

With British and French reenforcements the allies resumed hostilities with a cavalry charge on the Chinese position. The French stormed the bridge with its twenty-five guns by a dashing bayonet charge. It was there that General Montauban won his subsequent title of Comte de Palikao. Meanwhile the British flanked the Chinese position. Their success in this manœuvre, and the dispersion of the Chinese imperial guards by the French infantry, completed the discomfiture of the Chinese. Peking now lay almost at the mercy of the allies.

At this juncture Prince Kung, the Chinese Emperor's brother, arrived at the front and requested a temporary suspension of hostilities. On behalf of England Lord Elgin replied that there could be no negotiation until Parkes and his fellow captives were delivered in safety at the British headquarters. Prince Kung gave assurances that Parkes and Loch were in safety at the Kaou Meaou Temple in Peking, but would be retained as hostages pending the conclusion of an armistice. Lord Elgin at once requested Sir Hope Grant to resume his march.

During the parleys, lasting nearly a week, more reserves had been brought up from Tien-tsin and the Sikh cavalry had reconnoitred to the very walls of Peking. On their report that the walls were strong and in good condition, it was decided to concentrate the attack on the Tatar quarter of Peking. In execution of this plan the allied forces marched around the great city to the northwest corner of the walls converging on the Emperor's summer palace, some four miles out of the city. Emperor Hsien-Feng fled from his palace, and sought shelter at Jehol, the hunting residence of the Emperors beyond the great Chinese wall. The French and British soldiers began a squabble over the rich loot in the palace, in the course of which some of the choicest Chinese art treasures were ruthlessly destroyed, while others were torn asunder