

that the ascent for the first time of an unknown river for a distance of upwards of 600 miles is a great achievement. In absence of information as to the breadth of the river and the nature of its channels, and as some of the principal cities were known, and several of the fortified places were suspected, to be in the hands of the rebels, it was deemed prudent to proceed with an efficient squadron; accordingly, Her Majesty's ships *Retribution*, *Furious*, and *Cruiser*, and gunboats *Dove* and *Lee* were selected for the purpose; the *Retribution*, however, owing to her great draught of water, was left at Kew-Shien, about 90 miles above Nanking, and the remainder succeeded in ascending the river—overcoming all obstacles in the shape of rebels and shoals—to Han-kow. Within the last few years the channel of the river up to Nanking is so entirely changed, shoals existing where the charts indicated deep water, as to neutralize the advantages derived from the experience of former surveyors; nor is this transformation confined to the bed of the river—the same occurs with its banks, and former landmarks had either disappeared altogether, or were so completely altered as to be undistinguishable. The direction of the current follows the same law of change, and to such a degree, in the opinion of the author, as to render, in our altered relations with China, an extended survey essential to the interests of commerce. Passing the Imperialist fleet, which was blockading Nanking, then held by the rebels, the latter fired on a flag of truce which was hoisted, the result of which was the silencing and partial demolition of their batteries. Continuing the ascent, and leaving behind several towns, here, held by the Imperialists and there by the rebels, the squadron entered the comparatively narrowed passage by the Eastern and Western Pillar Hills; the former rising to a height of from 300 to 400 feet out of the water, crowned with a crenellated wall with batteries—the latter shaped like Gibraltar, on a smaller scale, and covered with fortifications extending some distance along the shore, effectually commanding the passage, and rendering such a position, in the hands of a European Power, impregnable. Leaving Kew-Shien, the expedition proceeded on their voyage—the hills on the banks rising to a height of 2,000 feet, richly wooded—and reached Ta-Keang, where this range winds rapidly away in a southerly direction, the river following an opposite course, and widening into noble reaches of great depth; and a range of hills to the north then commences. Up to this point the navigation is unattended with any great difficulty, and the soundings are regular. Continuing their course, large lakes were visible from the mast-head on both sides; in summer they are filled by the overflowing waters of the Ta-Keang, and are subject to annual inundations. The author here notices the principal towns and villages, and the chief features and the character of the country on either bank. With the exception of the Tsung-yang river which joins a lake a little above Nanking, all those tributaries marked as such in the maps were mere ditches, almost dry in the winter; but here the Great Lake meets a mighty feeder in the Poyang Lake, discharging into it the whole drainage of the province of Keang-si. Throughout the whole length of the voyage to Han-kow the banks, and the cultivation on them, retain much of the same character. The cotton of the district of Kin-kwoh is celebrated. There can be little doubt that the natural advantages Han-kow possesses must always render it of great importance in a commercial point of view; and it is not easy to estimate the effect which the concentration of a foreign community, and the accumulation of foreign capital may produce upon the river traffic generally.