

THE
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et of a Letter from the Ship Nearchus.

The *Nearchus* sailed from Huasco on the coast of South America on the 26th of May, bound to Calcutta, and the same day at 9 o'clock, when distant from the shore thirty-five miles, felt a violent shock of earthquake, which lasted nearly ten minutes. From thence had a pleasant passage of 88 days to the China Sea, latitude 12 44 North, and longitude 140 East. There we suddenly lost the wind, which was succeeded by a calm of several days, and light airs from the E. This appeared to indicate the approach of the N. E. monsoon, and having no provisions for a direct passage to Calcutta, we put into Manilla for a supply, which we obtained, and sailed again on the 22d May, intending to take the passage by the way of Sooloo and Macassar. On the 24th of the same month, we were off the islands of Bassulan and Macassar, and were there becalmed three days.

On the 27th at day-light in the morning, observed a fleet of Malay prows, in great number, full of men, bearing down upon the ship; made every preparation to meet them; they however did not attack, but lay to, a short distance astern, and three other very large prows joined them from Bassulan, as well as small ones coming out of every little creek and bay. It was as evidently plain to every one on board, they intended an attack, and only waited for night or reinforcements which came every minute joining them. We

were by no means prepared to make a very formidable resistance against such numbers, when fortunately, just as they were beginning to make sail and pull towards us, a breeze sprang up which enabled us to get out of their reach, though not out of their sight, till the following day. In standing to the northward to try some other passage, on the 3d June, being then off the Island Negros, our fore and mizen sky-sail masts were struck with lightning, shattering and tearing all in its descent down to the deck, so as to render them useless; reduced to this state of distress, we were obliged to return to Manilla to put the ship in a fit state to prosecute the voyage. Here we met with considerable detention, and did not sail from Manilla Bay till the 23d of August. The S. W. monsoon being then at its height, an eastern passage by the way of St. Barbadeno, Dampier and Timor Straits further prolonged our voyage. In the north part of Dampier's Straits spoke two London whalers, eight months out, the *Emily* and *Cape Packet*, all well.
