

THE
ASIATIC JOURNAL

AND
MONTHLY REGISTER

FOR
British India and its Dependencies :

CONTAINING

Original Communications.	Missionary and Home Intelligence, Births,
Memoirs of Eminent Persons.	Marriages, Deaths, &c.
History, Antiquities, Poetry.	Commercial Intelligence.
Natural History, Geography.	Shipping Intelligence, Ship Letter-Mails,
Review of New Publications.	&c.
Debates at the East-India House.	Lists of Passengers to and from India.
Proceedings of the Colleges of Haileybury	State of the London and India Markets.
and Fort William, and the Military	Notices of Sales at the East-India House.
Seminary at Addiscombe.	Times appointed for the East-India Com-
India Civil and Military Intelligence, Ap-	pany's Ships for the Season.
pointments, Promotions, Births, Mar-	Prices Current of East-India Produce.
riages, Deaths, &c. &c.	India Exchanges and Company's Secu-
Literary and Philosophical Intelligence.	rities.
	Daily Prices of Stocks, &c. &c. &c.



VOL. X.

JULY TO DECEMBER 1820.

NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

LONDON :

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

1820.

tions, choose persons according to their natural abilities: for the higher situations, choose men who can speak the Mandarin dialect. If commanders of a thousand or a hundred men (colonels or captains) are sent on any service, I must choose them myself: I will not allow any other person to name them. Such officers must not allow themselves to be deceived, or indulge any foolish hopes, for if I find it out, I shall consider them also offenders.

IX. If an important communication arrive, present it the moment that it is brought. The common communications of the day bring in when the drum beats, at the morning and evening. If persons come from a distance with papers, they are not to be delayed. If such persons are delayed, I allow them to come and tell me.

X. Officers who send in their cards, whether I see them or not, deliver my answer to them immediately; you must not presume to detain them.

XI. When civil and military officers are sent on any service, they must inform the owners of boats, horses, &c. (which they

may require) from what office they are sent, that the people may go there and make their claims. They who are sent must have a certain allowance made them, a statement of which must be brought to me. The officers of districts are not permitted to make extravagant allowances; nor may the persons go beyond their allowance.

XII. If the Hong merchants have any business, they must first see the Kwan-poo; if the salt-merchants have business, they must first see the Yen-yun-sze. If they have any very important affair on which they must see me, it is required that they all come in a body, or engage three or four of their number to see me. One person is by no means allowed to see me privately. The presents to servants and other fees are all entirely cut off. If any persons visit the Hong or salt merchants, and say that they are my relations or friends, the said merchants must immediately inform me. Let there be no disobedience, otherwise the offence will be examined into.

MALAY DEMONS AND WITCHES.

IN the eighth number of the Indo-Chinese Gleaner is a communication from a correspondent, who, after premising that the belief in witchcraft, evil spirits, charms, &c. prevails to an almost incredible extent among the Malays, and that their imaginary evil spirits, which are numerous, have all of them names either arbitrary or descriptive of their qualities, goes on to give an account of a species of these evil spirits vulgarly called Polong, a word, however, which the writer had not met with in any of their books, nor seen in any dictionary of their language. From this account it seems that the history of the Polong is very little known. They (the Malays) say that it is conveyed down from parents to children. According to their own laws it is death to keep one, therefore we cannot expect to know any thing more about it than from its influence. It is, as it seems, invisible, and is kept in a small earthen bottle with a neck, and a hole sufficient to admit a finger. He feeds upon human blood. The keeper cuts the tip of his

fore-finger about once or twice a week, either Friday or Monday night, till blood comes out, and he then puts it into the vessel, when the Polong sucks his fill. If the keeper neglects to feed him regularly, he comes out of his hole, and sucks the whole body to such a degree that the skin becomes all over black and blue. The Polong is very seldom kept by males, most generally by females. The woman, however ugly naturally, yet through keeping the Polong possesses surprising charms in her countenance to every beholder. If the person who keeps the Polong has a grudge against any one, or if asked for, or hired by another, he is let loose upon the man whom they wish to injure. The marks of possession are many. As soon as the Polong enters the man, he first falls down screaming, unconscious to himself and to every thing about him; sometimes he becomes speechless and like a dead man; sometimes there is no appearance of ailment, but his conversation is incoherent; sometimes he falls to beating all about him. Sometimes, as soon as he

enters into any one, the person possessed dies. The Polong always adheres exactly to his orders, and inflicts that punishment which is commanded him. Sometimes, though but seldom, it proves infectious, *etc.* in the following way, when the possessed falls down in a fit, and another asks him, saying, "What! what is the matter! what, have you got a Polong?" The person asking is affected, falls down insensible, and remains in the same state with the other till the Polong is expelled. A person seriously assured the writer that he had seen men and women, to the number of 20, thus affected at the same time. The people are so well acquainted with the power of this Polong, that as soon as they see any one suffering they send immediately for the physician, an adept in the occult sciences, who, with an air of importance and learning, administers some medicine, or more frequently makes use of a charm. He draws a fantastical figure, which, as he pretends, is that of the demon, and a print of which is given in the *Gleaner*, upon the inside of a white basin, pours water upon it, and gives the sufferer to drink. Then he takes hold of the end of the thumb (for fear the Polong should make his escape, that being the door by which he enters the body), and interrogates the man in the following manner: "Why do you torment him?" Then the Polong, speaking through the man, replies, "My *father* (for so he calls his keeper) has a grudge against him," &c. "Who is your father?" "—," "What has he told you to do?" "To eat heart and entrails," (general term for torment). Sometimes this evil spirit braves all means and refuses to speak. Sometimes he tells lies and confesses another name. When this soothsayer has prevailed against the evil spirit, and has heard his confession, he then tries to detect him (though a spirit yet he has dimensions and shape): he feels the body all over, for he lurks between skin and flesh. Sometimes he finds him in an arm, sometimes behind the ear, to the touch as large as the above. Now for his expulsion. The soothsayer first extracts an oath of him that he has spoken nothing but truth, and also that he will never come again. Sometimes the physician has such power that he sends him back to torment his own keeper.

In the ninth number of the same miscellany is an account, by the same writer, of another imaginary being, called by the Malays the *Penangalan*, a derivative from a Malay word signifying to "pull out," and which means "that which is pulled out." From this account it appears that the *Penangalan* is not properly, either witch or evil spirit. It is described as a human head, neck, and intestines adjusted to, and, as it were, inhabiting the trunk and limbs of a human body, but endowed with the power of extricating itself from this body (which is always that of a woman), and of returning to it again at its own pleasure. It delights, when unobserved, to make excursions through the air from the body it usually resides in, for the purpose of preying upon all manner of garbage, which, it seems, is its favourite food, and of avenging itself upon those who may have given it offence by sucking their blood. The person (whatever one may call her) who is made up of these separable parts—of *Penangalan*, that is—and the body it usually inhabits, believes, it appears, in Satan, and, as might be presumed, practices witchcraft. She, moreover, lives in filthiness, going astray. Some further particulars of this curious composite being, together with a Malay story illustrative of its habits, are given by the writer. With these we will not offend the delicacy or try the patience of our readers; though they can hardly, perhaps, be considered as one whit more disgusting, or one whit more tedious, than those horrors of various kinds, those stupid and loathsome exhibitions of vampires, &c. which have been pretty generally and pretty warmly admired in our popular poems, plays, and novels. The Editor of the *Gleaner* makes a very sufficient apology for the introduction of them into his miscellany, in the observations upon his correspondent's communication which are given below. In addition to his correspondent's remark, "that the unenlightened mind easily receives an impression from whatever is proposed to it" (meaning, it is presumed, easily *believes* whatever is proposed to it), it may be observed, that the belief of the unenlightened mind is never so readily yielded to imposture; never has the tyrannous imagination of uninstructed man so absolutely the better of his rea-

son, as when the absurdity attempted to be imposed upon him is associated with images of terror.

“ Our correspondent's idea that the unenlightened mind easily receives an impression from ‘ whatever is proposed to it,’ could not have a stronger confirmation than the fact, that conceptions savouring of such inconceivable degeneracy are entertained by creatures retaining a single claim to the human shape and to the character of man. Whatever degree of scepticism may have been entertained by thoughtful men on the subject of witchcraft and magic in general, we certainly think there is not much danger of any one's credulity being strengthened by this relation. The nature of our work requires that we should keep nothing back which tends to illustrate the intellectual

and moral character of the Indo-Chinese nations, however humbling to human nature the illustration may be : otherwise we should have made an apology, to our fair readers especially, for inserting a piece which may be considered offensive to delicacy. The lower the human intellect is sunk in ignorance, and the more coarse and degrading its imaginations are, so much the more pressing is the call on the well-wishers of our species to extend the boon of knowledge, religion, and civilization to those who possess them not, to those whose very *minds* seem identified with the ‘ *dunghill*,’ cast in the mould of that personal filthiness in which their days are passed, and extinguished by those habits of dormant indolence in which the Malays are known to waste their life.”

DESCRIPTION OF A BRITISH SHIP OF WAR.

By PELIMA TALAWA.

THIS is a genuine landsman's description of a ship, with an epitome of the comforts of a sea-voyage. The original paper from which it is translated was composed by Pelima Talawa, one of the Kandyan dessaves engaged in the late rebellion in Ceylon, and the highest in rank among several chiefs, who, for safe custody, after being reduced in the field, have been conveyed as state prisoners to the Mauritius. It was given by him to one of the lieutenants of H.M.'s ship Liverpool at the end of their voyage. Its diverting simplicity arises from a previous ignorance of nautical affairs, a purity and perfection of ignorance that may be accounted for by recollecting, that before the interior of Ceylon was united under the British government to the belt of maritime territory which European settlers had occupied, the Kandians were islanders without a coast.

Observations on the Voyage.

On the day that we came on board we were all astonished at the fabric and the magnificence of the ship. There are three very tall masts, with ropes innumerable, and many sails of a vast size. On the upper deck there are several boats and many guns. On the middle deck the guns were still more numerous on both

sides, and all ready for use. Here are the cabins occupied by the captain, which in cleanliness and beauty are like the rooms of a royal palace. There is on this deck, besides, a pump to clear the water out of the lower part of the ship, and a kitchen. The lower deck contains the cabins of the second officers of the ship, and many others, with a window in each : there is also a pump on this deck. Sailing is, I believe, not only pleasant, but very healthy to those who are accustomed to it. The sick appear to me to receive great benefit ; for persons labouring under great heat of body recover on the upper deck, or on the middle if their heat be only moderate ; and if they suffer under cold, they regain their health on the lower deck.

During our voyage, which lasted twenty-one days, we saw nothing but the sea and the heavens, which seemed of an immense extent. The working of the ship continued day and night without intermission. Both the officers and common sailors displayed the greatest activity, and their goodness and kind-hearted behaviour were more than I can describe.

Sailing to an unknown country, without any sight of land, is a most surprising