

Commander Johnston Stewart, of H.M.S. "Algerine," the Senior Naval Officer present at Taku (the Rear-Admiral being in his Flagship outside the Bar, 12 miles off). Commander Stewart directed our part of the operations, and well and ably handled his ship under heavy fire from the forts in a most gallant and seamanlike way, and I desire to submit his name to their Lordships for their very favourable notice.

I have, &c.

E. H. SEYMOUR,
Vice-Admiral.

The Secretary of the Admiralty.

Letter No. 388 from Commander-in-Chief on the China Station, dated 8th July, 1900.

Affairs at Tientsin between 10th and 26th June, 1900.

No. 388. Tientsin,

Sir, 8th July, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the following occurrences at Tientsin between 10th June, the date of the departure of the expedition to attempt the relief of Peking, until its return on 26th June.

Captain E. H. Bayly, of H.M.S. "Aurora," who was left in charge of the British forces at Tientsin, found immediately after my departure that the Chinese authorities were doing all they could to prevent trains being sent forward with reinforcements, and to keep up communication. Large and threatening mobs of Chinese came to the railway station to obstruct the work, but trains were with some difficulty sent through as required until 14th, when the tearing up of the line prevented further communication in advance.

On 10th June, Lieutenant C. D. Roper with 50 men was sent from Tientsin to Tongshan to protect British railways employes there, at the earnest request of Mr. Kinder, the Engineer-in-Chief. They remained until 16th June, when, finding the position untenable, they withdrew with the European residents to Peitaku, and embarked on 21st in H.M.S. "Humber" for Taku.

On 11th June the Chinese began to leave the Settlement and shops to close. Reinforcements of 150 seamen and marines, under Commander Beatty (H.M.S. "Barfleur"), arrived on that day, and on 13th some 1,600 to 1,800 Russians with cavalry and field guns.

A courier arrived from Peking on 14th with news that the Summer Legation and all mission houses at the western hills had been destroyed.

15th June.—Some mission houses in the French Settlement and the cathedral in the Native City were burnt and telegraphic communication with Taku interrupted. A search-light train patrolled the line between Tientsin and Tongku all night, and a guard of 200 Russians was left at Chun Liang Cheng, a station midway between.

16th June.—The first attack on the Settlement was made by some Boxers, who set fire to several stores and houses before they were driven out, they also attacked the railway station held by the Russians.

A train for repairing the up line was prepared with search-light and a 6.8 gun mounted; work had to be commenced within a half a mile of the station. A train sent down to Tongku was fired at by the forts as it approached and returned to Tientsin next morning.

17th June.—Some Chinese were observed gathering together to destroy the line $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles away; the repairing train was sent out with a small force under Mr. Henry C. Halahan, mid-

shipman, to drive them off. Outside the station they came across a body of Chinese troops (80 to 90) who opened fire on the train; the fire was returned, and after losing a few men, the Chinese made off.

The Russians afterwards went out with a force of 200 men and one of our 6-pr. with crew, under Lieutenant G. B. Powell, of "Aurora," and engaged the enemy.

The Military College on the river opposite the British Concession was taken by a party of the Allied Forces under Major Luke, R.M.L.I. ("Barfleur"); the guns found there were destroyed and the building also. The British loss was one killed and four wounded.

The bombardment of the Settlement by guns in the Native City commenced.

18th June.—A train under Lieutenant Field ("Barfleur") started with a Russian force to bring back the 200 Russians from Chun Liang Cheng, but found the line badly damaged and failed to reach that place. They were heavily engaged by the enemy and returned in the afternoon in time to help, by a flank attack, to repulse the Chinese troops then attacking the railway station. During the engagement two British companies under Commander Beatty, with a 9-pr. field gun under Lieutenant P. Wright ("Orlando"), reinforced the Russians and did excellent service.

19th June.—Two Chinese field guns were placed near the railway embankment opposite the British Concession and opened fire. Commander Beatty, with three companies of seamen, crossed the river and manoeuvred to within 200 or 300 yards in the hope of capturing them with a rush; some Russians moved out at the same time to co-operate. While our men were waiting for the Russians to come up, a large force of Chinese appeared to the right behind a mud wall and poured in a heavy fire, wounding Commander Beatty, Lieutenants Powell ("Aurora") and Stirling ("Barfleur"), Mr. Donaldson, midshipman ("Barfleur") (the latter died on 3rd July of his wounds), and 11 men. The force then retired.

A 9-pr. gun was then brought up to the Bund outside the British Consulate and succeeded in throwing shell close in front of the guns, upon which the Chinese brought up horses and withdrew them. During this action a piece of shell from one of the enemy's guns struck Lieutenant Wright, who was on the roof of the Consulate directing the fire of his gun, inflicting dangerous wounds on the head and arms.

Mr. J. Watts, of the Tientsin Volunteer Corps, undertook to ride to Taku with despatches, and left at 9.30 p.m. with a guard of only 3 Cossacks. Mr. Watts knows the country thoroughly well and succeeded in getting through; his action was most gallant and is well deserving of official recognition, as the whole country was swarming with Boxers and Imperial troops.

20th–21st June.—Only small attacks and skirmishes took place, but the Concession was still bombarded from the Native City.

22nd June.—Troops were seen in the far distance advancing from Tongku. A courier from Peking arrived with a message that all Europeans had been ordered to leave within 24 hours.

23rd June.—A column, composed of 250 seamen and marines, 300 Royal Welsh Fusiliers, 40 Royal Engineers, 150 United States marines, and 23 Italians (in all about 763), arrived from Tongku about noon. They left Tongku three days previously, under the command of Commander Cradock, of H.M.S. "Alacrity," and had not met with much opposition from the enemy.