

THE
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AND

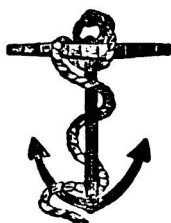
Naval Chronicle.

FOR 1851.

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ON SUBJECTS CONNECTED WITH

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THE FAULKLAND ISLANDS.

[The following useful information concerning the Falkland Islands forms a substance of a letter addressed by Mr. Henry Robert Wilson (Master of Swansea,) to Benjamin Hawes, Esq., M.P., which with the view of aiding the resources of those islands better known than they appear to be among our merchant shipping, is offered to them through the medium of *our Nautical Magazine*. In the May number of this work, the great advantages of Port Stanley are pointed out, (page 275,) and directions for making and entering that port appear in our volume for 1843.—Ed. N.M.]

REVIEWS to the issue of charts from the Admiralty by their agent to be mercantile mariners, the charts used were generally so faulty and incorrect that a notion prevailed among the merchant seamen and masters that the Falkland Islands were a most dangerous locality to navigate, and that together with the ignorance of any supplies being available here or with the majority, of there being a settlement at all, was, and is yet, the chief cause of so few ships calling there.

It was during a former voyage by the merest accident I heard from the manager of the copper smelting establishment of the Mexican and South American Mining Company in Copalimbo, that when he with the whole of the people in his employ were on their passage out in the *Sir Charles Forbes* from London, they were short of water and put into Stanley Harbour, where they received the best attention and supplies of water, fresh beef, goose, and milk.

On my arrival in London in 1849, I procured from the agent of the

SALAMANDER'S VISIT TO FORMOSA.

On the return of the *Reynard* from Amoy, preparatory to her departure for England, she brought news of the loss of an English ship on the island of Formosa, to which place the *Salamander* was ordered for the purpose of instituting inquiries. The arrival here of the *Antelope* opium clipper, brought the required information, together with three men, the sole survivors of the British ship *Larpernt*, which was wrecked on the south-east end of Formosa, on the 12th September, 1850. The narrative given by these three survivors is a very melancholy one, and is thus detailed.

The American barque *Antelope*, on her passage to Shanghae, was lying, on the night of the 1st inst., nearly becalmed off the south point of Formosa, when a boat was observed coming from the shore, and, as several others were also near her, an attack from pirates being apprehended, Captain Roundy thought proper to have his carronades loaded, and small arms prepared, and then fired a shot over the heads of the people of the boat that was approaching. But this had the effect of stopping the rowers but for a few minutes only, and shortly afterwards those in the *Antelope*, heard the voices of Englishmen requesting that they might be taken on board. Captain Roundy accordingly hove to, and received three men—Alexander Beris, able seaman; William Blake, joiner; and James Hill, a lad of 19 years of age, ordinary seaman; the sole survivors of the crew of the barque *Larpernt*, of Liverpool, a vessel for some time past concluded to have become a total wreck.

For the following particulars we are mainly indebted to the kindness of Mr. Foote, chief officer of the *Antelope*, who obtained them from the men shortly after they somewhat recovered from the severe sufferings undergone. It appears that the Moulmein built barque *Larpernt*, of 614 tons register, only seven years old, belonging to Mr. T. Ripley, and commanded by Mr. Gilson, left Liverpool on the 18th of May last, on a voyage to Shanghae; the crew, all told, including Mr. Bland (brother of Mr. Bland, of the firm of Shaw, Bland, and Co., of Shanghae) a passenger, acting as third mate, numbering thirty-one. The *Larpernt* passed Anjer on the 19th of August.

The *Albert Edward*, on the 28th of August, was in company with the bark *Larpernt*, bound to Shanghae, in lat 7° north, long. 108° 50' east; and had light winds and fine weather all up the China Sea, and no serious gales during the voyage.

Fifteen days after being thus spoken by the *Albert Edward*, viz:—on the 12th September, in the forenoon, the *Larpernt* passed Botel Tobago Xima, a lofty island, three or four miles in extent, bearing E. $\frac{1}{2}$ N., from the south cape, Formosa, from which it is distant thirteen leagues. The weather is said to have been thick and rainy at this time, wind moderate at north-east, blowing off the shore. At 9h. 30m. P.M., all hands were alarmed at the ship suddenly striking on a rock. By backing the head sails, however, the ship came off almost immediately, but on sounding the pumps no less than seven feet of water were found in the

hold; all hands were forthwith busily kept at pumping until 2h. 15m. A.M., of the following day, when, as there was no prospect of gaining on the leak, Captain Gilson ordered the quarter-boats to be lowered, and the launch to be hoisted out. In the hurry the jolly boat stove and became useless. The captain, mate, and six men, then got into the starboard quarter-boat, the remaining members of the crew taking the launch, in which some provisions had been placed.

On the weather clearing up a little at daylight they found themselves close to the shore, somewhere in the vicinity of the place designated on the map of Formosa, Mat-faer. Here they all landed for the purpose of getting fresh water, and with intention also of caulking the long-boat, which was found to "leak like a sieve;" but in these purposes they were prevented, the natives coming down in great numbers and plundering them of every moveable. So situated, Capt. Gilson determined on putting to sea again, as he said to endeavour to reach Hongkong, a distance of 400 miles and upwards. Both boats started together, but the launch, still leaking considerably, was unable to keep up with the lighter boat, and, parting company, she was never more seen, although it was afterwards heard that Capt. Gilson had landed near South Cape, and procured water. There, indeed, he might have been murdered, or taken captive, and may still be in slavery for aught we are required to believe to the contrary.

At daylight on the 14th the launch having rounded the extreme point, the crew landed on a shelving beach, surrounded by bushes, intending before proceeding any further to do their best to repair the boat. About 8 A.M., almost without any previous warning, they found themselves in the midst of a deadly fire of matchlocks. Young Mr. Bland was observed to spring a great height into the air and fall flat on his face dead; those who could swim immediately took to the water, from whence the savages were seen, with long knives, stabbing those who were wounded, and immediately cutting off their heads, which, to the number of nineteen, were then thrown into a terrible heap. Blake, the joiner, says that although wounded by a shot when in the water, he swam for several miles across a broad bight, and had landed under a huge sugar loaf rock, thoroughly exhausted, thinking that he was the only one saved, when, turning his eyes seaward, he observed the boy Hill, pursued by an enormous shark. The lad appeared nearly exhausted and was about to sink, when, cheered by his voice, he gave a few more strokes and landed in shoal water, from whence he dragged himself over the coral to the place where Blake was sitting. Here they had not remained long when two natives with matchlocks were seen traversing a beach at some distance, apparently in pursuit of them. But they succeeded in hiding themselves for the time, and afterwards escaped to the mountains, where they remained until the 19th. Exhausted nature could hold out no longer, and at a time when Blake says the feelings of a cannibal had arisen in his breast, and he instantly thought of partaking of his comrade's blood, rather than remain longer without food, they wandered into a field where some villagers were at work. From them they obtained a meal of rice and shelter, and were afterwards made to

work with the village labourers from daylight till dark; sometimes in boats diving for shell fish, at others with hoes about the paddy ground.

The man Beris and another had landed at a different place, from whence they tried to reach a junk, in which one of them, Harrison, succeeded, but was almost immediately shot and decapitated in sight of his comrade. Beris appears to have subsequently joined Blake and Hill, the latter of whom, being unable to do so much work as the others, was subjected to very severe treatment, and has been left sick at Shanghae. At the expiration of five months, the kind hearted villagers sold them to some neighbours for six dollars a piece; the purchasers proving to be of a more friendly disposition than the original holders. On arrival at Shanghae, a voluminous narrative of the seven months and sixteen days captivity, was taken by Mr. Consul Alcock, an abstract of which, we are told, will appear in the next issue of the *North China Herald*.

The shipwrecked men tell of having seen on the beach near where they landed, an anchor of about 19 cwt., chain cable, cat and top blocks, iron knees, a bronze figure head, four feet long, and other ship gear, the possession of which might be a clue to the fate of several vessels of which we are still in ignorance, (American barque *Coquette*, for instance, the British barque *Kelpie*, and others.) They also heard of two white men being in captivity, but could not, for a certainty, ascertain where.

The fate of the commander, officers, passengers, and crew of the *Larpernt*, naturally occasioned great excitement amongst our European community, who call aloud for vengeance on the Formosans, whose hands have also murdered the crews of the *Ann*, the *Nerbudda*, and now the *Larpernt*.

In conformity with instructions, H.M. steamer *Salamander* left Amoy at daybreak, of the 11th of Aug., having on board Mr. Interpreter Parkes, with two shipwrecked seamen of the *Larpernt*, for the purpose of proceeding to Formosa with the presents and rewards to be given to those parties who had succoured our countrymen in their distress; she reached the Pescadores the same evening, where she anchored for the purpose of obtaining the services of a pilot acquainted with the south end of Formosa. Next morning Mr. Parkes, the interpreter, landed and had an interview with the Haefang or civil magistrate of the islands, and with the military officer commanding the station. At first, both these officers objected to furnish a pilot to the *Salamander*, though the objects of the expedition were fully explained to them, and it was only on Mr. Parkes, informing them that if they refused to send a pilot on board the *Salamander*, they would be under the necessity of proceeding to the capital of the island Tae-wan-foo. On this, they agreed to send a pilot, alleging with true Chinese diplomacy, that they had objected, because they had no confidence in the skill of the native pilots. Several pilots were then brought in, and after some examination by Lieut. Lambert, one was chosen, who went on board with Mr. Parkes and the lieutenant, and the *Salamander* was got under way. On the morning of the next day, the 13th, the *Salamander* sighted Lang-keaou or Saw-sian which was immediately recognized by Beries and Blake as the place from whence they had escaped to the *Antelope*. A heavy gale coming

on from seaward, the *Salamander* stood out; the gale abating next day, she was enabled to anchor about midnight between Lamy Island and the Formosan coast. During the 15th, the weather continued very bad, and no communication could be had with the shore except by catamarans, one of which came off during the morning. Early next day the 16th, Lieut. Lambert and Mr. Parkes landed through a heavy surf on a catamaran. The curiosity of the natives having been excited by the appearance of the steamer, they crowded round the two officers, who made their way with some difficulty to the post of a small military officer stationed in the neighbourhood, where they explained who they were and the friendly nature of the visit. From the man that came on board on a catamaran, Capt. Ellman had learned that a person named Lin Wanchang, who, Mr. Parkes had been informed, had great influence with both the aborigines and Chinese, lived in the neighbourhood. The object of the landing of the two officers was to obtain an interview with this person, and Mr. Parkes stated this to the military officer, with a request that they might be shewn where Lin Wanchang lived. The officer would not send them to his residence, but despatched a messenger for him. While waiting for his appearance enquiries were made after the missing boat of the *Larpernt*, but no further intelligence was obtained of her, except a greater certainty of her fate, as the inhabitants, in consequence of the enquiries of Beries and Blake, had made an ineffectual search after the boat for some distance along the coast.

After waiting about four hours, the messenger returned with an invitation from Lin Wanchang to visit him at his house, and as it was about five miles distant he sent sedan chairs. The two officers immediately started in company with the Chinese military officer. On their arrival at Lin Wanchang's house they were hospitably entertained. Their host seemed to be perfectly well acquainted with all particulars of the wreck of the *Larpernt*, and had seen Blake and Hill early in March last: he said he would have endeavoured to recover the men, but their masters wished them to stay until they acquired sufficient knowledge of the language so as to understand that they did not belong to the tribe that had murdered their comrades, as the men had often threatened to come back with a force and revenge themselves for the massacre. On its being said that, in that case, he might have told the chief Mandarins of the island, he treated their authority and power in that part with contempt, which was not lessened by the presence of the military officer. He was then told that there was a British Consul at Amoy with whom he could have communicated: he said he was ignorant of the fact; but that in future he had no objection to communicate directly with the Consul. The object of the present visit was then explained; he seemed to regret its peaceful intentions, as the extermination of the tribe that murdered the crew of the *Larpernt* was desired by all in the neighbourhood—both Chinese and aborigines. The name of the tribe is the Kwei-tsei-luh; it is a very small one, containing only about two hundred members, of whom not above sixty are fighting men. They are a cruel blood-thirsty race and would have long ago been exterminated by the surrounding tribes but for want of unanimity. Lin Wan-chang said that

if we determined to attack them, we would be supported by at least four hundred matchlock-men. As considerable doubts seemed to be entertained of the pacific nature of the *Salamander's* visit, Lin Wanchang, at Mr. Parkes's request, sent a man named Lin Tseih, to accompany the officers to Lang-keaou, and explain matters; he also gave them a letter to the Towkay of a village near Lang-keaou, who had some influence with the aborigines, with whom it was the wish of Capt. Ellman to communicate. As it was getting late, Lieut. Lambert and Mr. Parkes bade Lin Wan-chang adieu, and left him with expressions of good will on both sides.

On their return they were encountered by the Capitan, or chief, of the settlement of Penan, who told them that he had rescued a man out of the water a few days after the murder of the launch's crew, and he supposed he was one of them. While rescuing the man he was fired upon by the aborigines, but succeeded in bringing the man to his house, where he lived only two months, when he died. It was difficult to understand from the Chinese pronunciation what his name was, but as far as it could be made out it was Harris or Harrison—he told the Capitan that he had two small children at home. Not having time to make full enquiries they attempted to take the Capitan on board, but as he would no go without a friend and there being no room in the boat for them both, Lieut. Lambert and Mr. Parkes were reluctantly compelled to leave him, and did not meet him again.

Next morning the 17th, at daybreak, the *Salamander* started for Lang-keaou, distant twenty to thirty miles. On her arrival there arrangements were made for distributing the rewards to those who had shewn kindness to our unfortunate countrymen—and, as in these rewards, some of the more distant tribes had to be called in to participate, the distribution was deferred till next day, the 18th, at noon, and arrangements were made for receiving Capt. Ellman at that hour.

Capt. Ellman landed at noon next day, and was received by the Towkay and several heads of villages; they were attended by a number of armed men who saluted the Captain with sundry volleys of musketry. The sums agreed upon were given to each party, by Berries or Blake; in some cases they were received with anything but gratitude. In one case it was thought proper to pay a relation of Kewah 50 dollars out of the 275 dollars that Messrs. Shaw, Bland and Co., wished to be paid to that person. This man's name was Chako, and it was said that he first incited Kewah to ransom Beries, having heard of his captivity through his wife, who was a native of the tribe in which Beries was a captive, and had seen him there before her marriage to Chako. The Towkay was much pleased with his gift, and generally speaking, the majority were thankful for the sums given them. The village where Hill and Blake lived was then visited, as the people were at enmity with those of Lang-keaou, though they are only two miles distant; the two parties, Akeih and Kwei-leu, who had taken care of our countrymen were not present, and the money not being deemed safe with the head-man, it was desired that the men should come on board the *Salamander* next morning. One only came, the other having been stated to be unwell,

his money was given to the man who came, to take to him. This person seemed very grateful. As a matter of policy, a reward was also given to the head-man of the village, Chang-kwang-tsaë who accompanied him, as it seemed to be the general impression he had some influence with the wilder tribes. From enquiries made at Lang-keacou, it turns out that Harrison was not shot in attempting to escape, but was taken on board the fishing-boat, and that he was the person mentioned by the Penan Capitan. It also appeared that a fishing-boat had supplied the life-boat with rice and water—that the boat stood out to sea and was probably lost in a storm that raged on the coast two days afterwards. Capt. Ellman deemed it advisable to survey the hills where the murderous tribe Kwei-tsei-luh live—the Towkay and several of the more respectable inhabitants went on board to point out the place, and all were very anxious that an attack should be made on these barbarians.

The coast was afterwards searched as far as Tae-wan-foo, the capital, but nothing further was ascertained. It was also proposed to give an explanation to the authorities there, of the reason of the *Salamander's* visit. Attempts were made to enter into communication with them, but they were defeated as far as an official visit was concerned. Mr. Parkes however, was enabled to gain some intelligence of a rice ship said to have been wrecked on the coast. From the information given, it is believed this was the Dutch vessel *Oesterling*, and that she went on shore on the coast of Formosa, in the latter end of 1849.—The crew were saved by the British ship *Ranee*. A day was spent on the return, in search of coal on the Pescadores, but no trace of such a mineral was to be discovered.

A VISIT TO BRUNE.

Our visits to the Sultan during our stay in Brunei were frequent, and frequently long. His highness usually commenced us early, and his palace was the only lounge we had in Brunei, but we thus saw much of the private life of Omar Ali, and his "tricks upon travellers."

On the arrival of a merchant vessel, his highness, being the principal trader, allows some of his subjects to purchase a thing, until he has made his selection, and has obtained all the presents he can, which the masters and supercargoes are weak enough to give him. This proceeding is most rigidly observed, for the Sultan being absolute, the infraction of it is visited with summary punishment by the kris, which is too often employed in the settlement of affairs in Brunei. Some Brunei people having stolen some things from a room adjoining the house of an Englishman, his highness on hearing of the offence sent word that he had given direction for the discovery and apprehension of the thief and that his right hand should be cut off. On another occasion the Sultan having said a boat or galley, to one of our countrymen, had given some orders about equipping her. On visiting the place afterwards where she was, and observing little or no progress made in the execution of his orders,