

No. 4.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.

His Excellency SIR JOHN BOWRING, Knight, L.L.D., Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary, &c., &c., is pleased to direct the publication for general information of a Despatch from Captain CRACROFT, R. N. of H. M. S. *Niger*, addressed to be communicated by H. E. the Naval Commander-in-Chief, detailing proceedings against the plunderers at Cupchi of the British Steamer *Five Brothers*.

By Order,

G. W. CAINE.

Superintendency of Trade, Victoria, Hongkong, 10th February, 1859.

No 3 of 1859.

REPORTING PROCEEDINGS.

HER MAJESTY'S SHIP *Niger*, HONGKONG, 5th February, 1859.

SIR.—In compliance with your Excellency's instructions, I left this harbour at 2 P.M. on Monday last the 31st ultimo, with the Steam Gun-vessel *Nimrod*, and Gun-boat *Plover*,—taking the latter in tow in the Lyemooon Pass, and proceeded to Cupchi, where I arrived at 4 P.M. on Tuesday.

2. I found the remains of the *Five Brothers* in the spot indicated by the Master of that Ship, a very small portion of the fore part of the Vessel and her Funnel only shewing above water,—the hull having parted in two, and being almost broken up owing to the heavy swell setting through the narrow pass.

3. I immediately directed Commander Mends to search the vicinity with an armed party, in case any of the plunder from the wreck should be in the neighbourhood; but everything taken from it had been removed into the interior, while his proceedings were watched from the heights above by a great number of Chinese, who kept aloof, and it was impossible to communicate with them before dark.

4. The following morning, after an unsuccessful attempt to get the *Plover* over the Bar, I proceeded up to the town of Cupchi with the armed Boats, and demanded an interview with the Authorities. A Military Mandarin was immediately sent to me, and on stating the object of my visit, he replied that the Authorities had already been made acquainted with the outrage committed upon the Passengers and Crew of the *Five Brothers*, and had sent a report to the Prefect of Lok-fun;—that measures were being taken to discover the perpetrators of it, but that some of the Villages were wholly beyond the control of the Mandarins, and requested I would punish them in any way I thought proper, as a warning to deter others from committing a similar offence,—the South western suburb of Cupchi itself being especially pointed out as requiring to be made an example of, being the resort of men half fishermen and half pirates.

5. Accordingly, on Thursday I landed all the Small-arm Men and Marines, with a 12-pounder Rocket Battery, marched to the Villages nearest the scene of the wreck, and demanded an indemnity from the Elders for the loss of life and property that had taken place, threatening them with the destruction of their Villages if my demand was not complied with. A similar demand was next made on the Elders of the S.W. suburb of Cupchi, but as no notice was taken of my message, I directed a few Rockets to be thrown into the place, and the Fishing Boats off it to be set on fire. Some resistance was offered, but these measures had the desired effect, and they came off to sue for mercy.

6. The result was that, after due deliberation, I accepted the sum of 2,500 Dollars from the Elders of the Suburb and Villages, which I considered sufficient indemnity under the circumstances of the case,—the Master of the *Five Brothers* statement having been, from reliable and corroborative evidence, much exaggerated; and considering also that the suburb of Cupchi, and one of the Villages, which opened a fire on our force with Matchlocks, had suffered severely from the Rockets, which were directed with great precision by Lieutenant Blake, First of this Ship.

7. During these operations, Mr Veitch, the Master of the *Niger*, made a survey of the pass where the wreck took place, a copy of which is enclosed. It is impossible to look at it, without being satisfied that to attempt the passage was in the highest degree imprudent.

8. I cannot conclude without expressing my thanks to Commander Mends and Lieutenant Rason, for the manner in which they carried out my orders. We had no casualties, but I fear that the Chinese had several; and as this expedition was carried out on their New Year's day, a strong impression will have doubtless been made upon a people so superstitious, which, if it tends to cause shipwrecked mariners to receive better treatment for the future in this locality, will not have been thrown away.

9. Mr Caldwell, whose services have been invaluable, having completed his arrangements with the Elders for the payment of the indemnity, I left Cupchi at 2.30 yesterday afternoon, and have the honour to report my arrival here, with H. M. S. *Nimrod* and *Plover*, at 11 o'clock A.M. this day.—I have the honour to be, &c., &c.,

P. CRACROFT,
Captain.His Excellency Rear Admiral SIR MICHAEL SEYMOUR, K.C.B.,
Commander-in-Chief.HER MAJESTY'S SHIP "*Niger*," OFF CUPCHI, 3d February, 1859.

SIR,—In compliance with your orders, I have examined the position of the Merchant Steamer "*Five Brothers*," and find that she is on a rock 60 Fathoms South of Cupchi Point; the least water on the rock 2 Fathoms. It is not marked in the Admiralty Plan, but the surrounding waters are strewn with rocks.

The Vessel is a complete wreck, a part of the bow and the funnel being above water.

I beg to enclose a Copy of the Admiralty Plan of Cupchi Point, with the position of the wreck marked, and the soundings around her; also of the water on the Bar at the entrance of the River.—I have the honour to be, Sir, &c., &c.,

ALFRED J. VEITCH,
Master & Pilot.Captain P. CRACROFT,
H.M. Ship "*Niger*."True Copies,
H. G. HANCE.* * *
"Five Brothers"
on the Bar

3d F.



Copy of the Admiralty Plan of Cupchi Point, with the position of the wreck of the Merchant Steamer "The Brothers," and soundings round her, also the water on the Bar at the entrance of the River. The soundings on the Bar are in Feet.

ALFD. J. VEITCH,
Master H.M.S. "Niger."

21 February, 1859.