

NARRATIVE

OF
VOYAGES AND TRAVELS,
IN THE
NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN HEMISPHERES:
COMPRISING
THREE VOYAGES ROUND THE WORLD;
TOGETHER WITH A
VOYAGE OF SURVEY AND DISCOVERY,
IN THE
PACIFIC OCEAN AND ORIENTAL ISLANDS.

.....
BY AMASA DELANO.
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CHAPTER XI.

Occurrences at Macao and Canton—Passage from thence to the Isle of France
—Remarks upon the Isle of France.

ON our arrival at Macao, I found that most of the European and American vessels had sailed from Canton. One remained, the ship *Eliza*, from New-York, commanded by captain William R. Stewart, who had come from the island of *Massa Fuero* with seal-skins. She had been a long time on her voyage. Captain Palmer, who started from the United States with her, had left her previous to her arrival in China. Captain Stewart wished to find a market for his skins; and after I became acquainted with him, we concluded to go to Canton together, leaving his ship in the harbour of *Larksbay*. I had come to Macao for the purpose of getting a passage home to America, and thought that the *Eliza* would afford me one opportunely.

It was in March when we were in Canton. A scene, very different from what we expected, presented itself to captain Stewart. The Chinese government, finding that he had come to Canton without his ship, and that he had left her below, out of the reach of the laws of the empire, caused the house, where he was, to be surrounded by a great number of soldiers, and charged him with the breach of an established and indispensable usage in coming to Canton to learn the state of the market, and take advantage of his information, while his ship was not liable to pay the common perquisites for a place of anchorage, measurement, and other privileges. Compensation was demanded in money. This was the only alternative, which he could think of adopting. After much difficulty and anxiety, it was settled by the agency of our friend, the chief Dutch supercargo, that Stewart should be released for \$500. He thought himself fortunate to escape, with so little injury, from the storm, which he had raised. This is a warning to other mas-

ters of vessels not to subject themselves to the same penalties and embarrassments.

The price of seal-skins was very low at this time, and Stewart was not able to raise funds enough to load his ship on his own account, although she was small. He therefore took a freight of sugar for Ostend in Flanders.

It was now time for me to bring my accounts to a close with the English government for my service in the expedition under commodore McClure. The chief surpercargo of the English at Canton paid me two dollars a day, for two years. This was not the whole time, during which I had been employed by them. But the commodore had always granted me many privileges, and good opportunities to gain a profit in various parts of the expedition, and I felt no disposition to complain of my wages.

The Panther and the Endeavour sailed from Bombay in August 1790. I have their journals complete from that date to July 1793, the period of their return. The most interesting parts I have already selected for the reader, and shall now leave them, although a few more articles of value might be taken, did my limits permit their introduction.

Having agreed for a freight, captain Stewart ordered his ship to Canton. He sold his cargo of seal-skins, 33,000, for only \$16,000, so reduced was the price for this article. The Dutch gentleman, Mr. Van Braam, who freighted the ship, knew that captain Stewart was not a regularly bred seaman, and wished that I should go in her to Ostend. For a small consideration, as I desired very much to get home, I took the command of her, by agreement with Stewart. We had the sugar put on board, and on the 10th of April, we sailed for Ostend. As we were to pass Macao, we took provisions on board for the Panther and Endeavour, having purchased them at Canton, and delivering them in the Tupa. For this service I received \$200.

I soon discovered that the Eliza was a very leaky ship, and extremely dull in sailing. We were late in the north east monsoon, when we left Canton, and at Pulo-Condore, in latitude $8^{\circ} 30'$ north, we met the south west monsoon. After this we had head winds, calms, and flattering weather, till we were to the north east extreme of Banca, in 2° north latitude, when we had a north west, and west wind, which carried us to the straits of Sunda. After taking the

wind ahead off Pulo-Condore, we endeavoured to keep the western coast best on board. We worked over to Pulo-Timoan in latitude 3° north, then stretched off eastward among the Anambas Islands, and coasted, or beat to the southward, through them, till we reached the equator. The soundings were regular, from thirty five to twenty five fathoms, and clear sandy bottom. In page 162, I have said, in regard to the navigation of this sea, that even sandy bottom is dangerous. That remark was made while I was in the southerly part of it, and must be limited to the coasts of Borneo, Billiton, Banca, Sumatra, Malaya, and other shore-soundings. The mid-way passage is sandy bottom, and the sea is interspersed with sandy islands, small and low, while it is still apparently safe to sail among them in every direction. We landed on several of them, and seldom failed to procure plenty of fine green turtles. Saddle-Island is a good place for them.

It must be remembered that the northern Anambas, and the great Natunas, are inhabited, and must not be approached with boats, on account of the treachery and cruelty of the Malays.

In making this passage, we went within two miles of the north east point of Banca, between that and Tree-Rock, and steered for its south east point, which we passed four miles distant. The soundings were regular all the way, from eighteen to twenty-five fathoms, except off the south east point, where they were irregular, and the ground broken. The water was sometimes as shoal as seven fathoms, and then immediately would be sixteen or eighteen fathoms, large coral rocks. The whole of this passage appeared to be safe, provided a ship would run directly from the north east part of Banca, giving it a birth of one or two miles, to the south east point of the same, giving it a birth of four miles. The course will then be nearest south-south-west. Should you keep further to the eastward, after you pass the north east point, as I did on a succeeding voyage, you will find shoals and reefs in great numbers on the western side of the Isle of Sal, or Salt Island. Should you get to the eastward of the passage, first described, I should advise you to go eastward of Salt Island, between that and the next large island east of it, which is called Middle Island, where the passage is tolerable. Eastward of Middle Island, the sea is filled with shoals, until you get eastward of Billiton. I have passed between Middle Island and Billiton, and can say, that it is hardly possible for more

dangers to be found any where. I have also been through four passages between Borneo and Banca. The one next to Banca is the safest; and the one next to Borneo is the second in point of safety. The passage by the straits of Banca is most frequented, but in my opinion it is not as good as the passage eastward of it. Its navigation is intricate, and you are liable to be attacked by the Malay pirates, who haunt the straits. A small ship must not encounter this danger, if it can be conveniently avoided. I once saw a fleet of prows come out of a small harbour, or bay, on the north east side of the island, and pass across our fore-foot, at the distance of a mile and a half, sailing in a line one ahead of another, with the wind directly after them. As soon as they had passed our bow, they hauled under our lee, and formed nearly a semi-circle round us. This manœuvre did not please me, and I ordered two six pound guns to be fired with round shot at the foremost prows. This was done, and repeated a few times, when the Malays altered their course, and left us free. I have no doubt that they had bad intentions toward us. Had we not fired at them in season, and, as I have reason to believe, hit some of them, we should no doubt have found ourselves in trouble from their treacherous attacks and manœuvres.

I have long been convinced that a ship, not strongly armed, should never let a Malay fleet of prows approach very near. It is different with Europeans or Americans. With them, it would be a mark of ignorance, or fear, to waste ammunition as soon as there should be the least chance of hitting a vessel of the enemy; but with the Malays, fire as soon as you can reach them, even if you are not near enough to do them any injury.

After beating in the China Seas for two months, we got through the islands, and as far as the straits of Sunda. Filling up our water, and supplying ourselves with wood, we proceeded to the Isle of France, where we arrived the 10th of July, worn down with fatigue in working at the pumps. In all my life at sea, I never knew a ship leak at such a rate as ours did, during the whole passage from China to the Isle of France. The two pumps sometimes gave fourteen hundred strokes an hour, and seldom less than a thousand. Our sugar was wet, and a large part of it dissolved and mingled with the water, which was pumped out of the hold. From this, or some other cause, we were surrounded with an im-