

CHINESE INSULTS.

The wolf complained that the lamb had stirred the waters below and made them muddy above for him to drink. The lamb remonstrated on the impossibility of the charge, but the wolf nevertheless ate him up in consequence. Yesterday brought us, apropos of last night's debate, a large Blue-book entitled "Correspondence respecting Insults from China," showing how strongly the feebleness of the Chinese had provoked the mightiness of Britain, and how much we had tolerated, until even the meek Bowring and the much-enduring Seymour were provoked, the one to a protocol and the other to a bombardment. The wrongs done to us are set forth in goodly catalogue, and are as follows:—

1. Disturbances at Canton, and burning of factories.
2. Chinese boy accidentally wounded at Shanghai.
3. Persecution of some Chinese in British employ at Amoy.
4. Assault on Mr. Vice-Consul Jackson, and Messrs. Martin and Staunton, at Canton. Question of entrance into the city.
5. Aggressive conduct of Chinese at Foo-chow.
6. Attack on Mr. Parkes at Foo-chow.
7. Attack on Captain Giffard and other officers at Whampoa.
8. Disturbance at Foo-chow-foo, and attack on British long.
9. Ill-treatment of a Malay sailor at Canton.
10. Disorderly conduct of Chinese near the factories.
11. Stones thrown at an English boat near Canton.
12. Firing on an English party, by villagers, near Canton.
13. Murder committed at Woosung by a Manilla man.
14. Affray at Whampoa between Americans and Chinese.
15. Attack on Missionaries at Shanghai.
16. Attack on Messrs. Bowman and Johnson.
17. Attack on Mr. Parish at Foo-chow-foo.
18. Attack on Mr. Meadows by pirates near Canton.
19. Execution of French missionary in Cochin China (subsequently referred to).
20. Interference with native teachers in the service of Mr. Walker, missionary Foo-chow-foo.
21. Attack on Messrs. Dent, Oakley, Macgregor, and Anderson, by pirates, in the Canton river.
22. Outrage committed on Lieutenant de Lisle, R.N., and Mr. Curling, at Kow-loon.
23. Outrage on Mr. Seth, at Canton.
24. Inceadary placard against foreigners, published at Canton.
25. Attack on Messrs. Johnson and Whittall, at Canton.
26. Affray at Foo-chow-foo, and death of Mr. Cunningham, a citizen of the United States.
27. Murder of M. Chapdelaine, a French missionary, in the province of Kwang-se.
28. Case of Mr. Burns, a missionary.

Every one remembers the many causes of complaint against Greece, the injured Ionian thieves, and the much bedamaged bed-furniture of Pacifico, and how victorious Lord Palmerston was in debate, how very wrong in reality, and how humbled finally Great Britain was in the eyes of Europe by the blank termination of that threatened bombardment of Athens. Had we space it would be easy to prove the fallacy of almost every one of these alleged wrongs, and the monstrous perversion, dissimulation, and falsehood, of calling them "insults" by Chinese.

We will take the first, which the letter from Sir H. Pottinger sufficiently explains:—

"Exclusive of the fact of nearly 200 Lascars having gone to Canton without any apparent control, I have learned that there were several European or American females there; that some of them had walked about the outskirts of the city, and had even crossed the river to Honan, an exposure which is at total variance with ideas of decorum and propriety among the better order of Chinese, and which I have heard, subjected them to the hootings and insulting indecencies of the rabble. I have also been told that different persons had publicly talked of selecting spots for their future country residences in the neighbourhood of Canton, and had avowedly crossed the river to Honan for that purpose, which are all indiscretions calculated to give offence and cause ill-will."

What Sir H. Pottinger says in a subsequent despatch to the British merchants (dated Hong Kong, December 16, 1842) might be now appropriately repeated:—

"As to the alleged inability of the local authorities to afford protection, that I can only, as at present informed, contemplate in the light of a conjecture. We all know what an unmanageable thing an exasperated mob is in every part of the world. Many instances of this truism could be adduced, within all our recollections, in England and other of the most civilized nations of Europe; and before I subscribe to the correctness of this allegation, I must learn that proper and timely application was made to the local officer, which, I regret to add, I have strong reasons for believing was not the case. It may, however, be true that the Chinese authorities had not the power immediately at hand to restore order when the riot became serious; and it may even be hereafter unhappily verified, that they do not possess the means of preserving the peace for the future; but, with respect to the first of these suppositions, it is just and proper, in looking at it, to inquire why our Lascars—one of whom, I am informed, began the riot by stabbing a Chinese—were not restrained by those whose business it was to look after them; and, as regards the second supposition, if we admit that it is possible, and investigate the cause, we are obliged to revert to occurrences which took place before I came to China.

"None of you, gentlemen, will suppose me capable for a moment of palliating the base and barefaced perfidy of the officers of the provincial Government in the progress of events, which terminated in the city of Canton being left at the mercy of her Majesty's arms in May, 1841; but I believe that I am quite justified in saying that, up to that time, there was no general popular feelings of ill-will or antipathy towards the British nation on the side of the people. It is true that we had, from the earliest period of our intercourse with this empire, submitted (with a very few memorable exceptions) to constant contumely and indignity from the Chinese Government officers; but, so far as the mass of the population were concerned, they were, I have understood, as civil and as well-disposed as I have invariably found them in all parts of the empire which I have had occasion to visit since the peace was concluded. It thence follows that the change which at that time came over the people, and which has gradually led to their present state of exasperation and excitement, must have been brought about by ourselves—that is, partly by mismanagement, and partly by ill-treatment; and I believe both these causes to have had a share in bringing matters to their present crisis."

No. 2 is the case of a Chinese boy shot by two English sportsmen, and this is set down as an "insult"! No. 3 is the case of two Chinese attacked by their countrymen at Amoy, for bringing supplies to British troops. The offenders were punished by the Government, and the apologies accepted! No. 4 was a case of "mobbing" and robbing certain persons who, because they were not allowed to enter within the walls of Canton, pertinaciously chose to take their walks just under them. The rogues were punished, but the question was then raised by Sir John Davis as to the right of entering Canton. Nos. 4 and 6 were avenged by three Tartar soldiers being put into the cangue—a kind of wooden block or cage. The rest down to 19 are of the ordinary native description which every Irishman could bring against an English Home Secretary, or vice versa. No. 19 has been avenged by the Emperor of France; and the sheer ignorance of the writers of the despatches about matters made notorious through Europe by the Propaganda is rather amusing. The other attacks, for the most part, are by pirate boats. As for Lieutenants De Lisle and Curling, the question arises, what were they doing on the Chinese shore, contrary to the treaty, and the same with many others. No. 26, the death of Mr. Cunningham, is shown to have been caused by his drawing a revolver on a mob who had already been fired upon by his servant for attempting to rescue a boy, who was wrongfully accused by some of the factory servants! And this is a "Chinese insult." No. 27 refers to the murder of a French missionary who was suspected of being a leader of the rebels at Kwang-se, where the rebellion first showed strength; the Roman Catholic priests and their Christian congregations, being supposed at this time to form the nucleus of the rebellion. But this was no "Chinese insult" to England. This priest was a martyr; he disseminated a foreign religion in China, knowingly under penalty of death. The Chinese had up to that time (1855) showed the greatest tolerance; as an instance of which let us refer to what is called the "Chinese insult" in the "case of Mr. Burns, a missionary," which Sir John Bowring himself thus disposes of:—

SIR J. BOWRING TO THE EARL OF CLARENDON.—(Received Dec. 1.) (Extract.)

"Hong Kong, Oct. 8. "I have the honour to forward to your lordship copies of correspondence with Mr. Consul Parkes on the subject of the arrest and conveyance to Canton of a missionary, Mr. Burns, from a district beyond treaty limits, in which he has lately been engaged.

"Mr. Burns is a most zealous person, and having heard that it was his purpose to return to the district from which he has been just sent away, I have thought it necessary to instruct Mr. Parkes to caution him against so doing. The caution is all the more necessary from the disturbed state of the locality."

Consul Parkes speaks yet more plainly:—

"The Imperial Commissioner has shown commendable moderation in not calling upon me to take more stringent notice of this infraction of the treaty. Perhaps it is, that being satisfied of the harmless character of Mr. Burns' pursuits, his Excellency considers forty days' confinement, ten days of which were passed at Chaou-chow, and thirty on the route hence to Canton, as a sufficient penalty for the indiscretion; or it may be that his Excellency, having some knowledge of the liberty so long allowed by the local authorities of Chaou-chow to foreigners at Swatow, justly deems it anomalous to call for the punishment of Mr. Burns for breach of treaty, when he knows his own officers to be similarly implicated, but to a far higher degree. Not only is a foreign trade, amounting annually to several millions of dollars, carried on openly at Swatow, as your excellency is doubtless well aware, in vessels under all flags, which either are in ordinary or visit that port at will, but the local authorities have been known to seek, and in more than one case, I believe, to obtain, the aid and alliance of these foreign visitors in their operations against insurgents or powerful marauders.

"Such being the case, it is almost surprising that the authorities of Chaou-chow should have considered themselves bound to incur the trouble and expense of forwarding Mr. Burns to Canton, instead of dismissing him with a caution not to appear again in that vicinity.

"From what Mr. Burns could gather during his confinement, it would appear that this was their first intention, as they applied to certain native merchants at Swatow to give bail both for Mr. Burns and his Chinese associates; and these merchants, with remarkable generosity, at once came forward with the security required. Subsequently, however, this course was altered by the advice, as Mr. Burns believes, of Wan, late prefect of Kea-ying-chow, who is at present at Chaou-chow waiting for employment, an officer already notorious to foreigners by the persecution he set on foot in August, 1850, against the Christians in his district, but whose acts in this respect were repudiated by the Imperial Commissioner Seu, at the instance of the French Minister."

And this is set forth as the last "Chinese insult," for which we broke down their walls, seized their ships, and burnt their houses.

This Blue Book will be for ever a standing record of British injustice, perversion of treaties, and barbarity.