

THE ASIATIC JOURNAL

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FOR
British India and its Dependencies :

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system has been put so happily into operation.

Of one of them,* holding as he still does that station in society so well merited by his talents and services, it would be difficult in me, without indecency, to offer more than that tribute which it would be injustice to withhold. To his perfect knowledge of the native habits and character, and his extensive acquaintance with their institutes, it was owing that the jury system was thus so skilfully "adapted even to their prejudices," and so deeply rooted in their affections, as to have had the consequences in which we now rejoice.

Of his lamented colleague,† a life devoted, I might almost say sacrificed, to the anxious discharge of his public duties, will surely justify a public testimony of recollection and regret.

You all knew him to be amiable in society, warm and active in his friendships, ardently alive to honourable feelings, and incapable of compromising with meanness; but it is for us who witnessed here his persevering diligence, his unwearied patience, and his anxiety for truth and justice, to appreciate the public loss; the loss of an able, a learned, and a benevolent judge, inaccessible to favour or to fear.

To succeed to duties so discharged, and by such men, imposes upon me and my colleague an awful responsibility, and we, I am sure, both appreciate its importance. We trust that we shall always feel an honest confidence in the consciousness of intending to do right; and we look to your cordial support and co-operation in the discharge of our several duties. Mutually assisted and assisting, we shall, I hope, proceed satisfactorily in the course so happily prepared by our predecessors in this court, and effect by our joint exertions, what I am sure is our common purpose, the furtherance of public justice.

I will trespass but one moment farther upon your valuable time, but it is in a matter of public concern, on which we have just now received reports, and in which you will be pleased with the result.

I advert to the healthy condition of the prisons in the southern provinces of this island. By the official returns it appears, that out of 270 prisoners in the several

districts of Matara, Galle, Caltura, and Colombo, there are but twelve persons affected by any kind of disease, and of these but two (patients with the small-pox, and removed of course to a distance from the goals), who labour under any very serious disorder.

This small proportion of sick, under every consideration of climate and season, is truly surprising, particularly when we know how easily sickness may be counterfeited or even induced, to escape from labour; and it may justly challenge comparison for ours with the best regulated prisons, under the most vigilant superintendence of our active and benevolent countrymen at home.

I shall no longer detain you than to state the numbers.

Sick in Colombo 9 out of 130 prisoners.	
Caltura 0.....	19 do.
Galle ..2.....	59 do.
Matara..1.....	62 do.

12 270

Being a proportion of little more than one sick person out of 20 prisoners.

It appears from an official abstract which has been published in the Ceylon Government Gazette, that 62,660 persons had been vaccinated in the different districts of that island during the year 1819.

DEATHS.

Feb. 3. At Colombo, Mrs. Williams, who had been superintendant of the Female Asylum there from the period the island has been in the possession of the English. By the death of this good and amiable lady, the poor have been deprived of a humane benefactor. Some few years previous to her decease, Government conferred upon her an annuity for life, on account of her inestimable services...
March 2. At Hambantotte, the infant daughter of Capt. Driberg, 1st Ceylon regt.

PENANG.

Loss of the Harriet.—By the arrival of the ship Minerva (Ballard) at Penang, a letter has been received from Capt. Charles H. Bean, dated Acheen, 2d instant, announcing the loss of his ship, the Harriet, in the Surat passage. Capt. Bean speaks highly of the kind treatment he has met with from the king of Acheen; and adds that the king is to send a brig with the government dispatches, passengers, and convicts, to Beacoolen, in a few days. Some further interesting particulars will be found in the following Extract of a letter from the commander of the ship Sandanny (Lindsay) dated 2d November, 1819.

"Unfavourable weather prevented our leaving Acheen before the 25th ult., on which day, whilst in the act of getting

* The hon. Sir Alexander Johnston, late chief justice, and first member of his Majesty's council, at whose recommendation and according to whose plan the trial by jury was introduced into Ceylon, in Nov. 1811, and the right of sitting upon juries, instead of being confined as it is in other parts of India to Europeans, was extended under some modifications to every native upon the island; the effects of which is to make the natives themselves participate in the administration of justice amongst their own countrymen.

† Sir W. Coke, the pulse justice of the supreme court, who died at Trincomalee in 1818, while on circuit through that part of the island.

under weigh, I received a letter from Capt. Bean of the *Harriet*, mentioning the unfortunate circumstance of his ship having been wrecked on the evening preceding in the Surat passage; in consequence of which, instead of proceeding on to Bengal, I resolved to repair instantly to his assistance. We anchored on the following morning close under a point in the entrance of the Surat passage, and sent our boats to the wreck. We succeeded this day in getting on board the whole of the officers, passengers, and crew, with a small quantity of cargo. The night proving boisterous, with very heavy squalls and hard rain, rendered it totally impossible for the boats to remain in the heavy surf, which it occasioned, alongside the wreck. On the following morning the boats were sent to the wreck, at day light, in charge of her own officers, and those of the *Samdanny*; but finding that the Malays had taken possession of her, one of the boats was dispatched for arms whilst the others laid under a point of land. Accordingly were sent two awivels, with a number of small arms. The awivels, upon the boat's return, were fixed in the long boat, by which means the wreck was in a very short time cleared of the Malays, when the boats' crews got on board, and found several Malays stretched upon the deck, some killed, and others wounded, the latter of whom were delivered over to the king of Achcen. During this day the Malays on shore were gradually collecting on the sides of the hills and rocks, until the whole of the ground between two points of land in a bay, of which they formed the entrance, was completely covered with at least 5,000 men and boys. They attempted to board several times, but were gallantly repulsed by the crews in possession. During this day, work was carried on as if the vessel was secured in an English harbour, which I must say reflects the highest credit on the captain, officers and crew of the *Harriet*, inasmuch as it shewed that there must have been most excellent subordination in the ship to insure such obedience on the part of the crew to their officers, and at a time, too, when the foremast men generally give themselves up entirely to pillage, and when also it is usually supposed, particularly amongst lascars, that such misfortunes level all distinctions, and that then all authority ceases. Thus matters continued for four days, during which time as much of the cargo as possibly could be got at, was saved; in fact, no more could have been preserved, as the vessel by this time was covered with water, and beating so violently against the rocks, in consequence of the weather becoming more severe, that the people could scarcely stand on the decks, much

less work. Capt. Bean then abandoned the wreck to the Malays, and in less than two minutes afterwards her decks were covered with men as full as they could crowd. We then returned with the *Samdanny* to Achcen, and as the whole of the cargo saved was damaged by salt water, an auction was made of it; and really I think it sold better than if it had been in good condition. This was the first auction ever held at Achcen.

"Capt. Bean's account of the misfortune is this. On entering the Surat passage, as directed by Horsburgh, backed the fore-top-sail, but finding the ship going a-head, he backed the main-top-sail, and finally laid all a-back; but as the ship was still forging a-head, on to the weathermost shore, and if kept laying a-back must fall on to a point of land which was somewhat on her lee bow, he filled and made all sail to give the vessel good head way, in order to tack, for which there was plenty of room, though the vessel was nearly scrubbing along the sides of the rocks of the point mentioned above; but this point formed one of the extremes of the bay in which she was lost, and by weathering this point, gave Capt. Bean sufficient room and time, before he could reach the rocks. He was perfectly in the right to act as he did; in fact, I should suppose in such a case he had no alternative. He succeeded in getting the vessel nearly round, when the wind changed and drove her on the fore-mentioned point; at this moment she rebounded off, and no time was lost in bracing the yards in such a direction as to cause the effect of the sails to be the most advantageous; but another puff came, and drove her against the rocks again; an anchor was cut away directly, the puff took her, but it was so steep that the anchor did not take ground before the vessel was, as just mentioned, against the rocks, close to her former situation; immediately the stream anchor was carried out, by which the vessel was hove off, and an eddy wind round the mountains came in her favour, which carried her out nearly to mid passage; and so sure were Capt. Bean and his officers of her safety, that he cut the cable; but almost instantly a squall took her aback, and having no room to back or wear off, he cut away another anchor, but before she could be brought up, she drove once more on shore in a situation whence it was impossible in such weather and heavy swell to move her. This was a most extraordinary hole she got into; her driver-boom in one end, and the jib-boom on the other, were amongst the trees on the rocks; it appeared as if it were made to fit the ship; for a longer vessel could not possibly get in; and I really think that was it the *Samdanny*,

she might have lashed with her bows against the steep rocks in both ends of her and be afloat. Capt. Bean and crew remained by the vessel till the following morning, at the dawn of which, finding her full of water, he quitted the wreck, himself and passengers proceeding to Achén for assistance; the officers and crew left in charge of the vessel were directed to land their baggage, and what cargo could be saved, in a sandy bay close by. Capt. Bean meeting the Samdanny working up, came on board, previous to which all the assistance that the king of Achén could render had already reached the vessel. Shortly afterwards, we anchored, and sent every assistance, as previously mentioned.

"In addition to this, it must be acknowledged that the king of Achén sent the most prompt assistance in *his power* to the wreck; but as it will happen in all such cases, the people whom he ordered shewed an inclination to participate in the plunder, which at times it was impossible to prevent; but no blame can be attached to the king, as his motives were good; in short, he did every thing that he possibly could in his present situation.

"The most deplorable part of the event is the sufferings of the lady passengers, which consisted of Mrs. Bean, Mrs. Smith, and Mrs. Brown. These ladies were on shore two nights, exposed to very stormy and rainy weather, without any shelter but a tent made with boat's sails, erected in a hurry by the officers of the Harriet. Mrs. Bean had an infant child, and Mrs. Brown had four young children, scarcely more than infants. They are all now on board the Samdanny, together with the captain, officers, and crew, and the rest of the passengers, who will proceed with us to Calcutta."—*Penang Gaz.* 20th Nov.

SINGAPORE.

Coin Discovered.—In the Calcutta Journal of 14th Feb. last is the following notice respecting the Coin, which, as mentioned in our last number under this head, was lately dug up at the Fort of Singapore.

The coin discovered last year in digging under the walls of the very ancient Fort of Singapore, and which has been mentioned in some late papers, has reached this presidency, it having been intrusted to Lieut. Henderson of this establishment, who has arrived in Calcutta from the eastward.

This highly curious relic of antiquity is in a state of entire preservation; the characters uneffaced; and unless it may be said to have lost some portion of its metallic gravity, there is scarcely any dif-

ference in it from the same description of Chinese money of even a late coinage.

It appears by the inscription that it was struck off by the Chinese government during the reign of Hwang-tsung,* an Emperor of the Sung dynasty, also called Nan-sung, or Ta-sung, who died A. D. 1125. He was contemporary with our Henry the first.

Lieut. Ralfe, acting engineer at Singapore, discovered this coin, with several others, digging at the remains of the old wall or mound which surrounded the once populous and large city of Singapore, but of which the only vestige is the wall in question.

The other colus immediately crumbled to dust on being touched after their exposure to the air, but the one at present in Calcutta remains, as we have before stated, uninjured by time, and its Chinese characters are in the highest preservation.

We understand it is to be forwarded to Gen. Hardwicke, of the H. C. Artillery, by whom we have no doubt it will be kindly offered to the inspection of the curious in antiquities.

The last arrivals from the eastward brought us letters from Singapore of the date of January extending up to the 10th of that month; from one of these we have the following satisfactory account of this new station.

I could live here as long as my destiny would compel me to remain in a tropical climate. Our cantonment-spot is now perfectly cleared of every kind of tree, and fine roads made through it, the dimensions of which are a mile in length by about 3-5ths of a mile in breadth to the bottom of the hill. All the public buildings are finished, being all very prettily built with Penang deal: I am just now living in one of the four. The Government house is to be built on the top of the hill which has been cleared away for the occasion.

You may judge of the extent of our China population by this fact; their camp is half a mile long, containing a number of good wooden houses. It lies south of the cantonment, from which it is divided by a river, over which there are thirty-five wherries constantly going to and fro.

At the other end of the cantonment is a Buggese village, just as large as that of the Chinamen, divided also by a small rivulet, over which a bridge has been erected. A road has also been made round the hill extending nearly four miles.

I was quite astonished at the appearance of this place; it exceeded by far my most sanguine expectations. We have

* The name appears to be thus written in the MS. but whether it is Hwang-tsung or Hwang-tsung, cannot be precisely determined.