

## COAST OF CEYLON DURING THE PEARL FISHERY.

All were confident : and the crowds on the beach looked as joyous for the night, as if the work was going on for their sakes. A city of bowers seemed to have sprung up like Jonah's gourd, or like the tabernacles which, in old times of Jewish festivals, made Jerusalem a leafy paradise for a short season of every year.—Talipot tents and bamboo huts dressed with greens and flowers were clustered around the sordid dwellings on the sands. Throngs of merchants and craftsmen, black, tawney, and white, with their variety of customs, mingled in this great fair.—The polisher of jewels was there with his glittering treasure. The pearl-driller looked to his needles, and pearl-dust, while awaiting on his low seat the materials on which he was to employ his skill. The bald, yellow-mantled priest of Buddho passed on amidst obeisances in one place, as did the Catholic pastor, in another. The white-vested Mahomedan, the turbaned Hindoo, the swathed Malay merchants, exhibited their stores, or looked passively on the gay scene. The quiet Dutchman from the south sent a keen glance through the market in quest of precious stones in the hands of an ignorant or indolent vender. The haughty Candian abated his fierceness, and stepped out of the path of the European while the stealthy Cingalese was in no one's path, but won his way like a snake in the tall grass of a jungle. The restless lessees of the banks, meanwhile, were flitting near the boats, now ranged in a long row, each with its platform, ropes, and pulleys; each with its sharkbinder, its pilot, its commander, its crew of ten, and its company of divers. The boat lights were being kindled, one by one, and scattering a thousand sparkles over the rippling tide. It was just on the stroke of ten and the signal gun was all that was waited for. The buzz of voices fell into a deep silence as the expectation became more intense. Those who were wont to make the heavens their clock and the stars its hour-hand, looked up to mark the precise inclination of the Southern Cross; while those who found an index in the flow of the tide, paced the sands from water-mark to water-mark. Yet more turned their faces southward towards the dark outline of hill and forest that rose on the horizon, and watched for the land breeze. It came, at first, in light puffs, which scarcely bowed the rushes around the lagoons, or made a stir among the stalks in the rice ground. Moment by moment it strengthened till the sails of the boats began to bulge, and every torch and faggot of cocoa-nut leaves on the beach slanted its forks of flame towards the sea, as if to indicate to the voyagers their way. Then the signal gun boomed, its wreath of smoke curled lazily upward, and dispersed itself in clear air; while a shout, in which every variety of voice was mingled, seemed to chase the little fleet into the distance. The shouting ceased, amidst the anxiety of watching the clusters of receding lights, which presently looked as if they had parted company with those in the sky, and had become a degree less pure by their descent. Then rose the song of the dancing-girls, as they stood grooped, each with a jeweled arm, withdrawn from beneath her mantle, and her jet-black hair bound with strings of pearl. Mixed with their chaunt, came the mutterings and gabblings of the charmers, who remained on shore, contorting their bodies more vehemently than would have been safe on any footing less stable than terra firma.

## THE PARTING.

Farewell ! I've broke my chain at last,  
My boat is ling'ring on the shore ;  
The bitterness of death is past,  
Nor love, nor scorn, shall wring me more.  
I loved, how deeply loved—oh, Heaven !  
To thee, to thee the pang is known :  
Proud woman, be thy crime forgiven ;  
Mine be the shame, the grief alone.

The madd'ning hour when first we met,  
The glance, the smile, the vow you gave—  
The last wild moment—haunt me yet ;  
I feel they'll haunt me to my grave.  
Down, wayward heart, no longer heave :  
Thou idle tear, no longer flow ;  
And may that Heaven she dared deceive,  
Forgive, as I forgive her now.

Too lovely—Oh, thou loved, farewell !  
Though parting rends my bosom's strings,  
This hour we part :—the grave shall tell  
The thought that to my spirit clings.  
Thou pain, above all other pain !  
Thou joy, all other joys above !  
Again, again, I feel thy claim,  
And die thy slave and martyr—Love !

## STEAM VESSELS OF WAR.

To render steamboats fit for war requires a better combination of construction and arming than our official people seem to be aware of. The Salamander at Sheerness, and the Dee, at Woolwich, will both be useless as men of war; the former has sufficient depth of hold, but is built so sharp that she will not stow more than ten days' fuel when her stores and goods are on board; the latter is sufficiently flat, but so shallow, that she also will stow little more than the former; and I understand those at Plymouth and Chatham are in the same predicament. A steam vessel of war ought neither to be so fine as a sailing vessel, nor, on the other hand, have the capacity of an Indianan; in the first case, she would not stow a sufficient quantity of fuel, and would draw too much water for most purposes—in the latter case she would not go with sufficient rapidity. Her floor would not be quite flat, but nearly so; its length should occupy half the vessel, the form of the bow and run should occupy the other half; the dimensions of the vessels built are thirty feet wide, and a hundred and sixty-five feet long; had they been twenty feet deep, and built in the above form, they would have been efficient vessels. I beg it to be fully understood, that I do not propose this as a vessel offering the least resistance in the water, but as one combining the requisites necessary for a steam man-of-war; such a vessel, when light, would draw little more than four feet water, without including the keel, whose depth should be according to circumstances, and quite independent of her construction. Her engines and boilers would immerse her between six and seven feet, and with about eight hundred tons of coals she would draw about fourteen, having her gun deck six feet above water at her greatest loading. With a two hundred horse engine, she would consume twenty tons of coals a day, and if they were good, with great care, something less. The shaft should be as close to the deck as possible, and the diameter of the wheels about twenty feet; when loaded, to fourteen, the paddle boards should shift up, so as to reduce the diameter of the wheels about fourteen feet; as the coal was expended, the boards should be shifted down till they came to their full extent: the coal boxes should be fitted in compartments, to receive water, in order that the wheels may remain sufficiently immersed as the coals were expended. The engine and boilers should be secured against shot, which has not been thought of in any of our vessels; no man will be found to attend them in their present state; men have long made up their minds on going into action, to be killed or wounded; but I never heard of any who are ready to be boiled. It has been proved that a combination of oak timber, iron plates, bales of linen, leather, or reams of paper, five feet thick, would protect the boiler and engine against an eighteen pound shot, and without that protection a steamboat is entirely useless in war. The wheels must, of course, be exposed; but if the masts, which are at present of cast, were