

## REVIEWS.

*Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the Chinese Seas and Japan, performed in the years 1852, 1853, and 1854, under the command of Commodore M. C. Perry, U. S. Navy, by order of the Government of the United States. Compiled from the original notes and Journals of Commodore Perry and his Officers, at his request and under his supervision. By Francis L. Hawks, D.D., LL. D. Washington: A. O. P. Nicholas, Printer, 1855.*

When Columbus set sail, in 1492, on his memorable voyage of discovery, he was specially stimulated and encouraged in his venturesome expedition by the conviction that the Asiatic continent stretched away so far eastward from Europe into the unexplored ocean, that it could be most easily reached by sailing westward, and so, as it were, meeting it on the way. The special points, accordingly, towards which the great discoverer of this New World aimed were Cathay and the Island of Cipango: in other words, China and Japan. It is needless to say that an authentic knowledge of these countries is of an older date than the recent expeditions of England and the United States: known as they have undoubtedly been, by means of the narratives and travellers' tales of such old authors as Marco Polo, the Venetian, our English Mandeville, and Mendez Pinto. With the last of these travelled for a time the catholic Xavier; though such good company has not saved that gasconading Portuguese from the title of "Prince of liars!" Nevertheless, the narrative compiled by Dr. Hawks from the intelligent notes and observations of the American officers, lifts the veil from scenes hitherto altogether hid from European or American eyes. Dutch, English, Russian, and American adventurers have attempted to penetrate the mystery by turns; but at best, it has been but a mariner's glimpse we have had of the "Golden Zipango" of Marco Polo. Nor does even this American expedition reveal to us greatly more than the all-important fact that the gates have at length been opened, and that this strange scene of an old civilization, in some respects more remarkable than even that of China, is about to disclose all its quaint and picturesque inner life to the outer barbarian world.

Europeans have learned to look without surprise, on the evidences of a civilization far older than their own, which China can boast of; on gun-powder, the compass, with its magnetic needle, wood-engraving, and above all, the printing press, only re-discovered for Europe, if not derived from the older use in Cathay. But in the Japanese we see an eastern people, not only similarly gifted, and working out a