HIGHLY INTERESTING FROM JAPAN.

TROUBLE WITH THE ENGLISH MINISTER.

HOSTILITIES THREATENED.

Another Eastern War Possible.

Condensed from a Blue Book lately laid before Parliament.

Correspondence of The N. Y. Tribune.

LONDON, April 20, 1860.

Under the high pressure of Lord Elgin's Expedition and his Chinese success, the Japanese Government had, on the 26th August, 1858, signed a treaty which not only broke through all the Japanese customs, prejudices, laws, and trade regulations of 200 years, but by a bold *coup de main*, even imposed on "His Majesty the Tycoon" the admission at Yeddo of permanent Foreign Embassies. The new trade regulations under the British and American Treaties were to come into force on the 1st of July, 1859. On June 16, 1859, Mr. Alcock, the British Consul-General, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Japan, arrived in her Majesty's steam-sloop Samson, at the port of Nagasaki, and, when on the spot, at once established a Consulate, with the charge of which he temporarily invested Mr. Hodgson, the British Consul at Hakodadi, a Japanese port where there was neither a British ship nor merchant. After a due exchange of compliments with the Governor of Nagasaki, and the transaction of some business which we shall afterward allude to, Mr. Alcock, having left Nagasaki on the 20th June, cast anchor in the Bay of Yeddo on the 26th. He at once forwarded to the Minister of Foreign Affairs an official communication, announcing himself as the bearer of the ratified treaty, with full power to exchange the ratifications, and his intention to take up his residence at his post. After the Governors or Assistant Ministers of Foreign Affairs had visited and congratulated him on his arrival, the temple of Tozenjee was put at his disposition as a residence for himself and his Consular staff in the "most prompt "obliging and seemingly straightforward manner." On the 30th of June Mr. Alcock, in his steam-sloop, made a trip to Kanagawa, there to put Captain Wyse provisionally in charge of the Consular affairs, and to communicate with Mr. Harris, the American Minister, who had just arrived from Simoda in the Mississippi on his way to Yeddo. After his return to the capital, Mr. Alcock arranged with the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs that the ratifications should be exchanged on the 3d of July. The ceremony was to take place at the Japanese Minister's official residence, situated in the precincts of the Tycoon's palace, where until then no foreigner had been permitted to approach—the portion of the city lying between the Minister's residence and the temple inhabited by the British Consulate-General stretching over four miles. This opportunity Mr. Alcock, the representative of civilization against barbarism, thought fit to improve in such a manner as to impress the Japanese authorities and people with a due sense of the importance "of the measure as being the *formal inauguration* "*of peace and friendship* between the two countries."

But now we must allow the man to speak for himself: "It was arranged that the treaty, under a "canopy draped with flags and evergreens, should "be carried in procession before me all through the "city from the Consulate to the Minister's residence, surrounded by a guard of artillery and "marines, and followed by fifty of the crew of "her Majesty's ship Samson. The officers of the "Consulate-General and Captain Hand, with the "officers of the Samson, were all on horseback. "The inclosed memorandum will give the programme of the procession." This memorandum is a sort of programme anxiously copied from the programme of a Lord Mayor's show, only that the personnel employed was of such ludicrously diminutive proportions as the worshippers of Gog and Magog would never have dared to exhibit to a London mob. But Mr. Alcock is all exultation on the *eclat* of his procession. "It was," he romantically puts it, "a "bright July day, and the distance to be traversed, "some four miles, through a populous quarter of "the commercial city, and into the center of the "official *enceinte*, gave ample time for crowds to collect and discuss the meaning of so novel a scene in "the capital of the Tycoon. . . . I observed all "eyes were fixed upon the canopy under which the "treaty rested on its silk cushion, and evidently "were eagerly drawing each other's attention to it." And, furthermore, he fancied that the imposing appearance of the cortege struck the whole population with admiration. But then comes the upshot of this "*formal inauguration of peace and "friendship*." "The march of a guard and *armed* "*escort*, not only through the main thoroughfares of "the capital, but the more sacred precincts of the "official quarter, within the double lines of the Tycoon's walled enceinte, more especially, was a measure they might have opposed from the first. It was "only, however, at the last hour that intimation was "conveyed to me of a prohibition of a guard to enter "through the gates for the official quarter. It was "then too late to retrace our steps or modify the "order of proceeding, of which the Minister had received due notice three days before, and there was "no alternative but to say so, and persevere, or refuse to proceed at all. . . . Fortunately, by "this show of firmness, the opposition to the programme originally settled was withdrawn after an "hour's anxious suspense."

Mr. Alcock seems not at all to have been aware that whatever pleasant impressions his ludicrous Lord Mayor's show was likely to produce on the Japanese mind, this armed intrusion into the official quarter, in the close vicinity of the Tycoon's palace, could not but raise a rankling sense of injustice, humiliation, and revenge, on the part of the Barbarians. He knew that the final assent of the Japanese Plenipotentiaries to the article of the treaty stipulating for the residence of foreign Embassadors at Yeddo, had been most reluctantly given and accompanied by the expression of a strong desire that Lord Elgin would endeavor to induce her Majesty's Government not to send a diplomatic agent to reside in Yeddo before 1861, while he actually arrived in 1859. The first use made by him of his admission to the residence is a deliberate breach of the Court etiquette, by which he decrees to himself honors he might have claimed if backed by a victorious army instead of by his fifty Jack Tars. But, however that may be, Lord John Russell, as he states in a dispatch dated Nov. 10, 1859, feels himself highly satisfied at the report of the details of the ceremonial, and considers it altogether a hit.

Mr. Alcock's residence at Yeddo, and the exchange of the ratifications having been concluded without any trouble, the diplomatic drama begins. In order to make you understand the subsequent events, some preliminary remarks seem opportune.

First, then, Mr. Alcock found the management of Foreign Affairs in Japan to be intrusted to a sort of Council, composed of a Minister of Foreign Affairs and five Governors; the Minister at the head being also one of the highest members of the Council of State, and, as would appear to be invariably the custom in Japan, he has his double in another Minister, who on all public occasions sits by his side, and takes part in the business.

Beside this Council, with which Foreign Representatives have officially to transact all their business, they have to cope with the great body of Damios, or feudal princes; the Japanese Government being oligarchic rather than monarchical. An oligarchy composed of all the hereditary Damios, proprietors of three-fourths of the soil, and with many attributes of sovereignty attaching to their fiefs, constitutes the great council of the nation, *en permanence*, since one half of them are always at Yeddo. The Tycoon, or Monarch, is little more than their nominee and executive, and for the last generation or two, at least, the choice has always fallen on the candidate related to, and supported by, three or four of the most influential Damios. While thus constituting a permanent council and wielding a decisive influence over the action and policy of the Tycoon's Government, they are in a position to exercise an independent and, to a great degree, an irresponsible power throughout the empire, each in their several states or territories. As chief proprietors of the soil, its products and the various channels of commerce through their estates are subject to their control. Yeddo and the two ports of Nagasaki and Hakodadi are severally in the Imperial domain, but the domains of the Damios intercept all the lines of commerce to and from the interior and the great centres of trade and produce. No trade, therefore, to any extent, can take developement without their consent. They hold, moreover, a power of life and death over all within their territorial jurisdiction; and the administration of justice is equally in their hands, uncontrolled, except in so far as established laws and customs may place any check on the arbitrary will of the lord or his delegates. The coal mines are all their property; also those of copper, lead, silver, and all the other sources of mineral wealth in which the country is said to abound. It should be remarked, *en passant*, that the importance of the Japan commerce to the maritime nations would principally rest on the coals thence to be supplied, and, generally, on the export of its mineral wealth. But throughout the empire there prevails a settled conviction of the danger of exhausting the mineral resources of the country, and the impolicy and injustice of doing so, if even for their own profit, in any one generation. All mineral products are looked upon as in great part the inheritance of posterity, being, unlike the produce of the soil, unsusceptible of reproduction; and, therefore, they hold them not to be at the disposal of any one generation, save for for its own reasonable and immediate wants. Now, the Damios, or territorial magnates, the proprietors of the land, the mines, and all the lines of commerce, form, as in all aristocratic countries, a powerful center of the so-called national prejudices. It is they who mainly cling to the traditions of the past, and represent all the hostile and antagonistic tendencies of Japan to all extension of foreign relations or commerce. The signing of the American treaty, concluded by Mr. Harris was the signal for great political commotion, and the disgrace of all concerned in the negotiation, even down to the subordinates. The lives of the chief ministers were for some time in danger, so violent was the feeling excited among the majority of the Damios, the great hereditary princes of the empire, whose nominee the Tycoon himself is in point of fact. The prompt dismissal of the ministers who were in office at the time of the execution of the treaty with America, and the nomination of those who have since continued in power, was a retrograde act, intended by the Damios to put a check to any further concession. Circumstances, however, proved too strong for them, and they found themselves under the cruel necessity of signing in rapid succession treaties with most of the great Powers in Europe, each more liberal than its predecessor.

From the sketch just given, it becomes evident that the foreign representatives have to overcome not only the resistance of the General Government, but the power exercised collectively by the permanent Council of the Damios, and individually by each magnate in his own territory. Instead of smoothing the way by an exhibition of the greatest possible deference to the Imperial Government, the foreign representatives, with Mr. Alcock at their head, put it to the alternative of a revolution or a war.

No sooner had Mr. Alcock thought himself, by dint of the exchange of ratifications, firmly seated in his saddle, when, fairly supported by Mr. Harris, his American colleague, he began to ride rough the Japanese Government, and to attempt the establishment of an *imperium in imperio*.

On his first arrival at Nagasaki, he found fifteen square-rigged vessels in the harbor—men-of-war and merchantmen—under British, Dutch, American, and Russian flags, and some fifteen British subjects resident on shore and actively engaged in trade, most of it transacted by means of contract with the Government or its officers. Fifteen thousand tuns of shipping had found profitable employment here within the last six months (since January, 1859). All trade had been carried on under the provisions of the Dutch treaties, and additional acts of the 30th January, 1856, and 16th October, 1857, or the Russian treaty of 12th October, 1857, signed by Admiral Putiatin, opening the ports of Nagasaki and Hakodadi to trade under certain restrictions and prohibitions. He ascertained that "the trade under Dutch, British and other flags "indiscriminately had thus been carried on with the "direct sanction and official cognizance of the Gov"ernor of Nagasaki, who had in many instances "facilitated the merchants in acquiring houses and "places of business." Foreign commerce thus appeared in a fair way of starting until brought to a sudden stand-still by the new treaty of friendship, peace and free trade.

The first blessing Japan derived from the charter of civilization granted to its Government was—a currency question, a thing never before dreamed of in the secluded oceanic spot. By article X. of Lord Elgin's treaty, provision is made that all foreign coin shall pass current in Japan, and for corresponding weights in Japanese coin of the same description, gold for gold and silver for silver. It is further stipulated, that for the period of one year after the opening of the ports, the Japanese Government will furnish British subjects with Japanese coin, in exchange for theirs, equal weights being given, and no discount taken for recoinage; while Japanese coins, of all descriptions, except copper, may be exported. The description of foreign money, the free circulation of which throughout the country was actually contemplated, was the dollar.

Now, the stipulations involved the complete overthrow of the old Japanese monetary system, and all the economical relations connected with it.

While gold in Europe and America bears, on the average, a relative value to silver of 15 to 1, in Japan it was legally current at the rate of 5 to 1. A gold kobang, intrinsically worth from 17s. 6d. to 18s. 6d. (there being some variation in the alloy between new and old coins), thus only represents four silver itzebous, or an ounce and a third of silver. When the treaty was made, the silver currency consisted of itzebous, half-itzebous, and quarter-itzebous; three itzebous being equal in weight to a dollar, and the rest in proportion. Copper cash, however, formed the base of the monetary system, one itzebou being worth 1,800 cash. It appears that as gold is undervalued by 200 per cent as against silver, silver is undervalued by about 7 per cent as against copper. This system, which gave a purely fictitious value to the silver coins in relation to gold, converting them, in fact, into mere silver tokens with a value derived not from their weight, but from the Government stamp fixed upon them, did by no means interfere with the Japan foreign trade, since the latter was only a barter-trade; the coins being in circulation only among Japanese. All this was now suddenly changed. A dollar and a third would now have been exchanged by weight with four silver itzebous, and consequently have bought a golden kobang intrinsically worth 17s. 6d. to 18s. 6d. The empire would have been swindled out of its gold in no time, the operation being facilitated by the Government itself being bound to give itzebous for dollars, weight by weight. The gold once carried off, the turn of the silver would have come, because of its undervaluation in relation to copper.

What was the Japanese Government to do under these trying circumstances? Should they raise the legal value of gold by 200 per cent, according to the European standard, as Lord John Russell insinuates in a dispatch? Such a proceeding, as Mr. Alcock states, would have unsettled all the pending contracts and debts throughout the Empire. The Japanese Government, consequently, hit upon the expedient of issuing a new silver coinage of larger silver pieces, called half-itzebous, two of which were equal to a dollar in weight. In other words, instead of directly raising the value of gold, they adjusted the relation of gold to silver, by giving to a larger piece of silver, to be used in exchange for dollars, a lower denomination. By secret understanding with their subjects, and some bureaucratical contrivances, this currency was to be passed only in the exchange for dollars, and then to be returned to the Treasury at the rate of the value indicated not by its weight but by its denomination. "The Government," as a British subaltern, Mr. Cowan, informs Consul Wyse at Kanagawa, "would thus succeed in gaining their favorite point "—of having one kind of coin current among the "Japanese, and another for all transactions be"tween Japanese and foreigners." Mr. Cowan, of course, considers this a very barbarous notion, although Plato, in his "Republics" and his "Laws," happens to concur on this point not with Mr. Cowan, but with the Japanese Government.

The question really at the bottom of the whole difficulty was very simple. Was the Japanese Government bound to allow itself to be cheated out of its gold, and to make the foreign adventurers a present of 200 per cent on every exchange between their own coin and the foreign coin? The representatives of civilization answered this question, of course, in the affirmative. The central Government at Yeddo had hardly issued a proclamation respecting the issue of the new silver coin, when there ensued a general hubbub; a complete stagnation of commerce and the detention of shipping at Nagasaki; a stand-still of trade at Kanagawa. Protests rained on protests from the merchants, the Consuls, the American Envoy, and Mr. Alcock; although the latter, in a dispatch addressed to the Earl of Malmesbury, has the good sense to say: "*The letter of the treaty ap*"*pears to be observed*. . . . It would be impos"sible to deny the right which every other nation "would undoubtedly claim of taking measures so "to modify their currency, thus suddenly brought "into circulation with foreign coinage, as to keep "a fair equivalent value between their gold and "silver, and prevent either, by an inevitable tend"ency, being drained out of the country and at a "third of its intrinsic value!" The Japanese Government, frightened by the general uproar, could not but revoke its proclamation and restore the old system. The Yeddo Ministers for Foreign Affairs, in a letter addressed to Mr. Alcock, dated 26th August, while announcing to him the return to the old system, remark: "As we mentioned in our "former letter, it is merely stipulated in the treaty "that coins of the same weight and the same sort "shall be exchanged, and not that no new coin "should be issued without a previous notification. "Therefore, we should agree with your proposal "that our subjects and citizens ought to take dol"lars, nevertheless they consider the inland coin, "with the Government stamp on it, as the only cur"rent coin. Thus the use of the dollar will meet "with great objections, because our subjects have "never seen foreign coins. But in consequence of "your communication, we issued a new order that "the dollar must be taken."

Mr. Alcock now flatters himself that "the cur"rency question is settled," although (see his dispatch, addressed to Lord John Russell on Sept. 20, 1859) he is fully aware that even against the will of the Central Government the Damios in the Provinces would prevent the circulation of foreign coins in the interior, and that "even with the good will "of the Government," the general circulation of the dollar would split on the general distrust of the natives. Meantime the Japanese Government give an earnest of their "good will" to Mr. Alcock. Under his pressure they undertake to receive from the foreign merchants any dollars they might desire to exchange, and recoin them into itzebous charge free. This requisition was most impudent, if it be considered that every European country save England (and there only nominally, the Bank of England raising some slight percentage on the exchange of gold against notes, and the mint being, consequent upon its delays in private transactions, only the Bank of England's mint) deducts a seignorage, paying the costs of coinage, while, in this case, the recoinage moreover only intended facilitating a fraud upon the Japan state by "*les amis du commerce*," as Fourier calls them. The Yeddo Government sent, under Mr. Alcock's pressure, considerable sums of Japanese coin for exchange to Nagasaki, Kanagawa, and Hakodadi. How, then, came it to pass that Mr. Alcock, who on the 13th of August, 1859, considered "the currency question settled," and on September 7 prides himself on its "satisfactory solution," complains at the end of his correspondence (December 6) that nothing has been gained, and that foreign commerce, which he found rising on his arrival, lies now utterly prostrate "by the persistent denial of "those facilities for the exchange of foreign money "into Japanese currency, or the free circulation of "the former, without which trade is obviously im"practicable?" The very plain answer is contained in Mr. Alcock's own dispatch to Lord John Russell, dated November 10, 1859. "Our own "people," he says, "and the foreigners generally, "utterly reckless of the future, intent only on "profiting, if possible, by the present moment to "the utmost, regardless of our treaties or future "consequences, *are wholly engaged just now in* "*shipping off all the gold currency of Japan*."

LONDON, April 25, 1860.

After it had been pestered with the currency question, Japan was blessed with a Foreign Location question. Passing over all the petty exactions of the British officials, the lowest of whom seemed to consider the finest Japanese temple an abode hardly deserving to enshrine his own mightiness, we shall only dwell on the conflicts growing out of the British Envoy's ostensible attempts at obtaining "suitable" ground or premises for all British commercial adventurers who might condescend to flock to the distant market just opened. The site to be elected for foreign settlements involved on the part of the Japanese Government considerations, the importance of which will hardly be understood in the Western world, where, on the whole, there exists an unrestricted right of building or residing wherever it may suit the convenience and caprice of individuals. The laws of Japan impose collective responsibility on all inhabitants of every street or ward, restricting the liberty of action in almost every direction, and entailing grievous penalties and liabilities, not only for their infringement by an individual, but also for the violation of such laws by his neighbors. If, therefore, an unrestricted power of location in the midst of the populations of towns were granted to foreigners, a fundamental change in the Japanese laws and customs affecting the peace and security of their cities would be the unavoidable consequence. Apart from this weighty consideration, the Japanese Government, in the interest of conciliating a powerful party among the Daimios or feudal princes, as well as of removing constant opportunities for bloody quarrels between the natives and the foreigners, had to select for foreign settlements sites out of the lines of the route of the Daimios to the capital in their frequent progress, in great state, to and from the Court of the Tycoon. The Daimio never stirs out without norimons, led horses, grooms, and a numerous band of officers and armed retainers, his progress altogether resembling that of a lord of medieval times. The foreign merchant, it would seem, ought to be anxious to find his residence out of the reach of these military processions.

After these preliminary remarks, we shall pass over the insolent claims of the British subjects in their private capacity, in regard to which Mr. Alcock himself feels compelled to remark:

"My impression is, that all the British merchants are asking far much more frontage than they will ever require, and that they generally expect too prompt and impossible action, thinking only of themselves and but little of a weak but patient government."

His own diplomatic action may be best illustrated by his correspondence on the foreign settlement at the port of Kanagawa. One day after his arrival at Yeddo, Mr. Alcock made at once in the Sampson a trip to Kanagawa, with a view of establishing a Consular officer there. In an hour and a half he anchored in the Bay of Kanagawa, the town lying along the upper edge of the bay, and consisting mainly of a line of houses on each side of the grand "tocado" or road, which leads to the capital, forming a trunk-line of communication with every part of the Empire, and constantly haunted by the Daimios and their armed suites in their journeys to and from the Court of the Tycoon. Mr. Alcock remarked at once, that, opposite to the town, at a distance of some three miles from Kanagawa, on the lower or southern edge of the bay of Kanagawa (an inlet from the larger bay of Yeddo) a new settlement for the occupation of foreigners and native traders had been improvised by the Japanese Government. It consisted of wooden huts and streets of shops, extending three quarters of a mile with a Custom-House or official timber-house of larger dimensions, numerous bands of workmen being still busily engaged in finishing their work. The approach was marked by two really imposing and beautifully constructed landing-places, with flights of well-laid granite steps of great extent. Massive jetties of great extent had been built, and, in order to shorten the access to Kanagawa, three miles of roads connected with the opposite site by several bridges been constructed. This new settlement for the extensive works of which the Japanese Government had incurred large expenses, was called Yokuhama. The greatest bustle and activity reigned everywhere, a few Japanese having just moved in, being busily engaged in arranging their several wares of lacquer, porcelain, silks, fancy articles, birds, &c. Now, the first thought striking Mr. Alcock's mind was, that the Japanese Government, by the improvisation of Yokuhama had tried to elude Art. III of Lord Elgin's treaty, providing for a British location at Kanagawa itself, viz: the town situated on the edge of the Bay and each side of the tocado, and had taken upon itself alone, without any concert with the foreign representatives, to select the site of the new settlement. The American Envoy, he contended had decided upon another site, although he could not deny that Mr. Dunker Curtius, the Dutch Commissioner, had taken no exception to the proposed site and arrangements of Yokuhama. He must also owe that the advantage on the site of Yokuhama, in point of facility of access from the Bay, with the aid of the fine jetties built and depth of water, the free and open space on shore, the greater water frontage and the easier approach at all times of the tide, "admit of no question." Nevertheless, he stands there on his diplomatic punctilio. Not content with assailing the Japan foreign Ministers by a formidable volley of protests, remonstrances and expostulations, he hastens to issue, by Capt. Vyse, his acting Consul at Kanagawa, a notification warning British merchants to take no houses in the Japanese settlement, since by so doing they would incur "the danger of defeating "efforts made in their interest for a fitting location "and a better understanding with the authorities "on that and other subjects immediately connected "with the opening port."

But, *horribile dictu*, the mercantile interest seems deaf to the diplomatic appeal. The Dutch merchants rent houses and stores at Yokuhama; an American schooner discharges her cargo on the forbidden side of the bay, and Mr. Keswick, a Britisher, a representative of the house of Jardine, Matheson & Co., sees fit to take a residence in the Japanese settlement, as do also the passengers of the Loch Lomond. Lord John Russell himself, in answer to the lamentations of the British Envoy, has the good sense to write:

"The preparations made by the Japanese Government, although contrary to treaty, have been so well adapted for the accommodation of merchants that it is probable that the Japanese Government will succeed in their attempt to make that place the settlement for foreigners, instead of Kanagawa, and the house of Jardine, Matheson & Co. have so established a reputation in the East that where they settle other merchants are likely to follow."

But Mr. Alcock, nothing daunted, proceeds to press on the Japanese Ministers the rights of a treaty extorted by surprise and terror. He flatters himself at last to have the question settled in his sense, but the upshot, as in the currency question, is to unsettle everything, to turn the new colony topsy-turvy, to jeopard the lives and limbs of the foreigners, and to bring trade to a stand-still. What more striking illustration of modern British diplomacy, at once atrocious, overbearing, and stupid, would it be possible to give? Instead of conciliating the Japanese Government to the extorted treaty, Mr. Alcock seems only bent upon making them swallow its most unpalatable clauses. Commerce he handles as a flimsy vail to cover claims at political usurpation. Instead of allowing commercial intercourse to smooth the inroads made by the foreigners, he stays on his bond, and puts the Yeddo Government to the alternative of abdicating or tearing the treaty to pieces. His own importance seems altogether to rest on the facility with which he hunts for sources of controversy, grievances, and interference.

There are his disputes about passports, in which he infringes himself upon the express words of the Elgin treaty, as said by the Japan foreign ministers, who give him to understand that "it is natural that "every country differing in customs will also differ "in their laws and regulations." He, the representative of a nation, in which vested interests play so paramount a part that at this moment the mighty coalition of Palmerstonians, Whigs, Peelites, and Radicals trembles before the ire of the licensed victualers fighting for their old monopoly of poisoning the British public—he expects the weak Japanese Government to execute at once, to the point of the letter, a treaty suddenly imposing on them absolute free trade, breaking through the centenarian monopoly granted to the Chinese for the traffic in certain articles, through the ancient system of trading guilds with exclusive privileges, and through the profitable participation in all the operations between Japanese and foreign dealers of the Government officials. This revolutionary change he wants to be brought about not by the slow action of the newly-opened foreign intercourse and commerce, but at his mighty fiat.

It is then not to be wondered at that the Yeddo Government get at last tired at his constant teasing, intermeddling, and assiduous impertinence, and, under a vail of courtesy and good will, in a tone perfectly conciliatory and in part deprecatory, in grave manner and with vague expressions of regret and promise of deliberation, try to get rid of the unwelcome customer and his treaty, the snares laid in which they become cognizant of the harder he bears on the concessions made in its single paragraphs. "We feel uneasy about all these quarrels "with foreign nations," exclaim the Japanese Foreign Ministers, in a dispatch addressed to Mr. Alcock.

There was a concurrence of other circumstances driving things to an extreme point. The rumor of the Peiho disaster and the brutal proceedings of Mr. Bruce and Admiral Hope in the Chinese waters had found its way to Yeddo. The Japanese Government heard of threatened missions from Prussia and Denmark and Sweden. A quasi agent of the Swiss Confederation appeared on the stage. On Mr. Alcock's referring to Belgium, one of the Japanese Foreign Ministers counted the existing Treaty Powers on his fingers, and added:

"With these five we find dearness and scarcity already resulting from foreign trade, with daily increasing difficulties; what, then, is to become of us, if new countries are added to the list?"

The arrival of a Russian squadron at Kanagawa gave occasion to an act of violence and murder, committed at Yokuhama, on one of the Russian officers and two sailors, by some Japanese. In the transactions with the Central Government, thence arising, Mr. Alcock, in his over zeal, succeeded in so managing the affair that all the odium rested on him, while all the profit was pocketed by General Mauravieff. The balance was at last turned by the reckless and violent proceedings of the British commercial adventurers in the trading ports. Mr. Alcock's Consular subalterns at Nagasaki, Kanagawa, and Hakodadi, instead of curbing the insolence of their countrymen seemed eager to exaggerate panic and excitement. It happened, for instance, that a Chinaman, in the service of a Britisher, was assassinated in a broil with the Japanese, at Kanagawa. Immediately, Mr. Vyse, the Acting-Consul, issued the following atrocious notification:

"The undersigned, her Britannic Majesty's Acting Consul at Kanagawa, desires all British subjects will, for the future, go about always armed as much as possible, for their own personal safety as regards a revolver, or any other deadly weapon they may be able to obtain; and the undersigned gives *free permission* to, and *hopes* that all British subjects will give *free use* to the same on any *reasonable* provocation, as regards the Japanese, whether official or non-official."

Mr. Alcock, of course, rescinded the order of his subaltern, but the cue was once given to a race of men only too prone to consider themselves as chartered libertines on Oriental soil.

"Looking, indeed," says Mr. Alcock, "to the indiscreet conduct, to use the mildest term, of many, if not all the foreign residents, the innumerable and daily occurring causes of dispute and irritation between the Japanese officials of all grades and the foreign traders, both as to the nature of the trade they enter into and the mode in which they conduct it, open, in many instances, to grave objection, I cannot wonder at the existence of much ill feeling. And when to those sources of irritation and animosity among the official classes are added the irregularities, the violence and the disorders, with the continual scenes of drunkenness incident to a sea port where sailors from men-of-war and merchant ships are allowed to come on shore, sometimes in large numbers, I confess, so far from sharing in any sweeping conclusions to the prejudice of the Japanese, I think the rarity of retaliative acts on their part is a striking testimony in their favor."

Nevertheless, six months after, Mr. Alcock's sojourn at Yeddo, and the introduction of the new treaty, the state of things had so changed that the members of the embassies themselves were pelted and mobbed in the streets of the capital, while in the provincial ports the lives of the British residents were continually menaced, their wooden houses swept away by incendiarism, and the British Envoy, in a dispatch dated at Dec. 14, 1859, induced to threaten the Japanese Government with war. On the other hand, he informs Lord John Russell:

"In nothing do the Japanese Government show so much energy as in the erection of forts. Two in the Bay opposite Yeddo, and one at Kanagawa, have been solidly built and raised out of the water since I arrived. The commonest sound in Yeddo is the musket and artillery practice of the soldiery."

Lord John Russell, in a dispatch dated Feb. 28, 1860, tells Mr. Alcock:

"It were to be wished that you had not threatened war. . . . We run the risk of engaging in protracted hostilities, and of earning a reputation of quarreling with every nation in the East. Time and patience may remove many of the difficulties of which you complain. The Japanese, on their side, may well be jealous of Europeans, who insult their usages, and carry away their gold."

But the warning of Lord John Russell comes too late, and we may expect soon to hear of an Anglo-French crusade against Japan.

FROM WASHINGTON.

THE COVODE COMMITTEE—LOBBY SCHEMES AND LOBBY SCHEMERS—INDIA RUBBER POLITICIANS—THE COLLINS SUBSIDY.

Correspondence of The N. Y. Tribune.

WASHINGTON, May 13, 1860.

Notwithstanding the cry made against the Covode Investigating Committee, they have steadily pursued the objects of their organization, and will probably develop a much greater amount of political rascality than was ever anticipated, even by the projector of the investigation. The examination of Mr. Cornelius Wendell has opened a lode which is likely to prove extremely interesting to the people and embarrassing to the venerable protestant who occupies the Executive Chair of the nation. The lode opens with Mr. Wendell's admission that he expended $30,000 for the purpose of securing the passage of the English bill, confiding that amount to the safe keeping of Mr. Bean, an employee of the House Clerk of the last Congress, Capt. Alexander Hay, a notorious lobby operator, and S. William Walker, a newspaper correspondent, to be by them disbursed as in their wisdom might seem advantageous to the purposes of the Administration.

Of course Mr. Wendell has not sworn that he received that amount directly from the Administration for the specific object to which it was devoted, but then there is an implication in the matter quite as strong as a direct announcement of the fact. The Administration was known to be devoted to the Lecompton Constitution, and consequently favorable to the English movement, as coming as near the original policy of the President in regard to Kansas, as possible. Mr. Wendell was then bound soul and body to the Administration in the bonds of the Executive Printing, and when it appeared necessary for money to be used to forward the President's darling project, a nod was sufficient to induce the forthcoming of $30,000 from the profits of printing aforesaid. Wendell was shrewd enough to see that if he used the money himself some disagreeable question might be raised, and so he trusted to the plastic Bean, the pliant Hay, and the accommodating Walker, to carry on the work, to hang the enemies, and encourage the friends of the bill.

It is no more than fair to state that Mr. Bean admits to receiving *only* $5,000 from Wendell, and that Walker denies handling a dollar of the $30,000. So it seems that Capt. Hay had nearly all the money, and the most of the profits. The testimony of Mr. Hay will certainly be very rich, as, through him, the $25,000 can be traced in carrying forward the English bill. The position of Mr. Cox in regard to that measure may likely enough find a solution, and many other things equally startling as relating to the way of pressing important political measures through the House. The amount of political Munchausenism brought to light by the Covode Committee will make a very entertaining and instructive book.

There is yet another wheel in the political complications of Wendell, Hay & Co. Hay is interested in the India-rubber monopoly with Horace F. Day, and for a few years past has been pressing Congress for an extension of the Chaffee patent. The Rubber interest is known to be one of the most gigantic in the business operations of the country, and as the profits are exceedingly large, those who enjoy a monopoly can well afford to spend liberally to retain their exclusive privileges. Hay and Day wanted a protection in rubber, and Wendell desired a monopoly in the way of the public printing. The parties met, became enamoured of each other, formed a treaty offensive and defensive, and went in for a general onslaught upon Congress to secure their objects. The printing lobby tickled the rubber lobby, and the rubber lobby tickled the printing lobby, and both laughed together. Every possible means was made to bear upon these schemes in Congress and out, and the Napoleon of the public printing and the Alexander of the rubber business finally went into a scheme for making a Government of their own.

The former devoted his means to secure elections in doubtful Congressional Districts, and the latter strove to become a maker of Presidents, and thus have the parties worked upon politics to accomplish private ends, until they are brought up with a round turn by the Covode Committee. Mr. Bean, Capt. Hay and Mr. Walker have been summoned before the Committee, and their testimony, as giving the details of the general facts which I have noted, will be looked for with great interest by several members in the House, and ex-members out of it. The ramifications from these operations of Wendell, Hay and Walker will be found perfectly astounding, as exhibiting a state of iniquity in this country hardly imaginable.

The claim of E. K. Collins for a subsidy under his mail contract with the Government, will come up again the present session. A distinguished gentleman from Ohio has the lobbying of the matter, and is sanguine of success this time. It is to be hoped that the merits of this case will undergo a careful scrutiny of the House. A great deal of injustice is frequently done by making private claims addenda to public bills, and then forcing them through the House at an hour too late in the session to correct mistakes. Important public measures are frequently brought into disrepute by being thus burdened, and their passage placed in jeopardy. A hint to the wise is often better than a blow to the otherwise.

FROM MEXICO.

From the N. O. Picayune of the 9th.

The British mail steamship Clyde, from Tampico via Vera Cruz the 1st inst., arrived at Havana on the 5th, with one week later news from Mexico. We are indebted to Purser Diamond, of the Coatzacoalcos, for the following report:

The Reactionists are in a truly deplorable condition. Defeated on all sides by the Liberals, without pecuniary resources and almost without an army, their only resource appears to be the proposed mediation of England and France, while the rejection of this by the Constitutional Government has caused a marked sensation at the capital. The position of Miramon is no longer tenable. Marquez had escaped from prison. The flight of Gen. Para, formerly Minister of War under Zuloaga, and his enrollment under the Constitutional flag, is not the least curious circumstance illustrative of the deplorable condition to which the Reactionists are reduced.

They are losing all the large towns, the conquest of which had cost them so much. The garrison of the capital, with 2,500 men, composing the central division of the army, are all that remain to oppose an army of 25,000 Liberals.

To render their condition more deplorable, the Reactionists are losing their best friends. The French Minister, Gabriac, has been recalled, and will leave Vera Cruz in a few days. His successor is anxiously expected, on account of the known liberality of his views. His name is Dubois de Saligny, formerly Secretary of Legation at Washington, and Chargé d'Affaires to Texas.

Gen. Vega had evacuated San Luis, taking with him the garrison, numbering 2,600 men and 15 officers of artillery, and a number of wagons containing munitions of war. Meeting Gen. Oraga at Salinas, he was defeated, losing his artillery and baggage. Miramon was about leaving Mexico to repair the disaster.

Miramon was unable to borrow more money, having succeeded in procuring only $23,000 from Jecker, but it was supposed that the capitalists who advanced $200,000 to take Vera Cruz would not refuse to do as much for the recapture of San Luis.

Minister McLane was at Vera Cruz at last accounts, but proposed in a few days going to the interior to have an interview with Miramon.

Carvajal was organizing an expedition to attack Puebla.

Vessels in Vera Cruz: English frigate Valorous, gun-boat Jasper; American steam-sloop Brooklyn, Saratoga, Pocahontas; Spanish frigate Francisco de Assis, Berenguela; French brig Olivier.

—A Kilkenny paper says that General de Lamoricière, now engaged in organizing the army of the Pope, is not only an Irishman, but a native of the County of Kilkenny. He was born in 1806, at the "Islands of Urlingford." His real name is Morrissy, and the late Mr. William Morrissey, shopkeeper, Urlingford, was his uncle.

POLITICAL.

—We notice by *The Wyoming Times*, a spirited weekly, which is well filled with local news, that the annual election of village officers occurred at Perry, N. Y., on the first Tuesday of May, in compliance with the mandatory provision of the village charter. Last Winter a bill was strangled in the Grinding Committee of the Assembly, after it had unanimously passed the Senate, and had been reported favorably in the House, which provided that the Justices of the Peace of the village should give notice of, and hold, the annual election; and it came out in discussion that the Trustees had failed to give notice of an election of successors for several years, thereby perpetuating themselves in office without discharging duties, and depriving the citizens of the village of the exercise of the elective franchise. The hold-over Trustees did not give formal notice this year, but the citizens held a public meeting several days before the time fixed upon in the charter for holding the election, resolved that they would be denied their rights no longer, and appointed a committee of their most prominent and active citizens to make all necessary arrangements for the election. Judge Gilman addressed the meeting, arguing that the election was mandatory; was the essence of the thing, and not the notice. The election was held on the day named in the charter, and worthy and competent officers were chosen—all Republicans except two—one Trustee and the Treasurer being Democrats. It is possible that the hold-over village officers may contest the validity of this election; but if it was fairly conducted, it is not probable that they will upset the doings of the people, as the decisions of the Courts are, that an election held in pursuance of a statute, is not vitiated by the refusal or neglect of the proper officer to give the requisite notice of such election.

—*The Chicago Times*, for the purpose, as it says, of showing the feeling in the State, quotes from a letter received from the northwestern portion: one extract is as follows:

"The enthusiasm for Douglas is tenfold more intense since the adjournment of the Charleston convention than ever before, while denunciations of the Southern fire-eaters and disunionists, who undertook to defeat the will of the people, are hurled from every lip.

The friends of Judge Douglas in this county are now thoroughly aroused, and they are determined that he shall have justice at Baltimore. There is a fire of indignation kindled here against the miserable intermeddling of the administration with our national politics, which nothing but its entire overthrow and the nomination of Judge Douglas can allay. There is no use mincing matters. The administration must cease its warfare on the people's favorite candidate, or the people will stop it for them. There ain't a Democrat here who is not brimful of wrath, and woe to old Buck and his minions if this wrath is discharged."

—*The Daily North Carolinian* does not think highly of the National Union party, but unkindly says:

"Well, well, we should think that after such a sounding name we would find something very national and Union-like in this party, or this effort at a party. How is that on behalf of the Northern States who send delegates to this Baltimore Convention have recommended two Abolitionists as the candidates of the National (!) Union party—Judge McLean of Ohio, who ruled against the Court in the Dred Scott case, and Edward Bates of Missouri, who says: 'I would not add another inch of slave territory to the Union,' and 'Slavery is an evil to be got rid of at the earliest possible moment.' National Union, forsooth! when it recommends a tariff for the protection of all species of American industry! Great National Union! (!) We often, when we hear of this prospective party, to be made and matured in one day, think of the old philosopher, who, after having entered an Egyptian temple, and looked about for the idol of the place, at length discovered a little black monkey enshrined in the midst of it, upon which he could not forbear crying out: 'What a magnificent palace is here for such a ridiculous inhabitant!' Surely they have adopted a high-sounding title, to be composed of such horrid materials."

—From present indications, the outside representation of New-England at Chicago will be very large, owing to the cheapness of the trip and the interest felt in the result. It is thought that from three to five thousand persons will go from that section of the country.

—The Hon. Isaac Davis, a delegate at large, returning from the Charleston Convention to Worcester, Mass., met a most enthusiastic reception. Five thousand people turned out, bands of music played, fireworks were let off, speeches were made, of course, and many other things were done amid general jubilation. The cause was Mr. Davis's firmness for Douglas.

—*The Chicago Journal* of a recent date, says:

"We paid a visit to the Wigwam this morning, and found it in a rapid state of progress. A bevy of ladies were as busy as ants, decorating, sewing, and arranging wreaths and festoons. The pillars in front of the stage are twined with evergreens, and connected together with red, white, and blue streamers, looped in the middle with evergreens and flowers. The alcoves in the rear wall are being filled by the painter with designs of Liberty, Plenty, Justice, &c. The pillars in front are also adorned with busts of prominent Americans and pleasing designs: Altogether, under the hands of our ladies, and planning heads of live Republicans, we shall soon have a structure, which will not only astonish our visitors, but also add credit to our city."

—The following letter appears in *The Washington States*, under the heading, "The Scarlet Letter":

"MONTGOMERY, June 15, 1858.

"DEAR SIR: Your kind favor of the 15th is received.

"I hardly agree with you that a general movement can be made that will clear out the Augean stable. If the Democracy were overthrown, it would result in giving place to a greater and hungrier swarm of flies.

"The remedy of the South is not in such a process. It is in a diligent organization of her true men for prompt resistance to the next aggression. It must come in the nature of things. No national party can save us; no sectional party can ever do it. But if we could do as our fathers did—organize 'committees of safety' all over the Cotton States (and it is only in them that we can hope for any effective movement)—we shall fire the Southern heart, instruct the Southern mind, give courage to each other, and at the PROPER MOMENT, *by one organized concerted action, we can precipitate the Cotton States into a revolution.*

"The idea has been shadowed forth in the South by Mr. Ruffin; has been taken up and recommended in *The Advertiser*, [the Montgomery organ of Mr. Yancey,] under the name of 'League of United Southerners,' who, keeping up their old party relations on all other questions, will hold the Southern issue paramount, and will influence parties, legislatures, and statesmen. I have no time to enlarge, but to suggest merely.

"In haste, yours, &c., W. L. YANCEY.

"To JAMES S. SLAUGHTER, esq."

—A Washington telegraphic correspondent of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* says:

"Gov. Wise has been expressing his opinions without reserve, as to the want of courage and consistency on the part of the Administration. He remarked the other day, in our hearing, that his belief is, if Douglas receives the nomination of the Charleston Convention he will be defeated, and that such an event will be the death and burial of the Democratic party. It was his opinion that Judge McLean, if nominated at Chicago and Baltimore, would defeat Douglas in Virginia and nearly every Southern State. He thinks Hunter is not a popular man enough, that Breckenridge is not the proper man, and Gen. Lane no better."

—The recent Anti-Investigation Message of Mr. Buchanan, which has been generally laughed at in this country, finds a zealous defender in *The London Spectator*. We quote a passage, for the gratification of the President's friends:

"In fact, John Covode and his accomplices have seized the occasion of a public ferment to play the part of traitors. They then embezzled the power lent them by the measure of an hour, to undermine the fabric of the Constitution; and they attempted an infraction into the liberties and immunities that invest every citizen of the United States. There are men among the honestest who, under the circumstances of President Buchanan, might have thought it most generous and most consistent with their own repute—since they were accused—to acquiesce, and to let the proposed investigation take its course. But James Buchanan combines far too much sagacity with his patriotism to make any such tragical blunder. As he says in his Message, his own conduct can readily be judged, but he was trusted for the rights of the Republic; and in repelling the encroachment, he fulfilled exactly the same duty that was fulfilled on previous occasions by Washington, and by Hampden. He had not, indeed, to brave the dangers of the battle-field or the scaffold, as those men did; but he had to confront what possessed more terrors for men in the present day—the danger of misconstruction, the danger of being said to act from selfish motives, when his conduct was dictated by the