

At the same time it is reported, and, in the main, no doubt truly, that a Russian Mission of some pretensions has arrived at Peking; that its members walk about the streets, in European costume, unmolested; and that discussions have taken place between its chief and the Chinese Government on matters of etiquette, in which it is reported that the Russian has receded from his first demand. The reports from Peking are sent by native Roman Catholic catechists to their Bishop, and embody probably, the gossip which circulates in the streets of Peking on these subjects. Your Lordship is likely to be better informed from St. Petersburg than we are on the coast of China, of the route and character of this Russian Agent.

It became necessary for me to decide, in this state of uncertainty as to the intentions of the Chinese Government, on the force which should accompany me to the Peiho, it being desirable that it should proceed without delay to the north. By a note received from M. Bourboulon, my French colleague, I see he does not expect that Admiral Rigault will spare from the operations in Annam more than two vessels, of which one, I hope, will be able to ascend the river as far as Tien-tsin. I therefore requested Admiral Hope and Sir Charles van Straubenzee to confer with me on this point. As your Lordship will see by the inclosed minute, I stated to them that the objects of my mission were—the exchange of the ratifications at Peking, the delivery of my credentials to the Emperor of China in person, and the arrival, as far as Tien-tsin, in a British ship of war. They agreed in the opinion that it would not be safe to assume that the Chinese would concede these points, and enter seriously on the consideration of the measures required to bring the Treaty into full operation, unless I were accompanied with an imposing force, and they agreed that it should be as nearly as possible of the same strength as that which formed the expedition of last year. I hope by the demonstration to render the active employment of the force unnecessary.

In the meantime I have requested Mr. Wade to inform Mr. Lay confidentially at Shanghai of the objects and scope of the Mission, leaving it to his discretion, in which I have full reliance, to communicate it, as from himself, to the Chinese Commissioners. We may thus obtain some knowledge of their intentions on our arrival at Shanghai, which would be important as a guide in our future proceedings.

I have not decided on the terms of my communications to the Chinese Government on the point from which it is to be sent. I propose discussing these points with M. Bourboulon, and with the American Minister.

I proceed to Canton as soon as the mail leaves for England; and on my return I shall visit Macao, where I hope to find my colleagues.

I have, &c.

(Signed) FREDERICK. W. A. BRUCE.

Inclosure in No. 2.

Minute of a Conference held at the Government Offices at Hong Kong, on Friday, April 28, 1859.

Present :

The Honourable F. Bruce, C.B.
Sir Charles van Straubenzee, K.C.B.
Rear-Admiral Hope, C.B.

MR. BRUCE stated that the instructions of Her Majesty's Government were to the effect that he was to proceed, if possible, to Tien-tsin in a

British man-of-war, and thence to Peking, where the exchange of the ratifications was to be effected, and where he was to present his letters of credence to the Emperor of China in person, insisting on such a reception as was befitting his character as the Representative of a nation on an equality with that of China.

He further stated that we were not in possession of any reliable information as to the spirit in which the Chinese Government were prepared to receive this first attempt to establish direct relations on a footing of equality with the Court of Peking. That we must be guided, therefore, by the general experience we had acquired of the Chinese character, and that we might infer as the result of our past experience that the objects of this mission were most likely to be satisfactorily and peacefully attained, if the British Minister were supported by a powerful demonstration of force at the mouth of the Peiho river.

Sir Charles van Straubenzee and Rear-Admiral Hope concurred in this view, the latter stating that his instructions contemplated the Minister being escorted with an imposing force.

It was unanimously agreed that the expedition should, if possible, be as strong as that which accompanied the Ambassadors of England and France to the Peiho last year, and with that view Sir Charles van Straubenzee intimated his being prepared, consistently with the security of his position at Canton, to place a battalion of Marines and a company of Engineers at the disposal of Rear-Admiral Hope. This addition to the naval force would compensate for the absence of the French forces in Cochin China.

No. 3.

Lord J. Russell to Mr. Bruce.

SIR, *Foreign-Office, July 6, 1859.*

HER Majesty's Government approve the arrangements, as reported in your despatch of the 4th of May, which you have adopted, in concert with Sir Charles van Straubenzee and Rear-Admiral Hope, for the purpose of proceeding up the Peiho on your way to Peking, backed by an adequate naval and military force.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) J. RUSSELL.

No. 4.

Mr. Bruce to the Earl of Malmesbury.—
(Received July 16.)

Victoria, Hong Kong, May 21, 1859.

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to inclose copy of the note I have addressed to the Chinese Chief Secretary of State, Kweiliang, informing him of my arrival in China, of the diplomatic character I bear, and of the course I intend to pursue. M. Bourboulon has also sent a note to him couched in identical terms.

In my previous despatches, I have informed your Lordship that we can ascertain nothing as to the intentions of this Government with respect to the visit of foreign Envoys to Peking; but the Imperial Commissioners, on hearing of my arrival in China, have proceeded from Soo-chow to Shanghai, a fact of some significance, and which gives colour to the opinion that they hope to raise questions or begin negotiations at that point, otherwise they would have returned ere this to