

FEARFUL SHIPWRECK.

In the *Times of India* we read the following account of the wreck of the Columbus on Aug. 15:—

“The ship was 760 tons burden, and sailed from Jeddah for Singapore about the 26th of July; she had a crew of 40 men and 230 passengers, including two Austrian gentlemen and their wives, the remainder being principally Malay pilgrims returning from Mecca. The vessel was laden with salt, dates, wool, and ghee. She had also 25 horses on board, and neither ship nor cargo, we understand, were insured. Six days before the wreck the vessel sprung a leak, which on the third day increased so much that the pumps were useless, and the salt having melted, the ship became water logged, and rolled so dangerously that the master determined to make for the nearest land. He put the ship before the wind, and crowded all sail on her for two days. On the evening of the 15th, the wind blowing hard at the time, with lightning and rain, the lead told them they were in eight fathoms, then seven, when they shortened sail, and finally six, when they dropped anchor, although they could see no land. The anchor dragged, and soon after the cable parted, when the vessel struck and went to pieces almost immediately. She lay in a shallow bay, where the black rock cropped up through the sand. For more than a quarter of a mile from the shore, along the whole bay, it was one waste of breakers. All on board tried to save themselves by clinging to portions of the wreck, and many succeeded in reaching the land, though wounded and bruised, by the surf hurling them ashore. The Austrian gentleman stated with much emotion, that his wife, his brother, and his brother's wife were among the lost. His name is Otho Albin, and he was one of the 130 survivors who were found congregated at Wurroda. About thirty Malays were found at Malgoond, which is half-way between Pooley and Wurroda. On coming within a mile of Wurroda [some brown objects were seen lying on the sand within the wash of the waves. On going nearer they were found to be the bodies of a Malay, a Chinaman, and a Chinese woman, all perfectly naked, and all with their skulls fractured, and fearful bruises on body and limb. For the next mile it was the same: every few hundred yards men, women, and children, all quite naked, frightfully wounded and bruised, lay dead on the sand and among the rocks in every conceivable attitude. Nearer the place where the vessel broke up were dead horses and other animals, and just opposite to where she struck, well up on the beach, was a large pile of broken beams, spars, ribs, and planking, and tightly jammed between them, and under them, the dead bodies of men and horses, sheep, goats, and fowls, Persian cats, Manilla dogs, and large rats, all beginning to decompose. Upon the grass at the top of the beach, above this horrible heap, were about twenty bodies that had come on shore the previous day, among them the bodies of Maria and Annette Albin, the Austrian women; and here we notice with pleasure an instance of delicacy and respect to Europeans evinced by the villagers, or by the native police of the place. All the many dead Malay women, as well as men, were lying quite naked over the beach, but these two white women were reverently covered and laid by themselves. Nor was this done to please Europeans, for no European was expected so soon upon the spot, and the surviving Austrian was three miles off. One of the women, a young creature, except for the cloth thrown over her, and a pair of stockings and boots which she wore, was quite naked, and both the poor creatures' bodies were fearfully bruised and cut. Decomposition had begun, and there were no means of conveying their remains to Rutnagherry; so a wide grave was dug, and, their few ornaments being removed, they were laid in it together, and a bit of broken white painted spar placed at the head and another at the foot of the grave. Before the earth was filled in, the missing body of the husband of one of them was washed on shore, and he was laid with them. Like all the rest he was quite naked, the clothes having been frayed off his body by the violence of the surf. His name was Matthias Albin. Large pits were dug close to the beach for the other bodies, which, if the sea had given them all up, must, I fear, number nearly 100; there were then 64, of whom 12 were women, on the beach and in the surf. It was with difficulty the vultures could be kept off them. Some packages of wax and dates had washed up, but they were much damaged, and there was little of any value among the large quantity of fragments of the ship and broken boxes. All were placed in charge of a sufficient party of police. The survivors were carried to Rutnagherry, as there was not food enough for so many in the small villages where they were. They all arrived at that station, except one or two sick, and were placed in a bungalow that happened to be vacant, and in two mosques. The Austrian, Otho Albin, Mr. Reed has kindly clothed and taken into his own house. The police apothecary is attending to the sick. It is by no means easy to dispose of all these poor people. Almost all wish to go to the Malabar coast, where they will find vessels for Singapore. If the steamers which are coming down at the end of the month can take them to Cochin, there will be some difficulty about their fares. There is no doubt that the magistrate will have to assist them; for, however willing the European and native community of Rutnagherry may be to afford assistance, the former are few, and the latter far from rich. Some natives fed the unfortunate people last night and this morning, and the magistrate will, it is believed, call a meeting to-morrow to see what further can be done.”