

"TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE, &c. &c.

"SIR,

"Macao, Oct. 1814.

"I hope that I shall not be thought to assume too much when I say that I am ever ready, as heretofore, to fulfil zealously the duties of the situation to which your Honourable Committee has appointed me. But at this moment, as in some other cases, the duties of Chinese Translator are attended with considerable personal hazard. Heretofore, in serious discussions with the Chinese, which have been offensive to the local government of Canton, they have persecuted and revenged themselves on the individual translator; the treatment of Mr. Flint, and Padre Roderigo, are two cases which occur to my recollection; and, with these before me, I cannot help feeling apprehensive that writing or translating a letter to His Majesty, the Emperor of China, which will, of course, contain an impeachment of the local government of this province, will subject me to personal suffering from the Chinese even long after the present difference shall be arranged. I state this in the most respectful manner, and beg your Honourable Committee to suggest what may be expedient to remove the reasonable apprehension which is felt by your most obedient, humble servant,

"ROBERT MORRISON."

TO THE REV. ROBERT MORRISON.

"SIR,

"Macao, Oct. 11, 1814.

"In reply to your letter of yesterday, we have to

character of the English nation prevented the provincial government from daring to make any attempt of the kind; though no precautions whatever were taken on Sir George's part for his protection. It is not surprising that, under such circumstances, Mr. Morrison should consider his own station a somewhat perilous one.

inform you, that we can in no degree object to your calling on us for assurances that you may not be held responsible for the measures we may adopt; and which, by your means chiefly, we are enabled to communicate to the Chinese government.

“The cases you have cited, but more particularly that of Mr. Flint,* we must admit are sufficient to excite both doubt and apprehension; and, therefore, as fully to warrant your application to us.

“We are aware that there are no measures, however unjust or arbitrary, that the officers of the Canton government would not very readily resort to, to deprive the Company and the Committee of the services of any person who may be enabled to render the important services we have received from you. Satisfied of the many and serious consequences of an admission of the interference of the Chinese government, we consider it to be our duty to resist such attempts in the most decided manner.

“For our opinion and sentiments on this question, we desire to refer you to the communications with the officers of the Chinese government; but more particularly in those of last season, in which you bore a principal part, and by whose assistance we were enabled to obtain from the Viceroy an acknowledgment, that the claim he had made to interfere with the appointment of one of the members of our Committee was withdrawn. From the communications that passed while that discussion was pending, you could not but have observed it to be our decided resolution to resist every attempt at interference with the Honourable Company’s establishment, that might be made by the Chinese government, by every means in our power.

* Who had been seized, and kept in prison by the Chinese nearly three years.

“We should consider ourselves as altogether unworthy the situation we hold, or of the charge that has been entrusted to us, could we, for a moment, allow ourselves to doubt on whom responsibility was to attach for any act committed by our authority, or in obedience to our instructions; or for the opinions expressed in any document or communication in any meeting with the officers of the Chinese government. In every case we consider that the Committee alone can be responsible.

“We hope the explanation here given will appear sufficient, and be satisfactory to you, and remove any doubt or anxiety that might have existed. We remain, Sir, your humble servants,

“J. T. ELPHINSTONE,

“THOMAS CHARLES PATTLE,

“GEORGE THOMAS STAUNTON.”

During these discussions, several letters on the subject passed between Sir G. Staunton and Mr Morrison, some of which show the difficulty of negotiating with a despotic government on unequal terms.

TO SIR G. T. STAUNTON, BART., &c., &c.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Macao, Nov. 16, 1814.

“I have just now been favoured with yours of the 24th; when it was said you should close ‘at all events,’ of course it was understood that much had already been gained, and that the points remaining were not of prime importance. You know that it is human nature to surmise when a thing miscarries, ‘I could have done better,’ or ‘I would not have done this.’

“In my humble opinion you have, in the course of your arduous discussion, shown great moderation and firmness; you have done honour to your under-