

United States' ship Plymouth.

1 killed ; 4 wounded.

Total ... Killed—2 ; Wounded—13.

(Signed) JNO. T. JENKINS,
Senior Surgeon, H.M.S. Encounter.Approved.
(Signed) G. O'CALLAGHAN,
Captain and Senior Officer.

Enclosure No. 8, of No. 26.

*Barracouta, Singapore,
April 28, 1854.*

SIR,

I RECEIVED, on the 22d, your Reports dated on the 4th and 5th instant, written from the scene of action, describing the operations and arrangements in which you had been engaged up to the latest of those dates, and containing explanations of some of the circumstances which had led to the very serious collisions you describe, with the forces of an Empire at peace with Her Majesty.

On a full review of those communications, it is my duty to point out that it belongs to the Crown alone to declare war ; and that the orders and instructions of the Admiralty prohibit the commission of acts of hostility towards the subjects of Foreign Countries, and that Naval Officers will be held most strictly responsible for any departure from the line of duty thus marked out.

In the particular case comprised in your Reports, it is clear that the seizure of the Chinese camps and junks were acts of hostility against the public forces of a State not only at peace with the Crown, but towards whom we are enjoined to shew the utmost consideration. No such acts can be justified on the ground that they were recommended or called for by any Consular Officer. They can only be justified by the immediate and unavoidable necessities of your position at the time, and it is by the proof you adduce of the existence of such necessities, that the Admiralty will judge of the propriety of such a departure from its positive injunctions.

I have considered, as it is my duty to do, the circumstances you relate, and I am bound to acknowledge that they appear to have been such as to have left you no alternative, consistent with the safety of the interests you had been ordered to protect, but to pursue the course you took upon the 3d and 4th instant ; but I must apprise you that in cases of this nature it is not for me to pronounce a conclusive judgment.

With respect to the measures you took for effecting the objects you had in view, supposing these to have been justifiable, I am at liberty to form a more decided opinion ; and I have therefore to inform you that your personal conduct, and that of the gallant captain, officers, and men who co-operated with you from the United States' ship Plymouth, and the conduct of Commander Keane, and of Lieutenants Dew, Hemsted, Majendie, and Montgomery, and of the seamen and marines, and gentlemen-volunteers engaged on the occasions referred to, has elicited my warmest admiration ; and I shall take an opportunity to bring to the notice of the Admiralty the names of the officers you particularly mention, and of the ten marines who so resolutely withstood the attacks of a very superior force upon the 3d of the month. I am, &c.,

(Signed) J. STIRLING,
Rear-Admiral, Commander-in-Chief.Captain G. W. D. O'Callaghan,
H.M.S. Encounter.

ADMIRALTY, June 14, 1854.

DESPATCHES, of which the following are Copies, have been received from Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Napier, Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's Ships and Vessels in the Baltic.

ENCLOSING a Copy of Captain Key's Despatch (and reply thereto), relative to the capture of Libau.

*Duke of Wellington, Hango Head,
May 30, 1854.*

SIR,

I REQUEST you will lay before their Lordships the enclosed copy of a despatch I have received from Captain Key, of the Amphion, senior officer on the coast of Courland and Livonia, giving an account of the measures he adopted to effect the surrender of the town of Libau, and the shipping in that port, which was happily accomplished without having occasion to fire a shot.

Enclosed I have the honour to transmit a copy of my reply to Captain Key's despatch.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHAS. NAPIER, Vice-Admiral and
Commander-in-Chief.To the Secretary of the Admiralty,
London.Enclosure No. 1 in Sir Charles Napier's Letter,
No. 107.*Her Majesty's Ship Amphion, Coast of
Kourland, May 18, 1854.*

SIR

I HAVE the honour to inform you that I arrived off the port of Libau on the evening of May 10th, in company with Her Majesty's Ship Conflict, and having received information from various sources that the town was defended by only 500 or 600 soldiers, and two or three guns, and that several Russian merchant vessels lay dismantled in the port, I determined to bring them out.

On the morning of the 17th we stood in towards the entrance of the river, and by careful sounding, with boats a-head, succeeded in anchoring both ships within gun-shot of part of the town. I then directed Captain Cumming to take a summons to the Governor, under a flag of truce, calling on him to surrender the merchant vessels within three hours. The Governor refused, but said that a final answer would be sent before the time specified in my letter. At 3.30 P.M., Captain Cumming, who had informed me that there was a considerable body of troops in the town, again landed to receive the answer—a letter—which I enclose. On ascertaining its contents I took the armed boats of both ships, with Captain Cumming in command of those of the Conflict, into the river. With the exception of one or two, the soldiers kept out of sight, and not a shot was fired ; it was well for us that they did so, as we pulled up the creek, which was fifty yards broad for one and a half miles before arriving at the shipping. I desired the authorities to point out the Russian vessels, of which I then directed Captain Cumming and Lieutenants Wodehouse and Hore to take possession. I detained a small steamer (originally Russian, now owned by a Dane), got her steam up, and kept her as a refuge for the boats in case of an attack.

The magistrate stated that they were induced to yield thus submissively, from their being convinced that if they were to overpower us, a large force would be sent, and the town perhaps destroyed.