

LONDON, AUGUST 26.

LORD AMHERST'S VOYAGE TO CHINA.

Arrived at Spithead, on Sunday morning se'ennight, in the ship *Cæsar*, Capt. Taylor, his Excellency Lord Amherst. His Lordship sailed from Portsmouth on the 9th of February, 1816, on an Embassy to the Court of Pekin, on board His Majesty's Frigate *Alceste*, Capt. Murray Maxwell, accompanied by the *Lyra* brig of war, Capt. Basil Hall, and the General Hewitt Indianan, Captain Campbell.

His Lordship touched at Madeira, Rio Janeiro, the Cape of Good Hope and Batavia; and the voyage was extraordinary for its rapidity, the ships having traversed 14,000 miles in 92 days under sail. In the beginning of July the Embassy arrived at the coast of China, and proceeded up the Yellow Sea: having being joined by Sir George Staunton, at Great Lemma; Sir George having been sent down to say the Embassy would be received with every attention. On the 9th August the Embassy disembarked safely in the Gulf of Pe Cheli, which is not far distant from the Capital. Whilst on the journey every effort was made by the Mandarins to induce his Excellency to comply with the Tartar ceremony of *Ka-ton*—which was resisted on the ground of the precedent of Lord Macartney; but every demonstration of respect consistent with the dignity of his Sovereign, and the honour of his nation, was freely offered by his Excellency. The degrading ceremony of kneeling and knocking the head (the literal expression in Chinese) nine times against the ground, is not only demanded from the Ambassadors of all tributary Kings (as every Sovereign of the world is indiscriminately called) when in the Imperial presence, but likewise on receiving any message from the Emperor, and on broken victuals being sent to them from his table: and this was actually submitted to by the Dutch in 1795. The Chinese for obvious reasons, were extremely anxious for the performance of this ceremony, by a British Ambassador; and threats, flatteries, and lies in abundance, were used, in order to induce compliance, but all in vain. A most extraordinary scene took place at the palace of Yeuen-Min Yeuen which, with many other singular circumstances attending the departure from Pekin, and the journey of four months through the celestial Empire, will very soon be laid before the Public. The Emperor, a man of impetuous and capricious disposition, increased by a habit of constant inebriation, seemed, in his cooler moments, afraid of the consequence of his abrupt dismissal of the Embassy, as appeared by his sending after it, to request some exchange of presents, and

expressing himself satisfied of the respectful feelings of the King of England, who had sent so far to pay him homage, attributing the whole blame of the affair to the unmannerly conduct of the Ambassador, who refused to knock head, as in duty bound, and according to the common rules of politeness. The Embassy on the tour through China, experienced the most perfect respect. The *Alceste* and *Lyra*, after landing the Embassy, were employed in Surveys; the former taking the Gulph of Leatory and Corea, the latter the south-western coast of that Gulf. The *Alceste* went as far as the junction of the great wall of China with the sea, which was seen from the ship. Both ships joined company at Che-a-Tou, or Zea-a-Tou Islands. The true positions of the coasts and islands of Chinese Tartary, and much useful hydrographical knowledge, were obtained, whereby former errors are corrected. Steering afterwards for the Corean shore, they found former geographical descriptions of it miserably defective; and an archipelago of Islands, hitherto unknown to exist were discovered. Many were christened with particular names, and correct Charts made of the true position of the whole. The ships then proceeded to the southward of Japan, and arrived at the Leon Kicon Islands. More hydrographical knowledge was obtained, and an intimate acquaintance formed with the natives, of whom hitherto, little was known, and themselves scarce knowing any thing about the rest of the world. At Grand Leuchen, the Chief of this kingdom of islands, the ships refitted, among a race of people as extraordinary for their diminutive size as for their general character. They are of great antiquity in and considerable civilization—possess much of the rigid, natural jealousy and reserve of their neighbours, the Japanese and Chinese. On further acquaintance, they were found an interesting people; in the highest degree kind and hospitable; and after a stay of six weeks, both parties separated with evident proofs of mutual regret. We are informed, by good authority, that Capt. Basil Hall (of the *Lyra*) is preparing an account of this island and people; as also a general history of scientific objects connected with the voyage; which will be enriched with charts and engravings. From his superior intelligence on hydrographical and scientific subjects in general, a work from his hands cannot fail of being highly interesting.

The *Alceste* and *Lyra* arrived at the mouth of the Tigris in November, and were treated with every indignity by the Viceroy of Canton, who refused a pass for the ships to enter the river, as had been granted to the *Lion*, on the former occasion; thus attempting to cut off the

supply of fresh water and provisions, which could only be brought on board by stealth after dark; and various other insults were offered. Capt. Maxwell justly considering that the honour of the flag must suffer by a tame submission, proceeded up without a pass. The mandarines strongly manned the forts (containing 110 cannon) at the Bocca Tigris, and sent out a Message, as the ship advanced, that they would sink her (the *Alceste*), if she attempted to pass through. She nevertheless pushed on, and a warm firing commenced from the forts, and their war junks, which was immediately returned by the *Alceste*, which getting within pistol shot of their largest fort, a well aimed broadside was poured in, which laid a number sprawling, and fairly drove the rest heels over head out of the battery; the ship now proceeded up to her safe and proper anchorage, followed, but unmolested, by the war junks. Next day the Viceroy (having been now treated in the right way) sent down a high Mandarin to congratulate the arrival of the Captain in the river, this Mandarin having passed Captain M. in his way down, who, in the mean time, had gone up to Canton, to demand farther reparation, for the insult offered to the King's ship.

On Tuesday, the 28th January, His Majesty's ship *Alceste* and *Lyra* sailed from Macao Roads; the former having on board his Excellency and suite, returning from his mission from the Court of Pekin. On the 3d February, the *Alceste* arrived at Manilla, and the *Lyra* on the 5th, when she was sent with his Excellency's dispatches to Bengal.

The *Alceste* was proceeding into the Straits of Sunda, through the Straits of Gaspar when she unfortunately struck on a coral reef, on the morning of the 18th February, and shortly filled. No lives were lost on this occasion. The Ambassador and his suite, with some of the crew, were immediately put on shore on the island of Pulo Leat, a short distance from the wreck.

It was decided after Lord Amherst's remaining one night on the Island, that his Lordship and suite should attempt to make Batavia (distant 200 miles) in two boats attended by Lieutenant Hoppner, and Messrs. Maine, Cooke, and Blair, and they arrived after four days of much fatigue and hardship, from want of water at Batavia. His Lordship, without a moment's delay, dispatched the Company's cruiser *Ternote*, with Mr. Ellis, the Secretary of Embassy, volunteer, to the assistance of those left behind. She beat against wind and current for a considerable time; and at last got sight of the Island. The party left obtained some provisions, which had floated up, and by careful management they made

shift to live digging, some February to this period the ges of the nei ter plunderir blockaded th a very few re bay. In an maining boat ing where va Hay; some drowned. I were rather east. The in his gener well as near high admirai played coolr under a sudd a combinati ficient to ha mind. At taken up to and Suite, v the *Alceste* St. Helena England.

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