

NARRATIVE

OF

THE ALCESTE'S VOYAGE

TO

THE YELLOW SEA,

&c.



CAPT. MURRAY MAXWELL, R.N.

Drawn & Engraved by T. Wageman. 1817.

NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE,

IN

HIS MAJESTY'S LATE SHIP ALCESTE,

TO

THE YELLOW SEA,

ALONG THE

COAST OF COREA,

AND THROUGH ITS

NUMEROUS HITHERTO UNDISCOVERED ISLANDS,

TO THE

ISLAND OF LEWCHEW ;

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF HER

SHIPWRECK IN THE STRAITS OF GASPAR.

BY JOHN M'LEOD, SURGEON,
OF THE ALCESTE.

LONDON :
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1817.

TO
JAMES WOOD, ESQ.

OF POTTER HILL,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE INSCRIBED,

AS A TESTIMONY

OF THE HIGH RESPECT AND ESTEEM

IN WHICH HE IS HELD

BY THE AUTHOR.

DIRECTIONS FOR PLACING THE PLATES.



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VOYAGE OF H. M. S. ALCESTE

TO

CHINA.

THE British Government, on the representation of the Court of Directors of the East-India Company, respecting the trade with China, having decided, with the view of relieving that branch of its commerce from the increasing vexatious impositions of the local authorities of Canton, on the measure of sending an embassy to the court of Peking; as on a former occasion of a similar kind, a distinguished nobleman had been selected to fill the situation of Ambassador Extraordinary from the

King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China, who carried out with him a numerous suite composed of gentlemen well skilled in every branch of natural knowledge, with many curious and costly presents; so it was now determined to leave nothing short that could contribute to the splendour and respectability of the present embassy. The Right Hon. Lord Amherst (who had already filled the high situation of Ambassador at the court of Sicily) was appointed to conduct this difficult and delicate mission. Mr. Henry Ellis (formerly employed in a successful negotiation with the king of Persia) was named secretary of embassy, with dormant powers to act as Minister Plenipotentiary, should any accident to the Ambassador render that circumstance necessary. The Hon. Jeffery Amherst, as page; Mr. Hayne, as private secretary; Mr. Abel, as surgeon and naturalist; the Rev. John Griffiths, as chaplain; Mr. Havell, as artist; and Dr. Lynn, with Mr. Maurige, Mr. Poole, and some others

to fill the respective departments, constituted the suite of his excellency *

Many valuable presents, supplied, as on the former occasion, by the East-India Company, for the emperor and his ministers, consisting of specimens of our improved manufactures, made by the first hands, were also prepared. The command of the naval part of the expedition was intrusted to Captain Murray Maxwell; and the *Alceste*, a frigate of forty-six guns, was fitted up for the reception of the Ambassador and suite. His Majesty's brig *Lyra*, commanded by Capt. Basil Hall, and the General Hewitt Indiaman, by Capt. Campbell, accompanied the *Alceste*, the latter carrying out the presents.

On the 9th of February, 1816, the ships sailed from Spithead, and soon cleared the Channel, with a favourable breeze, which continued with us to Madeira, where we

* Lieut. Cooke, of the Royal Marines, was also attached to the embassy, on its landing in China, the guard being selected from that corps. Messrs. Abbot, Martin, and Somerset, were likewise added to it at this period.

arrived on the 18th. In Funchal road we found the Phaëton, having Sir Hudson and Lady Lowe, with their suite on board, in their way to St. Helena ; and the Niger, with Mr. Bagot, on his mission to America. Our stay here was only twelve hours, and, in the evening, we pursued our course to the south-westward. The weather becoming hourly warmer, our people, who had been badly clothed, and had suffered a good deal from the severity of the cold in fitting out the ship, now began to thaw a little : things were beginning to find their proper places in the ship ; and those unaccustomed to the rolling motion had, by this time, acquired their *sea-legs*. On the 4th March, in the evening, at the moment of crossing the equinoctial line, the voice of some one, as from the sea, announced himself as Neptune's eldest son, and, after putting the usual interrogatories, added, that his father being a little indisposed, and rather *squeamish* about exposing himself to the night air, had deferred his visit until the morning, when he would personally call on board to inspect the strangers who were now en-

tering his dominions. The son of Neptune seemed now to sink again into the deep. In the morning, his godship, agreeably to promise, appeared, seated in his car (a gun-carriage), with his trident and other insignia, attended by Amphitrite, and all his usual train of inferior deities. He was received by a strange-looking guard of his own, the band striking up "*Rule-Britannia!*" After paying his respects to the Ambassador, the Captain, and the rest, the novices, of whom there were not a few, were forthwith shaved, according to a practice immemorial, with a rusty iron hoop, full of notches; and the lather being washed off, by playing the fire-engine in their faces, they were then wiped dry with a dirty swab. Much mirth and good humour prevailed; and a double allowance of grog finished the ceremony. We experienced none of the calms usual near the line, and nothing of moment occurred until we reached the lat. $20^{\circ} 4''$ north, long. $31^{\circ} 52''$ west, on the 16th March, when the *Lyra* and *Hewitt* were directed to make the best of their way to the Cape of Good Hope,

whilst the *Alceste* proceeded to the capital of the Brazils, where we arrived on the 21st of that month.

All the bold, as well as beautiful, features of nature, have conjoined to enrich the scenery of Rio Janeiro. The luxuriant descriptions of former travellers are by no means exaggerated, for it would indeed be difficult to exceed the truth in portraying the sublimity and grandeur of such a scene as presents itself on entering the harbour. The numerous islets appearing on this extensive sheet of water,—its richly-wooded banks, rising like an amphitheatre on either hand, studded with villages and country seats,—added to the distant view of lofty and picturesque mountains,—form, altogether, a very unusual and noble landscape.

The death of the queen, which happened the day previous to our arrival, at the good old age of eighty-two, had rather cast a gloom over the city of St. Sebastians. The batteries and ships fired five-minute guns during the whole day and night; the *Alceste*, *Indefatigable*, and a Spanish fri-

gate, following this example; displaying also the usual exterior marks of grief, by hoisting the colours half-staff high, and topping the yards. The officers likewise wore crape; and, from a positive order being issued to all the inhabitants to go into mourning, (which none dared, under the severest penalties, disobey,) the prices of all black articles felt a sudden and enormous increase.

The government of the Brazils seems perfectly despotic; and it is painful to see even Englishmen lose the natural freedom of their character under such dominion. Some, who from long residence had imbibed the feelings of the Portuguese, would, in answering any question relative to public affairs, look cautiously around, to see who was near them, and then whisper their reply.

The prince (now the king) during the period her majesty laid in state, was shut up, according to their usage, not to be seen by any but his chamberlain.

Swarms of priests occupied every avenue to the palace, and hung in clusters on the

staircases. St. Sebastians seems to be a soil, in which these members of the *autos da fé* still thrive well. The Brazils have lately been raised from the state of a mere colony to the dignity of a kingdom; and the residence of the court has conferred still more substantial advantages on it, arising from the emigration of the chief nobility from Portugal, and the transfer of their wealth to this country.

Its commerce has of late years increased to a great degree, chiefly, however, under the direction of English houses. The return of the court to the mother country, it is thought, would be the signal of revolt; for it is not probable the Brazils would long remain in their present fettered state, whilst colonies in all directions around them are freeing themselves from the oppression of the mother country. The want of the usual public attentions of saluting the flag of a foreign power might have been accounted for under the present circumstances of the court; but it was singular (considering, more particularly, our late relations with Portugal) that a house for

the accommodation of the Ambassador and suite, during their short stay, and which had been granted to the former embassy, should have been refused in the present instance. The hospitality, however, of Mr. Chamberlayne, the British minister here, amply supplied this deficiency. All places of public amusement were of course shut; and the only *spectacle*, during our stay, was the funeral of the queen, which took place by torch-light; all the military that could be collected, both horse and foot, lining the streets (which were illuminated) from the palace to the convent of Ajuda. The hearse and state-coaches were drawn up at the grand entrance, covered with black cloth, and near them the chief mourners, who were eight of the nobles, on horseback. Their dress was the ancient Portuguese costume of mourning. Each had a large broad-brimmed hat, rather slouching down upon the shoulders; a long black cloak, or robe, with the star of some order affixed to it; conveying to the mind of an English spectator the whimsical combination of a coal-heaver, a priest, and a knight.

The king, accompanied by the two elder princes, attended the coffin to the principal porch, and saw it deposited in the hearse, when the whole cavalcade drove off, and the body was interred in the convent, with the usual religious ceremonies. The royal family next day appeared at the balconies of the palace; on which occasion it is usual for the Portuguese to stand uncovered in the square opposite; and, if any of the royal carriages are met on the road, the passengers on horseback must dismount, and even kneel.

Neither of their Portuguese majesties can themselves be considered as *regular beauties*; but the princesses are good figures, and certainly, upon the whole, handsome women. Don Pedro, their eldest son, promises to be a man of some spirit. Much indolence seems to exist among the inhabitants, and they are said still to possess their characteristic contempt of all reading; so that a publisher of books in the Brazils would probably earn but a lean livelihood. This country produces all the various fruits of the

warmer climates; such as pine-apples, oranges, limes, mangoes, guavas, melons, bananas, &c.; the tea-shrub still continues to be an article of growth, under the direction of some Chinese accustomed to manage it; and it is to be hoped they may succeed in extending and improving its cultivation. The slave-trade still exists to its fullest extent; and this class of the population, however useful they may be, are certainly not ornamental; being the ugliest race of negroes that can be collected from the African coast—Gaboons, Congos, and Angolas. Our West-India islands having been generally supplied with Fantees, from the Gold Coast, with Eyeos, and Ashantees, who are a much finer-looking people; this circumstance, added, perhaps, to their improved condition, their better clothing, and general treatment, gives a slave of Jamaica a far less degraded appearance than one in this country. Yet, though the situation of the former is much ameliorated (and undoubtedly superior to his native state in Africa), it is unfortunate that the first Eu-

ropean settlers of colonies, had not, instead of hunting down and oppressing the natives, trained them to habits of industry; when the term *slavery*, so revolting to humanity even under the most favourable circumstances, so contrary to reason and natural right, need never have been known. Our East-India possessions, and late occupation of Java, sufficiently demonstrate the practicability of this system.

They do Buonaparte, here, the honour of being very much afraid of him; and keep a bright eye to windward, lest he should break adrift from St. Helena, and come down upon them before the wind. This silly appearance of fear is something like the weakness of ordering his name never to be mentioned, than which, perhaps, nothing tends more to keep up his consequence.

This part of the Brazils is naturally hot during the months of December, January, and February; but (more especially as the southern, are found to be comparatively colder than corresponding northern lati-

tudes,) it enjoys, during our summer, a sort of tropical winter, and is not considered an unhealthy climate.

The town of St. Sebastians, without any public edifice worthy of notice, is regularly built, and, from the late influx of inhabitants, is daily extending its limits. Although this country produces plenty of beef, yet, from want of care and management, it is such as would be considered carrion in England; and in few parts of the world is there less accommodation for travellers, there being only some *casas*, or inns, of the most wretched description.

The Brazils display an inexhaustible field for the researches of the naturalist, for no where else can the objects of his inquiry be more varied or multiplied. The state of society here is represented, by those whose long residence and close intercourse afford them the means of judging, as extremely demoralized. The men, in their exterior appearance, are a squalid, *hysterical*, grim-looking set; but the ladies, though generally little, and dark-coloured, are not deficient

in beauty or expression of countenance; they want, however, that elegance of gait and graceful walk, peculiar to the Spaniards. They are said to be more attentive to the external forms of decorum than to the essential practice of modesty; but this, if true, may "depend," as was suggested by an elegant writer of the last embassy, "on the example of the men;" for it would scarcely be reasonable to expect the perfection of female morals, where every manly virtue is unknown. At least three-fourths of the world are in a state of barbarism where women have no character at all; being either immured in seraglios, or the mere slaves and play-things of their savage lords; but in that portion of it, which has a claim to civilization, where they are allowed to have minds, and assume their just rank, the slightest glance will shew, that among those nations where honour, intelligence, and worth, are held in most esteem by the one sex, they are uniformly rewarded by corresponding good qualities in the other.

The ship having recruited her supply of very excellent water*, and other matters settled, we took our leave of the American shore on the 31st of March, steering south-easterly until we got from 36° to 39° south, where we found the prevailing westerly winds. Keeping in the usual tract for ships crossing the Southern Atlantic, we passed the islands of Tristan d'Acunha, about fifty miles to the northward of them. The wind continuing favourable, we saw the Table Mountain on the 18th of April, and anchored on the same day in the bay. We arrived at a gay time, in the middle of horse-racing and balls. An India fleet touched here, homeward bound, one of the ships having on board the Countess of Loudon and family, on their passage to England. Cape Town has now become almost an English place, and is too well known to require any description here.

* Captain Cook complained of the water here being very bad.—At that time, perhaps, the aqueduct was not so extensively covered, and secured from the admission of impurities, as at present.

As strangers, on first landing here, we were forcibly struck by the remarkable difference of complexion in the female part of the society, compared with the *brunettes* we had just left at Rio Janeiro; and an Englishman is probably the more inclined to esteem the beauty of the Cape ladies from its great resemblance to that which he is accustomed to admire at home. It is hinted, however, that this resemblance exists chiefly during youth, and that, in their maturer years, they are apt (from sedentary habits and want of exercise) to acquire a *peculiar Hottentotish* obesity. But this, perhaps, is only said by ill-natured people.

The ship having gone round to Simon's Bay, and the necessary refitment being completed, his lordship embarked at this place, with the usual marks of attention, on the 6th of May, and we proceeded on our voyage. From 38° to 40° south, we found our expected winds; but, as winter was far advanced in this hemisphere, (latter end of May, and beginning of June,) the weather was cold, bleak, and boisterous, with a heavy sea. On the 24th May we made

the islands of St. Paul and Amsterdam. Smoke was seen, as we approached, issuing from the crevices of the latter. It is here where the hot springs so nearly adjoin to the great salt water basin, as to afford the singular exhibition of catching fish in the latter, and boiling them in the former, without taking them off the hook, and within reach of the rod. The state of the weather, which was very rough, and the time of the evening, did not allow us to verify this fact, but there is no doubt of its truth. An immense crater (now apparently converted into a sort of harbour, the sea having flowed into it) appears on the eastern side of the island.

Having got sufficiently to the eastward for the purpose of fetching Java with the usual tropical winds, we began to haul to the northward and eastward, the weather of course becoming daily warmer; and, on the 8th June, we saw Java Head, and anchored next day in Anjeri road, where we found the *Lyra* at anchor, and saw the *Hewitt* off Cape Nicholas, on her way to Batavia, they having only

arrived two days before us*. This passage was extraordinary for its rapidity, for in ninety-two days, under sail, the ship had traversed about fourteen thousand miles, and visited every quarter of the globe.

After staying a day or two at the village of Anjeri (where we were amused with the ceremony of a Javanese wedding,) Colonel Yule, the resident of the Bantam district, accompanied by Mr. M'Gregor, waited on the Ambassador to pay their respects ; and having provided the necessary accommodation for his lordship and suite to proceed overland to Batavia, they all set out on their journey thither. During our short stay here, the king, or sultan, of Bantam, died ; and his uncle (the nearest heir to the sovereignty) refused to accept the title, preferring to live in humble retire-

* The superior sailing of the frigate enabled us to touch at Rio Janeiro, without in any way delaying the general passage ; as, notwithstanding this, she nearly overtook her consorts at the Cape. The same was the case here, though she remained ten days behind, being able to afford them, in such a run, a start of 1000, or 1500 miles.

ment. The *Alceste*, having completed her water, sailed also for Batavia, as she had brought out duplicate despatches for the evacuation of the island of Java. The *Lyra*, in the mean time, had been sent on to China, with a communication from Lord Amherst to Sir G. Staunton.

On the 21st June we sailed from Batavia, with the General Hewitt; saw the island of Lucepara on the 23d, and entered the straits of Banca. Our voyage up the China sea presented nothing unusual. On the 9th of July we met His Majesty's ship *Orlando*, and received intelligence of the motions of our coadjutors at Macao. We joined them at anchor near the Grand Lemma on the following day, and found along with the *Lyra*, the *Discovery*, and *Investigator*, two surveying-ships belonging to the Company, having on board Sir G. Staunton, and some other gentlemen * belonging to the factory, whose knowledge

* Messrs. Morrison, Manning, Toone, Davis, and Pearson.

of the Chinese language rendered them necessary as interpreters.

The apparent reason of choosing this rendezvous, was to be free from the impertinence of the Canton official people, whose business it naturally was to thwart the measures, and throw every possible impediment in the way of, the embassy. Circumstances occasioning the delay of a day or two, the ships passed on to an anchorage among the Hong Kong islands; where the Anjeri water, not being deemed good, was changed for that which fell from the rocks, and was certainly uncontaminated by any vegetable matter, for few places present a more barren aspect than these islands. They are also called the Ladrões, from being the haunts of pirates; and for such a purpose their situation is extremely well adapted. Here a message arrived, stating the emperor's pleasure that the embassy should be received as in the former case; and that the necessary orders had been sent to the ports of the Eastern and Yellow Seas for that purpose.

On the 13th July the squadron (four ships and the brig) sailed; and, coasting along the provinces of Quang-tung and Fokien, passed through the Straits of Formosa, and entered the Tung Hai, or Eastern Sea. The breeze altered its direction occasionally, but was always favourable; and, passing out of sight of the Chusan islands, we saw the land to the eastward, which we *then* conceived to be the south-west point of Corea. On the 24th we made Staunton's island, and Capes Gower and Macartney, on the south-east part of the Shan-tong promontory; and, the next day, rounding close the north-east point, we entered the Gulph of Pe-tche-lee. The country here had an extremely rugged and sterile look. On the 26th we passed through the Mee-tau islands, and steered for the mouth of the White (or North) River*, despatching the *Lyra* a-head, to announce the approach of the squadron.

An address was now publicly read by

* It is doubtful whether *Pei* means white or north; most probably the latter.

Lord Amherst, to all the individuals who were to be attendants on the embassy, touching the great necessity of maintaining the strictest regularity and propriety of conduct in their intercourse with the Chinese, so as to avoid every cause of offence or disagreement; and laying down general regulations for their conduct in all respects.

We anchored, on the 28th*, not many miles distant from the mouth of the river; but the land is here so very low, that the mast-heads of the junks in the river, and the tops of the houses only of the village of Ta-coo, were visible from the ship. It would appear that the ships had entirely outstripped the expectations of the Chinese; for they had no idea of seeing them so soon, or that they should not have heard of them in their passage up. Such rapidity of movement never entered into their conceptions; for they, in fact, had scarce heard

* During our passage up the Yellow Sea the weather was remarkably serene and fine, and we experienced none of the fogs which usually hang over the shallower parts of the ocean.

of them at one end of their empire, when they found them at the other.

The viceroy of this province (Pe-tche-lee) had been for some offence dismissed from his office; and his successor, having not yet left Peking, it was not until the 4th Aug. that two duly-authorized mandarins of rank (Chang and Yin) came on board to pay their respects to the Ambassador, and to give the necessary directions for the disembarkation of the presents. To those who had seen, for the first time, the Chinese costume, these mandarins had a very strange appearance.—On a back view, their short jacket, or gown, with their crape petticoats, gave them the look of bulky old women; but, in confronting them, their clumsy boots and “beards forbade the interpretation.” The fishermen in this vicinity, (almost within a hundred miles of the capital,) were literally naked,—even without a fig-leaf. This sort of indecency we were little prepared to meet, amongst a people who affect to be so *outrageously* decorous as to discourage the art of sculpture, because it displays too

distinctly the shape and lineaments of the human body.

Chang was a civil, Yin a military, mandarin ; and they had, as usual, the title of Ta-zhin (or great man) added to their names. They were saluted on approaching the ship with seven guns each, and received with a guard. Every body was in full dress ; and it could not be said of this, as of the last embassy, that there was any want of splendour in this respect. After a conference, in some degree ceremonious, and partly for arranging future proceedings, they partook of a banquet in the captain's cabin, and then returned to the shore. Quang, the Chin-chae, imperial commissioner, or legate, (as he has been variously termed,) holding a superior rank to either of the others*, being ready to receive the Ambassador on shore, his lord-

* The person holding such an office as this, *under the great seal*, obtains a kind of temporary rank, entitling him, for the time, to take precedence even of the vice-roy of a province, although he may have an inferior button or ball on his cap, and be a mandarin of lower order in the state.

ship and the gentlemen of the embassy took their leave of us for a while, landing in great state on the 9th of August; the squadron being dressed in colours, the standard flying, the yards manned, and a salute of 19 guns fired from each ship. They proceeded into the river attended by a number of Chinese junks, and by our boats in regular order. During the time we remained at this place, presents of bullocks, vegetables, rice, tea, and other refreshments were, according to usage, sent off to the ships, but by no means in great abundance. Several of the bullocks were brought along side dead, having been drowned in the bottom of the boats, or died otherwise in their passage off. This, however, was not meant as disrespect or incivility, for they make no distinction themselves between an animal that is killed by the butcher, and one which dies naturally; and in this way they eat dogs, cats, rats, and in fact, all manner of carrion and vermin.

In this respect, therefore, they made no strangers of us, for they gave us their own family fare.

It was now determined, by the senior officer, that the *Lyra*, attended by the *Investigator*, should take a southerly direction in the Gulf, whilst the *Alceste* and *Discovery* were to proceed to the north, a certain rendezvous being pointed out for our meeting again, to which the General Hewitt was also directed.

On the 11th we weighed, and stood to the north-eastward; the *Discovery* in company: the *Lyra* and *Investigator* to the southward. On the 13th saw the Shaloo-poo-tien Islands, extending from north-west by north to west by south, distant about five leagues. We coasted along the western shore of the Gulf of Lea-tong, hitherto unexplored by any European ship; and found the land, as we advanced, became more and more mountainous. About noon, on the 14th, in latitude $39^{\circ} 29' N.$ longitude $120^{\circ} 6' E.$, the great wall of China opened to the view, bearing north-west by west, its nearest and lowest point being then distant about six or seven leagues; but we approached it closer in the afternoon.

Rising from the sea, this immense barrier passed over the first or lowest hill, and, mounting the second, was seen stretching to the right, in our point of view, obliquely towards its summit: then on the third and still higher land, it inclined to the left, making an angle with the last range; and, ultimately ascending the highest and most distant mountain, it was there lost*. The opportunity of surveying this extraordinary structure, which, for more than twenty ages, has been deemed one of the greatest wonders of the world, afforded, more especially in this unexpected way, from the deck of a British man of war, the most pleasing sensations. Whether it is considered (as it is by some) a mighty effort of human industry, or (as by others) a monument of la-

* It extends for about fifteen hundred miles, and is carried equally over mountains and rivers.—“ It is said not to be more than five-and-twenty feet high, flanked with towers at short distances, but of sufficient breadth for several horsemen to travel easily abreast. Report says, that one-third of the men in China, capable of labour, were employed in its construction, and that it was finished in the space of five years.”

borious folly, still it is an amazing object, not only from its immense extent, but on account of its great antiquity ; and, from being so seldom visible to an European eye, to have beheld it, even at this distance, was a high gratification of curiosity. Beyond the wall is a remarkable head-land, very much resembling Cape Sicie, a notorious place, near Toulon. The wind heading us here, we stood across, about sun-set, toward the coast of Chinese Tartary ; and on the 15th, in the evening, anchored in a bay * sheltered by winds from the north-west to south, but open to the southward and westward, lat. $39^{\circ} 33'$ N., long. $121^{\circ} 19'$ E., We found here a cascade of water gushing from the rock, which was excellent.

The natives, who most probably had never seen any ships of our class before, crowded down next morning on the beach, but shewed no inclination to come on board. Indeed the people here seemed to be less amphibious than those generally found on sea-coasts ; few fishing or other boats were

* Named Ross Bay.

to be seen, although a very large and fine harbour, for vessels of twelve or fifteen feet water, extended inland round a point from the head of the bay.

The first officer who wandered up to the villages, about two miles from the watering place, was nearly devoured by the curiosity of the inhabitants.

Being seated beneath a tree, every part of his dress underwent the strictest scrutiny, from the shirt-frill to the shoes; but the anchor-buttons seemed most to attract attention, for they would refuse a dollar, and gladly accept a button, for any thing. The women here had, universally, small feet, all who were seen (and on the *first morning* every woman in the village made her appearance) being crippled. This we by no means expected to have found so far on the Tartar side of the great wall.

But these people are, in fact, completely Chinese; the language, dress, and religion of that country evidently prevailing: and they appeared to differ in no material respect from those we afterwards saw in the province of Shan-tong, except that they

were less rude and uncivil. No public officer, or man of any rank, made his appearance to inquire into the motives of our arrival. They were remarkably neat in their houses and gardens; and there was an air of comfort about their villages, not always to be found in the more civilized parts of Europe. The face of the country is mountainous, and extremely denuded of wood; not a tree being visible, except in the immediate vicinity of their dwellings. The hills had the appearance of sheep-feeding downs in England; and the soil, as far as we could penetrate, was excellent, and a good deal cultivated; the *holcus sorghum* appearing a prominent object.

Many deep fissures or gulleys were observed on the sides of the mountains, occasioned by the torrents from the melting snow in winter; for, although this part of the country is in the same parallel as the north of Italy or south of France, and was now (in August) very warm, yet the wintry season must be extremely cold, from the general situation and appearance of the

country, and the bleak winds blowing over the uncultivated wilds to the northward of it. The rocks here were composed of a very ponderous sort of stone, evidently containing a great proportion of iron; and some slate was observed. There must be some town of commercial importance situated at the head of the Gulf, from the number of junks we saw passing up and down. Some matchlocks were noticed at this place, but they were merely in the hands of individuals, as fowling-pieces; for no military made their appearance. We were unable to procure a supply of fresh beef;—not from want of cattle; but they could not comprehend the value of Spanish dollars, this coin of such universal circulation, being melted down, the moment it gets into the hands of a Chinese of Canton.

Having completed our water, we weighed on the 19th, and steered along-shore to the southward. At four in the afternoon, we saw a considerable town, lying in a hollow between two red cliffs, the neighbourhood immediately around being rather fine, and better wooded than usual. It seemed a

place of some trade, and a number of junks were lying at anchor in the roads. The narrow promontory which here extends into the Yellow Sea, and forms the eastern boundary of the Gulf of Lea-tong, was, from its resemblance to a sabre, named the Regent's Sword: the south end of it is the extreme Tartar point, and was called Cape Charlotte, in honour of her royal highness the princess.

Leopold's Isle lies a little to the north-west of this cape.

The coast along this shore from our anchorage was not unlike that from Plymouth Sound to the Start. Next morning (20th), steering southerly, we passed through a cluster of islands (nearly opposite and not very far distant from the Mee-a-taus), which were named the Company's Group. The space between them and Cape Charlotte, St. George's Channel; that through which we had sailed, Leadenhall-Passage; Ried's Rock and Grant's Island were names appropriated on this occasion. Soon after we saw the Mee-a-tau Islands; and, in the afternoon, passed the city of Ten-cheu-foo,

at which Lord Macartney, in the last embassy, touched. It looks very well from the sea, but the wall seems of much greater extent than is necessary for the town. Stood on to the eastward, and entered, in the evening, the bay or harbour of Kinsan-seu or Zew-a-tau. The clear and accurate description of it, by Sir Erasmus Gower, enabled the Alceste to proceed in without the least hesitation or difficulty. Here we found the General Hewitt. There are two towns on the peninsula, forming the north-west side of the harbour, and one on the opposite shore. They have no fortifications here; at least none deserving that name. The people appeared a gross and boorish set, and we enjoyed the *happiness* of being crowded with them from daylight till dark, when they always went away without the least expression of thanks for civilities shewn them. We here noticed that all the females, high and low, had small feet, which is by no means the case in the southern provinces, especially about Canton. At the latter place, among the middling and lower classes, the feet are al-

lowed to remain in their proper state, unless the girl promises to be handsome, in which case she is crippled, in order to give the finishing touch to her beauty, and with the view of preparing her for the mandarin market, where small feet bring a higher price, and she occasionally, also, obtains some interest or favour for her parents through the connexion.

They walk, or rather totter along, like one shuffling on her heels only, without putting the fore part of the foot on the ground; and, in moving quick, they not unfrequently tumble down, when they must get up again the best way they can; for, Chinese gallantry was never observed to extend so far as to afford any help on such an occurrence. Some, more cautious, were seen to move about, supporting themselves by the walls of the houses. Girls, from early infancy to eight or nine years old, were carried about in arms, their feet being too tender, during the first years of this absurd and cruel operation, to enable them to bear their weight; the four smaller toes being turned down under the sole, the

whole foot and ankle cramped, and the growth impeded by tight bandages, and a small shoe, which is generally again enclosed in a larger one. The pain and irritation excited by this horrid process, as well as the want of exercise, evidently injures their general health, for all the female children had a sickly pallid look. It would be as difficult to account for the origin of this barbarous practice, as that of squeezing the waists of Englishwomen out of all natural shape by stays (an usage which has not long been laid aside); or of “treating men like mere musical instruments,” and *tuning* them, as such, in Italy.

On shore the people were inhospitably rude, and even the children were encouraged to be insolent, and to throw stones. One mandarin seized a basket of vegetables from the officers' steward, ordering him and the interpreter (whom he also beat) into the boat, with a number of opprobrious epithets, such as “Foreign Devils! Spies!” &c. Our relation with the embassy tied our hands at this time.

Finding no refreshment was to be ob-

tained here, and being told, by some one in authority, that there was a greater probability of getting cattle at another harbour, forty miles farther to the eastward, we prepared to proceed thither.

We had by this time been joined by the *Lyra*; Captain Hall having surveyed the western and southern shores of the Gulf of Pe-che-lee, which were found to be in general low. One place, remarkable for its height over the adjoining land, had been named Mount Ellis. Here we parted for a time with our worthy friends of the General Hewitt, the companions of our voyage outward; that ship proceeding to Canton, to complete her ulterior objects. On the 26th we weighed from Zeu-a-tau, and next morning arrived at Oie-aie-oie, a very extensive and secure harbour, the *Lyra* sounding the passage in. On our entrance a number of mandarins (or, as the seamen termed them, *mad marines*) came on board to pay their respects; and an old turret on the face of a hill fired three popguns by way of salute, turning out about a dozen and a half

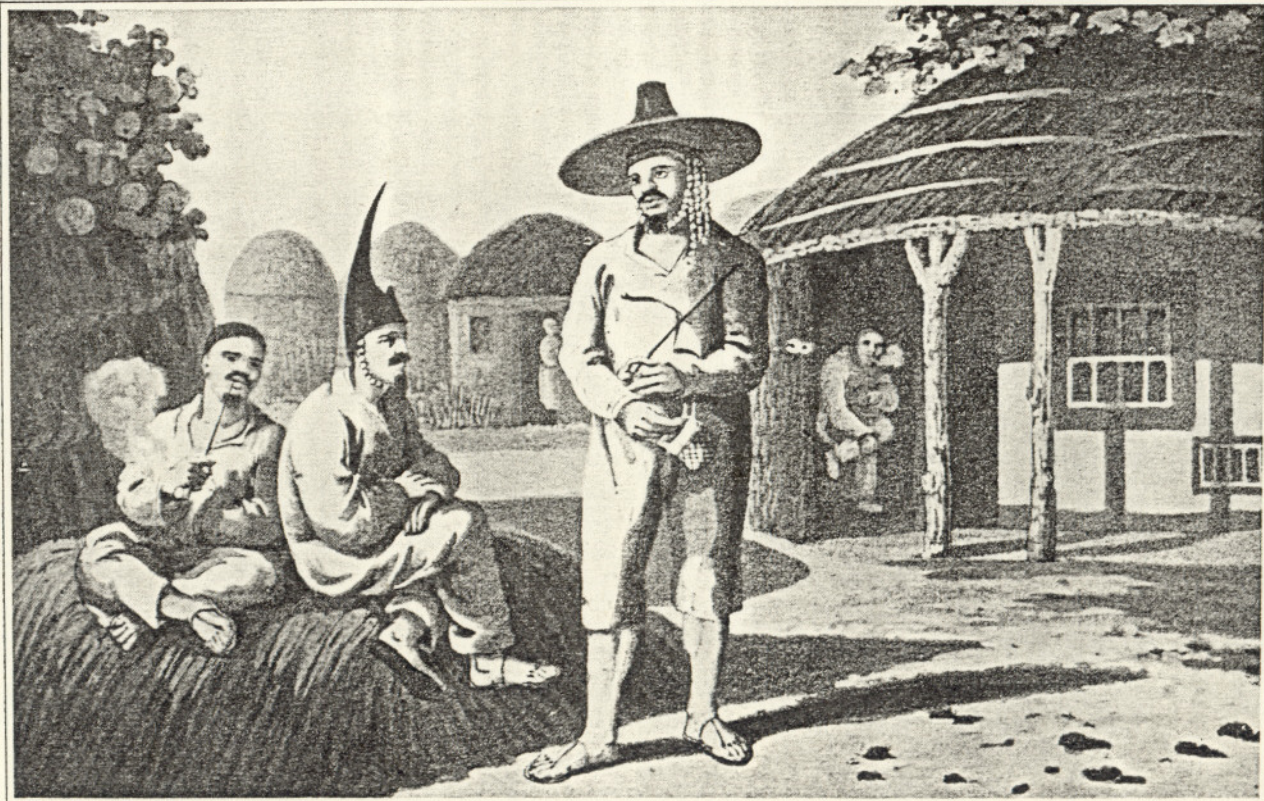
of soldiers, who looked a good deal like the stage-military in an old-fashioned play.

Their salute was returned by an equal number of guns from the ships. Here died Mr. Gawthrop, the master, aged forty-three years, (thirty-three of which he had been to sea,) after a severe illness contracted at the Cape of Good Hope. He had been distinguished as a good seaman and correct navigator; his career in the navy had also been marked by his abilities as a surveyor of coasts and harbours; and, although a man of blunt manners, his honesty was sterling. The ship's reckoning had been kept, during his confinement, by Mr. Taylor, the chaplain.

We buried him at sea, near the mouth of the harbour, with military honours; it not being considered right to inter him among a set of men who would have disturbed the grave for the coffin or the clothes, and of whose thievish disposition we had had the fullest example. We lost no time at this place, where nothing substantial was to be found*, but proceeded

* Here parted for Macao the Discovery and Investigator. They were towed up, and sailed down again.

to sea on the 29th, standing to the eastward along the Shan-tong shore. On the 31st we saw the land bearing east; but, the wind being light, anchored in forty-three fathoms. Towards morning we weighed, and the next day anchored again among a cluster of islands, lat. $37^{\circ} 45'$ N. long. $124^{\circ} 40' 30''$ E. on the coast of Corea. The natives here exhibited, by signs and gestures, the greatest aversion to the landing of a party from the ships, making cut-throat motions by drawing their hands across their necks, and pushing the boats away from the beach; but they offered no serious violence. These islands were named Sir James Hall's Group; the main land, of considerable height, was in view, and not far distant. Weighed again, and, the wind being easterly, stood to the southward. On the 2d we were out of sight of any land; but, the wind changing to the eastward, made sail southerly, and, on the 3d, passed a number of islands, with which the sea was studded as far as the eye could reach from the mast-head; and, on the 4th, stood into a fine bay formed by



W. H. D'warris Esq., del.

J. Clark sculp.

ISLANDERS of SIR JAMES HALL'S GROUP.

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the main land to the northward and eastward, and sheltered in a great degree in other points by Helen's and other islands to the westward; and anchored in six fathoms in front of a village, a larger town being observed at some distance. In the evening six or seven large boats came off to the *Lyra* (being nearest the shore), having on board a chief (most probably of this district), attended by a numerous retinue. There he met the commodore; and, after partaking of some refreshment, proceeded, although it was now dark, on board the *Alceste*. He was saluted, on leaving the *Lyra*, with three guns, which was repeated by the frigate. As he shoved off from the brig, one of his attendants, having in some way or other misbehaved, was by his order extended on the deck of the boat, and received, in a summary way, about a dozen and a half of blows with a flat bamboo over the seat of honour; and, as the culprit squalled, a number of his companions standing round him joined in the howl, either in derision, or to drown his noise. This ceremony finished, a flourish

of trumpets and other instruments announced his approach to the frigate. He was a man apparently about seventy years of age, of a very venerable and majestic mien; his hair and beard of a hoary whiteness. His dress was a light blue robe, with loose sleeves, and fastened round his middle by a buff-coloured leathern girdle. He had on his head an immense hat, not less than five or six feet round the brim, made of some substance resembling horse-hair varnished over. The cavity to receive the head being fixed *under the brim*, that which rose above it, as in European hats, was not larger than a common tumbler. He wore a kind of half-boots, very much peaked and turned up at the points; and in his hand he held a short black stick, twisted round with a silken cord, which seemed to be the badge of his office. Divested of his broad-brimmed hat, he would not upon the whole have made a bad representative of old *King Lear*. Of his attendants some were military, being distinguished by a short sword or rapier, the officers wearing peacocks' feathers in their hats (a distinction which also exists



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COREAN CHIEF and ATTENDANTS.

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in China for men of merit); and the rest were civilians. He was ushered into the cabin, where, in preference to chairs, he sat down upon one of the sofa-cushions, placed upon deck. It appearing to be etiquette for the head to be covered, the whole party, consisting of Captains Maxwell, Hall, and other officers, conformed to this rule, and, squatting on the cabin-floor, with gold-laced cocked hats on, amid the strange costume of the Coreans, looked like a party of masquers.

Much edifying conversation was no doubt lost on this occasion; for much was said, but unfortunately not one word was understood, the Chinese interpreter we had on board not being able to write his own language; and some of the Coreans could write, although they could not speak, at least, that dialect which he comprehended. The old gentleman, however, displayed, by signs, his satisfaction at the mode of his reception; and, after partaking of some liqueurs and sweetmeats, took his departure late in the evening from the ship, when he was again saluted,

his band striking up one of their martial airs. .

During the night several boats were anchored near the *Lyra*, apparently to watch her motions; and early in the morning the same chief, accompanied by a still greater retinue, was seen embarking at the nearest village, and soon after he visited the *Lyra*, where he breakfasted. He had in his train some secretaries (or men of letters), who employed themselves in noting down every thing relative to the ships which could be acquired by signs: the complement of men was described by pointing to them, and then, holding up ten fingers a certain number of times, they counted the guns, examined the muskets, measured the decks, &c. &c. A shot was fired, by express wish, from one of the carronades; and the distance it went, but particularly its *recochetting* along the surface of the water, seemed to strike them with astonishment. After breakfast, a small party of the officers (Captains Maxwell, Hall, Messrs. Clifford, Law, and M^cLeod) got into the boats with the view of landing at the village; and the old chief,

thinking they were going to the frigate, accompanied them, his own boats attending. But no sooner did he perceive the course directed to the shore than his countenance fell, and he seemed altogether in a state of great perturbation, making signs that he wished to go to the *Alceste*, and shaking his head when they pointed to the town.

Having reached the beach, the party landed, and were immediately surrounded by a concourse of people. The old chieftain hung his head, and clasped his hands in mournful silence ; at last, bursting into a fit of crying, he was supported, sobbing all the way, to a little distance, where he sat down upon a stone, looking back at the officers with the most melancholy aspect. His feelings appeared to be those of a man who imagined some great calamity had befallen his country in the arrival of strange people ; and that he was the unhappy being in whose government this misfortune had occurred.

The natives, who had in the mean time been driven by their soldiers to a respectful distance, stood gazing in astonishment

alternately at their afflicted chief and at our party.

Captain Maxwell, seeing what distress it occasioned him, would permit no advance, and, beckoning to him to come back, he arose, and slowly returned.

It was explained as well as could be done that no injury was intended, and that we were friends. He pointed to the sun ; and, describing its revolving course four times, he drew his hand across his throat, and, dropping his chin upon his breast, shut his eyes, as if dead ; intimating that in four days (probably the period in which an answer could arrive from Kin-ki-tao, the capital, for he also pointed to the interior) he would lose his head. One of his secretaries, or legal advisers (an amazing long-winded man), squatted on the top of a large stone, now made a harangue of considerable length, the purport of which was evidently against the advance of the strangers. Signs were made for something to eat and drink (thinking hospitality might induce them to invite us into their houses) ; but messengers were instantly despatched

to the village, who brought down little tables, with mats to sit on, and some refreshments: this, however, not being the object, they were not accepted, making them understand that it was unbecoming to offer them in that unsheltered manner, on the open beach; and, by way of a hint that this was not *our* mode of treating strangers, invited them to return to the frigate, where they should dine handsomely, and meet with every respect. The old man, who had observed attentively, and seemed perfectly to comprehend, the meaning of the signs, answered by going through the motions of eating and drinking with much appearance of liveliness and satisfaction, patting his stomach afterwards, to say all was very fine; then, looking grave, he drew his hand across his neck, and shut his eyes; as if to say, “What signifies your good dinners when I must lose my head?”

Perceiving it was impossible to penetrate farther into the interior without violence, which we had neither the right nor the inclination to use, the party re-embarked,

affecting to be much hurt at the treatment they had received.

The old gentleman followed on board the *Alceste*, seemingly much dejected, and looking as if ashamed that he could not pay more attention. Wandering about the decks, attempting to converse, by signs, with every one he met, he took a piece of paper from a gentleman who was sitting at his desk, and wrote some characters upon it, which he seemed to require an answer to, but of course none could be given. The paper was retained; and, being shewn some months afterwards to Mr. Bannerman, at Canton, turned out to be "I don't know who ye are; what business have ye here?" It was pretty evident, however, that he was acting from orders which he dared not trifle with, rather than from any inhospitable feeling in his own nature.

He received a Bible, which Captain Maxwell (to whom he seemed very thankful for not insisting upon going into the town) presented him with, and carried it on shore with much care, most likely sup-

posing it to be some official communication.

Basil's Bay (which this place was named) lies in lat. $36^{\circ} 9' N.$, long. $126^{\circ} 32' E.$, being, in sea-phrase, about 120 miles *high and dry* up the country, according to the existing charts.

This afternoon (5th) got under weigh, and stood to the southward, through innumerable islands, which were all high, rising like mountains out of the sea. None of them seemed of great extent, few appearing longer than three or four miles, and, as far as we could see, in some degree cultivated, the inhabitants generally crowding to the top of the highest eminence, where they remained huddled together, and gazing until the ships were passed.

On the 8th, anchored in lat. $36^{\circ} 26' N.$, and here we found that the land seen on coming up the Whang Hai or Yellow Sea, and which had been called Cape Amherst, was not the continent. It was now named Alceste Island; and another range, about twenty in number, running north and south,

rather within it, but outside the Corean Archipelago, was called the Amherst Isles. This morning, after sounding our way in, came to an anchor in a most excellent harbour, named Murray's Sound; the two islands, which principally form it, Shamrock and Thistle.

Here a number of observations were taken, and surveys made, to ascertain the exact geographical position of the land, and the qualities of the anchorage; and distinguishing names were of course given to remarkable spots, which might serve on future occasions as leading marks. From the top of Montreal, one of the highest, 135 other islands were distinctly counted; the main land, which seemed very lofty, was seen ranging from north-east to east-south-east, distant about forty miles. From Murray's Sound, Craig Harriet, a very peculiar rock, rising in sugar-loaf form from the sea, bears south 39° , west five miles. Another rock (Huntly Lodge), situate on an island, south 40° east, resembles a church with a square tower. Windsor Castle, north $40^{\circ} 50'$ east. The direction of the

sound itself north north-east half east, and south south-west half west; it is a very secure anchorage, with excellent holding ground. The intervening spaces between the multitude of isles, generally from one to two, or three, and even four miles across, are all (at least as far as the boats examined) close harbours, and capable of containing, in security, all the navies of the world. They form, in fact, an almost endless chain of harbours, communicating with each other. The rise and fall of tide is here considerable, but the setting of the currents among such a multitude of isles must, of course, be extremely various. They appear to be all inhabited, and therefore must possess fresh water. On first landing on Thistle Island, the women fled, with their infant children, over the hill, to a place which we named Eagle Point (from a large eagle being perched on the precipice as we came in), and hid themselves in recesses among the rocks; whilst the men, in a body, but unarmed, waved and halloed to us not to advance, making the usual signal with their hands across the throat,

When they found, however, by repeated visits, that no hostility was intended, and that we were rather inclined to give than to take from them, they became a little more tame, would crowd round the officers to see them fire at a mark, bring them water to drink, and offer them part of their humble fare to eat; but all this they seemed to do in a perfect spirit of independence, and not from fear. Then suddenly, as if recollecting they were acting contrary to orders in holding any correspondence whatever with strangers, they would lay hold of some of the gentlemen by the shoulders, and push them away, pointing to the ship; and this conduct was uniform wherever we touched. We observed no fire-arms among them, but some who came on board the *Alceste* discovered considerable acquaintance with the sword exercise. They cultivate as much grain as they want for their own consumption; they feed cattle (at least for domestic purposes); and, as may naturally be supposed, from their peculiar and insular situation, they subsist a good deal by fish-

ing. Of their government, general manners, and customs, it would be impossible to speak with any accuracy from so limited an intercourse as we had with them.

China has very little communication with *the barbarians of the west*, and that is chiefly confined to a particular spot, the port of Canton; Japan still less, and Corea none at all. A connexion, however, is kept up with China by two or three annual junks from the eastern coast.

What little knowledge we possess of Corea is mostly derived from the Jesuits of China, who certainly were not infallible guides in *all matters*; but in the geography, general literature, and delineation of manners and customs, when unconnected with their own superstitions, their labours are entitled to a distinguished place in the republic of letters, especially when the difficulties they had to struggle with are taken into consideration; but here they were freed from every motive to deceive, and had only to tell the simple truth.

Corea (or Kaoli) is tributary to the emperor of China, and sends him triennial Em-

bassadors expressive of its homage. We saw enough, however, to convince us that the sovereign of this country governs with most absolute sway ; and that, occasionally, he makes very free with the heads of his subjects. The allusion to this danger could not have been so constant and uniform, in places so remote from each other, without some strong reason.

The law against intercourse with foreigners appears to be enforced with the utmost rigour*. At one of the islands to the north, where we first landed, a Corean, in an unguarded moment, accepted a button which had attracted his attention ; but soon after, as the boats were shoving off, he ran down into the water, and insisted on restoring it, at the same time (by way of reparation) pushing the boat with all his might away from the beach. On almost all occasions they positively refused every thing offered to them. His Corean majesty

* It is said that the crew of a Dutch vessel, a considerable time since, wrecked on the eastern coast, were detained in slavery for nineteen years, without being heard of, when some of them managed to get away.

may well be styled "king of ten thousand isles," but his *supposed* continental dominions have been very much circumscribed by our visit to his shores. Except in the late and present embassy, no ships had ever penetrated into the Yellow Sea; the Lion had kept the coast of China aboard only, and had neither touched at the Tartar nor Corean side. Cook, Pérouse, Bougainville, Broughton, and others, had well defined the bounds on the eastern coast of this country, but the western had hitherto been laid down on the charts from imagination only, the main land being from a hundred and thirty to a hundred and fifty miles farther to the eastward than these charts had led us to believe.

The Jesuits, therefore, must have taken the coast of Corea from report, and not from observation, for their chart is most incorrect, and by no means corresponds with their usual accuracy. The Chinese written characters have found their way here, but they would appear to be confined to the literati, for the common language has no resemblance in sound to the colloquial language of China.