

treated and were in a condition of fearful emaciation, while the bodies of several who had died were also given up, among them that of Mr. Bowlby, correspondent of the *London Times*. This spectacle aroused the greatest indignation in the British camp. A terrible retribution might have been inflicted upon Peking had not a promise of its safety been given if the gate were surrendered. But the emperor's rural retreat lay at the mercy of the troops, and Lord Elgin gave orders that its palaces should be levelled with the ground. The French refused to aid in this act of vandalism, which they strongly condemned,—a verdict which has since been that of the civilized world. But Lord Elgin was fixed in his purpose, and the work of destruction went on.

Soon flames appeared above the devoted structures, and long columns of smoke rose to the sky, increasing in width and density as the day waned, until the canopy of smoke hung like a vast storm-cloud over Peking, and the sorrowful eyes of those on the walls saw the flashing fire that told of the swift destruction of what it had taken centuries to build. For two days the work of ruin in the imperial grounds went on, the soldiers carrying away what they could from the burning buildings, though a vast amount of property was destroyed, the loss being estimated at a value of over ten million dollars.

Threats were now made that unless compensation should be paid for the British subjects maltreated and murdered, and the treaty signed within a fixed period, the palace in Peking would be seized and other steps of violence taken. There was no redress