

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN ADMIRAL ITO AND ADMIRAL TING.

LETTER NO. 1.—*From Admiral Ito to Admiral Ting.*

I HAVE the honour to address this letter to your Excellency. The vicissitudes of the time have made us enemies. It is a misfortune. Yet it is our countries that are at war. There need be no hostility between individuals. The friendship that formerly existed between you and me is as warm as ever to-day. Let it not be supposed that in writing this letter I am actuated by any idle purpose of urging you to surrender. The actors in great affairs often err; the onlookers see the truth. Instead of calmly deliberating what course of procedure of his own part is best for his country, best for himself, a man sometimes allows himself to be swayed by the task in which he is actually engaged and takes a mistaken view; is it not then the duty of his friends to advise him and turn his thoughts into the right channel? I address myself to you from motives of genuine friendship, and I pray you to appreciate them. What is the origin of the repeated disasters that have befallen the Chinese arms? There is, I think, little difficulty in discovering the true reason if one look for it calmly and intelligently. Your discernment has doubtless shown you the cause. It is not the fault of one man that has brought China into the position she now occupies; the blame rests with the errors of the Government that has long administered her affairs. She selects her servants by competitive examination, and literary attainments are the test. Thus it results that her officials, the repositories of administrative

power, are all literate, and literature is honoured above everything. Her practice in this respect is as uniform to-day as it was a thousand years ago. It is not necessarily a defective system, nor does it necessarily produce a bad government. But a country can never preserve its independence in practice by such means. For you know well what troubles Japan had to encounter thirty years ago, what perils she had to surmount. She owes her preservation and her integrity to-day wholly to the fact that she then broke away from the old and attached herself to the new. In the case of your country also that must be the cardinal course at present; if you adopt it, I venture to say that you are safe; if you reject it, you cannot escape destruction. In a contest with Japan it has long been fated that you should witness results such as are now before you. Can it be the duty of faithful subjects of the empire, men really solicitous for its welfare, to swim idly with the tide now sweeping over the country by the decree of an ancient fate, making no effort to stem it. A country with a history running back thousands of years, and territories stretching tens of thousands of miles, the oldest empire in the world, can it be an easy task to accomplish for such a country a work of restoration, replacing its foundation on a permanently solid basis. A single pillar cannot prevent the fall of a great edifice. Is there any latitude for choice between the impossible and the disadvantageous? To hand over squadrons to the foe, to surrender a whole army to an enemy; these are mere bagatelles compared with the fate of a country. By whatever reputation a Japanese soldier possesses in the eyes of the world, I vow that I believe your wisest course is to come to Japan and wait there until the fortunes of your country are again in the ascendant, and until the time arrives when your services will be again needed. Hear these words of your true friend. Need I remind you that the annals of history contain many names of men who have removed a stain from their names and lived to perform great deeds. McMahon, of

France, having surrendered and passed over into the enemy's country, came back after a time and assisted in reforming the French administration, the French not only forgetting his disgrace, but even elevating him to the post of President. Similarly, Osman Pasha, after losing the fortifications at Plevna, and being himself captured, came home to Turkey, where he rose to be minister of war, and acquired a high reputation in connection with his military reforms. If you come to Japan I can assure you of the good treatment you will receive and of the Emperor's favour. Not alone has His Majesty pardoned subjects of his own that raised the standard of rebellion, but has rewarded their talents by elevating them to positions of high trust, as in the case of Admiral Yenomoto, now a member of the cabinet, and Otori Keisuke, a Councillor of State. There are many such instances. In the case of men of note that are not His Majesty's subjects, his magnanimous treatment of them would certainly be even more marked. The great question that you have now to determine is whether you will throw in your lot with a country that you see falling to ruin, and be involved in a result inevitable under unchanged administrative circumstances, or whether you will preserve the strength that remains to you and evolve another plan hereafter. It has generally been the habit of warriors of your country to use haughty and rough language in addressing their foes, but I address this letter to you from motives of pure friendship, and I entreat you to credit my sincerity. If happily, reading these words, you accept my counsel, I will with your permission address some further remarks to you on the subject of giving practical effect to the idea.

(Signed) Ito YUKO, &c.

LETTER NO. 1.—*From Admiral Ting to Admiral Ito.*

I RECEIVED the letter of suggestions addressed to me by the officer in command at Sasebo (evidently a mistake of the officer commanding the united squadrons),* but did not reply because our countries were at war. Now, however, other material of war in your possession. With regard to the hour and other particulars, I shall be glad to consult with you when I receive a definite reply to this communication. When the transfer of everything has been concluded, I shall detail one of our ships-of-war to escort all the persons indicated in your despatch to a place convenient to both parties, but I desire to offer an expression of opinion on one point. As I had the honour to advise in my recent communications, I venture to think that for the sake of your own security and in the future interests of your country, it would be best that you should come to Japan and remain there until this war is over. If you decide to adopt that course, I offer you the strongest assurance that you shall be treated with every consideration and shall receive the fullest protection. But if you prefer to return to your own country, your wishes shall be respected. With reference to the suggestion that the British Naval Commander-in-Chief will act as guarantor of this arrangement, I think such a precaution wholly unnecessary. I place implicit reliance on your assurances as an officer. I trust that I shall receive a reply to this letter by 10 o'clock to-morrow morning.

(Signed) Iro YUKO,

Commander-in-Chief of the Squadron,
on board H.I.J.M.S. *Matsushina*.

(Dated) February 12th.

To H. E. Ting Zhuchang, Commander-
in-Chief of the Peiyang squadron.

LETTER NO. 2.—*From Admiral Ting to Admiral Ito.*

YOUR answer, just received, gives me much satisfaction on account of the lives of my men. I have also to express gratitude for the things you have sent me, but as the state of war existing between our countries makes it difficult for me to receive them, I beg to return them herewith, though I

him on the following day, and consult about the hour of the transfer and other details. I now desire to settle these points in conference with some Chinese officer duly authorised, but I wish to state distinctly that the officer coming to my ship for the purpose must be a Chinese officer not a foreigner. If he be a Chinese officer, he may count on being heartily welcomed.

(Signed) ITO YUKO,
Commander-in-Chief, &c.

(Dated) February 13th.

To H. E. the officer in immediate
command of the Peiyang squadron.