

THE
ASIATIC JOURNAL

AND
MONTHLY REGISTER

FOR
British India and its Dependencies :

CONTAINING

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VOL. V.

FROM JANUARY TO JUNE 1818.

LONDON :
PRINTED FOR BLACK, KINGSBURY, PARBURY, & ALLEN,
BOOKSELLERS TO THE HONOURABLE EAST-INDIA COMPANY,
LEADENHALL STREET.

1818.

order given to "stand by the larboard guns for Tiger Island," (on which we then supposed there was a battery), he said, with a rueful countenance, "What! no hab done yet?"—"Not half done," was the reply. "How many guns have you got on Tiger Island?"—but, without waiting to answer this question, (or indeed reflecting in this perturbation that there were none at all), he wrung his hands, groaned heavily, and dived again below.

The discipline they had received was not lost on the Chinese. The General Hewitt had been forbidden to load on frivolous pretences, and had been detained for six weeks at the second bar; but no sooner did the intelligence of the affair with the forts reach Canton, than tea-junks were sent with part of the cargo, and permission was given her to load immediately. The Viceroy also sent down a high Mandarin, to welcome Captain Maxwell to the river, and compliment him with all possible politeness: so that the spirited conduct of the latter "not only commanded as brilliant an entry for the embassy, as ever had been witnessed on any other occasion, but, what was of equal importance, it sustained the dignity of the flag, and reduced the Viceroy (after offering every insult,) to the meanness of congratulating those who had defied his flotilla, and battered his fortifications."* The behaviour of Captain Maxwell and Lord Amherst was in many other respects successfully directed to the repression of the insolence of the Viceroy and people of Canton.

On the 29th of January, the Embassy took leave of China in the *Alceste* frigate, and after touching at Manilla, steered for the straits of Gaspar. Here, while following the best and safest course, and using every precaution which could guard against danger, the ship suddenly struck on a reef

of sunken rocks and remained immovable.

It was soon discovered that the injury she had sustained was irremediable, and that any attempt to move her must have been attended with fatal consequences. The anchor was accordingly let go, and preparations were made for removing the men and all the stores that could be saved to the neighbouring island of Pulo Leat. The boats were hoisted out, and the Ambassador and suite, with all whose labour was not required on the wreck, were sent on shore; while the captain and officers used every exertion to secure what provisions could be obtained from under the water, which now filled the vessel. The boats found great difficulty in effecting a landing; for though at a distance the shore appeared easy of access, it was found on close inspection that the mangrove trees grow out to a considerable distance in the water, and formed an impenetrable barrier. At length a small opening appeared, and by cutting away a quantity of jungle at the foot of a hill, a space was cleared, where they bivouacked under the shade of the loftier trees.

In the mean time the work on board the ship made slow progress. During the first day no fresh water was obtained, except what happened to be on deck in the dripping-stones and water jugs. The party on the island were equally unsuccessful the pits which they dug, from the vicinity of the sea, containing only salt water. A small quantity was served out to every man without distinction, Lord Amherst setting the example of that readiness to share in privations, which never fails to animate the lower classes to endurance and to unite them in subordination to their officers.

On the second day Captain Maxwell determined that the Ambassador and his suite should pro-

* It is remarkable that Mr. Ellis had not said one word on the passage, of the forts by the *Alceste*.

ceed without delay in the barge and cutter to Batavia; which, with the assistance of the north-west monsoon and a favourable current, they would probably reach in three days, and from whence they might dispatch vessels for the relief of the rest of the ship's company. By this measure he not only secured the safety of the charge which had been entrusted to his care, but ensured more effectually than by any other means the relief of the officers and men that remained with himself in this desert isle. Much importance was attached to the influence of the Ambassador with the Dutch government, in procuring prompt and immediate succour; and in our opinion Lord Amherst deserved little less credit for his ready acquiescence in this wise measure, than Captain Maxwell for the generosity with which he preferred the safety of his Lordship to that of himself and his companions. The boats were supplied with a small stock of provisions and water, which was all that could be spared, and was deemed sufficient for their sustenance for the few days that the passage was expected to last. The party which remained on the island consisted of two hundred men and boys, and one woman.

The first measure of Captain Maxwell, after fixing a party to dig a well, was to remove the bivouac to the top of the hill, where the air would be purer, and where defence would be more easy in case of attack. By setting fire to the underwood, a spot was cleared for that purpose: the provisions were deposited in a sort of natural magazine, consisting of a cavity in the summit of the rock; and a party was stationed on the wreck to add to the stock if possible, and to bring off what arms or public stores could be found. The men began to suffer severely from thirst. A small cask of water, the only one which could be obtained from the ship, was distribu-

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ted among the crew, but in such small quantities as scarcely to afford any alleviation. During the night, however, the well began to be productive, and a shower of rain which was caught in sheets and table-cloths served in a great measure to relieve their distress.

Captain Maxwell, who knew the danger of insubordination in circumstances like the present, called the crew together at an early period, and stated to them in few words, "that every man, by the regulations of the navy, was as liable to answer for his conduct on the present as on any other occasion; that as long as he lived the same discipline should be exerted, and if necessary with greater rigour than aboard; a discipline for the general welfare, which he trusted every sensible man must see the necessity of maintaining. He assured them, at the same time, that he should have much pleasure in recommending those who distinguished themselves by the regularity and propriety of their conduct, and that the provisions they had been able to save should be served out with the most rigid equality to all ranks, although necessarily with a very sparing hand, until the arrival of the expected succour from Java." To his firmness and decision in thus maintaining discipline, the happy result is in a great measure to be attributed. He had already attached his crew to him by his kindness and attentions, and he now reaped the fruit of his conduct in their cheerful and strict obedience.

But the attack of a number of Malay pirates on the following morning served still more to unite the sailors in obedience to their officers, and in the patient endurance of hardships and privations. Mr. Macleod has well depicted the spirit which was excited by this barbarous assault, and the picture is so characteristic of Bri-

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fish sailors, that we are sure our readers will peruse it with pleasure.

Under all the depressing circumstances attending shipwreck—of hunger, thirst, and fatigue, and menaced by a ruthless foe—it was glorious to see the British spirit staunch and unsubdued. The order was given for every man to arm himself in the best way he could, and it was obeyed with the utmost promptitude and alacrity. Rude pike staves were formed, by cutting down young trees; small swords, dirks, knives, chisels, and even large spike-nails sharpened, were firmly affixed to the ends of these poles; and those who could find nothing better, hardened the end of the wood in the fire, and, bringing it to a sharp point, formed a tolerable weapon. There were, perhaps, a dozen cutlasses; the marines had about thirty muskets and bayonets, but could muster no more than seventy-five ball cartridges among the whole party. We had fortunately preserved some loose powder drawn from the upper-deck guns after the ship had struck, (for the magazine was under water in five minutes,) and the marines, by hammering their buttocks round, and by rolling up pieces of broken bottles in cartridges, did their best to supply themselves with a sort of langrage which would have some effect at close quarters, and strict orders were given not to throw away a single shot until sure of their aim. Mr. Cheffy, the carpenter, and his crew, under the direction of the captain, were busied in forming a sort of abattis, by felling trees, and enclosing in a circular shape the ground we occupied; and, by interweaving loose branches with the stakes driven in among these, a breastwork was constructed, which afforded us some cover, and must naturally impede the progress of any enemy unsupplied with artillery. That part of the island we had landed on was a narrow ridge, not above musket-shot across, bounded on one side by the sea, and on the other by a creek, extending upwards of a mile inland, and nearly communicating with the sea at its head. Our hill was the outer point of this tongue, and its shape might be very well represented by an inverted punch-bowl: the circle on which the bowl stands would then shew the fortification, and the space within it our citadel.

It appeared by the report of scouts, a short time after the first account, that the Malays had not actually landed, but had taken possession of some rocks near this point, on which they deposited a quantity of plunder brought from the ship; and during the day they continued making these predatory trips.

In the evening all hands were mustered under arms, and a motley group they presented; it was gratifying, however, to

observe, that rude as were their implements of defence, there seemed to be no want of spirit to use them if occasion offered.* The officers and men were now marshalled regularly into the different divisions and companies, their various posts assigned, and other arrangements made. An officer and party were ordered to take charge of the boats for the night, and they were hauled closer into the landing place. An alarm which occurred during the night shewed the benefit of these regulations, for, on a sentry challenging a noise among the bushes, every one was at his post in an instant, and without the least confusion.

On the 22d it was determined to regain possession of the ship by force, but the intention was defeated by the pirates abandoning her on the advance of the boats, having previously set fire to her so effectually that in a few minutes the flames burst from every port, and she was soon enveloped in a cloud of smoke. Though they did this with no friendly intention, they materially served the English interests; for by burning her upper works and decks, every thing buoyant floated up from below and could be more easily laid hold of.

The next morning (Sunday) on visiting the wreck which was still smoaking, though the flames were extinguished, it was found that some flour, a few cases of wine, and a cask of beer had made their appearance on the surface of the water.

This last God-send was announced just at the conclusion of divine service, which was this morning held in the tress-tent, and a pint was ordered to be immediately served out to each man, which called forth three cheers. This seems to be the only style in which a British seaman can give vent to the warmer feelings of his heart. It is his mode of thanksgiving for benefits received; and it equally serves him to honour his friend, to defy his enemy, or to proclaim victory.

* Even the little boys had managed to make fast a table-fork, or something of that kind, on the end of a stick, for their defence. One of the men who had been so severely bruised by the falling of the mass, and was slung in his hammock between two trees, had been observed carefully fixing, or fixing, with two sticks and a rope-yarn, the blade of an old razor.—On being being asked what he meant to do with it, he replied, "You know I cannot stand; but, if any of these fellows come within reach of my hammock, I'll mack them."

On the 24th, besides some addition to their stock of provisions, they found on the wreck about forty boarding-pikes, and eighteen muskets, which were very acceptable in their present dangerous situation. Musket-cartridges had been formed by melting down some pewter basins and jugs, and every day increased their means of repelling the enemy. One encounter which took place is thus related by Mr. Macleod.

Wednesday, (26th,) at day-light, two of the pirate proas, with each a canoe astern, were discovered close in with the cove where our boats were moored. Lieut. Hay, (a straight-forward sort of fellow,) who had the guard that night at the boats, and of course slept in them, immediately dashed at them with the barge, cutter, and gig. On perceiving this, they cut adrift their canoes, and made all sail, chased by our boats; they rather distanced the cutter and gig, but the barge gained upon them. On closing, the Malays evinced every sign of defiance, placing themselves in the most threatening attitudes, and firing their swivels at the barge. This was returned by Mr. Hay with the only musket he had in the boat, and, as they closed nearer, the Malays commenced throwing their javelins and darts, several falling into the barge, but without wounding any of the men. Soon after they were grappled by our fellows, when three of them having been shot, and a fourth knocked down with the butt end of the musket, five more jumped overboard and drowned themselves, (evidently disdainful of quarter,) and two were taken prisoners, one of whom was severely wounded. This close style of fighting is termed by seamen *man-handling* an enemy.

The desperate ferocity of the nation was strongly marked on this occasion. Never giving quarter, they expected none at the hands of the conquerors, and only sought to avoid the tortures they apprehended by putting an end to their lives. "One who had been shot through the body, but was not quite dead, on being removed into the barge with a view of saving him (as his own vessel was sinking) furiously grasped a cutlass which came within his reach, and it was not without a struggle wrenched from his hand: he died in a few minutes."

The aspect of the people is described as unprepossessing—"their bodies are of a deep bronze; their black teeth, their gaping nostrils, and lank clotted hair hanging about their shoulders and over their scowling countenances, give them altogether a fiend-like and murderous look."

On the 1st of March the force of the pirates was increased by the arrival of fourteen additional proas, and the number of their vessels soon amounted to sixty, which contained at the least six hundred men. The wreck seemed now nearly exhausted, and appeared to be a secondary object; the chief booty was on shore, and they blockaded the landing place with increased rigour, and hourly threatened an attack. In the evening, when the officers and men were assembled as usual under arms, in order to inspect them, the Captain addressed them in the following plain and seaman-like but spirited and animating words:

"My lads, you must all have observed this day, as well as myself, the great increase of the enemy's force, for enemies we must now consider them, and the threatening posture they have assumed. I have, on various grounds, strong reason to believe they will attack us this night. I do not wish to conceal our real state, because I think there is not a man here who is afraid to face any sort of danger. We are now strongly fenced in, and our position in all respects so good, that armed as we are, we ought to make a formidable defence against even regular troops: what then would be thought of us, if we allowed ourselves to be surprised by a set of naked savages, with their spears and creeses? Is it true they have swivels in their boats, but they cannot act here. I have not observed that they have any matchlocks or muskets; but, if they have, so have we. I do not wish to deceive you as to the means of resistance in our power. When we were first thrown together on shore, we were almost defenceless; seventy-five ball-cartridges only could be mustered: we have now sixteen hundred! They cannot, I believe, send up more than five hundred men; but, with two hundred such as now stand around me, I do not fear a thousand, nay, fifteen hundred of them! I have the fullest confidence we

shall beat them; the pike-men standing firm, we can give them such a volley of musketry as they will be little prepared for; and, when we find they are thrown into confusion, we'll sally out among them, chase them into the water, and ten to one but we secure their vessels. Let every man, therefore, be on the alert with his arms in his hands; and should these barbarians this night attempt our hill, I trust we shall convince them that they are dealing with Britons." Perhaps three jollier hurrahs were never given than at the conclusion of this short but well-timed address. The woods fairly echoed again; whilst the piquet at the cove, and those stationed at the wells, the instant it caught their ear, instinctively joined their sympathetic cheers to the general chorus.

There was something like unity and concord in such a sound, (one neither resembling the feeble shout nor savage yell,) which, rung in the ears of these gentlemen, no doubt had its effect; for about this time (8 P.M.) they were observed making signals with lights to some of their tribe behind the islet. If ever seamen or marines had a strong inducement to fight, it was on the present occasion, for every thing conducted to animate them. The feeling excited by a savage, cruel, and inhospitable aggression on the part of the Malays,—an aggression adding calamity to misfortune,—roused every mind to a spirit of just revenge; and the appeal now made to them on the score of national character was not likely to let that feeling cool. That they might come seemed to be the anxious wish of every heart. After a slender but cheerful repast, the men laid down as usual upon their arms, whilst the captain remained with those on guard to superintend his arrangements. An alarm during the night shewed the effect of preparation on the people's minds, for all like lightning were at their posts, and returned growling and disappointed because the alarm was false.

Indeed the spirit of the men wanted no excitement. Though their situation became daily more critical, the force of the enemy rapidly accumulating, while their stock of provisions was constantly diminishing, and they had no means of obtaining an additional supply, yet they betrayed neither fear nor discouragement;

Awful as our situation now was, and every hour becoming more so—starvation staring us in the face on one hand, and without a hope of mercy from the savages on the other—yet were there no symptoms of depression, or gloomy despair; every mind seemed buoyant; and,

if any estimate of the general feeling could be collected from countenances, from the manner and expressions of all, there appeared to be formed in every breast a calm determination to dash at them and be successful, or to fall, as became men, in the attempt to be free.

On the 3d of March they reaped the reward of their bravery and good conduct, in their relief from their perikous situation by the arrival of the Ternate, one of the Company's cruizers, from Batavia. The sight of this vessel, (though from the state of the wind and current she would have been unable for some days to render them effectual assistance) raised at once the blockade. The Malay proas instantly abandoned their prey, and left the communication free between the ship and the shore. Messrs. Ellis and Hoppner, who had volunteered their services to relieve the companions they had left behind them, were received with the heartfelt acclamations of the sailors in their romantic fortification. The former, on surveying the precautions which had been used to fortify the position, states his conviction that its strength would have presented insuperable obstacles to an attacking enemy, and would have ensured the repulse of the Malays, had they ventured to attempt an assault.

The health of the men, notwithstanding the scanty allowance of food and the swampy nature of the shore, was excellent. Those who were sick on their arrival recovered during their stay, with the exception of one young man, who was labouring under an incurable disorder. One man also, of a troublesome character, deserted into the woods, and probably met his death, either from the hands of the savages, or the bite of a serpent. The rest embarked on board the Ternate on the 7th of March, nineteen days after the shipwreck, and arrived in safety at Batavia on the 9th. Mr. McLeod's reflections on the whole

of the occurrences deserve to be recorded :

It is remarkable, indeed, that, surrounded by so many dangers, the occurrence of any one of which would have proved fatal, we should have escaped the whole. We had, for example, great reason to be thankful that the ship did not fall from the rocks on which she first struck into deeper water, for then all must have perished ;—that no accident happened to the boats which conveyed the embassy to Batavia ; for, in that case, we should never have been heard of ;—that we found water ;—that no mutiny or division took place among ourselves ;—that we had been able and willing to stand our ground against the pirates ;—and that the Ternate had succeeded in anchoring in sight of the island, which she was only enabled to do by a fortuitous slant of wind for an hour or two. Had we been unfortunate in any one of these circumstances, few would have remained to tell our tale.

The Cesar was engaged to carry to England the embassy with the officers and crew of the Alceste : they embarked on the 12th of April, having for the companions of their voyage a boa constrictor,

and an ourang outang. Mr. M'Leod has given a curious description of the way in which the snake devoured a goat which was given to him. But as we have already presented our readers with this portion of his narrative, we will not dwell farther on the subject.

They touched at St. Helena, and had an audience of Bonaparte, who displayed as usual that universality of knowledge, and that readiness of conversation on every subject, which were of such essential service to him in the government of the French empire. After a prosperous passage they arrived at Spithead on the 17th of August ; “ not merely,” says Mr. M'Leod, “ with the common feelings of happiness, which all mankind enjoy on revisiting the land of their birth ; but with those sensations of pride and satisfaction with which every Briton may look around him in his own country, after having seen all others.”

LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL INTELLIGENCE.

ASIATIC SOCIETY.

On the evening of the 18th Aug. a meeting of the Asiatic Society was held at the Society's apartments in Chouring-hee, the Most Noble the Marquis of Hastings, president, in the chair. The Lord Bishop, the Honorable A. Seton, and Mr. Harrington were also present. On this occasion Captain B. Hall, R. N. and Messrs. Yeld, Robinson, and Calder, were unanimously elected members, and professor Playfair an honorary member of the Society.

A paper on the Malabathrum of the ancients, by Sir George Cooper, Recorder of Prince of Wales' Island, was read.

An analysis of some snake stones, by J. Davy, M. D. F. R. S. of Ceylon, was also read.

Dr. Willick presented to the Society a German volume “ On the language and wisdom of the Indians,” by Frederick Schlegel.

Four spears from the island of Engano

were presented to the Society by the Marine Board.

Captain Harriott transmitted two Persian coins. Their form and inscription sufficiently denote their antiquity. They were brought a few years ago, with a few others now in the possession of Captain Harriott, by a Roman Catholic priest from Nepal, and presented by him to the late Mr. Gladwin. In the opinion of the learned Moolve Abul Kasim, a native of Persia, and now resident at Patna, they are Persian coins of Zoroaster's time, and about 2,500 years old.

Some sculptured bricks taken from the wall of an old Hindu temple in the district of Jessore, were received from Dr. Tytler, to be deposited in the Museum.

A mathematical paper was also received from Stephen Andreas Grove, captain in the Royal Danish Engineers, and surveyor at Tranquebar.

The governor general in council having purchased a valuable collection of botanical works, which were commissioned