

other foreigner into the business seemed likely to do harm rather than good. So they sent one of the pupils who had lately been selected to join the Society but had not yet entered on his noviciate. His name was John Ferdinand, he was a young man of singular prudence and virtue, and one whom it seemed safe to entrust with a business of this nature. One of the converts acquainted with that part of the country was sent in company with him. His instructions were to use all possible means to get away Benedict and his party to the capital, but if he should find it absolutely impossible either to get leave from the officials or to evade their vigilance, he was to stop with our brother, and send back word to the members of the Society. In that case it was hoped that by help of friends at Court, means would be found to get him on from the frontier.

A journey of this nature might seem unseasonable enough at a time of the year when winter is at the height of severity in those regions; and the town at which Benedict had been detained was nearly four months journey from Peking. But Father Matthew thought no further delay should be risked, lest the great interval that had elapsed should lead Benedict to doubt whether we really had members stationed at Peking. And he judged well, for if the journey had been delayed but a few days longer the messengers would not have found Benedict among the living. They carried him a letter from Father Matthew, giving counsel as to the safest manner of making the journey, and two other members of the Society also wrote to him, giving full details about our affairs in that capital, a subject on which he was most eager for information.

Our Benedict in the meantime, during his detention at that city, endured more annoyance from the Mahomedans than had befallen him during the whole course of his journey. Also, on account of the high price of food in the place, he was obliged to dispose of his large piece of jade for little