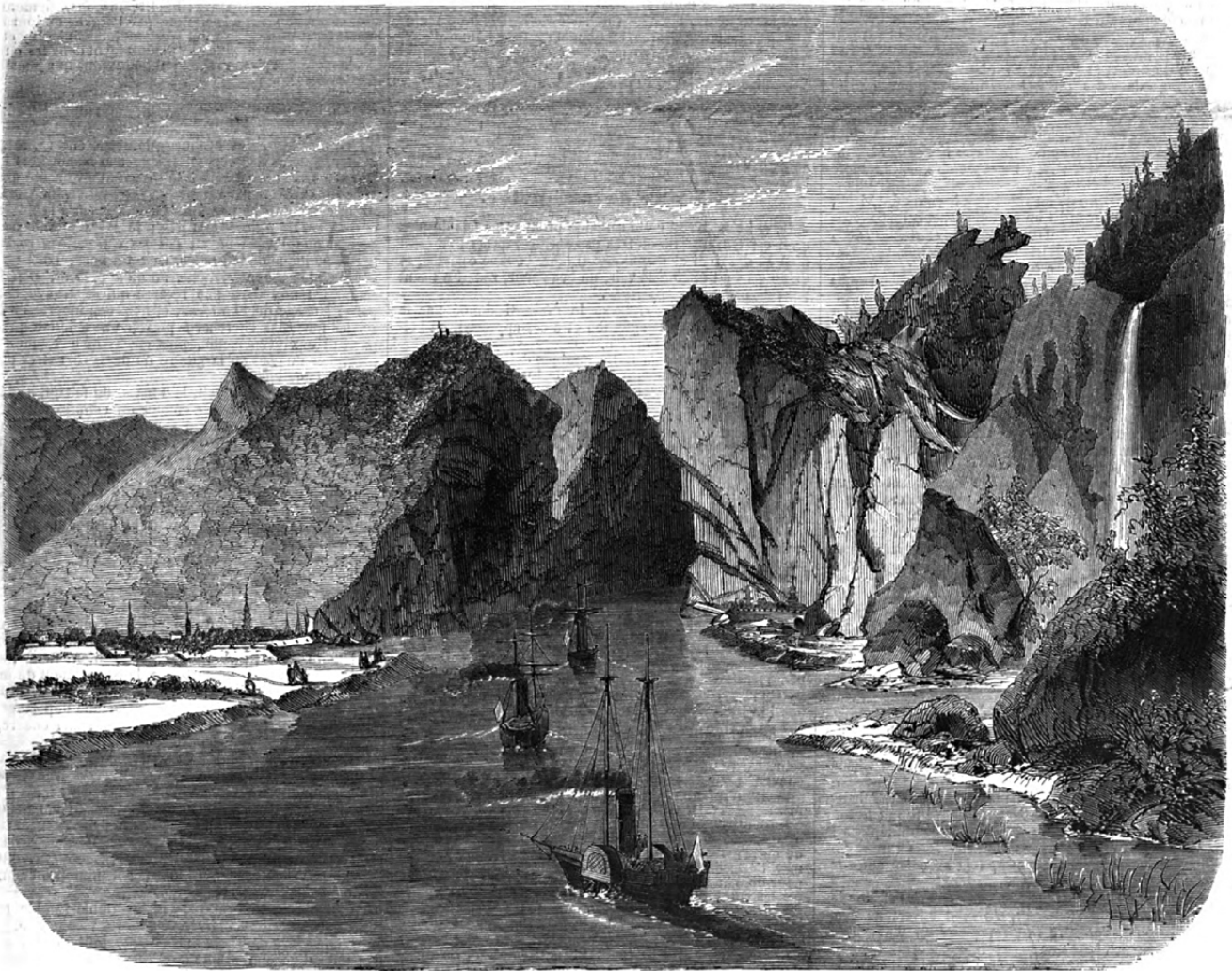
Illustrated London News, *September 20, 1858* (p. 483)

Illustrated London News Group

[ILN_1858-11-20_483_opium_BL]

November 9, 1858: British Reconnaissance Mission in the Yangtze

To ascertain the state of the interior, Lord Elgin commands a two-month fact-finding mission up the Yangtze (Chang Jiang) River. There are altercations, including a two-day bombardment of the forts at Nanking (Nanjing), sparked by a cannon fired at the British by mistake.



PASSAGE DES DEUX PILIERS DANS LE YANG-TZE-KIANG.

Translated from French:

“Passage of the Two Pillars in the Yang-tze-kiang.”

Leaving Shanghai on November 9, the squadron of three steamers and two gunboats went up the Yangtze as far as Hankow (Wuhan).

L'illustration, *Journal Universel*, Paris, March 12, 1859 (p. 161)

University of California

[Illustration_1859-03-12_161_yangtze]

1859

June 25, 1859: Hostilities Escalate – Chinese Victory at Dagou

When British and French envoys are sent to exchange treaty ratifications in Beijing, they find the Pieho River defenses—destroyed in 1858—have been rebuilt and improved, making the river impassable. Demands for free passage go unanswered and on June 25, British gunboats and a landing force of 350 royal marines attack the Dagou forts, the second such attack in the war. Having underestimated the strength of Chinese forces, they're driven back, losing three ships and taking many casualties. The incident fuels animosity on both sides, and stiffens the resistance of the Qing court.



SURPRISE, PAR LES CHINOIS, SUR LA RIVIÈRE DE PEI-HO, DE LA FLOTTILLE ALLIÉE CONDUISANT LES AMBASSADEURS DE FRANCE ET D'ANGLETERRE A PÉKIN.

Translated from French:

“Surprise, by the Chinese, on the Pie-Ho River, of the Allied Fleet Conducting Ambassadors from France and England to Peking.”

Spurious reports of an attack on the diplomatic mission, like this one in L'illustration, were often repeated as fact.

L'illustration, Journal Universel, Paris, September 24, 1859 (p. 228)

Hathi Trust Digital Library

[illustration_1859-09-24_228_surprise-peiho]

November 13, 1859: France Appoints a Commander-in-Chief

General Cousin Montauban is selected as French commander-in-chief of the China expedition by Napoleon III, who later grants him the title of Comte de Palikao (after the Battle of Palikao).



LE GÉNÉRAL COUSIN MONTAUBAN, commandant en chef du corps expéditionnaire français envoyé en Chine. D'après une photographie de M. Moulin.

Translated from French:

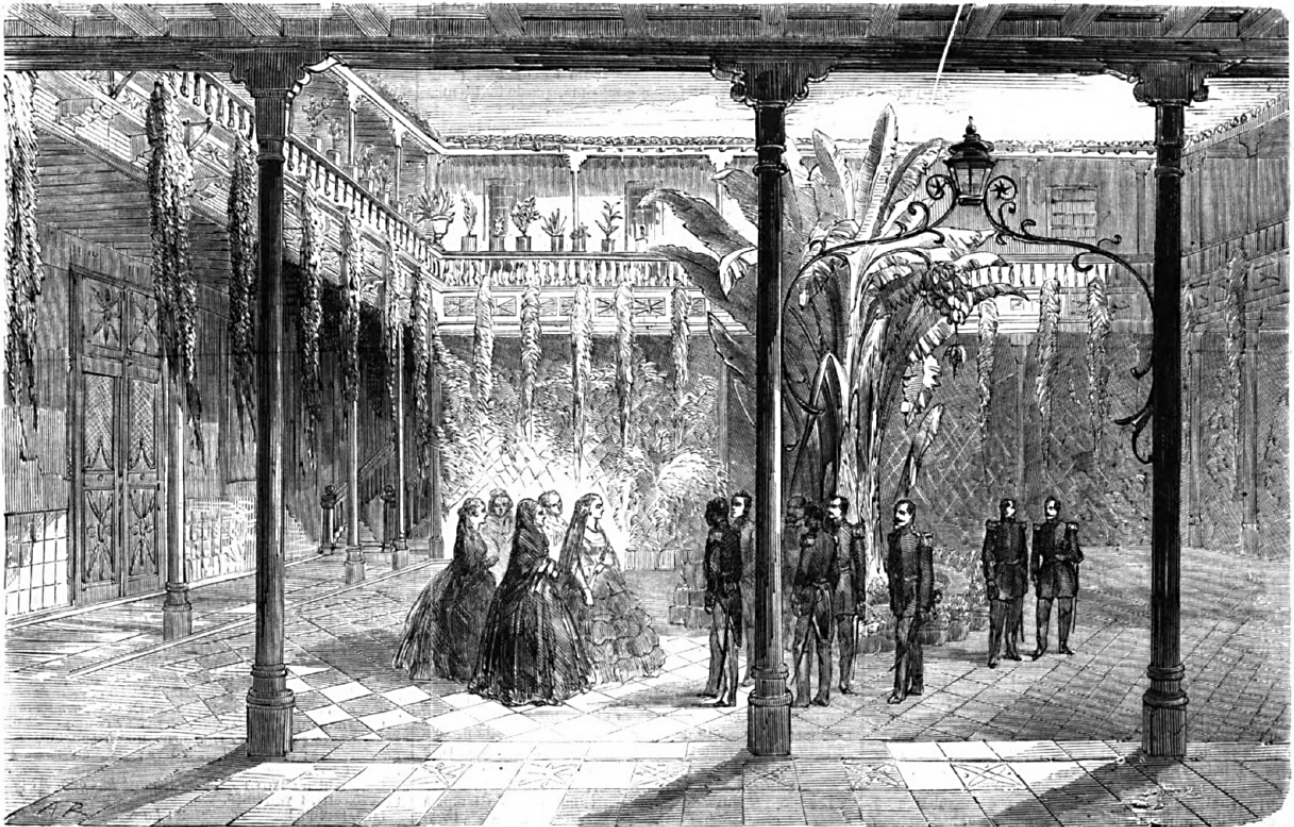
“General Cousin Montauban, Commander-in-Chief of the French Expeditionary Force sent to China. From a photograph by Mr. Moulin.”

University of California

[illustration_1859-12_36a525]

Late 1859–mid 1860: Allies Move Resources Into Place

As the Allies plan a major offensive, the French assemble convoys of ships. These include warships destined for China via Spain, and transports freighting cannons from Toulon.



RECEPTION D'OFFICIERS DE L'EXPEDITION FRANCAISE EN CHINE DANS L'INTERIEUR D'UNE HABITATION A SAINTE-CROIX DE TENERIFE.
(D'après un dessin de M. A. T., officier de la Marine Impériale.)

Translated from French:

*“Reception of Officers of the French Expedition in China Inside
a House in Sainte-Croix de Tenerife. (From a drawing
by Mr. A. T., officer of the Imperial Navy.)”*

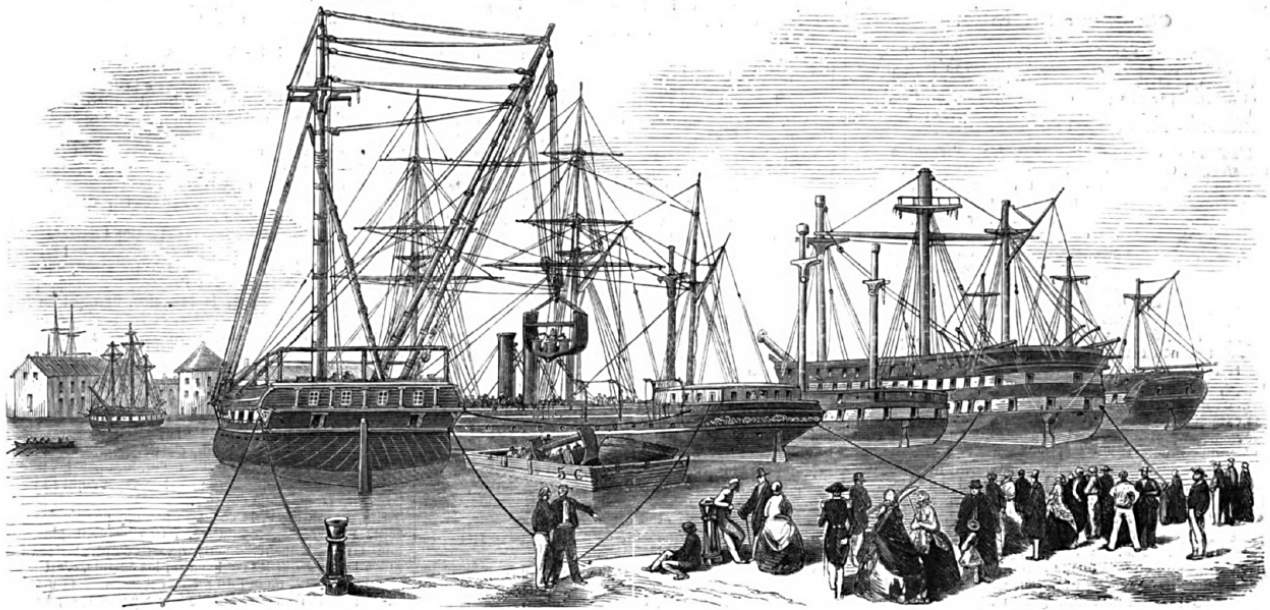
... The first evening of our arrival, we went naturally to the theater, which was quite well stocked with some young and pretty Creoles who looked at us curiously ... their parents struck up a conversation with some officers and asked them for information on the expedition to China.

... I deeply regretted that I had only one day [in Tenerife] to complete my observations.

(L'illustration, Journal Universel, Paris, February 4, 1860, p. 69)

Ohio State University

[illustration_1860-02_36a527]



EMBARQUEMENT A TOULON, SUR LE TRANSPORT LE WESER, DES CANONNIÈRES DÉMONTÉES, DESTINÉES A L'EXPÉDITION DE CHINE.
— D'après un croquis envoyé par M. Cecco.

Translated from French:

“Boarding at Toulon, on the Transport the Weser, Disassembled cannons, Intended for the China Expedition. — From a Sketch Sent by Mr. Cecco.”

L'illustration, Journal Universel, Paris, March 3, 1860 (p. 133)

Ohio State University

[Illustration_1860-03-03_133_ship-departure]

1860

February–May 1860: War Photographer Felice Beato Joins the Expedition

Finished with documenting the uprising in India, Felice Beato sails from Calcutta on February 26 with General Sir Hope Grant, commander of the British army in China. They arrive in Hong Kong on March 13. Beato soon befriends Charles Wirgman, a sketch artist for the *Illustrated London News*. Bored with waiting, on May 20 they are at last berthed on a British troop transport heading toward Beijing.

June 5, 1860: Allied Commanders Embark for China

Lord Elgin and Baron Gros leave Ceylon (Sri Lanka) for China on the mailboat *Pekin*.



Translated from French:

*“Lord Elgin and Baron Gros leaving Ceylon for China on Board the Mailboat Pekin,
June 5, 1860. From drawings sent by Mr. F. L. Roux.”*

L'illustration, *Journal Universel, Paris, July 14, 1860 (p. 17)*

University of California

[Illustration_1860-07-14_017_cover-ships]

August 14–21, 1860: Anglo-French Forces Re-Capture Dagu Forts

Further up the Peiho near the forts, Tang-Ku (Tanggu) is taken on August 14. Tang-Ku will serve as a staging area for an overwhelming assault on the forts, the third such attack of the war. On August 21 over 17,000 British and French troops re-capture the Dagu forts.



“Attack and capture of the Forts at the Entrance of the River Pei-ho, China, on the 20th May 1858. By the Allied British and French Gun Boats and Boats of the Squadron in the Gulf of Pechili,” chromolithograph by Frederick le Breton Bedwell

National Maritime Museum

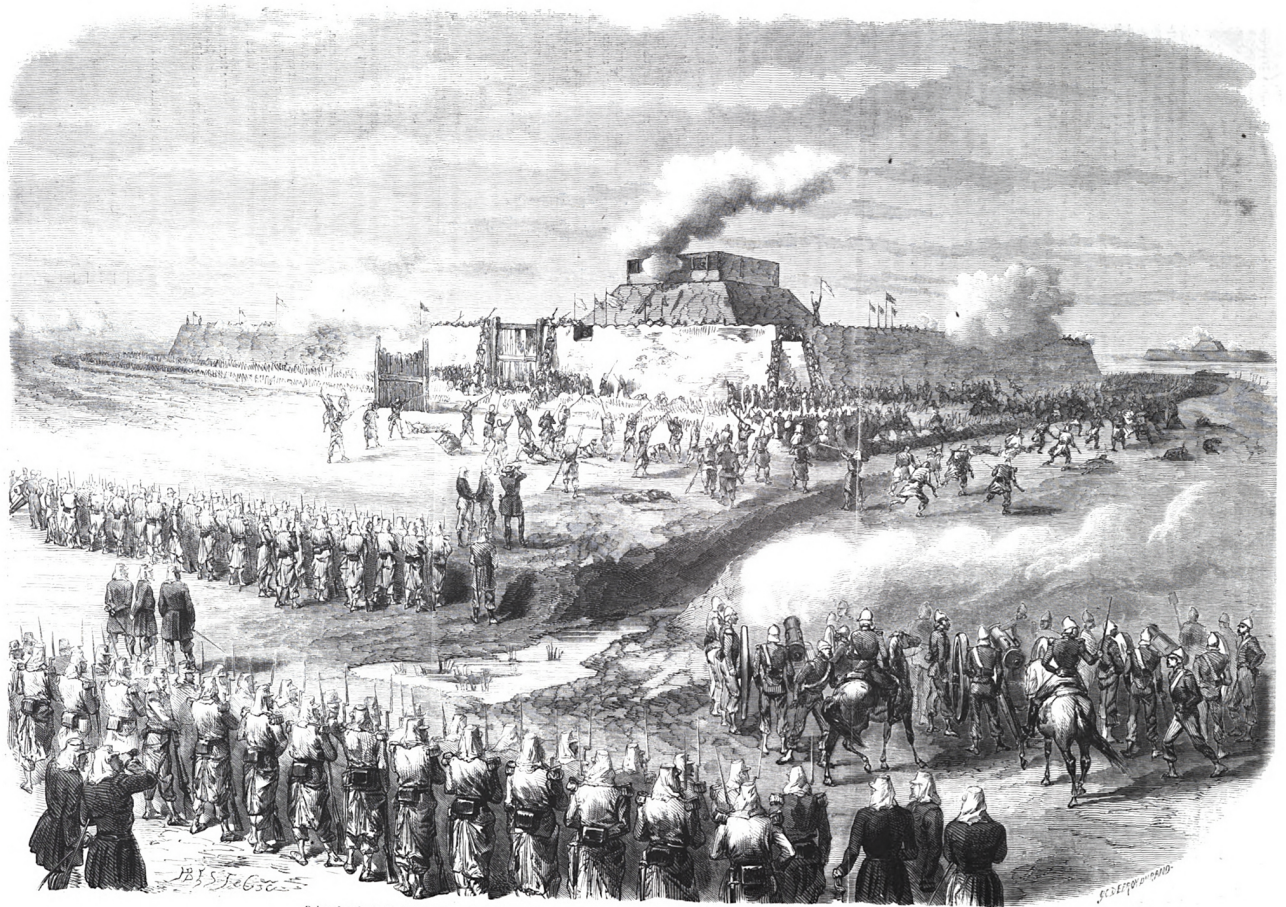
[Pei-ho_PAH8282_n1510_py8282_nmm]



*“The Storming and Capture of the North Fort, Peiho, on 21 August, 1860,”
oil on canvas, by Charles Stewart, 2nd Viscount Hardinge, 1865. The caption notes:
“Soldiers of 44th (East Essex) and 67th (South Hampshire) Regiments
breaching the walls of the North Fort.”*

National Army Museum

[1860_stewart_North-Fort]



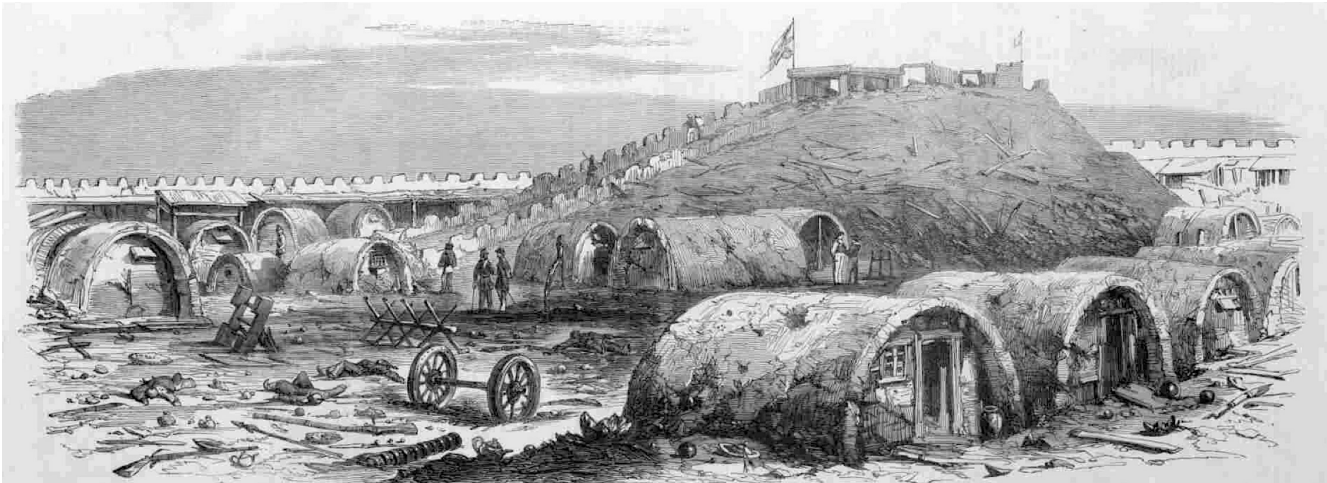
Prise des forts du Pei-ho (21 août 1860). — D'après un croquis du capitaine H. G., du 10^e. (Voir la Revue politique de la semaine.)

Translated from French:
“Capture of the Pei-ho Forts (August 21, 1860).
— A Sketch by Captain H. G., From the 10th.
(See the Political Review of the Week.)”

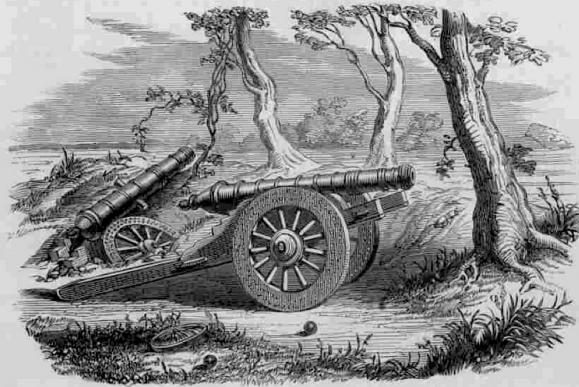
L'illustration, Journal Universel, Paris,
January 19, 1861 (p. 40)

University of California

[illustration_1861-01-19_040_forts-peiho-1860-21Au]



THE WAR IN CHINA.—INTERIOR OF THE NORTH FORT, PEIHO.—FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST.



CHINESE FIELD-GUN.—FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST.



BEING UNDER DIFFICULTIES.—FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST IN CHINA.

top: “Interior of the North Fort, Pei-ho”

bottom, left: “Chinese Field Gun”

bottom, right: “Being Under Difficulties”

Illustrated London News, *January 8 1860*, p.547

Illustrated London News Group

[ILN_1860-12-08_547_fort-beato_horiz_BL]

August–September 1860: Allies Advance – Chinese Imprison Negotiators

After garrisoning the forts, British and French troops march upriver toward Beijing—each nation on opposite banks of the Peiho. The Chinese agree to talks, but then ambush the Western negotiators and imprison them in Beijing.

September 18, 1860: Large Chinese Force Routed

Reaching Chang-Kia-Wan (Zhangjiawan), Allied troops meet a 30,000-strong Chinese army, said to be five miles wide, and quickly defeat it. Qing commander-in-chief Senggerinchen decides his remaining cavalry will make their last stand at the Tonghui River, eight miles from Beijing.

September 20, 1860: Anglo-French Forces Invade Beijing

In the battle at the bridge named Palikao (Yongtongqiao), which spans the Tonghui River, the Allies scatter Senggerinchen's elite Mongolian cavalry and entrap the infantry defending Beijing.



*“The French Attack on the Bridge Pa-Li-Chian, Eight Miles From Peking
— Form [sic] a Sketch by our Special Artist in China”*

BATTLE NEAR PEKIN.

... At daybreak on the 21st I marched from Chang-Tsin-Wan. and, parking the baggage in a village two tram to front, was there joined by the French, who advanced on the right. Soon after passing Tang-Chow the French troops got under fire of the Chinese works thrown up to protect a fine bridge over the canal, and on the Imperial high road to Peking. At this point the enemy's infantry appeared in considerable force. On the left the Tartar calvary showed in large masses, and and advanced rapidly until within 200 yards of our guns, which, hastily unlimbering, threw them off with a fire of canister ... — J. Hope Grant, Commander of the Forces. (*Illustrated London News*, December 22 1860, p.582)

Illustrated London News Group

[ILN_1860-12-22_582_battle_horiz_BL]



THE KING'S DRAGOON GUARDS CLOSING WITH THE TARTAR CAVALRY IN THE ENGAGEMENT NEAR PEKIN ON THE 21ST OF SEPTEMBER.—FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST IN CHINA.

*“The King's Dragoon Guards closing With the Tartar cavalry in
the Engagement Near Pekin on the 21st of September
— From a Sketch by our Special Artist in China”*

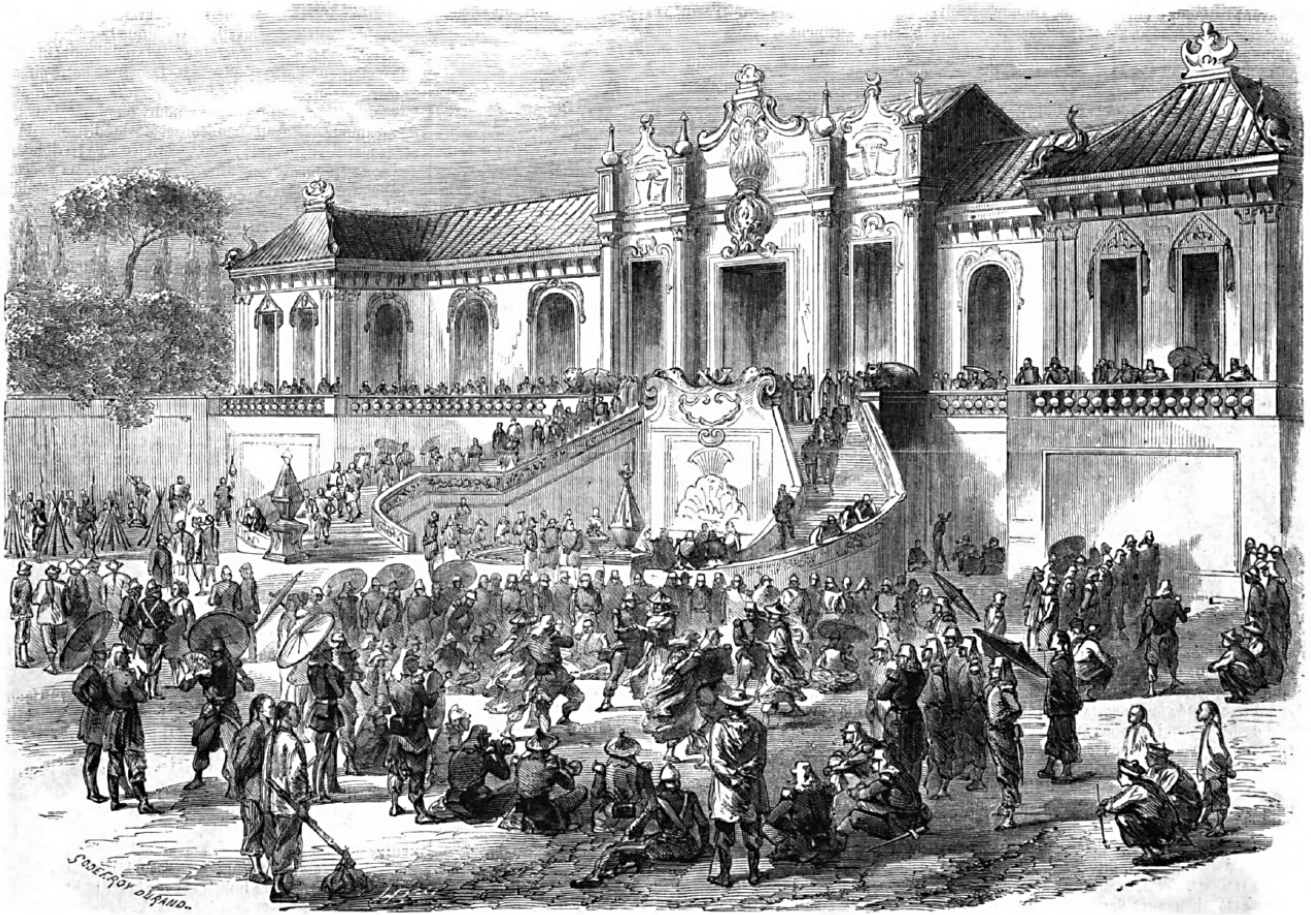
... At this time I had with me the cavalry, the 4th Infantry Brigade and three Armstrong guns ... We fired occasional small single shots on their thickest masses. These shots, fired singly, at slow intervals, served admirably to illustrate the good qualities of the Armstrong gun: not one failed to strike the thick masses of the enemy, at once driving them from the spot. ... — J. Hope Grant, Commander of the Forces. (*Illustrated London News*, December 22 1860, p.583)

Illustrated London News Group

[ILN_1858-09-18_267_fire-canton_BL]

October 6, 1860: Capture & Looting of the Yuanmingyuan

In pursuit of Senggerinchen's retreating forces, French troops enter the grounds of the Yuanmingyuan (summer palaces). The following day troops begin looting, at first against direct orders, but later supervised by their officers. Joined quickly by the British (and a small number of Chinese), three days are spent stripping much of the complex of silks, jewels, bullion, and objets d'art, all considered by the Allies to be "spoils of war."



Occupation du palais de Yuan-ning-yuan par les troupes françaises. — D'après les croquis de M. B. J., officier de l'expédition, et de M. Marechal.

Translated from French:

"Occupation of the Yuanmingyuan palace by French troops.

— From the sketches of Mr. B. J., expedition officer, and Mr. Marelle"

University of California

[illustration_1860-12-02_413_ymy]



A PORTION OF THE EMPEROR OF CHINA'S SUMMER PALACE, NEAR PEKIN. — SEE SUPPLEMENT, PAGE 406.

“A Portion of the Emperor of China's Summer Palace”

Illustrated London News, *April 27, 1861* (p. 390)

*This image is based on a photograph by Felice Beato, titled
“The Great Imperial Palace (Yuan Ming Yuan) Before the
Burning, Peking, October 18, 1860.”*

Illustrated London News Group

[ILN_1861-04-27_390_summer-palace_BL]

October 11, 1860: Beijing Truce Declared

Demands for the release of the captured negotiators having failed, British engineers prepare to demolish the walls of Beijing. At 11:30 pm the two sides agree to a truce, and the Chinese open the city gate.



Entrée des troupes alliées dans Pékin par la porte Tchao-yant, le 22 octobre 1860.

Translated from French:

“Entry of the Allied Troops Into Peking by the Tchao-yant Gate, October 22, 1860.”

The pitched battle portrayed in L'illustration may have been dramatized, or repurposed from other events. Agreeing to a truce, Prince Gong opened the Andingmen gate: Allied forces remained camped outside the city walls or in the Andingmen. (Beato took the first photographs of Beijing from atop the gate.)

L'illustration, Journal Universel, Paris, December 2, 1860 (p. 412)

University of California

[illustration_1860-12-02_412_pekin-22Oct]

October 18–19, 1860: Yuanmingyuan Destroyed on Elgin's Command

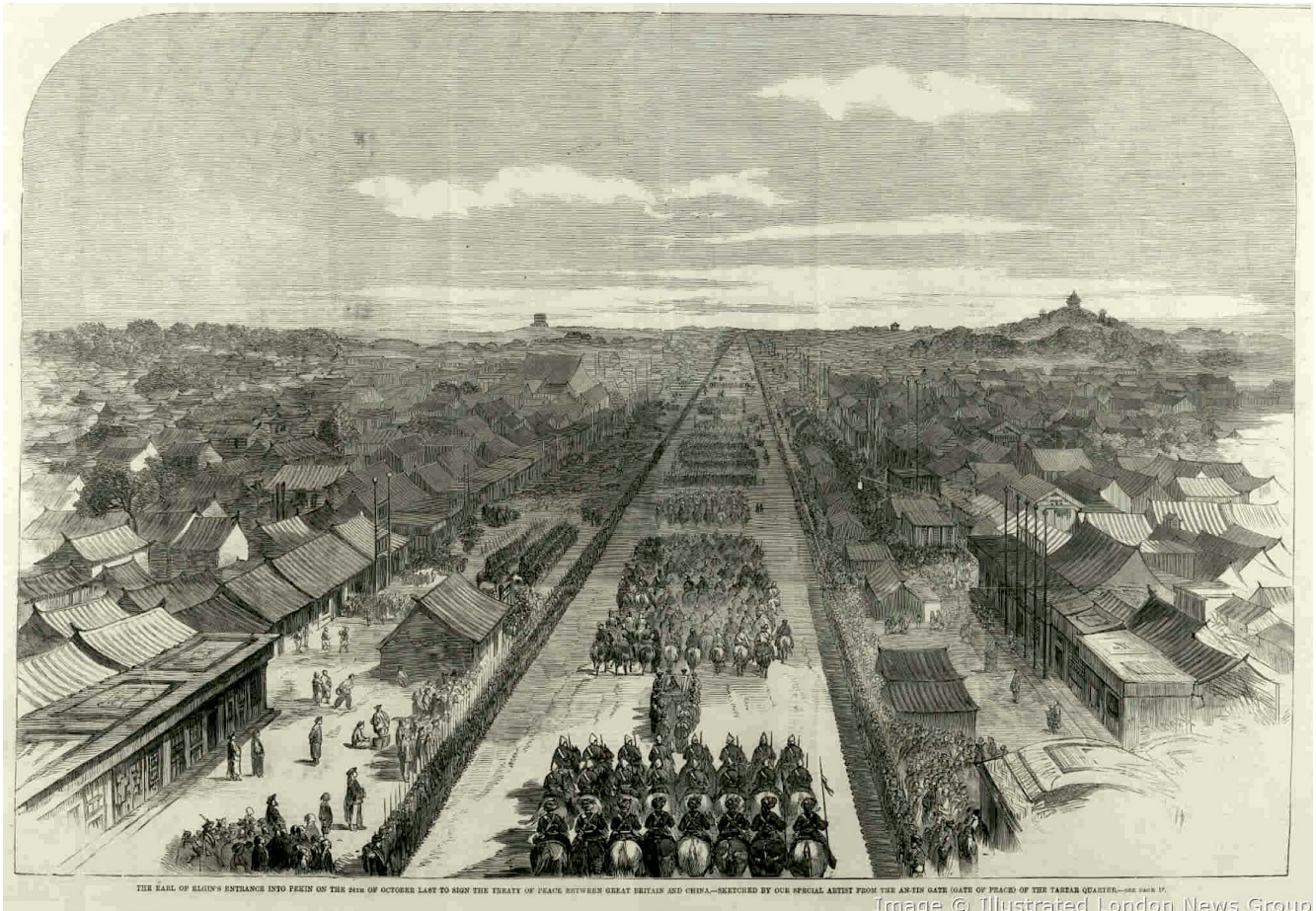
Upon learning that some of the imprisoned negotiators are dead, Lord Elgin considers the destruction of the Yuanmingyuan, “not for vengeance, but for future security.” At a meeting with Baron Gros, he claims some prisoners were tortured there:

To this place [the emperor] brought our hapless countrymen, in order that they might undergo their severest tortures within its precincts. Here have been found the horses and accoutrements of the troopers seized, the decorations torn from the breast of a gallant French officer, and other effects belonging to the prisoners.
(Letters and Journals of James, Eighth Earl of Elgin. London, 1872, pp. 365-366)

Gros demurs, but doesn't stand in Elgin's way. On October 18–19, British troops led by Hope Grant demolish and burn most of the roughly 200 palaces, gardens, and pavilions.

October–November 1860: Second Opium War Ends

China signs the Beijing Convention and ratifies the Treaties of Tianjin and the Treaty of Aigun, ending the Second Opium War.



“The Earl of Elgin's Entrance into Peking on the 24th of October, Last to Sign the Treaty”

Illustrated London News, *January 5 1861, p.20*

Illustrated London News Group

[ILN_1861-01-05_21_elgin-pekin_BL]



“The Peace With China — Street Scene in Peking: a Crowd of Celestials Contemplating the Barbarians”

A STREET SCENE IN PEKIN.

... before the gate was an enormous crowd of wonder-struck inhabitants gazing with open eyes and mouths at the European soldiery in the gate, as the Trojans may have gazed on the wooden horse when it had passed their impregnable walls. To keep back this curiosity-stricken mob was a task of some difficulty to the sentries, and so far from fearing us were they that several adventurous spirits brought with them supplies of fowl, fruits, and sweetmeats, with which they drive a good trade with the soldiers on guard. (*Illustrated London News*, January 5 1861, p.143)

Illustrated London News Group

[ILN_1861-01-05_12_street-Pekin_BL]



Théâtre du Cirque-impérial : la *Prise de Pékin*, acte 3^me. (Voir le précédent numéro, *Causerie dramatique*.)

Translated from French:

"Theater du Cirque-Imperial: The Capture of Peking, act 3. (See the previous issue, Dramatic Talk.)"

L'illustration, Journal Universel, Paris,
August 10, 1861 (p. 92)

The Capture of Peking

The crowd runs to the marvels of *The Capture of Peking*, a convenient means of making the expedition to China. The drama is enlightening. Patriotism dominates there ... The staging is splendid: opium and dreams serve as an excuse for shimmering scenery that the pen would try in vain to describe. (*Revue Artistique et Littéraire*, Paris, 1860, p. 276)

Ohio State University

[illustration_1861-08-10_092_theater-pekín]